

NOVEMBER 2021 | VOL 1 | ISSUE 4

# STRIDERS NEWSLETTER

NORTH TEXAS STRIDERS RUNNING CLUB



## ADVENTURES OF A TRIATHLETE

*Written by Sonia Soprenuk*

I've been an active Strider's member for over 21 years and have grown in the sport in a way I had never dreamed of. I've been inspired by so many talented athletes, mentored by the best, and have built long-lasting friendships with many of our club members. Actively involved in multiple activities such as races, finish line duties, recruiting, etc. Also the co-founder along with Tom Alvey of the infamous "Hill Run" which would become our signature run since day one. Below my athletic history since I joined the club.

My personal accomplishments: 9 times Boston Qualifier, 3X Boston marathons, 2X New York City marathons, 1 Ultramarathon, more half marathons than I can care to remember, 2X Ironman full distance World Championship qualifier, 6 full Ironman races including 1 Kona, and a bunch of half ironman's. In the pursuit of my athletic goals I became RRCA certified running coach and USAT Level 1 triathlon coach.

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TUESDAY: TRACK  
HARMON HIGH  
SCHOOL, 5:30AM

WEDNESDAY: TRAILS  
MURREL PARK,  
7:45AM

THURSDAY: HILLS  
POST OAK PARK,  
5:30AM

SATURDAY: ROAD OR  
TRAILS - LAKESIDE  
STARBUCKS, 7:30AM

SUNDAY: ROAD  
BARTONVILLE  
KROGER, 7AM



## UPCOMING RACES

Unofficial Striders Turkey Trot - Bartonville, Nov 25

Double Oak Turkey Trot 5K - Nov 25

BMW Dallas Marathon Weekend - Dec 10-12

Irving Frost Half Marathon - Dec 18

LGRAW's Bold in the Cold - Jan 15, 2022

Hot Chocolate 15K/5K - Feb 12, 2022

Cowtown Marathon Weekend - Feb 26-27

*Join the North Texas Striders Facebook forum for discount race codes when available.*

## 4 IN 4

*Written by Lee Rebodos*

Four endurance events in a four week span, that is what I set out to do this past fall! It all started with the Ironman 70.3 World Championship in St. George, Utah on September 18th. I went out to Utah for this half ironman triathlon with several other tri friends who qualified from the Flower Mound area (fellow Striders Maria, Tracey, Ken) and the event had it all, including a strong rain and windstorm on the hilly bike portion. It was such a great experience with the beautiful Utah background along the bike and run course.

Then one week later on September 25th, I returned to the area to run/hike the entire Grand Canyon called "Rim to Rim to Rim". This is an informal run/hike where we started early in the morning at the south side of the Grand Canyon, slowly ran down to and along the bottom of the rim, then hiked up the north rim (5,800 ft. elevation gain), then back down and across the bottom, and then finally backup the south rim (4,400 ft. elevation gain, Bright Angel trail).

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*"If it doesn't challenge you,  
it won't change you."*

- Fred DeVito

## PAST RACES & PLACES

Ironman 70.3 Boulder - **Lee Rebodos** (qualified for Ironman 70.3 World Championships)  
 USA Triathlon National Championships - **Tracey Roesner**  
 Leadville 100 Trail Race - **Bret Wilson** and **Kathy Kromis**  
 Hotter' N Hell 100-Mile Bike PLUS Wee Chi Tah Half Marathon Trail - **Sonia Soprenuk**  
 NYC 5th Avenue Mile - **Michael Bratton** (6:22), **Rob Avila** (6:46), **Jenna Avila** (7:35)  
 Tour de Fluer Half Marathon & QM - **Steve Zinecker**, **Bill Vesterman**, **Chand Yadev**, **Michael Bratton** (1:39:18 - PR), **Tiffany Harlow** (QM), **Brock Harlow** (QM)  
 70.3 World Championships - **Tracey Roesner**, **Lee Rebodos**, **Maria Lozovskaya**, **Ken Ryder**  
 Piney Woods Trail Race - **Rusty Yowell**, **Taylor Yowell**  
 Disco Triathlon - **Mark Tuggle**  
 Rim to Rim Grand Canyon Experience - **Lee Rebodos**, **Chelsea Le Clair**, **Maria Lozovskaya**  
 Run Lantana - **Erika McCann** and family, **Michael Bratton** (44:37 10K PR, 22:01 5K PR, 1st AG, 7th Overall) and family, **Cecilia Holt**  
 Boston Marathon - **Kelley Aviles**, **Lee Rebodos**  
 Virtual Boston Marathon - **Ram Kasarla**, **Vamshi Chamala**, **Ram Sama**, **Harish Kasunganti**  
 Salem Half Marathon - **Mark Tuggle** (7th overall)

Ironman Texas - **Sonia Soprenuk** (2nd AG)  
 Ragnar Trail Texas - Ultra: **Michael Bratton**, **Robert Avila**, **Richard Evans**, **Maria Lozovskaya** (1st division Mixed, 7th overall Ultra)  
 Ragnar Trail Texas - Ultra Masters: **Steve Zinecker**, **Lee Rebodos**, **Chip Kelsey**, **Bill Vesterman** (1st division Masters, 6th overall Ultra)  
 Ragnar Trail Texas: **Jenna Avila**, **Tiffany Harlow**, **Dave Emerson**, **Brock Harlow**, **Sean Ingalls**, **Janet Ingalls**, **Dustin Wernicke**, **Justin Wilson** (22nd overall Standard, 4th division Mixed)  
 Mayor's 5K on the 5th Runway, Atlanta: **Rick**, **Amy** and **Noah Velasquez**  
 The Colony Half: **Mark Tuggle** (3rd overall; 1st Masters)  
 Ironman Waco 70.3 - **Maria Lozovskaya**  
 NYC Marathon - **Maria Lozovskaya**, **Ram Reddy**, **Hareesh Kaduganti**, **Evelyn Natal**  
 DRC Half Marathon - **Rosemarie Coletto** (1st AG), **Bill Vesterman**  
 Fort Worth Marathon Weekend - **Lee Rebodos** (20-mi, 4th overall, 1st AG), **Mark Tuggle** (11th overall, 3rd AG)  
 Rockledge Rumble - **Jasmine Johnson** (1st OA - 30K), **Chip Kelsey** (2nd AG - 50K), **Lee Rebodos** (3rd AG - 50K), **Rusty Yowell** (1st AG - 30K), **Chelsea Le Clair**, **Erika McCann**, **Tracey Roesner** (1st AG - 15K), **Richard Evans** (3rd AG - 15K), **Vamshi Chamala** (3rd AG - 15K), **Robin Olsta Smith**



## HOW RAGNAR IS A LOT LIKE LIFE

*Written by Tiffany Harlow*

In October, I finished my second Ragnar Trail Texas, a 120-mile trail relay in the rocky, rolling hills of central Texas. Eight team members ran legs of 3-miles, 5-miles and 7-miles in warm and muggy daytime conditions, and cool and pitch black nighttime conditions...all while camping and getting less than optimal rest in between legs. But what we learned from it and learned about ourselves in the process is something that can't be replicated by staying in the safe bubble of routine. No, this challenge stripped off the "I'm fine" exterior and exposed our true self. And what we realized was quite refreshing.

### **Lesson #1: Life and Trail Races are Better Together**

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." - African Proverb

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## LET'S GET SOCIAL!

**NTX Strider's Christmas Party**

**Friday December 10th**

**6:30 pm**

**White Elephant Gift Exchange**

**BBQ provided by the club**

**Please bring a side**

**Where: Jasmine Johnson Estate**

**RSVP on the Facebook event**

*Thanks to everyone who came out to  
the club social on Nov 13th!*

*Photos are in the Facebook forum.*

# TALK OF THE TOWN

## PARENTS WEEKLY



*Congrats to Bill & Lisa Vesterman  
welcoming Baby Christian*



*Congrats to Ryan & Kelsie  
Hammer welcoming Baby Sadie*



*Congrats to Steven & Caroline  
Solazzo welcoming a Baby Girl  
(soon!)*

## TRACK COACHES OF AMERICA



*Shout out to Stephanie Dellaria  
for growing our track following!*

## I'M TOO SEXY FOR THIS SHIRT



*All the Striders who ordered  
gear, thanks to Rick Velasquez*

## ANIMALS ON THE TRAIL



*Wasps of North Shore – Shilpa  
Kaluvala, Steve Zinecker  
(not pictured)*



*The Zebra at Bartonville*



*Jennifer Vincent, Becca Edwards,  
and Michael Bratton for saving  
the Frenchy puppy named Lady*

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Recap of "IRONMAN TEXAS" – Oct 9th 2021 –  
The woodlands – 140.2 miles

**2.4 mi open water swim, 112 mi bike and 26.2 mi run.**

My goal entering this race was to defend/improve the 3rd Place AG obtained in the same race back in 2019.

**Training:** 5 months of solid training on Swim, bike, run, and nutrition/hydration (research and practice during several race rehearsals), yoga and strength sessions. I peaked 24 hours a week of training with no days off until taper times. I developed a consistent sleeping routine to allow my body to recover and I managed to get to the start line injury free.

**Race day:** The humidity started @ 100% and the heat reached later on 91 degrees. My alarm went off at 3:30 am and the crew support at 4 am. Liquid breakfast at 4am and the hydration process began. Thank God for my support crew!

**Swim: 2.4 miles.** No wetsuit legal. Not favorable for me. Warm up in the water wasn't allowed so I did a short jog, then a goodbye hug to my support crew, and lined up. I was calmed but anxious to see what I had to bring to the table this day. Roll down started at 7:15 am. The water was chilly at first but I got used to it quickly. The course was very straight forward. But as expected, this swim felt like being inside a blender. For the first time ever, a guy who unintentionally knocked me in the face stopped and apologize! That was sweet... little things that make your life better. Around mile 1.5 started to feel tired and slowed down specially entering into the canal (narrow and shallow), trying desperately to remove from my neck and arms all the debris and algae over and over until the finish. A disappointing 1:50 hr (I was expecting 1:35). So I knew I was really behind but nothing I could do about it so I moved on with my plan. I came out of the water in 11th place AG.

Transition area opened at 5:30 am. We arrived on time and set up nutrition on the bike and pump the tires. Then 1 mile walk to the start (lake).

**T1:** I sprinted out of the water to transition and accidentally dropped my spare goggles ... so spend 15 secs trying to decide what was more important ... the goggles or T time ... I ran back to recover my expensive goggles just to see the person who picked them up walking away with them. And to add to the disappointment extra 45 seconds to transition. Total T time: 4:23.

**Bike:** A long run with the bike to the designated spot to mount it. I took off and started to work my way into a steady rhythm. I felt strong and knew I had to work very hard if I wanted to meet my goal. However, I couldn't blow it so I remained calmed and steady, trying to save my legs for the run. (Earlier during the week I had made the mistake of putting new racing wheels which I knew during the test they were a bit heavier for me or I just wasn't used to). Then the head wind picked up. At around mile 30 and my hips were already screaming. I started worrying about how I was going to ride 112 miles if I was already toast at mile 35. It was really hard trying to stay in aero position with my sore hips so I alternated both positions:

straight up and aero. But in that wind sitting upright was going to kill my times. Thanks for the tail wind at the turn around that gave a little break to my legs for 15 miles. Second loop heading into the wind again but this time much stronger. I entered the pain cave and forced myself into aero position for the remaining 60 miles at a steady effort and later on with a short tail wind coming back into town. Bike time 6:22 hrs. It was a tough bike segment, physically and mentally. I had made progress to #4 AG.

**T2** was uneventful. 5:23 min (my goal was 2 min).

**Run:** 3 Loops, flat course. Hot, humid, tired. For the first 4 miles I couldn't focus trying to handle all the extra stuff I was carrying (I forgot to empty my jersey pockets after the bike). I started to get rid of water bottle, extra energy gels, extra nutrition, anti chafing, stomach pills, sunscreen, you name it, I had it. Lesson learned. At mile 5 I started to become more "mentally present" but I was still feeling tired. I didn't want to force it that early and fall into exhaustion. Better to keep it conservative rather than attacking too soon. At mile 10 (after a restroom stop) I started to plan my next move and decided to remain steady at that pace and wait until the half marathon mark. At mile 13 I started to pick up the pace gradually until I reached a pace that I knew I could sustain for the remainder of the marathon. Unfortunately my tummy wasn't happy any longer. From this point it was impossible to hold in my stomach any fluids or gels. Only thing I could take was ice. At mile 20 things started to get really difficult and had to bring my mental skills into full force to resist the temptation to slow down or walk. So my brain took control and I was able to sustain full focus on the task. An impulse to quit or slow down was not even there, on the contrary, I was able to follow my negative splits strategy. But so deeply focused on the task that I found myself running at mile 27... when I realized I had missed the exit to the finish line...pitch dark and lonely... a spectator came by and I asked her, she said I was okay... why did I think she should had known...!?? A runner came by... he was starting his third loop... he said "you have one more loop to run" ... I insisted NO! I already have 27 miles... at this point I am crying and desperate... so he exclaimed: so you missed to exit to the finish line!!! I go yeah! I turned around and sprinted like a mad man and still couldn't find the exit... then a nice guy came out of nowhere told me YOU MISSED THE FINISH LINE!!! I said yes I know! ... he said follow me... and he was sprinting like a gazelle and I am sprinting behind him... screaming how much more every two minutes. Finally after running 2 extra miles there was the exit to the finish line... I had no clue I had all that speed left in me until I really needed it. I know I could just had walked back and take it easy but that's not what I had in mind to finish the race. Another half mile and I crossed the finish line where I saw Sheldon who yield to me "you are in second place". I just couldn't believe it! I am so glad I sprinted those extra miles. It paid off. My total time was 13 hrs 24 minutes. I met my goal of moving up on my ranking and I qualified again for the Ironman World Championship. Thanks to The Striders for all the inspiration you provide to the running community. I'm looking forward to log more miles with you the upcoming seasons. Stay strong my friends.

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#### *4 in 4 by Lee Rebodos*

The views along the trail within the Grand Canyon are amazing and breathtaking! It took me roughly 17.5 hours or so to complete the 47.5 mile event including breaks/lunch stop and the last part up the south side at night was such a struggle for me as I had nausea, dehydration and a right quad strain. This was such a life changing and bucket list event that was much harder than I thought it would be with the heat and elevation gain, but I would strongly recommend every runner/hiker to do this. No time to rest and relax after this, but I do have two weeks until the Boston Marathon.

After trying to recover from the beating my legs took and my strained right quad from the Grand Canyon, I lined up in Hopkinton, MA for the 125th Boston Marathon on Monday, October 11th, the first time the Boston Marathon did not take place in April due to the Covid pandemic. It had been 13 years since I last ran Boston back when I just use to run before taking up triathlon. The weather was great and the staggered start made it a smooth start to the marathon. I truly just ran at a moderate pace and enjoyed the atmosphere and all the cheering people along each town that we passed as we made our way to Boylston street in downtown Boston. I high fived a lot of kids and a lot of the young girls at Wellsley College and even stopped to kiss a beautiful woman (my wife at mile 17) along the way. The Boston Marathon is truly the “Super Bowl” of marathons. Time for the offseason and rest and recovery? Nope.

Only four days after the Boston Marathon on Monday, I made my way down to Comfort, Texas for the Ragnar Ultra Trail Relays with a big group of NTX Striders that started Friday morning Oct. 15th. I was on the Masters Ultra Team with Bill, Steve Z., and Chip where we each ran 3 legs of about 10 miles spread out over 21 hours. I was truly worried about having anything left in my legs but did not want to let our team down and we ended up winning the masters division. This team trail relay event is one of the NTX Striders annual team running events and is both hard and fun at the same time! Getting zero hours of sleep made my third leg a survival event but the bonding and commiserating with the other Striders around our camp made this such a fun event. Although there was a lot of talk of glamping, only doing the standard 8 person relay (instead of Ultra), carpooling so we don't fall asleep on drive home, etc. from our team members for next year!

So my 4 in 4 was completed with a total of about 175 miles for all four events. How did I do it and survive? I just made sure each event that I did not race all out and just completed each one at an easy/moderate effort. It also, of course, took a lot of consistent training for the several months prior to the events but I really think the reason I completed all the events was mostly because of all my tri and running friends who were there with me at each event. Oh by the way, it was supposed to originally be 5 in 5 as I was supposed to do Waco 70.3 Half Ironman one week after Ragnar Ultra Trail Relays, but for once I listened to my body and deferred Waco 70.3 to next year!

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#### *Ragnar by Tiffany Harlow*

Running on your own is great, don't get me wrong. I'm a big fan of only having to count on me, myself and I. But when the road gets rough (and rocky and hilly) and the nights get long and you don't know how much life is left on your headlamp battery, having other runners who have your back or a spare light can make all the difference in your mental fortitude.

**Lesson #2: Kind People are the BEST to Encounter along the Way**  
I absolutely love trail running because of the people. Trail runners are some of the kindest and most encouraging humans on the planet – and almost always are complete strangers. On the journey of life (or Ragnar), a little kindness and humor goes a long way!

**Lesson #3: When You get Off-Track, Sometimes You Have to Go Backwards**

I HATE getting lost. In fact, I pride myself in being stellar in following directions and even know the difference between east and west. But at Ragnar this year I took a wrong turn and got lost. Along with a dozen other runners, we had to back track, adding over a mile to our last long legs and precious minutes to our time. But sometimes in life you take a wrong turn. It may not be caused by cows knocking down the wrong-way signs, (those DAMN cows!) but when it happens, take a few steps back and see where you went off-track. Then step by step, get back on the course. It may even train your brain to be on the lookout for those wrong-way symbols in the future.

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Ragnar by Tiffany Harlow

**Lesson #4: There are Ups and Downs - even Within the Ups and Downs**

On the yellow loop, you are supposed to climb for 3+ miles. I noticed during the climb a few exhilarating downhill that give me a little boost. And on the way down, you guessed it. There were some climbs I was not expecting. In life, there are times when I think "ahh, these are the good times," only to find a really tough stretch. And others when I'm in the midst of the storm but somehow get a little momentum from something unexpected. This. Is. Just. Life. And also it's really representative of Ragnar. Look for the ups within the downs and be prepared for the downs within the ups. Or the other way around on trails!

**Lesson #5: Celebrate Beginnings, Endings and When You've Done Something Brave**

Ragnar does a great job of this. Every group starting on the half-hour gets a count down and massive cheering. Every group that comes across the finish line on the final leg enjoys hearing their name called out to cheers and high fives (and sometimes a beer shotgun, if you're lucky!) And just for finishing, you get a shirt, swag and a crazy rugged medal. In life, take a moment to celebrate the milestones, celebrate starting something new and even celebrate just because we've been brave. Shot-gunning is completely optional.

**Lesson #6: Let Go of the Things You Can't Control**

I was incredibly stressed before this race. The forecast showed rain, my husband was joining me for his first-ever trail race, and I was dragging two unsuspecting friends along because I had hyped up my last Ragnar race. I was worried that they would all hate me, worried we would have to run in the mud, worried camping would SUCK in the rain. But I had an epiphany two days before the race. I could not control the weather or anyone else's moods towards the race. The only thing I could control was my attitude and effort. Knowing what's yours to take on and what's OK to let go can take your stress level down a few notches. Spoiler alert: it didn't rain while we were there AND my husband and friends loved the experience!

**Lesson #7: Life is Better When You Have a Little Fun With It**

Laughing burns approximately 120 calories in an hour. Not quite the same as running, but think what would happen if you run, then laugh, then run some more!? Not only is this healthy for you, but having fun at races and in life brings people together and makes great fodder for inside jokes (murder shed...anyone??)

Maybe it was the lack of sleep or the rawness of our bits and our souls, but I feel like in the depths of the night with a star-covered sky as big as the state itself, we uncovered some real truths in the search for the meaning of life. Thanks, Ragnar, for the lessons.

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# BREATHWORK

By: Eric Sardina, Psychology First Breakthwork Coach

Eric Sardina lead a Breathwork session with the Striders on Saturday, November 20th. Here are a few reminders from the session.

### Think of breaking in this way:

Sympathetic = if you're showing sympathy, it's because someone is hurt or suffering. So it's engaged and active.

Parasympathetic = parachute. Calm, gliding, quiet with only the wind (breath) in your ears.

### From the session:

We did Wim Hoff first, which is sympathetic. Engaging and getting ready to fight or handle something difficult. I did that to show how ridding ourselves of CO2 can make a huge physiological difference. Your body is then empty of CO2 which is toxic and full of O2 and is in a state of alkalinity (good) and ready to fight/ compete. Supercharged.

The box breathing and 1x inhale (nose)/ 2x exhale (mouth) is calming. Parasympathetic. Focused on a long slow exhale to empty the CO2. This is what to do to de-stress or aide in calming the mind for sleep. Great to do for 2-5 minutes during the day or whenever stressed. We shallow breathe all day, so this lets us check in with our breath for low, slow deep breath. Very calming.

For an athlete, you want to be parasympathetic until it's go time. Calm, no wasted energy. Low heart rate. Inhale nose 2-3 seconds/ exhale mouth 4-6 seconds. Then within 10 minutes of the event start, do one or two rounds of Wim breathing to fire up the system. It's go time.

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## BETTER TOGETHER!

