

The (e)AURA

December 2009 – The Grand Slam Edition

An Email Newsletter for Members and Friends of the Arkansas Ultra Running Association



THE BIGSHOT'S PAPER TRAIL

In November's issue of the AUR there was extensive coverage of the 2009 Grand Slam of Ultra Running and Stan and Chrissy's completion of it. Why is there more coverage this month? Because in this Editor's option, it is a **BIG Deal**. To complete the Grand Slam is an out outstanding feat of Ultra Running. Many years ago in his ignorance, the BS made the comment that if one could complete one 100 miler, one could complete all of them. While maybe technically true, the BS came to realize that there are no guarantees or givens in this sport. Finishing these four 100 milers in a summer requires meticulous of preparation and a lot of good fortune. It is true that there have been numerous GS finishers but it can be equally written that there are many who did not succeed. The Editor appreciates the articles that Stan and Chrissy have provided to this newsletter.

Since we last spoke, the AURA welcomes several new members: Thomas Chapin(Paron), Tammy Walthers(Little Rock), Rich Brown(Searcy), Brad Lawrence(Bentonville) James Silverstone(Hot Springs) and Kurt Galbraith of Memphis. All are off probation and are members in good standing.

The Grand Slam of 2009



Stan and Chrissy at the Grand Slam finish

Stan Ferguson's GS Report

Congratulations you two on WS entrance!! We will be seeing you there! Do you know that if you two did the Grand Slam, you'd be the first married couple to do so!! Food for thought, huh!!

--e-mail from our friend Beth, ultrarunner from Milwaukee, WI, December 2007

From the instant that we had mentally committed to attempting the Slam again this year, I had my goals completely established. I wanted to finish Western States in under 24 hours (to get the silver buckle), Leadville in under 25 hours (to get the bigass silver and gold buckle), Wasatch in under 30 hours (to get the Spirit of the Wasatch/Cougar buckle), and the Slam as a whole in under 100 hours. That left 21 hours for Vermont. There is no special award or recognition for finishing the Grand Slam in under 100 hours, but in my head that was just a nice goal.

My amount of training was less than I would have liked (as always), but certainly more focused this year than last. For basic numbers, my average weekly mileage from the first of the year until tapering for the first race was 56 miles, vs. about 48 last year. Preparation races included two 50-milers, a 40-miler, two 50Ks, and three marathons, in addition to two other 25-30 mile training runs—one being a five Nebo repeat workout. All this was pretty much identical to last year. Really, the most obvious difference in preparation was that this year I did about a dozen days of doubles, where I did only one in 2008. That aspect was much of the source of the weekly mileage increase.

Western States

While certainly they have had hotter days, it was definitely a hot one this year. Also, from Chrissy's and my experience, we think the current course is the most difficult version there's ever been. Duncan Canyon is back, some of the trail that was incorporated during its absence was retained, and nearly all road has been removed. But enough excuses.

After nearly three months of reflection, I still can't say for sure what happened. I do feel I was adequately prepared and should have been capable of achieving my goal of sub-24. Maybe I ran too conservatively early, not leaving enough time for the nighttime sections where I had failed to run very well during my previous two completions there. Or maybe I pushed too much in the canyons during the heat—beating myself up and not saving enough for the more runnable sections after Foresthill. Whatever the reason(s), I finished in 26:22:17 and was glad to be in.

Vermont

Faced with nearly a two and a half hour deficit on my Slam time goal after one event, my adjustment was to reset my Vermont goal to sub-20, and try to beat that by as much as I reasonably could. Hopefully I could trim the time to within an hour, and somehow find the remainder during the last two races. I was actually more comfortable with the sub-20 goal than for 21 hours. My thought was that it made for a simpler plan: I would just have to run everything except for significant uphill. It added some pressure, but I thought I could use that to my advantage. Chrissy thought it was stupid for me to try and run that fast, but with the relatively long five week recovery period before Leadville, I saw nothing to lose by giving it a shot.

The run itself was essentially just working the plan. I experienced no major problems and was able to run the approximately 90% of the time that I expected would be required. I actually finished in 19:33 (give or take about 15 seconds), but a timing snafu put my "official" time as 19:36:09. Everyone we checked with also reported 2-3 minute discrepancies with their times, and when we informed the race director she acknowledged that others had said that also.

Much to my disappointment, however, nothing was done by the race to correct the errors with the results. I hoped this didn't wind up costing me in my sub-100 quest. On a positive note, this was my first sub-20 hour 100-miler in eight years, and cut the deficit in my Slam plan to just over 58 minutes. Also, I think finishing in fewer hours and not being out there all day and all night helps with recovery. I was able to do a 5K race the next weekend, and a 4-mile race the week after that, with results comparable to what I ran in the spring.

Leadville

Being able to run virtually the whole distance at Vermont gave me much confidence going into Leadville. My mission was the big (sub-25) buckle, and anything less would be a disappointment. We followed the same pattern as last year: Chrissy went out two weeks early to acclimate, and I followed a week later. We got to see Lance win the bike race. It was a circus again, with even more riders, more spectators, and a whole bunch of camera crews on foot, motorcycles and helicopters, filming for an upcoming movie on the race (check out <http://raceacrossthesky.com/>). One notable difference in my pre-race preparation from last year was that I ran four days during my week there (instead of just one).

A major and tragic event that occurred the week before the race was the crashing of a Black Hawk helicopter on Mt. Massive. We knew something was up Wednesday afternoon when we saw a med-flight helicopter going over town. Four members of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment were killed. They were Terrance Geer of Casper, WY, Robert Johnson of Seattle, WA, Paul Jackson of Lancaster, MD, and Chad Tucker of Titusville, FL. The military took over Half Moon campground as their staging area to remove the wreckage. This displaced numerous people who were staying there for the race, and rumors began circulating on how the race would be rerouted—since the course goes through there. Amid all this, race officials maintained the proper perspective of the running event in relation to the tragedy. The detour was formally announced Friday. Some bits of road used for the mountain bike course would be utilized to circumvent the campground until we could tie back into the Colorado Trail between the Mt. Elbert trailheads. This would provide a section that was more runnable than usual, but most assessments estimated it was a little longer.

From my 26:20 performance in 2008, I had a pretty good feel for where I needed to trim some time. I felt the keys were to be able to run the section from Half Moon to Fish Hatchery—all on road and a net downhill, and to run more of the “boulevard” back into town at the end—if I needed to. I thought that would make up most of the time I needed, but did desire some comfort of a little more buffer. So I was very attune to what 25-hour pace was through all the check-points, and intended to be ahead of where I was last year.

The detour presented a slight question mark, but for the most part my pacing was exactly where I wanted it through the first half of the race. Conditions were good—with no rain anywhere on the course at any time, although it did get rather warm. After shedding my extra starting clothing at Fish Hatchery (23 miles), I never wore anything other than my trail shirt and shorts the whole race.

Coming in to Twin Lakes outbound (40 miles) at precisely 25-hour pace, I made a regretful decision to go light on the out-and-back trip over Hope Pass and to Winfield. I picked up a bottle of Ensure to carry for extra calories, and had another waiting at Winfield for the return trip. Unfortunately, I decided to forego the weight of carrying my third water bottle. After a laborious up and over Hope Pass, I came into the Winfield turnaround at 2:35pm--just five minutes over 25 hour pace, but three pounds under my race check-in weight. That wasn't much, but enough to convince me that some of my recent lack of pep was due to dehydration. This I worked on, but it was not to be a quick resolution. The return climb up the steeper side of Hope was an extreme struggle—so much that I didn't even mind the frequent stops to let the late out-

bounders by on the narrow trail. By the time I reached the top I had major leg cramps. These got so bad, that at one point I stopped to empty something out of my shoe and it took several minutes to work through the process—as I couldn't raise my foot or bend down without something completely knotting up.

I returned to Twin Lakes about twenty minutes past 25-hour pace. I was trying to get my hydration turned around, but was still not moving well. I still had about the same gap when I arrived at Fish Hatchery, and after a bathroom break and some regrouping was probably closer to half an hour behind by the time I left. This is where Joyce met me to pace me in to the finish. I had about six and a half hours to cover the remaining 23 miles if I was to claim the big buckle. Climbing up Sugarload on the Powerline trail was a struggle. I recall several people passing me on this section. After painfully shuffling down the other side my running finally came around a little bit for the short section on Hagerman Pass road. That's only a mile, but putting Joyce in front of me and just trying to keep up, I felt like I continued to move better on the Colorado Trail section.

At May Queen, thirteen miles to go, I arrived at just after 1:30am. Three and a half hours before the magic hour. It was a very quick stop. I wanted to keep moving, with the idea that if I could move as well on the trail around Turquoise Lake as I did on the Colorado Trail, I might have enough time left to cover the long uphill road back into town. I didn't recall the exact distance from the end of the lake trail to the finish, or how long it took me last year, but in my head I decided that I wanted at least an hour and a half for it to be feasible. We did move well around the lake, but as we neared the end there were a few spots where the course was hard to find and we made several false starts trying to stay on the trail. Although each cost only a few moments, they seemed like forever as I was counting on every minute I had left. Just before the road we came upon a gathering of glowsticks. Someone had pulled them off the course and deposited them by the lake. I made it off the trail with just over the 90 minutes I desired, but was still not confident. At this time, the doubt, the desire, thoughts of the finish, and the focus on what I wanted to achieve finally kicked in. After scrambling down the steep rocky incline from the dam road, I started running. Granted—it was not a fast run, but definitely better than what I had done since early in the race. I checked with several people who I passed—seeking those who knew the course and knew where we stood for a sub 25-hour finish. Each response was positive, but I still wanted no chances. So after steadily running for 75 minutes, I trotted onto the red carpet and crossed the finish line a moment before 4:44am. Big Buckle Time!

Wasatch Front

Last year, the final 20 miles at Wasatch were mostly a death march. I was confident in being able to cover that section an hour faster, in addition to the extra few minutes needed to improve from my 31:16 to a sub-30. But to reach my Slam goal required a 29:17:30 or better—meaning essentially a two-hour improvement was needed. My main strategy in doing this was to travel lighter. In lieu of an actual pace chart (--which you can find for Wasatch, but when compared to actual times reveal that there is a whole lot of latitude), I carried a small card with my arrival times and intervals between each aid station last year. (Those who have done mountain races know that the actual mileage between two points means very little.) Combined with it being a warm day and night—requiring little extra clothing to be carried, using my previous data to know how much water and fuel to take for each section was a definite benefit.

Maybe it was due to the lingering effects of Leadville—just 20 days earlier, but I never felt very energetic. And I never ever got really comfortable running downhill. I initially was making slightly better time than last year, but as the day wore on and it got kind of hot that small buffer disappeared. I reached Millcreek, 61.7 miles, at around 9pm—which was actually a few

minutes later than in 2008. “Uh, if you’re gonna turn this thing around, NOW would be a good time.”

My sister Kim was at Millcreek, to pace me the 14 miles from there to Brighton. It got cool, but not cold. Very good conditions. I moved better through this section and started making improvements in time vs. last year. We reached Brighton just before 1:30am: 40 minutes ahead of last year, and exactly per the plan. Unfortunately, there and at the previous stop it got difficult for me to force down food. This didn’t seem like a crisis, as I was getting most of my calories through liquids and gels anyway, but still not a great feeling. On the climb up to Catherine Pass—the high point of the course at 10,500 feet, I stopped to take an electrolyte cap and a gel. REJECTED! I had not been hiking hard, but this triggered some gag reflex and I started puking. It was a four-heaver; now I had nothing in my stomach. Lovely. I especially felt bad that I left puke all over a big rock that more than a hundred people would be passing over during the ensuing hours—but it’s not like I had a bunch of water to spare to rinse it off.

My focus now became negotiating the treacherous descent down to Ant Knolls aid station as quickly as possible, to get some stuff back in my stomach. There, I sat down to consume a couple cups of soup and Sprite, and to regroup. Next was the Grunt. Only about a 300 foot climb, but it seems like you do it in an eighth of a mile. Eventually after that, on a relatively gentle downhill section, I focused on trying to get back into some kind of running form. A crucial part of my plan was to be able to make time after Pole Line Pass, mile 83.4. Even though it was still cool, I took off my gloves and long sleeve shirt and left them there. I dumped everything by my absolute necessities. I had soup, an Ensure Plus, and some Sprite, planning to blow through the remaining two aid stations as fast as I could. Leaving at 4:57am, I had been going exactly a day and it was time to start pushing.

A guy at the aid station had said the four miles to the next aid station was mostly level, with just a short climb of about half a mile. That sounded great. My thought was that if I could cover that four miles in an hour, I would have less than 13 miles to go and more than four hours to do it in. Then it started coming back to me. I remembered hearing that same description last year. After I climbed several hundred feet, I remembered last year thinking what a fxxkin’ liar that guy was! I remembered thinking how they shouldn’t let idiots who don’t know the difference between up and down tell anybody about what a section of the course is like!! When it became obvious I would be on that section for well over an hour, I started looking for other angles. I still had just enough mental capacity to do simple math, so I added up the times of the final three sections from my 2008 data. It came to 6:11. Those times didn’t include stoppage, so I figured I needed to make up ten minutes to get sub-30, and about 55 minutes to go sub-100. I knew how poorly I did last year, but could I beat myself by an hour? Completing the climb up to Rock Springs aid station, I had made up 12 minutes. Barring something bad happening, a sub-30 now seemed probable, but I would have to do much better to beat 29:17.

A motto of Wasatch is “100 miles of Heaven and Hell.” If you took a poll, I think the responses of where the Hell is would overwhelmingly be the section between Rock Springs and Pot Bottom. You have The Dive, The Plunge, and then a whole bunch of steep ups and downs that seem TOTALLY unnecessary. I pushed more through this section than at any other point in the race. And when there was finally some good runnable trail, I actually felt like I was truly running. Checking the time when I got to Pot Bottom, I had made up another 35 minutes. Yes! --Just ten more minutes were needed. As at Rock Springs, I only stopped long enough to fill one water bottle. I was familiar with what was left from there: a 1,000 foot climb on good forest road, about three miles downhill on rough 4-wheeler type road, a mile and a half downhill on smooth single-track, and then less than a mile on road to the finish. I had the luxury of being more selective on where I pushed during this section. Breaking 29 hours would have been possible, but I really didn’t care about that. Coming in at 29:00:54, I was thrilled.

The Watch

Kim and Rhonda were at the finish line when I came in, and had been tracking Chrissy's progress. Wasatch has a great system for tracking runners and projecting their arrival at the next checkpoint. Their estimates are typically dead-on. When Chrissy became 30 minutes late getting into Pot Bottom, we got concerned. When she was an hour late, we were REALLY concerned. Finally she arrived, and when they got her anticipated finish time calculated, it was for 4:47pm—just thirteen minutes under the 36 hour cut-off. I expected her sooner, since she had chastised me so much last year when I ran very little of that last section. By 4:30 we were closely watching a section of the road that we could see through the trees, nearly half a mile away. Waiting, waiting... Finally, two matching lime green OT50 shirts popped into view. Her finish time was 35:46:31. Chalk another one up for the Wasatch time estimates. If you want to read about her and Paul getting off course for over an hour at 88 miles, you can read her report. Thankfully, when Paul first started running with her at 40 miles they pushed a little bit to build up over an hour buffer on what would be cut-off pace.

Thanks

To wrap up a quest that took almost two years from its inception is quite a relief. It was a significant time commitment (not to mention monetary), required numerous things to go right, and involved a bunch of people. In addition to the many who wished us well and pulled for us, the following are some of the people who were key in helping Chrissy and I in our quest. Our gratitude is immense.

Frank Ives: Put us up at Western States once again and crewed.

Paul Turner: Paced me for 38 miles at Western States from Foresthill to the finish.

Joyce Taylor: Crewed and paced Chrissy at Western States, and paced me at Leadville.

Tracy Rose and Hank Glass: Put us up once again at Vermont. Tracy paced Chrissy the last 30 miles. Also, Tracy's daughter Taylor and boyfriend Neil from England did a great job crewing Chrissy and PT.

Theresa Daus-Weber and Phil Kahn: Crewed us at Leadville. Theresa teamed up with Randi Young to pace Chrissy over the full 50-mile return trip.

My sisters Kim Johnson and Rhonda Ferguson: Crewed us at Wasatch for the second year in a row. Kim also paced me for a section.

Paul Schoenlaub: Paced Chrissy for 23 hours and over 60 miles at Wasatch.

My brother Bud Ferguson and his wife Debbie: Checked on our cats every one of the 22 days we were gone this summer. Next year: Something a little less involved.

AURA's Archive Vault-*The Grand Slam File*

AURA/Arkansans Grand Slam Finishers

Stan Ferguson(09)

Chrissy Ferguson(09)

Stan Ferguson(08)

Mike Samuelson(06)

Paul Schoenlaub(04)

Bob Marston(97)

Roy Haley(91)

Roy Haley(90)

Max Hooper(89)

Larry Mabry(89)

Lou Peyton(89)

The Western States 100

Stephen Tucker(88)	20:26:05
Paul Schoenlaub(04)	20:29:22
Stan Ferguson(02)	21:47:26
Stan Ferguson(05)	22:27:14
Ray Bailey(97)	22:34:25
Chrissy Ferguson(97)	23:18:08
Roy Haley(99)	23:36:08
Roy Haley(84)	23:44:14
Bill Maxwell(91)	23:48:41
Darin Hoover(05)	24:08:26
Bill Coffelt(88)	24:28:03
Max Hooper(88)	25:22:49
Steve Kirk(04)	25:53:41
Stan Ferguson(09)	26:22:16
Larry Mabry(90)	26:37:07
Paul Schoenlaub(05)	26:49:42
Larry Mabry(89)	27:06:31
Roy Haley(91)	27:10
Roy Haley(88)	27:17
John Muir(09)	27:31:58
Nick Williams(91)	27:33:45
Max Hooper(86)	28:13:13
Max Hooper(89)	28:20:47
Lou Peyton(89)	28:29:52
Kevin Dorsey(06)	28:35:11
James Holland(09)	29:09:00
Mike Samuelson(06)	29:24:30
Chrissy Ferguson(09)	29:29:00
Bob Marston(93)	29:34:18
Bob Marston(96)	29:36:33
Michael DuPriest(07)	29:42:23
Bob Marston(94)	29:45:02
Bob Marston(97)	29:51:09

The Vermont 100

Stan Ferguson(01)	17:03:37
Kim Goosen(95)	17:41:02
Paul Schoenlaub(04)	18:37:30
Chrissy Ferguson(03)	19:22:29
Stan Ferguson(09)	19:36:09
Chrissy Ferguson(02)	19:59:12
Roy Haley(91)	20:46
Lou Peyton(90)	21:17:03
Kevin Dorsey(06)	21:18:27
Kevin Dorsey(05)	21:34:46
Chrissy Ferguson(04)	22:22:36
Kevin Dorsey(07)	22:46:46

Chrissy Ferguson(09)	23:27:11
William Gilli(90)	23:34:53
Michael DuPriest(05)	23:47:28
Stan Ferguson(08)	23:48:58
Chrissy Ferguson(08)	23:49:00
Lou Peyton(89)	24:23:20
Max Hooper*89)	25:54:50
Larry Mabry(89)	25:54:50
Bob Marston(96)	26:06:20
Mike Samuelson(060)	26:30:03
Paul Turner(09)	26:54:33
Chrissy Ferguson(06)	27:13:07
Bob Marston(97)	27:19:25
Brooke Touchstone(99)	27:32:37
Bob Marston(92)	28:11:58
Nick Williams(90)	28:15:35
Carrie DuPriest(05)	28:36:47
Tammy Walther(09)	28:47:28
Bob Marston(04)	28:50:19

The Leadville Trail 100

Stephen Tucker(89)	21:32:45
Ray Baley(94)	22:37:34
Ray Bailey(92)	22:39:29
Bill Laster(90)	22:43:35
Bill Laster(91)	22:55:45
Billy Simpson(03)	23:41:49
Paul Schoenlaub(06)	24:33:13
Bill Coffelt(90)	24:43:11
Robert Orr(03)	24:43:34
Stan Ferguson(09)	24:43:55
Steve Kirk(08)	25:16:05
Bill Laster(92)	25:22:15
Steve McBee(03)	25:26:08
Bill Laster(99)	25:35:33
Bill Laster(97)	25:36:29
Paul Schoenlaub(09)	25:49:08
Bill Laster(88)	26:07:54
Ray Bailey(00)	26:20:30
Stan Ferguson(08)	26:20:45
Paul Schoenlaub(05)	26:41:32
Paul Schoenlaub(04)	26:48:07
Paul Schoenlaub(08)	27:04:46
Paul Schoenlaub(07)	27:13:29
Veronica Bataglia(09)	27:16:10
Larry Mabry(91)	27:27
Ellis James(98)	27:38:02
Dr. Feelgood(94)	27:38:25

Bill Laster(98)	28:08:24
Jen Foster(09)	28:15:32
Dr Feelgood(96)	28:19:29
Jack Evans(95)	28:24:57
Greg Eason(01)	28:29:13
Nick Williams(88)	28:31:37
Max Hooper(88)	28:31:40
Larry Mabry(88)	28:37:24
Larry Mabry(92)	28:40:12
Mike Heald(92)	28:40:13
Randy Ellis(09)	28:41:36
Roy Haley(87)	28:42
Greg Eason(96) 2	28:46:11
Larry Mabry(89)	28:47:37
Lou Peyton(88)	28:48:44
Natalie Mc Bee(08)	28:58:04
Lou Peyton(89)	28:58:34
Max hooper(89)	29:11:34
Kevin Dorsey(06)	29:19:46
Mike Samuelson(06)	29:19:46
Roberta Orr(98)	29:27:34
Chrissy Ferguson(09)	29:36:04
Bob Marston(97)	29:40:14
Chrissy Ferguson(05)	29:43:42
Tom Holland(93)	29:44:46
Roy Haley(01)	29:47:58
Mario Martinez(99)	29:49:28
Angie Ransom(98)	29:50:11
Kyle Kruger(08)	29:55:20
Roy Haley(90)	29:56:52
Morris Miller(99)	29:58:47

Wasatch Front 100 Miler

Ray Bailey(97)	25:41
Stan Ferguson(09)	29:00:54
Paul Schoenlaub(04)	29:18:25
Ray Bailey(98)	30:50:56
Stan Ferguson(08)	31:16:17
Roy Haley(90)	32:14:21
William Gilli(89)	32:43:37
Stan Ferguson(02)	32:51:59
Roy Haley(91)	33:08
Tamara Zagustin(05)	33:26:04
Max Hooper(89)	34:01:17
Nick Williams(89)	34:01:17
Bob Marston(97)	34:12
Larry Mabry(89)	34:12:27
Mike Samuelson(06)	34:43:50
Lou Peyton(89)	35:14:39
Chrissy Ferguson(09)	35:46:31

ULTRA CORNER

The Heartland 100/50 Miler

Cassoday, Kansas

10-10-09

100 Miler

7th	Paul Schoenlaub	18:47:45	
39th	Alston Jennings	29:30:09	61 starter; 41 finishers

50 Miler

35th	Randy Ellis	12:27:33	44 starters; 43 finishers
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Photo- AURA brother, Alston Jennings shown on the Heartland 100 Miler race course. To his right is his pacer, and daughter, Laura Earley, also an AURA member.

The Heartland 100 Race Report by Alston Jennings

You can't do trail races without daydreaming about what it would be like to run 100 miles with the Big Boys and Girls. Daydreaming never hurt anybody. It's not as if you're actually planning anything. The logical progression is sufficiently challenging and adventurous for anybody: the marathon, the 50 K, the tough 50 K, the REALLY tough 50 K. Then, as promised, the 50 mile is a whole, different universe. Still...for those of us who are really fans more than competitors, the legends of the sport are all about 100 mile races.

I finally decided to enter a 100 as a sort of "now or never" proposition. I wasn't worried about the inevitable DNF. I just wanted to be able to tell myself that I'd had the courage to try. Heartland, KS was the only realistic choice. I knew the layout from two 50's, the gravel roads were familiar from AURA races and there was no technical stuff to deal with. The beloved Traveller was out of the question for someone as "marginal" as I. That 16 mile opening loop would put me too far behind schedule, and most of the rest of it is frankly tougher than Heartland, too. I wanted to feel that I had at least a shot at finishing. I didn't tell anyone for months. When I let it slip to Lou Peyton, she seemed genuinely happy and excited for me, even though I can't keep up with her while she walks her dog. When Chrissy Ferguson asked me what I was training for, I thought about being vague, but when Chrissy asks you a question, you answer it. The first words out of her mouth were "You can do it." This lady doesn't strike me as someone who sugar-coats things in order to to be nice. "Hey, good luck to you," would have sufficed for that. I decided to believe she had meant what she said.

The plan was simple. There is a cutoff at every manned station. The first 50 of the out-and-back must be done at 16:48 pace (14 hours,) after which the cutoffs gradually loosen to the 18:00 pace that is a 30 hour 100. My 50 K PR is 7:33 at the Midnight. I was going to have to just skim the cutoffs all the way through and have zero problems. None. Any little bonk, gastric upset, blister repair, wrong turn, mosquito bite...I'd be timed out.

Joe Prusaitis wrote a great report on his '02 Heartland, beginning: "You can't see the mountains in Kansas but you can feel them. The constant, vicious wind creates an uphill climb for mile after endless mile..." It was cold, too. Mid 30's I'd guess. That was a blessing in disguise, letting me work at higher effort than heat would have allowed, but the wind got tiresome indeed. I ran the downhill of the first 25 miles but took it as easy as I could. Had a visit with Louise Mason of Illinois who is the only person to finish all nine previous Heartlands. This one broke her streak. I hit 25 miles in around 6:15, just cruising. I was looking forward to seeing the second 25 miles of the out-and-back for the first time.

The hills in the first 25 are straight up and over ridges but in the second half of the course you curve up the sides of big, rounded hills. When you top one, you can see the white road winding up and around other hills miles ahead. It reminded me of sand dunes in Michigan, except on a much larger scale. This stretch between Teterville and Texaco Hill is the prettiest part of the course. The race is run through the last remaining tallgrass prairie in the U.S. The course is beautiful, desolate and very sparsely populated. It's one thing to be by yourself. Out here, you are ALONE.

But not for too long, thank goodness. Daughter Laura paces me into the night, from 43 to the turn (13:40) and back to 58. We have the most wonderful talk. It begins to snow lightly. AURA brother Jay Miller still lives in Kansas and has recruited two fit, gung-ho youngsters to pace. Jacquie Chansler has given up her Saturday evening (and Sunday morning) to remind a stranger

that he needs to keep drinking EFS Liquid Shot and Perpetuem, and that picking up the pace a bit wouldn't hurt anything. She is a microbiologist and answers my stupid questions about viruses and whatnot with great patience and good cheer. She turns me over to Jay with about 36 to go.

Jay and I have done a good bit of training together. He has his Garmin. A few miles in, he gives me the bad news. "You're doing 18:30 miles." No chitchat, use that information as you will. I realize I'm not going to make it. The pace feels much faster. I can go harder, but for how long? It's seven or eight miles between most of the manned stations. If I bonk out here in the freezing wind at midnight, it could be real trouble. I start thinking about the logistics of getting to Jay's truck. I'm too numb and my feet hurt too much for me to really anguish about it. At least I gave it the old college try. That's when Jay put his head down and started walking 15 minute miles. I looked at his heels and followed him. A couple of weeks before the race I saw Jesse Dale Riley climbing Overlook Hill and jumped out of the car to pick his brain. (I couldn't keep up with Kimmy.) He listened to my plan and then told me that, regardless of the pace, I needed to find a way to "push" throughout. "Get too relaxed and you'll take yourself out of it mentally." I started paying attention to form again...arm bend, foot placement, stand straight (wind or no wind,) turn it over. An hour of this, a caffeine tablet, and, hey, I'm not dead. I feel good! I finally turn the bad ankle on a rocky downhill but just jog a few steps and keep going. I can do this.

We come to a low-water bridge with some flow across it. Best to keep the socks dry. I tell Jay "The right side was shallower this morning." Then, I remember Mike Bouscaren's great line from his Traveller report: "Yes, but that was yesterday morning."

Greg Horning meets us at 75 in Jay's truck. It's just for the supplies. He'll take it on to 84 where Jay will complete 20 and take the truck to the finish line. Greg says I'm looking great, gives me a warm pat on the back and tells me he's proud to meet me. He has left his wife and two, young children, driven two hours and stayed up all night for the privilege of walking 16 miles with a total stranger. I am not going to let this guy down. Over eight hours left just to do a short marathon. A hilly, rocky one but, really, how hard could that be? Jay tells me I was starting to flag again when we hit the 84 mile station just as L aura pulled up. She had to be in Little Rock in the afternoon and was on her way to the Wichita airport, but wanted to give me a hug to start the last lap. Words fail me. It was nice.

I was looking forward to the famous boost we're supposed to get from the rising sun. No such luck. The leaden overcast still prevails, the wind is still blowing 100 mph, we're walking due West and eventually just notice we don't need the lights anymore. What an anticlimax. I'm too tired to be a good companion to Greg and tell him so. He just laughs. I have him in front setting the quickest pace I can match and if he isn't having a ball he has me fooled. He makes me keep the nutrition and water going down and distracts me with cheerful conversation. I could no more have done this without ALL my pacers than I could have flapped my arms and flown to the moon.

When we hit the asphalt for the last quarter mile, I see by the watch that just 15 or 20 steps of the old ultra shuffle will get me into the next lower half-hour bracket. That would be nice and I consider it, but decide it's impossible. Or, rather, just not worth it. My feet hurt. 29:30:09 will do nicely, thanks.

An hour's wait for the awards ceremony. I see a guy at a table with his head on his arms. I try it and immediately fall asleep. It's fun watching even the fast people gimp up to the front. There are exceptions. Paul Schoenlaub (18:47) is still moving with the ease and grace of a dancer. The first woman, Amy Palmiero-Winters (18:54,) looks as if she's on her way to a party. I wonder whether she gets tired of hearing how inspiring she is. I hope not. Dan Brenden (22:24) shows no sign of

having completed his sixth consecutive Grand Slam AND run the Traveller last weekend. One of the biggest payoffs of sports is being in the company of such exceptional people. Yeah, I'm from Arkansas, and I train with Lou Peyton and Chrissy Ferguson. Small world.

So, somehow, the plan worked out. Not a bite of solid food and not a hint of stomach trouble. Didn't stop at all at most stations, thanks to the lovely crew. 10 minutes for blister surgery at Ridgeline (L aura is an intensive care nurse) but no sitting otherwise. I couldn't afford any problems so I didn't have any. It's going to take awhile to sink in. I feel very selfish for having sucked up the time and resources of so many people. I have to keep reminding myself how much I enjoy pacing and aid station duty. And I'll never forget the kindness and generosity of the people who made the trip with me, my dear wife who helped me train and told me I was going to make it, and the AURA brothers and sisters who are always so supportive and encouraging.

Further affiant sayeth not.

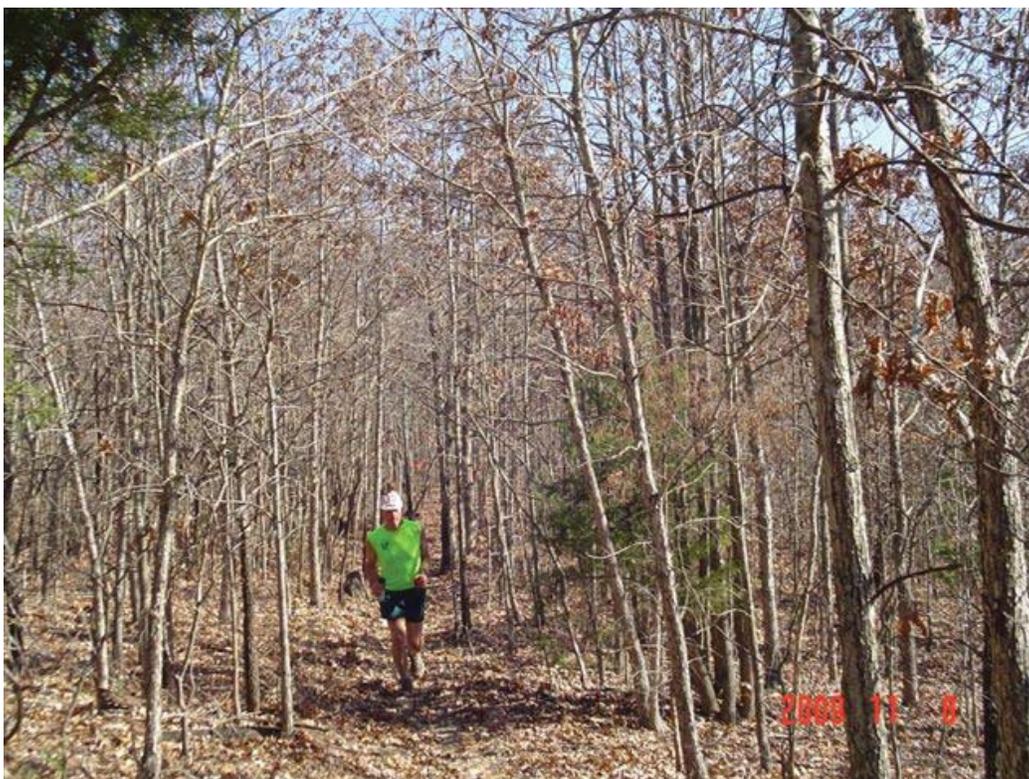
2009 Ozark Trail 100 Mile Endurance Run

Ozark National Forest –Steeleville, Missouri

November 7th, 2009

10th	PoDog Volger	26:50:04
29th	Paul Turner	30:22:20
46th	Jen Foster	31:10:24
50th	Randy Davidson	31:19:46
51st	Mike Samuelson	31:21:32
56th	Maurice Robinson	31:53:35

129 starters; 56 finishers



AURA's Maurice Robinson on the Ozark Trail 100 Mile Endurance Run

ULTRA TRAIL SERIES

2009-2010 UTS Schedule

For complete schedule information and rules, go to www.Runarkansas.com and link to 2009-2010 Ultra Trail Series.

- 7-18-09 UTS #1 Midnight 50K
- 8-8-09 UTS #2 Bartlett Park Ultras
- 8-22-09 UTS #3 Mt Nebo Trail Run(14 miles)
- 10-3-09 UTS #4 Arkansas Traveller 100 Miler
- 11-14-09 UTS#5 *Gulpha Gorge Challenge(17.2 miles)*
- 12-05-09 UTS#6 **Lake Ouachita Vista Trail Run**
- 1-2-10 UTS#7 **Athens-Big Fork Trail Maeathon**
- 1-17-10 UTS#8 **Swampstomper**
- 2-6-10 UTS #9 **White Rock Classic 50K**
- 2-21-10 UTS# 10 **Sylamore Trail 50K**
- 3-12/14-10 UTS #11 **3daysofsyllamo**
- 3-??-10 UTS #12 **Big Rock Mystery Run - Unconfirmed UTS event – Fun Run**
- 4-17-10 UTS #13 **Ouachita Trail 50M**

UTS # 6 - Lake Ouachita Vista Trail (LOViT)Marathon(26.2)

**Saturday, December 5, 2009-8:00 a.m. start,
Lake Ouachita-South side(see directions below)**

Directions: Sangri La is located 25 miles west of Hot Springs and 12 miles East of Mount Ida North off Hwy 270. Look for signs posted for the run. Registration will be set up approximately 500 feet down OLD Hwy 270. Parking will be at that location and along the road.

The course will be on the Lake Ouachita Vista Trail, a single track footpath. This contains no significant creek crossings.

There will be a total of 6 stations set up along the trail all will have water and gatoraid, along with various goodies. Dropbag service will be available. There is no application or entry fee. There will be a waiver to sign and a donation can to cover the expenses. You will keep your own time and please check in at the finish.

Race contact: Phil Carr. Email <bpcarr@windstream.net>

UTS #7 –Athens-Big Fork Trail Marathon

**(and) Blaylock Creek 17 Mile Fun Run
Saturday, January 2nd, 2010 – 8:00 a.m.
Big Fork, Arkansas**

Directions: From Little Rock, take I-30 thru Benton. Past Benton, Turn off I-30 onto the Hot Springs Hwy(Hwy 70). Entering Hot Springs, merge right onto the Hot Springs By-Pass and follow to the Hwy 70 west/Glenwood exit. Follow Hwy 70 to Glenwood. Entering Glenwood, look for Hwy 8 West. Follow Hwy 8 West for approx 32 miles to the small community of Big Fork. Look for the Big Fork Community Center on the right.

No registration or entry fee. There will be a waiver to sign. A donation will be appreciated which is given to the community center for upkeep and maintenance.
For complete information go to www.Athensbigforkmarathon.com/

Important Reminder

UTS #8, The SwampStomper, is on January 17, 2010. This will be here before you know it. Be aware that this popular trail race in the Memphis area takes only a limited number of entrants and will fill up quickly. If you don't enter early, you will be left out. Link to the Swampstomper from Runarkansas.com and stay abreast of its status.
Post-Editor note: the Swampstomper has reached its runner limit for 2010.

UTS #5 Gulpha Gorge Challenge November 14th, 2009 Hot Springs, Arkansas



Photo-Group picture before the start of the Gulpha Gorge Challenge. There were a record number of starters and finishers this year.

Gulpha Gorge Run
November 14, 2009
Hot Springs, Arkansas

17+ Miles (2009-2010 UTS Race #5)

Place	Name	Gender	Age	City	Time
1	Darby Benson	M	39	Fayetteville	2:17:02
2	Jamie Anderson	M	36	Hot Springs	2:24:05
3	Keith Francis	M	49	Hot Springs	2:25:10
4	Chris Shaw	M	38	Little Rock	2:32:15
5	Stan Ferguson	M	46	Conway	2:35:05
6	Robert Mooney	M	34	Sherwood	2:40:55
7	Thomas Chapin	M	31	Little Rock	2:47:02
8	Sha Gilani	M	28	Hot Springs	2:49:01
9	Dave MacKenzie	M	56	Hot Springs	2:56:50
10	Rich Brown	M	48	Searcy	2:57:52
11	Bill James	M	40	Hot Springs	2:58:07
12	Josh Bornhorst	M	35	Little Rock	2:59:02
13	Alan Hunnicutt	M	55	Berryville	3:00:02
	Katie Helms	F	32	Fayetteville	3:00:02
15	Tiff Gaulke	F	28	Fayetteville	3:00:12
16	Ken Barton	M	51	Greenwood	3:03:05
17	Mark DenHerder	M	45	West Fork	3:04:10
18	Christian Sterka	M	39	Conway	3:04:09
19	Murry Chappelle	M	50	Sherwood	3:05:23
20	Karrie Anderson	F	34	Hot Springs	3:06:11
21	Josh Madison	M	20	Hot Springs	3:15:05
22	George Peterka	M	49	Hot Springs	3:18:35
23	Troy Birk	M	44	Hot Springs	3:19:55
24	Frank Massingill	M	51	Conway	3:23:10
25	Larry Wagner	M	47	Hot Springs	3:25:05
26	Chris Biagini	M	68	Hot Springs Village	3:25:03
27	Debbie Lashley	F	49	Fort Smith	3:25:09
28	Rebecca Irons	F	38	Little Rock	3:25:15
29	Alex Del Carmen	M	50	Booneville	3:25:25
30	Scott Rogers	M	45	Memphis, TN	3:28:50
31	Liz Francis	F	49	Hot Springs	3:31:02
	Mike Hoover	M	28	Fayetteville	3:31:02
33	Guy Patteson	M	49	Jonesboro	3:31:20
34	Laura Brown	F	44	Searcy	3:33:11
35	Bob Lathrop	M	52	Hot Springs	3:33:14
36	Jo Spencer	F	42	Little Rock	3:36:10
37	Ronnie Daniel	M	39	Jonesboro	3:42:11
38	Patrick Erwin	M	20	Little Rock	3:44:15
39	Matthew Jackson	M	32	Hot Springs	3:44:30
40	Johnson Phillips	M	31	Memphis, TN	3:47:05
41	Dianne Seager	F	53	Little Rock	3:48:30
42	Jim Sweatt	M	53	N. Little Rock	3:48:35
43	Chris Irons	M	38	Little Rock	3:50:10
44	Brad Harriman	M	31	Memphis, TN	3:50:12
45	Shirley Hyman	F	41	Fort Smith	3:52:15
46	(Illegible)		52	Little Rock	3:55:23
47	Eunika Rogers	F	38	Memphis, TN	3:58:10
	Salli Scott Young	F	36	Memphis, TN	3:58:10
49	Michael DuPriest	M	53	Little Rock	3:58:39
50	Shane Maxwell	M	37	Benton	3:58:45
51	Gary Gehrki	M	55	Arkadelphia	4:05:10
52	James Silverstone	M	39	Hot Springs	4:09:14
53	Kayce Hall	F	31	Little Rock	4:10:19

54	Mike Burnham	M	41	Benton	4:12:02
55	Earl Simpson	M	61	Conway	4:16:33
56	Charity Ashworth	F		Conway	4:17:14
57	Kim Johnson	F	40	Harrison	4:23:11
	Rhonda Ferguson	F	54	Little Rock	4:23:11
59	David Caillouet	M	51	Little Rock	4:23:39
60	R.C. Fason	M	64	Little Rock	4:23:40
61	Rita Speas	F	58	Little Rock	4:26:05
	Gary Speas	M	56	Little Rock	4:26:05
63	Judy Massingill	F	50	Conway	4:26:40
64	Tina Cone	F	52	Berryville	4:26:51
65	Carrie DuPriest	F	52	Little Rock	4:29:40
	Kimmy Riley	F	48	Mabelvale	4:29:40
	Chrissy Ferguson	F	48	Conway	4:29:40
68	Katie Gehrki	F	22	Arkadelphia	4:29:18
69	Greg Bourns	M	70	Waldron	4:39:15
70	Rosemary Rogers	F	62	Maumelle	5:00:05
71	Bill Brass	M	70	North Little Rock	5:03:05
72	Ann Moore	F	68	Little Rock	6:00:00
73	Bob McKinney	M	66	Little Rock	6:00:00

Other Distances

Brooks Clem	M	50	Hot Springs	1:11	6 Miles
Michael Erwin	M	57	Little Rock	4:23	16 Miles



AURA's Darby Benson, Fayetteville, Arkansas finishes first at Gulpha Gorge.



Photo: Ken Barton, Greenwood, Arkansas, AURA, on the Sunset Trail at the Gulpha Gorge Challenge, Mile 7.

Editor's Last Word

HOT FLASH!!! At the State RRCA Convention in Hot Springs, Arkansas, over the weekend of November 21st, the 2009 Ultrarunners of the Year were awarded. They are as follows: Male and Female Ultrarunners of the Year, Stan and Chrissy Ferguson and Masters Ultrarunners of the Year, Dianne Seager and PoDog Vogler.

Gentle Reader – When your renewal date approaches, your AURA secretary will send you a friendly reminder. In order to renew, you have two options: 1. Download an application from the AURA website or 2. Send your check and the secretary will update your application already on file.

-AURA Bumper Sticker are still available. Send \$2.00. AURA, 41 Whiteoak Lane, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72227

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The End