

Jenny's Journal: 2023 Trans-USA Run

(full statistics & maps at <http://www.runjennyrun.com>)

Day -2: gratitude

Sept 14, 2023

My heart is full of gratitude for the team that has rallied around me to help fulfill my dream to run across the USA, starting in the wee hours of Sept 16 in Los Angeles. Thanks to crew chief Jill who will coordinate logistics and RV throughout. Thanks to Sydney, Grace, Michelle, and Yan who will each spend 1-2 weeks leapfrogging me in a smaller vehicle throughout the day. Thanks to Rebecca (PT) and Jesse (LMT) and Antonina (LMT) who have been invaluable in getting me to the starting line healthy. Thanks to Katherine who has been a faithful sounding board and running partner and fellow dreamer. Thanks to Pete for so much listening & advice, route-scouting, and most of all the inspiration to "carpe diem" despite competing priorities and challenging last-minute logistics. I have visualized this journey every single day for the last 4 years. I have a teaching sabbatical this fall, and I'm blessed with good health now, so I want no regrets. Thanks especially to Daniel and to my whole family for putting up with my extreme goals. I am excited and nervous and 100% determined.

You can track my progress live via my garmin page. <https://share.garmin.com/runjennyrun> From there you can also send me short messages, which will appear in real time on the tracker I am carrying, and will help to encourage me forward. Please sign your messages with your name, because the tracker doesn't otherwise identify the sender. I also welcome company from anybody who wants to run a few miles with me. See the initial route and crew in the comment.

Day -1: headed to San Francisco

Sept 15, 2023

Change of plans! My all-star crew spent 14 hours driving around SoCal yesterday looking for a pedestrian-safe route out of Los Angeles, but our plans A, B, C, and D were all totally washed out by hurricane Hilary a few weeks ago, and roads are impassable. The only way east out of LA is interstate 10, which is neither safe nor legal for pedestrians. So we are in the RV driving north to San Francisco, and will follow the same route I started in 2019. I welcome anybody who has last-minute flexibility to join me at SF City Hall at 6am Saturday (or for the truly adventurous early risers, at the beach straight west at 5am). My full strava route for day 1 is here:

<https://www.strava.com/activities/2700840313>



Day 1: so many friends!

Sept 16, 2023

SF City Hall start video: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/2474613582721582>

So grateful for Bob, Kathy, Ben, Lyla, Rory, Mira, Avni, Cyndi who noticed my late Friday post about the reroute and came out to meet me at the last minute! And grateful for my all-star crew who drove until 1am Friday to make this happen.



Crew chief Jill Yeomans, Jenny Hoffman, and crew Sydney Dolan at San Francisco City Hall just before 6:30am on Sat, Sept 16, 2023.



Bob Hearn with Jenny at SF City Hall. Bob ran the first ~11 miles with Jenny.



Kathy surprised Jenny on El Camino Real, in Burlingame.



Avni, Mira, Lyla, Jill, Sydney at Bedwell Bayfront Park, just before crossing the Dumbarton Bridge across the San Francisco Bay.



Avni, Mira, Rory, Lyla, Jenny at Bedwell Bayfront Park.



Mid-day, brief break. The first of many smoothies that Jill made to power Jenny...

Day 2: windmills at sunrise

Sept 17, 2023

This is why we do this. Beautiful sunrise running through the graceful windmills of Altamont canyon. I raced a parallel freight train for a while and lost but could still hear the nostalgic low train whistle long after the train was out of sight.



Day 3: big climb towards Yosemite

Sept 18, 2023

We made it within 1 mile of the Yosemite gate, but we're too late to get a campsite inside, and the big climbs in the heat were enough for my legs for one day, so we stopped at 60 miles. The first climb, 3000 ft up the switchbacks of New Priest Rd was so much fun - beautiful views, and great to move my legs in a new direction after the endless flat orchards of the central valley. But the additional 1000 ft climb out of North Fork Tuolumne River valley in the shadeless 85°F afternoon heat was a big struggle. Then there was a second 1000 ft climb out of the South Fork Tuolumne River valley! I am ready for sleep, and ready for the beautiful Tioga pass and Yosemite valley tomorrow!



Day 4: Tioga pass (9945 ft) in lightning & hailstorm

Sept 19, 2023

All the way through Yosemite in a day. Beautiful rock slabs and mountain lakes. I love climbing up to ~7500 ft, but after that my sea level body struggled, and I walked most of the uphill above 8000 ft. During the final ~5 mile approach to the pass, the rumble of thunder grew louder and louder until it was almost continuous, and the sky darkened, and I just couldn't move my legs any faster... and then the skies opened and it started to hail! Luckily my amazing crew Sydney drove back to find me, and I waited out the worst of it in the car on a turnout. As soon as the hail lightened a little, Sydney pushed me (reluctantly!) out of the car and I slogged to the pass, where we took a photo together then I made it a few more miles downhill to another turnout wide enough for the RV, where we were rewarded with clearing skies and a beautiful sunset over Ellery Lake.



Day 5: Nevada border!

Sept 20, 2023

Long descent through Ellery Lake canyon in the dark under clear sky & millions of stars, then another beautiful sunrise over Mono Lake. Then 40 miles on Rt 120, initially climbing again through dry pine forests, then descending onto the open desert & yellow flower shrubs that we'll be seeing for the next several 100 miles, all the way through Nevada. I pushed hard to make it to the border today. From the last time I tried this crazy transcon run, in 2019, I remember that every day was harder than the last for almost 2 weeks before my body finally settled into a rhythm. That's been my experience for the last 5 days too... so I assume that it will keep getting harder before it gets easier, but I am so grateful for an A+ crew Jill & Sydney, and for the beautiful and varied views of our country, and for all the friendly people we pass on the roads.

Also: there seems to have been some sort of carrot truck accident. The shoulder of Rt6 was littered with carrots for the whole 6 miles from Benton, CA to the Nevada border.

Fun fact: Mono Lake is a salt water lake that is 2.5x saltier than the ocean!





Day 6: from tears to rainbows

Sept 21, 2023

Today was a rough start and a strong finish, but I couldn't have done it without the terrific support of my team.

Nevada was the toughest state for me in 2019 - then I suffered through 8 days of excruciating shinsplints, and had to take 1.5 days totally off moping in the RV. This year I was so determined to avoid the shinsplints, and I thought I was being so much smarter - I started with lower mileage, better sleep and nutrition (protein smoothies for lunch, and no Oreos allowed before I hit 50 miles!) and a slower descent from Tioga pass (in 2019 I flew down so quickly I peed in my pants!)

So yesterday afternoon I was feeling smug and relieved as I approached the Nevada border with shins feeling good... but in the final descent into Benton, the last town in California, the shinsplints onset again suddenly and ferociously. Miscommunication about how much ibuprofen we had on hand (only 6 pills), and misunderstanding of the massage gun power (does not work when battery is discharged, even when plugged in) sent me into a state of high anxiety, and I lay awake in bed until way too late. I woke up this morning with a cough and runny nose, and discovered that the garmin watch had discharged overnight while "updating Amazon music" and it was just too much. I set what felt like an impossible goal of 50 miles for the day and headed out the RV door in tears, an hour later than usual.

But once I was moving, my mood gradually improved with Jill & Sydney's support, and the miles started clicking by with manageable shin pain. The carrot truck incident seems to have been pretty intense, because I was dodging carrots on the shoulder for the first 16 miles into Nevada, right up and over Montgomery pass (7167 ft). After descending the pass, we bounced along around 5000 ft for the rest of the day. Hopefully I banked enough new red blood cells during our last 2 days above 8000 ft to help me through the Utah & Colorado mountains to come.

Then transcon fairy godmother Cinder and talented LMT drove all the way up from Las Vegas just to surprise us at the Coldale ghost town around 34 miles and work on my legs, which helped so much. I am SO GRATEFUL! Finally we had some nice cloud cover in the late afternoon, and I ran straight into a beautiful rainbow for several miles. With all of this love and support, we made it to a truck stop with actual trees (!!) at 61 miles for the day, a goal which had seemed impossible at the start.

At one point this afternoon a kind old gentleman passed me, and turned around to pull over beside me. He asked "where are you headed?" I said "Boston". He stared at me blankly for a second then his face fell. He said "I'm sorry, I was going to offer you a ride, but that's too far."

This is a long post because it will likely be several more days before we have service again, as we traverse the upcoming 169-mile empty treeless and townless desert between Tonopah and Eli.



Jill, Cinder, Jenny, Sydney at Coaldale, Nevada ghost town.



Day 7: Clown motel in Tonopah

Sept 22, 2023

Tough start this morning with a dark descent into Tonopah. Shinsplints are still painful but manageable, but I just couldn't get my legs to turn over faster than 12 minute miles. Also: why does truck rush hour start at 4am in rural Nevada!?!? And the rumble strip extends the entire width of the shoulder, so the footing is challenging and I trashed the soles of a brand new pair of hokas in one day. After dark 12 miles we chugged into Tonopah, the sun came up, we took the requisite photos at the clown motel, and I granted myself a 2 mile walk break to see the rest of the quirky town businesses because it's my last glimpse of civilization for a while.

After the walk break my legs finally started to move a little better, and I chugged slowly & steadily through the day. We must be slightly past peak for the omnipresent yellow flowers (common horshbrush) that I remember from 2019, but there are still a few. I'm now seeing lots of low red finger-like flowers and at the end of the day a few pretty purple clusters (ankle asters). Near the end of the day I also appreciated a beautiful black horse who galloped along with me intermittently on the other side of a ranch fence paralleling the road. A slightly shorter day today - not quite 60 miles, but we have a beautiful campsite near the top of warm springs pass, 46 miles into the 169-mile desert between Tonopah & Ely, and miraculously we still have a few bars of cell service. I'm at 439 miles for the first week, finally ahead of where I was for my first week in 2019, which feels really satisfying.



Day 8: desert stars & flowers

Sept 23, 2023

We passed 500 miles today! Started in the dark under beautiful desert stars, and Sydney took an amazing 40 second exposure photo. The morning was cool and pleasant, but the afternoon desert miles are long, hot, hard, and mostly unstimulating. I can see landmarks on the horizon 15 miles in the distance, and spend many hours gradually approaching without any visual change. I did spot some new desert flowers today: an orange one called apricot globemallow, yellow desert marigold, and a white-pink flower called California suncup. We also passed a telescope observatory called Moores station, and near the very end of the day we passed some stinky oil drilling and processing plant. We pushed hard to get to 63 miles today so we can coast into Ely by the end of tomorrow.

To occupy my mind during the long desert miles, I finished listening to "Demon under the microscope" about the invention of the first antibiotics. I learned that Calvin Coolidge's son died of an infected blister on his toe, so I took extra care to disinfect my blisters today.

I've been struggling with water retention, and we can't quite figure it out. At the end of the first week in 2019, I was down 6 lbs, but this year I'm up 6 lbs. I look in the mirror first thing in the morning, and the forecast is something like "puffy with a chance of cheekbones". Over the last 2 days, I cut my salt as much as I dare given the heat & sweat, but the puffiness continues. I'm hoping it's just general inflammation from the shock of running 500 miles, and it will dissipate once my body gets more accustomed to this.

Signing off for the night, and fantasizing about a whopper & fries in Ely tomorrow!





Day 9: coyotes & the road runner

Sept 24, 2023

As we exited the RV at 4am, we were serenaded by a pack of coyotes howling and yipping nearby in the dark. Then I set out east towards a bright Venus, under more beautiful desert stars. My shins appreciated the uphill start for the first time in several days: a long climb over Currant pass at 6999 ft, then a descent into more endless, slow mid-day miles. The actual temperature is not so high, but the sun is relentless and it takes a toll on me. But I visualized that burger in Ely and chipped away at the distance. About 24 miles out of Ely, the lonely Rt 6 was joined by another road coming north from Las Vegas, and the truck traffic increased significantly. The worst are the hay-bearing semis, because they create so much drag they blow my hat off if I don't remember to hold it on. Finally in the last 10 miles of the day, we climbed over Murray pass at 7300 ft and descended in the evening light through a beautiful canyon into Ely. I'm so glad that I got to see Murray canyon in the light this year, as I remembered only a dark early-morning descent on stiff legs and excruciating shinsplints in 2019.

This 169-mile stretch from Tonopah to Ely was the hardest and scariest part of my 2019 adventure, so I picked out an inspiring audible book to help motivate me through it this year: Des Linden's "Choosing to Run". I loved her story, and I'm also visualizing "right on Hereford, left on Boylston" 6 weeks from now. But given the unexpected start in San Francisco, we will be headed first to New York City for our top priority: the trans-USA world record. If we have energy & time left on the RV rental we'll spend an extra 3 days getting to Boston.

I'm so relieved to have navigated Tonopah to Ely in only 2.5 days this year with the help of inspiring books and my all-star crew. I celebrated with 2 burgers & fries, and am signing off for the evening with Utah in striking distance...



Day 10: Utah!

Sept 25, 2023

I learned 2 important lessons today. First, the temperature changes very quickly in the desert, and drops precipitously just before dawn. I left the RV at 4am in Ely with temperature in the 40s, comfortably wearing a long-sleeve, a wind jacket, fleece hat, and cotton gloves. But between crew stops at 3 and 8 miles, the temperature dropped to 29F, and my hands turned to blocks of ice during one of my all-too-frequent pit stops, and I could barely reassemble myself to run/shuffle again to try to keep my core temperature up. I had left my warm mittens in the RV back in Ely, so Sydney raced back to get them, but by the time we met again at mile 10 I had to sit in the car for 20 minutes to warm up. Sydney told me that in ice climbing, that sensation when the blood rushes back into numb frozen hands is called the screamy-barfies. I did not barf, but I may have screamed... finally I warmed up enough to move forward again, and within an hour I was putting ice in my bra to stay cool. But this kind of thermal cycle shock to the body causes a deep systemic exhaustion, layered on top of the cumulative fatigue of >600 miles in 10 days, and I just couldn't seem to caffeine or sugar my way out of it.

Second, I think I finally figured out the cause of my swelling and water retention. I'll spare you the GI details, but I think I've been taking in too much protein, and specifically red meat. I've been over-compensating for 2019 when I started with too little protein. I had been starting to feel better after a few non-meat dinners between Tonopah and Ely, but last night's burgers sent me over the edge today. I'll be staying away from animal protein for a bit, and I hope that like the "Very Hungry Caterpillar" I can eat some green leaves (and lots of nuts) and feel better soon.

Between frozen hands and countless pit stops, it took me 3.5 hours to move just 13 miles down the road. That's a half-marathon PW. But by 10am I figured out that if I could average 4.5 mph (frequent pit stops included) I could still make it to the Utah border before sundown, so I mentally committed. The road ahead included two more >7000 ft passes, with a great, hot, flat plain full of windmills in the middle.

A bright spot of the day was making a new friend. As I was feeling sorry for myself, a voice came from behind me "how's it going?" It turns out Sue was biking from Seattle to Flagstaff, and she slowed down to bike at my running pace and chat for a while! Finally we stopped for a photo together and wished each other well on our respective journeys.

With tremendous support and patience from my amazing crew, we made it to Utah just after the sun dropped behind Sacramento pass at my back. Gloriously, there is a rocking chair right under the "Welcome to Utah" sign! It was the most enjoyable rocking chair I have ever experienced, and I'm looking forward to enjoying more of Utah in the days to come.

Two important lessons today, very painfully learned. But we made it out of Nevada, and tomorrow is a new day (and a new time zone - we lose an hour). I have no specific landmarks or mileage targets in mind for tomorrow, but I'll see how far my legs carry me.





Day 11: relentless sun

Sept 26, 2023

So far, Utah seems just like Nevada, only more so. Hotter, dryer, and even more relentless sun. I figured out how to see the current weather on my Garmin tracker, and it was 84F, 15% humidity. Not a wisp of a cloud, no sight of a tree, and not much atmosphere up here above 6000 ft altitude to protect me. We took a short day, to recover from yesterday's effort, and to try to reset to the mountain time zone and get an earlier start tomorrow to pack in more miles before the sun gets so ferocious. We're camped by a large dry salt plain called Sevier Lake.

We now have 302 miles remaining in Utah, including some beautiful high passes and lakes farther east. Aiming for the Colorado border by Sunday night, where many friends & family await throughout the state.



Day 12: cementing new friendships

Sept 27, 2023

We started early under an almost-full moon, at 3:30am to beat the heat, and managed to pack in 30 miles before the sun became uncomfortable (the high today was 87F, with zero shade or humidity to block the high-altitude rays). We had our first vehicle failure: a dead RV battery around mile 9. Luckily we had cell service at the time, and Jill was able to call the 24hr RV hotline and ultimately buy a new battery at an auto parts store in Delta as soon as it opened at 9am. Meanwhile, I slogged into Delta mid-day and found it overwhelming to see so many people and businesses after so much isolation. After >400 miles on Rt 6, I looked forward to finally turning onto Utah 132, which I remembered as a quieter and more scenic road, but those last 15 miles north of Delta were dragging, especially the last 6 miles with zero shoulder and an absurd number of cement trucks speeding by.

Then a wonderful surprise - friend & race timer extraordinaire Mike Melton drove 3 hours out of his way en route from last weekend's race in California to next weekend's race, just to meet up and run a mile with me! It was soooo nice to see a friend and catch up on some runner gossip. I also saw a great blue heron as I crossed the Sevier River, and I chased and was chased by omnipresent little pale green butterflies throughout the afternoon.

Finally I rounded the corner onto Utah 132, and found it ... just as shoulderless and full of cement trucks as Rt 6, though the scenery was nicer. I passed through the pretty town of Leamington and saw the little church where we camped 4 years ago, listening to train whistles in the night. But this year, Jill found another campsite 6 miles farther along, in the parking lot of ... a cement factory! She befriended all the cement workers and they gave us access to their showers, WiFi, ice, and breakfast burritos. Furthermore, they warned us that a whole new crew of workers is coming in from Texas by 5:30am tomorrow, and they will be speeding towards us in their semis along the 22-mile stretch of narrow winding road from Nephi ahead. So we will have to take advantage of that full moon and move as far up the road as possible before the onslaught begins. Just in case, the friendly night crew here gave us brand new cement-logoed reflective gear and even some nice shirts and sweaters as souvenirs.





Day 13: red foliage

Sept 28, 2023

We started at 2:45am under a beautiful full moon to try to beat the factory commuters, but got stuck in a scary rush hour between 5-6am just as the shoulder disappeared on Rt 132. But I made it safely over the pass and into Nephi as the sun rose. After passing under Interstate 15 in Nephi, we crossed a second pass with beautiful red fall foliage far above us on the flanking peaks. Alas, these first trees we have seen since California are not close enough to provide shade (or cover for my still-too-frequent pit stops) but they are beautiful! On top of this pass, and descending into Fountain Green, we traversed ~6 miles of road construction to widen the shoulder (yay!) but smooth new blacktop sure radiates a lot of heat (bummer!) I am still really struggling with the sun - it seems that no matter how early I start, I can't quite get my miles done before the afternoon death march in the unrelenting high-altitude sun.

Today took us through a bunch of little Utah farm towns: Nephi, Fountain Green, Moroni, Mt. Pleasant, and finally we are camped in Fairview (established 1849, population 1247). On the roads between these farm towns are lots of farm trucks carrying lots of farm animals. My favorite was the sheep truck, labeled "Ewe Haul". Ironically, we are currently parked in a U-Haul parking lot for the night. We just took a selfie wearing our new cement factory swag, with the red foliated peaks we'll summit tomorrow in the background.





Day 14: Sydney's last day

Sept 29, 2023

Today we sampled some of the best that this big beautiful country has to offer. I started with a big ~4000 ft climb under the full moon, and never even turned on my headlamp. For most of the climb, Venus shone brightly ahead of me between a cleft in the peaks. After summiting the first pass, as the first rays of sun peaked up in front of me, and the big beautiful moon was setting behind me, I ran through the most beautiful foliage I have ever seen - red, orange, yellow perfectly highlighted by intermixed dark coniferous trees and by the simultaneous light from the sun and the moon. I descended slightly to see rising mist over the beautiful Electric Lake, and then climbed again around a roller coaster of switchbacks to over 9300 ft just as the full sun crested. Later in the afternoon, I ran through more gorgeous foliage around Scofield Lake, populated by a majestic stork, flocks of Canada geese, and idyllic fishers.

And the friendly Utah people! Our new friends at Ash Grove Cement have been sending me messages of support on my garmin tracker. On the road near Electric Lake, a pickup truck zoomed past me, then reversed backwards and the driver popped out and enveloped me in a bear hug. He said: "Jenny, it's Bobby, we met on this road in 2019 and I was so sad you didn't make it all the way. But I've been following you again, and I hope you make it this time!" We took a selfie together with the setting moon behind us. At the Scofield corner store, more friendly guys treated me to iced coffee as I ran by. So much love!

But this is really, really hard. I'm still dealing with GI issues and water retention, presumably from my inadvertent protein overconsumption of the first week. The cold that I mysteriously caught from nowhere on day 6 has lingered, and today my cough was exacerbated by the high dry air, as we bounced around ~8000 ft most of the day, so I had to walk most of the uphill all day long. Every day I struggle, and every day I'm terrified that I won't be able to wake up and do it all over again tomorrow.

It's also impossible not to compare to my 2019 experience on the same route. In 2019, I took 1.5 days off in Nevada for terrible shinsplints, so for the last week we had been running a little more than a day ahead of 2019. But I've just had a few slow, short days in a row and we are now camped at the same spot at the end of Emma Park Road, where we camped in 2019 - so I feel pressure to stay on track with future campsites, but scared that I can't hit the same daily mileages as I did in 2019. I'm lucky that my shinsplints are milder this year, but the early GI distress and persistent cough are new challenges. Also, despite starting 2 lbs lighter in 2023 than 2019, with the water retention this year vs. rapid weight loss in 2019, I'm carrying almost 10 lbs more every day up & over all of these high-altitude passes!

But I am so grateful for the support of my amazing crew who patiently enables me to move forward, 3 miles at a time, all day long, without rest, every day. Sydney intuitively meets my every need at every stop, from sunscreen to cough drops to mileage updates. Today is Sydney's last day - they will return to their life as an aerospace engineering grad student at MIT - and normal wake-up times, showers, etc. I will miss Sydney terribly! Tomorrow we will be joined by Grace, a friend from many summers at VT100. I am looking forward to seeing Grace!







Day 15: thanks to the Ute tribe

Sept 30, 2023

I want to start by paying my respect to the Ute tribe, and expressing my gratitude for the gift and privilege of running through their beautiful land. Today started with one more steep ascent in the dark up to a 9114 ft pass, then a gradual 25-mile descent through Indian canyon on the Uintah and Ouray reservation. I had to dodge a number of free-range cattle who glared at me from the middle of the road. We passed through Duchesne (yay for another iced coffee!) and covered another 28 mostly-flat miles to Roosevelt, where we are now camped on the east edge of town, within striking distance of Colorado tomorrow!

Some highlights of today include meeting up with my new crew Grace in the early afternoon, and a surprise visit from a friendly runner named David who drove all the way down from Salt Lake City to run a mile with me and give me a 2 lb box of See's chocolates (which I have already put a serious dent in)!

As hard & discouraging as yesterday was, today was a relatively easy high-mileage day thanks to the wonderful afternoon cloud cover - the first clouds we've seen since day 6! It's a good lesson for me that every day is a new day, with new weather, and new challenges and highlights that are different than 2019 despite the same course.





Day 16: family in Dinosaur, Colorado!

Oct 1, 2023

We got off to a late start after a long day yesterday. It was a beautiful warm morning until it wasn't. I got caught in a cold, windy rainstorm around mile 10, but Jill kindly surprised me with warm oatmeal in the RV around mile 14, which set me up for a good 15 miles into Vernal despite rapidly changing storm conditions, including moments of penetrating sun, some lightning and hail just to keep things interesting, and then a beautiful rainbow. The terrain was also beautiful - gently undulating road through red dirt craigs highlighted by pale green grass and a few more bright yellow desert flowers. I saw a family of racoons, some rabbits, and scurrying desert lizards. The second half of the day dragged a bit, as the sun finally came out. Give me rain any day over the high-altitude sun!

But thanks to a few late afternoon clouds, and an emotional boost from Grace who parked at the border and ran back 1.5 miles to meet me, I finally made it to the Colorado border sign at mile 57. My beloved sister-in-law April and her 3 kids, and another friend Krista had driven all the way up from their home in Fruita to meet me with hugs, encouraging signs, gummy worms, and chocolaty, peanut-buttery baked goods from cousin Laura (who wins state fairs with her baking skills!). After some photos, I ran 3 more miles to the little town of Dinosaur where we enjoyed a wonderful picnic dinner outside the RV. It is so rewarding to spend time with beloved family!





Day 17: 1000 miles

Oct 2, 2023

Grace & I took a selfie at our best estimate of 1000 miles from the Pacific Ocean. Today was perfect weather (cool with cloud cover, and only a few patches of light rain), perfect road (wide shoulder, little traffic), perfect terrain (rolling hills around 6000 ft) and I was hoping for another magical high-mileage day to make it to Steamboat Springs by tomorrow night to hang out with my brother who is working there now. But 1000 miles is exactly where my body finally said "WTF do you think you're doing!?!?!? Stop it right now!" I don't think I'm injured per se, but I reached some critical point of tightness where everything knotted up painfully and I just couldn't get my legs to turn over with any normal stride length. My body kept spontaneously transitioning from run to walk, without any conscious decision on my part - even on the easy flats & downhills. I am desperately in need of regular professional massage to keep this train rolling forward.

****Does anybody know a good LMT (sports massage therapist) who would be up for an adventure to fly out here to beautiful Colorado and join our party for a week (or more)????**** If so, please contact crew chief Jill Yeomans ASAP on facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/runjennyrunUSA>). Jill will help coordinate travel & reimbursements.

I cried more today than I have in a long time. I cried when Grace moved the car in a way I didn't expect. I called transcon fairy godmother Cinder and cried on her virtual shoulder (several times). I called my husband and cried.

But here are some things I'm grateful for:

- (many) hugs from Grace
- a chance to talk to my kids on the phone when I finally gave up on running for the day and walked the final 7 miles
- yummy baked goods from cousin Laura
- Jill cheerfully moving the RV backwards 5 miles when it became clear that I wouldn't reach my mileage target for the day, and finding a nice campground in the little town of Maybell with WiFi, hot showers, and RV hookup so we can charge all our devices and stay toasty warm overnight
- Jill greeting me at the RV with hot chocolate and another hug
- Cinder & Jill working together to find me a 1hr massage in Steamboat Springs tomorrow evening
- a plan to see my brother even though I won't quite make it all the way under my own power tomorrow
- this amazing opportunity to see our beautiful country on foot, with such a loving supportive team to get me through the ups and downs of every day



Day 18: dinner with my brother Edward

Oct 3, 2023

I woke up abruptly at 2am from a crazy anxiety dream: I was running the Transcon Backyard Ultra, and I had to complete 60 miles every day or I would time out & no longer be allowed to continue. In my dream, I timed out with a 56 mile day, and I was kicked off the course and sent home. Unlike my real transcon DNF in 2019 with a blowout knee injury, in this dream I was still capable and motivated to continue, but I was sent home healthy and had to embarrassingly explain to everybody in my workplace one-by-one that I wasn't actually injured this time; I was just too slow.

So, wide awake and anxious at 2am, I woke up the team and we started our day, knowing that we would have to end early too. Last night Grace got a facetime crash course on sports massage therapy 101 from Cinder, so Grace worked on my legs before I headed out the door this morning. I also started in long pants to keep my legs warmer, and Jill kindly did the morning crewing in the RV so that I could keep my potty stops warm as well. With all of this help, my first 40 miles went pretty smoothly, before the painful tightness recurred.

In the morning dark, I heard some screaming animal that scared me - definitely not a coyote, was it a mountain lion? A local later suggested that foxes sometimes scream in the night like that. I've also been seeing a lot of pretty black-and-white birds: mostly black, with long black tail, but white patches on their chest and wings. Mid-day, we passed through Craig where my brother-in-law Sammy often works, and frequents a bar called JW Snacks. So I popped my head in, introduced myself as Sammy's sister-in-law, and got a photo with the friendly owner Danny. After Craig, I chipped away at the mostly-flat miles towards Steamboat Springs, but just like in my dream, I timed out around 55 miles, because I had a professional massage scheduled at 5:15pm. It really emphasizes what I typically love about a real transcon (not the anxiety dream version) vs. a race. In a transcon, it's usually ok to take 7 minutes to pop into a bar and meet the owner, or stop briefly for an iced coffee, because finishing 7 minutes later for the day is usually no big deal. But in a race, 7 minutes can really matter.

But today's massage with Jay at Aspenwood Massage was great, and Grace can put into practice some of what we learned, so I hope we won't have more end-of-day deadlines for a while. After the massage, we had take-out Greek food with my brother Edward who is also living in Steamboat Springs, and it was wonderful to catch up with him.

In other news, after a week of avoiding animal protein, my GI distress and swelling is finally mostly resolved. I'm happy to report that I'm down to single-digit poops-per-day (ppd) which is probably the best that can be expected given the volume I have to consume to keep moving. I'm also happy to report that my weight is back in the normal range, so I won't have to carry that extra 6 lbs of water up and over the 9445 ft Rabbit Ears pass tomorrow. But my cough continues, so I will probably be walking that climb over the continental divide. I am looking forward to it.



Jenny with Danny, owner of JW Snacks in Craig, Colorado.



Jenny after a much-needed professional massage from Jay in Steamboat Springs. Jay was kind enough to teach Grace some of her tricks to take on the road for future evenings in the RV.



Jenny with brother Edward in Steamboat Springs.

Day 19: Rabbit Ears Pass, continental divide!

Oct 4, 2023

It took 6 donuts, 2 of Laura's enormous yummy home-baked chocolate chip cookies, and a bucket of coffee - but I made it over the continental divide today! The day almost started with some unwanted excitement, as I narrowly missed stepping on a skunk in the first mile. Luckily the skunk also seemed to be only half-awake, and did not react to me. I got into a good rhythm for the first 18 flat miles into Steamboat Springs, and I enjoyed seeing the cute houses and shops as I ran through in daylight this year. Pretty soon after the town, I began the big climb up Rabbit Ears Pass. It was a good climb for me, with some steep sections that were unambiguous opportunities for walk breaks, but also a lot of gradual slope that was very runnable. The foliage was incredible - there is a certain golden yellow here in the west that I just don't see even in my beloved New England fall which is dominated by the red sugar maples, and here in the west there is more mixing of deciduous & coniferous, so the bright colors stand out even more against the dark evergreens. The top of Rabbit Ears Pass is a long 8 mile plateau, and finally the official continental divide at 9500 ft, where we paused for a photo.

The weather today was perfect - it stayed in the 40s and 50s all day, with puffy white clouds and intermittent sun. My legs felt good after a professional massage last night, and a mini-massage from Grace this morning. So we pushed long into the evening, finishing with 6 miles on dirt roads that are a much welcome respite for my legs from the hard pavement and my mind from the constant vigilance required to hop off the road and hold onto my hat when big trucks pass. The sun was setting in a red fiery glow behind me, and my shadow was 100 ft long in front of me, pointing directly towards the snow-covered Rockies ahead. Though the continental divide is behind us, we will hit the high point of the 3000 mile journey tomorrow as we cross Cameron pass at 10,200 ft. As the last few rays of light faded from the sky, and I approached the RV in the twilight, I saw beautiful horned antelopes gathered at a water hole on one side of the road, and an owl swooping overhead.

For those who are just starting to follow my journey & asking some questions:

- We are headed first to New York City to try to break the World Record, and then hope to continue to Boston.
- You can follow me in real time on my Garmin tracker:
<https://share.garmin.com/runjennyrun>
- You can also send me text messages of encouragement that I will see on my tracker in real time. Please sign your message so I know who it is from! You can rest assured that I read & greatly appreciate these messages, but the tracker does not have the capability to respond with outgoing texts.



Grace, Jenny, and Jill at the continental divide.



The epsom salt kerfuffle.

Day 20: Cameron Pass with Candice Burt

Oct 5, 2023

We cleared the high point of the journey, Cameron Pass at 10,276 ft, and had some beautiful views & great company, but it wasn't the high mileage day I had hoped for.

The trouble started last night, when we tried to implement Steamboat massage therapist Jay's advice to soak my sore calves in warm water and epsom salts. In an RV, we don't just have a bathtub and infinite supply of warm water. There was a lively debate between the garbage can (a good shape, tall and narrow) vs. the cooler (insulated, in theory should hold the heat better). The cooler advocates won, but the problem is that the volume is very large, so to take up space and minimize the amount of warm water required we tried putting in some of our gallon jugs of drinking water. Of course the empty ones floated, and the full ones just absorbed the heat, negating the purpose of the cooler. Furthermore, the cooler drain valve leaked all over the RV floor. Amidst this kerfuffle of physics-gone-wrong, I did eventually get a nice epsom salt soak, but I forgot to eat enough for dinner.

So this morning I was ravenous, and just couldn't seem to fill the hole of yesterday's 66-mile day, despite eating PB&J or double pop tarts every 3 miles. I made it through the ~18 miles on dirt roads, but as soon as we reached the flat, runnable Co-14 again, I bonked so hard that I was hallucinating: reading food words on signs that weren't there, seeing the crew vehicle in front of me where there was actually just a rock. Amidst this mental confusion on this very rural road over Cameron pass I suddenly saw a tiny "Snack Shop" that turned out to be real (!!) - associated with a small camp ground on the right side of the road. I beelined in, and purchased a breakfast sandwich, crumb cake, snickers bar, and bag of peanut M&Ms, all of which I managed to consume within 1/2 mile. Oops. Now I had an uncomfortable brick of calories in my stomach, but still no glycogen in my muscles. Unfortunately I never really got my GI back on track, and ended up walking for most of the rest of the day.

But there were some bright spots! Candice Burt came out from Boulder to "run" (mostly walk) with me over the pass and down the beautiful Poudre Canyon. I really enjoyed getting to know her, and hear stories of the 200-mile races she directs, and learn from her own adventure with 200 ultras in 200 days. Another pair of runners, Maia and Cody also joined me for a few miles, then Candice walked with me until after sunset to barely crack 50 miles for the day. So it was a very social afternoon, but a disappointing waste of easily runnable flats & gentle downhills, due to my mis-management of calories. Hoping for better running tomorrow...









Day 21: Poudre Canyon & friends in Fort Collins

Oct 6, 2023

Waking up each day feels a little bit like spinning the wheel of fortune with the participants chanting "big money, big money..." as the wheel ticks towards its final unpredictable stopping point. Likewise, I am always thinking "big mileage, big mileage..." but it's hard to know how the day will turn out until the very end, because there are so many variables that can change in an instant during the day: weather, unanticipated hills, muscle cramps, bonks, excessive ppd, etc. But today everything held together, and we had a great 69-mile day!

We started with the ~30 mile long descent through the beautiful Poudre Canyon. Starting in the dark, I felt jumpy about all of the animal noises in the brush on either side - recalling that I had seen a mountain lion near here in 2019. But today I carried pepper spray, and no mountain lion materialized. As the sun came up, I saw more of the canyon and some of the beautiful houses and campgrounds on either side, which I had missed entirely in 2019 when running this section in deep fog. There are also sections of the canyon so narrow that a tunnel had to be cut into the rock to make room for the road next to the river. Somewhere along the way, we met a new friend George who delivered fresh bagels and cream cheese, a half dozen of which powered me through the rest of the day.

In early afternoon, I arrived in Fort Collins, where Candice Burt met us again, bearing compression socks, massage tools, chocolates, and other goodies she had generously procured to help us along. I ran some more with Candace and with her friend Jess, and these miles just flew by. I was also surprised by my sister-in-law Susan and her parents Lynn & Ray, who tracked me down to cheer with encouraging signs.

In the late afternoon, we turned onto long, rolling dirt farm roads. The mountains were still barely visible on the horizon behind, but in front is the feel of the midwest - big open prairie, the smell of hay and farm animals, and so much big beautiful sky! We are also camped near a railroad crossing, and I'm enjoying the long whistles of the trains carrying agricultural harvests. I am excited to move on to this new phase of the journey!





Day 22: crew switch: Grace's last day, Michelle's first day

Oct 7, 2023

Today was a long day headed straight east across rolling hills of farmland on Co-14, and I'm too exhausted to write much. It was cold (in the 20s) in the morning, and I moved well but it got hot in the afternoon and I ran into some GI troubles that slowed me down. I ended up running just past sunset again to make it 65 miles, but still not quite close enough to get to Nebraska tomorrow. But we are camped on a county dirt road with a hypnotic view of a field of windmills blinking their red lights synchronously in the dark. I look forward to running through them in the wee hours tomorrow morning.

Today was Grace's last day on my crew, and Michelle's first day! Grace has been wise and wonderful and kind and loving, and I'm devastated to say good-bye to her, but I'm also excited to work with Michelle and get to know her better too. Another treat today was a visit from my college crew coach, Aubrey, who now lives in Denver! I hadn't seen Aubrey in 25 years, but coincidentally we have both independently made the switch from rowing to ultra-running. Today she biked along slowly behind me for several miles so we could catch up on life and kids and athletics.

I'm looking forward to windmills and more dirt roads tomorrow, and to challenging myself to get as close to Nebraska as possible, while finding a good rhythm with new crew Michelle.



Grace, Michelle, Jenny, and Jenny's college crew coach Aubrey from 1998!

Day 23: windmills & dirt roads

Oct 8, 2023

One final photo of our transitioning crew early this morning before Michelle dropped Grace off at Denver airport. Jill crewed my morning from the RV, and Michelle & I found a great rhythm with the minivan in the afternoon.

This morning started non-ideally for my very sore right calf with a steep downhill on sharp turn with cambered road; I should have run the extra mile the previous night when I was warm. I eventually got moving more smoothly towards those hypnotically blinking red windmill lights spanning the eastern horizon. But they never seemed to get any closer! It turns out that the closest of the windmills was a full 24 miles away, on the other side of Sterling - distances are deceptive in the dark!

I ran through Sterling from miles 13-17. As usual, I find it overwhelming to pass through a city and see so many people and stores, after so much solitude on the rural 2-lane highways where towns are sparse. It also throws off my rhythm to navigate sideways and curbs and crosswalks. I crossed under I-76, and shortly thereafter was stopped by 2 police cars who said that somebody had called in a runner on the interstate. I definitely did not run on the interstate; I ran on the sidewalk under the interstate, but I did have to cross the entrance and exit ramps without crosswalks, so I guess somebody thought that was illegal? I told the policeman he could check my tracker to prove that I had not been running on the interstate, and eventually he let me go.

Shortly after the not-running-on-the-interstate incident, I turned onto a dirt road that took me on a perfectly straight line east towards the Nebraska border. I stayed on this road for the second half of the day, and it was glorious - I think I can count on one hand the number of cars that passed me. I also enjoyed running through the majestic windmills for many miles. One curious observation was many of piles of animal scat filled with red berries - I would have guessed bear, except this is farm country with no trees, so bears seem unlikely here. I wonder what animal produced these.

I had some trouble with one of my watches today. Yesterday afternoon the watch had aggravated my wrist, which became so swollen and painful, even after icing & sleeping, that I tried running with the watch in my pocket in the morning. Mistake. The watch went into pause mode, and I didn't notice for ~4 miles. Luckily, my Garmin watch functioned well on the other wrist, so I have one good copy of today's full track.

I can tell we're approaching Nebraska as the density of flies and grasshoppers increases. We hope to be there by sunrise tomorrow morning, and I'm looking forward to more dirt roads and rolling hills through beautiful farm country.



Last morning with Jill, Michelle, Jenny, Grace in the RV.



Coros watch caused painful swelling of Jenny's left wrist; Jenny tried to carry the watch in her pocket, but this led to an accidental press of the pause button and several miles that weren't recorded on the Coros. Luckily the miles were correctly recorded on both Garmin devices.



Windmills in eastern Colorado.

Day 24: Nebraska!

Oct 9, 2023

"Oh beautiful, for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain ... America, America!"

Today we entered Nebraska on a perfect blue sky day through the town of Venango, population 157, "buckle of the wheat belt". We spent the whole day on NE-23, paralleling train tracks and passing through the small towns of Brandon, Grant, Madrid, Elsie, Grafton, and finally we are camped in a pretty park in Wallace. Each town is marked from afar on the horizon by its giant grain silos, and the road is lined with dried cornstalks, while the shoulder is littered with corn kernels. I entered Grant just at noon, and heard the noon whistle that is characteristic of small towns across America. It is a familiar and comforting sound to me, as I am used to hearing the daily noon whistle from my own home next to fire station in the small town of Keene Valley, NY.

NE-23 has only a narrow or non-existent shoulder. Luckily the truck traffic is not continuous, but comes in bunches throughout the day. Each truck - even the polite ones who swing wide into the opposing lane when they see me - carries with it a gust of 65 mph air, and an after-gust which is sometimes stronger than the initial one, and sometimes in an unpredictable direction. I think I got an arm workout from holding my hat on all day long, and a few times I was knocked sideways off my feet by the after-gusts.

Though I have traversed many railroad crossings, and paralleled at least 100 miles of train tracks on this journey, and listened to a few train whistles in the night from our campsites, I hadn't actually seen a train since day 2 - and I saw only one today, a short one with just 30 cars. Why so many trucks and so few trains carrying America's goods around?

Today I noticed more songbirds especially in the morning & evening, and grasshoppers chirping and hopping, and fuzzy caterpillars scooting along the shoulder of the road. Near the end of the day, I saw a group of several female antelopes bounding along. I am loving Nebraska so far, and looking forward to getting back onto some dirt roads in the second half of tomorrow.



Day 25: half-way to New York City!

Oct 10, 2023

Last night we crossed into the central time zone, and today we passed 1500 miles, the approximate half-way point between San Francisco and New York City. It's simultaneously exciting and terrifying. If I can make it halfway, shouldn't I be encouraged that I can make it the full way? On the other hand, holy cow the last 25 days have been hard - can my body really do it all over again starting tomorrow? I know that my will is strong, but my body is 45 years old and lots of parts are not working quite as they should under this constant stress. When I first tried to run across the country in 2019, I made it >2500 miles in 42 days from San Francisco to Akron, Ohio where my knee suddenly gave out (complete meniscus root detachment, requiring surgery). So I am a lot more fearful now, knowing that no matter how close I am to the finish line, it's not over until the very last step.

But today was another beautiful day in Nebraska. We took a shortcut off highway NE-23 and spent most of the day on beautiful dirt roads through trees and green grass that saved us 4 miles and many truck dodges at the expense of a lot more elevation in the form of short, steep descents and ascents. We met a friendly rancher named William, owner of BarWD Ranch (<https://www.barwd.com/> "I like big bucks and I cannot lie"), who was initially incredulous that a record-attempt run across America took us right along his quiet dirt road! He kindly circled back around and brought us T-shirts of his ranch!

In the afternoon, we left the glorious dirt roads and rejoined NE-23 for the last ~20 miles. I had expected that the highway would flatten out, but instead the hills just got bigger and longer, and my chronically sore right calf became so painful that I could no longer run or even walk with an even gait. I had a meltdown and put my poor crew through the ringer near the end of the day. I thought there was no way I could make it through 8 more miles of hills to our planned RV site at 62.6 miles before dark. But I was also unwilling to "stake out" (i.e. mark the exact spot where I stopped running, and would start again the next morning, but actually ride in a vehicle to a location more conducive to sleep for the night - all of which takes precious time & energy). And I was unwilling to run less than 60 miles, because it feels like a slippery slope if I let myself off the hook one day (recall my "Transcon Backyard Ultra" anxiety dream of day 18). So in my end-of-day exhaustion and anxiety, I irrationally wanted my crew to magically conjure up a legal parking/camping spot exactly at 60.1 miles. Such a spot did not exist on this corn-lined 2-lane highway, so my poor crew hopped around to several untenable spots over a 5-mile range before I realized that NE-23 did finally flatten out once we crossed out of Lincoln county in the last 8 miles of the day, and my calf started to calm down a bit. So we made it, and we're ready for sleep and flatter roads tomorrow.



Jenny with William, owner of BarWD Ranch (<https://www.barwd.com/>)



Our new BarWD Ranch swag!

Day 26: dust & headwind

Oct 11, 2023

We spent most of today on a straight dirt road between cornfields during peak harvest season in Nebraska. It was hot and dry with a steady 20 mph headwind, so I just leaned in and chugged along slowly. The road was populated by 2 types of trucks: ordinary semis carrying (and spewing) corn, and monster green John Deere trucks that take up the whole width of the road with various sharp attachments poking out the sides. The challenge was that the road was too soft for easy running except in the very middle, but I couldn't hear trucks coming up behind me over the noisy windy. Also, each truck was trailed by a giant dust cloud that further obscured my vision and also plastered itself into my sweaty, sunscreeny skin. Usually I love dirt roads, but I would not recommend this particular road during this particular stage of harvest.

But I had a wonderful surprise near the end of the day. At the last crew stop, 3.4 miles out from the final RV campsite, Scott pulled up and parked next to us bearing a grocery bag full of 4 flavors of poptarts! Scott is the father of a friend of our beloved 1st-week crew Sydney, and he just happened to fly into Lincoln today for business, so he drove down to meet us at the end of his day. Even better than the poptarts: he came ready to run, and he chatted with me through that final 3 miles that is usually the hardest and crankiest part of my day. His company was such a gift; it's the first time I've arrived at the RV smiling in many days. He is also a bird watcher, and he pointed out to me a beautiful ring-necked pheasant.





Dust from wind, dirt roads, and harvest trucks.



Day 27: cats & dogs

Oct 12, 2023

Cats and dogs would like to participate in our journey too! Last night we parked the RV in the driveway of a home with many adorable kitties. They tried very hard to get into our RV, even climbing right up the screen door. This morning, I spent the first 22 miles on dirt roads and passed several homes with uncontained dogs who wanted to play. I'm focused on moving forward, so most dogs retreated quickly when I ignored them. But one pair of dogs followed me 2 miles to the end of the dirt road... and across the railroad tracks... and onto the, high-traffic shoulderless 2-lane paved road beyond... where they darted all over the road, chasing me, chasing bunnies, checking out roadkill on both sides. Vehicles swerved dangerously to avoid the dogs (sometimes swerving towards me!), or came to a complete stop and honked or glared at me for my apparent irresponsibility in bringing "my" unleashed dogs out jogging on a narrow high-traffic road. This persisted for 4 more miles! I tried to apologize and explain the situation and ask for help from some of the drivers, but nobody had their window down. Finally after 6 total miles of dog harassment, Jill passed and saw the trouble, and lured the dogs into the RV with rice krispie treat to get them away from me, while she also called the local sheriff to pick them up (the dogs had no collars with identifying info).

I also battled a headwind all day, increasing from 20 mph in the morning up to 44 mph in the afternoon. In the late afternoon, I was engaged in a stressful battle to keep my exhausted legs moving forward quickly enough to beat the looming lightning storm blowing ominously towards me. I cried my way through the last 5 miles, but my crew gave me lots of hugs and cookies, I beat the storm, and even saw a hint of a rainbow. We are camped at a pretty RV park in Sutton. Tomorrow is predicted to be even windier. I'm grateful for Michelle & Jill who support me physically and emotionally through these challenges.



Cat climbing the screen door of our RV.



One of 2 unleashed dogs that followed Jenny for 6 miles along the busy, shoulderless 2-lane highway towards Juniata, Nebraska.



Racing a storm into a gusting 40+ mph headwind at the end of a long, hard day towards Sutton.

Day 28: for my father

Oct 13, 2023

Edward Louis Hoffman, Dec 15, 1938 - Oct 13, 2016

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/greenwichtime/name/edward-hoffman-obituary?id=14750556>

My father supported my every effort and firmly believed that I could do anything I set out my mind to do. He approached everything in life with unstoppable enthusiasm and determination. There was no halfway: once he liked something he loved it unconditionally. Once he had decided something, it was the best of all possible plans. Once he found something he enjoyed, he bought a dozen or more copies of it, to share with everybody he cared about. He taught me to work hard, to seek the best, to believe in myself, to give frequent compliments to others, and to love chocolate (when he walked into any restaurant, the first thing he always said to the staff was "save me 2 pieces of your best chocolate cake").

My father firmly believed that the United States of America is the best of all possible countries. Health issues restricted my father's travel and interactions in the last third of his life, but I am grateful to have the opportunity now to explore so many beautiful parts of America and meet with so many beautiful Americans, like friendly Nebraskan Chris who gave me a dozen of her farm fresh eggs today when she heard that I am eating 8 eggs a day. I hope that my father is looking down and enjoying my great American experiences vicariously too.



Day 29: farewell Michelle, welcome Yan!

Oct 14, 2023

Another crew switch today. Michelle slipped quietly out of the RV at 2:30am to drive to the Omaha airport and fly home to Philly. She parked the crew car to be picked up by Yan who was flying in from Boston. Michelle provided wise & patient support; her knowledge of running tips & equipment was invaluable; and she always knew just what to say to help motivate me through the last few seemingly-impossible miles of each day. I will miss Michelle, but I am also thrilled to have Yan on the team for the week!

Jill crewed me for most of today, through >40 miles of short steep climbs & descents on mostly-gravel (and one horrible mile-long section of clay) roads on the east edge of Nebraska. Finally in late afternoon Yan arrived and we all crossed the Missouri River into Iowa! So far, Iowa is foggy and rainy and dark, but I look forward to seeing more of it in better light tomorrow. One initial Iowa highlight was running past a kids yard party, where the friendly adults helped with our temporarily-stuck crew vehicle, and the kids all cheered for me, and even signed a witness statement that is super-cute but unfortunately won't count for Guinness.



Yan and Jenny, just after crossing the Missouri River.

I, Jim declare that I am not associated with, or related to, the record organizers or participants, nor have anything to gain from the final outcome of the attempt. Therefore I have acted as a witness of the Guinness World Records™ attempt for the record:

Record Title: Application Reference Number:

2) My contact details are: Good for all our names

First Name: Liv Postcode: Harper Vasa
 Last Name: Graham Country: USA
 Organisation: Maddie Nationality: USA
 Address 1: Stanton Email:
 Address 2: 1279 Telephone:
 City/Town: Vaasa Included business card: Yes ☐ No ☒
 State/Province/Region: Leib Arkville

3) What did you see / measure / evaluate as a witness?
She ran past my house and drove past my house and got stuck and we helped her.

5) Final measurement:

6) Where did the record attempt take place?
 Venue:
 City/Town: Hamburg, IA
 Country: USA

7) When were you present at the record attempt?
 (Include dates and times)
10/14/2023
6 PM

4) My field of expertise is: (Reason for witnessing the record attempt)

8) This witness statement was completed by:
 I am willing to be contacted by Guinness World Records to discuss any details regarding this record claim.
 Sign here: Jim
 (All signatures must be handwritten)
 Date: 10 / 14 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

OFFICIALLY AMAZING™

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Witnesses from a kids' yard party, just over the border in Iowa.

Day 30: Iowa's rolling hills

Oct 15, 2023

Today was a blessedly uneventful day (no dogs, lightning, clay roads, spraying fertilizer trucks,...) so we worked to bank as much mileage as possible through the pretty rolling hills of southwestern Iowa, with our sights firmly set on the Mississippi River as the next big milestone. Yan was an incredible support for me during her first full day of crewing, and Jill patiently moved the RV several times near the end of the day as I inched up my mileage goal. Other highlights include: more green & foliage that felt almost New-England-like in some areas, a yummy cupcake with beautiful pink frosting that Yan surprised me with, and a couple of enthusiastic budding track stars who wanted their picture taken with me.



Day 31: sunny day in Iowa

Oct 16, 2023

After 4 days of cloud cover, the sun came out again! I don't love running in the sun, but it sure enhances the pretty greens of Iowa's rolling hills. I continue to push hard up & down through Iowa towards the Mississippi River - now just 125 miles away. The miles behind us are adding up, while those ahead of us now seem close enough to wrap my head around... but I got myself into a bit of a snit this morning doing too many calculations in my head, e.g. if I average X miles per day, I will finish on Y date, but if I have a bad day then I'd need to average X+2 miles to make up for it, etc. So I set myself an aggressive mileage goal for today, and moved towards it with good momentum until mile 50, and which point I crashed abruptly and the rest of the day was a long slog and much self-beratement about falling off all of my newly calculated plans... My conclusion is that I shouldn't do all of these stress-inducing calculations in my head, I should just run.

A few nice interactions of today: a friendly reporter named Jenny from Mount Ayr news caught up with us and said she heard we were passing through, so she hopes to do a story about us in her town paper. Another friendly mom named Jenny let me use her bathroom mid-day. A couple waved and cheered "Run, Jenny, Run" from where they were waiting for me in their yard - they must have heard through the grapevine that I was coming. In the last 2 miles of the day, when I was all but dead, I chatted briefly with a beautiful family cruising around their farm. I also saw a praying mantis today - they really are HUGE - but wasn't carrying my phone to get a picture.





Day 32: drive with care

Oct 17, 2023

As I ran through Centerville, Iowa this morning, past tombstone manufacturer Centerville Monument Company, I noted with amusement their front yard display of engraved granite: "Drive with care. We can wait." But on the topic of "drive with care", Iowa, I have to say I've been a little disappointed with your shoulder situation. All of the roads so far have either:

(a) zero paved shoulder, but a wide gravel shoulder that's great for parking a crew vehicle but terrible for running because the gravel is too big for stable footing

(b) 12" paved shoulder, but rumble stripping that extends the full width of the shoulder, over the white line, and 6" into the road!

Also Iowans seem to be more reluctant than drivers in the western states to cross the yellow line (even when it's dashed for passing and there is no oncoming traffic) to make room for a pedestrian. Luckily the semi truck traffic has not been heavy. There have also been some slow-moving monster John Deere farm vehicles, and some Amish horse and buggies on the roads (including 2 friendly guys Wilbur & Herman who asked for my autograph!), so I guess the drivers are used to avoiding non-standard traffic.

I also ran through the tiny town of West Grove where all the street names start with E (Ebony, Emery, Echo, Eaker, Emery, Emerald, ...) At some point between towns today I passed "Cedar Ave" - the first one I've seen in this journey, though I think every town in the northeastern US has at least one "Cedar St", so my sighting today feels like one more little sign that we are getting closer to home. Just under 60 miles to the Mississippi River; we are hoping to cross tomorrow evening!



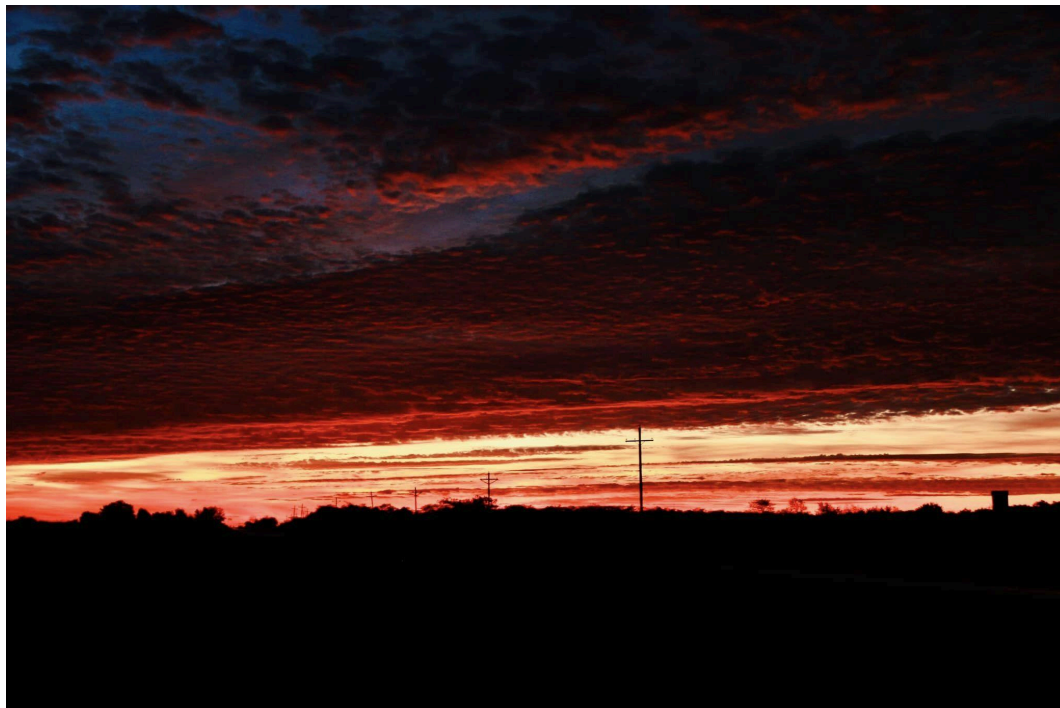
Day 33: crossed the Mississippi River!

Oct 18, 2023

The great state of Iowa gave me a fabulous sendoff today, starting with a magnificent prairie sunrise that evolved from red to gold as I ran towards it for many miles. I also enjoyed some beautiful winding, rolling miles through the fall foliage and lakes of Geode State Park.

We also had some great company throughout the day: first Bonnie Busch surprised us in Salem with a little brother unicorn for the llamacorn mascot that she had brought for me in 2019, and some yummy colorful treats, and plenty of hugs and encouragement. Then Ann Kostelnick, Pete's sister who masterminded the route for his 2016 record, which I have largely been following. I was thrilled to have Ann's company and conversation for almost 10 miles of running, and more treats including chocolate chip zucchini muffins! Finally Bryan, a veteran who has run across a number of states himself to raise awareness for veteran mental health issues, came to bring sports drinks and run a mile with me. I am beyond grateful for these generous new friends who each drove for several hours to lift me up on my last day in Iowa! And even some truckers seem to know who I am - one semi driver whizzing by leaned out his window and pumped his fist and shouted "Run, Jenny, run!" and another shouted "You go girl!"

Finally near the end of the day I ran through increasing traffic and commerce (and rain) into the city of Burlington, from which the Great River Bridge crosses the Mississippi into Illinois. When I first glimpsed the high tower of the cabled bridge through the rain, a mile or so away, my eyes teared up - but this was a good kind of cry. We are headed home! Pedestrian access to the bridge is pretty sketchy, via the shoulderless exit of Rt-34, but I armed myself with 2 mini Snickers bars and a Rice Krispie treat in my back pocket for emotional support and made it onto the bridge itself where the shoulder is comfortably wide. The Mississippi River is grand and beautiful, and I felt lucky that I could run close to the guard rail and take it all in while the drivers had to just speed through it. Illinois welcomed us with a rainbow and beautiful sunset after the previous 10 miles of rain, and we are looking forward to seeing more of Illinois tomorrow.









Day 34: alphabet food

Oct 19, 2023

Today was a big struggle for me, more mentally than physically. For the last 4 days I had such a clear short-term goal, to get across the Mississippi River by Wed evening, but now the final 1000 miles seem very long without clear milestones. It was also a letdown to run 68 lonely miles on the relatively non-descript terrain of western Illinois, after my very social last day in Iowa. But with great emotional and physical support from my all-star crew, I chipped away at it, one 3-mile chunk at a time between stops, and now we are well-positioned to cross the Illinois River in Peoria early tomorrow morning.

You might wonder what I am eating to fuel all this running. It has evolved somewhat over the last 5 weeks as I have tired of many foods. Recently, my days start with a cup of coffee and a banana before I leave the RV. Then 2 egg sandwiches at the first 2 stops, accompanied by more coffee or hot chocolate. Then I move on to the bagels & cream cheese phase of the morning, and eventually mix in some pop tarts, muffins, and finally by late afternoon I confess that I'm eating mostly baked goods & sugary treats to motivate me through the final miles. When I arrive at the RV for the night, I chug a protein drink. For dinner I eat 6 eggs & cheese, either broccoli or salad with peanuts, and a protein smoothie.

A highlight of today was an outstanding grilled cheese sandwich that Yan procured for me. The idea came from Jill's friends Nancy & Mercy, who have supported me from the beginning by sending an inspiring word of the day to my tracker (<https://share.garmin.com/runjennyrun>), moving through the alphabet one day at a time (e.g. awesome, believe, courageous, ...) On day 14, they sent the word "nonpareil" which they meant as "unrivaled" but it's also a chocolate candy that I immediately began to crave, so I sent Jill scurrying through the small towns of the west looking for nonpareils until she finally found some for me in Steamboat Springs. This spawned the idea to switch from inspiring words to food words for the second round of the alphabet starting on day 27. So far I've eaten Chocolate Cake, some Deviled eggs that Jill miraculously whipped up for me in the RV kitchen, a whole box of 5 Eclairs, and now today a fantastic Grilled cheese sandwich from Yan.

If anybody wants to join this game, tomorrow (Fri 10/20) will be day 35, the 9th letter I. I am ever grateful for new & old friends who bring food contributions to fuel my body, and even more importantly running company to fuel my soul. Please coordinate with my crew chief Jill Yeomans on facebook, because it can be a little overwhelming if multiple people show up to run unannounced at the same time.



Photo of the Llamacorn mascot from Bonnie Busch in 2019, and little brother unicorn that Bonnie delivered yesterday, and the nonpareils that Jill finally found in Steamboat Springs.

Day 35: Illinois River at sunrise

Oct 20, 2023

We crossed the Illinois River through Peoria at sunrise, over a bridge that had a designated bike/pedestrian lane! In fact, the main vehicle part of the bridge was closed for construction, so I had the whole bridge to myself, and the construction workers were interested in our journey so they kindly escorted Jill in the RV across the closed vehicle part of the bridge as well.

Later we passed through Eureka, Illinois - home of Eureka College, President Ronald Reagan's alma mater. Of more direct interest to me, at one of our crew stops we just happened to meet a woman named Mary who said that she is friends with another Jenny Hoffman living in Eureka, who has also run the Boston marathon! We exchanged contact info, and I will try to track down my doppelganger after this journey is over.

Near the end of the day, we passed through Chenoa, where we crossed the historic Route 66 - the route I had intended to follow for much of my 2023 journey when I originally planned to run from Los Angeles to Boston (a plan that was derailed at the last minute by the hurricane Hillary road closures around LA). I reflected on how disappointed I was initially by that last-minute change of plans, but how grateful I am now to be following this same beautiful and familiar route that I followed in 2019. My biggest remaining emotional milestone before New York City will be crossing from Ohio into Pennsylvania 443 miles from here - a crossing I failed to make in 2019 due to my run-ending knee injury in Akron.

In other news, today was Yan's last day on my crew. I am so grateful for Yan's friendship over the last week. Among all of my crew members - all of whom are now beloved friends - Yan was the only one I was really close to before the run, so in some sense she was the riskiest crew member because I had the most to lose. Yan knew me as a confident professor, but now she has seen the worst of me - from irrational toddler-like crankiness about trivial details, to all manner of bodily dysfunctions. But she continued to patiently love and support me through this journey, and I am eternally grateful. Today she brought me back from the dead around mile 45 with a hamstring massage that got me through the last 20 miles when I thought I was finished. Now we are well-positioned to make it to Indiana by the end of tomorrow, and I am looking forward to meeting up with my final crew member, the transcon fairy godmother Cinder!



Day 36: Physics friends in Illinois

Oct 21, 2023

My day got off to a rocky start with some rude drivers, homesickness, and tears. But around mile 18, I was joined by my physics collaborator Dirk Morr and his colleague Rick Cavanaugh from U. Illinois, who had driven 1.5 hours down from Chicago to meet me. They brought fresh bagels (yay!) and they ran with me for ~8 miles (double yay!) so I got caught up on some gossip from the physics world, and the miles flew by. I'm super-grateful for their company!

In late afternoon, as my intractably tight hamstring relegated me to a zombie shuffle, and my spirits lagged again, I was surprised in Watseka by old friends from physics grad school, Roni Harnik and his wife Tami, who drove all the way down from Naperville with their 2 teenage kids. We walked a mile together, caught up on 15 years of life, and they left me with a generous bag of goodies from Trader Joe's, my favorite grocery store, which I haven't seen since San Francisco. Their company and generosity lifted me out of my low point, and I zombie-shuffled onwards.

At mile 56 we finally met up with my last crew, transcon fairy godmother Cinder! Cinder rejuvenated me with a quick massage that got me to the state border and to our final campsite ~3 miles into Indiana. I am looking forward to seeing more of Indiana and to more of Cinder's massage genius to get this tired old body through the last 2 weeks to New York City.

On Rt 24, we were passed by 4 windmill blades. They are enormous! They are 170 feet long, and each one sits on 2 trucks (front and back) and takes up the full width of the 2-lane road, so there are also 5 escort cars in front and back of each one. As the first blade passed, it took me a minute to figure out what it was; it initially looked like a missile! Also, the grasshoppers were out in force this afternoon, bouncing off my legs as I ran.





Long-awaited reunion with Cinder at the Indiana border!



Day 37: family Sunday

Oct 22, 2023

We are in the eastern time zone! Although we lost an hour, it was a pretty good day overall. I was able to move slowly & steadily thanks to Cinder's great help loosening me up last night.

This morning in western Indiana, I ran through the 4th largest windfarm in the US, with 414 turbines spanning 15 miles on both sides of Rt-24. I love the windmills: they are so graceful yet powerful, and I find it mesmerizing to watch them rotate during the day, or blink their red lights in unison in the dark.

At one of my morning crew stops, a kitten also stopped for aid, and Jill indulged it with some cream cheese. I saw a calf nursing from its momma cow in a pasture, which felt healing after seeing so many sad factory farms last week. I also saw a fox crossing the road.

This afternoon my beloved cousins Melinda & Susan drove 3 hours each way from their home in Michigan to surprise me with all of the K foods: Krispy Kreme donuts (I ate 4), KitKat bars (I ate 8), and Hershey Kisses. I am so grateful for their generous and creative support!

Late afternoon, on the west edge of Logansport, I passed the Pool & Spa store where I remember spending 20 very stressful minutes in 2019 trying to figure out what to do when an unexpected detour sign told me that the Eel River bridge was out and the alternative way across would add 8 miles to my route... Today I crossed the Eel River without trouble, and we are camped just east of Logansport, close to train tracks where we are regularly hearing the nostalgic long, low whistles and the rumble of the trains.

I have missed going to church while I am running full-time. But we found a sign in Monticello that captures my sense of gratitude for this run, and seems to me to connect it to a form of worship. I am also really touched by the prayer request that my 11yo daughter submitted in our home church this morning.



PRAYER REQUEST

We are honored to pray for your specific needs. Please place prayer requests in the offering plate during worship services or drop in the Prayer Request box in the church lobby.

Please pray for: My mom Jenny
Hoffman. she is running
across the country
for the 2nd time
I hope she succeeds
this time.

"Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord,
you know it completely." Psalm 139:4

 **HARVARD**
The Memorial Church



Monticello, Indiana

Day 38: quiet day in Indiana

Oct 23, 2023

Today was a long, quiet day in Indiana. I enjoyed the cooler fall weather and just focused on banking miles along busy Rt-24 in the morning, then along quieter residential and cornfield-lined streets in the afternoon. I am so grateful for so many aspects of this journey: the beautiful geography, friendly people we have met, amazing support of my crew and other friends who have come out to cheer, run, or bring food to me. But my body is ready to be done with running 60+ miles per day, and I am looking forward to a very long sleep, reunion with my family, and celebrating with so many friends in the NY/CT area where I grew up. We now have 17 miles remaining to the Indiana/Ohio border, 254 miles to the Ohio/Pennsylvania border, and approximately 668 miles to New York City Hall (though my husband is still carefully finalizing PA, NJ, and NY routes, for which I am very grateful!) I'm also grateful for everybody who is sending me messages on my Garmin tracker; I read each one and it lifts my spirits, though I'm sorry I can't respond individually

We are camped tonight in the driveway of a friendly family on the outskirts of Fort Wayne. As I plodded through my last few miles in the dark, they ran out a quarter mile to greet me and welcome me home for the night.



Day 39: hot & flat in Ohio

Oct 24, 2023

We completed the hat trick of I-states (Iowa, Illinois, Indiana) and entered Ohio without fanfare or signage, on a small county road. The first 50 miles of Ohio are: hot and flat. Where are the crisp, cool northeast fall days that I was expecting? Today was 82°F and not a cloud in the sky, running between flat corn and soy fields for 15 hours. We pushed long and late today because it's hard to find a safe, out-of-the-way place to park an RV in farm country during peak harvest. The farmers are working very hard right now; we can still hear the hum of the monster John Deere trucks harvesting soybeans as fast as they can by moonlight. They are trying to beat a rainstorm that is predicted within the next 48 hours, which would ruin any crop left in the fields.

As I ran between alternating corn and soy, I saw one solo corn plant sticking up awkwardly in a soy field. I identified with that corn plant.

We have 185 miles remaining to the Ohio/Pennsylvania border, and 600 miles remaining to New York City Hall. I am looking forward to seeing more friends as we move east!



Day 40: more corn

Oct 25, 2023

I have been running through corn since eastern Colorado. That's 20 days of corn. I have noticed a lot of things about corn. It makes a dry rattling noise when the wind blows, and a tat-tat-tat noise when the rain falls. It is planted in perfectly-spaced rows so the John Deere monster trucks can harvest up to 10 rows at a time with their pointy fangs. It is planted so close together that each plant can produce only a single cob. A cornfield is a great place to hide, though my 2023 run started 5 days later, and the harvest is apparently earlier than usual this year, so I'm finding it more challenging to hide exactly when I need to. Luckily there are still some unharvested opportunities, and Jill caught me in the act.

There are signs that we might emerge from corn soon. We passed through 2 cities today: Findlay and Tiffin. For most of this journey, we've been on very rural roads, and I've felt overwhelmed by the occasional modest-sized towns that we have passed through. But today I enjoyed the cities: the stores are getting more familiar, the sidewalks are more runnable, and I especially enjoyed passing through Tiffin University and with its familiar feel of dorms and students. I also enjoyed seeing several school buses picking up and dropping off kids at neighborhood homes. Tomorrow we are headed to Cuyahoga National Park, which I think will be at least 6 corn-free miles on Rt-303.

We put up some signs on our crew vehicles with a QR code and website to let curious people know about my run. Today a number of people stopped to cheer or ask more. We met a friendly family with an adorable boy and dog. The Tiffin radio station WTTF even sent me an encouraging message on my tracker! Thanks to everybody for your encouragement as we head into the home stretch of this long journey.



Day 41: Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Oct 26, 2023

Today was a big milestone for me: I crossed the Cuyahoga River and surpassed my total mileage from my 2019 attempt (2573 miles as of this evening vs. 2560 miles before my knee gave out in Akron, Ohio in 2019). This time I detoured north, through Cuyahoga Valley National Park, so I wouldn't have to run down the same Tallmadge Road in Akron that holds such a traumatic memory for me. CVNP is a bit past peak fall foliage, but I could still enjoy the beauty of the hills and river. And my body certainly enjoyed the change of pace traversing rolling hills instead of endless flat cornfields.

I also enjoyed some great company today. Debra Horn, an old friend from 24 hour national teams, came out to run 6 miles with me, and caught me up on some world news and running gossip. Then two new friends from the Medina running club, Laura and Harold, each joined me for a few miles. I'm so grateful for the generosity of old friends and strangers (new friends!) who are willing to keep me company and lift my spirits with conversation. At the end of the day, another new friend Karen stopped by our RV (she called it the "Jennymobile") to introduce herself because she will be running her first marathon in New York City a day or two after my projected arrival there. Good luck, Karen!

As we pass through the region of Ohio originally known as the Connecticut Western Reserve, where land grants were given to New Englanders who fought in the Revolutionary War, I also noted the many towns with duplicate New England names. Last night's campsite was in New Fairfield, and today I ran through Fitchville, New London, and Greenwich (my childhood home in CT). Near the end of the day, I ran through Boston Township, and I briefly thought "well, I could just stop now, since my original goal was to run from California to Boston." I am tired, and feel like my body is holding together by a thread, but now that we're in new territory I do have some renewed energy and excitement for the final week to come. I am also looking forward to cooler weather: this week we've had record-breaking heat in Ohio (80s in the last week of October!) but I hear that more wintry temps are coming soon and I look forward to crossing the Pennsylvania border tomorrow.



Debra Horn, old friend from USA 24hr National Team.





Karen will be running her first marathon in New York City in a week!

Day 42: P is for pastries, pierogies, and Pennsylvania!

Oct 27, 2023

We made it to Pennsylvania! But we had a few final adventures in Ohio. I was so grateful to meet up with my close friend Elena who happened to be in Kent for the weekend and brought me all the P foods: pastries (I ate at least 6), peanut butter, and peppermint patties. Just 5 minutes & a hug from a good friend from home is emotional rocket fuel. While running, I was joined by Ward Fremon, then old friends Larry Orwin & Dan Horvath who had also run with me in 2019, so for over an hour we had a pack of 4 runners. I really enjoy the company, and wish I could space it out to fill more hours of the afternoon. Larry brought pierogies (I enjoyed 2 for dinner), and his wife Christine's county-fair-winning blondies (I think I must have eaten 10 throughout the afternoon). Thanks to all for your support!

I saw just a few final small cornfields in Ohio... so my primary hiding places are gone. Three 10-lb babies and 40+ days of running 60 miles per day is not a recipe for bladder success, so I often need to hide quickly. I stepped off the road to hide in what looked like a leaf-filled ditch, only to discover that there was a deep cold muddy creek underneath, which startled me so much that... well, I could have just stayed on the road and at least I would still have dry feet. But I had a change of shoes & clothes in the crew van a mile ahead, so the situation was quickly resolved. Now that we are passing through more cities, I did use 3 different flush toilets today, which I think matches the total number of flush toilets I have used between San Francisco and mid-Ohio.

Late afternoon, we entered Pennsylvania, where I struggled with the lack of sidewalks in the city of Sharon. My legs are so tired by now that hopping curbs and traversing grass to stay out of traffic forced me to walk for most of the miles through town. But I've been enjoying the big hills so far, most of which are runnable, but a few steep ones afford good walking breaks. I know the hills will get even bigger as we move across the state. I think we have 316 miles left in Pennsylvania, 75 in New Jersey, then the George Washington Bridge and 12 miles in New York City. But I still need to take this one day at a time, and I'm looking forward to cooler weather tomorrow.









Day 43: gentle rain & rivers

Oct 28, 2023

So far, I am loving Pennsylvania! This morning I ran through a gentle rain that felt wonderful after the record-breaking heat wave in Ohio last week. I crossed two beautiful rivers: the Allegheny and the Clarion. Both were wide and tranquil, no sign of current or commerce, and lined on both sides by beautiful red foliage. I spent the middle 30 miles of the day on smaller roads, including some dirt roads. I passed several Amish horse and buggies. Late in the afternoon, back on larger roads, I enjoyed the brief whiff of a college atmosphere as I ran through Clarion University. Not too many towns today, but they all had runnable sidewalks. For the last 2 miles, I ran towards a beautiful rising full moon, first pink, then gold.

Pennsylvania is hilly! Almost 5000 ft elevation gain and loss today, and more in the days to come. My legs are so much happier with the variation, after so many flat miles in the midwest. But my right hip was pretty cranky during the last 20 miles of the day on the heavily-cambered Rt 322. We took a shorter day today, trying to reset to an earlier start tomorrow. Today felt like the calm before the storm: tomorrow I will get back into race mentality, to traverse even bigger hills throughout the rest of PA, to get to the George Washington Bridge before it closes to pedestrians on Thursday at midnight.





Day 44: more rain

Oct 29, 2023

Today's rain was not quite as gentle. I'm glad we started very early (before 4am) because it's psychologically less challenging to keep running when rain starts than it is to leave a warm, dry RV to head out into pouring rain. This morning I had been out for about a mile when the skies opened, and I was drenched and cold. Despite the forecast for "3/4 inch rain, mostly before 2pm", it continued to rain for off and on (mostly on) for the entire day. Since the rain never stopped for any appreciable time, there didn't seem to be any point to changing my clothes & shoes, so I was just cold and wet all day, with ugly prune feet by the end.

I also had some stress following my printed directions. One of the written distances was 2 miles off, so I found myself at the top of a hill where the expected turn wasn't, facing the unpleasant choice of descending > 500 ft in either direction with 50% probability of guessing correctly. Luckily as I was standing very forlornly contemplating my options, a kind man named Robert opened his house door and invited me into his warmth and pointed me in the right direction. People really are so kind and generous, everywhere I go! I also had a friendly police officer named Henry check in on me and wait for me at a busy intersection.

A bright spot in an otherwise long, damp, and challenging day was the surprise arrival of my good friend Grace from Cambridge (not to be confused with my crew Grace), who had been staying with friends in Pittsburgh over the weekend. Grace & Jerry & Rachel ran and kept me company for 5 miles, and they brought me a Pittsburgh special: burnt almond donuts, which were amazing (I ate all 3!)

I think I am mostly through the Allegheny mountains (a western subset of the Appalachians), but the taller Appalachians are yet to come over the next 3 days.





Day 45: hills & horses

Oct 30, 2023

Today started early with a good climb up to 2500 ft through Black Moshannon State Park. In the misty rain (yes, more rain!) my headlamp gave me only ~10 ft range of vision, so I couldn't visually parse the slope in front of me, and I barely realized I was climbing. Mid-day I climbed up and over Mt. Nittany near Penn State, and at the end of the day I climbed over a small pass in "Hairy John State Forest" (I wonder who he was?) Total elevation gain for today was similar to my first 2 days in Pennsylvania, but today felt much easier because the climbing was divided into these 3 big climbs, with long flat(ish) sections between, instead of yesterday's short steep ups & downs all day.

In the afternoon, I ran through beautiful Amish country. An advantage for me is that the shoulders are wide, to accommodate the horse & buggies. But I also spent many miles dodging horse-poo in the shoulder. I am jealous of the horses - if I could just take care of my 8000 calorie/day output while running, instead of visiting all the cornfields, I would probably be in New York already!

We have been doing this for 45 days, and we are tired. Crewing is exhausting, all-consuming work just like running. Some say that CREW stands for Cranky Runner, Endless Waiting - but for a trans-USA run (as opposed to an organized race) all that waiting time is also filled with logistics of checking mileages and turns, finding turnouts and gas stations, finding campsites, filling and dumping the RV, doing laundry, coordinating with visiting runners, managing social media, and a hundred other tasks. I cannot put into words how grateful I am for all of my crew: Sydney, Grace, Michelle, Yan, Cinder, and particularly Jill who has been with me as faithful crew chief since the beginning. Jill has generously and lovingly dispensed wisdom, hugs, and logistical support, while shielding me as completely as possible from every stress other than putting one foot in front of the other. Today, my husband Daniel (who has been doing all the routing behind the scenes) drove out to give Jill a short rest and help crew for the last few days, as we are all running on empty. It is so great to see him, and we even got to run together for a few miles.

I really appreciated a visit and cheers from Geoffrey, former US national rowing team coxswain (note the Head of the Charles jacket, which is nostalgic for me as a former college rower). Geoffrey brought me baklava that was so good I ate 3 giant pieces while running this afternoon! I am super-grateful that Stephanie, a fellow materials scientist at Penn State, came to run 6 miles with me in the afternoon, which is the hardest time of day for me. Her company made the miles fly. She also brought yummy home-made butterscotch oatmeal cookies. Finally, I want to thank my daughter's friends Elodie & Olivier who sent along with Daniel some beautiful signs and the S food of the day, Swedish fish, which powered me through my last 2 miles. As we get oh-so-close (but still oh-soooooo-far) from my home turf in the New York / New England area, I'm looking forward to a quiet rail trail and more friends to run with tomorrow.

PS - more about Hairy John:

<https://susquehannavalley.blogspot.com/2020/02/hairy-john-legendary-hermit-who-had.html?m=1>









Day 46: happy Halloween!

Oct 31, 2023

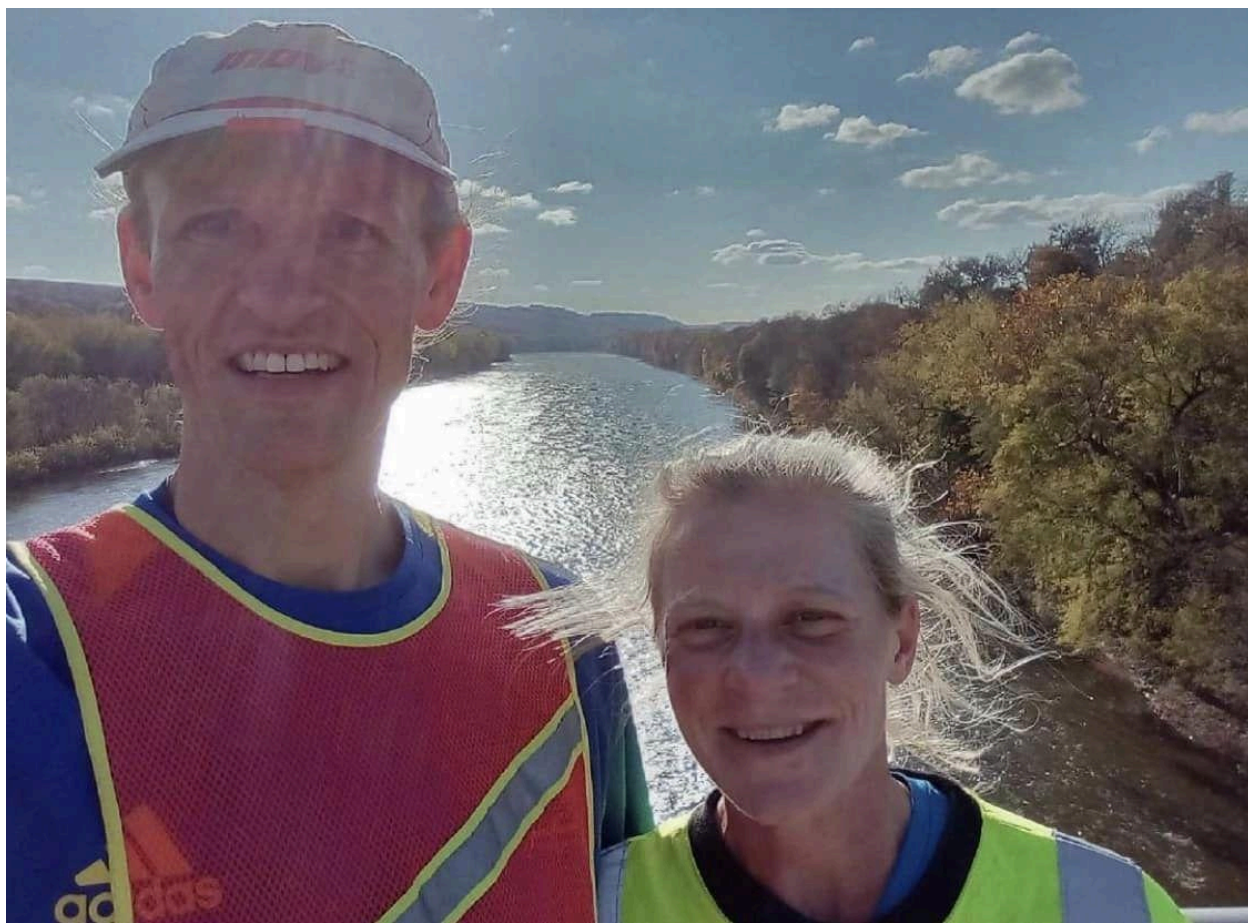
I finally got my perfect fall running weather, and I enjoyed a lot of great running company today. My close friend from grad school Joan Hoffmann (2 n's!) drove up from Maryland to bike slowly behind me on a 9-mile section of rail trail early this morning. It was so wonderful to catch up with her, but I felt very forlorn when she left at mile 14 and I thought "the best part of the day is already over, and now I still have more than 50 miles to go". But I was wrong! Jill came back refreshed after a night of good sleep in a hotel and crewed while Daniel ran with me through Bloomsburg and across the beautiful Susquehanna River, until we met up with another old friend Tatiana who joined with her sister Liv and ran with me up and over the biggest 1500 ft climb of the day. Meanwhile, it turns out that Geoffrey (of baklava fame from yesterday) is also a licensed pilot, and he did a flyover with his small plane to take aerial pictures of us. It was a real thrill to see the plane circling and know that it was up there for me! Finally, Daniel ran with me again for the final 3 miles of the day. Overall, I had company for almost half the day, and it flew by! I also enjoyed a second kid-drawn sign from E+O, and their T food of the day Twix bars, which powered me through the last few miles.

Halloween yard decorations have been a source of great entertainment for me over the last few weeks. I have seen many beautifully carved pumpkins, elaborate tableaux of ghosts and monsters, and creative home-made decorations. A few are motorized or even motion-sensitive, and have given me a good start as I run by and they suddenly start moving or talking to me. I was hoping to pass through a small town late in the day and see some of the little ghosties and ghoulies out trick-or-treating, but we saw only one small boy. It occurred to me that with all of the wonderful sugary food gifts from the last few days, and so little time remaining in this journey to eat them all, we should have put out a pumpkin and invited kids to trick-or-treat at our RV!

We have 58 miles remaining in Pennsylvania, 75 in New Jersey to the George Washington Bridge, then 12 in New York to the official endpoint at NY City Hall. That's just 145 total miles remaining. In June 2023, I ran 145.4 miles in a single 24-hour race in Wisconsin to qualify for the World Championships in Taiwan next month, but my depleted legs couldn't repeat that performance tomorrow. The plan is to put in a "normal" 60+ mile day on Wed to get a few miles into New Jersey, then push through to NY City Hall late Thurs night. A complication is that the city hall steps (the official Guinness-designated endpoint) are currently under construction, i.e. there are no steps. We are trying to get confirmation from Guinness about what to do, but no answer yet. In any case, we plan to sleep near city hall then continue at a more social, leisurely pace to the Atlantic Ocean at Coney Island on Friday morning. I welcome company as I end this journey in New York City, either Thurs night or Fri morning!

It feels so close, but 145 miles still leaves a lot of room for error. Today I had a scare when I went into a pizza shop in Bloomsburg to ask to use their bathroom. I explained to the woman behind the desk about my journey, and she pondered my request for a long time, hemmed and hawed, and finally after several minutes told me no. I turned to leave, but didn't remember that there was a big step down to the sidewalk immediately outside the front door, so I stepped through the door into free space and faceplanted down on the sidewalk. Luckily I was just a bit scraped up, but I spent the rest of the afternoon grappling with the realization that a fall like that could have ended my journey. It's not over until the very last step!









Day 47: tomorrow, tomorrow, you're only a day away!

Nov 1, 2023

We have 66 miles left in New Jersey to the George Washington Bridge, and 12 miles in Manhattan to New York City Hall. The plan is to start tomorrow (Nov 2) at 4am, aim to make it to the bridge between 7-8pm, and follow the Hudson River Greenway to reach City Hall in the late evening, ideally 10-11pm. Then sleep in a local hotel, and meet back at City Hall at 7am on Friday (Nov 3) to jog/walk to the Atlantic Ocean at Coney Island. My NJ+NY route is shown, and my tracker will show where I am while I am moving: <https://share.garmin.com/runjennyrun> I particularly welcome company from the George Washington Bridge onwards to City Hall and then to Coney Island, and I welcome witnesses at City Hall.

Today was a wonderful day with friends. Peter Armitage was my hero of the morning for running 36 miles with me, his longest run ever! I'm super-honored that he drove 2.5 hours each way, and pushed his own running limits to keep me company and entertain me with gossip from the physics world, among other topics. Then my high school classmate Sally ran with me through the Delaware Water Gap and across the lovely Delaware River, and we face-timed with 2 other high school classmates on the run. We had a brief scare because a 4-mile section of road on the PA side of the bridge was closed due to a rock slide, but it turns out it was still pedestrian-accessible and even lovelier for running without the cars. Another high school classmate Jannett joined with her kids on the New Jersey side of the bridge, and helped me through the 3-mile trail section at twilight. It was so great to get 3 old HS classmates and field hockey teammates together briefly for maybe the first time since 1996?

I faceplanted 2 more times today, going down hard on my left knee both times, and bloodying my hands. I am running on fumes, and my gait is so shuffly that the smallest bump can trip me. A rough shoulder in PA, and a tree root under leaves on the NJ trail both took me down. I iced my knee this evening, and the swelling went down, so I think I'll be ok to start tomorrow. But can my legs get me there without another catastrophic fall? I am looking forward to giving it everything I have, with gratitude for friends who can join me along the way and cheer me at the end.



Peter ran 36 miles with Jenny - his longest run ever!



High school classmate Sally accompanied Jenny through the Delaware Water Gap.



High school classmate Jannett and family!



Across the Delaware River. She's in New Jersey!

Day 48: World Record 47:12:35 !!

Nov 2, 2023



8:54am. Jenny is headed east on US-46 for about 14 miles.



This is really hard. 16 more miles to GW Bridge; another 12 to City Hall.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=226285950315559>

A special thanks to Matt Vosburgh who ran 30 miles with Jenny on the final day and took this video of her approaching the George Washington bridge with a police escort.



Awaiting crowd at the George Washington Bridge.



Reunion with son Zephyr, who ran the last 13 miles across the GWB and through Manhattan.

We did it! We took more than a week off the existing world record:

[https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/fastest-crossing-of-america-\(usa\)-on-foot-\(female\)](https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/fastest-crossing-of-america-(usa)-on-foot-(female))

I supplied the legs, and Jill, Sydney, Grace, Michelle, Yan, Cinder, and Daniel supplied the logistical, physical, and emotional support that made this all possible. I am beyond grateful to my crew and to all of my friends who ran with me or rallied around me virtually in the last few days to help push this train over the finish line. Thanks to my son Zephyr and to many other friends who joined in crossing the George Washington Bridge and running the last 12 miles through Manhattan with me. I will have many more gratitudes to write later, but for now I am going to sleep.



New York City Hall - 47 days, 12 hours, and 35 minutes after leaving SF City Hall on foot.





None of this would be possible without beloved crew chief Jill.



At the end of it all, Coros watch's opinion on Jenny's run.

Day 49: From sea to shining sea

Nov 3, 2023

This morning I walked from New York City Hall to the Atlantic Ocean at Coney Island. My daughter and I took off our shoes and waded in. Total mileage from sea to shining sea is 3048 miles. It's a beautiful country filled with beautiful people. God Bless America.

