



Sara Acton

Sara Acton will expand her "Roadside" photography project to Nebraska. Acton received a four-week artist-in-residency at Art Farm in Marquette. She will spend much of that time photographing roadside memorials and decorated fatality markers, created by family and friends of people who died in traffic accidents. This memorial was installed by the Florida Department of Transportation along the Overseas Highway Southbound (MM47), in Marathon, Fla. Acton took this photo in February.

# REFLECTIONS ON FAITH

Artist travels Nebraska to photograph roadside memorials

By ERIN ANDERSEN  
Lincoln Journal Star

Sara Acton remembers where she saw it, but not much else about the roadside memorial along a rural Michigan highway.

The tribute to a stranger's loved one who died in a crash at the spot triggered memories of Acton's own tragic loss in 2004, when her father perished in a car accident.

Acton stopped her car, stepped out and began taking pictures.

That was the beginning of the Western Massachusetts photographer's art project "Roadside."

Her journey along two- and four-lane highways and rural byways looking for mementos to grief will bring her to Nebraska later this month.

The 40-year-old photographer and charter art school teacher received an artist-in-residency

at the Art Farm in Marquette. For four weeks she will spend a portion of her mornings working on the farm and the remainder of her days traveling Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa roadways in search of roadside memorials to photograph.

The trip is funded through donations to her Kickstarter campaign ([kickstarter.com/projects/1011125453/to-nebraska-the-roadside-photography-project](http://kickstarter.com/projects/1011125453/to-nebraska-the-roadside-photography-project)), which has met her "stretch" goal of \$2,650. Any additional donations allow her to expand her hunt for roadside memorials.

"Up until this point, the project has been a solitary investigation of markers and memorials," Acton said in a telephone interview from her home. "I'm really hoping that opportunities to meet and collaborate with makers or caretakers of memorials will evolve from the



Loie Acton

Sara Acton

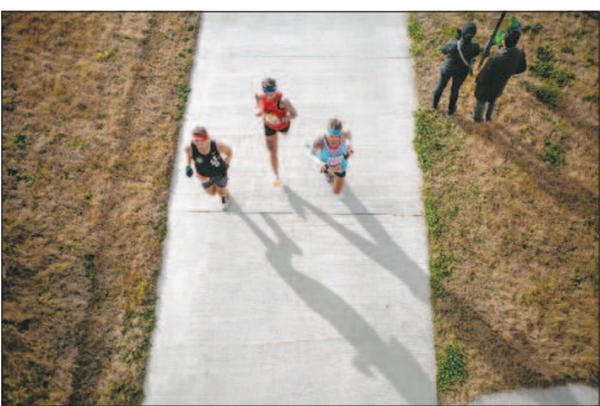
Kickstarter campaign."

One day, she hopes her photos will be placed on exhibit somewhere. And, perhaps, published in a book.

Until then, she searches for the homemade markers, adorned with flowers, crosses, balloons and teddy bears, that pay homage to lives abruptly cut short — like her father's.

"Although I don't remember consciously connecting the exploration of the memorials to my

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Lincoln Journal Star file photo

Runners make their way through Union Plaza last year during the inaugural Good Life Halfsy half-marathon. Organizers announced the second year has sold out.

## Good Life Halfsy registration closes

Lincoln Journal Star

The Good Life Halfsy is good and sold out.

After nearly doubling the amount of registration spots from its first year's field of 3,500 runners, there will be 6,000 people traversing 13.1 miles of Lincoln streets and trails on Nov. 1.

Race organizer Jason Bakewell said racers from 33 states have signed up for the second Halfsy, and there will be 250 Nebraska cities, towns and villages represented in the field.

"The race sold out so fast in 2014, we really didn't have time to promote the race to out of state runners," Bakewell said

in a news release. "It has been nice this year to have more time to attract runners from across the country as well as more Nebraska runners from outside the Omaha and Lincoln metro areas."

There remains a way to register for the race, with proceeds from the final option going to charity. If a runner commits to raising \$500 for People's City Mission or Lincoln/Lancaster County Habitat for Humanity, there are a limited number of bibs remaining for racers who want in. To learn more about the charity option and the course, go to [goodlifehalfsy.com](http://goodlifehalfsy.com).

## 'Faith of Our Fathers' star has faith in movie genre

By RICK BENTLEY  
The Fresno Bee

Kevin Downes recalls talking 20 years ago to his "Faith of Our Fathers" co-star David A.R. White about how great it would be if Hollywood would finally embrace the kind of faith-based movies they wanted to make.

It took some time, but that has finally happened.

"Faith of Our Fathers" is the latest in a growing list of faith-based movies that not only are being released theatrically but hitting theaters during the very competitive summer movie season. It stars Downes and was co-written by him and Carey Scott. Downes and White also co-produced the movie. It's currently playing at Grand Cinema in Lincoln.

The movie deals with two strangers (Downes and White) who come together to find out more about their fathers who died during the Vietnam War. That search takes the pair on a road trip to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"I came across the story eight years ago, and it meshes with the style of film we make," Downes says. "It helped me understand what all veterans go through and is a great way to thank them for their service."

"Sometimes, we take their service for granted. The more I worked on this film, the more I learned that many veterans feel unloved and unappreciated. We want them to know they are not forgotten. Not them, nor their family."

The film not only has a faith aspect and tribute to veterans but takes a long look at father-son relationships. It's a topic that's becoming more important to Downes daily as he's the father of three sons. The older he gets, the more Downes appreciates his own father and growing up in Visalia, Calif.

"My dad encouraged me to pursue my passion. I had to have that, because without it I don't think I would be making movies," Downes says. "My dad was speechless when he saw it."



Oakwater Films

Actor Kevin Downes stars in "Faith of Our Fathers," a faith-based movie co-written and co-produced by him.

The movie-making bug came early to Downes. He went to College of the Sequoias in Visalia and California State University, Northridge, where he studied theater and geography. At the same time, he was landing acting jobs, appearing in numerous commercials, television shows and feature films. He was cast in his first Christian film, "The Crossing," in 1994, and his passion for the genre was born.

Downes has been producing movies since the late '90s, including the 1999 offering "Mercy Streets," which was partly shot in Fresno.

"Faith of Our Fathers" shows how a shared faith becomes important to both the soldiers and their sons. Downes has seen Hollywood become more aware of such movies because the quality of production has continued to rise.

"We are working together to raise the bar when it comes to faith-based movies," he said.

The real reason faith-based movies are succeeding, according to Downes, is that audiences are looking for these kinds of movies and embracing them when they open.

The original plan was to shoot "Faith of Our Fathers" in Fresno County, but Downes couldn't find

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