



***We challenged
you & you accepted
the challenge...***



Here is our first edition (of many we hope) of your
"BEST RUNNING STORIES"

Whether all fact, loosely based on facts, or completely from imagination...
here are your running stories with the writer as the main character.

So let the storytelling begin!!!



So here is my story...

I am NOT a runner..... never have been..... never will be :(

I have never found pleasure at running and in school was always the slowest. In older age, I tried, but came to the realization.... it's OK, because I LOVE LOVE LOVE to walk and hike, and I don't have to be a runner. To me it's about getting outdoors and enjoying nature and what it has to offer around me.

When I was a teenager, I had an awesome Golden Retriever named Layca. Her and I were like 2 peas in a pod. We walked everywhere. Whenever I was grounded (and trust me that happened a few times), she was my excuse to get out. Because how could my mom deny me walking the dog right? I might have stopped at my friends on occasion, and told mom it was a very, very long walk. I think my mom knew what I was doing, but she never said a word. LOVE YOU MOM!

I loved our walks, being outside, teaching Layca how to swim (a waterdog that was afraid of



Bubble races, or meet for a bike ride, Dragonboat together etc, etc.

I have a great group of friends and we all motivate each other. We are all at different fitness levels, but we cheer for each other no matter what, and these are the people that keep me going physically and mentally.

I am excited to join the Boreas Trail Adventure this year. There will be a few of us and I look forward to the experience. And I can't wait to read everyone else's story.

See you on the 17th.... maybe even with the cats...

water). We had a blast!

So Layca is long gone and I now have 3 cats. I tried to put the leash on them and go for walks, but somehow they just don't like it. So I go out in nature by myself. I get fresh air, good exercise listen to a good song or book, and enjoy myself. Or I meet my friends and we do activities together. We join 5K runs, or Indoor Tri's, or do Inflatables or

Here is a picture of Layca getting a bath.... doesn't she just look pathetic? She truly wasn't a "real" waterdog. Miss her to pieces.

-- Elain Tschoepe

HILLS ARE ALIVE TRAIL RUN/WALK

Saturday, March 16, 2019

10:15 a.m. CaniCross • 10:30 a.m. Run/Walk

Lake Geneva Canopy Tours

N3232 County Road H, Lake Geneva, WI

Winter Running – A Love Story

Once, I loathed winter. It was the most awful season, months of feeling shut in and cold.

I could never find mittens warm enough. I let the car run until it was 75 degrees inside before I got in. I never did anything outside if I could avoid it.

Then I started to run. Living in Wisconsin (and later in Illinois) meant that if I wanted to run, I was going to miss out on six to seven months of being outdoors.

I could run on a treadmill — boring. Or I could become a runner, which to me means cultivating a willingness to embrace whatever you're given and persevere — the very definition of endurance.

As with any transformation, this change didn't happen overnight. But the winter I chose to embrace whatever I was given was the beginning. Rather than having one epic winter run to share, I think of my Big Tough Five as milestones of my metamorphosis into a runner. They are, in order of least to most tough:

#5. First Winter Run

In 2007, as a new runner, I braved four cold, snowy miles with a local Madison, WI group. With temps around 20 degrees (above zero), this really wasn't a big achievement in retrospect, but it was the brave leap that started the whole thing.

#4. First Trail Run

On New Year's Eve 2017, with the mercury at -2°F, I bundled up to head out for my very first trail run — of 5.5 miles. It was sunny. The snow was dazzling. Dressed right, I was toasty and delighted. It's been love ever since.

#3. Madison Blizzard Run

With my first marathon looming, a blizzard was a real inconvenience. Midweek 8-miler, starting in the dark? Let's do it. When I stepped outside, the wind blew me sideways. I slogged on, only bagging the run when the spray from a snow plow blew me down at the four-mile mark. I hiked home through the drifts.



#2. Eighteen Miles at 2°F

You know what's not fun? A snot-filled scarf frozen so solid that rubs your face raw for 18 miles. But today, more than 10 years after this run, I still use it as my yardstick. Ten hilly miles with the mercury at 1°F? If I could do 18 then, I can do it now. Lace up.

#1. Snowstorm Run

The historic winter snow storm of January 31-February 1, 2015 brought more than 19 inches of snow to Chicagoland. When I got up to run that morning, flakes were blowing sideways and five inches had already fallen. I went five miles anyway. The reason why I count this as #1 in the Big Tough Five is that I was five months pregnant with my third child — and I still ran outside. And yes, my son turned out just fine — he's a delightful three-year-old snow-lover today. (Before you scold me, I had on YakTrax for sure footing, I went slow, my midwife knew I ran and sanctioned it all, and I would have bailed if I were ever in danger.)

Now, when winter arrives, it's just another beautiful season to make running memories.

-- Jara Kern



Sunday, April 7, 2019

10:15 a.m.

Bong State Recreation Area
Kansasville, WI

Fall of 2014 Petrifying Springs Trail Run/Walk was a memorable run...

I can't imagine how much time the race director spent laying out the course, measuring it, and marking it for the runners. He also considered our opinions for the tee shirt design. His efforts should be commended but as we all know "the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry". On race day there were approximately one hundred of us at the starting line. Now I'm familiar with the trails and had studied the course map ahead of time so I had a general idea of the layout. Specific paths to run on had been marked with red arrows. Shortly after the start, a few of us formed a pack and started running together. Our combined efforts were able to find the red arrow on the course and ignore the similarly looking red oak leaves which had recently fallen.

We were doing okay until we reached a junction behind the 15th /16th holes of the golf course. Leaves had covered the ground and we were totally bewildered as to which way to go. We stopped completely and exchanged our ideas as to which way to run.

Our group continued up the hill towards Hwy A. Our pack thinned out and I crossed the road with my friend Jim Larsen. On the north side of Hwy A there were 3 trails which all looked equally inviting. There was also a water stop with volunteers. Jim and I paused, Jim asked "which way?" One of the volunteers directed us to the trail to the right. We discovered after the fact that we cut off part of the course by doing this.

Jim and I continued our run, one of us would spot a marking on the ground and say "this way" or "here it is". Over the next couple miles the event felt more like a scavenger hunt than a running race but we were working our way towards the finish and having fun.



Towards the end Jim picked up the pace and I followed him across the line. We were the first 2 finishers and the race director looked puzzled and asked "where did you go?" We had finished a designed 10K course in less than 30 minutes. I could tell he was thinking "I know you're good but not THAT good."

We told him about the directions we were given and how we tried to follow the red arrows and he understood. As time went by other runners started coming out of the woods and into the finishing area from different access points. Eventually all of the participants made it to the finishing area where we were we smiled, laughed and exchanged our stories as to where we ran. Some ran more than 10K some ran less but we all had a good time.

So whenever I grab this shirt for a run I reminisce about the fun I had that day.

-- Andy Kaestner



Sunday, April 7, 2019

10:15 a.m.

Bong State Recreation Area
Kansasville, WI

Here is my super cool running story. It is FACT.

I have been thinking long and hard about the story I would provide in an attempt to win the running shoes and a free entry. I thought about making up a story, or about telling my story of how I used to routinely run my dogs at the dog

park, or about where I wanted to be in the running world, etc. etc.

Then, as I sat down tonight, I realized, my story was right under my feet – smack dab in front of me - all along.

I started my running career in 1979 at the age of 5 years old. I ran my first Lighthouse Run, the 2 miler, with my Aunt Gloria. We ran the whole way and did not stop once (see photo). From that point on, my running career launched. I ran the St. Luke's race downtown, the Burlington Flat Foot Five (I think it was called), UW Parkside inner loop runs, etc.

I have a box of trophies, medals and ribbons in my basement as proof, but clueless as to what to do with them now, some 40 years later.

My inspiration? Well that's my father.

He got me into running at a young age and I'll never forget my first pair of REAL running shoes, they were New Balance from Merritt's Running Center in Racine, remember it?

My dad ran that very first Lighthouse run too. In fact, he has run every single Lighthouse since inception. To this day, only he and one other fella have run every single LHR race.

About two years ago my father suffered a stroke. Unfortunately, while the family knew something was wrong, he wasn't evaluated by a neurologist for some weeks afterward. My father is currently 71 years old. He is not as active as he used to be, but we make sure he engages in his life.

I coach my paddling team (dragon boating) and he is on the crew. We are also cyclist, and he bikes along with us – I should mention that he got us into cycling too. While his running days are not as they were, I knew my dad was always a competitive spirit.

So this past LHR, I not only corralled my family, but I also summoned my close friends and crew from my paddling team to make up TEAM CORTEZ – SINCE 1979 Strong! We had people do the 2 miler, the 4 miler, some running, some walking. And then there's our cheering section. YES! The Cortez crew has the best, the loudest cheering section on Main Street at the end of LHR journey.

We not only cheer our own, but we cheer on the many other LHR participants. Our favorites, one might ask? Are the participants who come in last, or come in with the struggle on their face. WE HOOT and HOLLER and often time run alongside them, cheering them to their finish. This past year there was a young woman who came in, near the end of the 10 miler - she was crying. I captured her picture (I didn't attach on this email) and we cheered her on. She was inspiring to us, as noted in her tears, and I only hope we were inspiring to her as we cheered her on to the finish of her 10 mile journey.

I digress, so back to the story of my father.

Like I said, he is not in the running shape that he used to be in, but competitive by nature, I know his will to push on. This year, my husband Jerry and our close friend Lynn ran/walked the 10 miles with my dad because I know he'd have it no other way but to ensure he completes the LHR. Heck, even if he's wheelchair bound, I will see to it that he is pushed that 10 miles for completion (let's hope that's not the case or that it's a ways off yet).

So as Jerry, Lynn and my father completed the 10 mile LHR course, the Cortez Cheering Crew received mile by mile photos and updates of their course status. About one of the very last finishers, my Dad was coming up Main Street for the finish line. I quickly corralled our group and asked everyone to stand arms wide, like a HUGE banner spanning across Main Street. This was my father's end of his race and his journey in last year's LHR. It was his own personal finish line of family, friends and supporters who were there for his journey, cheering him on, but also there creating their own.

It was truly a great moment. (see photo)

Several of my close friends from my paddling team came up to me afterward. They told me how powerful, emotional and inspiring the whole event was. One even gave my dad a huge hug and gesture of appreciation, awe and gratitude for his diligence to complete every single LHR since inception - 1979. My friends said, "We are doing this next year!!" This running journey, shared by many, is not just the journey of my father, but it's the journey of many who thought they'd never see themselves do something that they one day do. And after trying it, they realize how much fun it was. The challenge, the thrill, the defeat. From that point on, they embrace it - it becomes part of their life, their routine, their habit. Here's to the life journey of not only running, but engagement in the many activities life has to offer. Whether we're doing it solo or with a group of others, it's not only a great contributor to our health, but also that of our social well-being in the memories that are made from events such as this. I look forward to trying CaniCross and hope for decent weather on the 17th for the Boreas event. As I would have it no other way, I have two friends also willing to try it out with me. We are looking forward to the event.

Michelle Springer







Saturday, June 8, 2019

9:30 a.m. (dog-friendly event)
 Petrifying Springs County Park
 Kenosha, WI

Superior 100 (90) recap - Dissection of my first DNF

Superior 100 is a lottery so about half as many “lucky” souls who want to are fortunate enough to participate in this great event. I put my name in the lottery right after the online registration website opened at midnight on New Year’s Day. Besides shouting happy new year, kissing Jane, and having a drink of champagne it was the first thing I did in 2018. OK no big deal, I’ve got 8 full months to get prepared for this, my second 100-mile run. Feeling much more mentally prepared having done this before, I think I may have skimped on my training a little. I would have liked to have gotten another 50 miler in closer to the race but Ice Age in May and 2) 50Ks in the weeks leading up to the race would have to do. In hindsight, I also didn’t do any strength training which might have helped me complete this thing. Anyway, the weeks leading up to the race were tough. I was the least confident of any race I’ve ever entered and dealing with more complicated logistics was also an additional stressor.

As race day approached, I got my plan together for the trip up, what to pack and how to arrange my drop bags. They allowed a drop bag at almost every aid station but with 13 I figured I wouldn’t need that many. I settled on 5 strategically placed at Silver Bay – 25 miles, Finland – 51.2 miles, Crosby-Manitou – 62.9 miles, Cramer Rd – 77.9 miles, and Sawbill – 90.7 miles. I had fresh socks, body glide, GU and Endurolytes in each drop bag. I had headlamps and batteries in a couple. I made up a little chart with the distances and cutoff times along with a potential 34-hour finish timeline. This proved very helpful (but sometimes distracting) as the hours went on.

Aid Station	Mile	Estimate	Cutoff
Split Rock	9.7	10:00	11:00
Beaver Bay	20.1	12:20	2:20
Silver Bay	25	1:40	4:00
Tettegouche	34.9	4:30	7:30
County Rd 6	43.5	7:30	10:30
Finland	51.2	10:00	2:00
Sonju Lake	58.7	12:40	none
Crosby-Manitou	62.9	2:00	9:10
Sugarloaf	72.3	6:00	12:10
Cramer Rd	77.9	8:31	1:45
Temperance	85	10:45	4:00
Sawbill	90.7	1:00	5:40
Oberg	96.2	3:00	7:10
Finish	103.3	6:00	10:00

Got everything packed the night before and got to bed early Wednesday night.

Left at 6:30am on Thursday for the 8-hour drive. Traffic was fine but a big truck accident at the rest stop just after Johnson Creek caused a bit of a delay. Stopped in Spooner for bite at MDs. Remembered the good times we had there last year when we rented a cabin for the week just outside of town. Got to the motel around 3:30pm gave me

a little time to look around get my stuff into the room. Stayed at the Solbakken Resort about 10 minutes from the finish. The resort had a main lodge and 12 motel rooms. There were also several individual cabins on the property. Each motel room had its own deck overlooking Lake Superior. Very nice little place. Room had a kitchenette and a fridge.



Packet pickup was in Two Harbors a bit over an hour south of the finish, so I didn't have that long to settle in before I had to get going. Wanted to get there and have the spaghetti dinner prior to the mandatory race meeting at 6:30. Packet pickup was buzzing with tons of people. I dropped off my 5 drop bags, picked up my number and t-shirt and bought a sticker (miss the freebies that Ice Age gives out). They did not have any pint glasses for sale. I thought I saw that on the merchandise list online. Got my spaghetti and meatballs, salad, bread and cookies and found a seat at a table right up close to the stage. Talked to a few runners from MN and finished dinner just as the race director was taking the stage. He gave a few pointers and went over a lot of what was on the website. He did recognize all the folks that had run more than 1. Think the most was 20. After the meeting I headed back to the motel had a beer and made my final organizational attempts before going to sleep.

Woke just before my alarm at 4:30 and slept great. I must have been tired from all the driving the day before. Had an English muffin and gathered my gear and headed to the finish line shuttle bus for the hour ride to the start at Gooseberry Falls State park. Saw my friend Jim from New Berlin at the bus stop. His son Ben was running the 100 and Jim was doing the marathon. The ride went quicker than I thought and saw a lot of nice scenery on the way down to Gooseberry. I got off the bus and checked in, so they know who started the race. I went inside the building and found a spot on the floor to relax. The photographer caught me through the window.



I was looking a little tense in the picture but really wasn't as shown in the next pic taken by my friend Randy Kreill. I just wanted to get on the trail. Weather was perfect, sunny and cool around 60. Would heat up a little throughout the day but it never got hot. We finally started and ran the first 4 miles or so on a paved bike path before the trail started.



This was good as it broke up the crowd a bit prior to hitting the single-track trail where passing is not the easiest. It was 9.7 miles to the first aid station at Split Rock and it was a nice stretch along the river. I saw the "split rock" that the aid station is named after a little before the actual aid station. The aid station was a quick stop, refilled my bottles, grabbed a few cookies and was off. The next aid station was Beaver Bay 10.3 miles away. Along this stretch was the river crossing that last year was knee deep. This year, it was easily rock hopped over and only got my foot wet when I lost my balance on one of the landings. I was a little worried about this, but it was a total non-issue. Beaver Bay was mile 20 and I was feeling good. Ran into Jeff Malach the race director for Ice Age. He ended up being my "crew" at several of the aid stations. Mainly I just talked to him, but he did help refill a few bottles and provided good moral support. He was there supporting some other runners I was familiar with but did not know well. Between here and the next aid station was also the beaver pond crossing that was waist deep last year. This year it was a little muddy but no real water to deal with – second area of concern was a non-issue.

Got to Silver Bay aid station - mile 25 and lubed my feet. No issues yet but didn't want to take any chances. Jeff helped with a few things and I was in and out quickly. The terrain was typical of the trail so far, lots of rocks, even more roots and hills a plenty. I was aware that ahead was Bean and Bear lakes. From high on a ridge top the trail over looked these 2 beautiful lakes. In the past there was a photographer there and it was a great spot for an action shot. I purposefully made sure I was by myself as I neared the top where the overlook was but alas, no photographer. I did stop and take in the view. A bit further down there was a photographer taking pictures at Mt Trudee. It was a good climb to the top and I climbed out on a rock to get a better view and I heard music that seemed far away. I thought it was the aid station as we were getting closer but found it to be the photographer's radio. He took a few pictures and the landscape was gorgeous.



Rolled into Tettegouche aid station mile 34.9 feeling good. It was almost 6:00pm so I was glad I got my head lamp at the last aid station since this was the only aid station with no drop bags. Fueled and refilled my hydration bladder – which turned out to be a pain in the ass to get re-closed no matter who tried to help. Coming out of this aid station I started up a conversation with Mike Porter. He was a runner I was trading places with for most of the day until then. I nicknamed him “Toolmaster” because he was from Brainerd, MN (where the children go to milking school). Brainerd was made famous (to a select few fans) by the band Trip Shakespeare. Mike was aware of, but not familiar with, the band so he didn't appreciate the nickname as much as I did. We would end up running a good chunk of the race together and we decided to be each other's pacers as both of us were running this solo. It was great to have someone to talk to as night started to fall. The next aid station was County Rd 6 at mile 43.5. Ran a brief stretch along the road prior to getting there and it was a little cool on the road in my sleeveless shirt. Back in the woods it was warm again. Mike and I worked our way to the mid-point – Finland it was about 12:30am and I wasn't feeling tired at all. I did start to have a few issues with my mind playing tricks on me. The reflective arrows pointing the way to the aid station appeared to move and there were rocks in the road that also appeared to move along with my headlamp. Another drop bag and I changed my socks again. Mike picked up his trekking poles. Poles might have come in handy but for me it's just more stuff to worry about.

Mike and I ran a bit with Greg Allen who turned to be a bit of a celebrity having tried and failed 7 times prior to complete this race. Spoiler alert, he finished this year. It was slow going in the dark with all the roots and rocks. We kept ourselves entertained telling stories and singing (badly) some songs. We ran a part of this stretch with a few others and each of us had a unique nickname. I was the drunk guy because of the way I was staggering around all the roots it felt like I just left the bar at closing time – which it was probably about that time of the morning. I was given my nickname by “bubbles” who got her nickname because a friend of hers bought her a bubble wrap suit because she tended to fall a lot. Mike was “disturbing” because of his rendition of the sound of silence and “bubbles” liked the Disturbed version of the song better. Her pacer was “number 2” not because she was a crappy pacer but because she was her second pacer. Finally, “hiccup” was in the back dealing with his hiccups. Bubbles attempted to cure them by asking his middle name - that did not help. We all ran into the next aid station at Sonju Lake mile 58.7 together. It seemed to take a long time to get the final few miles and each of us was expecting the aid station to show up around the next corner, or the next corner.....

Shortly after Sonju my friend Randy Kreill passed me. I met him at the start and recognized him from the 50K I ran in West Virginia the month prior. Small world, but even smaller because his parents live in Waukesha – he's from just outside Dayton. He runs in sandals and ended up finishing. Mike and I were getting passed by a lot of people, but we continued to power hike forward. The next aid station was Crosby Manitou mile 62.9. It was just before 6 and the sun was coming up and we were looking forward to finishing the last 40 or so miles. They had great quesadillas and was feeling good having another drop bag with fresh socks everything was going great. Legs, feet, nutrition hydration everything was good. We continued through the next aid station Sugarloaf mile 72.3 but I started to do math in my head and figured that at some point we'd need to pick it up a little. We had a 2-hour cushion to the cutoff, but I really didn't want to spend another long night on the trail. Mike left the aid station before me by a few minutes. I figured he was going to pick it up. I caught him quickly and continued to move at the faster pace. Mike stayed with me for a while but eventually my pace was too fast, and he let me go. I ended up coming into the next aid station Cramer Road mile 78 feeling good ate some hash browns and sausage and was ready to go. I was told there were sections of the course ahead that were runnable, so I continued to move faster than I had in a while. There were a lot of 50 milers in this section and they were supportive because they saw the pink ribbon on my pack indicating I was a 100 miler. I passed a lot of 100 milers in this stretch as well. I was feeling good, but my back started to feel tight. I was also starting to hallucinate a bit. Trees and shrubs started to look like animals. I'd start to see clearings with cars up ahead thinking it was the aid station only to find it was a downed tree. The trail also started to look odd. I'd see the trail appear to go up hill and curve only to find it went straight. The trail was flat and went over a lot of boardwalks. As I ran over them, I swore I'd run this same boardwalk before. There was a steep downhill into Temperance aid station mile 85. My back on the left side was really bothering

me and I had to stop and stretch it out several times. I took my first Advil at this point. The little bag I had them in had broken and I had earlier given 2 to Mike so all I had was 4. In hindsight, I should have taken them earlier and maybe my back would not have progressed to point where it impacted my abs. As I continued to work down the descent into the aid station along the river, my right abs started to contract, and it was causing me to be hunched over to the right. This made the descent even more difficult and I lost my balance several times. I was starting to get concerned but the thought of dropping still didn't enter my mind. The 50 milers that were passing me all asked if I was ok and one gave me a couple more Advil. I figured I'd need them in the last 15 miles even though I had a couple left. I made it to the aid station mile 85 and still did not consider dropping with almost an hour under the cutoff. I figured I need to do 20-minute miles from here on to make it in 38 hours. One of the aid station workers was from an earlier aid station and he helped me with my pain in the ass hydration pack again. He was a race veteran who didn't get in the lottery this year. He was really rooting for me and made sure I got out of the aid station quickly. I continued all hunched over, luckily the river was on the left so my natural lean to the right kept me from falling in the river. I came upon a photographer who took a pic and I stupidly asked if I was listing to the right and they confirmed my crooked posture.



I continued to shuffle along now starting to doubt my chances of a finish. I'd stop and stretch my abs and could take 3 or 4 steps before my abs contracted and pulled me over. Some 50 milers stopped and offered me some Biofreeze. The runner that helped me turned out to be Joe Flynn. He asked the RD for my email and emailed me a few days after the race making sure I was ok. He was impressed that I made the Carlton peak climb, truthfully, I was impressed as well. Navigating the next climb became very difficult. I made it about half way to the next aid station maybe 3 miles and was done. My left hip and thigh were starting to cramp as well trying to compensate for my lean. I was trying to figure out if it would be better to walk back to Temperance or push on to the next aid station at mile 90. I started to walk back to mile 85 but figured by the time I got back they would be gone and I really didn't want to figure out how to get a ride considering I didn't even know where I was. I contemplated going back to where I saw some hikes and a more established trail. But ended up just figuring I'd push on. I laid down in the grass and tried to stretch it out but nothing was working. Then 2 more 100 milers came up and I decided I'd give them my bib and ask that they tell the 90-mile aid station that I'd be along eventually and please wait for me. They were very concerned about leaving me, but I told I'd be fine, and they needed to keep moving. I continued up the climb which at the time I did not know was Carlton peak – the steepest on the whole run. Then I heard a familiar growl/grunt coming from the rocks below. It was the Toolmaster himself, Mike. I quickly told him of my situation and told him to keep moving. He was doubtful he would make it to the aid station before the cutoff but was moving much better than me. I apologized for leaving him earlier and he was fine with that. I wished him well and continued my grind. I lost my balance several times and once hit my shin on a rock. The gash looked worse than it was. As I made it over the top and started to work my way down, I swore I saw Mike just ahead of me. When I got to an open area it was clear I was hallucinating again. Finally, I made it to the bottom of the descent and figured the aid station would be close. There were what seemed to be miles of boardwalks and I kept seeing clearings and cars/trucks/shelters around every corner. Finally, I hit a road and there was a truck and trailer there and few people standing around. At first, they thought I was the sweeper but then realized I was "that guy" they were waiting for. The aid station was still a few 100 yards away and the volunteer tried to take my arm thinking I was going to fall over. I told her I hobbled this way for the last 3 miles, so I was good. She still stayed very close.

I got a ride back to my car at the Caribou Highlands. I did not feel like going over by the finish area and just wanted to grab a bite to eat and find my way back to my motel and have a beer before I passed out. After being up for over 37 hours and my first DNF, I was selfishly in no mood to cheer on the finishers. On the way back to the motel I stopped at a liquor store that had 6 pack of beer from the Voyager Brewery which was about 15 minutes north of where I was. I had wanted to visit there but time on Thursday slipped away. I asked if there was a place to get a take-out pizza and the only place was back at the resort I just left so I stopped at a little market across the street hoping to find some mac and cheese or chili I could heat up. The nice lady there recognized me as a Superior runner right away and was very familiar with the race and where I dropped. They had a little café that had closed at 2:00 – it was almost 7:00 now but she had some pasties left over and she heated one up for me to go. I bought a bag of chips and headed back to the hotel. I answered a few texts and ate my dinner and started to get really tired. Figured I'd better take a shower before I fell asleep at the table. Hit the hay and slept great until about 6:00. I needed to get back to the finish to get my drop bags before 9:00. I was planning to go back to the café at 7:00 when they opened for breakfast but wasn't hungry and wanted to get

home. The drive home was eventful, traffic was a pain by 3:00. Everything felt really good my back was a little sore, but my legs and feet were ready to go for a run – which I waited until the Wednesday Holy Hill fun run to do. Ran 3 miles on the trails there and the legs felt great.

The biggest disappointment was that I had a lot of strength and no soreness in my legs. I wonder if I would have pushed it earlier maybe I would have got done before my back issues did me in. I think the constant looking down caused my neck and back muscles to stress which then caused my abs to go. It's too bad, had perfect weather and trail conditions that will probably never happen again. I'll need to go back but not sure if next year will be too soon.

-- Tim Wegner



Thursday, July 4, 2019

1:30 p.m.

Somers Fire Station

Somers, WI

I was not born a runner.

My family – not runners. I am a sporadic runner at best. I did not participate in 5K's at all until a few years ago. What changed? I have dogs. Active dogs. There is a saying, "a tired dog is a good dog". I do performance events with my dogs. Agility – maybe 75 seconds maximum running (sort of), and that's if you are having a terrible round. Obedience and rally – a few steps at a "fast pace". Honestly, it's too expensive in these parts to take lessons (most of the time). It's much less costly, read: free, to hike on Sugarloaf Mountain or the C & O Canal Tow path. And, signing up and running in a 5K gives good swag – medals and t-shirts are standard swag. I'll never have to buy another t-shirt again.

I do dog-friendly 5K's. If I can't run with my dog, then I don't actually want to run. I moved on to trail runs (also dog-friendly). And then...a dog-friendly mud run/obstacle course. Mid-life crisis? Maybe. I had just celebrated my 48th birthday and wanted to do something like this once, to say I had.

I drove out to West Virginia to participate in the Logan Haus Kennel 5K obstacle course/mud run. Luckily I did not have to cross any really large bridges over very deep gorges or my trip may not have happened. Yes, I have a very healthy fear of heights. It's a lovely, mountainous area, rather in the middle of nowhere. The nearest hotel was 30 minutes away. I slept in my van with my dog. I mean, hey, why not? If you are going to do it, do it all the way.

This race has a professional level (K9 trainers, military trainers, Schutzhund trainers, etc.) and a competitive level (everybody else). There is no tourist level for people like me (sightseers). Race morning. You leave out every 2 minutes. The professionals go first. I watch as they spring over the first obstacle, a wood box with tires above it on a pole that rotates as you go over it. Some pros just pick their dog up and toss them over. Let me add here that the professionals have to zip-line with their dog. That is not in the competitive level I am relieved to say.

I end up teaming up with a girl who was from Michigan who has the same breed of dog as I, an

later. This is not a great option. I choose Option 3 – the cowards way – I go around the long route and step around the hot wire. This knocks me out of the opportunity for placement. Meh. Priorities. Spoiler Alert: winning time at the competitive level - 36:18, my time – 1:44:12.

I release my dog from her crate and we continue on. More gullies, slides, culverts, streams, hills and the spools (over and under). Somewhere around the halfway point of the course is The Wall. It's on the side of a steep hill, like a rock climbing wall but with 1/2" board fencing as the hand holds. It's approximately 10' tall and above that, tires are roped and staked together to climb the remaining way (another 10'). I climb about halfway up the wall and call my dog. She really has no idea what I want her to do but she comes and I try to push her up and past me into the tires. We're just not there and she ends up with her front feet on a slat above me and her hind feet on my shoulder. I start yelling, "stay, stay, stay" (repeatedly). Now I have to figure out where to put my hand, foot and push her up all while saying "stay" so she doesn't jump, which would send us plummeting to the ground. I am straining and sweating profusely now. Finally we get to the tire portion and crawl our way out. As I get clear, I look back and the girl waiting below me for her turn says, "Thank God, I thought you were a goner". My response, "thank you", somewhat peevishly.

More hills, gullies, streams. A culvert where the exit is above the ground and you leap into the water. Not bad, but now it's mud and it's chest deep. My dog doesn't wait and leaps in behind me, going all the way under. I grab her harness and steer us to the bank with a steep, uphill climb. Starting to tire....

I cause bottlenecks. This is not the first obstacle where I do this. Another, different obstacle, the school bus. You have to climb a spool (laying on its side), get on the hood of the bus and then climb up to the roof, walk across the roof, jump down onto another spool (also on its side) and to the ground. The easy part is getting the dog on the roof. I, for the life of me, however, can't seem to

Australian Shepherd. We are given the go. I lift my dog over the first obstacle, the tires, grateful she only weighs 48 pounds. We manage to run down steep hills, across streams, and up and down dirt banks and crawl through culverts in the streams. By obstacle #5 we are soaking wet. Thankfully, the first weekend of October, it is actually warm.

Obstacle #6, a conundrum. Requirement – your dog must go in a crate. After all, they don't want your dog to get injured. You, however, are fair game. The first portion of this obstacle is to hit a hanging target, in this case a water bottle, with an air gun (or maybe it's a bb gun), whatever it is, I have no real idea what I am doing. My co-runner picks up her gun, "bam", hits the target. I miss. I struggle to cock the gun or reload or whatever it's called. Everyone is ducking and weaving as I'm swinging the gun around in my effort to do so. The "spotter" grabs the gun and does it for me – FOUR times – as I miss each time. Finally he says, "just go on". The second portion is now upon us. Two options for this one. Option 1 – the short route. A sniper shooting paintballs as you run the shorter loop. Note here, you must wear goggles to protect your eyes as you run around with a sniper pegging you on the rest of your body parts. I have played paintball, even wearing the protective gear, it hurts. Option 2 – the longer route. No sniper, but, at the end of the longer route, approximately a 10' stretch of hot wire that you must crawl under and it is on. Note here, the professionals had returned from running the course before we left the start line, some of them had been getting zapped and blacking out. I have been zapped by cow-level hot wire. I got flung back about 15' and came to a little

figure out how to get up. The guy behind me, waiting, asks if there is a problem. "I'm thinking," I snap. I end up propping myself on my elbows and kicking like a seal on the beach, crawling along on its belly with its flippers. Finally I'm able to get my legs under me and run across the "roof, roof."

Next stop, a slog/crawl under a wire panel (not electric). This is not my dog's favorite part. I actually have to go first as she thinks I should lead. My shoes almost pull off in the mud, it is that thick, and judging by the smell, it is not just mud.... we've already passed the cow's whose field we are running in.

Thank goodness I had the harness because the last steep hill almost did me in. My dog pulled like the Northern breed she is not. Down the hill, over the floating board pond obstacle, which only made my dog mud free, and up a slight hill and you have to carry your dog the last 100 yards across the finish line. She is a really good, tolerant dog and the look on her face as I carry her is priceless.

I feel like a badass. A t-shirt and a medal await me. I cold hose the mud off of both of us. A pig roast at the end of the day to celebrate. Talking and drinking around the campfire with my neighbors who drove from Michigan to compete. Looking up at the Milky Way in all its glory on a beautiful night. Sleeping on my sleeping bag in my van with my dog (one of the best nights sleep I've ever had). Meeting people with grit, determination and strength. Realizing I had the same.

I was not born a runner, but now I'm a convert.

-- Dottie Bumb

HIL100PY

RELA Y

Saturday, July 27, 2019

6:00 a.m.

UW-Parkside National Cross
Country Course, Kenosha, WI

My Running Story...

For most of my life I have always ran. As a kid I was "fast" and would always run from my friend's house to home and such. In high school, I was a three time letter winner in track. I was a sprinter and never won, but never came in last. That transitioned into my time in the Army where running was a part of the standard aspect physical fitness. After I was discharged from the Army, I stayed active by playing sports but whenever I felt the need "to get into shape" I would return to running as my main activity. Over the years my running has waxed and waned. Some years I would run a lot and other not so much. This story is about my recent return to running and more specifically how I fell in love with trail running.

It is the Spring of 2016 and my weight has ballooned to an unhealthy level and my activity level is very low. I decided I needed to do something about it. I told my wife to enter us into a longer distance race to motivate me. She signed us up for the Monona 20k race. The idea is that a longer distance will make me train a little more seriously. From my past experience I knew I could fake my way through a 5k race. I was enjoying running again and getting some decent mileage under my belt. My training runs were getting up to 4-6 miles and felt pretty good about the upcoming race. Keeping in mind I was never a distance runner, so this was a sizable feat for me. Here is a picture of me and my son Aidan going for a 4-5 mile run on May 1, 2016. The date is important, so keep that in mind.



This is last "old normal" picture I have in phone. On May 3, 2016 our family's life was turned upside down. Our youngest son walked to school that day. Around noon I got a call from school that he "wasn't feeling good" and his arm "wasn't working." About 45 minutes later he was paralyzed in his right arm and leg. Four hours later he was paralyzed in both arms. In less than 24 hours he was having difficulty breathing and in an ICU fighting for his life.

His journey, while important, is a different story for a different day. He was hospitalized for 60 days and let's just say that we didn't make it the 20k race that spring.



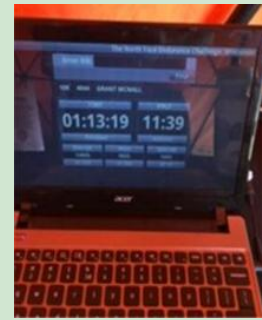
As we move to the Spring of 2017 we are celebrating many things. Our son, August, has made a remarkable recovery. We have a "new normal" to adjust to. He lost the use of his right hand and his whole right side is significantly weaker. He remains in positive spirits and works hard in rehab. Our oldest son is the first to graduate high school that spring as well. We also have new challenges to face as my wife was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) that spring as well. With the stress of everything, my fitness and eating habits are truly poor. My weight is getting to a very unsafe level. In fact I am at the heaviest I have ever been, which was shade over 250lbs. This is a picture from the MS Walk that summer when I was nearly at my heaviest.



That summer I decided something had to give. I could not continue to gain weight and expect my health to not be impacted. I got serious about my nutrition and exercise. I am a nursing instructor and made a goal to drop 20lbs during my summer break. I started walking on our treadmill every morning. The weight came off a little at a time and my endurance improved as well. I was up to about 30 minutes at a modest pace. While the weight continued to drop I started to get bored. I decided to go for a trail run at a local park just for something to do. I got lost a couple of times, I soaked through my top in about 10 minutes, and almost tripped. Despite all of that, I had a blast! I felt alive. The boredom of running on the sidewalk was gone. I ran over 4 miles at it felt like only 1. I was hooked. I was now a trail runner! Here is a photo from that first run.

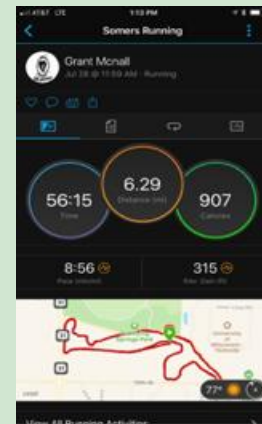


My next goal was to train for the North Face Endurance Challenge 10k race that fall. This race has always been a favorite of my wife and I. Prior to her MS diagnosis she was one of those "crazy runners." She has completed marathons, ultras, triathlons, and multi-day races. Her story is for a different day as well. I barely survived the North Face and felt rather proud of myself just for finishing. My results said another thing:



An hour and thirteen for a 10k is nothing to brag about. I was also 14 out of 15 for my age group. I know that the achievement was in the journey but still...!

As we move into 2018 something is happening. I am able to go farther with ease. I am looking for new routes. My speed is improving and the weight has stayed off. I completed the Conquer the Capitol challenge by running a 10k at night and my first 1/2 marathon the next day. The heat that weekend (Memorial Day weekend) was brutal. I was happy to finish and not have the race called off. I sign up for a 10k at Devil's Lake in the early summer. I set a PR and almost place in my age group! That motivated me even more and later that summer I set another PR and run a sub 60 minute trail 10k.



I have set my sights to return to the North Face Endurance Challenge, only this time to complete the 1/2 marathon.

I set a PR of nearly 15 minutes, no walk breaks, and if not for the heat I felt I could have gone further.



While all this training and racing is going on, something else happens. My son, the one who was paralyzed, has decided he wants to do some races. It started with bribing him to complete a mile race. He goes on to complete 2 other 5k events that summer!

So now trail running is a part of my life. I am setting my sights on my first trail marathon and ultra this summer. I have parks with countless trails to explore. My goal for 2020, the year I turn 50, is to complete a semi supported multi stage race. All of this is due to the fact I went for a trail run in the summer of 2017.

-- Grant McNall



Running it is just a way of life!



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