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**Upcoming
Events**



**Locals Share Stories
From Leadville**



**Big Hill Pond
Walking Tall
25k/50k**

AURA NEWS



From the President

~George Peterka

The new AURA and UTS year started with the Full Moon 50K/25K. A big thanks goes out to Susy Chandler and all the volunteers for putting it on. We had 384 finishes. It's unbelievable how that race has grown. When I first ran it in 2004, there were 62 runners.

Also, a big thanks to Tom Aspel and volunteers for another great race on Mount Nebo. It was a foggy start but a good turn out and a good time was had by all.

I want to remind everyone who has not renewed their AURA membership to do so now. Visit <http://www.runarkansas.com/AURAmembers.htm> to see if your registration has expired. I also want to remind anyone who is thinking of joining the UTS <http://www.runarkansas.com/UTSraces.htm> to do so because you don't get points for races you ran before you joined.

We are still working on the UTS race schedule, but it is starting to take shape. I want to thank everyone in advance who will be working on the Traveller. Your time is very much appreciated.

Best regards,
George Peterka

Arkansas Traveller 100

October 5th-6th
Race #3 of the AURA UTS

Schedule

Friday - October 5th

Noon - 3:15 pm Pre-race packet pickup and weigh-in
3:30 pm Welcome; Runners and crew briefing (**Mandatory**)
4:30 pm Spaghetti Dinner

Saturday - October 6th

5:30 am All runners check in at race headquarters
5:50 am Begin assembling at starting line
6:00 am (Prompt) Race Start!

Sunday - October 7th

7-ish to noon Pancake Breakfast
12:00 noon Race ends
12:30 pm Race awards

[Click Here For Runner Race Packet](#)

[Click Here For Driving Directions To The Race Start](#)

AT 100



Race Director
[Thomas Chapin](#)
501-231-0535

Sweet Spot 50k

November 9th
Race #4 of the AURA UTS

Location: Russellville, AR

Start Time: 8:00am

Race Info:

- The race is on the [Ouita Coal Company Mtn. Bike Trail](#) at Illinois Bayou Park.
- The trail is a 10.7 mile single track lollipop shaped loop with 316 feet of ascent and descent. You will run this loop 3 times.
- You will run back to your car when you finish each loop. So you may have drop bags or supplies in your car.
- There will be 1 aid station and 1 water drop on each loop.
- Directions: Just off I-40 Exit 78. This is one exit west of Hwy 7 in Russellville. Take Exit 78, Hwy 64 east, towards Russellville and the parking lot is on the left just before you start crossing the lake. See [Map](#). The sign says Illinois Bayou Park.
- Race directors: [Tom Aspel](#) and [PoDog Vogler](#).

The Ouita Coal Company Trail is built along a spur of land sandwiched between Arkansas I40 and the Illinois Bayou section of Lake Dardanelle. 100% single track, the trail includes lake views, exposed climbs, rocky, rooty sections and a veritable playground of fun build on the skeletons of an 1800's coal mine.

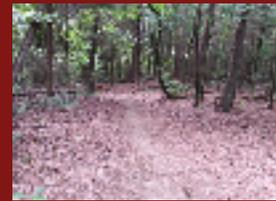
OCC rolls through a mix of cedar and hardwood forest creating an excellent wooded corridor in an urban environment. The trail is well built and maintained by the River Valley Chapter of the Ozark Off Road Cyclist Club.

Come out and enjoy this special event and feel free to test those holiday culinary skills with items to add to the finishers table. This always makes for an even sweeter time.

Come Join The Fun

[Click Here For Driving Directions](#)

Sweet Spot 50k



Race Director
[Tom Aspel](#) and
[PoDog Vogler](#).



Full Moon



Leadman 2019

~ By Brandon Allen, Little Rock, AR



Almost ten years ago, the book *Born to Run* was published and several folks recommended I give it a read. The big showdown between Ann Trason and the Tarahumara runners at Leadville caught my attention and planted a thought in my mind that maybe one day I could attempt such a feat. At the time, I had a few years of triathlon experience and had been to Sylamore and crossed the creek for the 25k. I thought this trail running thing was pretty cool but running more than a 50k seemed like something only for people with mental issues. I moved to Arkansas and slowly worked my way into ultra running and mountain biking. After a few years, I developed ultra runner mental illness and had finishes at the LOViT 100 miler and the Arkansas Traveller.

In 2018, I lined up on Sixth Street at 10,152 ft for the Leadville Trail 100 Run. I put in a solid year of training, knew the course well after doing the training camp, and had a small crew and a pacer. For the first 40 miles of the race, I was hitting my goal checkpoints and feeling amazing. However, I moved slower than planned for the Hope Pass out and back and lost significant time. It took almost all I had to run into Twin Lakes inbound and make the cutoff at mile 62. I went into the next segment without a pacer and literally lost track of time while my watch was charging. Seventy-one miles in and I was out of luck. I was the first runner pulled at Half Pipe and my race was over for my first DNF at anything. The next morning, I went to the finish and watched the last runners cross the finish line with pacers and crew. During all this excitement, my mind was made up and I would be back to complete this race.

I needed to find an entry for the 2019 Leadville 100, and I came across the Leadman challenge. The Leadman is made up of five events from June to August: 1) trail marathon, 2) 50-mile run or 50-mile mountain bike, 3) 100-mile mountain bike, 4) 10k run, and 5) 100-mile run. One must start each event to move on to the next. I had thought about doing the mountain bike race one day and believed I could train for both run and bike events. This seemed like the perfect plan to avoid the lottery and challenge myself even more.



The Leadville marathon course was a good warm up event that had three climbs above 11,000 ft along mining roads. I was able to better my previous time and gained more confidence at altitude. For the 50-mile Silver Rush races, the run and bike used the same out and back course along mining trails west of town with four climbs reaching 12,000 ft. The start took place at Dutch Henri ski hill with a short 30% climb or bike push to separate the field. Although only one race was required for Leadman, I entered both of these events on back to back days. For each race, I settled into an endurance pace and focused on nutritional goals and low heart rate. I bonked about 40 miles into the run and found a way to recover with a strong finish. I completed the run and bike with plenty of time to spare and picked up some extra hardware as a Silver King finisher.

The 100-mile mountain bike course had a mixture of pavement, packed gravel, single track, and rocky steep sections. Training on the Ouachita Forest roads was ideal for this race and simulated these surfaces and percent grade. Both professional mountain bikers and road cyclists were drawn to the event, along with 1600 other contestants. I started in one of the last corrals and had to walk many of the steeper climbs in which I was stuck behind other bikers. The first few miles were a fast descent on pavement with a bottle neck into a one lane dirt road and a climb up the back side of Turquoise Lake. Next, there was a climb up Sugar Loaf Pass and descent down Powerline. The steepest part of Powerline had lost its trenches and was now smooth and extremely fast. The course flattened out on its way to Twin Lakes Dam. Coming out of Twin Lakes, I wiped out on some loose rocks and hit my hip and knee. I got up and saw nothing was broken on me or my bike. I now had to ride off the pain and focus on the 7.5-mile climb to the top of Columbine Mine. The first part of the climb was packed gravel, but the last two miles up the Goat Trail were so rocky and steep that most riders pushed their bikes. I pushed my bike, too, and made the turnaround at 12,400 ft. The inbound narrow, rocky trail makes for a technical descent with oncoming riders. I avoided collisions and reached the gravel road back towards the dam and Pipeline aid station. At mile 74, I was near the 12-hour projected time and decided I would have to step it up to finish this race. I pushed my bike up most of Powerline passing others and was welcomed by a cold rain shower at the summit. The dirt and rain caused my fork to lock up and I had no suspension as I descended one of the roughest parts of the course. With a finish still within

reach, I began the final big climb to Carter Summit. Both of my legs began to cramp, and I had to get off and walk my bike. I took down two salt tablets and drank all the Roctane I had left. If I could not shake these cramps, my race was over with 15 miles to go. Luckily within minutes, I was back on my bike and passing riders one by one as I repeated over and over, "give me that buckle". I made it to the last aid station and only a downhill and smooth road stood in my way. I was in my highest gear and spinning over 100 rpms coming in hot to the Boulevard. I had salvaged my race and safely crossed the finish line before Ken Chlouber fired his shotgun at the 12-hour cutoff mark.



The next morning, I completed the Leadville 10k run and began the short recovery interval before the 100-mile run on the next Saturday. I had originally planned to stay in Colorado, but I found a last-minute flight home. This benefited me well, as I recovered quicker at sea level and got somewhat of a mental reset. I returned to Leadville feeling rested and poised for the final Leadman race. I had assembled an all-star crew to get me through the run. I convinced my wife Emily to come witness what all this running in the woods stuff was about, and she brought her friend Crystal that just moved to Colorado. My crew captain was Heather who helped last year, and her husband Darrin was back to pace again. Nancy, a friend of mine from New Mexico, came to pace and crew. My third pacer Rusty had run with me in all my previous hundred-mile finishes. My coach Ryan would be moving along the course following his runners.

One year later, I was back on Sixth Street at 4am with 800 other runners for the start of the Leadville Trail 100 Run. I had learned from my mistakes. I had trained more efficiently, had a complete crew and pacers, and my mind was overflowing with positive thoughts and confidence. The race started and I eased into a 12 min-mi down the Boulevard and around Turquoise Lake. The first climb started around mile 13 with an ascent to Sugar Loaf Pass and then a run down Powerline. I was making good time to the Outward Bound aid station (mile 23) where I met my crew and they followed me along the road to the Pipeline (mile 26) crewing area. My heart rate was creeping up, so on the next segment I slowed down on the gradual climb along the base of Mt. Elbert. I came into Twin Lakes (mile 37) near my projected time. I needed to eat and get ready for Hope Pass. I left the aid station feeling better than last year and was a few minutes faster. Before climbing Hope, there were multiple stream crossings and a knee-deep river. The cold water felt amazing during the heat of the day which reached the mid 80's on my watch. I started the climb and held a constant pace for the 3 miles to Hopeless aid station. I told myself I would not sit down, but I did, and I took nutrition for a couple of minutes. I got up and moved toward the last half mile above the tree line to 12,600 feet. I had to cross a small patch of snow and was up and over. The descent was fast, and I escaped from a fall on some loose boulders. The last few miles before the turnaround seemed to take forever as there was more uphill hiking. At one point along the trail, I could see Winfield and hear the crowd in the valley below but there was nearly 2 miles remaining before I would reach this ghost town aid station.



I came into Winfield (mile 50) about 30 minutes faster than before. However, I was behind my goal of the 12-hour mark and didn't stay in the aid tent long. Nancy and I said hi to Rusty and Ryan and we began the trek up the backside of Hope Pass. I was beginning to crack and none of the food I had seemed appetizing. Nancy was urging me on and offering her food and playing motivating music on her phone, but I was slowing and even sitting down at times. I finally ate two of her gels packed with chia seeds. We started moving again and I escaped from this bonk. Nancy was taking in the views as the sun was getting lower. I had found my legs and said, "Nancy, I am getting you to the summit before sunset so you can see the other side." Ironically, the Beastie Boys song "Sabotage" began playing and we started passing everyone. Hope was not going to sabotage my race this year! Unfortunately, there wasn't any time to enjoy the sunset and I set a quick pace on the 4-mile downhill to the water crossings. We made it to Twin Lakes (mile 62) with about 25 minutes to spare.

I grabbed a cup of ramen, and Darrin and I headed up the Mt. Elbert climb. I was feeling great compared to last year and wide awake. We were making up time on one of the easiest segments of the course. We made it to the Half Pipe aid station (mile 71) where I was stopped last year and now had 35 minutes on the cutoff time. As we approached Outward Bound (mile 76), I started getting cold. Heather was there with warm clothes and more ramen, but I couldn't get warmed up. I found out Rusty was dehydrated and had symptoms of altitude sickness, but Darrin was excited to continue to pace me. After several years of pacing at Leadville, this was the farthest his runner had ever gotten, and he was all in to see a finish and break this curse. I shivered my way down the road trying to warm up and keep moving. Powerline was not a difficult 4-mile climb, but at mile 80 it was a different story. I kept a slow and steady pace while chewing caffeinated gum and jellybeans to stay awake. I was getting passed by runners who were feeling the pressure of the cutoff. We reached multiple false summits and finally heard music and saw flashing lights. I passed under

the “Space Camp” banner and immediately heard “Get your runner moving! Don’t miss the cutoff!” We picked up the pace and started running downhill on the jagged rocks to Hagerman Pass Road. It became nice and smooth and then we hit technical single track as the sun was coming up. Back to asphalt, I came storming into May Queen (mile 87) as 10 minutes to go was being announced.

Nancy and Heather rushed in and filled my bottles and I dropped unneeded gear. We picked up plenty of gels because I could no longer chew solid food quick enough. Nancy headed out with me as I calculated my pace. I would need to average a 17 min-mi to finish in under 30 hours. If I had anything left, it was time to do it. To my surprise, I still had legs and ran the rolling hills around Turquoise Lake to Mini-Powerline and back to gravel road and pavement. I had passed multiple runners and was now safely within a large group of soon-to-be finishers. At the Boulevard, I slowed to a walk for the 3-mile final climb. As Nancy and I got to town, we could see our crew with a half mile to go. My wife and Crystal had found grass skirts and were dancing with Darrin and Heather to “Eye of the Tiger”. I shouted to Darrin, “The curse is broken!” We all ran together to the red carpet and crossed the finish line at 29:49. I was congratulated by Ken and Merilee and my coach. I had done it—I was a Leadville 100 run finisher and a Leadman!



It took almost everything I had along with my crew and coaching plan to complete the Leadman challenge. All the cheesy sayings about Leadville are true. You have to “dig deep” to finish. It takes “grit, guts, and determination”. The course will “chew you up and spit you out”. You can have a plan in place for these long-distance events, but things will always go wrong, and you have to make adjustments and have luck on your side. Never take anything for granted and keep going. For us average ultrarunners, the cutoff times are tight, and you must “commit not to quit”. There were 61 Leadman finishers out of the 122 starters mostly from Colorado and neighboring mountainous states. From what I could determine, I was the second finisher ever from Arkansas. Ted Herget was a top 5 finisher in the 2012 Leadman and James Gaston came very close in 2014, in which he did a nice blog on Arkansas Outside. My plans for next year are



already set and I will be going to Leadville as a pacer to help Darrin finish his first 100-mile race. Rusty also has an itching to do a Leadville event. I cannot wait to go back and run with my friends!

The DNF's Club, Leadville Edition

By Chris Davis

First off let me say that I'm not the best writer in the history of mankind nor even in my own mind. Hell I'm mediocre at best. That being said here's my best recollection of the experience of getting to toe the line at this year's Leadville 100 Trail Run.



The race itself has a long and storied past – a race created by Ken Chlouber with the intention of staving off the death of a once proud mining town. When the Climax Molebeyondum mining company shutdown in the early 80's the town of Leadville lost its source of income. Ken came up with the concept of the Leadville 100 trail run as a means to draw tourists back into the town. Over the years they've added more races to what's now known as the Leadville Race Series. This currently includes such events as the Silverton Rush 50 Miler, Leadville Trail Marathon, Leadville 100 Bike Race and of course, the 100 mile trail run. It's called one of the most brutal races in the country by the staff itself and it all but lived up to that reputation.

For me, I'm not the fastest of runners nor the best – I happily admit to being a back of the packer where the fun conversations take place. I don't get awards or accolades and honestly I don't care. I'm out there to enjoy the event, the people and the post-race festivities. Back in December of 2018 I was nursing a broken toe (what use does the pinky toe have anyway besides finding furniture corners in a hallway??) and volunteered at the LovIT half and full by helping out at the turnaround aid station and then acting as part of the LovIT Uber crew. As the race progressed I found myself back at the finish line watching and cheering the runners as they finished. I remember standing talking to Kyle Martin when Steve Adkison came up to us both and asked us if we wanted to be a part of a team he was forming. When asked what the team was for he told us it was the Leadville lottery.....but to not worry since we probably wouldn't get in. Later that day while at dinner with my wife and friends I signed up on the team not expecting anything to come of it. I mean after all – who would pick a team that only had 1 member of it that had completed a 100 miler? (odd thing is Kyle would go on to do so 2 months later at LovIT).

You guessed it – we got picked. On January 19 th I received an excited group text from Steve stating we were on. The first thought in my head was “Oh hell not one but 2 100 attempts this year and I've never done one before!” So after LovIT was come and gone I went from being able to relax to having to shift gears in training. That would soon take a derailment stemming from ankle and knee tendonitis. When I could sneak in training runs they went well despite not having the elevation that Colorado has. Living in Hot Springs only means a base height of around 700' or so compared to the 10,154' that the start/finish line of Leadville sits at. I looked at the schedule after LovIT and found OT50, Full Moon and a disastrous circus event in Tulsa called Midnight Madness (to quote someone about it, “I'm not saying this was a crappy idea but this was a crappy idea”and I paraphrase). Months go by and the training runs start to feel better and the tendonitis slowly goes away.

(a side note) – I have to say a HUGE thanks to Steve Adkison for the advice and gear he gave me the past few months. The Leadville trip wasn't a cheap one but had it not been for Steve the cost would've been a strain I couldn't have tackled.

The week of the race I was a nervous wreck although you might not have spotted that externally. Internally everything was turning over faster than Taylor Swift dumping boyfriends....or faster than Chris Baldwin crop dusting tailing trail runners. Oh don't roll your eyes like that, you know one of those jokes HAD to make it in here somewhere. I found for the first time just how much gear needs to be packed for a race of this magnitude. I ended up using an entire piece of luggage for my own gear which prompted me to call my sister to see if she had a piece of luggage my wife and I could borrow for our own clothes....not a pretty sight of me showing up in Leadville and wearing compression shorts for 5 days straight is it? I poured over every single bit of gear laid out on my home office's floor wondering what else to throw in and what to leave out. Funny thing is once I got to Copper Mountain, CO I realized I had left my damned rain/wind jacket at home. Once I had secured a backup jacket I felt confident that I had everything laid out and ready. Hell I took a picture of what I had printed for the race prep and thought I was killing a small forest. Just ask some of the Hot Springs folks.

As it the case with trail races there was a pre-race meeting that was mandatory at the Lake County High School. The night before when my wife and I arrived in Colorado I had worried whether or not the elevation was going to bother me and affect my running and especially my breathing. Turns out I was ok – my wife on the other hand got hit pretty hard. She came down with all the telltale symptoms of elevation sickness that night and it got worse on Friday. I started having thoughts of having to ask others like Teresa Sellers if they wouldn't mind crewing for me also if my wife wasn't able to get better. The pre-race meeting was something of a magical dream – hearing the words of various staff members, the on-call medical staff and then the race creator's son Cole. But the true spine tingling words came from Merilee and Ken – the very first race director and the creator of the race himself. Ken's final words still echo in my head: "You are better than you think you are and you can do more than you think you can." and "I commit, I will not quit."

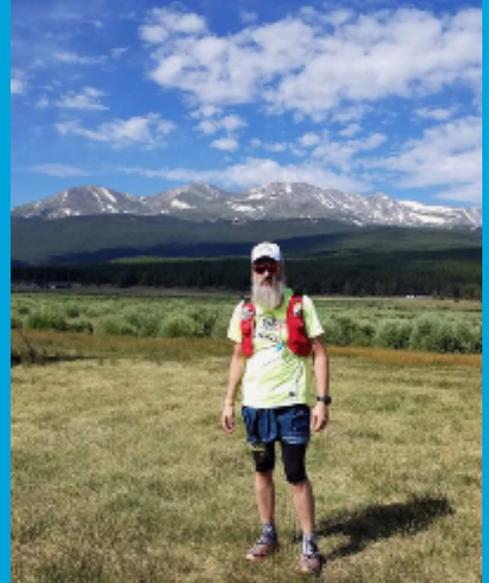
I stopped to talk to talk to Charlie Sellers, Jim Tadel, Brandon Allen, and Daniel Arnold a bit after the runners meeting when the crew folks went inside for their meeting. We all dispersed and made our way over to the Expo to check out the sponsors and vendors and most importantly – pick up our packets. The staff at the Expo were some of the most helpful I'd seen at a race this size and it was set in the middle of an old town that still had that old mining town feel to it. The view looking down 6 th Street towards the mountains didn't hurt either.

I left the Expo after talking to a few people such as Kyle and Jeff Beason and made it back to the condo my wife and I stayed at in Copper Mountain which is about 20 miles up Highway 91. I started the task of sorting out what would be in my 2 drop bags and what I wanted my wife to bring to me at Twin Lakes (which sadly I had to drop before getting to). She just stood back and let me run around like a chicken with its head cutoff – either in awe or just scared to say anything. Once I had everything about where I wanted it I shut down and relaxed with the TV on and screen door to the porch open. I will say – I prefer Colorado's weather to ours.

Morning and I have never agreed but when my alarm went off at 2am I was awake even despite the fact I hadn't had a single drop of anything with caffeine the entire week. I scurried around while my wife made herself something to eat then and something to have ready during the spell she'd be waiting for me to arrive at an aid station. We loaded everything in the rental car and took off for Leadville, Let me tell you – even in the pitch black of morning the scenery along Colorado Highway 91 will take your breath away if you've never seen it before. A steady stream of headlights at that time of the morning was a good indication of the crazy and dedicated few that were fixing to toe the line in just a few hours. We arrived in Leadville to an air that was electric and filled with a nervousness like none other. The staff hurried around like ants putting the finishing touches on things but at the same time stopped to talk to myself and any other racers that were arriving – this race has some of the nicest folks I've ever met on the race staff side.

I took a few steps and started to side step someone I thought was just a volunteer.....who turned out to be Merilee refusing to let me by without giving me a hug. She saw just how let down I was and it meant a lot for someone of her position to do something like that. The final gracious act was that of Cole Chlouber playing Leadville Uber for myself and 4 others that got pulled at Halfpipe down to Twin Lakes.

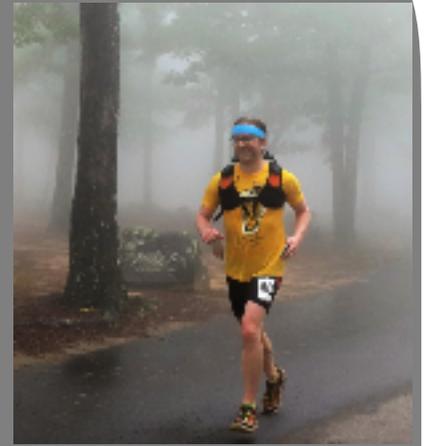
My day ended talking to Teresa and Charlie Sellers and Stan Ferguson while waiting on my wife to pick me up and take me back to the condo. I got to see the grit and determination of runners staring Hope's Pass in the face and that's something truly to behold. I applaud every one of the those that finished from the 1 st place runner to the very last guy who was so spent he had to have his pacers and family hold him – that right there is the very embodiment of what Ken and Merilee talk about at the pre-race meeting.



Will I be back? In a few years sure – for now it's time to move on.....I may be 0-2 on buckle attempts but the next 2 shots I won't be going down without a fight. That's right Traveller and Lovlt – I'm looking at you both.



Mount Nebo





2nd Annual Big Hill Pond Walking Tall 50K/25K Trail Race

~By Sean Hilsdon

The 2019 running of the Walking Tall 50K/25K will take place on Saturday October 19, 2019 at Big Hill Pond State Park in Pochontas, Tennessee. This trail ultra-marathon is now in its second year and shows signs of beating last year's numbers. Last year we sold 365 bibs from 21 states for a 350-participant race. This year our 25K is sold out and we have been processing a waitlist for a month, with the 50K spots quickly approaching the same fate, whoo-hoo. This is a not-for-profit event with 100% of the proceeds going to charity (90% of the proceeds going to the park itself and 10% going to the Tennessee Park Rangers Association). The domino effect from just the first year's race alone is amazing. The entire community benefited from the race. Hotels around the area were sold out, 100% of the trail system was completely renovated, the park repaired or replaced 17 foot bridges and saw a ton of work on the famed 1/2-mile long dismal swamp boardwalk, \$14,000 was directly donated to the park and \$3,500 was donated to the Tennessee Park Rangers Association, and almost all expenses of the race were spent in McNairy County. Even more exciting news for 2019, with the addition of this year's proceeds, the park has made plans to build an aviary to rehabilitate injured birds! Brian Williams and I are the race directors for this event and avid ultra-marathoners / trail runners ourselves. We have spent a lot of time at this park training for tough ultras across the country. From the race director's seat, here is the race description that we have used since the beginning and we feel it is a very fitting and honest summary of the course:



Big Hill Pond's 50K/25K will have something for everyone. It will be run on October 19th, 2019. The race will have 31 or 15.5 miles made up almost entirely of single track trail with only a little park road to help string out the competition. The race will feature a fire tower that you will have to climb, and a swamp boardwalk that is over a half mile across. The history of the area comes from the local sheriff Buford Pusser, who is known for his virtual one-man war on moonshining, prostitution, gambling, and other vices along the Mississippi-Tennessee state line. The race will offer enough scenery and elevation for the most grizzled trail runner but should be doable for the well trained first time

The 50K race starts at 7:00am and has an overall cutoff of 9-hours with an intermediate course cutoff of 7.5-hours, near mile 26. The 25K race starts at 8:00am and has an 8-hour cutoff, so that both races finish at 4:00pm. At which point the clock is turned off and no other times will be recorded. We feel the hard cutoff is something that stays true to the old-fashioned way of racing and the mentality of it will stay with you all day during the race, compelling you to finish for the ultimate reward. I know most AURA runners are accustomed to races with decent elevation change, however, a lot of how this impacts your race performance is the frequency at which the climbs come at you throughout the course. In total, the runner will experience over 4,200-feet of climbing across the 50K and roughly 2,000-feet across the 25K. Each racer that finishes in the allotted time will receive the signature Walking Tall club just like Sheriff Buford Pusser carried to maintain justice in McNairy County. These clubs are custom finished at the Buford Pusser Museum, just down the road in Adamsville, TN. In addition to this, if the racer decides to face any possible fear of heights head-on in the fire tower climb, they will receive a challenge coin. Each finisher item is custom to the race year and distance. We will also have the WT logo brand, hot and ready, for multi-year participants to customize their clubs with the number of years they have conquered the race.

With 2018 being the inaugural running of this trail race, four course records were set. The 25K female course record was set by Miranda Bavier of Memphis, TN with a time of 3:06. The 25K male course record was set by Chris Winter of Memphis, with a time of 2:28. For the 50K, the female record was set by Chloe Zimmerer of Dexter, KY with a time of 6:08. And finally, the 50K male record was set by an AURA elite, Daniel Arnold of Benton, AR with a blistering time of 4:48. These records will be hard to beat but anything is possible!



One final item that helps elevate this race to a high level is the quality of sponsors. Altra Running company was our Chairman-level athletic-gear sponsor, both last year and again this year. They provided cool head buffs for the packets and gave the overall winner of each distance and the DFL a free pair of Altra shoes of their choosing. Tailwind Nutrition provided hydration and electrolytes on the course last year and this year we have Precision Hydration thanks to BPC Performance Coaching. The Bank of McNairy County has stepped up both years with a large cash donation that helps offset race cost and allow even more race proceeds to benefit the park. Please check out our other sponsors and important course information out on our website at www.walkingtall50k.com or on our Facebook page and on Instagram @walkingtall50k. There are links that take you to registration on UltraSignup.

This park has been a special place for both Brian and I well before we knew each other. For Brian, BHP has been a short 15-minute drive away from his family vacation cabin and he has shared countless memories with his wife and children hiking and running the trails of the park for years. As for me, I grew up backpacking this park with my Boy Scout troop, preparing for the next big trip and just to get away from the city. My thoughts are that anyone would find it hard not to fall in love with this park no matter the choice of recreational activity, and that's the main reason Brian and I are looking to the trail community to continue giving it some well-deserved love and rehabilitation like only it can. It truly makes for one of the most beautiful and challenging courses I have experienced and it's only ninety minutes east of the Memphis bridge. We welcome our Arkansas neighbors and would love nothing more than to be overwhelmed by the AURA crowd. Brian and I have come to love so many AURA trail races each year and we are so fond of this special trail community.

And as always, "until next time happy trails to you, until we meet again!" -RD "Hizzy"



A Word From The Newsletter Editor



The AURA UTS Series is off to a great start. We have a large number of participants and we have some new faces this year. Strong competition in both the women's and men's divisions is already heating up. Don't let that stop you from signing up for the series. Two races down but 15 still to go!!

One of my favorite weekends of the year is coming up. The Arkansas Traveller 100 is just around the corner. I hate I have missed seeing all of you on the training runs but I will be out there cheering loudly for you all as I travel the course crewing a friend. IF you are not running, crewing, or racing I encourage you to contact Thomas and sign up to Volunteer! It is such a rewarding experience. The appreciation level for our volunteers is high! Plus you get to witness the stories of the day unfold and you get invited to the volunteer picnic at the end of October.

Congratulations to Brandon for becoming a Leadman & Daniel Arnold on your Leadville 100 finish. Big Thanks to Brandon and Chris D. for sharing their experiences. It was truly a gift to have a glimpse into your races and the struggles you both endured.

I want to wish the best of luck to George Peterka in the Wasatch 100 this weekend. For those who wish to follow his progress: <http://results.wasatch100.com>

LET'S ALL WELCOME HOME OUR FRIEND & ONE OF OUR FAMOUS VOLUNTEERS, ALEX PETERKA! GLAD TO HAVE YOU BACK IN AR!

If you have race experience you want to share please send it to the email below. We would love to see where you are running and racing.

Until Next Time Happy Trails

Contact Me at
mverrunnergirl@gmail.com



RETREADS

(Retired Runners Eating Out)

We meet the first Wednesday of every month at Franke's Cafeteria on Rodney Parham Blvd. The food lineup begins sharply at 11:30 a.m. Come early to the lobby and celebrate your latest adventure. Everyone welcome, retired or not. If you are late look for the table with the old runners in their t-shirts from the past, medallions, trophies, etc.

Questions? Call Lou or Charlie Ellis Peyton
680-0309