

AURA NEWS

Arkansas Ultra Running Association

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From the President & Editor



Full Moon 50k/25k with RD Sharon Bennett and new Co-RD, Tina Mitchell went really well and many runners drove away tired yet very happy. Big thanks to these two ladies as well as the countless number of volunteers that it took to host this event. Racing does not happen without volunteers and the Arkansas Ultra Running Association community has the BEST!!!

We truly appreciate everyone who played a part in the success of this event.

Next up will be the Scorchin' Squirrel and I know that Noelle and Joel will ensure that you have a fantastic time out there!! On the heels of this race will be Mount Nebo. Tom Aspel always has a lot of hoops to jump through to host this event. He goes above and beyond to make sure the runners are safe and have a good time. He will have race shirts again as well as tasty hamburgers. He just asks that you bring a cash donation to help him cover his expenses. You are also encouraged to bring a side dish or dessert to share at the post run cookout. Please bring your own plate, utensils and drinking vessel. We as a club strive to be more green and appreciate your help in helping us achieve this goal.

Athens Big Fork Trail Marathon had a first. All race spots were filled before registration could be made available to the public. My first priority with registration is to ensure our UTS/UTS Lite participants have a spot because the race is in both series. I know some try to circumnavigate this and I am trouble shooting this issue. All that to say, if you are an **active participant in the series** and you did not get in, please email me soon!

I look forward to the next time we gather as a community! Until then, Happy Trails.

~ Stacey Shaver-Matson~

Upcoming AURA Events
And
Volunteer Opportunities



August 19th

1720 Ferncliff Rd
Little Rock, AR

2nd UTS Lite event

[Click To Register](#)

*Profits benefit [Ferncliff](#)

Volunteers Needed - If you aren't running please consider giving back through service!!

[Click Here To Volunteer](#)

OR

Email Noelle at noelle.coughlan@fleetfeet.com

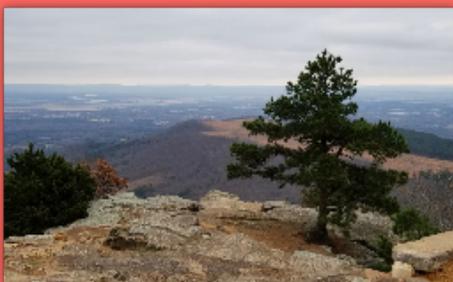


7a.m. Sunday, August 27th
Dardanelle, AR
14 Miles

3rd UTS Lite Event
3rd UTS Event

*Free/Pay What You Can
Bring a **Cash Donation**
to cover Tom's cost for aid
supplies, permits, and the post
race cookout!*

Bring extra cash if you want
A T-Shirt





32nd Annual
Arkansas Traveller 100
 Ouachita National Forest - Arkansas
 October 7-8, 2023

*Good Time
 Running!*

Calling all trailblazers, explorers, and endurance enthusiasts! Prepare to push your limits and discover the untamed beauty of the Natural State. The Arkansas Traveller 100 is your ticket to an unforgettable adventure, where every step brings you closer to personal triumph.

Come run the 9th oldest 100, where experience counts. We will have a course veteran at almost every aid station. They are there to offer advice if you need it. Our volunteers have also been a part of the race for decades and they go the extra mile to ensure you are well fed, cared for, and encouraged to keep moving to the finish.

Register today and take the first step towards a journey of a lifetime! [**Click To Register**](#)

Want to join the fun of volunteering, helping runners accomplish their goal, and witness something epic? [**Click To Volunteer**](#)

**This event is a Western States Qualifying Event & an RRCA
 Championship Event !**

Hot Springs Nat. Pk. Trail Run



October 28th
 In Beautiful Hot Springs

Starts and Finishes at Fat Jacks

[Click Here For Website](#)

Watch the AURA FB page for registration announcement

If you are interested in taking over the AURA Newsletter, send me an email. I try to put out an issue once a month and it is a pretty easy gig. I have done it for eight years, have loved the job, but ready to pass the baton.

**TRAIL WORK DAY
ON THE
ARKANSAS TRAVELLER 100 COURSE
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH**

**If you are available to help, please
email PoDog**

We will be divided into groups to tackle different sections of the course. We will be lopping, weed eating and mowing. If you don't have equipment we will bring what you need.

***Lunch will be provided**

***Earn Points towards the Ultra Trail Series High Mileage**





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



BIG THANKS TO THOSE WHO DONATED WHEN YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP! AS A NON-PROFIT, EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS!

[Click Here to See IF You Need to Renew](#)

[Click Here To Register or Renew Your Membership](#)

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

[Click Here to Register for the UTS or UTS Lite](#)



Do we have your mug shot for the AURA membership page?

- * CHECK TO SEE IF THERE IS A PHOTO OF YOU ON THE MEMBERSHIP PAGE
- * IF THERE ISN'T A PHOTO OF YOU, PLEASE EMAIL A PHOTO TO GEORGE AT [**advdesinc@sbcglobal.net**](mailto:advdesinc@sbcglobal.net)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Our fantastic volunteers are what make our events top notch. Volunteering at trail running events is a fun and rewarding way to get involved. For experienced trail runners, it's a great way to give back to the sport and help your fellow runners succeed. For those new to trail running, it's a great way to get involved and learn more about what makes the sport so fun. And for many, it's just a fun way to spend the day outdoors.

Let's all do our part to contribute to this amazing running community of ours!!

My Western States 100 attempt ~By Ronnie Daniel

The Western States Endurance Run is a 100 mile foot race beginning in Olympic Valley, CA and ending in Auburn, CA. The Endurance Run originated in 1974 when Gordy Ainsleigh famously completed the route on foot. Prior to that time, it had been a 100 mile horse race called the Western States Trail Ride. The trail ride continues to this day as the "Tevis Cup". Western States is the oldest 100 mile foot race in the U.S and is steeped in tradition and history. It is a "bucket list" race for many of us and it often takes several years entering the lottery to be selected. Lottery application involves completing a qualifying race in the required finishing time for each year you apply. The entries accumulate in the "hat" as you re-qualify each consecutive year by completing another race in the allotted time and entering the drawing. This year I was selected with 16 tickets in the lottery - which is 5 consecutive years of completing qualifying races and entering the lottery.



Lindsay and Chris Baldwin flew to Reno, NV with me a few days before the race. We rented a car and detoured through the Lake Tahoe area on our way to Olympic Valley. Chris and I will be pacing in the Tahoe 200 mile in July and wanted to see the area and stop for a burger at the Char Pit in Incline Village (highly recommend).

Everything about the Sierra Nevada Mountain region is rugged and beautiful. The Western States Trail courses through this area.

Olympic Valley (formerly Squaw Valley) is a ski resort village of shops, attractions and lodging at the base of the mountain and was the site of the 1960 Winter Olympics.



Pre-Race Day:

The pre-race expo was Friday, June 23. This was a large production and was spread out throughout the village. Vendors with displays and an assortment of gear, nutrition, shoes, etc were near the trail head start area. Drop bags were organized by aid station along a common roadway on the sidewalk. Registration was an efficient assembly line style process. Participants were guided in a step-wise fashion from the waiver table to race bib pick up, then to the pre-race photo station. After the photo, we were taken to a separate room, handed a backpack bag, which was filled with swag items from multiple vendors as you walked along in line like a kid going Trick or Treating.

Later that evening the required pre-race meeting was held in the outdoor village square. We were introduced to the elite runners and given the most recent updates on weather and trail conditions. This year was notable in that there was no rain forecasted, cooler than average temps, and remaining "patches" of snow pack along the first 30ish miles of the course. Cut-off times for the first aid station were not enforced to allow for an expected slower race start due to the snowpack.

Race Day:

Saturday June 24, 2023 at 5:00AM was the start of the race.

My strategy was simple. Take the first 4-5 mile climb slow, be careful over the "patches" of snow (hiking poles are not allowed), make up lost time on the backside of the initial climb. I always have nervous energy at the start. Excitement to see the course. Knowledge of the discomfort that will eventually set in and how I plan to manage it. Hoping nothing weird happens like stomach issues or chaffing, etc. The course has a large initial climb and is a net downhill for the remainder of the race. Side note to anyone planning to run Western States - This does not mean there aren't significant climbs throughout the race, as I now know.

The gun (literally) goes off and we begin the initial climb. It isn't terribly steep to hike/walk and I don't care much because my plan was to take this section slow anyway. Within 2-3 miles, I still have some climbing to do but I am now toward the back with a long line of people ahead of me.

No worries. There were short patches of snow. A little slippery, but not an issue in a walk.



Near the top of the escarpment section I met Sean

Coughlan from Fleet Feet. He was very encouraging and took a short video where he documented the first of what would be many many falls on the snow/ice. Shortly after hitting the summit, the trail became clear, dry dirt single track and no trees on the back side of the mountain. Here I could make up a little time. The noise from the crowd was now blocked and it was quiet, peaceful, beautiful...and lonely. I realize there is no one in sight in front or behind me.



Once I re-entered the tree line, I was met by a "patch" of snow and ice that extended as far as the eye could see. There were undulating small ascents and descents with

lots of foot tracks from the horde of runners in front of me. I tried to stay in the line of foot prints as I jogged but I fell. I moved out to less trampled areas, but fell just as easily there as well. So I walked. I took a few photos with my phone to document this and didn't worry much about the pace. The snowy sections were marked with small pink ground level flags. These were trampled down and hard to find in several sections requiring me to use the Gaia app on my phone to find and stay on trail-but mostly they were easy to spot. I was mostly alone in this area leading to the first aid station (mile 10). I managed to catch up to a couple of people in the area and we commented on each others falls as we progressed slowly forward. Once I arrived at Lyon Ridge aid (mile 10) I was a full hour past the 30 hour pace and in the red zone for

possibly not finishing this event. On the next section, there was more snow and more falls. Grooves were cut in the ice/snow by runners who had been sliding/skiing down descents. Sometimes this worked for me, often I landed on my back. The snow patches were at times long with difficult footing and continued on and off all the way to Robinson Flat at mile 30.



Robinson Flat was an important aid station. It was the first place to see Lindsay and Chris, and marked the end of the snowy section. I could hear an air horn beep 1 long time in the distance. I had been hearing this the last 2 aid stations and now I knew this was the 10 minute warning. You have to be out of the aid station before the cut off time - they are very serious about this. My legs were super tired from balancing and slipping on the snow but I was running best I could, knowing I was very close to cut off. When I could finally see the aid station in the distance I estimated I had about 1 minute to reach it. So I worked in one final fall on the ice just before I reached the dirt section. I ran as hard as I could up the hill to the aid station knowing I wasn't going to make the cutoff. I thought it was over at that point. But, I made it to the aid station with only 12 seconds remaining. They were yelling and pushed me through and out of the station and initially said there wasn't time to refill my empty bottles. The long airhorn indicating the aid station was now closed was blowing as one volunteer realized I was completely empty and filled my bottles up but said crew couldn't help me. Since Chris and Lindsay couldn't do it for me, they laid some ice on the dirt and I made a muddy ice bandana to wrap around my neck.



I thought it was over, but I had a second chance now. With the snow section done and a downhill portion to follow, I proceeded. As I reached each subsequent aid station, the recurring pattern of chasing cutoffs and barely



making it continued. I could hear the 10 minute warning in the distance, reach the station, and hurriedly leave before the final air horn sometimes with only bottle refills, no time for food, and definitely no time to open my drop bags. Millers Defeat (mi34), Dusty Corners (mi38), Last Chance (mi43), Devils Thumb (mi48), and Eldorado Creek (mi 53) all were an hour past the 30 hour pace and with only minutes to final cut off. Finally, at Michigan Bluff (mi55), I could have Chris start pacing. I was excited to have the help and my buddy keep me going. Chris helped me move a bit faster and more efficiently and we actually made up time. By the very next aid station, at Forest Hill (mile 62), I had 20ish minutes to spare and we kept moving and passing people. I was feeling exhausted from the first half but

Chris is an excellent motivator and I had time to eat real food for the first time in hours during this part. We chased down and passed so many people between miles 55-78. By Rucky Chucky river crossing at mile 78 we had reclaimed nearly an hour of time and I was almost in the green zone for a 30 hour finish pace. But I was unraveling. The climb from Rucky Chucky to Green Gate was only about 2 miles long and it took about an hour. Very slow going. I was nauseated and puking but had nothing to throw up. I experienced a couple of episodes of chest discomfort and I told myself I could not and probably should not continue. I had lost all the work and time we had put in and was once again deep in the red zone and very close to cutoff. My first DNF on a 100 mile race was mile 80 at Western States.

Ultras are interesting. It's been said ultra running is some percentage physical and a larger percent mental. Something like 40% physical and 90% mental to highlight the point that the mental aspect is not small.

We all start a 100 mile race with reasonable physical fitness and some degree of grit and determination. We organize goals into primary, secondary, and tertiary endpoints. For example, "goal#1 is finish in 28 hours, goal#2 is finish under the cutoff, and goal#3 is run, walk, or crawl, just finish the race. At some point we all will want to quit. The physical and/or mental tasks will seem too much. Earlier in the race, the thought of stopping and quitting never entered my mind. Once those thoughts creep into our minds, we are forced to make a decision...repeatedly.



Initially, the answer is "no, I'm not quitting", but eventually you begin to negotiate with yourself. In the future, I plan to simplify my goal setting. Instead of the 3 goals I previously mentioned, I plan to only have 2 goals- which is how it should have been all along. Goal#1: finish in a specified time Goal#2: finish. If the default goal is just finish the race regardless of finish time, I think it removes the pressure to decide anything further.

I recently learned something about mental toughness in endurance events. It's from the book "Training Essentials For Ultrarunning" by Jason Koop. He says we constantly evaluate how we are doing based on our "rating of perceived exertion". We inherently pace ourselves according to 2 variables: how we feel right now and how far do we have left to go. We literally take how we feel right now and imagine how we might feel at the end of the remaining distance, then make DNF decisions based on that. How you feel at any given time fluctuates throughout the race. It's common to feel good, then bad, then good again. Our ability to accurately predict how we might feel hours later and miles away is very poor. To combat this, Koop recommends a strategy of staying in the moment and focus on the mile you're in. He says forget the forecasting and predictions. Instead, focus on getting through the mile you are currently in. Nearly all of us break down a long effort into the individual segments between landmarks or aid stations. We can better understand and accept a 5 mile stretch than an entire ultra at its full length. So "just get to the next aid station" is a common way to mentally cope with a long race. But when things are falling apart, maybe zooming in on the mile we are currently in would be helpful. "Just get to the next mile" will be something I try in the future.



I fought hard throughout the day to overcome early mistakes I made in pacing and environmental factors that I couldn't control. Lindsay and Chris were amazing and I couldn't have got past mile 30 without their help and encouragement. In the end I didn't finish Western States, but I did get my money's worth. It's a beautiful and exciting course and if you ever have the chance, definitely go to Western States.





Our Arkansas Ultra-Running Community

~By Erich Washausen

"This write up is about two different races I had the joy of experiencing this July: Hardrock 100 as a spectator, and Full Moon 50k as a participant. "How are they related?" you may ask. Well read on and you'll see how both events were able to remind me how solid the people are in our Arkansas ultra-running community.



I'll start with Full Moon. Every year I keep going back to it! I keep returning partly due to the fun atmosphere, but even more for the incredible aid stations. For as many people run this race it's always great to see so many familiar faces helping at aid stations. They're like a beacon of energy emerging from the dark dirt road as you run along. They're full of people who are quick to help.

Kudos are in order to Tina Mitchell and Sharon Bennett for the great work with Full Moon. I'm sure it was a challenge for Tina in her new role with the event, but she knocked it out of the park! Also great job Wesley Hunt on running an amazing time. You know he did well when he was a whole 14 minutes faster than second place Daniel Arnold getting his PR!

...I ran Full Moon a week after attending Hardrock 100 in Silverton, Colorado. I had the time off work and I decided to make the drive out there after years of hearing how special the race is. I was lucky enough to spend time being shown around the area by two Hardrock veterans: Stan Ferguson and Podog Vogler. Pretty much any time spent with them is like a clinic in ultra-running advice. I've been so appreciative of their willingness to teach ever since I found out about ultra and trail running.

Not only did they gift great advice, they gifted stories from their past Hardrock experiences. It really made me understand how difficult the race is when I heard them, two good and experienced runners, talk about the struggles: like getting down from mountains when a storm comes, braving two cold nights during one race, the sky-high elevation, and the seemingly never-ending climbs. To say I was inspired by my week spent in Silverton, Colorado is an understatement.

Before driving back to Arkansas I finished the week watching the final finishers make it back to kiss the rock in just under the race's 48 hour cutoff time. In a way, being around the community at Hardrock felt familiar; like being home amongst the good community I've come to know in Arkansas. It really made me appreciate how welcoming and helpful the people in Arkansas ultra-running can be.

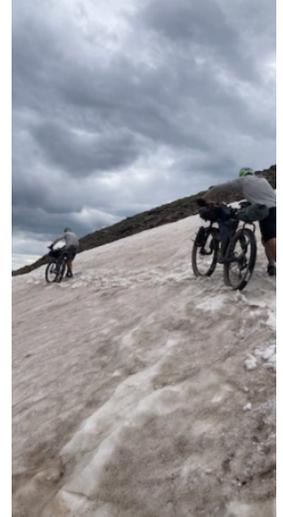


I'll feel accomplished if I can ever be even half as helpful as people have been to me in my journey learning about trail and ultra-running!"

CONGRATULATIONS JAMES HOLLAND & MATTHEW MYERS ON THEIR HIGH LONESOME 100 FINISH!!!



Congratulations to Steve McBee on his completion of the Colorado Trail by Bike!



AURA Members Volunteer at Hardrock & Never Summer 100k



**Chris Cantwell- top, far left
Janet Cantwell-bottom far right
Ouray Aid at Hardrock 100**



**Stacey Shaver, Shelley & James Sparks, and PoDog
Clear Creek Aid at Never Summer 100k**



Podog swept the 1st half of the 60k - Shelly and I swept the 2nd half.

Sweepers trek the course behind the last runners - keeping enough distance that they don't feel like they are being pushed. It isn't as easy as you'd think but volunteering was incredibly rewarding!!

RETREADS

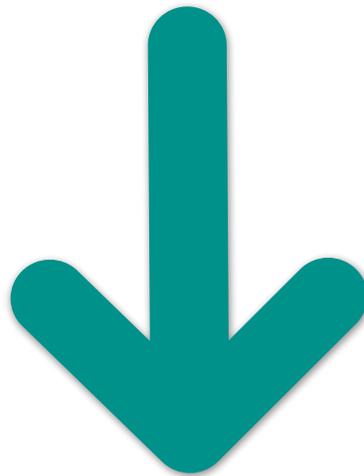
Hello All, the first Wednesday of every month is RETREADS Day. What is a RETREAD? Could be a retired runner. Maybe not. Could be a runner who wants to eat out in the company of other runners.

We are currently meeting at Homer's Restaurant, 9700 West Rodney Parham 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



Don't Miss The Fun!



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