

PACESETTER

STARVED ROCK RUNNERS LTD.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020 • VOLUME 43 • ISSUE 1



**CANAL CONNECTION
2019**



TURKEY TROT 2019

UPCOMING RACES

12/31 Run Your Ice Off Kewanee
3/7 SRRL ANNUAL BANQUET
3/21 Lori's Walleye Run - Spring Valley

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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Club Officers



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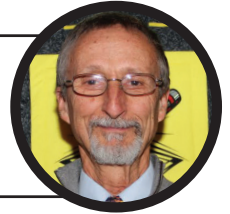


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Election results of new Board Members had not been determined at the time of the publishing of this issue.

Info

Mission of Starved Rock Runners Ltd.

Our purpose is to promote physical fitness, health and fellowship through distance running and to educate the public as to its benefits. To disseminate information on running through newsletters, booklets, clinics, meetings, handbooks, press releases and educational programs. To engage in activities conducive to the encouragement of distance running, including race management, fund raising activities, race circuits, and charitable community activities.

MONTHLY CLUB MEETINGS

are held at 7:00PM the 3rd Tuesday of every month in the Board Room of the Illinois Valley YMCA in Peru. Attend and see the inner workings of your club.

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND.

SRRL CONTACTS

Questions?

Do you have a question, a suggestion, possibly a complaint, or have you ever said "Why are the Starved Rock Runners doing this?" or, "I sure wish the club would _____."

Perhaps you don't know anyone on the Board well enough to voice your thoughts or opinions to. We have people in different towns who have agreed to be liaisons and relay comments and concerns back to us. Feel free to reach out to any board member or the following liaisons:

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Notes from Our Club Secretary

Meeting October 15th, 2019 at the YMCA in Peru

Called to order by club president, Carroll Lulay; 13 board members present. Minutes approved. Treasurer's report presented and filed. Circuit 266 members.

Old business: Candidate packets were mailed September 30th. The forms must be filled out and returned to Nomination Committee chairman by November 1st to be included on the ballot. This includes a small head shot photo along with a short bio.

New Business: Jill Jackson anticipates the wash out will be repaired in time for the race. Discussion regarding how long to wait before re-routing the course. Janine will email Jill Jackson to inquire if wash out can be repaired by 10/25/19. If not, course will be changed. Rosanne and Janine recently roughly mapped out a new alternate course.

Meeting November 19th, 2019 at the YMCA in Peru

Called to order by club president, Carroll Lulay; 14 board members present. Minutes approved. Treasurer's report presented and filed. Circuit 267 members.

Old business: 5 new candidates running for the board and 5 current board members running for re-election. Ballots with photos and bios to be mailed the 1st week of December and returns must be postmarked by December 31st. Utica Canal Connection 10K: 706 finishers with 80 club members.

New Business: A random draw was done for the ballot position. January 6th ballot counting and Banquet mail prep meeting will be held at John Steele's house, 6pm dinner and 7pm meeting. Raffle tickets and quilt tickets remain the same price. Banquet pricing adjusted to coincide with catering cost and are as follows: \$20.00 for ages 11 and up, \$10 for ages 7-10 and children ages 6 and under are free.

On The Run

Club President Carroll Lulay

It's the end of the 2019 running/racing season, but for some it continues thru the winter and into the beginning of a new 2020 running/racing season, hoping for some improvement, faster times, and no injuries. Maybe trying a new training method or a new distance in 2020.

During the so-called off season after the final 2019 Circuit event ends for the club, it really doesn't end. What you don't see is your Board of Directors getting ready for an election made up of new and/or re-election candidates for your new Board of Directors makeup for 2020, which in turn determines your Officers. Then the 2020 Circuit schedule must be determined by its Committee and approved and Race Directors notified. After the season ends, the Board of Directors continue to meet monthly and other Committees such as Finance, Constitution/By-Laws, and Pacesetter. The Banquet committee also meets to make plans and organize the first Saturday of March annual event which includes the location, meal, volunteers, decorations, and more. All of these things and more are happening thanks to your Board of Directors, who are truly working volunteers.

Then soon after the Banquet, the new Circuit season begins and later Running Clinics take place, continuing the work to keep the quality, safety, and fun in those events for our membership. It's truly a year round position for the volunteers who without them, there would be no club to enjoy. Be Safe out there,

Carroll Lulay
Club President
clulay@comcast.net or 309-232-9055

Where In The Heck is My Pacesetter

By now everyone has hopefully received their November/December issue, but some took as long as 7 plus weeks to get delivered.

Bulk mail is used for the mailing of the Pacesetters in order to make it economical and feasible to mail. Unfortunately the down side of bulk mail is it takes longer.

On the USPS website they claim bulk mail can take up to 10-14 days. Last year this same edition took 3 weeks to be delivered. This year, about half of them seemed to be delivered in 2-3 weeks, and the remainders were between 7-8 weeks

We hope this one finds its way to you much faster.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

January

Tom Fowler 1/2
John Thomas 1/2
Tim Novak 1/3
Annalise Ricci 1/6
Nancy Antkowiak 1/8
Christine Ridley 1/15
Mary Jane Pratt 1/16
Constance Wilcoxson 1/19
Emma Kolczaski 1/20
Nicole Heaver 1/25
Jill Bollis 1/28
Alex Taylor 1/29
Nick Amble 1/30

February

Joanne Vaccaro 2/1
Bob Zeglis 2/7
Ryland Heaver 2/7
Donna Coleman 1/12
Mike Miroux 2/12
Sharon Brady 2/13
Elizabeth Reynolds 2/13
Brittany Domyancich 2/14
Rick Abbott 2/16
Charles Grotevant Jr. 2/18
Kathy Jones 2/18
Theresa Hart 2/21
Paula Hallock 2/23
Bobbi Leacock 2/25
Jenna Olivero 2/25
Ryan Bell 2/26

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR SRRL MEMBERSHIP

If you haven't renewed your membership for 2020, please take five minutes to do it now.

If you've provided us with an email address when you signed up last year, you should have received an email or two reminding you that you can sign up on-line.

If you are old school and mail it in, there is a copy of the membership form in this Pacesetter to allow you to get signed up. You can also obtain additional printable copies of the form on the web site under the MEMBERSHIP tab.

The Run Down

Club President Carroll Lulay

Dorothy Vesely, 90, of Ottawa, mother of William Vesely, passed away Wednesday, December 8, 2019.

William Vesely is a 32 year member of Starved Rock Runners, Ltd. Our sincere thoughts, prayers & deepest sympathy are with the Vesely family.

Congrats to Starved Rockers Stephanie Sweeden and Candis Kenny who finished the Chicago Bank of America Marathon in October of 2019 and again to Candis Kenny who also finished the TCS New York City Marathon in November! Congrats also goes out to Starved Rocker, Adrienne Van Horn who finished a 50 miler at The Hennepin in October. Congrats to all other Starved Rockers who ran those longer distances in 2019!

Tom Smith, decided not to run for re-election to the Board of Directors for 2020. We wish to thank him for his years of service to the Board and membership.

Michele Gaeta has decided to not head up the Women's Running Clinic any longer. She wishes to thank everyone for your support with it and had really enjoyed doing it, especially all the wonderful friendships she made as a result. I sincerely wish to thank Michele for all the years of service and dedication to the club in making the Clinic into what it now is. It had helped many women to have healthier lives, to socialize and have long term friendships with each other, build confidence, have more women in the sport, and gave good advice and first class coaching that made it fun to come back week after week.

The last Canal Connection 10K in Utica was a success on November 3rd with 706 finishers and 80 of those were club members! Thanks to all the volunteers and to our race directors, Janine Sobin and Rosanne Abbott for putting together a quality, safe, and fun event for us all!

The Oglesby Turkey Trot 3 Mile was successful with 1001 finishers! 92 of them were club members! Thanks goes to Mitch Hobbs, John Steele and their volunteers for another great Thanksgiving Day event with friends and family!

As well, the Santas On The Run 5K in Spring Valley was also a success with 292 finishers! 76 of them were club members! Thanks goes to Bob and Marsha Zeglis and Santas volunteers for their hard work in putting on a great holiday event!

We are very lucky as a club to have these great running events at the end of our running season and our volunteers!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Our annual Starved Rock Runners, LTD. banquet is scheduled for Saturday, March 7, 2020. Where has the year 2019 gone? The faster we run, the faster time seems to slip by. Our venue this year is the Oglesby Elk's Lodge 2360 which is located at 800 E. Walnut Street. A buffet style meal will be catered by Harold Witek, owner of Paramount Catering in La Salle.

Prices for the buffet are as follows: 11 years old to adult: \$20.00, 7 years to 10 years-\$10.00, There is no charge for children under 6 years of age.

A cash bar will be available for soft drinks as well as beer, wine and mixed drinks.

The banquet will begin at 5 p.m. with a social hour, followed by dinner at 6 and awards at 7.

The committee hopes that you and your family/friends will be able to attend this festive gathering. Numerous club members have put in an extensive amount of both time and effort achieving their running goals. Receiving a circuit award is one way of showing our members how proud we are of their accomplishments. Several additional awards will also be presented.

The committee is putting the finishing touches on the final plans for the evening. More information and raffle tickets (prize money and t-shirt quilt) will be forthcoming. Please make your reservations ASAP and send your payment to :

Starved Rock Runners, LTD.

P.O. Box 1092

La Salle, Illinois 61301

Hope to see everyone on Saturday, March 7 to honor, support, and mingle with our fellow club members.

MY HERSHEY HALF

by Kory Katkus

Up to this year I had not run anything more than a 10k and at that in 3 seasons of running I had only done 3, 1 in 2017 and 2 in 2018. I had originally signed up for a half in 2018 to help a fellow runner but then I moved down to the 5k because they had a few more obstacles to overcome and a half would be too much for them. But that put the thought in me that maybe I could do a half. I started looking on the internet for half marathons and that is when I came across 2 that seemed to really spark my interest, Napa to Sonoma Half and the Hershey Half.

Not being a fast runner and one that does a run/walk approach, I thought I was a ways away from doing a half. That is when fellow SRRLs friends said I could do it, not as being pushy but rather gave me confidence that maybe I should try. Leading up to 2019 season I kept thinking in my mind that it would be so fun to go to Napa or Hershey to run. Well after they kept boosting my confidence the early bird pricing of the Run Starved Rock Country half came out and that's when they said that would be a good 1st one to do because after a couple hills getting out of the park and across the river it's a relatively flat course. Another advantage was that it was close to home, I could sleep in my own bed the night before, and plenty of cheer from other SRRL members that would be there, as it is a circuit race also. Little did I know they would have to alter the course the day before (difficult but very much worth it). So there it began, I signed up I was committed!

I was thinking that if I was going to do a half, I might as well challenge myself the whole year. I am going all out, going out of my comfort zone. So when I devised my approach I figured I would need a little more guidance to prepare and train. I got some help by training for the Lake Run 12k every



Wednesday in Normal. Seemed to be the help I could use as it was only a week earlier than the Starved Rock County Half. Yet still I was looking at those other half marathons. Napa in July or Hershey in October! As my training progressed, the decision was made... HERSHEY! Calendar was marked 20OCT2019. The race also benefited the children's hospital, a worthy cause.

Why Hershey? Well it was a bargain deal! \$85 for a "sweet" race (pun intended). Also, I could drive there in 13hrs straight thru, it was the 10th anniversary, it included theme park passes, voted in top 10 halves to run in the US, and it was chocolate town! Now it was just a wait till registration to open.

The gap between my halves was nearly 6 months. I knew I would have to continue pushing (what I thought) was my limits. I ran races from 6.6k on Route 66, 8k pirate race in Wisconsin, to multiple 10k races that included brats, sweet corn, and pumpkins (see the theme here? FOOD!) and even the Steamboat 15k. For good measure I

signed up the toughest 4 miler in Illinois. I even placed at a few of the longer runs which was a surprise to even myself.

Why the history of my year you ask? Well, the answer is quite simple... my son! Shortly after I began this journey he stated he wanted to try out for the Jr. High baseball team as an 8th grader. Having not played in 7th grade due to having surgery, he even thought he had slim chances of making the team. He put in the effort all year for tryouts and made the team. Little did I know that his decision would greatly affect my training for Hershey. Traveling to games in Chatham, Urbana, and Champaign while playing 5 to 6 nights a week made it difficult to run a regular schedule. But with the baseline I had and continuing the longer races, I knew I could still get thru the Hershey Half. It may not be pretty but I would always choose to support my son first.

As the date approached the shirt design was revealed, long sleeve hooded moisture wicking shirt. I really was getting excited cause it was a cool shirt. Then the finisher medal was revealed. I wanted that medal. Looking at the past medals I knew this would be special for the 10th Anniversary (I was hoping for Recesses' Peanut Buttercup) a BIG HERSHEY KISS medal. Then the custom bibs, filled with Hershey Kisses as the backdrop. As the race approached the more excited I got. Registration included 2 passes to Park in the Dark at the theme park, a sweet medal, an awesome shirt, and an insulated lunch bag with your after races snacks and shoe key holder.

I threw out there I wanted to go on Facebook, hoping to have a travel buddy. One friend I work with said it was on her bucket list and asked if she

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ILLINOIS VALLEY & MENDOTA YMCA

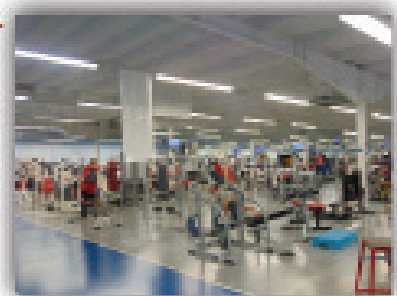
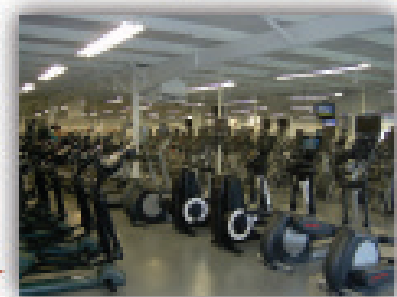


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TURKEY TROT 41

For the 41st year the streets of Oglesby were taken over by runners as 1,001 people covered the three mile course on Thanksgiving morning. After the singing of the National Anthem by Jeni Roether, Race Director Mitch Hobbs started the race and the stampede began. The spectators didn't have long to wait for the return of the fastest runners but the stream of finishers would continue until 1:08.07 after the start.

Leading the way was Zach Chapman, 21, 15:07, Dolan Harris, 21, 15:39 and Brendon Sebaz, 20, 15:39. For the women the top three were Rachel Hickey, 19, 17:27, Julia Washkowiak, 24 20:14 and Gabrielle, 24, 20:24. The masters winners were Angie Forbeck in 22:05 and Nick Anderson with 17:42.

This race is the exception to the rule as it was dominated by the youth both in the winners and with the largest age groups. For both genders it was the 25-29 who had the most participants with 69 for the women and 56 for the men. Two of the runners in the field, Carol Pratt and Larry Roda, have finished all 41 of the races and are already planning for their 42nd. For many people the race is a perfect, healthy start to a day spent with family and the Starved Rock Runners are glad to provide the opportunity for them.

Mitch Hobbs serves as the head of the committee who plans this event. He could not do it without the countless volunteers who take on tasks in the months leading up to the as well as race day and after. The people on the committee who assist Mitch are John Steele, Randy Pratt, Dan Rolando and Bob Zeglis.

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INSPIRATION ON THE RUN

WORDS RENE AGREDANO

IMAGES COURTESY OF TIM NOVAK/JUAN LEG

We all want a healthcare provider who understands our needs and hopes. But if our medical team isn't giving us the support we need, it's time to practice the adage, "If you don't ask, you don't get."

When the Illinois runner who's now known as Juan Leg wasn't getting what he wanted from his prosthetic limb, he asked around for someone who could help. In return, he got a new life.

Asking for the Impossible?

Twenty years ago, 34-year-old Tim Novak was supporting his wife and three children in a physically demanding construction job while living in Tampa, Florida, when a workplace accident resulted in the loss of his right leg. Novak did his best to stay positive and adapt but grew weary from reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD) syndrome pain and the lifelong toll that spina bifida had taken on his body. He found it hard to do anything physical and could no longer work.

Meanwhile, the prosthetic limbs prescribed to Novak never restored him to the level of mobility he wanted. "I was on crutches all the time," he says. Doctors told him that the device was as good as it gets, and he would always walk with a limp and crutches. For many years, he surrendered to this hopeless prognosis. Then, 14 years after losing his leg, his wife of 30 years filed for divorce.

Broken-hearted and dejected, Novak faced an uncertain future on his own. But everything changed the first time he watched his youngest son compete in a high school cross-country race. Novak was astonished by the determination splashed across his youngest boy's face. "I thought it was going to be as exciting as watching bowling, but when I watched him give it everything he's got, I just broke down into tears. It was so exciting!" Competitive



running shook Novak to the core and ignited his dream to race alongside his sons.

Advocating With Heart and Determination

The 48-year-old aspiring athlete called numerous prosthetists to inquire about the possibilities of a running leg. But the underwhelming response was deflating. He says he couldn't find one provider who looked past his age, his fitness level, or his lack of funds for the prosthesis that can cost upwards of \$18,000. "They just don't take into consideration your heart, your determination, your willpower or anything like that, which upset me," he says.

Novak persevered and searched for referrals. His path led to David Rotter Prosthetics in Chicago. Rotter is a renowned prosthetist regarded for his technical aptitude and charitable work with children and athletes. The man

Novak now calls a saint didn't hesitate when his new client said, "I want something that can help me throw the crutches away." The ability to make the kind of running device Novak wanted was entirely possible all along, explains Rotter.

The new prosthesis was profoundly life-changing for Novak. "The first time I put on the running blade, I let go of the crutches," he recalls. His hip was weak from disuse, but Novak embarked on a training program and joined a gym where one year later he met his fiancée, Jeanette Samek. A fitness enthusiast who asked him out on their first date, she describes him as "the most patient, sensitive, kind, positive, and loving man I've ever met."

Encouragement on the Run

Four months after learning to use his blade, Novak entered his first race, the
(continued on page 10)

Inspiration on the Runcontinued



Novak with his fiancée, Jeanette Samek.

Encouragement on the Run

Four months after learning to use his blade, Novak entered his first race, the 2014 Run For Glory 5K. His goal was to finish in under 40 minutes, but he surprised himself with a 28:50 ending time, ranking him 58th overall. "I crossed that finish line and fell to the ground and started bawling," he says in a voice cracking with emotion. "Thoughts ran through my mind of wanting to scream at the doctors, 'Don't tell me what I can and can't do.'"

The race was one of his life's greatest accomplishments. He never played sports as a youth and says he missed out on the encouragement given by peers and coaches. "I had people come up to me and pat me on the back and tell me, 'Good job!' I've never had that before." The unexpected accolades were the catalyst that inspired his transformation into "Juan Leg," the happiest, most positive man on the move in his hometown of Streator, Illinois.

As of summer 2019, Juan Leg has completed 400 races, including several half marathons. But the finish line is never the end of the road for him. Once he's done running, he

swaps his running blade for his walking leg, then returns to cheer on competitors until the last one finishes. His goal is to give back to all those who have encouraged him. "Kindness is contagious, and I've got it bad," he explains.

Novak's tenacity combined with Rotter's ingenuity was transformative for the now 54-year-old runner. It happened because he refused to take no for an answer, which Rotter says is imperative for anyone who wants more out of his or her prosthesis. "It's up to the consumer to challenge the status quo," he says. "If someone feels they're not getting the level of rehabilitation of their life that they'd like, then the first thing to do is challenge the provider. If that doesn't work, there are other ones out there." He and Juan Leg are living proof that when you find the strength to ask for what you want, odds are good that you just might get it.



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Canal Connection Reflections Of The Past

by Dan Pambianco

As an organization, the founding officers of Starved Rock Runners Ltd. knew we were a little late to the game. The Dannon Oglesby 10K Classic was well established as the premiere local running event, and the Turkey Trot, also founded by Art and Barb Sarver, and Gary Carey, was its popular 5K sibling. The 10K in late June dominated the local racing scene, and the Turkey Trot was a growing holiday tradition and unofficial end to the road racing season.

Many of us, in fact, had discovered our passion for running while training for

the Oglesby races, and sharing those feelings and the roads had led to us banding together as an official club. Having grown in numbers and developed structure, the Starved Rock Runners Ltd. Board of Directors agreed the time had come to do what all formal running organizations do – host our own major race. There wasn't much debate about the particulars. The distance would be 10K, the course should be scenic, traffic-free, and flat. Selecting a date was the only remaining consideration.

Fall in north central Illinois is prime

time for personal records. Most runners have a summer's worth of miles in their legs, and aren't quite ready to settle into offseason training, which for some meant battling the wind, snow, and frigid temperatures to squeeze in a few miles a week, and for others, meant going dormant like the trees. Before that happened, during the few short weeks when the risks of heatstroke or frostbite weren't real risks, the prospects for a fun and fast race were solid.

Many of us had previously circled the
(continued on page 14)

Welcome new members

Below is a list of new members that have joined for 2020.
We hope to see them at a lot of races and in our various running groups.

Chelsea Brashear, Karen Leifheit, Trixie Lukancic, Sarah Lukancic,
and Catie Lukancic.

Be sure to spread the word about our club and membership.
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Canal Connection 37

More Than A Few Obstacles To Overcome

As most everyone knows, around early summer the SRRL had been informed that the State of Illinois was no longer honoring the waiver of the "use fee" to use the Canal tow path for the Canal Connection. The state would charge a fee of 10% of the gross income of the event to the Starved Rock Runners for use of the Canal.

After careful analysis of how this would impact the profitability of the race financially, the Board decided this would be the last year for the Canal Connection since the state would be essentially taking all of the profits from the clubs efforts and months of planning and organization.

Then a couple months before the race, terential rains (and a lack of on going maintainence on the Canal), caused a washout of the towpath on what was our normal course.

Initially DNR told SRRL that the wash out would be fixed for the race, and then just two weeks before the race, they said it would not be fixed because it was still in the engineering phases.

As a result there was a scramble to salvage the race an make the best out of a bad situation.

The 37th and final Canal Connection was run on November 3, 2019 and hosted 706 finishers. For most of those years the race started in LaSalle and ran to Utica but at least twice the start and finish were in Utica. The last edition would fall into this group as well.

Race directors Rosanne Abbott and Janie Sobin worked for months preparing for the race prep but then had the added stress of a late wash-out necessitating a course adjustment. Comments from participants seemed to be overwhelmingly positive and discussions are happening about a replacement event in the fall of 2020.

Before we look to the future however let's find out a bit the final Canal Connection. Since most of the actual work happens long before race day a discussion with the race directors seems appropriate.

Rosanne and Janine what were some of your concerns or major stressors caused by late change to the course?

Rosanne: I felt the last minute course change was stressful for several reasons. We wanted to make sure we have a safe and fun race. We now had potential traffic control issues, bussing,

and the out and back course would either be good or bad. The course ended up being more of a positive than we thought.

Janine: The course change happened a week before the race. While it wasn't an optimal choice, it was the only answer if we were to keep it a 10k. The many positive responses from the runners was very gratifying. They're such a great community of people! Other positives that came out of the race was the village of Utica supporting our changes. They were amazing and helped us with the course changes, emergency medical course coverage, traffic control to keep our runners safe and offered the use of the Canal Market not only this year but in the future.

Every race director will tell you the success of the event is due is huge part to the quality of the volunteers. Each person, no matter how small, is an important piece of the finished puzzle and all of the pieces came together perfectly on race day. In each puzzle however are those pieces that attract special notice. Our race directors felt that these people helped make a difference.

Janine: I'd like to acknowledge all of

our wonderful volunteers. Without them the race wouldn't be possible. They all were so agreeable about the last minute changes. A special thanks goes to John Steele and Dan Rolando for measuring and marking the new course. Kory Katkus for giving up running the race to volunteer at a turn around. He also transported mile marker volunteers on "his side" of the course. Joe Bornac for manning the other turn around. Randy Pratt needs a mention for being our "go to guy" for managing parking, traffic control and jumping in to direct anything that needs to be done.

Rosanne: Every volunteer helps made the day work from beginning to end. If anyone comes to mind it is Rick Maltas from the Waltham school. He is our go to guy.

As far as the actual race the top finisher was Brian Glass who finished the new slower course in 33.07. Brian has been on top of the medal stand many times here and is 46. Finishing first in the masters and second overall was 56 year John Collet with his 36.07. On the women's side 22 year of Amanda Nelson stopped the clock at 41.17, while Celeste Quinn 41, an ironman triathlete as well as a runner,

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could tag along. That's why I posted the race I stated. We began brainstorming things to do on the way out there, while there, and on the way home. The list grew and grew, to a point where there was no way to do it all. But 1 thing that was a must for both was the Flight 93 memorial in Shanksville, PA. We decided the best way to see it was on the way out since our route was just 8 miles or so away. We figured Thursday would be the travel day out there so we could stop at Flight 93 and we would have all day Friday to visit Chocolate World, take the trolley tour of Hershey (giving us an in-depth history of Milton Hershey and his history), do the rollercoasters at the theme park, and be up early for packet pickup on Saturday morning. Next we looked for hotels. As with any big race, prices were increased. Luckily we found a nice hotel in Harrisburg that was at a fraction of the price and only 20 minutes away. The hotel was perfectly situated downtown within walking distance of restaurants and other sights.

Finally race week was upon us. We left Wednesday night after work driving to Indianapolis to stay at her niece's house so we had extra time for stops along the way. Thursday morning we left from there stopping at a few locations and at Flight 93 Memorial and we were able to view the beautiful change of leaves in the mountains along the way, arriving in Harrisburg

around 7pm EST. We checked in and walked to eat that evening. Friday morning was perfect for all we wanted to do without having the crowd of runners for Chocolate World, the tour, some downtown shopping and theme park. Chocolate everywhere! I was chocolate out, but not before filling the car with all sorts of sweets and souvenir items. Saturday we picked up our packets 1st thing, this is also where we found out about the Baltimore Half that day. That race is run around the harbor with sweet looking Crab medals and crab meat dinners included. So we decided we did everything at the theme park the night before and didn't need to go again as the crowd grew to being really busy and lines for rides would be long. Friday the longest we waited was 20min for a ride. So we decided to road trip to Stow, Pa for what we thought would be a history lesson. We were a little disappointed but the drinks we found and butternut squash soup made up for it. Still having time we decided to then visit Amish country for a history lesson and baked goods. Once again we filled up with goodies. We both agreed to be back early the night before for a good rest.

Race Day!! We left early since we were rested and ready. Rain was in the forecast but we thought with the sunrise we were watching, it may be after the race when we would see the rain. We were wrong! Rain started not even 5 minutes into the race. Over 2 miles running and we finally left the parking lot. It started to rain harder; this was not going to be fun. Then we hit the theme park where we looped the walkways to get beyond the 3 mile mark. The rain now starts to let up as we ran thru the old chocolate factory. Just as we past Milton's mansion and the 4 mile mark, it rains harder. Miles 5 thru 7 takes us past the golf course and on to Hershey Boulevard. Where I thought the rain was letting up, again I was wrong. As we enter the housing complex for the Milton Hershey School students it begins raining harder. The students were out there in the rain with

signs cheering us on despite the rain. The boost I needed. As we hit mile 11, the rain lets up once again. After hills and hills, none of which was too bad but the hills repeated we were only greeted by the hill that kills. By this time, my legs were jello. The neglected training now is having an effect on me. Thankfully we were greeted by a gauntlet of volunteers rewarding us with none other than chocolate for a little boost to push the last 2 miles. The rain picks up again, I can do this! I pushed thru the pain and rain. Just when I thought the end was near seeing the football stadium and finish line, I was mistaken. To the far end of the stadium, yes the end is in sight. No way! Back around the stadium, around the corner, and down the field... FINALLY the finish line! Not by much, but I PR'd (kind of easy as it was only my second half), thinking I would not been able to PR with my training schedule and baseball conflicts. But I did. Rewarded with the medal I was chasing and plenty of other goodies I was glad it was over.

Back to the hotel we go so we could shower and load the car to drive part way home. With the rain getting harder we figured we would keep driving as our plans to visit Gettysburg would be a mess with the rain. We pushed on getting to 4hrs from home before stopping for our personal reward of a steak dinner. That's where we decided to try to make it all the way home and sleep in our own beds. Dropped my partner off in Dunlap, I got home around 2am. I made it! I accomplished what I set out to do, run the Hershey Half. All in part from the support of my fellow runners and pushing myself to do more.

If you ask me, yes I would run the race again? Absolutely! I plan it as of a matter of fact. Would I recommend it? I would ask, why are you not signing up? Everything was run nicely, well organized, and plenty of swag and it's a short road trip. It is worth the trip to make for everything you get to see and do at a reasonable price for a great cause. As for me, well I men

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Sycamore Pumpkin Run on our calendars as the target fall 10K. That race met the criteria – a fun local festival, a flat race course, and weather that was typically conducive to fast times. But a measuring mishap had occurred when organizers were making some adjustments, and competitive runners learned they squandered their training peak when slow times indicated a longer than 10K course. Nevertheless, the race was still a popular one, and we made sure to avoid a scheduling conflict.

Choosing the Canal Connection race course was another component that required minimal debate. From the club's origin, we enjoyed weekly Wednesday evening fun runs on the 4.2 miles of the Illinois-Michigan Canal towpath. A portion of the local section that stretched from LaSalle to Utica had previously been a part of the defunct Burgoo Bustle course, an out-and-back race that coincided with its namesake community event in Utica.

The elementary school in Utica provided a great gathering point where runners could leave their belongings before boarding buses to north LaSalle, where the starting line had been adjusted to meet the distance requirements. From that location it was a straight route sloping gently downhill for 1 ½ miles before intersect

ing the west entrance to the towpath. Fast times guaranteed!

What is never guaranteed – the weather – was still a likely advantage, with an average high temperature in late fall/early November around 60 degrees, and the chance of rain less than 20 percent according to the National Weather Service. SRR Ltd. board members had promoted the event at the hot summer races, handing out flyers and reminding would-be participants that the Canal Connection was a race “designed by runners for runners.”

When a fall rainstorm hit the area the weekend before the Canal Connection, we gathered to discuss the possible effects on the course. Months earlier the park service that was responsible for maintaining the towpath had assured us that it was due to be upgraded that summer with hard-packed, compressed gravel. That hadn't happened, but none of us recalled any problems with our fun runs following summer thunderstorms.

Tracking the weather closely now, we learned that the weekend rain was expected to linger. The winds from Hurricane Juan, which had hit Louisiana a few days earlier, had dissipated over land, but a huge mass of moisture that remained in the upper atmosphere was tracking up the

Mississippi River Valley, and residents all the way north to Minnesota prepared for flooding.

For the next few rainy days (and sleepless nights), club President George Heagy and I met daily at the towpath's west gate. With the board's input, we considered postponing the race, but entries were high for a first-year race, and we decided the only option was to fulfill the promise of an event “designed by runners, for runners.” The runners came, slogged their way through deep puddles and slick clay in spots, and finished with smiles on their faces. The first Canal Connection was now history, and our credibility as race organizers survived.

Having survived a hurricane's impact, I was certain that the race's future was secured, and indeed, it became an annual tradition and source of great pride for the club. When I learned this summer the towpath would be restricted and the club's sponsorship was no longer feasible, I experienced stages of grief -- first denial, then anger, and finally despair. What remains, however, are the people who kept the race going through the club's evolution and changes. Like the wonderful memories the Canal Connection created for generations of runners, those people and their successors will organize more great events “designed for runners by runners.”

WINTER WEDNESDAY NIGHT GROUP RUNS



WEDNESDAY NIGHT GROUP RUNS MEET AT 6-6:15

at Holy Family School in Oglesby. Workouts vary from week to week. Group does a 2 mile warm-up, then performs the scheduled workout (generally intervals), followed by a cool down run. Workouts can total up to 8 miles.

Mother Nature Is No Match For Santas (on the Run)

by Bob Zeglis

Twenty nineteen marked the fourth year of the Santas On The Run 5K Run/1 Mile walk. All of the proceeds from the event benefit the Hall Township Food Pantry, which services eastern Bureau County, including the towns of Spring Valley, Ladd, Dalzell, Cherry, Arlington, DePue.

This year Mother Nature decided to test the spirit of the participants with a light rain, some rather cool temperatures and wind gusts that reported by some of the runners to be up to 80mph (they were exaggerating.... just a little).

While Mother Nature efforts may have kept a few people away, the roughly 350 participants that showed up came with smiles on their faces bringing lots of non-perishable to donate to the Pantry.

This year the event collected 1,428lbs of food and the raffle raised \$700.00. While that is down slightly (70lbs of food and \$200.00 in raffle sales), from last year, it was also with 150 less participants. That is a testament to the generosity of all of those who participated.

Santa himself was on hand to start the race, and then he stuck around to hand out awards and have his picture taken with participants.

This event takes approximately 80 volunteers to pull off, and it can't be done without great volunteers. A special thanks to the Kayleen Loch and the students from Hall High School student government who manned the water stops, LaSalle Peru Key Club who helped with packet pick up and serving food, the volunteers and Board members of the Hall Township Food Pantry for helped where ever they were needed, all of our Starved Rock Runner family who helped stuff packets, worked packet pick up and Day or registration and acted as Race Marshals out on the course to keep the participants safe, and Mark and Deb Wackerline for timing the race once again as a donation to the Pantry. And last but surely not least, all of the local businesses that have sponsored the event to make it even possible. .

And we would be remiss to not mention the generosity of all of our sponsors. Their donations are what make it possible to host such a fun event that raises needed money for a great casue.

Canal Connection 37..... continued

finished in 44:44. It is interesting to note that for both genders the 20-24 the numbers were very low with 12 for the ladies and only five for the men. In contrast the largest age group on both sides was the 50-54 with the women at 61 and the guys at 36. While these numbers may seem surprising they

are actually supported by an article called, " The State of Running 2019" by RunRepeat.com and the IAAF.

Races of quality rely on the hard work of the race directors and their volunteers but can't continue without the help of sponsors. Please try to support


them as they have supported us.

Those sponsors are: Creative Apparel, Skoogs, McClintock, Steele, Barry Attorney's At Law, the Village of North Utica, Canal Market, Uptown Grill, Kmetz Architects, Midwest Avtech, August Hill and Eureka Savings.

My Hershey Halfcontinued

tioned Baltimore didn't I? That is now on the list as well as the Pro Football Hall of Fame 5k and Half Marathon in April as I know a few other SRRL are signed up as well. I believe SRRL has helped me find a distance I have to push myself to do as well as enjoy. So in ending, challenge yourself, enjoy the races you run, take in all the races have to offer, and plan a destination run (hopefully the Hershey Half).



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KEEP THOSE STORIES AND PHOTOS COMING!

Your contributions to the newsletter are vital.
Please e-mail your articles, photos, etc.
by February 15th for the March/April issue.
Articles and
accompanying photos to:
info@starvedrockrunners.org



HISTORY

The Starved Rock Runners, Ltd. was founded in 1982 as a non-profit voluntary organization for the purpose of promoting physical fitness and fun through running. Membership is open to any individual or family interested in running.

The Club is affiliated with USA Track & Field and the Road Runners Club of America. Other benefits are a bi-monthly newsletter, race calendar, weekly group fun runs, social events, monthly meetings, and website www.starvedrockrunners.org



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