

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 2005

Dam to Dam and Living History Farms - - best races in the US

Two of the greatest races in the nation are in Striderland. Striderland runners make Dam to Dam 20 km their "marathon" for the year and hoards of young runners end their cross country season at the Farm. Both races have much in common: starting over 25 years ago, great start and finish areas, interesting race courses, 5000 entrants and excellent competition. Their differences make them unique: a road vs trail race, 30 vs 60 percent are under 30 years of age and awards are cash vs turkeys. They have both been honored as the largest and best in the nation, Striderland treasures.

Drake Relays gets a facelift

The granddaddy of Striderland running is the Drake Relays, which started in 1910. The multimillion dollar facelift at the Drake Stadium will continue the tradition of great Track & Field at Drake. The track surface will be state of the art and the field events will all be within the expanded confines of the Stadium. The 10th Relays Director Mark Kostick (2000-2004) and new Relays Director Brian Brown will continue to bring the best runners to Striderland.

Ankeny Boys & Valley Girls dominate XC 秀秀秀

Two Striderland High School cross country teams continue to dominate in consistency and teaching young runners discipline and citizenship. During the past 10 years Ankeny Boys with coach Steve Arneson has made the state meet every year finishing no lower than 6th place. Valley Girls with coach Bob Hardin have made the state meet the past 9 years with a brilliant 2nd place finish this year. Both coaches motivate, inspire and teach their 60 plus athlete squads. Striderland says thanks to these two coaches and their teams.

Des Moines Marathon & Half-Marathon survive

The past 3 years of the DM Marathon were filled with controversy cumulating in the the race director resigning. Nicely in the wings, Chris Burch and friends of the marathon stepped up in April and continued to make the 26.2 mile race a success. While the full marathon lost over 300 finishers from its' high the year before, the half-marathon maintained with 1342 finishers (almost twice the size a of the Drake Half). The September date for the Marathon proved a hot one with only 4 runners breaking 3 hours in the Marathon. Next year it moves back to October.

Let's nurture the Front of the Pack

Throughout the 1990s races consistently catered to the back of the pack runners, so much so that races seem to lack those that aspire to run fast. 20 years ago Striderland had a surplus of good runners but times change and today's races are challenged to find those with speed. High School and College runners still exist in abundance, their transition to road racing has been difficult. Runners like Jason Fogel, top Iowan at Dam to Dam, Blake Bolden, top Iowan at Midnight Madness and Sarah Gall, female winner at Living History Farms need the running community's support. Races deserve front of the pack runners too.

Distance is King

Call it luck, call it good fortune, call it great! Striderland has the best of all worlds with solid distance races, a rarity in many running communities. The lineup fits neatly on the running calendar: Drake Relays Half-Marathon in April, Dam to Dam 20 km in June, Capital Pursuit 10 mile in September and Des Moines Marathon & Half-Marathon in October. Each race has a unique course and identify. Striderland distance races are special.

Please take a bow

John Leonhart, long time runner in Striderland and the announcer at Striderland races, completed a goal

obtained by few as he finished marathons in all 50 states and DC - - good running John. Rarely do race directors last 10 years as race director so when Roman Lynch starts the 2006 Midnight Madness it will be special. It's his 20th as Director - - everyone at the race should shake his hand. Thanks Roman.

RunnerStuff.com

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 2004

Dam to Dam celebrates 25 years

It was a perfect celebration! Striderland voted with their feet, as almost 5,000 runners entered Iowa's Distance Classic (20 kilometer) along with the 5 kilometer and youth runs - - amazing. The 20 kilometer had 3073 finishers claiming the title as the largest 20 km in the US. Kurt Schaeffer, race director, in six short years has taken Dam to Dam from a great race to one of the best in the nation, almost doubling the finishers in the 20 and 5 kilometer races. Everything about the race is first class starting with the striking brochure to the classy results booklet. At the awards ceremony 8 gentlemen were introduced that had run all 25 Dam to Dams. Their bodies had aged but the heart hadn't - - Dam to Dam continues to "light their fire" and Striderland.

Roosevelt HS & Wartburg College duos Win

Rarely do male and female runners from the same school win cross country titles the same season. When they do it's worth noting. Striderland runners from Des Moines Roosevelt took top honors at the High School State Cross Country Meet. Hannah Roeder surged at the finish to take the girl's crown while Kiel Uhl beat teammate Jon Thomas, reversing their 2003 finish. At the collegiate Division III level the amazing Missy Buttry took her unprecedented 3rd crown and Josh Moen repeated his victory from last year. Missy and Josh are hard working Iowans, that did not have stellar high school careers but raised the bar so high at college, it may never be duplicated.

Robyn Friedman has a breakout year 秀秀秀

Former Wartburg All-American Robyn Friedman jumped to the head of Iowa women's running with her win at Dam to Dam, being the first Iowa woman to take the victory stand in 10 years. Her 1:15:58 time at Dam to Dam and marathon best time at the Olympic Trials 2:45:53 marked Robyn's best year on the roads. Robyn can also be seen helping young runners as a Newton High School volunteer coach.

Des Moines Marathon makes it to year 3

Striderland runners have been lucky as long distance races have always been king. The Des Moines Marathon certainly adds to the list of distance events. To put on any distance race, especially the 26.2 mile distance is never an easy task. The Des Moines Marathon and cousin Des Moines Half-Marathon have represented Striderland nicely. Despite ups and downs, Striderland wants the Des Moines Marathon and Half-Marathon. Let's hope for many more years of these classic distances.

Farm Race was wild

A couple of days of rain mixed with some good old fashion Iowa soil and what do you have, mud, lots of it. Living History Farms race marks the end of Striderland running and oh what fun it is. 3798 finishers ran over farm fields, through a half dozen creeks, up hills so steep they require climbing ropes and finished in Walnut Hill, the 1880s town of the farm. Iowans from over 300 towns gathered, were perfectly quiet during the opening prayer, sang the national anthem and then they got muddy.

Midnight Madness, always competitive

Captain Midnight always knows how to throw a good party and tell a good joke. Roman Lynch, as 18

year director of Midnight Madness, also knows how to put on a good race. This year was no exception. Historically Madness has always had competitive running, the 50th best times are 30:23 for men and 35:50 for women. In the heat of summer, this evening race had runners from seven states finishing in the top ten for men and women. Fast times have always been a part of Midnight Madness.

Easy to forget

Big races might get the headlines, regardless, runners like these two old favorites, Red Flannel Run and Clive Running Festival. The YMCA Red Flannel is a perfect winter race and has been for 15 years. The Clive race directed by Curt and Nancy Hoegh is a perfect summer race and has been for 23 years. Both races have flirted with 1000 entrants, a testimonial to their popularity.

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 2003

The biggest in America

Dam to Dam 20 kilometer and Living History Farms cross country race were honored as the largest 20 km and XC races by USA Track & Field in 2002 - - wow! The hard work of race directors Kurt Schaeffer (DD) and Steve Bobenhouse (LHF) have not gone unnoticed. While both races are celebrating 25 years (LHF in '03 & DD in '04), that's where the commonality stops. Dam to Dam is a serious long distance race held in the heat of late spring and challenges even the most experienced runner. Living History Farms is all about fun, frolic and friends held in the cold air of late fall. Neither race disappointed in 2003 with both having perfect weather, great competition and a wonderful atmosphere for Striders near and far. And they both grew by hundreds with Dam to Dam 20 km having 2733 finishers and Living History Farms having 3862 finishers. Regardless whether these two veteran races are the largest in America for 2003, they give Striderland fitting bookends for the running season.

It's a simple quiet sport, well, most of the time

Running is attractive due to it's simple quiet nature, rarely calling attention to itself. While running is low key, marathons are not. Nothing stirs the public, running community or sponsors like the word marathon. Marathons and those who run 26.2 miles are held in high esteem - - it's a story of legends. The marathon symbolizes the feat of a Greek soldier who, in 490 B.C., ran from Marathon to Athens to bring news of his countrymen's victory over the Persians. The news in Striderland is the Des Moines Marathon, neither quiet nor legendary, has hit an emotional nerve. Maybe marathons in central Iowa will always struggle, in the late 1970s the Drake Relays Marathon drew everyone's attention when it was moved to Sunday, losing the admiration of Midwest runners who loved finishing in front of Saturday's packed house at Drake. Regardless of the constant rumors, news reports and friction about the Des Moines Marathon, the second year event continued to be successful, although drawing less marathon finishers than in 2002. 2004 being a special Olympic year, Greece will host the games and Athens will play a part in the noble sport of marathoning. Let's hope the Des Moines Marathon continues and duplicates the honor of marathon running.

Rotich, Borgert & Friedman top Striderland runners 秀秀秀

This trio of runners captured Striderland running with ease. Julius Rotich topped a good field at Dam to Dam winning in 1:03:34 and duplicated his 2002 victory at Capital Pursuit 10 miler. Also Julius finished second at the Drake Relays Half-Marathon and narrowly got beat by 5 seconds at Midnight Madness. Michelle Borgert scored a terrific time at Dam to Dam, taking second in 1:13:46. Michelle triumphed for the second straight year at Midnight Madness 10 km and Drake Relays 8 km winning in 35:29 and 28:29. Robyn Friedman placed high at Drake, Dam to Dam and Midnight Madness but she saved the best for last. Robyn ran the Chicago Marathon breaking 2:50 but not enough for an Olympic Trials qualifying time of 2:48. A month later she ran the Philadelphia Marathon and qualified by one

second for the Trials. These three runners are the best in Striderland where their talents and hard work are rewarded.

Cross Country takes center stage

It was a special year for cross country in Striderland and the state of Iowa. DM Roosevelt captured their third straight boys state team championship, also taking first, second and fourth in the individual race. Former Ankeny HS grad Marcus Murphy, Capital Striders scholarship winner, won his fourth Iowa Conference crown. Outside of Central Iowa, Wartburg's Missy Buttry and Jason Moen won Division III individual championships. Topping off an unbelievable XC season, UNI hosted the Division I Championships. The pre-nationals and nationals held on a wonderful spectator friendly course featured the best runners in the nation. Kyle Kepler, two time Drake Relays 8 km winner, was the UNI meet director.

Capital Pursuit, best year ever

It took 20 years. The 21st Capital Pursuit had a record number of finishers, beating the previous best from the second year of the Pursuit in 1984. The race looked like it was on its last leg in the mid-90s, but no longer, as the finishers are almost three times as many. The Capital Strider namesake grew out of the first year of Capital Pursuit, so it's only fitting it should be a great Striderland race.

Charlie McMullen passes away

The beginning of the running boom reached Iowa at the 1978 Drake Relays Marathon as over 1000 entered the race. Ten runners broke 2:30 on a difficult course finishing on the oval stadium track. Leading the way was Charlie McMullen running a record 2:15:19, he also ran a 3:56 in 1974 (a rare double feat sub 2:20 & sub 4:00). On the east side of the state long time Cornbelt Running Club President, Nancy Kapheim, unexpectedly died. Charlie and Nancy, both in their 50s demonstrate that the race does have a finish line.

Capital Striders do it right

Just when you think you've heard it all, the Capital Striders Annual Winter Meeting was a hit. A packed room enjoyed not only socializing with new and old friends but a wonderful program of speakers. The Des Moines Police, Lint Van Lines, Capital Striders Scholarship fund and CS donations such as the big annual contribution to Living History Farms were all honored. But maybe the best was saved for last as Curt and Nancy Hoegh were given accolades for training beginning runners and directing the Clive Running Festival. Nancy exclaimed, "It's like a big family". Yes the running family had a great year.

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 2002

Distance wins BIG, once again

Many communities are lucky to have any distance runs as a 5 km or 5 mile fits the needs of many social runners. In Striderland, not so as there is a quality race at almost every major long distance. The 26.2 mile marathon distance, after a 10 year break, has the Des Moines Marathon. Dam to Dam represents the largest 20 km in the US with well over 2500 finishers. The Capital Pursuit 10 mile celebrated 20 years in record fashion. The oldest race in Iowa, the Drake Relays On-the-ROADS overcame the worst race weather in history, regardless a near record number finished the Half-Marathon. And the Equalizer 6 hour and now 24 hour tests of survival around Gray's Lake fills out the list of distance races. The true test of running is to go the "distance", in Central Iowa runners have that choice.

Dalton & Friedman shine, especially at the DM Marathon

Marty Dalton and Robyn Friedman have a lot in common - - they grew up and currently live in small town Iowa, went to private college in Iowa and scored impressive seconds at the inaugural Des Moines Marathon. Both know fast times as Marty was the 1993 2A Iowa XC Champion and Robyn was a 4-time XC All-American at Wartburg. Marty opened his running season scoring a victory at the Drake Half-Marathon with an impressive 1:11:00. Robyn displayed her distance ability at the Capital Pursuit with a 1:01:26 victory. Without a major marathon in Iowa during the past decade, the Des Moines Marathon provided the perfect stage to see if Iowans could go the distance. Marty and Robyn didn't disappoint as they ran 2:25 and 2:55 respectively. Honorable mention as top Striderland runners go out to Daniel Kinyua (Dam to Dam winner), Julius Rotich (Capital Pursuit winner) and Michelle Borgert (Drake 8 km & Midnight Madness 10 km winner).

Redefining what's a Master Runner

Traditionally a master runner was anyone over 40 years of age. Twenty-five years ago, master runners were a rarity, no more. Nearly half of the men and a quarter of the women finishing Dam to Dam were over 40 years old. The new definition of master is being challenged by a trio of 70 year olds - - Gene Harding, Jim Smedema and Jim Schleisman. Gene, while not the speediest of the three, has an amazing record of winning the most age divisions of anyone at Dam to Dam, he has won the 45-49 through 70-74 divisions. The two Jims are extraordinary marathoners. Schleisman won his age division at Grandma's and Smedema won his age division at Chicago. At Capital Pursuit the two Jims were separated by one second at the finish.

How big is big enough? Who knows, who cares?

In 1992 Living History Farms was a modest race with 575 finishers. Fast forward to 2002 and 3499 finishers enjoyed the LHF experience. Wow, what happened? Any race that grows this fast must be doing something right. As it turns out the Farm race does everything right! In the last decade the Farm has added a Visitor Center, perfect for packet pickup; spacious parking lots, thank goodness; and an upgraded Walnut Hill Village, an ideal setting for the finish. No cross country race in North America is as large as LHF, for good reason, how would any XC course delight runners like the Farm. Gladly the weather at the Farm has been friendly too. So how big will LHF get, who cares.

Local HS Cross Country Teams score big

Roosevelt High School Boys didn't disappoint. Their victory at last year's State Meet was just a sign of their potential strength as they cracked the top 10 nationally this year. As Roosevelt reigned victorious at State, they weren't the only top Central Iowa teams - - Valley finished 2nd and Ankeny 3rd shutting out the strong Eastern Iowa teams, amazing. The cousin of running on the roads, cross country, is strong with the youth of Striderland.

Al Gross, a Volunteer to Respect

His resume includes race director, President of the Capital Striders, 15 year course director for Drake Relays On-the-Roads and the list goes on. He even runs, of course. Al has come to define the perfect volunteer and the reason that Striderland running is so strong. Al provides balance to the running landscape, respecting all runners and those who help others run.

Good Things from the Running Community

Running is self centered activity, so be it. Nicely runners and races are not. While charity races can take over many running communities, in Striderland good things are happening quietly. In 2002 traditional "runner races" have contributed over \$50,000 to good causes. Established charities have benefitted along with Gray's Lake, downtown river trail, top XC HS runners, Living History Farms, local youth track clubs and others. Good things are happening.

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 2001

Roosevelt wins Boys State XC Title

Alan Webb runs a 3:53:43 and closer to home Des Moines Roosevelt wins the state cross country boy's championship. High School running doesn't get any better. Roosevelt finished 7th in 1998; 5th in 1999 and 2nd last year but rising to the top required beating Iowa City High, winner of 8 of the last 10 titles. Mid-season Roosevelt beat City High by 3 points in a Decorah meet, 5 days later they lose to the same team in Ames by 4 points. The stage was certainly set and the Roughriders easily won as team depth lead the way. It was also a banner year for CIML boys with Dan Taylor of Ft Dodge capturing first individual at state (coached by former Drake Relays Marathon winner Jeff Wubben). Ankeny, SE Polk, Valley and Ft Dodge placed 3rd through 6th in the team race.

He's here, there & everywhere

As with most volunteer endeavors, the whine of "please help" is too often a rallying cry. So it's refreshing to see a "Just Do It" attitude displayed proudly by Carl Voss. When the classy Gray's Lake renovation was nearing completion, Carl lost no time in creating a Memorial Day hit, Loop the Lake 8k. The matching bookend summer holiday, Labor Day saw Carl bring new life to the 19th Capital Pursuit, topping 700 finishers in the 10 mile and 5k, the best Pursuit since the mid-80s. While big races are nice, Carl doesn't stop there as he organized a wonderful after work corporate team event and a winter holiday stroll through the lights of Waterworks Park. To top it off Carl founded the pride of the Capital Striders club, the high school cross country scholarship program.

Iowa's Distance Classic does it again

A few years ago Dam to Dam had made a surge from 1584 to 2001 finishers for its 20th year celebration. Iowa's distance classic didn't rest for year 22 as a new record 2305 finished the 20k placing it squarely behind the largest 20k in the nation, the Chicago Distance Classic by less than 200. While there are few 20k races in America, the honor to be the largest would be a nice touch for Iowa. Dam to Dam isn't just about size, Iowans consider it their "marathon" for the year, a worthy accomplishment. The year 2001 version saw ideal weather, a down to the wire men's finish, Bonnie Sons scoring her 5th women's victory, over 700 record finishers in the 5k, a new youth one mile run and the always popular tot trot.

Master of the Roads

While he has always lived in the northeast Iowa town of Cascade, Phil Kauder is no stranger to Central Iowa running. The mid-80s produced the greatest crop of road runners in Iowa history, including Phil, the youngest of that group. Phil, a student of history and running knew his year had come, he turned 40 celebrating it with all of Striderland. He set Iowa master records at the Drake Relays Half-Marathon running a 1:12:56, at Dam to Dam 20k he scored a 1:06:52 and to top it off a Capital Pursuit 10 mile victory in 53:40. He didn't stop there as he finished the season running a 2:34:39 marathon. Four long distance races, four all-time Iowa records.

Just for the joy of it

Let's see . . . November 17th usually means a cold blustery day in Iowa, think again. The 23rd edition of Living History Farms was greeted by a 56 degree sunny day at the start and it just got warmer - - unbelievable! The farm ended the 2001 running season on a high note. 3137 finished the race displaying the best field of runners in Striderland along with some of the craziest. Winner Dmitry Drozdov loved it, saying, "It's good spirit". Living History Farms, a mere 575 finishers 10 years ago, understands the value of play, at any age.

Drake & Madness continue their traditions

When these two races were born, many baby boomers were heard to say, "Don't trust anyone over 30". Times change, now everyone trusts these two favorites. The 33 year old Drake Relays On-the-ROADS signals the beginning of the race season and the 30 year old Midnight Madness signals the middle of summer. Both have tried every distance in the book: 3 mile, 5k, 8k, 6 mile, 10k, 9 mile, 12 mile, 20k,

half-marathon, 15 mile, 25k and marathon. Regardless of the distance, trust the 59,203 finishers that have come to love these over 30 year old races.

23 hours down & 1 hour to go

It's hard for many runners to understand what an equalizer race is, in fact it's harder to understand running 24 hours, but no one would expect the brainchild of Dave Hurd and Mark Movic to follow the norm. So on a wonderful fall day in late October a few dozen runners start the run of a lifetime, most opting to run "just" 6 hours but a few trudge on for another 18 hours. This isn't exactly a spectator sport but it's hard not to feel the emotion of seeing runners break 100 miles of running (4 did!) - - move over Iowa-ISU football games, the equalizer is here.

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 2000

Wow, RW features Des Moines

Guess it would happen soon or later. Runner's World has been published monthly for over 3 decades so eventually Des Moines would be featured in the "On the Road" section of the magazine. And what a feature it was as Striderland looked great, of course. The popular running routes along the Des Moines river, Clive running trail and Polk/Kingman Boulevard were as impressive in print as they are to run. Central Iowa races are no longer a local secret as the traditional favorites gave the nation a taste of the great distance races in Striderland. The home of the Drake Relays and Fitness Sports added to the Striderland legacy.

Jipp and Larson leave their mark

Chuck Jipp died too early in life. Lou Gehrig's Disease ravaged his athletic body prior to his 50th birthday. Chuck was a top notch runner, the 1991 Dam to Dam Master Winner. Additionally he was always a dedicated race volunteer including helping with Dam to Dam from the early 80s. Karl Larson lived a full life, passing away a few months after Chuck. Karl was well into his 70s. As founder of the Midnight Madness, Karl was one of Striderland's best runners, owning the best Capital Pursuit 10 mile time (1:02:12) and Dam to Dam 20 km (1:20:03) for 60 year olds. Chuck and Karl will be missed, not forgotten.

Drake's Jason Lehmkuhle scores big

Every April the Drake Relays showcases the best American runners. At Drake University the wait can be a little longer for a special distance runner. Two decades ago Vern Iwancin thrilled Striderland as a premier steeplechase and 5000 meter distance runner. Enter the new century with Jason Lehmkuhle leading Drake to its first Missouri Valley Conference Cross Country title since 1970. Jason didn't stop there as his track season was just as impressive with a third at the NCAA Outdoor 10,000 meter and a qualifying time, 28:45, for the Olympic Trials. Jason graced the roads running a sub-15 minute 5 km at BeaverDash.

Dam to Dam keeps on growing

It seemed impossible that Dam to Dam 20 km could ever reach 2000 finishers. It did in in 1999 amid the hoopla of the 20th year and the outpouring of support for Chuck Jipp. Kurt Shaeffer's second year as race director didn't disappoint as near perfect weather greeted runners. The race was near flawless with a another increase in the number of finishers. Iowa's Distance Classic continues their storied tradition attracting bigger and bigger crowds.

Cross Country, alive and well

It's not often that Striderland or any "land" has a one, two, three XC punch. At the college level Iowa

State hosted their 3rd NCAA Division I National Championship in the last decade. The best XC runners in America came to Ames, unfortunately they were not greeted with favorable weather as 30 mph winds and 15 degree weather made for frostbite conditions. At the high school level Roosevelt boys continued their rising cross country power as they finished 2nd at the state meet and Ben Glaser of Dowling was the boy's champ. To top off a great XC season Living History Farm again featured the best fun on foot with over 2500 finishers, double the numbers 4 years earlier.

Two of the best call it quits

Rarely in one year does the running community have two leaders finish their running career, a new century brings change. Bob Ehrhart decided to step down as Drake Relays director, a post he held for 31 years. Bob administered the Relays that had 3000 athletes in 1970 to triple that number, 9,000 in 2000, wow. On the other end of town, Don Graves called it a day completing 25 years as track and cross country coach at East High School. Last year Don, seeded number one, completed his 20th straight Dam to Dam 20 km. Bob and Don were champions, as top athletes, long term coaches and successful meet directors.

UNI runs fast, where's ISU?

Since the late 1970s current and former Iowa State runners dominated Striderland races with national class times. In the winner's circle of late has been a trio of former Northern Iowa runners. At Drake they showed their command of Central Iowa running as Kyle Kepler won the 8 km edging Dan Hostager, they both are two time winners of the 8 km. At the longer half-marathon distance Jeff Joiner matched his first place finish from the previous year. The season continued with UNI victories as Jeff placed in the money at Dam to Dam, Kyle won Clive and Dan topped the field at Marshalltown. While the international ISU running stars had blazing speed, the UNI troops have had solid victories.

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 1999

2000 at 20th Dam to Dam 20k

The stage was set in 1998 as the Dam race had a record number of finishers and perfect weather. How could year number 1999 be better? Iowa's Distance Classic did not disappoint. Honorary Race Director Chuck Jipp was at the finish to see 2000 runners cross the finish line. The hot muggy weather, tying 1986 for the worst Dam running day, didn't deter a celebration of distance running. The shorter Dam race, 5k, had a best of 645 finishers and the tot trot scored record numbers too. The special embroidered shirts, anniversary cup, colorful poster, 20k medals and the one of a kind results booklet made the 20th Dam to Dam a race to remember!

gosh - it's not cheap to race

Runners have gotten over the sticker shock of \$100 sneakers and \$200 winter wear but now it costs dearly to enter races too. OK, a \$4 entry fee at Midnight Madness 20 years ago is never going to return. Gee . . . sponsors are flocking to races but that isn't stopping the sudden entry fee increase mania. Hard to figure? This year Midnight Madness cost \$17 (up \$2), Dam to Dam \$20 (up \$5) and Living History Farms \$18 (up \$3). Admittedly races deserve all the money they can get, runners are asking for more and volunteering less to help, but maybe, just maybe races could make the early entry fee more affordable.

Kepler and a female trio take top honors

Striderland saw some fast times on the roads this year led by Kyle Kepler as he won the Drake 8k in

24:28 and was first Iowan at Dam to Dam 20k (4th overall) and at Midnight Madness (6th overall). On the women's side a trio take the awards stand. Anne Flynn, an Olympics marathon qualifier, took a second at Oktoberfest in Marshalltown along with thirds at Dam to Dam 20k and Midnight Madness 10k. Kay Pals had a break through season with a win at the Drake Half-Marathon and first Iowan honors at Dam to Dam 20k (second overall). Tricia Allen, the only winner residing in Striderland, topped off her season with a first at Living History Farms, a third at Oktoberfest and sixths at Midnight Madness 10k and Dam to Dam 20k.

the Farm race just keeps on growing

Billed as America's largest cross country race, Living History Farms Off-Road Race is a phenomenon - - it is the most popular race in Striderland. It passed 1000 finishers in 1994 and race director Steve Bobenhouse wondered, silently, if the race could handle anymore runners. Five years later almost 2000 runners finished and Steve said there has to be a limit, no way. 2497 runners finished this year and 127 teams scored, records at the Farm race are just made to be broken, yearly. This is the race where young, old, racer and "tour de course" runner all get together to end the season. As always Living History Farms is the best way to end the Striderland running season.

www.FitnessSports.com

The world wide web has played a minor role in Striderland races and running - - no longer! For Stiders this is the place to visit, during the peak of the season a 1000 runners do so daily. FitnessSports.com is where the action continually changes, race results are posted immediately and the calendar includes all the races in Iowa. A highlight of this site is finding your picture at the biggest races in Striderland (over 200 posted this year).

High School XC are not forgotten by Road Races

The Capital Striders along with area road races have seen the future and it is youth. The Striders have increased their scholarship fund including both a male and female Striderland cross country runner. Area road races - - Dam to Dam, Midnight Madness, Drake Relays On-the-Roads, Living History Farms, WHAMM, Clive Running Festival and Oktoberfest - - donated 8,500 race numbers that were used in cross country meets.

Hey, how about some energy?

The big four of Striderland, Drake Relays On-the-ROADS, Dam to Dam, Midnight Madness and Living History Farms are directed admirably by seasoned race veterans. But what about anyone in their 20s or 30s adding a little vigor to the local races? While the harping continues, how about a new big race in the area, something that just knocks the socks off the running establishment. Well it never hurts to wish . . .

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 1998

"Big 4" score more Runners

Survey Iowa races, are they getting bigger? No! But in Striderland, it's a running boom. The "Big 4" - - 30th Drake Relays On-the-ROADS (up 12%), 19th Dam to Dam (up 20%), 27th Midnight Madness (up 10%) and 20th Living History Farms (up 20%) - - had almost 1000 more finishers this year than last, rarely have all gained in the same year. These four races must be doing something right as each race attracted over 10 states and 150 Iowa towns. Their popularity infused life into old favorites like Lung Run, Clive Running Festival and Run for the Roses as they all increased 100 finishers or more.

www.comes/to/striderland

Spearheaded by Mike Bender with www.IowaRun.org, his web site for over 6 months kept runners informed as to races, results and records. Mike got 1000s of hits, stirring www.FitnessSports.com to even greater web heights. Steve Bobenhouse combined his computer and running prowess to create a phenomenal site, one only needs to check the continual updating of Living History Farms information including post race photos, results and letters, second to none. Could the web be the future for race entry and results, one only has to see what happened in one racing season.

Aging gracefully, Hardly

It's obvious by now turning 40 doesn't stop good times on the road. The best master runners in Striderland are Keith Fevold and Jackie Groves. Both placed second in the master race at Dam to Dam, first Iowan; first master at Midnight Madness 10k and first master at Drake (Keith in the 8k and Jackie in the Half-Marathon). But Keith and Jackie may need to step aside as the honor for age division best time certainly belongs to Jim Smedema, age 67, who scored a 3:06:33 at the Chicago Marathon. Jim has always garnered Striderland fast times and awards, his most current time ranks as the 24th best time, ever, in the USA by a 65 to 70 year old.

Unsung Heroes

Yes it is all about runners but honoring volunteers only makes sense, without them there might not be the great Striderland running we have come to expect, so our hats go off to this trio. Kevin Otte has coached for five years Leukemia's Team in Training with over 175 first timers going the distance, all 26.2 miles of it at marathons throughout the USA. Mike Franke has dedicated decades to area races, most notably his concern for races that go the distance, the exact distance, not 7.5K for an 8K race but correct distances as Iowa's top course certifier. Joe Bisignano has given a quarter of a century of service to the Drake Relays On-the-ROADS, the last 15 as race director, a record for longevity.

Dam to Dam, year 19 the best?

As year number 20 at Dam to Dam 20k approaches it couldn't have had a better opening act than year 19. Perfect 46 degree weather greeted runners at the start, a record 1548 finished the 20k, the 5k really popped with 501 finishers, 7 year race director Bill Wallace left the race on a high note and for the first time in Dam to Dam history both male and female winners were not from the USA. The enthusiasm of Iowa's distance classic is spilling over to year 20 for the 20k as the race hopes for 2000 runners just before the year 2000, it's time to start training.

High School XC gets a boost

The Capital Striders along with area road races have seen the future and it is youth. The Striders have established a scholarship fund for an area cross country runner and purchased a race clock that can be used by high school cross country meets. Area road races - - Dam to Dam, Midnight Madness, Drake Relays On-the-Roads, Living History Farms, Lung Run and Oktoberfest - - donated 7,261 race numbers that were used in area cross country meets.

Oktemberfest 10k puts flair onto the Roads

Marshalltown, home to the best combined male and female HS cross country teams, tried something a little different. Their fall tradition at 13 years met an unlucky 25 mph winds and 90 degree weather for the afternoon 3.8 loop 10 Kilometer elite race. But hand it to a small town race, they had some of the best talent, Joseph Kahugu won the men's race (a few weeks later he scored a 2:07:59 at the Chicago Marathon) and Kris Ihle won the women's race (a 1998 RRCA Road Scholar) in a race that except for Bix had the most prize money in Iowa, a tidy \$6600. Wow, way to go Marshalltown!

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 1997

The Farm was alive with Youth

Living History Farms teams two of Iowa's "oldest" organizers, Steve Bobenhouse and Stan Smith, with a race for the "young" or at least young at heart. Almost 50 percent of the finishers were under 25 years of age, few races see half the runners under 35. The Farm provides a beautiful backdrop for a race that is part road race and part cross country race, so it appeals to most. A record 1618 finishers and 114 scoring teams makes this the biggest race in Striderland. And the competition is fierce, seconds counting for team championships and few area runners on the award's stand. The farm demonstrates that the youth of the sport are alive and well.

Curt Hoegh scores Big

Like a fine wine, Curt, age 46, continues to age well by being the oldest runner to break the 1:10 barrier at Dam to Dam. In the process he shattered a 12 year old age division record at Dam to Dam, one of the few records broken by Iowans during the 1990s. Of course, Curt does it all, directing the successful Clive Running Festival and is current President of the Capital Striders. Curt started the season setting the 8K race record (on a long course) at the Drake Relays On-the-Roads and ran in the Midnight Madness heat to win his age division, good enough to place in three age divisions younger than him, too!

Kruse & Joiner take top Honors

The 1990s have usually found the best Striderland male and female runner from Central Iowa, not this year. Renee Kruse, S. Sioux City, had no problem crossing the border into Iowa to take Drake, Dam to Dam and a second at Midnight Madness. At Drake she sped to record time on the Half-Marathon (long) route and scored a tie for third best time at Dam to Dam. Jeff Joiner, Iowa City, proved that being the best at all distances is the key, as he took third at both the Drake Half-Marathon and Dam to Dam 20K along with top honors among native Iowans at Midnight Madness and Living History Farms. Honorable mention, with each having Striderland victories, goes to Laura Bell, Anne Flynn, Dmitry Drozdov and Andrew Rinn.

Drake Relays On-the-Roads cannot be Stopped

After 29 years on the road and 88 years on the track, Drake knows how to be on time for a race start, in fact that's the pride of the Relays. But 1997 was an exception. On the track, minutes seemed like hours as Michael Johnson got set in his blocks before a record setting crowd. On the road, minutes were crucial for a Des Moines family whose house on the race course went up in flames. While the races started late, for the second year in a row the weather was perfect, not a Drake tradition this past decade.

10 mile Pursuit is best this Decade

Striderland has the best of all worlds with three notable distance races, many running areas settle for a steady diet of 5K races. The Drake Half in the spring, Dam 20K in the summer and the Pursuit 10 mile in the fall is just the ticket for Central Iowa distance runners. Under the direction of Al Gross the Capital Pursuit celebrated 15 years having the most finishers in the 10 mile during this decade.

Perfect Summer Races - DD & MM

It couldn't get better. Dam to Dam greeted runners on Saylorville Dam with 58 degree cool dry weather - - perfect. Midnight Madness, that has claimed the hottest races in Iowa, didn't disappoint with 86 degree hot humid weather - - perfect. Runners love both races. Dam to Dam had 1404 finishers, second best in history. Midnight Madness had 1699 finishers, best in a dozen years with the exception of the big 25th celebration last year. It doesn't get better, a reason runners look forward to the summer in

Striderland.

Road Races help High School XC

"Adult" road races have quietly joined forces with a close cousin and likely source of future road runners, High School Cross Country. Striderland races have been donating race numbers and support to the 16 3A High Schools in the Central Iowa Metro League (CIML). 736 boys and girls participate in the CIML Championships, from the very competitive athlete to the more recreational runner. A special thanks to Dam to Dam, Midnight Madness, Drake Relays On-the-Roads, Living History Farms, WHAMM and Oktoberfest.

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 1996

25th Midnight Madness was a Celebration

Weird race, same goes for the race director - - hey it works, 25 years and counting. Under the leadership of Captain Midnight, Roman Lynch, Midnight Madness is everything great about running. Young and old together on a summer night, with good racing and good times at the one of a kind party into the wee hours of the night. Just when you think it's not possible, madness strikes with 1937 finishers, the best crowd since the running boom of 1983. It was quite a celebration.

It's still about Distance

Some things change, some don't. With running it's always about distance, time thrown in to keep runners honest about pace. Tests of distance remain in Striderland at the Drake Relays Half-Marathon, Dam to Dam 20k and Capital Pursuit 10 miler. Each comes during a different season of the year, all have a decade or two of experience and runner support was never better for the group during the '90s. Over 2100 finishers this year agree, Striderland distance running is tops.

Angela Andersen and Andrew Rinn prevail

Talent shines as these two runners, easily, topped Striderland runners and races. Angela coming off a 1995 career best season started with a win at the Drake Relays 8k with a 27:57. As defending champion of Dam to Dam, she ran 13 seconds slower finishing second and placed fourth at Midnight Madness. Andrew started with a 24:47 third at the Drake Relays 8k, was sixth at Midnight Madness and a second at Capital Pursuit. Both runners continue their domination in Striderland.

Race events can still grow

Just when you think Striderland races are shrinking, along come three that change the landscape. In a dramatic move, Race for the Cure, changed from a Spring to a Fall race and then doubled their number of finishers to almost 2000. The Jazz Festival run got off to a great first year, 500 participants wouldn't disagree, especially with the pancake breakfast after the run. A Striderland standard, Run for the Roses, caught the spark, growing by almost 50 percent to 700 participants.

He keeps running and running and running

January 2, 1977 it started and this year marks a 20th anniversary - - hard to believe. Yes, John Liepa, owns the longest streak of running everyday in Striderland. Many striders have made it a month, a few a year but no hands are up when the streak becomes two decades. A 2:45 marathoner and former Midnight Madness race director, his running exploits are headlined these days by a son who completed

his first marathon and a daughter on the Indianola cross country & track team.

Living History Farms, a special race indeed

Word is out these days. Once a race dominated by Striderland runners, now more than a dozen states and 155 Iowa towns showed up to run the ultimate in cross country courses. It started with grade school kids taking off in the one mile and ended with a 73 year old female resident of the state of Oregon finishing last in the 5 plus mile run. Iowa is a land of farms, this race demonstrates that fact, as runners usually take home Iowa soil along with the spirit of Striderland.

A legend, Bill Bergen, leaves Iowa State men's running

Bill is reserved and quiet, his runners talk for him, loudly on the roads of Striderland. The roster looks like this: Richard Kaitany, Yobes Ondieki, Joseph Kipsang, Bob Verbeeck, Ray Wyns, Tim Wakeland, Paul Black, Barnaba Korir, Roland Pauwels, John Nuttall, Jonah Koech, Jon Brown, Ian Robinson, John Kihonge, Steve Brooks, Dmitry Drozdov and Patrick Sang & David Kogo attracted by the talent. Bill honored Striderland with runners of the world coming to Central Iowa.

by Cal Murdock