

## 2013 YEAR-END REVIEW

2013 was a big year for Lake-area athletes. It was a fun and busy year, with lots of new and interesting things going on, both locally and elsewhere. Here's one last look at some of the year's highlights, along with some miscellaneous stuff.

### FIRSTS

In 2013, a number of local athletes challenge themselves to do something they had never done before:

**First triathlon:** **Alysia Maschino** not only decided to do a triathlon, but for her very first one she picked the REV3 Branson Triathlon, a half-iron distance race (1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike and 13.1-mile run) that features one of the toughest bike courses in the country. She was equal to the challenge, and finished in 7:33:22, being cheered along the way by her incredibly supportive family and friends.

**First half-iron distance triathlon:** **Jim McDermott** has finished any number of shorter "sprint" and "International" distance triathlons over the last few years, but in 2013 he stepped it up a notch to do REV3 Branson Triathlon, finishing a bit ahead of Alysia Maschino, in 6:53:11.

**First ultramarathon:** **Scott Page** and **Todd Raney** became the first Lake-area runners (as far as we know) to ever finish an ultramarathon (i.e. a race beyond the 26.2-mile marathon distance) by completing the Midnight Madness 50-Miler in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in July. They crossed the finish line, side-by-side, in 12:43:25.

**First marathon:** We had two first-time marathon finishers this year. **Terry Atteberry** finished the Bass Pro Conservation Marathon in November in 4:49:44. **Jen Wiethop** finished the Heart of America Marathon in Columbia on Labor Day in 5:21:12, and, apparently not wanting to leave it at "one and done", finished her second marathon seven weeks later at Waddell & Reed Kansas City, in 4:45:53.

**First half marathon:** We had at least two first-time half marathon finishers in 2013. **Reagan Page** and **Brandi Kincaid** finished the Bass Pro/Cohick Half Marathon in Springfield in 2:08:22 and 2:16:30, respectively. Reagan, at 13 years of age, is probably the youngest female in the Lake area to have finished a half marathon.

If there's anyone else who completed their first full or half marathon in 2013, please let me know so that I can add it to the above.

## **FASTEST FINISHES**

It often came down to a matter of minutes or seconds, but here are the fastest marathon and half marathon finishes recorded in 2013 by Lake-area runners:

### **Marathon:**

Men: **Andy Goessmann** (3:14:28; Garmin Marathon)  
Women: **Tammara Vitelli** (4:08:18; Run for the Ranch Marathon)

### **Half Marathon:**

Men: **Nigher Alfaro** (1:31:55; Rock 'n' Roll St. Louis Half Marathon)  
Women: **Ashley Pryor** (1:44:49; Route 66 Half Marathon)

It would be nice to do so, but I don't keep track of fastest finishes for 5Ks and 10Ks because (1) local race results are not always reported; (2) variations in exact distances of local "5K" courses would make finish times invalid for comparison; and (3) keeping track of results for out-of-town 5Ks/10Ks would be a nightmare.

## **OUTSTANDING PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Jim McDermott** had the biggest and best news of the year for any Lake-area athlete by earning an entry into the 2014 Boston Marathon. Jim ran a 3:52:02 at the Garmin Marathon in April. That was 2:58 under the qualifying standard for the male 60-64 age group, and 80 seconds below the cut-off for a qualifying time being accepted.

**Denny Gillen** also had an outstanding year. In his "A" race of the season, he finished the Ironman Louisville Triathlon (2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike, 26.2-mile run) in 13:29:21 on a brutally hot day. That was thirty minutes faster than he finished two years earlier. You may recall that, in 2012, Denny was badly hurt in a bike crash while on a training ride not long before what was to be his second Ironman. He obviously bounced back stronger than ever.

## **MOST MILES RACED**

In 2013, I started keeping track of the number of miles people were racing. It was done simply out of curiosity to see who was doing how much. (Only races of 10K or longer counted because of the impossibility of tracking everyone who does a 5K.) There was no intent to make it a competition, and I hope no one treats it as such.

**Todd Raney** reigned supreme among Lake-area runners in 2013 by running a total of 367.8 miles in eighteen races of 10K or longer. His total included eight marathons and one (51.5-mile) ultramarathon.

Among Lake-area women, **Angela Martin** raced a total of 159.6 miles, including three marathons and five half marathons. **Miki Schroeder**, who lives full-time in Platte City, Missouri, but who's a frequent visitor to the Lake, tallied 165.1 miles, mostly from nine half marathons.

## **LOCAL RECORDS SET**

A couple jaw-dropping records were set in 2013 in the Lake area:

The **What's Your Color 5K** run/walk, which was organized by Lake Regional's Family Birth Center and benefited the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life of Camden County, was—by a factor of more than two—the largest-ever 5K in Lake-area history, with a stunning 650 participants. Even more amazing is that there would have been more participants had registration not been closed five days before the event due to the overwhelming number of sign-ups.

**Casey O'Connor** finished the **Give 'Em The Bird 5K** in 16:05. While no one knows for sure (since no one keeps such records), that's almost certainly the fastest 5K ever run in a Lake-area event. I don't recall anyone even running a sub-17:00 5K here at the Lake.

## **5Ks**

In 2013, there were about twenty-three 5Ks held in the Lake area. That number has pretty much held steady the past several years, with a few new events replacing some that were cancelled. (It's still a dramatic increase, though, over the five or so that we had each year about a decade ago.) What was unusual about 2013 is that four of the 5Ks were color runs, one was a glow run, and one was a mud run. In 2012, by comparison, we had no color, glow, or mud runs.

We're probably close to the limit for local 5Ks, unless new races want to compete with existing ones. Except for the extremely cold and hot parts of the year, and holiday weekends, there are very few weekends left without a 5K.

## **MONEY RAISED FOR LOCAL CHARITIES**

No one really talks about it, and no one keeps track of it, but the combined total of all the money raised for various Lake-area charities at local 5Ks has to be a big number. It's only a guess, but I'd say the total is a minimum of \$75,000, and probably closer to \$100,000, if not more. Whatever the actual number, these events help a lot of worthy charities, and that fact seldom gets reported.

## **SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT COMES TO 5Ks**

A decade ago, 5Ks were just ordinary run/walk events. With the tremendous growth in the number of 5K events, however, organizers understandably started looking at ways to set their events apart from the competition. Hence, the birth of color runs, glow runs, mud runs, zombie runs, etc.—and that's on top of the holiday-themed turkey trots, jingle bell runs and commitment day runs. At most of these (can we nicely say "gimmicky") new events, competition takes a back seat to entertainment as the primary draw. It's also worth noting that many of these sports entertainment 5Ks are "corporate" in nature, in that they are trademarked, for-profit national series, such as The Color Run™, The Glow Run 5K, Electric Run, Warrior Dash, Tough Mudder, etc. Ten years ago, who would have ever thought that 5Ks would become big business?

It's going to be interesting to see over the next few years if these kinds of 5Ks remain popular, and what new "sports entertainment 5K" ideas may yet come along.

## **NEW LOCAL RACES**

A few brand-new events were introduced to the Lake area in 2013:

The **Run for the Children Half Marathon** in Eldon was a great addition to the local calendar of running events. It was well-organized, attracted nearly 100 runners, and now gives us a local replacement for the now-cancelled Moonshine Half Marathon.

The **Splash Pedal Dash Youth Triathlon** in Eldon was a huge hit with the kids who participated and the many parents and adults who came out to watch. With all of the kids in the Lake area, and with few events focused primarily on them, this event has the potential to become much, much bigger. The City of Eldon also showed that it has a perfect venue for an event like this.

The **Ozarks Gravel Road Expedition (OGRE)** bicycle race in April was a big success. The 150-mile race was as brutal as advertised, but that's what many mountain bikers like and expect. We had six local cyclists reach the finish line. **Dr. Scott Hofer** did exceptionally well and finished fifth overall. **Josh Schrock** also did well, proving that he's as good a cyclist as he is a runner. It'll be interesting to see how registrations go for the 2014 race. Some gravel-road bike races have grown into large events that sell out almost immediately. A much bigger OGRE would be great for the Lake area.

I can't personally say much about the **Osage River Bottom Rowdy Run** since other events that weekend kept me from attending, but it was apparently very well organized and a lot of fun for those who participated.

## **FAVORITE PHOTO**

In the past year, I took thousands of photographs and recorded many hours of video. By far, my absolute favorite image (shown below) was that of **Alysia Maschino** and her massive entourage of family and friends—the largest I ever recall seeing for a single athlete at a race—after she completed the REV3 Branson Triathlon.



It may look like a run-of-the-mill post-race photo, but you really had to be in Branson that day to fully appreciate it. Alysia went through a wide range of emotions that day, from a nervous “newbie” just before the start, to a jubilant and emotional first-time triathlon finisher at the finish line. During the day, her entourage traveled to various locations on the course to cheer her on, and then went wild as Alysia—running with her husband, Shawn, and two sons—came down the finish chute and crossed the finish line. It was an unforgettable day, and was memorialized with a priceless photograph.

## **HAS INTEREST IN RUNNING PEAKED?**

In the past decade, there’s been a tremendous increase in the number of people participating in running races, both nationally and here at the Lake. Anytime you see something growing so quickly, you wonder if the growth is sustainable, or whether the bubble will burst.

In 2012, I noticed that some events weren't growing as fast as they once had. A few actually saw declines in participation. Throughout 2013, I kept track of participation at nearly every marathon and half marathon in Missouri (and a few just over the border) to see if interest in running was trending up, down or flat. (I focused on those two distances since you have to be a fairly serious runner to do a half or full marathon.) Here's the data I collected:

### Marathon & Half Marathon Finishers (excludes relay team finishers)

Event	2012	2013	% Change
Adventure Max St. Louis	104	91	(12)
GO! St. Louis	10,366	9,429	(9)
Sedalia Half	161	127	(21)
Rock the Parkway	4,020	4,478	+11
Garmin	1,554	1,601	+3
Kansas Half Marathon	1,483	1,339	(10)
Running with the Cows	1,007	672	(33)
Go Girl Run Columbia	624	601	(4)
Joplin Memorial	1,253	853	(32)
Hospital Hill	3,356	3,279	(2)
Maryville Marathon & Half	93	147	+58
Heart of America	212	237	+12
MO' Cowbell*	2,400	2,593	+8
Roots 'n Blues Half	806	740	(8)
Waddell & Reed Kansas City	6,372	7,599	+19
Rock 'n' Roll St. Louis	11,221	8,976	(20)
Bass Pro	1,880	2,242	+19
Gobbler Grind	922	994	+8
Mother Road	485	389	(20)
Run for the Ranch	411	331	(20)
TOTAL	48,730	46,718	(4)

\*Excludes marathon finishers, as this distance was only offered in 2013

It appears that the dramatic growth in running has ended, at least for the time being. More races saw declines than increases, and some of the declines were pretty substantial. The two biggest races in the state—GO! St. Louis and Rock 'n' Roll St. Louis—each showed significant declines. In fact, the decline at Rock 'n' Roll St. Louis alone (down 2,245) nearly equaled the combined increases at all the races that had positive changes.

GO! St. Louis is worth a closer look since it's the state's largest full and half marathon, and has a long track record. You can see from the data below that participation at GO! St. Louis more than doubled between 2005 and 2011, but declined sharply in both 2012 and 2013.

2005	6,039
2006	8,171
2007	8,619
2008	9,747
2009	10,355
2010	12,808
2011	13,461
2012	10,366
2013	9,429

As to whether statistics nationwide are mirroring those seen here in Missouri, I honestly don't know. It's too early to say what the trend is, or what this all means for the future of distance running, but it does bear watching. Declining participation means declining revenues and potential loss of sponsors, and those are big concerns for race organizers. GO! St. Louis probably took in \$300,000 less in registration fees this year than it did just a few years ago. That has to hurt, since the cost to produce the race surely hasn't declined that much, if at all.

### **BASS PRO OUTDOOR FITNESS FESTIVAL**

"Bass Pro" became the most popular out-of-town race for Lake-area runners in 2013. In 2011, just nine runners from the Lake made the trip to Springfield for it. In 2012, the total doubled to 20, and in 2013 it rose to 31. For the first time, the number of Lake-area runners at Bass Pro exceeded the number at GO! St. Louis, which had 18 in 2013, down from 38 in 2012.

### **"MARATHON MAN" TRENT MORROW**

"Marathon Man" **Trent Morrow** completed 161 marathons in 2013, setting a new Guinness world record by beating the previous record of 157 set in 2012. Ignoring for a moment the athleticism and dedication it took to achieve that feat, it's absolutely amazing that he was able to do it. When you think of all the things outside of his control that could stand in his way—injuries, sickness, travel snafus, money shortages, etc.—Trent was very, very fortunate to have succeeded. Also, even if everything went his way for 51 weeks, if any one of these problems arose in the final week of 2013 (when he completed five marathons), his expensive and all-consuming year-long quest would have fallen just shy of its goal. One thing's for sure: The guy's got guts.

## **DIANA NYAD**

After four unsuccessful attempts over the past thirty-five years, **Diana Nyad**, at age 64, finally realized her dream of swimming nonstop from Cuba to Florida. Yes, there were some critics questioning the validity of her achievement, and some regrettable things she said years ago came back to bite her, but she did it, and that's all that really matters.

## **RASPBERRY AWARD**

**Chad Stafko** stirred up quite a controversy with a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece entitled, "OK, You're a Runner. Get Over It." In it, he derided the vanity of runners who feel a need to brag about or show off their accomplishments. Needless to say, his article generated a huge outcry from runners upset with what he had written. There were, however, quite a few people—including some runners, actually—who agreed with him. Nothing was ever settled in the argument, but it was fun to read.

## **R.I.P.**

Sadly, a few notable runners around the country crossed the ultimate finish line in 2013:

**Joy Johnson**, age 86, finished her 25<sup>th</sup> New York City Marathon in November, and died the following morning. Her motto was, "I want to die running." She came very close to doing just that.

**"Boogie"**, an 8 year-old chocolate Labrador retriever, got away from his owner on a Friday evening in October, and happened to find himself wandering around the starting line of the Evansville Half Marathon the next morning. When the gun went off, Boogie started following the runners, and didn't stop until he crossed the finish line two hours and fifteen minutes later. The day after the race, he was reunited with his owner and received a finisher's medal. He died a few days later.

Closer to home, **Chad Rogers** went out for a run one August evening from his home in Liberty, Missouri. When he didn't return, the 30 year-old husband and father became the subject of a massive search effort. Several days later, his body was discovered in a portable toilet on a construction site a few miles from home. There was no foul play involved, and his death was attributed to a congenital heart defect. A run was later held in his memory.



## **LAKE AREA RUNNERS T-SHIRTS**

The bright, yellow Lake Area Runners t-shirts introduced in March turned out to be a brilliant idea. They served a variety of purposes, including (1) creating a unifying “badge” to those who were already part of the group; (2) advertising the group to new runners in the Lake area; and (3) letting runners at out-of-town races know that there’s a running community at the Lake of the Ozarks. (A further, but unintended, benefit was that the t-shirts made it easy to spot Lake-area participants among hordes of runners at big, out-of-town events.)

I don’t know exactly who came up with the idea for the t-shirts, but **Scott Page** deserves some or most of the credit for turning the idea into a reality.

## **BOSTON MARATHON**

A recap of 2013 wouldn’t be complete without mentioning the Boston Marathon. The deadly terrorist bombing that halted the iconic event was undoubtedly the biggest sports story of the year. It’s sad that, for years to come, when you see or hear the words “Boston Marathon”, the first thing you’ll think of is that horrendous, violent act.

Immediately after the tragedy, runners from around the world joined together to show their support for the victims of the bombing. They also made an entry into the 2014 Boston Marathon the most coveted one in the race’s 118-year history.

(End)