



## **Helena Vigilante Runners**

*Promoting health, fitness, and community through group training runs, races, and events in the greater Helena area*

**PO Box 663  
Helena, MT 59624**

**[www.vigilanterunning.org](http://www.vigilanterunning.org)**

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Dear Friends and Running Partners:

July 28, 2014

How does one get from Davis Gulch to the Boylston Street finish of the Boston Marathon? I don't know what Google Maps might offer, but in my case that journey had to be routed through Vigilante Stadium and Helena Vigilante Runners (HVR).

Years ago, I was trapped in the monotony of solo out-and-backs on Davis Gulch when some odd impulse directed me on a sunny Tuesday midday to Vigilante Stadium. I expected to run a few solitary laps, but was startled to find the track covered with runners in some purposeful workout. My instinct was to bolt before anyone noticed me, but Jeff Thomas, the dean of local runners, approached me warmly and said, "Join us!" I replied, "I don't think I belong here." That was ten seasons ago.

Helena is extremely fortunate to have the support and coordination of a running club and access to a facility the quality of Vigilante Stadium. An organized workout can revolutionize one's approach to running: unaccompanied boredom becomes a social event, undirected runs are replaced with a designed training method, self-motivation is supplemented by others' encouragement, cheers and concern. In addition to the training, the club offers information about races, volunteer opportunities, social events, speakers of interest and more.

All of this is available for free, but it is not without cost.

In addition to weekly workouts, HVR organizes races, pays insurance premiums, and provides services and opportunities to members and nonmembers alike. Everyone is welcome to test their speed at the August Road Race or their toughness at the Mt. Helena Classic. School children enjoy friendly, spirited competition at the Helena Elementary Area Track (HEAT) Meet. The club offers a website and Facebook page with information about workouts and races, organizes Helena's Montana Cup team each Fall, and provides free informative talks at the Speaking of Running series. To make this all happen, HVR has to raise money.

HVR has deliberately avoided a mandatory dues system, instead relying solely on voluntary contributions. This voluntary system is nearly unheard of among other running clubs, most of which have rigid membership structures and enforced fees. In recent years our club has managed to collect sufficient contributions to meet its budget. While many individuals have supported the club, disproportionate contributions from a few especially generous members have sustained the club.

This year the Board of Directors is hoping to have nearly 100% contributions from regular participants. Other running clubs might charge mandatory dues of \$100 or more for a similar summer's training program, but HVR can offer a comparable experience if each member or family contributed as little as \$30.

We are asking supporters to make a tax-deductible donation of \$30, \$50, or \$100 (or any amount you are comfortable giving) by sending a check payable to HVR at PO Box 663, Helena, MT 59624 or by bringing a donation to a Tuesday workout (receipts for tax purposes will be provided by Treasurer Extraordinaire Ann Seifert). We also invite you to consider helping out as a volunteer at one (or more) of HVR's upcoming events; events don't happen without volunteers, plus it's rewarding and fun! Finally, please know that we value your feedback and ideas, and would love to hear from you. Feel free to contact any board member or attend any of our quarterly meetings (3rd Monday of Feb, May, Aug, Nov).

Years ago I was satisfied to aimlessly trot up and down Davis Gulch without any particular goals and content with the isolation. My chance meeting with the wonderful people that make up the Vigilante community changed all of that. With focused training and the support and encouragement of new friends, my running improved enormously. I never could have called myself a Boston Marathon Finisher without VIG.

Please join me in supporting HVR's annual fundraising effort to sustain this wonderful group. A small investment is certain to return immeasurable gains.

Sincerely,

Mike Fanning and the HVR Board of Directors:

Ann Seifert, Carolyn Blasch, Chris Beskid, Erik Makus, Janet Robinson, Jeff Thomas, Jesse Zentz, Lila Thomas, Pat Judge, Rebecca Shaw, Samsara Chapman, Scott Story, Sean Connolly, Todd Younkin

**P.S. The 2014 "must have" item is the Vig water bottle. Contributors donating \$30 (or more) will receive the color of their choice (white on navy or black on silver), while a donation of \$50 or more will net one of each color scheme. Supplies are limited! 50 of each color only!**

