

Western Reserve Trail Running Newsletter

Monthly Newsletter

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Fools Run - UPDATE

Fools Trail Run is quickly approaching capacity. As of February 1st, about 30 spots remain. If you or anyone you know is interested now is the time to get entered in

Click [here](#) for more information.

National Runner Survey Project

Calling all RUNNERS! What motivates you to run? What is your favorite race distance? How often do you run? You are being invited to participate in Running USA's 2011 National Runner Survey, a comprehensive survey to assess the demographics, lifestyle, attitudes, habits, and product preferences of the running population nationwide. The National Runner Survey is easy to access and available online. All responses are completely anonymous and confidential. Don't miss this opportunity to join other runners nationwide!

To access the survey, please click on the following link: http://www.surveymk.com/s/NRS11_WesternReserve

Select "Western Reserve Trail Running" as the organization

Welcome

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce **Kate Koewler** as the new co-Editor of the WRTR newsletter. Kate is a familiar face at [Vertical Runner](#) having worked there part time since October 2010.

Kate has been running the trails in the CVNP for the past 5 years and began training and running trail races in 2010.

If you ever have any thoughts of suggestions for Kate regarding the WRTR newsletter, she may be reached at kate@wrtr.org.

Happy Trails!!

Brandon Huff
WRTR Newsletter co-Editor

contact us via [email](#)

Run for Regis - FINAL REPORT by Mark Carroll

On January 16, a bunch of Regis Shivers' friends, and people who would have been Regis' friends, gathered to run in an annual event held in his memory. The run was 50 kilometers, or a bunch of other distances including a half-marathon, or a marathon. Some runners decided to run 2 miles or 5 miles or 8 miles, others felt that twenty-two miles was what they could handle. One runner decided to cover 36 miles because that is a fine fine distance. Regis would have approved.

Race director Tanya Cady created the perfect environment in which we could remember our friend. Old and new friends ran together through deep, slippery snow and ice. The run benefitted The Regis Shivers Scholarship and also The Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher House, a non-profit organization that provides free lodging for families of patients being treated at Cincinnati area Veterans Administration health care facilities. Runners received access to wonderfully stocked aid stations, the nicest race shirt that this writer has ever seen, and the camaraderie of the best trail running community in the country. The event did not offer trophies. There were no mylar blankets and there were no finisher medallions. Many runners eschewed competition and chose to run and walk slowly through the foot of freshly fallen snow that blanketed the beautiful trails in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. But some runners find racing to be fun and so major and minor competitions unfolded. The feeling in the air for all runners of all speeds was one of joy and remembrance. After the race, despite the fact that temperatures never made it out of the teens, no one seemed to want to leave. Regis left us with many good memories and stories.

Since this wasn't a typical race I hope that you will forgive the fact that this wasn't a typical race report. I ask that you oblige me as I keep the spirit of the event alive for a few more minutes with a few more stories. If I've told you these tales before take a swig from your bottle, settle into the rhythm, and listen one more time. That's what trail friends do for one another you know.

The first time I had a real chat with Regis was in the middle of a very dark night. It was during one of the Mohican 100's. I don't recall which one and it doesn't matter which year it was. I'm convinced that memories are supposed to blend into one another.

The Mohican Trails Group has done such wonderful work on the trails in

that invited you to participate.

Run With Your Heart Trail Challenge - RACE PREVIEW

More than 250 hearty souls, including fearless runners and charitable volunteers, will kick off their 2011 Valentine's Day weekend by participating in the Center for Families and Children's 2nd Annual Run with your Heart Trail Challenge in the Cleveland Metroparks North Chagrin Reservation on Sunday, February 13th. Runners eager to conquer the challenges offered by a chilly and hilly trail run led to another early sellout of this 8K and 15K event. Race participants will feel the love from the race's perks, including candy hearts, tote bags, and stainless steel water bottles; shelters with roaring fires and cozy after-race refreshments; and once again, live music by an accordion player to motivate people as only a polka song can. All race proceeds benefit the [Center for Families and Children](#); a community nonprofit making success possible in school, work, and life for people in Northeast Ohio's most challenged communities.

Although this race is sold out please consider coming out to the Metroparks with your sweetie to cheer on the runners and help them feel the love! Race start time is 9:30 AM.



2010 Run With Your Heart Challenge runners hit the trails!

Central Ohio Trails by Michael Patton

We are blessed in Ohio to have a great network of parks and trails throughout the state. From a trail perspective, Central Ohio is probably best known for its interconnected network of multi-purposed trails. As these trails continue to be expanded nearly all the suburbs will be connected to the downtown area by paved asphalt trail. This is great for road runners who want to avoid automobile traffic but what about trail runners who want to get off the pavement?

Central Ohio does have a few local parks that offer relief for those not afraid to get their feet dirty. The two that offer the most off-road trail are [Highbanks Metro Park](#) and [Alum Creek State Park](#). Highbanks, which is along the Olentangy River in North Columbus, has about 10 miles of trails that are mostly crushed limestone and challenges runners with a few nice hills mixed in. Alum Creek State Park has two mountain bike trails that offer runners about 10 miles of single track trail. Both offer a nice alternative to the crowded, paved bike paths.

If you live in Central Ohio and aren't opposed to driving a little further for a trail run than your choice of trails expands greatly. Your options would include (in no particular order):

the Mohican State Park and Mohican Wilderness area that it almost seems like a different place today. The trails still get muddy, but years ago a good rainstorm would wreck them. The year Regis and I connected was a wet one. I was sick and my race was reduced to a slow trudge. I walked for hours from the Bridle Staging Area, making my way toward Rock Point. I had seen no one in forever, and I was walking down an eight foot wide strip of six-inch deep mud that stretched on for as long as my headlamp would allow me to see.

I was young and I was angry. I was angry at the mud and I was angry that it had rained. I was angry that my goal of breaking 24 hours was broken, and I was probably angry at God. Regis appeared from the gloom with his pacer and walked up beside me. Then he told me that he was thinking of dropping out. I couldn't have been more shocked if I have seen a UFO land. Even though I hadn't chatted with Regis before, I knew him well enough to know that HE didn't quit. Regis couldn't quit. Regis was a legendary strong-man. He was a pillar. He was fast and he was tough. He had a daring nature and a glint in his eye. Superman was fictional but Regis was real.

Regis would have loved the unique ultra running community that has grown in northeastern Ohio. I believe that he would also love the Western Reserve Trail Running Series, of which this event was a part. Facebook and blogging unite us today. But just a few years ago our community was held together by Regis, and a few others like him, who liked to run but enjoyed their friends even more than they enjoyed their sport. Runners are forgotten, records are re-written, but love lasts a good long while. That's why Regis hasn't left our hearts.

The last time I saw Regis was also at Mohican. It was several years ago. I have always been honest about my successes and failures at Mohican and I can honestly say that the last time I saw Regis I was simply carrying out a planned DNF. I was working on my doctoral degree and my training was nearly non-existent. I entered simply because I wanted to be a part of the event. I planned on running 30 miles and I made it to the 45 mile mark at the Bridle Staging area near where Regis and I had met years before. Regis was well into his battle with cancer at that time. He approached me as I was sitting on the ground, under a tree, waiting for a ride. Speaking through an electronic voice simulator, he urged me to get up and go on. I explained to him that I had met my goal. I told him that I would finish the race the next year. I told him that we would run it together. He smiled at me and told me that I should continue if I could. I now imagine that Regis knew that life's opportunities can be limited.

Regis died later that year. Every single runner I knew grieved. What kind of man must he have been when, at virtually every gathering of ultra runners, people tell stories about him, quote him, and just generally miss him? Being a good runner isn't enough to achieve such status. Sadly, being a good person isn't even enough. Being famous will carry you for a generation or so. We remember Regis because he served, and loved, and supported. We loved Regis because, to him, life and running was fun.

Regis never quit fighting the cancer. The original night we met on the trails Regis didn't quit either. I mumbled some sort of advice to him about how he should stare at his pacer's back and just keep moving. He offered me some kind words as well, and in this way two guys with nothing left exchanged the gift of energy. If that sounds smarmy to you then you simply haven't experienced life on the trail. Care creates energy. I don't know why. I just know that it does. The next morning, and for years after that night, Regis credited me with getting him to the finish line that year. Regis always gave the credit away.

I think that Regis knew enough to live life for every minute that he was here. I have memories of Regis in motion but the image that I hold closest of this man were the times when he was very still. He seemed overwhelmingly in love with his wife, and he seemed to be surrounded by his kids and grandkids at all times. I have an image burned into my mind of him, seated in a lawn chair, surrounded by those who loved him. At these times he would speak of any topic other than himself. He knew that his running would end but his family would not. I recall closing in on him at the finish at Mohican another year while he walked

[Dillon State Park](#), [Clear Creek Metro Park](#), [Tar Hollow State Forest](#) (home of the [Tar Hollow 50](#)), [John Bryan State Park](#), [Delaware State Park](#), the [Dennison Bio Reserve](#), and [Malabar Farms State Park](#). The two parks with the most extensive and most challenging network of trails in the regional area surrounding Central Ohio are without a doubt [Mohican State Park](#) and [Hocking Hills State Park](#). Both parks offer close to 50 miles of unique trail: including a variety of bridle, hiking, and mountain bike trails. This variety makes it well worth the drive if you want to get in a long trail run and are looking for an escape from your typical routine.

If you are interested in exploring these trails on a group run two local groups offer semi-regular group runs: [Central Ohio Trail Runners](#) and [Columbus Outdoor Pursuits Trail Running](#)



WRTR Registration Update

Green Jewel 50k
- Saturday, March 5, 2011
- Registration now open!
- Click [here](#) for more information

Fools Run 50K/25K
- Sunday, March 27, 2011
- Registration now open!
- Click [here](#) for more information

Forget the PR 50k/25k
- Sunday, April 17, 2011
- **SOLD OUT**
- Click [here](#) for more information

Buckeye Trail 50k
- Saturday, July 16, 2011
- REGISTRATION OPENS 3/1/11
- Click [here](#) for more information

Muddy Paws 10M & 5M
- Saturday, July 23, 2011
- REGISTRATION OPENS 3/1/11
- Click [here](#) for more information

Burning River 100
- Saturday, July 31, 2011
- Registration now open!
- Click [here](#) for more information

Complete WRTR race and registration information can be found at [wrtr.org](#).

XTERRA Ohio Trail Run Series

The 2011 XTERRA Ohio Trail Run Series will include both a Northern Ohio and Southeast Ohio division.

slowly toward the finish with his young grandson. Regis must have been desperate to finish...I know I was. But instead of pushing for the finish a couple of hundred yards away they stopped to look at a bug on the ground. Then they held hands and walked along as though they were spending time on a playground. In hindsight I suppose they were.

Trail Runner Spotlight: Darris Blackford



Darris Blackford

1. Tell us a little about yourself.

Starting with the best part first, I have been very happily married since 2004 to Star (known to many as Starshine, but I for some reason never call her that!). We live in Columbus, and have an awesome 3-legged dog named Sunday, and a couple of cats, Courage and Bob. We have been trying to start a family, but that has been an unattainable finish line thus far ...

I was born in Akron and raised in Cuyahoga Falls, graduating in, wait for it, 1981. I attended the University of Akron for a couple of years, then transferred to Kent to pursue a degree in journalism. I even won a national collegiate award for my writing (not bad for someone who never did get the whole sentence-diagramming thing!). After college I worked as a reporter and editor for The News-Herald in Willoughby (yes, the same place where Burning River starts, but more on that in a moment), then worked for about a year for the Tampa Tribune before returning to Ohio where I spent five years at the Columbus Dispatch.

Following my newspaper career I ran my own small media/marketing business for eight years, followed by five years handling marketing/advertising/events for America's Oldest Harley Dealership in Columbus (oh yeah, I ride motorcycles, too).

2. Beginning in April 2010 you took over as Race Director for the Columbus Marathon & 1/2 Marathon. How did you come about directing this wonderful event, now in its 32nd year?

This path unwittingly began more than 10 years earlier. In 1999 I started pace teams at the Columbus Marathon. Sponsored by White Castle, we were called the "Striding Slyders." That year one of the pacers gave me a bunch of homemade mile split charts for the pacers to wear on their

The Northern Ohio division will include seven (7) races from May thru September.

The Southeast Ohio series will include four (4) races from April thru December.

Click [here](#) for complete race information.



Race Calendars

[100 Mile Race Calendar](#)

[Coach Weber's National Ultrarunning Calendar](#)

[Jason Robillard Ultra-Marathon Calendar](#)

[Trail Runner Magazine Race Calendar](#)

[ultraRUNNING Magazine Race Calendar](#)

[OhioOutside.com Race Calendar](#)

2011 WRTR Race Series

NOTE: When results are updated, a notification will be sent via the WRTR Facebook page and Twitter account. Thank you for your patience.

[2011 WRTR Series Rules](#)

[2011 WRTR Series Race Legend](#)

2011 WRTR Race Series Standings (to be updated after Run for Regis)

The purpose of the Western Reserve Trail Running (WRTR) race series is to promote regional competition, wide participation in the sport of trail running, foster volunteerism, and to recognize the annual WRTR series champions.

VR Corner by Vince Rucci

February brings the opportunity to explore some new additions and great updates to trail shoes at Vertical Runner!!!

Merrell (minimalist): Trail Glove
<http://www.merrell.com/US/en-US/Blog/Article.mvc.aspx/403c154a-f1d4-4aa8-98bd-b1419336c5b1>

Salomon (lightweight & neutral): Speedcross 2 and XR Crossmax
<http://www.salomon.com/us/segment/trail-running-shoes.html>

Brooks (updated style): Cascadia 6
<http://www.brooksrunning.com/>

Saucony (train & race): Progrid Peregrine
<http://www.saucony.com/store/SiteControllor/saucony/home>

Montrail (adaptable fit & feel): Fairhaven

wrists. I thought this was the coolest thing, especially since I had always written mine on the back of my bib and many times almost fell trying to read the numbers! I asked him if he wanted to grow the idea and produce the wristbands in bulk, but he declined, so I ran with it on my own.

I took a suitcase full of 60,000 of these bands to the Honolulu Marathon in December 1999, figuring I would easily sell these to the 30,000 runners at \$2 a band. Easy money! Day 1, I sold 21 for a total of \$42. My hotel breakfast cost more than that! Day 2, I doubled my sales, and Day 3 I did a little better, but not close to covering airfare, hotel and expenses in Hawaii! So I did like anyone would do - I walked out of the hotel to return home, and there were cabs and a stretch limo waiting for passengers, so I went big and took the limo!

I mean, I was already booked for expos at Disney, Houston, Austin and Boston! I was in for the long haul! Wow, was that a costly experiment! But it got me exposed to the "circus" known as marathons/expos, and introduced me to many important people in the business whom I am still friends with today! It also led me to meet folks from Clif Bar. Eventually the pace team idea was picked up by them, and for the past nine years Star and I have led the Clif Bar Marathon Pace Team.

With my experience I was asked several years ago to join a group of folks that was working to improve the Columbus Marathon, and two years ago I started helping out with the marketing of the event. So when there was a change in the management of the race, the Board tapped me to take over. Thankfully there was a great team of people in place, and we were able to quickly pull things together and put on what some say was a nice event!

3. What are your future plans with the Columbus Marathon? How will things change and how will things remain the same?

More fireworks! Starting in the dark gives us the opportunity to do some cool visual things and we will be adding to that in 2011! We also are proud of the entertainment we offer - 80 bands on course! - and we will continue to add bells and whistles. Better food at the finish, too! The course will remain the same for 2011, and we again hope to sell out the field - our 5th year in a row!

Besides the fun factor, we also are building upon our reputation as one of the top spots to qualify for Boston, and a great race for elites. We are increasing some of our prize money a bit, including for the top Ohioans. I love how well runners from Ohio did last year at our race, including Northeast Ohioans Fred Kieser and Elizabeth Hansen!

While it is still a year away, we are looking to make some bigger changes in 2012 in honor of Columbus' 200th anniversary celebration. And I have a dream to bring the Olympic Trials back to Columbus in 2016. We hosted in 1992, and it was awesome!

4. You took part in the Annual River Run in Columbus on January 1st as part of the "Beat the Director Challenge." There were 17 people who finished the race before you thereby earning a free entry into the 2011 Columbus Marathon or 1/2 Marathon. How did this opportunity come about and is this a tradition that we can look forward to going forward?

Like all great ideas, it was hastily thought up and seemed like a good idea at the time! Who invented a 5k anyway? Racing them is hard work - I was dry-heaving by mile 2! Seriously, I knew about this New Year's Day run and thought this challenge might tie in well with the opening day of our 2011 registration, but it really exceeded everyone's expectations. We got TV, radio and newspaper coverage ... not bad for a kid from Summit County! I think this has the potential to become an annual event - my brother Damon (some folks might know him from his running exploits in Northeast Ohio) suggested we do age-graded scoring, so that might be a way for this old guy to fight off the younger runners!

5. Even though you don't consider yourself a trail runner, you

<http://montrail.com/Default.aspx>

Montrail (go fast!): Rogue Racer

<http://blog.montrail.com/2010/08/the-rogue-river-and-the-rogue-racer-run-free/>



For more information about this workout or customized training programs contact Vince Rucci directly at vince@verticalrunner.com.

Talking to Trees by Star Blackford

If you know Darris and I at all, or even know of us, it's very possible you know about our ongoing battle with infertility. I know, what a shocking word. We're very open people, and quite frankly, it's required to seriously re-examine our lifestyle, our values, our relationship, and yes - our running. Not just mine, but ours.

This is a column about running. More truthfully, this is a column about not running.

Not running generally applies to all of us at some point in our running lives. Take my good friends Brandon Huff and Nick Billock, who both faced extended layoffs last year. On an elite level, take Adam and Kara Goucher, who have openly discussed how they seemed to "trade injuries" for several years. And then there's Darris and I, both of us ultrarunners, but one of us not running so much at all.

I've slowly come to the realization that Darris has the harder task right now. He knows what the running means to me. He knows I long ago passed the point of running being "exercise" or "cardio" or "to lose weight." Running is our lifestyle. It is not just what we do, but in many ways, who we are. And as we spent over a year deciding to transition from "runners" to "parents," it never occurred to us that we might first be stuck in this odd limbo where one of us is ... neither.

And Darris is the one who has to save me from myself. And that has to be so hard, but he does it. He tells me no. He tells me to stop. He tells me "enough."

In the ultrarunning community, we sometimes need to be more like Darris.

This is a community where we tend to push each other, egg each other on, top each epic adventure with something even more outrageous. If you suggest 30 miles, I'm going to say "how about 40?" If you say "I just signed up for XYZ-something-that-ends-with-the-number 100," I'm probably going directly to the website to sign up, or to find something even gnarlier, so we can crew and pace for each other. And if you're injured or coming back from an injury and say you got in an easy 3 miles, I'm probably going to say something like "Awesome! You'll be doing 30 with us in no time."

finished the inaugural Burning River 100 in 21st place. In 2008 you improved your finishing time by almost three hours and finished in the Top 10, even leading the race for a time. In 2009 you were again a Top 10 finisher. How did these experiences affect your desire to run future trail races?

Ah yes, Burning River #1. I seriously NEVER ran on trails until the day I took part in the inaugural BR100. Since the race started in Willoughby, where I had my first newspaper job, goes through places where I frequently hiked with my favorite aunt and grandmother as a kid, passes over Brandywine Falls, which my family visited in summers for years since we knew the property owner before it became parkland, and finished in my hometown, I just had to do it, trail or no trail running experience! But that wasn't the worse idea I had - it was probably starting the race at all. I had tweaked my back three days before, and I literally stood crooked. I told my friend George Roulett who joined me that first year (and finished 12th) that I had paid, so I might just go five miles and drop out. But five became 15, then 25 and I kept going. It kept getting more painful and difficult with each passing aid station, but what can I say, none of us out there are known for being very smart! At Mile 65 I had a bit of a breakdown, and figured I was out. Star asked me if I would like her to join me, and it renewed my spirit! She really wasn't prepared, but God love her she jumped right in anyway! And then we began ... a ... 35-mile WALK! It took us 11 hours! Quite honestly, it was perhaps one of the best times we have spent together! I have a framed picture of us embracing at the finish - it is one of my most cherished possessions.

The second BR100 started out much better for me - but probably too good, as after about 15 miles I found myself in the lead! It was the time of the Summer Olympics, and I was thinking this was my Olympic Moment! I remember at one aid station, volunteers saying, "hey you are in the lead!" and I was all like, "I know, it's crazy!" And indeed it was. I got a great story out of it though, and finished in 9th, which was cool! In 2009 I also finished in 9th, but that year at about mile 20 I smacked my leg on a tree stump and ended up with an infection that took me out of running for a month. Finally, last year I started the race with a bad hamstring injury incurred while training for the Cleveland Marathon. Again, I probably shouldn't have started. I ran with Star and several friends, but I really couldn't keep up. When I got to Boston Store the first time I was hurting, just way too tired and overheated for where I was at that stage of the race. I walked out of Boston Store for the Brandywine Loop, but a mile or so into it I decided I was done.

6. Looking towards the immediate future and in the years to come, what are some key events on your "Must Do" list?

I still have unfinished business at Burning River. I am not going to come out and say I can post a record-breaking time there or anything, but I expect more from myself than I have shown. As any true runner, I am always thinking, "this is the year!" Then there is the idea of Badwater 2013. Star and I and some friends crewed there a couple of years ago and had a blast! Well, in 2013 the race finishes on my birthday - my 50th birthday! How cool is that? Star wants to run it, too, and depending upon how our life turns out these next couple of years that could be quite a fun time for this running couple!

Submit an Article

Are you interested in submitting an article for the WRTR newsletter? Do you know of someone who should be featured in the Trail Runner Spotlight section?

If so, drop us a line at newsletter@wrtr.org and tell us your thoughts.

Western Reserve Trail Running, Inc. is a nonprofit organization registered in the state of Ohio. The organization's first event was the

And I'm going to mean well, but it's not.

Because I'm not sure we're always as good at supporting each other when we can't run as we are when we can.

We love each other. We love our spouses, our partners and *our* significant others. We love our close friends, our training partners, those bonds formed only on the trails and only after the "first" 20 mile portion of a training run is done. We love our fellow ninjas, our partners-in-midnight crime, sneaking into the Mohican woods with our headlamps off until we're deep enough in not to be seen. And sometimes selfishly, we want them there. We want them back. Even if they're not physically ready to be.

This is not to say that I haven't seen a huge outpouring of support for those injured; this is the most supportive community I've ever known. But my recent experiences compel me to remind everyone, healthy and injured, that sometimes, unfortunately, "getting back out there in no time," can be an empty promise. The words sound so wonderful, but right now - no, I don't know that I'll be out there again in no time. Sometimes, a doctor, an MRI or a cast might be saying it's going to be quite a bit of time. And while hope and looking to the exciting future of being back out there "in no time" are exciting, sometimes it's just as important to focus on the injury - the situation - the circumstances - and simply let them be. Yes, it might hurt. But we're trail runners. We're good at hurting.

It's easy to tempt each other with the next race, the next midnight running adventure, the next "something ending with 100" when we're well. It may be more of an acquired skill for us to urge each other toward prolonged healing, extended layoffs or that dreaded couch time that's really only fun for a day or two. But if the result is effective and complete healing, rather than scrapping it together as soon as it doesn't hurt "too bad" anymore - we might just find longer lasting periods of time to have our ultra adventures in. More time to be spent on the trails and the road with our spouses, training partners and midnight ninjas. More healing in every sense of the word.

Sometimes, the closest we can get to our running is when we're not running. And that, too, is a gift.

Because being a runner isn't only about the running.

2007 Burning River 100 Mile Run held on August 7-8, 2007. Our mission is to promote trailrunning in the Northeast Ohio region through the development and management of new events (races, fun runs and training runs) within local park systems and municipalities. Questions: contact info@wrtr.org

