

The Missouri Trial Attorney

Helping to Balance the Scales of Justice

corporation can ever be established in this state:

6. That all elections shall be free and equal:

7. That courts of justice ought to be open to every person, and certain remedy afforded for every injury to person, property or character; and that right and justice ought to be administered without sale, denial or delay; and that no private property ought to be taken or applied to public use without just compensation:

8. That the right of trial by jury shall remain inviolate:

9. That in all criminal prosecutions, the accused has the right to be heard by himself and his counsel; to demand the nature and cause of accusation; to have compulsory process for witnesses in his favour; to meet the witnesses against him face to face; and, in prosecutions on presentment or indictment, to a speedy trial by an impartial jury of the vicinage; that the accused cannot be compelled to give evidence against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty or property but by the judgment of his peers or the law

B.R.E.A.K. PARKINSON'S DISEASE

The Run Entirely Across the State of Kansas

By Steve Gorny

Running 234.7 miles across my home state may seem like a crazy idea to some people. But the chance to pair my passion for running long distances with a need to do something to raise awareness and money to fight Parkinson's Disease, which afflicts my father, actually made the idea seem fairly normal. And, as it turned out over five very long days on Hwy. 99 in Kansas, the run was one of the most memorable, moving experiences I will ever have. As I told many people along the way, I got far more than I gave while covering those miles.

As you can imagine, there was a lot of "alone" time on the highway. People often ask what I thought about during those five long days. I was on the road for 10 hours 40 minutes on Wednesday, 11:22 on Thursday, 10:35 on Friday, 12:07 on Saturday and 6:07 on Sunday. Audiobooks helped, as they enabled me to get my mind away from the miles for a little while. I also used the time to think about issues at work and how best to handle them. I thought a lot about my family, especially those with me and my father back in Ohio. I also tried to do what I could to immerse myself in the country I ran through. Toward the end, I told my brother I felt as if I was becoming part of the landscape, rather than just running through it. The beautiful wheat fields, the cattle, the small towns, the people I met along the way – they all became part of the permanent experience. At times it made me feel very small when considering everything else around me. I suspect I will never have a similar opportunity to completely immerse myself into the countryside like I did during those five days.

It is virtually impossible to explain how, but I can recount with extreme precision various sights, smells and thoughts from along Hwy. 99. I can describe the overwhelming apprehension when the Elk County Sheriff pulled up to speak with us on Wednesday and we feared he would make me leave the road. I can instantly recall the wretched smell of the dead armadillo Paul Lattan and I passed near Madison on Thursday. On the morning of Day 3, as I approached Emporia, I can still feel how the chill in the air cooled the sweat as it ran down my face. I can recall countless points like this from along the journey with great clarity. Perhaps the absence of the sensory triggers in my everyday life enhanced the ability to experience my surroundings in a different way. Some may suggest the mental clarity was merely the result of utter and complete boredom. But honestly, I never felt bored. Each step was part of the whole and each mile had meaning. And, it's funny looking back now to think that during the run, each

mile felt like a long way, but now the whole trek across Kansas doesn't seem like it took that long. (My wife will politely disagree.)

Perhaps nothing defined the oneness with the prairie than when coyotes began howling at the Kansas/Oklahoma border in the pre-dawn glow on Day 1. My daughter was a bit apprehensive to send me down the road with the barks and howls coming from the nearby field, but I assured her they were not interested in me. From that first step of the first mile, I was welcomed into the adventure with the realization that this was going to be anything but "usual."

For an event like this, training and preparing my body and mind were critical. I prepared for approximately eight months, some of which were extremely challenging. For a span of over one month, I averaged more than 80 miles per week and ran several 40-plus mile ultra-marathons. By the time we headed for Oklahoma, I felt like I accomplished what I needed to get my body ready. However, two wild cards always remain in a running project like this – weather and injuries.

I got my first taste of weather issues in the form of warm temperatures about halfway through Day 1 when the mercury touched 86 degrees. I was as prepared as possible with light, white clothing and a hat that covered my neck and the sides of my face. Part of my training for the event included "two-a-day" runs. I ran in the morning before work when it was cooler, then ran again in the afternoon to acclimate to the mid-day heat. That experience came in handy my first, third and fifth days, each of which topped 86 degrees.

The weather played a trick on me during Day 2. I was teased with reasonable cloud cover and temperatures that topped out around 66 degrees. However, the traditionally south summer wind switched directions and came blowing out of the north at 20-26 mph. People ask if there came a time when I ever thought I could not finish the run, and this is the time that stands out more than any other. After 15 miles into the headwind, I knew I was in trouble for two reasons. For one, struggling against that kind of force for an entire day would likely deplete energy reserves I needed for later in the week. Two, the winds made it dangerous to continue because I could not hear traffic ahead or behind me. Keep in mind that Hwy. 99 is a two-lane road with many blind hills and rises. I needed to be able to hear traffic approaching from the opposite side of those hills so that I

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could step off the road and wait for the car or truck to pass. When I could not hear the traffic, I was putting both them and me in danger. A critical decision helped save the day. I got in the crew car and told Erin to drive north. Shocked at first, she then realized what I was doing. She drove me north, and for the rest of the day, I ran to the south. This solved both problems and saved me mentally and physically.

Spending 11 hours on the road each day left little time for other necessary activities – eating, sleeping, driving to and from the hotels, foot and leg care, and prepping for the following day's run. To maximize the time we had, on the ride to our hotel each night, I iced my feet and knees in a big bucket. Once at the hotel, I showered, treated blisters and muscle issues, cleaned out the day's supplement bottles, prepared the following day's clothes, then went with Erin, Ellie and Dave to get something to eat. Pork and vegetables each night, downed with two Boulevard Wheat beers. Yes, two beers a night. It helped ease the pain, helped me get some sleep, and think of all those carbs! We would then return to the hotel and work on a blog update. I went to bed at 8 p.m. and did what I could to get some sleep, although it was usually fairly light because something hurt when I moved or rolled over.

Each morning, I woke at 4:15, shuffled to the shower and slid under the hot water. After a few minutes, I was awake enough to start my stretching routine. I then dressed in my BREAK Parkinson's Disease shirt, applied bandages to my blisters, and smeared on enough anti-chafing gel to allow me to slide down a bone-dry sliding board in the heart of summertime. I packed nutritional supplements for the morning and filled the coolers with ice and water from the hotel. Then we were back in the car headed to the point where we left off the night before. It was at these

times when some additional doubts would creep in. I was tired, often yawning during the entire drive. I was sore. It was dark. And I knew I had to run 50 miles that day to stay on target. It seemed like a lot to comprehend during those moments. Fortunately, Erin recognized that the mornings would be mentally and physically challenging. So she enlisted the help of family and friends. They sent

encouraging and funny notes, quotes, stories and pictures. She gave me several each day to help take my mind to a better place while driving to the start.

How were your knees? Don't your hips hurt? How do your ankles stand all that running? Yes, I get a lot of questions about my joints. And, yes, I fully appreciate the possibility that my joints may come back to haunt me later in life. But, during

this project and throughout all of the running I've done in my life, I have been very blessed not to experience joint problems. Sure, my legs were sore and tired, but I was never at the point that I felt like they could not carry me up the next hill or to the next mile marker. During the last 50 miles, my back was also extremely sore, but only when going downhill, so it was a give-and-take with which I could live.

My feet were a different story. Despite diligent, routine footcare several times each day, I could not avoid blisters. After Day 3, I kept them to a minimum – only three total and all fairly treatable. Day 4 brought increasing problems. We surmised that my feet were so swollen at that point that there simply was not enough room in my shoes for my toes to land comfortably with each stride. I was greeted with six new blisters on Saturday – five on the left foot (two different ones under my big toe nail) and one on my right foot. As strange as it sounds, even if my legs were strong

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enough to carry me farther, it is almost impossible to continue with the pain of that many blisters. I thought back to the 2005 Marine Corps Marathon which I ran with my brother and sister. At around mile 22, my brother developed a massive blister on his foot. We took off his shoe and had a look. He asked me what his options were. I told him, "You've got two. Finish the run or quit." Needless to say, he finished.

I had the same two choices on Hwy. 99, but unfortunately still had about 70 miles to go, so I began what became a series of little roadside blister surgeries. Sterilizing the blisters and pin. Popping and draining the blisters. Resterilizing the blisters. Then, cutting and maneuvering specialized bandages into place in an effort to ease the stress on the compromised skin. I also had to figure out which type of sock (toe sock or double layer anti-blister (misnomer) to wear. Sometimes the repairs worked and I got another 10 or 12 miles before having to repeat the treatment process. Sometimes I couldn't take more than a few steps before having to re-fit a bandage or sock. If it seems I'm overemphasizing the blister issue, you should know something that seemingly insignificant can destroy all your efforts up to that point. Fortunately, I had company from friends during the last 40 miles on Saturday and they were very patient during the foot procedures. Passing mile marker 200 late that afternoon made the possibility of finishing the run seem like an actual reality for the first time, regardless of how my feet felt.

I had some extremely uplifting moments along the route. Three different visits from co-workers toting funny signs and adding encouragement were wonderful. My family owns a little cottage at a lake in the Flint Hills called Lake Wabaunsee. Hwy. 99 took us right past the lake. My mother-in-law arranged for a group of friends to come out and cheer me on. I could hear their horns from over a mile away. I was supposed to stop at the lake for the night, but kept going for another three or four miles riding on the positive energy they gave me. That night I was treated to a home-cooked meal by my mother-in-law and good friend Sharrel Houx. I also got to talk with my dad by phone and sleep in my own bed. It was the most relaxed I had been since leaving for Oklahoma on Tuesday.

Being joined by friends and my brother during some of the more difficult miles also meant more than I can express. On Day 4, when temperatures reached 88 degrees, I was on the road for 12 hours and seven minutes to cover 52 miles. It was the hardest, hilliest stretch I encountered. But, fortunately, I only had to run four miles by myself that day. The support runners kept my mind off of the mile markers and the temperature and made an incredible difference.

On Day 4, I was running with good friends Ann Gagel and Joe Morrey. Joe drove over from St. Joseph to log

some miles and assist the crew. He and Ann are both very experienced and accomplished runners and coaches. As we approached the town of Wamego, Kansas, we passed a group of bicyclists. "Are you going to Wamego?" they asked.

"No, we're headed to Nebraska," we told them. They didn't know what to say.

It was also on Day 4 that my brother said something extremely motivating. When I began expressing some question as to whether I would finish, he said, "I knew you would finish this the second you told me you were going to try. I never doubted it. It never crossed my mind." His confidence in me was inspiring and boosted my spirits as the long day on the road finally came to an end, 12 hours and seven minutes after we began.

Over the first four days, I accumulated extra miles in an effort to make the final day easier on what I knew would be a tired body and found out would be very sore feet. Fortunately, I only had to cover 28.7 miles on Sunday. It started off cool and cloudy, but quickly warmed up and threw some heavy humidity at us. My brother ran with me following every-other rest stop and helped to break up the final miles. He hesitated, but then commented that my stride had changed and it was clear that I was favoring my left foot. If I would have had farther to run, I may have been concerned, but figured I would not do too much damage over the last 20 miles.

My brother and I got a call from our sister with about 12 miles to go. It was nice to talk to her and gain some encouragement. Her kids also made signs and she sent them to Kansas. I got to see them a few miles later. My assistant Mary and three of her boys came out to cheer us on for the last ten miles. They brought more entertaining signs. Perhaps the best said "Believe in Yourself, because the rest of us think you are an idiot." Ahh, the love.

At the edge of Summerfield, Kansas, I reached mile marker 234 – the last I would see on the journey. Just 7/10ths of a mile awaited. For this final stretch, I got to run with my daughter, Ellie. It is hard to imagine a better way to finish this mission. Although I can still patently feel them, it is almost impossible to describe the emotions going through my mind during those last 10 minutes. Thoughts of my dad and our other honored patients. Thoughts of all of the preparation and training. Thoughts back to day one and passing the Oklahoma/Kansas border. Thoughts of all of those people who came out to assist me and all of those people who donated money to The Michael J. Fox Foundation.

Eight months of effort, the people who helped make this possible, and the people whom the project honored all flashed through my mind during those final strides. Add to

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The power behind the run

I can't discuss the project without thanking the many people who made it possible. My wife Erin, daughter Ellie and brother Dave were an incredibly efficient and upbeat crew team. At times there can be no worse job than working a long-distance runner's support crew; the weather can be bad, you are stuck in a car much of the day without covering much distance, you may have to deal with a grouchy and sore runner and you may be stuck without good food or actual restrooms for hours on end.

Despite all of these hurdles, Erin, Ellie and Dave performed every task without complaint. They were mentally strong and supportive when I needed it most, and provided nutritional and medical supplies on a moment's notice.

Runners who joined me along the way referred to my team as a "concierge service" because they were so adept at providing everything a runner might need. I could not have finished without their love and support. Dave also ran a total of 42 miles over three days. He had a unique ability to figure out where and when I needed help, and where and when to leave me alone.

Many thanks to the others who also came out and ran – Paul Lattan, Kristin Amend, Ann Gagel, Joe Morrey, John Curran and Stacy Benson. Their company was dearly appreciated. They were all a huge reason why I got to the Nebraska border. And tremendous thanks to all donors who supported The Michael J. Fox Foundation's effort to find a cure for Parkinson's Disease.



End of the road: Gorny, center, with medal, celebrates with brother John, mother-in-law Judy Waugh, daughter Ellie, wife Erin, father-in-law Bill Waugh and dog Maisy.

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that the chance to tell and show my 12-year-old daughter that people can do anything with dedication and preparation and the moment was simply perfect.

As Ellie and I neared the border, a sign came into view - "Leaving Kansas Come Again." Ellie and I joined hands and decided to jump across the border where my mother-in-law had created a finish line with streamers. After 234.7 miles, I am still amazed that I got my body airborne. Emotionally, I was certainly far higher than my feet took me physically. When I landed on my sore and swollen feet, I wished I had thought twice about jumping across the state line, but the picture of Ellie and me celebrating is one of the favorites of my lifetime.

Two of my favorite quotes often came to mind as I approached the last few miles of the run across Kansas. One is by legendary American runner Steve Prefontaine. He said, "To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift." Pre's gift was, among other things, powerful speed. Not mine. But, like him, I feel I have been blessed with mental determination that will allow me to push my body farther than many, including myself, think it can go. In doing so, I have been able to use that gift in an effort to bring awareness and raise money to support causes which help those I love.

The other quote is from former Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi. He

Ellie and I joined hands and decided to jump across the border where my mother-in-law had created a finish line with streamers.

said, "A man's finest hour, his greatest fulfillment to all he holds dear, is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle – victorious." I recited that quote to my brother on the last day and he agreed it would be hard to find words more fitting of the situation. He and I, along with Erin and Ellie and all of those who joined in the BREAK Parkinson's project were proud to work hard toward a cause we hold dear – helping to find a cure and better treatments for my father and others with this terrible disease. As I smiled at the "Leaving Kansas" sign, I knew that we had completed the mission – reaching our fundraising goal and logging 234.7 miles across the state.

Three days after the run, I received a call from the director of The Michael J. Fox Foundation, informing me that all funds raised qualified for a matching gift made by some incredible donors – the CEO of Google and his wife. Thus, our journey netted more than \$85,000 for Parkinson's Disease research.

Ten days after the run, I was minus a big toe nail and part of another, but otherwise felt great and was running again.