

# AURA NEWS

Arkansas Ultra Running Association

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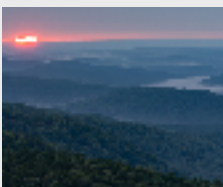
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## From the President & Editor



A lot has happened in the last month. Several of our running friends were affected in some way by the tornado. We witnessed a lot of compassion, from cleaning up a destroyed yard to cleaning out a fridge, storing belongings for someone who no longer has space, moving someone, offering a shower or a place to plug in to simply listening. If you are still in need of help, please let us know how we can help you! We know the journey will be long and our hearts go out to you!!

We said goodbye to two caring souls who were long time members of our community. Rest in Love Rosemary and Alston.

We had some first time AURA RD's kill it at Styx & Stones. Will Landreth, Matthew Myers, and Cliff Pittman hosted a heck of a race with a well maintained & well marked course as well as a fun post race party. Big thanks to these guys and Big Congratulations to all who ran!

We had a crazy number of first time 50k and 50 Mile runners at the 32nd annual Ouachita Trail 50! Runners came from AR, MO, TN, TX, OK, MS, LA, FL, NC, MI, MT, SD, WI & NY. We had several clubs and organizations from across the state involved. Thank you to our amazing volunteers! We appreciate you more than you know!! Pinnacle State Park will benefit greatly from your participation this year!

Fresh new club shirts were ordered and I will have them at the Mt Magazine event. When they are gone, they are gone - sorry. I will also have them at the CatSmacker, when we host the end of season meeting & CLUB PARTY!!

**Until the next event, Happy Trials ~Stacey Shaver-**

Upcoming AURA Events  
And  
Volunteer Opportunities



**MOUNT MAGAZINE TRAIL WORK DAY  
HELP NEEDED**

**9AM      APRIL 29**

**EARN UTS POINTS - EARN GOOD KARMA**

Meet at the pavilion directly across from the Mt Magazine Visitor's Center.

Email PT if you plan to help - [runninpt@gmail.com](mailto:runninpt@gmail.com)



**Mount Magazine Trail Run**

**18 Miles**

**8am    May 6th**

**Paris, AR**

Supplies are purchased based on registration numbers. (81 currently) Please unregister or email the RD if you are no longer able to attend. This helps us keep cost down. Don't be that guy that emails the RD the day before the race or just doesn't show up.

**PLEASE BRING A CASH DONATION**

*\*We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and the proceeds from this race benefits the Mountain Magazine State Park*

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER/VIEW WEBSITE](#)

Fleet Feet Little Rock hosts weekly trail group runs. If you want in on the FUN just click [Here](#) !



# The Catsmacker Trail Run

7am May20th Lake Sylvia

[Registration Is Full](#) [Link to Website](#) [Email Katie to Volunteer](#)

## End of the UTS/UTS Lite Season PaRtY !!!!

Join us for the run, the party and the annual club meeting.



The 2023 -2024 AURA Ultra Trail Series will begin with the

## Arkansas Backyard Ultra Championship June 10, 2023 6AM - Cotter, AR

[Click Here To View The Website/Register](#)

\*Our members asked and we listened! Don't wait to register.

The first AURA owned event and 2nd race to be hosted in the 2023-24 Ultra Trail Series




## Full Moon 25K & 50K July 22nd - Perryville, AR

[Click To Register](#)

Don't wait to register, especially if you are participating in the UTS/UTS Lite

# 2023 - 2024 UTS Calendar

**\*Registration Opens in May**

| Date              | Event                                                 | Location                                                                          | Regular UTS                        | UTS - Lite          |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 6/10/23           | AR Backyard Ultra                                     | Cotter                                                                            | #1 (6 Hr min)                      | #1 (any distance)   |
| 7/22/23           | Full Moon 50k/25k                                     | Perryville                                                                        | #2                                 | #2 (25k)            |
| 8/27/23           | Mt Nebo                                               | Dardanelle                                                                        | #3                                 | #3                  |
| 10/7/23           | Arkansas Traveller 100                                | Perryville                                                                        | #4                                 |                     |
| 10/28/23          | Hot Springs Nation Park 18M                           | Hot Springs                                                                       | #5                                 | #4                  |
| 11/24-25/23       | Sunset 6/12/24 Hr Endurance                           | Benton                                                                            | #6 (any distance over 26 miles)    | #5 (any distance)   |
| 12/2/23           | Lake Ousachita Vista Trail 26.2M                      | Mt Ida                                                                            | #7 (full distance)                 | #6 (14M)            |
| 1/6/24            | Athens Elg Fork Trail Marathon                        | Big Fork                                                                          | #8 (full distance)                 | #7 (17M)            |
| 2/7/24            | White Rock 50k/25k (TBA)                              | Cass                                                                              | #9 (50k)                           | #8 (25k)            |
| 2/23/24           | LOVIT 100k                                            | Mt Ida                                                                            | #10 (see note if running the 100M) |                     |
| 3/15-17/24        | Three Days of Syllamo                                 | Mnt View                                                                          | #11 (50M)                          | #9 (20k)            |
| 4/6/24            | Styx & Stones                                         | Winslow                                                                           | #12 (Full)                         | #10 (Half)          |
| 4/13/24           | Ouachita Trail 50k/50M                                | Little Rock                                                                       | #13 (50M)                          | #11 (50k)           |
| 4/15/23 - 4/15/24 | Runners Choice Marathon                               |  | #14 (marathon)                     | #12 (half marathon) |
| 5/4/24            | Mt Magazine                                           | Paris                                                                             | #15 (18M)                          | #13 (12M)           |
| 5/6/23 - 5/6/24   | Trail Work (you need pre approval for any other work) | for these UTS events/FooT/CATA                                                    | 3 Hours                            | 4 Hours             |
| 5/18/24           | Catsmacker (End of season awards party!!!)            | Perryville                                                                        |                                    |                     |

## NOTES:

### Some UTS race terms and guidelines

Sign-in sheet. It may be up to you to keep your own time, and sign in when you complete the run.

Water bottle. This is what you need to carry on most of the runs. For minimal aid races, there might be water set out, but there won't be cups. Show some consideration to your fellow runners by NOT tonguing the water jugs or wasting the water!

Donation can. If it's a no-fee race, there will be a donation can. Participants are encouraged to donate what they can. Your donations help cover the cost of our free events so RD's aren't out any money.

### LOVIT 100K/100M

The 100M is not a UTS race but if you run the 100M, we will take your time at mile 62 (Spillway) and count it as having run the 100K.

For more information on Ultra Trail Series runs or the AURA, contact George or Stacey.

[To switch from the regular UTS to UTS-Lite \(or vice-versa\) contact George.](#)



## A Birthday 100 ~ By Paul Turner



A few years back, 2016 to be exact, I pretty much swore off 100's. They were never my best event, and the easy way out was to just not do them. Last year an old high school friend asked me about my running, what kind of races I'd done, how many miles I'd run, etc. etc. That got me to thinking, "next April is my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, maybe I should do something epic, to celebrate."

The 'epic' somehow ended up being the Endurance Hunter 100, in Blue Ridge, GA. A 100 about to run its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. A point to point, mostly trail run, with 22,000ft of elevation gain.

As mentioned, 100's were never my best event. So I dug into the race info, and notice the aid-stations were any where from 8 to 15 miles apart. I need to do something different. My different was only 5 days of running, with the other 2 days for weight training. I also decided that every run, would be at least 10 miles. This ended up working out really well. I even got to a point, late in the training, where all my runs were at least 12 miles.

Dale Humphrey and PoDog went out with me, to crew and pace me. I could not have done it without them. These guys got it going on!!

The race started at a park in downtown Blue Ridge, which is a really nice town. At the start of the race, it was sprinkling, that would soon turn into a good solid rain, and then into a basic down pour!! Once we started, we ran to the outskirts of town, and hit an old abandoned railroad track. This was not a rail-to-trail thing, but an old railroad track. It was really the only section of the race I did not care for. However, it did slow me down, which is a good thing for me. The race had a lot of climbing, but it also had a 40hr cut-off. So I felt the most important thing was to always be moving. So even though I was walking, I was moving. The 1<sup>st</sup> aid-station was at mile 8, and Dale was waiting for me... in the pouring rain, with an umbrella, so I could switch to my trail shoes. We'd hoped that the storms would have been moved out, by the time I got there.



After that, there is not a lot that went on. The trails were wonderful. No rock, no roots, just good mostly smooth dirt trails. There were not a lot of flat sections either, we were pretty much either climbing, or descending. Starting at aid-station 2, PoDog had joined for adventure, and again those guys did a wonderful job, especially taking care of my feet. I will guess that, for the most part, I was at the aid-stations for 10-15 minutes. Then back out on the trail. My only really down section, was coming into aid-station 4, at about mile 40. It had gotten hot, and I thought I was coming off the trail and running down the road to the aid-station. When in fact there was another  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile steep climb, then on the road and down to the aid-station. Plus the next section was a 15 mile stretch. That is where PoDog jumped in to pace, mile 54.5.





After that the roughest section was a 7 mile stretch between as6 & as7. This section was easily the rockiest section, along with lots of roots. Plus it was short steep uphill's, followed by short steep downhill's.... over and over again for 7 miles. The next section was 13.5, and we feared, based off talk, a gnarly section. It ended up not being too bad. The roughest part was a mile climb, in 1,200ft, about mile 86. Once we were past that, it was 'mostly' downhill, lol, to the finish.

A final thought, when I crossed the finish line, the young man working it, gave me a 1<sup>st</sup> place trophy. Said I'd passed a guy on the final descent, and gotten first place in the Masters Division (per the race info 50-59). I noticed a couple days later, when the official results were posted, that a 55 year old was about 1:10 in front of me. I sent a note, and said... "since the award doesn't say 'Masters', and I turned 60 during the race, if it was ok with them, I'd keep it, and say it was 'Grand Masters' (in the race info 60-69). Plus I was the oldest person in the race." Oh the race was 4/1 & 4/2... I turned 60, on 4/2! I've not heard back from them... :) I did ask if they wanted me to send it back to them.





# STYX & STONES

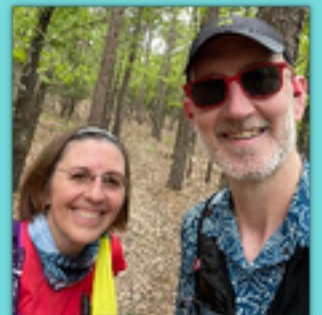








# OUACHITA TRAIL 50











## OT 50 – From the New Kid on the Block ~By Kayla Parr

I am a complete rookie when it comes to the world of ultra running. With just this year's Syllamo 50k and now the OT 50 miler under my belt, I have yet to experience even a fraction of what the well-seasoned veterans of AURA have endured. Fortunately, I have the pleasure of living in Hot Springs, where I'm surrounded by a band of special idiots (I swear they call themselves this affectionately) that find pleasure in subjecting their minds and bodies to the challenges of ultra-marathonng. I'd stick around after weekly group runs to hear their accounts of recent finishes, told with the sort of painful satisfaction exclusive to an experience that's both equal parts exhausting and fulfilling.

Believe it or not, the stories about missing toenails, lost tromps through the woods, and vivid details regarding digestive issues weren't enough to get me on board. It wasn't until I paced a fellow Hot Springs runner in the 2022 Arkansas Traveller 100 that I was convinced I needed to sign up for an ultra. The atmosphere of that race was electric. I was so inspired by the collective support from aid station volunteers, crew members, race directors, pacers, and spectators alike. Not to mention the respect I had for anyone willing to take on 100 miles. Shortly after, I found myself stacking on the mileage and tagging along with some of the more experienced folks for some longer weekend runs.

So even though I'd picked up a few tricks of the trade from training with my new friends, I still had my doubts about how my first attempt at a 50-mile finish would go. I'm in the habit of hyper-fixating. So naturally, I was checking the weather every hour of every day for an entire week leading up to the OT 50 (I really hope I kick this trait the more I run). It wasn't looking great - hot and humid at best, hailstorms at worst. By 6:00 a.m. come race day it was 67° and I knew I could expect that number to keep climbing...but I'm into finding silver linings and it looked like the storms were projected to hold off until around cut-off time.

We took off into the dark, running the first few paved miles of the course. I ran alone, interspersed between old friends reminiscing on past races and sharing plans for new adventures. Tuning in and out of the conversations around me, I took the time to check-in with my mind and body. I had no real expectations for the day other than finishing, but I was feeling pretty good. Then we hit the base of Pinnacle. One by one, we all began to scramble over the chaotic pile of sandstone boulders; remnants of the thrust faults that formed the Ouachita Mountains (can you tell I'm into geology?). I'd climbed Pinnacle before, so I knew what lay ahead. What I hadn't anticipated was how stagnant the air felt that day during the climb. I listened to the sounds of hands slapping against stone; runners balancing their bodies as legs propelled them over one boulder after another. I chatted with another runner about the stifling conditions.





Then we finally felt it: the touch of breeze against our sweat-slicked faces. That's how you know you've made it to the top. The air around you seems lighter and breathing comes a little easier. The ever-smiling Debbie Rigsby greeted us at the crest, taking pictures of faces filled with accomplishment and anticipation of what was to come. I paused for a moment, admiring what was behind me and preparing for the next 45 miles.

It didn't take long before I found a rhythm and fell in with a small crew of folks. We passed the Hash House Harriers where I grabbed a few fig newtons, which I regret to say felt akin to shoveling piles of dry dirt into my mouth. I'm not sure if I can attribute it to the heat or the time of day, but almost immediately I recognized that my body was not ready to digest whole foods. That's when the stomach cramps set in. I slowed my pace as every foot fall brought on a series of stabbing pains to my abdomen that had me questioning if I should attempt to toss my cookies, or in this case the newtons. This went on for a few miles and I fell into a bad space mentally; questioning how much longer I could go on if I continued to feel this way; asking myself why I was even out there in the first place. Then I remembered my only goal was to finish. There was no need to place unnecessary pressure on myself about pace or how I would place. So I kept on moving.



My physical and mental state did eventually improve, especially as I jogged into the Northshore aid station and heard the booming voice of my friend Carrie yelling, "WOOHOO. GO KAYLA.". It is incredible what a friendly face and a little encouragement from someone you know can do to lift your spirits. I had forgotten Carrie would be at Northshore and it was such a pleasant surprise to have someone I knew by my side to help grab my drop bag and get me the fuel I needed. I didn't have wet feet by that time, but I just wasn't jiving with the socks I'd put on that morning. So I sat down, changed my socks, and devoured a combination of potatoes and pickles sprinkled with salt. From that moment forward, salt became my best friend; every pickle juice shot I threw back tasted like liquid gold.

The next ten miles between Northshore and the Highway 10 Turnaround were pretty uneventful, but totally runnable. This was my first time on that section of the OT, so I was pleasantly surprised. I continued to curse the heat and humidity, but at least I was slogging along at a semi-even pace. As I neared the turnaround, it was incredibly motivating to see the runners that had already left and were now on their in-bound journey – I couldn't wait for that to be me. Music, unicorns, dinosaurs, an impressive spread of food, and my partner (a.k.a. crew) awaited me at the aid station. Two pieces of pizza quesadilla, a couple slugs of Red Bull, and a baby wipe to the face had me feeling fresh as hell. Nothing left to do now but go back the way I came.

I don't think I moved any faster on that return trip compared to the out-bound, but every movement felt easier. Reaching the half-way point and leaving the turnaround had apparently eased my mind into a state of concentration and my body into purposeful motion. Or it was just the pizza quesadillas...those things were delicious. Suddenly, I was back at Northshore and running much stronger than my first visit. That's when someone informed me I had advanced to third overall female, which had me stunned. After a few encouraging words from friends and volunteers, I was back on the trail with hopes that maybe I'd catch up with the second female.

The remaining miles passed in a steady rhythm. I crossed paths with friends and strangers; everyone a joy to talk to, joke with, and run alongside. Several black snakes made their appearance in the sunspots of creek beds, probably wondering why so many people were interrupting their sunbathing that day. The heat still hadn't let up, but I welcomed the breezes that meant the storms were fast approaching.

Then I was back to the pavement that had started our run in the morning. Except now it felt like it was going to kill me at the end of the race. I was experiencing a pain in my right foot that could be described as running with a hot rock in my sock. That's when a new friend, someone I'd met only a few miles earlier, yelled at me from the other side of the road, "If you can push this last stretch in 12 minutes, you'll finish in under 11 hours." So I had a new goal...and the last mile wasn't pretty, but I finished as second overall female with a time of 10:59:53.07.

I have undeniably fallen in love with this sport and its community. I'm constantly moved by the failures, successes, lessons learned, and memories that I know I'll cherish for years to come. And I think it's no coincidence that my first few ultras ended up being such amazing experiences, because they were both in Arkansas and I'm quickly learning that we've got some of the best folks around! I can't wait to grind out some more miles with ya'll.



**Alston Jennings's daughter, Laura, would like to thank those members who attended the memorial run for her daddy!  
(we regret there aren't any more photos)**



**DeeDee is looking for a loving in door home!  
Female Torti, about 13 years of age, inside cat only, litter box trained, sweet and loving disposition a cuddle bug and great lap cat. Rosemary Roger's, who just recently past away and a long time member of AURA, was DeeDee's fur momma.**





**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.

**Homer's Restaurant at 9700 West Rodney Paraham Road is open and meetings will resume this month!!**

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](mailto:CHRLYPYTN@GMAIL.COM) if you've not been to RETREADS before and not on my notification list.



Thanks, Charley and Lou Peyton

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW AURA MEMBERS!**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER.**

**CURRENT MEMBERS,**

**Thanks for Renewing Your Membership**

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