

AURA NEWS

Arkansas Ultra Running Association

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From the Editor



Big thanks to Jacob Anderson and Rusty Harvey for hosting a very fun weekend of running and communing with friends at the Three Days of Syllamo running festival. They have done an excellent job of taking on this event! Congratulations also to our club members who are now a part of the Syllamopeople.

Congratulations to those of you who finished the Ouachita Trail 50! Thanks to everyone who was a part of my first year as race director. Your presence meant a lot and I am grateful. I have to thank Chrissy Ferguson for laying a solid foundation for this race and for mentoring me. I must give gratitude to Missy Harken, our volunteer coordinator. I also have much gratitude for our aid station captains and the many, many volunteers who came out to keep our runners well fed, safe, and happy on race day. Whether your contribution was small or large, thanks to everyone who played a role in a successful event!

Steve McBee and Michael Hall did a fantastic job in their first year of directing Styx & Stones. It looks like everyone had a great time. I am sure you made Mark Den Herder proud!

Many of you had great success in these events and and some had a few struggles but you toed the line and that is brave! A big congratulations to all of you who participated!!

Only one race and one fun run remains for this UTS season. The club picnic and awards ceremony will be held at the Catsmacker. We hope you can join us. We are going to have fun celebrating You and Your Successes!!

See you all on the trails soon!

~Happy Trails~

Stacey & the rest of the AURA Board

**Upcoming AURA Events
And
Volunteer Opportunities**



**Mt Magazine
18 Mile
May 14th**

Mount Magazine State Park

[Click Here for Race Website
& Registration](#)



Catsmacker

**May 21st
20ish & 12ish miles
Lake Sylvia**

[Click Here for Website](#)
[Click Here to Register](#)

UTS Awards & Picnic After

Club awards, Food, Drinks, and Music

We will have burgers and hot dogs with all the fixings, chips, cookies, fruit and various beverages. Feel free to bring a side dish to share. Bring a chair and canopy if you wish. Plan to hang out, celebrate and have a good time after the race.

AURA Shirts For Sale

"More than a running club. We're a community"

Women's Relaxed Fit or a Men's Regular Fit

\$16 for s-xl

\$17 for 2xl

\$18 for 3xl

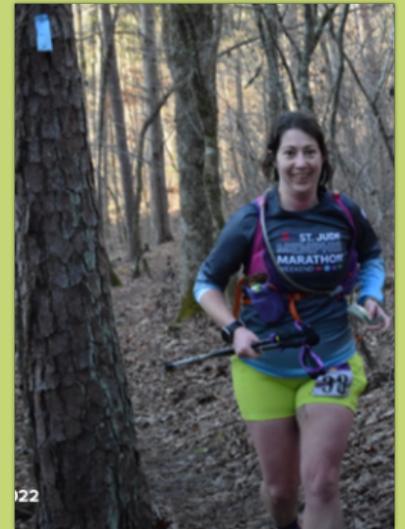
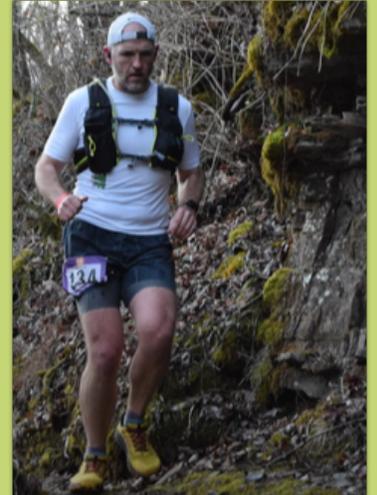
Place your order by emailing
[Stacey](#)

Order deadline has past but there will be limited quantities available at Catsmacker. Please bring cash.



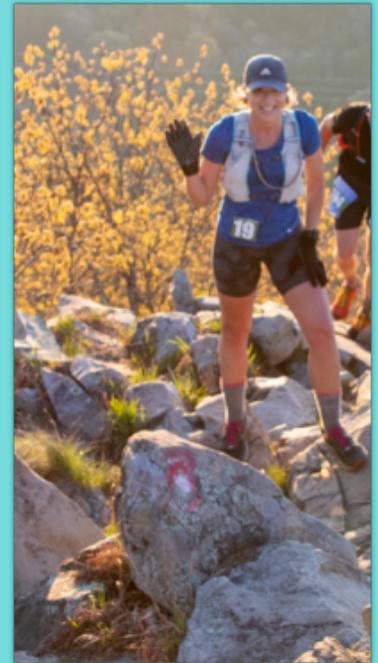
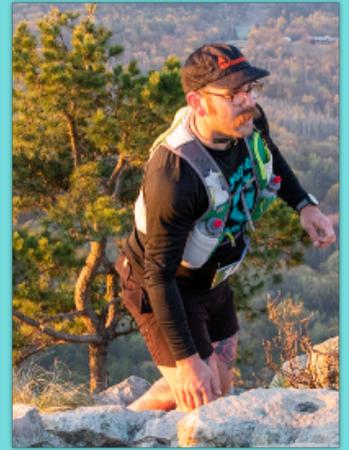
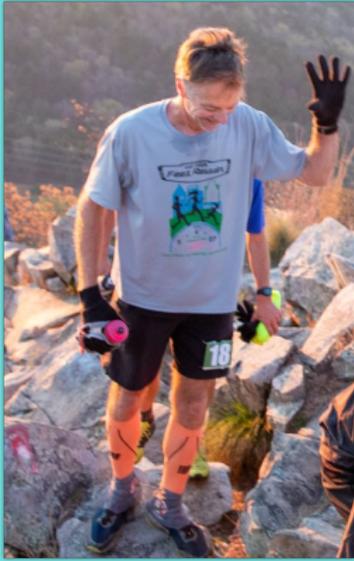
Three Days of Syllamo

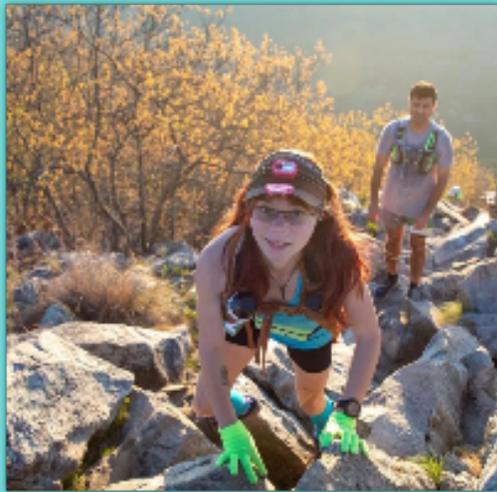
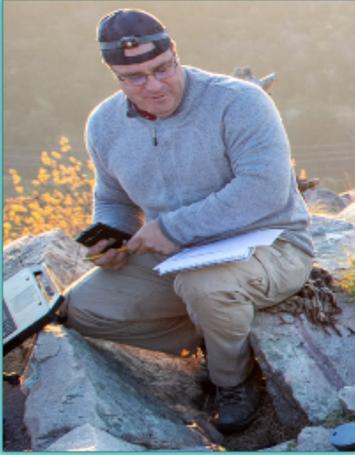


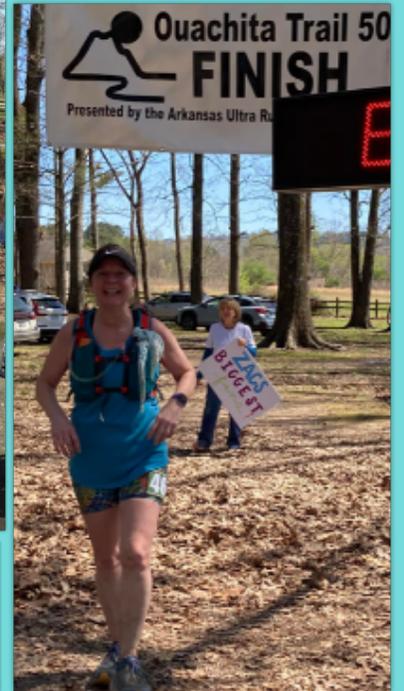
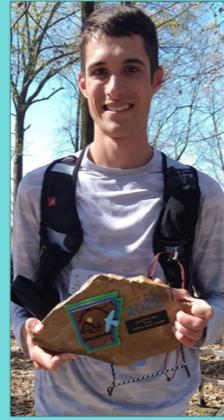




Ouachita Trail 50







Styx & Stones



AURA RECEIVES RECOGNITION

AURA was named the 2022 award winner by the Arkansas River Valley Tri-Peaks region organization for our involvement in Perry County and throughout the region for promoting the area both in the state and in the mid-south region. Our organization was noted for our efforts through putting on running events and especially by being good stewards of the trails. Doug Brandon, president of the Perry county board noted in his presentation how AURA prioritizes leaving the trails “better than they found them” even when holding an event with 100+ runners and many more than 100 volunteers plus crew and spectators. It’s nice to be recognized for our efforts but even nicer to realize that someone outside our group has noticed what we have built over the past 30 plus years.

Accepting the award was PoDog Vogler at the annual Tri-Peaks banquet held at Pridgin Family Brewery in Scranton Arkansas on April 12.



PURSUING A 100 MILE DREAM

~By Maurice Robinson

There is coming a time when I will not be able to run long distances on this Earth. I know that, but that time has not yet come as I continue to train and run ultramarathons in my 81st year of life. Pete Ireland, one of several friends with which I train is about one year older than me. We have been training and running together for more than two decades. We have each run many races of 100 miles or more.

About seven years ago after I had run the Arkansas Traveller 100, Pete mentioned a website that he thought I might want to look up and study. It was a link to the World and USA records for 100 mile runners, age 70 and above. We were both listed in nice positions in the records! This perked my interests and caused me to think, "What if...?" Clearly, I could see myself in the top ten for my age group. Racing records will show that this feat was accomplished. I became the 10th fastest 100 mile runner in the World, age 75 and above by finishing the 2019 Prairie Spirit Trail 100 Mile Race with a time of 28:42. Pete and my son, Randy helped greatly by crewing and pacing. I kept the memory of this 2019 finish in my mind and pondered it.

Approaching my 79th birthday, I had a dream, this desire to leave even a greater legacy for my family; grandchildren, great grandchildren, etc. So, I made this decision. On Christmas Eve, 2020 after all the family had finished brunch, had exchanged and opened gifts, I stood up. I got everyone's attention and made an announcement, followed with a request. I told them about my dream and desire to run the fastest 100 mile race in the USA, by anyone age 80 and above, for the record. I begged four family members from three generations to be on my team. I don't know how much hope they had for us being successful. Later, I asked Pete to lead the team and to coach me; also, I added one more family member to the team. Each team member was presented a medium gray wind breaker, collar hoodie with zipper pockets and elastic sleeve cuffs. "Team80" was sewn into the left breast flap using all bright silver thread.

The following April, one year before the planned race, I started water aerobics at Bishop Park Aquatic Center to help build body core strength, flexibility, balance and for weight control. Being a beekeeper and working outdoors also helped in this cross training. In early September, six months before the 100 mile race I completed 161 miles at A Race For The Ages in Tennessee. Friday after Thanksgiving, four months before the 100 miler I ran 71 miles at the AURA Sunset 24 Hour Endurance Run at Sunset Lake in Benton. Those were some long training runs but over time, running longer distances unlocked the doors to the center of my being and the joy of running entered my soul.

January 1, 2022, Coach Pete went to work on me. He said, "Maurice, the opportunity is there for you. At 80 years of age and with your ability, if we can slow you down in the first half of the race and save you for the later sections of the course, you can get under 29:27 hours and capture some US and World records. The stars will have to align just right, but it is possible." He sent me his schedule for the final six weeks of training. He helped me to fine tune my running. Most of the time I would adhere to his instructions, especially the faster runs. Occasionally, I would unintentionally run faster than he had planned for me to run. I sent him all my running data daily for the last twelve weeks. He was comparing my heart rate and my pace at different distances and different elevations. We wanted to optimize a winning pace with a lower heart rate (Pulse Rate vs Running Pace) for my 2022 Prairie Spirit Trail 100 Mile Race.

Early Friday morning I packed and I pick up Pete with his gear. We picked up Randy and drove to lola, Kansas. I drove the course from lola to Ottawa, the location of the start and finish. We check-in for two rooms, then went to the race headquarters. I turned-in my drop bags, then we visited and ate supper. We ate across from two runners from Alaska. Back at the motel I prepared and taped my feet. I got everything from my start bag and put it in place ready for morning. The alarm was set. I was asleep before the rest of the team arrived from home. The alarm sounded 'immediately'. However, it is already 4:45 am. Other team members were Kristen Robinson, my daughter-in-law, Tiffany Weston, my granddaughter and Kevin Weston, my grandson-in-law. We were up early getting ready for me to run. They were getting prepared to crew and later, to pace.

The five matching Team80 wind breakers are very impressive at breakfast. At 6 am they start while I'm still waiting, momentarily for my Garmin to lock onto GPS. Here, I'm standing on this one spot. I could stand here on this spot for 29 hours or, I could run 100 miles in 29 hours, return to this spot, then go live my wonderful dream. Last to start, but I'm good. Jogging out, I throw my arm up wide and give thanks to my creator and my parents for making me like I am and giving me what I have. I try to run a pretty even pace as we planned. Soon, I see the half-moon and I'm on an emotional mountain top.

At each crew accessible aid station my amazing crew was ready to help me to relieve some of the pain, provide first-aid, restore my strength, replace electrolytes, provide my prearranged foods for the course and know that I was on track to finish well. Quickly but carefully to get restocked, I hurried the quest to capture the next 5-10 mile segment of the course. I would say, "Thank You!" to crew members and to some of the aid station volunteers. As I smiled, each Team80 member got a 'fist bump'. Walking away, I would see Pete in my way and hear him whisper the pace that he wanted me to maintain for that segment of the course. "I have everything I need." came to mind.

I remained hydrated throughout the course. There were no stomach problems or digestive issues. Only one major potty break was needed and that was at lola, mile 51, the turn-around point. I ran in there, thankfully beating the cutoff time of 14 hours. The pause at this aid station was by far my longest. I would run solo for just over 61 miles. Kevin would then pace about sixteen miles from Colony to Garnett, the 10 'til 2 night time stretch. He was a fun pacer. Kristen, our Mother Hen paced me next for nine miles up to Richmond. The wind chill was in the upper 20's. She was a good, pacer and could walk faster than a long legged rooster. Randy paced me to Princeton. It was still cold. He has successfully paced me several times in races of 100 miles. I fully trust him to do the right thing for his dad who has already run 85 or 90 miles. Finally, Pete got me for the last seven miles. Pete is always my finisher pacer. He makes me suffer until there is no more course to run. At some point along the course after several hours of night running, I developed a forward lean. It's a condition that pacers see but they don't tell their runner about it. Pete and I were fast walking side by side. The faint sun was rising to our right side. I looked to our left and saw a shadow bent way over forward and moving in synchronism with us. I said, "Pete is that your shadow?"

he said, "No." Looking again at the moving shadow, "It must be because I definitely can not straighten it up!" We smiled.

The last couple miles were rough going because my forward lean had changed into a right side lean. There was no way I could stand up straight. I wasn't sure that I was going to make it, especially in record time. I had substantially conquered pain, but the lean couldn't be controlled. In an effort to stretch my lower back muscles, I occasionally grabbed treated posts along the trail to let my lower body dangle for a moment. That helped a little but was no cure.

Making the last turn of the course, I stepped over toward a trail post, grabbed it and hugged it momentarily in order to stretch my back again. I could see the red inflatable finishing archway. I doubled down and finished the course. I stepped over the doubled timing mats at the finished line and cried dry tears of happiness to see my son and other members of my family waiting with open arms. Pete, my last pacer had joined the rest of his team. They each could pen an interesting story from their own perspective of the experience. There was a big to do about our team's accomplishment. Photos were taken to cement the legacy of a finish time of 29:03:21. The recorded fastest 80 year and older runner in the USA for 100 miles and second in the world.

We let the other team member, my wife Norma, know that we believed prayers from home had been answered. We went into the race center, washed up and had breakfast. I ate more than I thought I could. Later I would confirm to all that my average pace for 100 miles had been 17:19 minutes per mile and my average heart rate was 121 bps. After a brief rest we loaded into our vehicles and returned to Arkansas. Upon arriving in Bryant at Randy's house just before sundown we were greeted by twenty or more friends and family members. Half of them were holding big cardboard signs each with a different phrase. The cutest one to me was the one that my granddaughter Boyce was holding that read, "MY PAWPAW IS FASTER THAN YOURS!"



RETREADS

Hello All, the first Wednesday of every month is RETREADS Day. What is a RETREAD? Could be a retired runner. Maybe not. Could be a runner who wants to eat out in the company of other runners.

We are currently meeting at Homer's Restaurant, 9700 West Rodney Paraham Road. We have the private room reserved for 11:30 a.m. If you plan on coming, it is important that you contact me the day before as our location is subject to change. At some time soon Homer's is scheduled to move to the old Franke location also on Rodney Parham. Or, we could decide to spend the summer at 2 Rivers Park. Right now as I write this, Homers is the location. So email me at CHRLYPYTN@GMAIL.COM if you've not been to RETREADS before and not on my notification list.



Thanks, Charley and Lou Peyton



AURA MEMBERS

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[Click Here To See Events In The Ultra Trail Series](#)

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Stacey Shaver - Vice President

Lisa Gunnoe - Secretary

Katie Helms - Treasurer

