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**Reply-To:** Julie Ackerlund <j.ackerlund@bresnan.net>  
**Date:** Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 4:55 PM  
**To:** vig <vig@npogroups.org>  
**Cc:** Julie Ackerlund <j.ackerlund@bresnan.net>  
**Subject:** [vig] HVR Membership Renewal Drive

Hello Vigilante Running Club Members!

We are catching up with Vigilante Board Member and "Spirit Leader" Em Thiessen, to discuss what's been going on with her and the how the year 2021 went for the HVR club.

**Spoiler alert: I didn't make the cover of Runner's World. So, you may be wondering why I am interviewing myself right now?**

After being recognized, well, by my neighbors, after my [KTVH news stint](#), I am thirsty for the attention. **AND it is time for the Helena Vigilante Runners annual membership drive!** Learn more about the club and follow the links here to renew <http://vigilanterunning.org/> or if you already bleed blue, here is the direct link to renew your membership:

<https://runsignup.com/Club/160>

Unlike pesky KGLT and NPR, once you renew, we stop bothering you (you can do that, right *Julie Ackerlund?*, *Sorry, that would take a more expensive membership tracking system.* – *JA*). Thus, sign up early and keep that email inbox open for important work items and Bed, Bath & Beyond coupons.

**Well, that sounds super easy. And please know that I'm not greedy, but what do I get if I renew my membership or join as a new member?**

If you do choose to join us again as an active member of HVR, get ready to rock this made-in-Montana Sauce Headwear toque (that's 'hat' for you non-Canadians). I know what you are thinking. Em, I already have this hat from 2015. Au contraire (that's 'think again' for you non-French Canadians), the hat pictured is the old design. Our new hat will sport a new pattern and pom. So, get with the cool kids; sign up at the Champion, Medalist, or Individual level and this beauty can be all yours.

As the *HVR Sustainability Coordinator*, I recommend the following for your old hat: cut the top off and make a cold-weather Vig headband (tassels can be donated to Frankie Mittens or

Sagebrush Sam's), stuff in your wife's (or own stocking) so your kids won't ask 'Mama, were you naughty this year, your stocking is always so flat?', or keep wearing it with pride. Sauce hats are awesome and can handle a lot of miles... Just like you amazing people.

**I can see that you are up to your elbows in laundry, art projects, and spelling homework.**

**When do you find the time to run?**

This year has been so much better; my girls are in school full-time, so I actually have a lot of opportunities to get out there.

**That's awesome! Where do you normally run?**

The trail system in Helena is unbelievable. If it's not too icy, that's where you'll find me. As soon as I graduated from my running-stroller days, I rarely take the flat route.

**And I see that you attend as many Vig workouts as you can fit in. Do you have a favorite? And a least favorite?**

Well, I really loved the trail workouts when I was able to attend them a few years ago. I am hoping my husband will be home during next season so I can add [Trail Thursdays](#) to my schedule again. As for [Tuesdays at Noon](#); I enjoy Robinson *Centipedes* or any other workout where it really feels like we are working together as a Team. Being encouraged always makes it more fun. As for my least favorite...it's not called *Baarfson Hills* for no reason. And *Prefontaine* is a tough one because there is no rest. That's a workout where a group makes all the difference in getting it done.

**It sounds like you really enjoy the team aspect of the Vigilantes. How was it for you during the pandemic, not having that? And what were some highlights for you this year as the running club got back to a more normal place?**

I am great about running on my own, but terrible about pushing myself (like I do during speed workouts with the group). I think it took me a long time to build back my speed. Again, doing that hard stuff with people supporting me, makes it that much easier. We were so lucky to be able to have a full season of workouts: 30 Tuesday-at-Noons and 32 Thursday-Trails.

Two HVR events that we hosted, the [8<sup>th</sup> Annual HEAT meet](#) and the [53<sup>rd</sup> Annual August Trail Race](#) were both highlights for me. I love the way our group really came together to put on these events that focus specifically on local youth. Speaking of kids: [Helena Novas](#) youth program also came back strong, with 85 track & field participants, 51 in cross-county, and many notable performances at the state, regional, and even national level. Helena also played host again this year for the [Junior Olympics State XC Meet](#). Many

thanks to Vig Board Member extraordinaire and Novas Director *Jesse Zentz* for these accomplishments. And stay tuned for next year, when we also host the *Junior Olympics State Track Meet!*

**Did you do anything new within the club this year?**

I did! *Pat Judge* invited me to join the [6<sup>th</sup> Annual Sun Run](#) committee. After a tremendous amount of planning and effort, we put on a wonderful race and raised funds to go toward the installation of photovoltaic arrays for Helena Public Schools.

I missed the [45<sup>th</sup> Mount Helena Run](#) to celebrate my anniversary, but I heard that *Beau Downing* did a fabulous job taking over the race from the capable hands of *Erik Makus*. There is always next year...and that goes for all of you too! I heard there might even be trucker hats in the future???

And finally wrapping up my year of firsts; I was elated to score my highest finish at [Vig Scrimmage XIX!](#) I could not have done it without my pacing buddy *Rhonda Payne*. It was our first time on the newly re-surfaced track, and even without the fancy shoes that *Pat* lovingly unwraps and dons for uber-fast workouts, I think we all had a spring in our step that day.

**Any regrets about the season?**

I had some illness at the end of the season that kept me sidelined and unable to run in the [29<sup>th</sup> Montana Cup](#) in Butte. Team BLUE was able to bring home the [Women's Masters Cup!](#) I would have loved to physically contribute to that victory but was thrilled to be there cheering folks on and freezing my ass off. Seeing *Vern Roberts* crest that hill was so inspiring. I can only hope that's where you'll find me in 30 years.

And I missed the [Phase 3 Party](#) at *Abby and Ryan McLane's* house this year. Sorry I double-booked. Really, if you other board members could consult me and my social calendar before requesting permits and blowing up the balloons, you won't be able to get rid of me...

**Any last words before you get back to cutting out hand turkeys and pretending like you are going to make dinner?**

Yes please! On behalf of the HVR Board we would love to thank you for standing by us during this difficult time. The outpouring of support, and strong membership numbers these last two years was truly inspiring. We hope you will again join in as we look to an even better 2022! Go Blue!

With gratitude and a little attitude,

Em

