

# CLUB MEMORIES: 1975-1990 with Jim Barry, Dave Cyplick and Paul Spiezio

THE YEAR WAS 1975.



Gerald Ford was President and, like the year before, the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal dominated our national news coverage.

With Glen Campbell singing about life as a Rhinestone Cowboy, the Captain and Tennille were hoping Love Will Keep Us Together while the BeeGees were Jive 'Talkin' and Van McCoy was doing The Hustle.

In sports, the Steelers beat the Vikings in Super Bowl IX. Muhammad Ali took the heavy-weight crown of boxing after defeating Joe Frazier in a 14 round slug fest called the Thrilla in Manila. And "Boston Billy" Rodgers won the Boston Marathon with a time of 2:09:55.

That year's summer blockbuster movie was a shark flick called "Jaws", while on the small screen two new shows premiered: Saturday Night Live and Wheel of Fortune.

Meanwhile in Joliet, Illinois...

DAVE CYPLICK: Running gained momentum as an everyday fitness activity for the average person; no longer was it the exclusive domain of ex high school and college runners or those training for other sports. From this background, running began to develop as an organized activity in the greater Joliet area.

In 1975, the Joliet YMCA Running Club was founded. The YMCA was located on Ottawa Street in a building that exists today and serves as a retirement home. The Y had a circular running track that was suspended from the ceiling. Needless to say, the running track couldn't have been the favorite running venue of club members at the time.





*Photo from Google*

**ABOVE:** The old Y building, designed by Daniel Burnham, is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

DAVE CYPLICK: During those first few years, the club had a couple of dozen members. Les Cox served as the first club president from 1975 through 1978. Jim Robinson then took over as club president from 1979-1981.

During the 1970s, road races began to appear in the Joliet area. By 1980, the YMCA running club began hosting races. They included the Musser Sports 7 ½ mile classic in New Lenox in May and the Joliet Days 10K in July. Our Poultry and Pie Predictor race began on Thanksgiving as a 5 miler the following year. The oldest area continuous race, the Frosty Five, began in 1980. At that time, typical race fees were \$6 if you pre-registered and \$8 for race day registration.

The club also took over control of the Will County Road Race Circuit and renamed it the Prairie State Circuit. In addition to the Musser Sports race, Joliet Days 10K and the Frosty Five, **the circuit included Gordies' Run 10k, the Crest Hill 10K and the Rockdale Rambling 10K.** The club instituted 5 year age group awards as a standard procedure for our own races and other Will County races soon followed our example. We were the first running club to do this in the Chicagoland area as well as the first club to offer overall Masters awards at races.

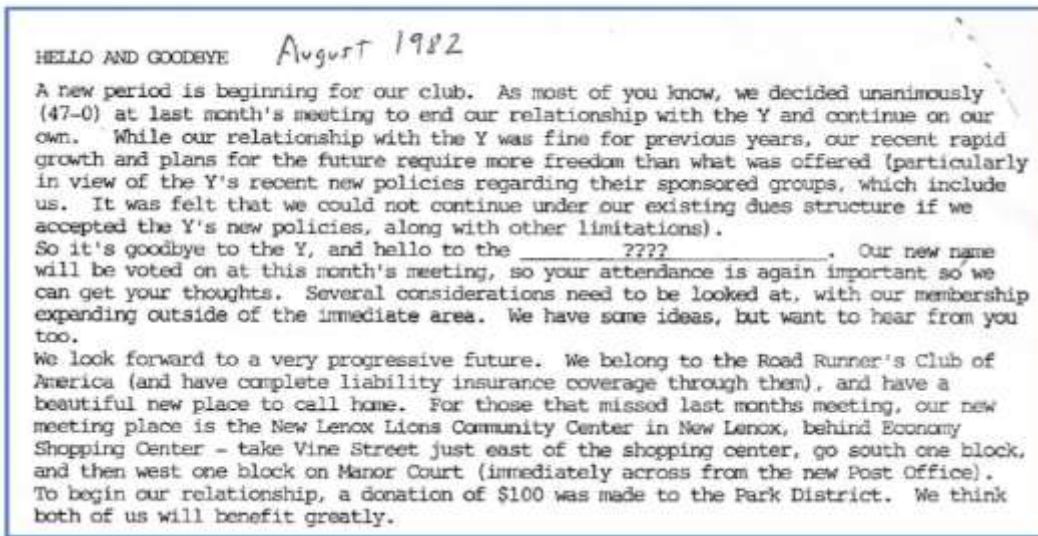
Membership growth in the club was strong in the early to mid-1980's. **The club went from 30-40 members to nearly 300.** The Joliet YMCA retained strict control over club activities and finances.

As a result, the club split off from the YMCA in 1982 and officially became the Prairie State Road Runners, affiliating with the Road Runners Club of America, a relationship we still have currently.

Gary Moss served as club president from

1982 through 1986. In 1983, Musser's went out of business and for one year the race was known as the Marine Corps Classic and then became the Armed Forces Classic 12K in 1984. The Joliet Days race became the Joliet Summerfest race, eventually becoming a CARA circuit race in 1986, the last year it was held due to logistical difficulties we encountered with the Joliet Police Department. One other race was added in 1983, the Prairie State Half Marathon, which ran from Lincolnway High School in New Lenox out to Mokena and back. By 1985, this race was reduced in distance to the Prairie State 10 miler.

Janet Velemir was club president from 1987 through 1989. PSRR continued to host multiple races in the latter half of the 1980's and even added a fifth race, the Illinois Open State Cross Country 8k Championship in 1988 at the Camp Sha-Wa-Na-See 4H Camp across from Kankakee River State Park. Jim Hubbell was the first race director, later followed by Jack Picciolo. This race featured some challenging terrain including a steep ravine you found yourself sliding down if you didn't pay attention. In 1990 Dan Keenan served as club president followed by a one year return by Gary Moss in 1991.



PAUL SPIEZIO: I was born and raised in the Joliet area (Braceville to be exact). However, I left the Joliet area in January 1989 due to a transfer with Caterpillar. However, I have loved the PSRR club forever and continued and continue to pay my membership dues every year. When I first moved, I was able to get back and run some races, but as I took on the running scene in the Peoria area, I began to concentrate my racing here.

I ran in the era of Gary Moss, Mary Moss, Greg Rose, Lance Bovard, Patrick Koerner and others I can't totally remember at this time. But competition was fierce as we raced each other. We raced a lot back in those days late 70s and 80s. It was fun, running was

just beginning to come into its own, we had Shorter and Rodgers and people like that to look up to. I remember a race that went through Rockdale and West Side of Joliet finishing on the track at Joliet West High School. From memory can't remember the name or year [*editor's note: 1984 Deerbrook 25k rediscovered when Paul went through his archives*], but Bill Rodgers ran the race and I crossed the finish line with him, and a friend caught it on camera that I later had developed in an 8 x 10 and sent to him which he returned autographed.

**"THE LONG RACE BEFORE AMERICA'S MARATHON"**  
**DEERBROOK'S 25K**  
**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS GERIATRIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

**RACE RESULTS:**

Overall	Race #	Age	Sex	Time	Name	City
1	0332	31	M	1:22.34	Raymond Hayes	Davenport, Ill.
2	0003	34	M	1:23.15	Gary Moss	Joliet, Ill.
3	0448	27	M	1:24.47	Chris Cudworth	St. Charles, Ill.
4	0500	20	M	1:24.58	Rodolfo Castellanos	Chicago, Ill.
5	0251	25	M	1:26.28	Thomas Prisco	Chicago Heights, Ill.
6	0306	37	M	1:27.03	Jim Barber	Chicago, Ill.
7	0342	40	M	1:27.06	Joe Vega	Chicago Heights, Ill.
8	0150	32	M	1:28.37	Albert Lorens	University Park
9	0008	36	M	1:29.30	Steve Currins	Beecher, Ill.
10	0382	31	M	1:29.42	Rob Garner	Rolling Meadows
11	0358	32	M	1:30.12	Julio Martinez	Chicago, Ill.
12	0197	24	M	1:30.43	James Barry	Chicago, Ill.
13	0330	31	M	1:31.10	Scott Putnam	Oak Park, Ill.
14	0002	29	M	1:31.32	Carl Cox	Atlanta, Ill.
15	0327	25	M	1:32.02	Al Kirsininkas	Oak Park, Ill.
16	0451	35	M	1:32.30	Peter Wenger	Chicago, Ill.
17	0371	21	M	1:32.49	Danny Stolzenbach	Grant Park, Ill.
18	0329	27	M	1:33.00	Scott Foster	River Forest, Ill.
19	0328	28	M	1:33.01	Michael Caprile	Oak Park, Ill.
20	0331	32	M	1:33.08	Gary Worcester	Oak Park, Ill.
21	0414	37	M	1:34.00	Manuel Palcios	Joliet, Ill.
22	0405	20	M	1:34.23	Patrick McGovern	Joliet, Ill.
23	0490	30	M	1:34.28	Chris Krolack	Shorewood, Ill.
24	0487	35	M	1:34.29	Sam Buccarelli	New Lenox, Ill.
25	0419	32	M	1:34.43	Mike Ferguson	Joliet, Ill.
26	0411	29	M	1:34.58	Dara Azari	Arlington Heights
27	0498	32	M	1:35.08	Jose Castellanos	Chicago, Ill.
28	0408	30	M	1:35.21	Jeffrey Crowhurst	Joliet, Ill.
29	0257	50	M	1:35.30	Juan Barrajas	Harvey, Ill.
30	0488	38	M	1:36.07	Angelo Cruz	Mundelin, Ill.
31	0360	32	M	1:36.20	William Escobar	Calumet City, Ill.
32	0483	26	M	1:37.01	Jorge Desideric	Sauk Village, Ill.
33	0127	28	M	1:37.07	Don Buganski	Shererville, Ill.
34	0297	32	M	1:37.14	Jeffy Briggs	Chicago, Ill.
35	0195	44	M	1:37.25	Andy Lawrence	Northbrook, Ill.
36	0426	34	M	1:37.29	Clark Schreiber	Park Forest, Ill.
37	0491	27	M	1:37.34	Farias Alvarez	Chicago, Ill.
38	0178	41	M	1:38.37	Dave Davis	Schaumburg, Ill.
39	0163	30	M	1:39.01	Paul Speizo	Braceville, Ill.
40	0370	38	M	1:39.02	Arthur Kimber	Chicago, Ill.
41	0001	37	M	1:39.03	Bill Rodgers	(Boston Billy)
42	0152	28	M	1:39.25	Kurt Wright	Chicago, Ill.
43	0462	34	M	1:39.41	Kurt Faber	Shorewood, Ill.
44	0173	43	M	1:39.52	Pete Viehweg	New Lenox, Ill.
45	0117	44	M	1:40.15	Thomas Guilfoyle	Chicago, Ill.
46	0190	34	M	1:40.18	Gary Porter	Geneva, Ill.
47	0333	31	M	1:40.33	Leslie Watson	Chicago, Ill.
48	0221	47	M	1:40.37	Jack Coleman	Joliet, Ill.
49	0237	50	M	1:40.43	Lynndon Ruber	Glenview, Ill.
50	0460	38	M	1:40.49	Joel Hale	Glendale, Ill.
51	0376	34	M	1:40.52	Mike Davis	New Lenox, Ill.
52	0402	33	M	1:40.56	Pablo Hernandez	Chicago, Ill.

THE LONG RACE BEFORE AMERICA'S MASTHON

Sunday, September 30, 1984 - 8:00 A.M.

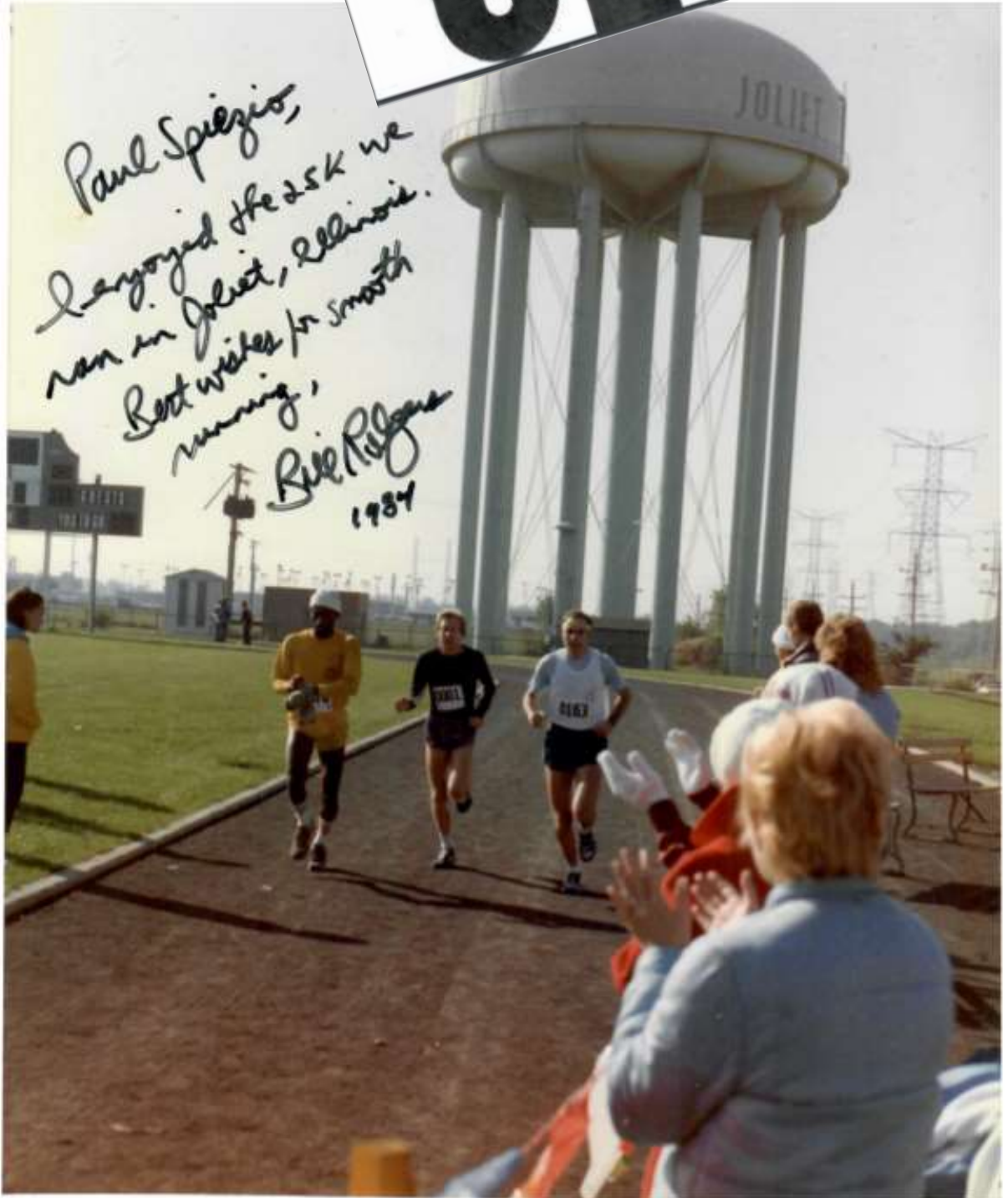


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On Sunday, Sept 30, bring BILL HODOR to the Illinois Geriatric Nursing Centre.

607-244-4111

Paul Spiezio,  
I enjoyed the 25K we  
ran in Joliet, Illinois.  
Best wishes for smooth  
running,  
Bill Poljan  
1984



PAUL SPIEZIO: I, again if memory is correct, remember getting a call two weeks before the River to River run 1990 from Lance Bovard. One of the male runners had just bailed and they were looking for a fast runner to replace him. So Lance called and I went and we won the Mixed Division and broke the 8 hour mark. I also remember the many Sunday mornings that John Randolph and I would meet in Channahon on the Canal Trail and do 10, 12, 14 milers. Sometimes a few others would join, but most of the time it was John and me. John and I would rotate turns going out early and placing water along the trail to hydrate with. I guess we were pioneers in those days.



**ILLINOIS RIVER TO RIVER RELAY**

**21 April, 1990**

**Open Division**

- 7:16:21 ~ Elite Non-Repeat Repeats, from Southern Illinois
- 7:32:57 ~ Second Wind, from Champaign-Urbana, Ill.
- 7:33:40 ~ Sterling Runners, from Sterling, Ill.
- 7:38:24 ~ Team Centralia, from Centralia, Ill.
- 7:43:30 ~ Gateway Athletics Hares, from Saint Louis, Mo.
- 7:54:31 ~ Brinkers Okers #1, from Belleville, Ill.
- 7:57:09 ~ Road Hogs, from Ames, Iowa

**Women's Division**

- 8:59:02 ~ TCBY Fit to be Tris, from Saint Louis, Mo.
- 9:00:00 ~ Second Wind (Women), from Champaign-Urbana, Ill.
- 9:24:01 ~ Adrienne's Revenge, from Saint Louis, Mo.

**Mixed Division**

- 7:59:43 ~ Prairie State Mixed Blessing, from New Lenox, Ill.
- 8:52:23 ~ USAthletics - Mixed, from Saint Louis, Mo.
- 9:05:02 ~ The Big Gulps, from Saint Louis, Mo.
- 9:06:04 ~ Zephyrs, from Saint Charles, Mo.
- 9:07:36 ~ Blade Runners, from Saint Louis, Mo.

**Masters Division**

- 7:51:34 ~ Wandering Walukis, from Carbondale, Ill.
- 8:08:10 ~ DJ's Runners, from Peoria, Ill.
- 8:09:47 ~ USAthletics - Masters, from Saint Louis, Mo.

**Women-Masters Division**

- 11:43:35 ~ Masters Magic, from Saint Louis, Mo.

**Mixed-Masters Division**

- 9:20:37 ~ Mix-Master Beaters, from Park Forest, Ill.

**Handicap Division (Adjusted Finish Times)**

- 7:04:41 ~ Chicago Wet Socks, from Chicago, Ill.
- 7:13:59 ~ Masters of Dune, from Michigan City, Ind.
- 7:29:49 ~ Lisle Windrunners Handicap, from Lisle, Ill.
- 7:34:12 ~ Club 400 Striders, from Southern Illinois

**Corporate Division**

- 7:43:03 \* ~ McDonnell Douglas Flyers, from Saint Louis, Mo.
- 9:00:21 ~ General Tire Relay Team, from Mount Vernon, Ill.
- 9:36:14 ~ Anheuser-Busch Bud Runners, from Saint Louis, Mo.

**Corporate (Handicap) Division (Adjusted Finish Times)**

Display a menu



JIM BARRY: I became a runner because of my father (PSRR HOF member James G Barry). He has been a runner my whole life and we went to road races when I was a kid. I started running as a sophomore in high school. I thought that I would just do road races after that but when I got to college at DePaul University my freshman year I would sometimes run into guys on the track team while I was running along the lakefront and would join them for some long runs. They convinced me to join the cross country team for my Sophomore year. I was a mediocre runner by NCAA Division 1 standards but improved as a runner significantly.

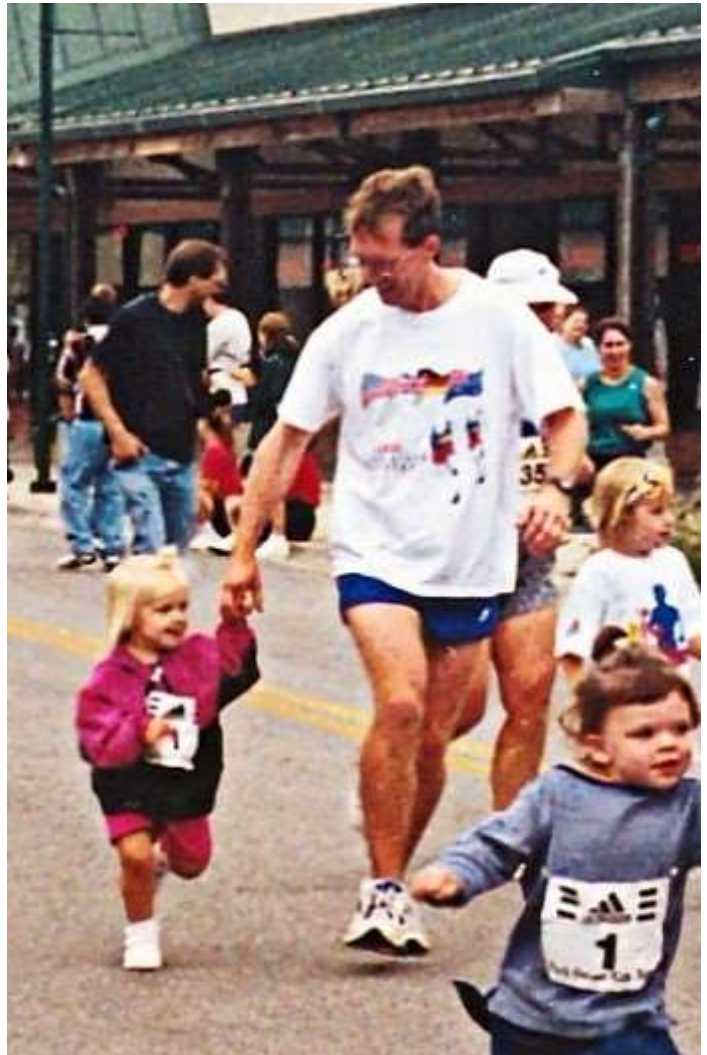
I continued to train pretty hard while in law school (though not at college levels) and was able to keep up a decent training regime but once I started working as a lawyer, I was working 50-60 hours a week and my training fell off. Still I managed to remain competitive at local road races for many years. However, continued long hours working as a lawyer, marriage, kids and the passage of time all contributed to my decline as a runner. I have kept at it but a series of injuries have limited my ability to do anything more than jog in recent years. Right now, I am recovering from a serious case of plantar fasciitis that has sidelined me for the last 18 months but have started jogging again and hope to be able to get back out there. My father was running half marathons into his 80s, so I figure that I have a long running career ahead of me still. Maybe when I retire and get regular sleep it will be better (or so I hope).

At my peak I was reasonably competitive in local road races and managed to get road PRs of 16:07 for 5K, 33:45 for 10K, 56:40 for 10M, 89:50 for 25K and 2:43:01 for the marathon (those numbers might not be exact but are close). However, competition in the area was tough and I only managed to win a handful of races overall during my road racing career (including a memorable marathon in Alaska). Indeed, I remember running sub 35 minute 10K's in Joliet area races and not even getting an age group award. I would race PSRR HOF members



Gary Moss, Joe Jenkins, Lance Bovard, Greg Rose and others in every race it seemed. Every once in a while I think I managed to beat Lance and Greg, but they were improving as I was starting to slow down and eventually I was chasing them as well as Gary and Joe. I never could get past Gary or Joe. I also managed to win the PSRR circuit for my age group one year and that wasn't easy considering that Greg Rose and I were both born on July 24, 1960. His death was tragic.

I could talk endlessly about the many races I ran and what made them memorable. For example, I still remember the last marathon I ran while in law school and going through the 20 mile mark at 1:59:52. I remember all of the races where I ran PRs. It seemed those races were the easiest in many respects. However, several races stood out for me in general. I was especially fond of the Park Forest Scenic 10. I managed to finish all 30 of them before the race was cancelled. It was there that I set my road PR of 56:40 for 10 miles. They inducted me in their hall of fame with 5 others after finishing the first 25 years of the race. The Channahon Frosty 5 was my other long streak and a favorite of mine. I finished the first 40 years of those before I broke the streak this year. My foot just won't allow me to run 5 miles safely. One of the Prairie State 10 milers meant a lot to me because they had a father/son competition and I teamed up with my father to win it. I also remember vividly that



the last time I saw my mother alive was at a 10K race in Morris near St. Patrick's Day. You don't forget things like that. In recent years I have not run too many races other than Channahon because of my injuries and a busy life. The guy who ran 20 straight miles at sub -6 minute pace and those other PRs seems like another person.

I joined the PSRR as part of my father's family when I was still a teenager. It may have been the Joliet Y running club at the time. It seems like the club was more about competition and less about running as a social event. However when I ran consistently, I knew all of the runners at my competitive level pretty well because I saw them regularly. Now when I go to races, I recognize almost nobody. However my view of the club might just have been me,



and other members from those days might have a different view. I eventually joined as an individual member when I moved out of the house. I always enjoyed the newsletters and the competition with other of the fast members of the club. Unfortunately, I was never able to do many of the social events that the club held. My life was just too busy, and I was happy I was able to run when I could. I don't remember when the circuit awards started but it must have been in the early 80's. Most of the races that made up that circuit no longer exist, but they lasted throughout the year with different distances. Back in the early days of the club there were many more 10Ks and 10 milers and very few 5K's. Things have definitely changed in that regard. However, I have always enjoyed being a member of the club because of the people who were members of the club. They have always been a friendly group and it is great to see that it is still thriving.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Upon reviewing the race results from the Deerfield 25k which Paul Spiezio finished alongside Bill Rodgers, you will notice that Jim Barry came in 12th in that same race.

WE THANK ALL OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ARTICLE FOR THEIR RECOLLECTIONS, PHOTOS AND MEMORABILIA. OUR CLUB'S HISTORY IS TRULY A PRECIOUS GIFT AND WE ARE GRATEFUL THEY HAVE SHARED IT WITH US.

***Note from Dave Cyplick re his narrative:*** *In 2000, Gary Moss published a brief history of the Prairie State Road Runners. I've used that document heavily as a resource covering club history through 1992. From that point forward, I've been a club member and have used personal knowledge (with the help of old newsletters) in developing this information.*