

THE ARKANSAS ULTRA RUNNER

November 2013

The Newsletter For Members of the Arkansas Ultra Running Association

AURA Website - www.runarkansas.com

Message from the President – Stan Ferguson

In 1997 at the Western States 100 Endurance Run, I was at a couple of spots when Mike Morton came through on his way to a landmark win. He looked great and was in control of the race for most of, if not the whole race. Morton broke the course record that day—which had stood for a while. But perhaps more significantly, he was the first man to win Western States who was not from California. He, along with Courtney Campbell, Eric Clifton, and some others from the east coast (Virginia, North Carolina area) were making it known that in no way was Northern California the only hotbed of ultrarunning in the U.S.—regardless of its self-proclaimed “endurance capital of the world” status.

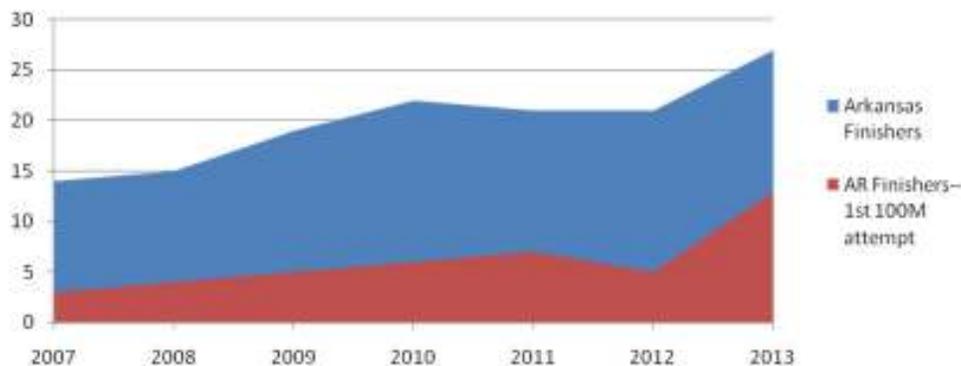
Fielding winners at highly-competitive mountain races in the west requires some things. Many would argue that a full-time Arkansas resident does not have the environment and terrain necessary to rise to such success. I’m not positive that’s true, but we are certainly at a disadvantage. In any case, it was at that time that I first began thinking about what it would take to increase the awareness of Arkansas in the ultra world.

It’s not like Arkansas was a ultrarunning wasteland. Runners across the country received the Big Shot’s AURA newsletter, the Arkansas Traveller was well-established and one of the first ten 100-milers in the county, and there were other events in the state attended by a strong core ultra and trail community. But how to get to the next level? There’s no formula for that, and no instructional book or guide that I’m aware of. I guess the first tendency is to try and entice other runners you know to get into ultrarunning. Remember: this was before the book Born to Run, or Dean Karnazes’ fame. I found it to be a tough sell back then. The best advice I came across highlighted the need for a foundation of quality events. And that has been the focus of the AURA since it became a club in 2001: create and support events that are focused on the runners, and that will wet their appetite for continuing to expand their running horizons.

No, we have not had an Arkie win a western 100 yet. --Or an eastern 100. But we continue to move in the right direction -- which as we know is how you must accomplish any significant thing (e.g., completing a 100-miler). One of the positive signs is the performances posted on our home turf. I could talk about the winners of recent Travellers, but that is obviously a skewed

statistic given the dilution of competition from out-of-state due to the increased number of 100 mile events. So how about a more objective measure: In the first ten years of the AT100, only two different Arkansans finished in less than 18 and a half hours. In the last ten years, seven distinct Arkansas runners have done so. To include one of our bonafide AURA Brothers from eastern Oklahoma, it goes to eight. Women's performances—we're still working on, but I firmly believe those will begin to trend upward also. To get top performers, I think you need more performers, and those we are getting. We don't show charts very often in the AURA newsletter, but I will trouble Chief Editor Harold with one this time—showing the increase in recent years of Arkansas finishers and first-timers. (Hopefully he can get that in.) If this trend continues, I have no doubt we'll be seeing more good results across the board. Yes, these are small quantities, not Obamacare-type volumes, and even one person can make a perceptible difference. Constant forward progress. I love stats—but some folks probably find them boring. So just one more: by my count, 167 different Arkansans have finished the Arkansas Traveller 100. Let's raise that. Spread the word!

The Traveller veteran population is actually a nice segway... At this year's race, even with the largest bunch ever of AR runners completing it, there were still a larger number of previous finishers helping. That's a good thing, for multiple reasons. We receive tons of accolades praising the caliber, enthusiasm, and obvious experience of the INCREDIBLE and FANTASTIC volunteers throughout the race. But also, the word is out that Chrissy and I will be directing the Traveller for just two or three more years. It is clear that there are many members and former Travellers who care about the race and want to keep it going. So we are calling for those who are interested in stepping up and being involved in the administration of the race to do so. Do not wait until we declare our last year. Some individuals may have interest, but as they understand more of what's involved could decide otherwise. So getting involved now will ensure that there is a smooth, less stressful transition with the most appropriate and devoted new leadership. If you are interested, contact us.





Stan Ferguson at Lake Sylvia Aid Station



Bill Coffelt at the Lake Sylvia Aid Station

23rd Annual Arkansas Traveller 100

October 5-6, 2013 – Ouachita National Forest, AR

Official Results

Place	Name	Se	Age	State	Time
1	Brock Hime	M	22	AR	18:05:34
2	N. Wesley Hunt	M	30	AR	18:06:42
3	Chas Kabanuck	M	29	ND	20:18:41
4	Donald Hellen	M	49	AL	20:45:12
5	Mark DenHerder	M	49	AR	20:59:40
6	James Holland	M	37	TN	21:30:58
7	Michael Poole	M	32	TN	21:30:58
8	PoDog Vogler	M	47	AR	21:33:28
9	Jorge Rasillo	M	32	TX	22:01:21
10	Matthew Victoriano	M	33	NC	22:03:47
11	Troy Potter	M	50	TX	22:20:23
12	Doug Cassiday	M	47	GA	22:35:36
13	Danny Ponder	M	54	OK	22:36:29
14	Shelley Egli	F	40	OK	22:37:59
15	Aaron Scrimager	M	38	CA	23:08:23
16	Malcolm Smith	M	50	TX	23:20:40
17	Paul Turner	M	50	AR	23:22:40
18	Stephen VanDenburgh	M	47	CA	23:29:29
19	Bill Coffelt	M	53	AR	23:31:22
20	Paul Tidmore	M	45	TX	23:40:28
21	Tammy Walther	F	42	AR	23:55:00
22	Derek Dowell	M	31	LA	24:20:30
23	Sarah Miller	F	23	MS	25:02:25
24	Christopher Baldwin	M	40	AR	25:11:59
25	Tina Ho	F	48	AR	25:14:29
26	Corbin Freeman	M	26	AR	25:18:25
27	Stan Ferguson	M	50	AR	25:23:10
28	Russell Allison	M	49	OK	25:35:10
29	Reginald Harper	M	40	KY	25:43:04
30	Butch Allmon	M	58	TX	25:55:16
31	Max Roycroft	M	49	TX	25:55:16
32	Brian Cockrell	M	37	LA	26:17:58
33	Sharon Zelinski	F	48	ON	26:20:07
34	William McKinney	M	40	TX	26:33:43
35	Jeff Potter	M	40	TX	26:33:43
36	Deb Baker	F	51	AR	26:36:24
37	Brian Kuhn	M	40	TX	26:41:28
38	Tyler Wilkerson	M	25	AR	27:03:15
39	Dale Humphrey	M	54	MN	27:08:08
40	Belinda Jared	F	42	AR	27:08:35

41	Nate Smith	M	48	AR	27:19:02
42	Chris Goodreau	M	51	FL	27:25:46
43	Jason Armitage	M	40	AR	27:44:37
44	Howard Baade	M	38	TX	27:47:16
45	Noora Alidina	F	57	FL	28:00:47
46	Jenny Wilkes	F	30	AR	28:10:04
47	Patrick Barker	M	49	AR	28:14:38
48	Keith Gates	M	32	GA	28:17:05
49	Monica Scholz	F	46	ON	28:18:49
50	Lauren Pasley	F	47	TN	28:26:02
51	Eunika Rogers	F	42	TN	28:27:14
52	Isaac Espy	M	50	AL	28:28:03
53	Bernita Lovelace	F	59	AR	28:37:17
54	David Stafford	M	29	AR	28:43:27
55	Rob Ulm	M	37	IL	28:48:28
56	Tammy Sieminowski	F	44	ON	28:48:30
57	Johnny Eagles	M	61	AR	28:55:15
58	Vincent Swendsen	M	51	NC	28:57:00
59	Kelsey Regan	F	23	LA	29:02:57
60	Marty Regan	M	50	LA	29:02:57
61	James Crowe	M	52	TN	29:09:41
62	Kathy Hoover	F	53	OK	29:12:30
63	Russell Bennett	M	41	OK	29:12:30
64	Mark Roth	M	51	AR	29:30:09
65	Victor Serrano	M	35	GA	29:39:29
66	David Hirschfeld	M	48	MT	29:42:02
67	Angie Stewart	F	32	AR	29:44:30
68	Letha Cruthirds	F	60	MS	29:48:12
69	Hiromi Hatta	F	52	Japan	29:50:48
70	Andi Stracner	F	40	AR	29:51:11
71	Leonard Martin	M	60	TN	29:59:50
72	Cliff Ferren	M	57	AR	30:01:56
73	Ian Maddieson	M	71	NM	30:26:00
74	Randy West	M	56	AL	30:38:09
75	Elizabeth Kimble	F	27	AR	30:48:27
76	Joshua Berry	M	37	AR	30:58:38
77	Katsuyuki Hatta	M	49	Japan	31:09:59

120 starters (64.2% Finishing rate)

2013-2014 Ultra Trail Series Standings Through Four Events

Open Division - Women

Rank	Name	FullMoon	Nebo	BartPark	AT100	Total
1	Jenny Wilkes	43		44	76	163
2	Angie Stewart		34	51	63	148
3	Tina Ho			33	106	139
4	Deb Baker	32			90	122
5	Stacey Shaver-Matson	54		55		109
6	Andi Stracner		16	27	52	95
7	Cymer Gieringer		28	51		79
8	Christine Rutlen		56			56
9	Chrissy Ferguson		45			45
10	Elizabeth Kimble				43	43
11	Carol O'Hear	26				26
12	Elaine Gimblet		22			22
13	Lisa Gunnoe			21		21

Open Division - Men

Rank	Name	FM	Nebo	BartPark	AT100	Total
1	Brock Hime		70	58	114	242
2	Mark DenHerder	57	30	41	84	212
3	Caleb Ault	68	59			127
4	Tyler Wilkerson		42	47	25	114
5	James Holland	40			71	111
6	Thomas Chapin	46		52		98
7	N. Wesley Hunt				98	98
8	PoDog Vogler		36		60	96
9	Paul Turner		48		47	95
10	Shannon McFarland	18	20	53		91
11	Malcolm Smith	28			47	75
12	Bill Coffelt	34			37	71
13	Aaron Dickens	22	10	36		68
14	Jason Armitage	12		30	20	62
15	Stan Ferguson		24		31	55
16	Patrick Barker	9	9	18	15	51
17	Kevin Dorsey	7		42		49
18	Cliff Ferren	15	17		7	39
19	Jonathan Young	6		31		37
20	Kurt Hauser		11	24		35
21	Johnny Eagles			8	11	19
22	Rich Brown		14			14
23	Greg Weidenhoffer			12		12
24	Joshua Drake	4	5			9
25	Ronnie Daniel	8				8
26	George McDonald		8			8
27	Ron Gimblet	3	4			7
28	Joe Milligan		7			7

29	Bob Marston		6		6
30	Dennis Baas	5			5
31	Greg Bourns	2	2		4
32	Bill Brass		3		3

Masters Division - Women

Rank	Name	FM	Nebo	BP	AT100	Total
1	Tina Ho			43	103	146
2	Andi Stracner		26	32	73	131
3	Deb Baker	41			87	128
4	Stacey Shaver-Matson	52		54		106
5	Cyber Gieringer		43	51		94
6	Chrissy Ferguson		54			54
7	Elaine Gimblet		32			32
8	Lisa Gunnoe			26		26

Masters Division - Men

Rank	Name	FM	Nebo	BP	AT100	Total
1	Mark DenHerder	62	43	51	110	266
2	PoDog Vogler		54		94	148
3	Paul Turner		65		73.5	138.5
4	Jason Armitage	28		55	39	122
5	Malcolm Smith	40			73.5	113.5
6	Bill Coffelt	51			56	107
7	Patrick Barker	22	15	33	33	103
8	Cliff Ferren	34	31		21	86
9	Stan Ferguson		37		47	84
10	Kevin Dorsey	12		51		63
11	Kurt Hauser		19	44		63
12	Johnny Eagles			21	27	48
13	Greg Weidenhoffer			27		27
14	Rich Brown		25			25
15	Ronnie Daniel	16				16
16	George McDonald		12			12
17	Joshua Drake	6	5			11
18	Dennis Baas	9				9
19	Joe Milligan		9			9
20	Ron Gimblet	3	4			7
21	Bob Marston		6			6
22	Greg Bourns	2	2			4
23	Bill Brass		3			3

Grand Master Division - Women

Rank	Name	FM	Nebo	BP	AT100	Total
1	Deb Baker	51			101	152
2	Chrissy Ferguson		52			52
3	Elaine Gimblet		41			41

Grand Master Division - Men

Rank	Name	FM	Nebo	BP	AT100	Total
1	Paul Turner		59		97	156
2	Malcolm Smith	45			97	142
3	Cliff Ferren	34	48		51	133
4	Bill Coffelt	56			75	131
5	Johnny Eagles			51	62	113
6	Rich Brown		37			37
7	Ron Gimblet	22	13			35
8	George McDonald		31			31
9	Dennis Baas	28				28
10	Joe Milligan		25			25
11	Greg Bourns	16	6			22
12	Bob Marston		19			19
13	Bill Brass		9			9

Senior Division - Women

Rank	Name	FM	Nebo	BP	AT100	Total
1	Elaine Gimblet		51			51

Senior Division - Men

Rank	Name	FM	Nebo	BP	AT100	Total
1	Johnny Eagles			51	101	152
2	Ron Gimblet	42	28			70
3	George McDonald		56			56
4	Dennis Baas	53				53
5	Greg Bourns	31	16			47
6	Joe Milligan		45			45
7	Bob Marston		34			34
8	Bill Brass		22			22

Super Senior Division - Men

Rank	Name	FM	Nebo	BP	AT100	Total
1	Greg Bourns	51	41			92
2	Bill Brass		52			52

Upcoming AURA Events

The 4th Annual Bona Dea 50K Saturday, November 16, 2013 Russellville, AR 8:00am start

Part of the 2013 - 2014 AURA Ultra Trail Series

Introduction:

Ultrarunning made an appearance in the Arkansas River Valley back in the early 1980's with the Arkie 50 (miler), conducted on the Bona Dea Trails in Russellville. Over 25 years later, ultrarunners returned for the first Bona Dea 50K, in 2010. With the flat course and cool weather, many PRs were set over the multi-lap course on hard surface trail. Put it on your calendar for 2013 and come see what you're made of!!

Directions:

Take Exit 81 off I-40 in Russellville. West-bound traffic will have to turn left on Aspen Ln, then take an immediate left onto Arkansas Ave (AR Hwy 7). East-bound traffic will exit onto Arkansas Ave, and should turn right. Once on Arkansas Ave, drive south and take the first right turn onto Dyke Rd/Lake Front Dr. Continue west on Dyke Rd/Lake Front Dr until reaching the Bona Dea Trailhead parking lot.

Details:

The race will utilize a 3.4 mile loop on paved trail: nine complete loops, then a short out and back at the end. An aid station will be available at the completion of each loop. If you have a drop bag for special supplies, it can be left at the aid station. Times will be captured on each lap.

Entry:

There will be no entry fee or advanced registration this year, but if you will let [Tom](mailto:Tom_taspel@atu.edu) [Stan](mailto:Stan@Runarkansas.com) know if you plan to attend it will help in knowing how many runners to plan for.

6/12/24 Endurance Run
Sunset 6/12/24 Hour Endurance Run
Friday and Saturday November 29 – 30,
2013
Ultra-Trail Series Race #6

Location

Sunset Lake, Benton
(see directions below)

Times

The 24 hour run will begin at 7:30pm on Friday, November 29.
The 6 and 12 hour runs will begin at 7:30am on Saturday, November 30.
Check-in will be 30 minutes prior to the start time of the event you are running.

Course

The course will follow a one mile paved loop around Sunset Lake
(The actual distance is 1.02 miles.)

There will be lighting on part of the trail loop after dark
but

it is recommended that the 24 hour runners bring a flashlight or headlamp
unless they are comfortable running in the dark.

Entry Fee

None (donations will be gladly accepted)

No Fees, Few Frills

Water will be provided along with some snack foods and soft drinks.

Runners are encouraged to bring a water bottle and/or another personal container marked with their name to use for liquids to minimize the use of disposable cups to avoid unnecessary trash.

No awards are promised but we may have Overall and Masters male/female first place awards for each event.

Other

No DNFs – Runners will be credited with the total number of miles completed regardless of how long they run. Runners may stop at any time they decide they have had enough fun! However, runners who change to a different run category will not be eligible for any award *should we decide to give awards.*

Runners are welcome to bring someone with them to help count laps or just cheer them on.

Although there is no entry fee, advance registration is encouraged so that we will have some idea of the number of people to prepare for. This form may be submitted by e-mail.

There will be a waiver to sign on race day. Go to www.runarkansas.com for an application.

Directions

From westbound I-30, take the Sevier Street exit (Exit 116), cross the bridge, turn right and go down to the frontage road. Turn left on the frontage road and go just over 3/10 mile west. You will pass Holland Chapel Church and the Saline County Fairgrounds. Turn left on Fairfield Street which is just past the fairgrounds. Approximately 2/10 mile past the National Guard Armory the road will turn right and take you to Sunset Lake.

From eastbound I-30, take the Sevier Street exit (Exit 116). Bear left on the frontage road Turn right on to Fairfield Street which will be the first right after you enter the frontage road. Stay on Fairfield Street to Sunset Lake.

Questions may be referred to Pete pirel@prodigy.net

LoVit Trail Marathon (Lake Ouachita Vista Trail) Saturday, December 7th, 2013 - 8:00am

Miscellaneous Information

Distance: 26.2 miles (approximate)

Location: Shangri La Drive on Lake Ouachita, near Mount Ida

Directions:

Shangri La is located 25 miles west of Hot Springs and 12 miles east of Mount Ida off of Hwy 270. You will turn onto Shangri-La Drive and make the first left which is OLD HWY 270. Look for signs posted for the run. Registration will be set up 500 ft down OLD HWY 270. Parking will be at that location and along the road.

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

Aid: There will be a total of 6 aid stations set up along the trail; all will have water and Gatorade, along with various goodies. Drop bag service will be available.

There is no application or entry fee. There will be a waiver to sign and a can for donations to cover run expenses.

Please keep your own time and check in at the finish.

Race contact: Phil bpcarr13@gmail.com

Check out more information on the Lake Ouachita Vista Trail:

<http://lakeouachitavistatrail.com/WP/>

Brock Hime 1st Place 2013 Arkansas Traveller 18:05:34

Going into training for the AT100 I didn't know, really, much of anything about ultra running. I got into it basically because of some of the guys at the shop giving me a hard time about my long run being 18ish miles. Once I decided I'd do an ultra I basically just started running a lot of miles since the race would be a lot of miles. The original idea was to do a 50K but it later turned into a 100 mile race, The 2013 Arkansas Traveller 100 Mile. My goal was to run 90 minutes a day at a pretty hard effort and then on the weekends I would run a long-run a little more relaxed. Some days would be more than 90 minutes and some less... The main focus was definitely the long-run on Sundays. I would say my training for my first 100 miler was all over the place because I had no idea what I was doing. I was taking in as much information that I could from guys like PoDog, PT, Chapin, Stan, Harold Hays, Jimmy Sweatt and Bill Torrey. I feel very confident about my plan I have set now for next years AT100. I plan to run fast.

My goal from the start was to win. I never turned away from that goal that I had set for myself and I'm glad that I didn't. When I was on the starting line I just thought about all the training and mentoring I had been through. To some, the Traveller isn't a huge deal, but to me it was a really big deal. In April I wasn't running any more due to an injury and in May I committed to running a 100 mile race.

I knew that to be successful I needed a very detailed plan. I had the best crew member on my team, Jimmy Sweat. We talked a whole lot about what would work and what the plan was. As far as nutrition goes, I knew I would eat Epic Bars but I didn't know what else. Jimmy kind of guided me throughout the race at the crew aid stations. Honestly, Jimmy is the reason that I did this whole damn thing. As far as pacing, I told my two pacers, Dustin Speers and Rodney Sasse, that I wanted them to make sure I was eating, motivational words, tough love, and make sure I win. They did just that.

I would say the only true surprise was that I noticed at 31 miles that I was in 2nd place. Bill Torrey told me two days before the race that I had a great chance of winning if I went out slow. I did exactly that, so I was a bit surprised that I was in second place that early on. I wasn't expecting to be in that position until around half way or later.

The biggest low for me came around 85 miles. This sounds stupid probably, but I wasn't expecting an aid station until mile 86.1. So when I got to an aid station at 85 and thought it was 86.1 I got down... really really far down. I pulled into the station to weigh in and all of a sudden it went from terrible to amazing. I had my parents (who were amazing support), GREAT friends, my girlfriend Lauren Wall and her parents, my boss Bill Torrey, and Jack Evans (who had informed me it was mile 85)! They were so loud and just there for me. Wow, it gives me chills thinking about it.

My highest of all high points EASILY came at mile 67. I came into Powerline behind by about 4 minutes. I went to the scale to weigh in and all of a sudden my friend Harold Hays is standing with his hand on me holding me on the scale. We talked a little and all of a sudden I was more motivated that I had been the entire race. I left the scale yelling and just ready to win.

Wesley is a stud for starters. I caught up to him around mile 33 I believe and I honestly, sorry Wesley, thought that he was done. I think he had hit a low at that point and I was feeling good since I was at that point taking the lead. He just held on longer, and longer, and longer. Hell, he was there for 67 more miles. He caught around 63 miles and then I didn't catch until mile 80ish.

When I was chasing him back down I just thought about how well things were going overall at that point. I knew I couldn't lose the race or I would never hear the end of it from my friends. I was so motivated to win because I knew that there wasn't anyone there that had worked as hard as I did, but I still had great respect for everyone out there.

I knew at mile 97.7 that I was going to finish and at mile 99.75 I knew I had the win. Honestly, as long as Wesley held on I didn't count him out until about 2 minutes left in the race... it was that close.

My recovery has gone great. I took a few days off after the race and then ran a little bit here and there. 2 days before the race I had some plantar problems, but I didn't tell anyone besides Lauren and the other people at work because I didn't want that set as some excuse for 2 days later. This past week it has flared up a lot but I'm still getting in the mileage. I'm wearing a sleeve and sleeping in a boot to help with it. I have some big plans for 2014 so training for that is well under way.

In 2014 I plan to do some big things. I plan to run the 2014 USA 100K Trail Championships in January and then in April race the American River 50 mile in Folsom, California. I want to run fast in 2014 and that includes the AT100. I really, really, really, want the record... I guess my goal is official now, I want 15:37:25. It's going to be some serious, tough training, but I'm ready to put in the work. It's worth it to me.

I want to thank everyone that supported my goal starting in May. Jimmy Sweatt believed in me from day one and I really appreciate him. Again, I wouldn't be in this position if it wasn't for him. Also, the human body can do anything you want it to if you can wrap the mind around it. It's tough, but possible. Do something crazy... go run 100 miles. I look forward to THE 2014 Arkansas Traveller 100 Mile. It was the greatest race experience I've ever had.

N. Wesley Smith 2nd Place 2013 Arkansas Traveller 18:06:42

I love to run. Races are pleasant diversions. My preparation for the 2013 Arkansas Traveler was as much about research and gaining race-specific (including length) knowledge than physical preparation. I had completed a few 100-mile training weeks prior to my second Boston finish in April 2013, so my focus was more academic as I began contemplating whether to register for the Traveler late last spring. I started following the blogs of several elite ultra-runners, and for those who have written books and articles, digested every word. I relied heavily on Byron Powell's irunfar.com website and his very thorough guide to racing ultras, "Relentless Forward Progress."

After discussing the race with my wife and family and ultimately deciding to run, I recognized the need to accelerate my mileage from base level (60-70) to 90-130 during late July, August, and early September (before tapering). However, the most significant shift in my training approach as compared to my marathon training was in the area of mental preparation. Because others have asked, I would note that my longest training run prior to the Traveler was 43 Miles, on pavement, from my parents' home just outside of Malvern, to Bismarck, and back again.

The Traveler was a logical choice for me because of its proximity to my home in Little Rock. Also, the Traveler's course consists of long stretches on well-maintained Forest Service Roads, which I believed would suit my strengths as a road runner who frequently trains on hills. These

two facts alone provided me with confidence in the potential for a strong finish in the vicinity of 18 hours, which I believed would be good enough for a first or second place finish. My goal was to run relatively even splits of 3:00:00 to 3:18:00 (10-11 minutes/mile) for each 18-mile segment through Mile 90. At that point, I had contemplated running the final 10 miles as fast as possible, with a target of 9 minutes/mile. With this six-segment strategy, my goal range for *racing time* was 16:30:00 to 18:00:00. My aid station time goals were 1-2 minutes for every other aid station, or 22-44 minutes cumulative time spent at the eleven aid stations at which I intended to stop. In sum, this resulted in my goal range *finishing time* of 16:52:00 to 18:44:00.

Everyone has to run their own race, and for me, completing the race without a pacer was not only a challenge I relished, it was what I believed to be the best strategy given my training and make-up. As for my crew, which included my mother and father (Mark and Phyllis Hunt) and briefly, my wife and newborn baby (Diana and Evan Hunt), I am indebted to them for their service and support during one of the single most enjoyable running experiences of my life. Strategically, we decided that one or more members of my crew would meet me at Lake Sylvia, Lake Winona (out and in), and Powerline (out and in). Other than Powerline outbound, where I changed out of my trail shoes into my road shoes, the extent of my crew exchanges was the reapplication of Vaseline, the restocking of my fuel belt with gels and chews, and brief discussions of the location of other runners (specifically Brock!).

My primary challenge was overcoming the pain that began to reveal itself through my right foot beginning at approximately Mile 40. That injury was the result of what I believe to be my only tactical misstep throughout the entire day. At Lake Winona, I disregarded my pre-race plan to make the change out of my trail shoes into my running shoes. I had a sound basis for doing so (morning showers had not fully subsided and Brock had not yet made contact), but in hindsight, this decision was misguided. I had no business running 48 miles to Powerline in minimalist trail shoes offering nothing by way of support or structure.

As for Brock, I can only repeat that the guy is all guts; he's one of the most competitive and focused athletes I've ever met in my life; and he deserved to win the 2013 Arkansas Traveler. I am proud to have exchanged leads with Brock throughout the day and to be associated with the first of what will ultimately prove to be his many victories in the Traveler. For anyone thinking about running the Traveler next year, I would certainly encourage them to do so, but only after securing the support of their loved ones and support network. Training for a 100-mile race is a significant undertaking, and only with a clear mind and full heart can one run their best race.

Check out Wesley's blog at: <http://wesley.fastrunningblog.com/blog-week-09-29-2013.html>

Bill Coffelt 2013 Arkansas Traveller 23:31:22

My advice for a rookie AT100 runner is to find a multi-year finisher and pick their brain. Listen to everything they say. Talk to several if you have the chance. Practice what they preach. Their wisdom is your reward. Don't over plan. Drop bags and crew are great but, never underestimate the abilities of the aid station workers to keep you going! Take advantage of them.

My preparation this year was similar to most years. I take a week off following Pikes Peak and

then try to get in a 25 to 30 miler in on Saturdays for the next 4 weeks. I wouldn't really change anything in my training/strategy. The major thing is to make proper adjustments on race day when conditions change. My run went pretty well this year. I originally targeted a 21 to 22 hour finish. When the cold front was delayed and we were blessed with heat and humidity for the first 10 hours, I backed off that pace set a new target of sub-24. I struggled through the heat of the day like everyone else and ran a strong second half after the cool down. Once I get past Powerline going out, I know a finish is at hand. That is my mental half way point.

Recovery is going well. I took a whole week off this year following the run. My legs were fine by Tuesday morning and I feel great. Next up will probably be Athens Big Fork Marathon in January. I'm going to run as many races this fall.

Arkansas Traveller #3
Cliff Ferren 30:01:56

Once you have run the Traveller, it can be difficult to imagine not running it the next year. I guess it becomes part of your lifestyle, the high water mark of the running year. If you're not careful, it can become an all-consuming passion!

Looking back, it's hard to believe I have actually finished the race 3 times. This was an especially difficult year because of the weather. It was very warm and extremely humid most of the day, then a cold rain to chill the unprepared.

I trained on the course, putting in long sweaty miles all summer, mostly with Chris Baldwin, Deb Baker and Tina Ho, but others joined in occasionally. I really enjoy the time training with my friends. It makes the miles go by so much faster. We did a number of 20+ mile runs including at least three 30-mile runs on the course or similar terrain. I also ran three 50-mile races this year. I think all of that helps, but nothing is guaranteed on race day. The weather made it so much tougher, and probably resulted in the lower than average finish rate. I am happy to get the finish, but a little disappointed by my time. I have thought of a lot of small things I would do differently if I had it to do over again. Still, a finish is a win! Three up, three down, but #3 went down hard! My strategy this year was to be careful not to go out too fast, and follow the 26 hour pace chart as long as I could. The 26 hour pace was comfortable early in the race, but by afternoon I found it too fast. That really wasn't too big a surprise as I've never turned in a 26 hour finish before and didn't really expect to this time either. Still, you need a target, and the pace chart on the Traveller website is helpful. I overheated somewhat in the afternoon, which slowed my progress.

Except for the overheating, my run to Powerline was uneventful, and I enjoyed seeing lots of friends and helpful people at the aid stations. The pancakes and bacon at Browns Creek are always a highlight, as is the pumpkin pie at Pumpkin Patch. One of my regrets is that I missed the pumpkin pie! I didn't think of it until I was out of the aid station, and I wasn't going back. Maybe I can eat two pieces next year!

I arrived at Powerline around 5:30 and met my first pacer. Stacey Shaver had really wanted to run the Traveller herself, but it was a tough year for her with a number of injuries, so she settled for working the race and pacing me for 36+ miles. I'm not sure I could have finished without her help. The low spot for me on the race was when the cold rain hit just outside Copperhead on the return. I was shivering and chilled before I could get rain gear on. I think that's the closest I've been to being knocked out of the race in 3 years. We did make it to Copperhead and some hot

soup revived me. Fortunately, I had more warm clothes at Powerline.

Looking back on the night run from Powerline to Winona, I feel that I spent a little too much time in the aid stations, but kept going reasonably well. As we ran toward Winona, Stacey picked up a branch in the road and raised it over her head. This is unusual behavior, and even in my depleted state I wondered what was she up to? She said that she had seen a large, black shape on the side of the road and she was trying to look as big and fearsome as possible!

My friend Stacey has many wonderful qualities and abilities, but somehow I wouldn't include looking large and fearsome on the list. Nevertheless, the bear, if there really was a bear, didn't eat us and we ran on.

We met a runner just outside Winona. He was sick and we told him we would send help. I saw later that he made it all the way to Rocky Gap. We hadn't thought he was going to even get back to Winona!

We finally arrived at Winona, where I met my 2nd pacer, Karen Call. We fought our way uphill through Rocky Gap and after what seemed forever, we reached Electronic Tower. Despite all the blisters and general exhaustion, I'm always relieved to get past Electronic Tower. Barring total breakdown, a finish is assured, as this is the last time cutoff on the course. I was 18 minutes behind last year's time at this point, but I hurried in as best I could, made the turn at Pumpkin Patch and struggled over the rocks of 132C. This section was termed the "Gutter" by Chris Baldwin. I fully agree with that assessment.

Finally reaching the Cross Roads, I mostly ran it in from there, picking up speed as I got closer to the Finish. My mad dash left Karen behind, but I was still one minute and 56 seconds over 30 hours! I guess nothing really bad happened because of that 1:56; I got the finish and buckle, but it was a bit disappointing. For the record, there were 5 people who finished after me, and 43 who didn't get to finish at all. It makes me feel a bit greedy, but I go into training for the 2014 Traveller hungry to do better.

Slow or not, I have a lot to be thankful for: health and strength to do a 100 miler, family and friends who are supportive, even though they cannot imagine the attraction of running a hundred miles in all kinds of weather and then hobbling around for days on blistered feet. My wife Karen gave me up for crazy long ago, but she tolerates and enables my running.

Once again, my pacers were wonderful! Thanks Stacey and Karen! You went above and beyond helping me to finish. I don't know how I would have made it without you. Finally, I am thankful to the Lord who makes it all possible.

If the Lord is willing, I'll be back next year going for #4!



Cliff Ferren at Lake Sylvia Aid Station

Arkansas Traveller 2013 – Chris Baldwin 25:11:59

Local ultra runners who have been around for a while assume that I got into running ultra marathons because of my brother. He finished the Traveller in 2nd place back in 2009. While I would like to say he passed me the torch along with some of his running ability, that isn't the case. I got into ultras back in 2010 after a decent but frustrating marathon season. A season that was good enough for a personal record, but not good enough to qualify for Boston.

After running the St. Jude Marathon back in 2010 with a time of 3:23 (8 minutes too slow for Boston), I thought now what? The answer came to me the next weekend when I went out for a comfortable 20 mile run along the river trail. It was a nice day and the 20 miles came easy. On the way home, something that an experienced ultra marathoner told me years ago during my Hash House Harrier days popped into my head... "If you can run 20 miles easily, then you can physically do 100 miles". Until that point, running 20 miles was never easy.

I went home that afternoon and started doing online searches for 100 milers. Fortunately, I came across Rocky Raccoon instead of Leadville, Western States, or Wasatch (at the time I didn't know the difference). I didn't care that I had never done an ultra before; a 100 miler would be my next race.

In 2011, I ran and finished Rocky Raccoon. The following year, in 2012, I ran the Keys 100 and my first Arkansas Traveller. I was happy to just finish all of these events and I completed them all with some time to spare, finishing with times between 27:15 and 28:30.

In 2013, I wanted to go into the Traveller with a little bit more of a goal than "just finishing". I wanted to knock an hour of last year's time of 27:15. Talking to Rich Brown during the Cat Smacker run, he said he likes to do back to back to back long runs. I had never tried that before,

the year before I gave myself the Sunday off after my long Saturday run; this new schedule would force me to run on tired legs, an activity covered for about 90% of the Traveller.

I followed this schedule most of the summer. On Saturday I would run with my most dependable training partner, Cliff Ferren. Cliff and I hit the forest nearly every Saturday from about mid June through early September. Deb Adams and a few others joined us much of the time, but without Cliff, I would have had some lonely Saturday runs.

I did my Sunday runs out at the forest as well. My Sunday training partners really varied from week to week. I ran with Andi and Belinda a few times. I never did tell them, but I gave them the nicknames Lucy and Ethel. If you have to ask “why?” then you haven’t hung out with them for very long or maybe you’re too young to understand the reference. I also talked a co-worker of mine, Anna Gonzales, to join me for a few Sunday runs. I took her on the initial 17 mile Traveller loop one Sunday with Andi. It was only her 2nd trail run and her longest run to date; I think Andi’s description of Anna was “she’s got some real balls”.

My Monday training runs were typically a 12-mile street runs. Tuesday through Friday consisted of days off and 6ish mile runs, giving a weekly total of about 70 – 75 miles. I did hit one 100-mile week during The Heart of the Traveller.

Race day finally came and I was able to line up feeling healthy and well trained. I won’t bore you with mile-by-mile details because other than seeing Rich Brown getting stuck by lightning I don’t really have much to talk about. One highlight was having Tina Ho’s company from Brown’s Creek all the way to the finish. This was especially helpful until our pacers joined us at Powerline.

I need to thank my pacers Randy and Jeff. They have come out the past 2 years to perform this thankless task of running in the rainy darkness. I did have to tease Randy the following week because after the race Patrick Barker asked me “why I didn’t have a pacer from Powerline to Powerline”. I told him I did have a pacer but after the turnaround he got tired and started running like my dog. Basically sprinting until he got 50 yards ahead of me, then walking until he was about 50 yards behind me, and then he would sprint again.

Jeff, my final pacer, and I crossed the line at 25hrs 11mins a PR of 2+ hours. Of course, now I have to decide if next year’s goal should be sub 24. Ok, yes, next year’s goal is sub 24.

I would like to thank Stan, Chrissy, Susy and all the other volunteers who give so much of their time to put these events together that mean so much to so many of us.

Joshua Berry 2013 Arkansas Traveller 30:58:38

I went into the race with what I believed to be a good race plan and quality training , and it turned out to be a pretty good strategy overall. My crew of Michelle Berry ,Michael Hiron, Jody and Stephanie Hodges, Sarah Cook, Mary Ann and Mike Lipin were top notch all the way. That sounds like a lot of people but its not really. Crew members have to sleep sometime or another so they can take care of you when you come in.

There were 23 aid stations including the finish line , 6 of which were crew access stations. The race began at 6:00 A.M. with about 2 miles of easy terrain until we hit the Ouachita trail. This is

14 miles of single track! I knew this section would be rocky and tough and it didn't disappoint. I finally arrived at the first crew station (lake sylvia mile 16.4) to be greeted by my wife Michelle who had everything I needed already laid out and ready. I left out of there with food and water and already running 30 min late. 30 min this early really isn't a big deal because there are plenty of miles and runnable terrain left to make it up. The high humidity was taking a toll on everyone already so I still felt pretty confident that I was doing ok.

Next crew station was lake winona at mile 31.9. I tried to take it easy even though I was running behind because the temps and humidity were climbing like crazy. The whole time I'm thinking if I can make it till 4:00 pm the temps will fall and I can start running a little stronger. I came into lake winona around 3:00 with temps at 87 and sunny. Not a good thing! I was slightly dehydrated and losing my appetite. This isn't good, calories are essential for long distance. I sat down for a sock change while my crew performed a NASCAR pit stop performance. Michelle off filling water bottles, Michael snatching off my shoes and funky wet socks. I lubed my feet and pulled on fresh socks with Sarah snapping photos the whole time. Michael pulled me to my feet and started walking me out telling me its going to cool off soon and just keep moving.

He was right too, about 30 min later I find myself running in a welcome downpour of wind and rain. This was my saving grace , I felt good and suddenly had my appetite back (always a good sign). I ran pretty strong all the way into powerline aid station (mile 48.2) having actually made up some lost time. I was tired but my spirits were up. This is where I picked up my first pacer Mary Ann. I had to do a quick weigh in and found out I had lost 4% body weight. I felt like that was an error because of the way I felt. We later found out their scale was off 2#, so I was right. It really wasn't a concern at this point because it was in the upper 50s and breezy. Mary Ann and I left out with a caution from medics to drink a little more. We were going 10 miles to the turn around and 10 back to the same station. We moved along at a descent clip walking and running the downhills and a few of the uphills. Darkness came and I was having trouble eating , nothing sounded good at all. That didn't stop Mary Ann from constantly pushing food and water on me though. She pushed me hard to the turn around like a good pacer should, constantly evaluating my every need and condition , running ahead to the aid station and filling water bottles. Spirits were still pretty good at this point. Now just 10 miles back to powerline and fresh socks and we'll be good to finish this thing. 2 miles after the turn around is where everything turned south.

Temps fell to mid 40s with 15 mph winds and driving rain. I quickly dug out my water resistant windbreaker , water resistant being the keyword. We are freezing and trying to make the aid station midway between turn around and powerline. The rain had washed all the sand and trail grime down into my socks and I could feel the hotspots forming everywhere. We slowed from a decent walk to a crawl in an attempt to control foot damage. Limping into the aid station I plopped down to pull off the wet socks and try to shake the sand out, smeared vasoline on the now blisters and bummed a garbage bag to use as a coat. 4 miles to powerline and fresh socks and a blister repair kit. This was a very low point for me. The reason to keep going at this point was to stave off hypothermia, we are soaked and the wind is relentless. Mary Ann was tough as nails through the whole thing and constantly tried to push a run. "Come on ,we can run to that tree. Can you run to that tree? " . After a while, I put my hand on her shoulder, looked her in the eye and said "Mary Ann, I'm giving you all I got, my feet feel like hamburger meat and I'm simply going for damage control". She just laughed and said thanks, now I'll think about your funky feet every time I eat a hamburger. We trudged on for 4 miles at a 24 min mile pace. When powerline was in sight she ran ahead to give my crew the run down on what I needed. I just walked 4 miles trying to hold my toes up and my shins were paying the price. I did a quick weigh in to find out my weight had dropped 2 more pounds. I sat down and a wonderful medic went to

work on my feet popping blisters on my heels and the balls of my feet and toes. My crew is shoving food in my face and pulling warm clothes over my head. 30 min later the medic is done making me wince, fresh socks and dry insoles in my shoes.

Jody H is up for pacing now, and has been briefed on my running ability and time running short. Those first 10 steps outta that chair were intense, but I managed a shuffle walk. I left there in pain but feeling much love from my crew. We made our way out to start the long climb up Smith mountain. The higher we got the better I felt and mixed in some running. Jody seemed pleased to hear that I was hungry and started handing me food. I got my spirit back as we crested and started down the other side. It hurt at the start of every run but would ease some after 20 yards or so. I had everything at this point : hydrated, had my gut back and fire in my spirit. Here we are at about mile 69 and running some 10 min miles on technical terrain and feeling strong at the bottom of smith mountain. We went through another aid station and continued on towards pig trail aid. Things went south on pig trail. Very sharp rocks and loose footing had my shins on fire. Nursing the blisters earlier was now haunting me but we made it and cruised into lake winona 45 min to an hour early. My crew was astounded at the time we had made up.

Now its Michael's turn to pace the final leg of 16 miles into the finish and boy did he have a train wreck to work with. We eased out of winona with some light jogging and a whole bunch of delirium but we were moving. The terrain from here out was ugly.... Steep long grades with sharp rocks and loose footing. My shins and feet were shot but the will to finish was still there. We made snails pace for most of the way with a few shuffle jogs mixed in here and there. He tried everything under the sun to push my pace. He stretched and rubbed my legs out in an attempt to get relief on my shins but nothing worked. He literally had nothing to work with , I was too beat up from damage the rain had done after turn around. We eventually reached the final aid before the finish. He asked how far and they said 2.8 miles. I asked them what time it was because I knew he wouldn't tell me. The sun was high and I knew it was close. The answer was 11:38. I melted with that news because official time ended at 12 and I knew I wouldn't make it even if I had fresh legs. The terrain was too hilly and the distance too far. He pushed me on out of the aid station saying "your gonna finish this thing no matter what the time is. You have to do the best you can do at this point. ". We met Michelle 2 miles from the finish (2 pacers are allowed at this point) . Michael ran on ahead at this point so Michelle and I could sort this thing out husband wife style. I tried to manage a pathetic jog once or twice but the shin pain was more than I could bear. We talked and kept walking making slow progress. The crew met us about 200 yards from the finish with encouraging words, hand shakes and pats on the back. I felt pride and defeat all at the same time crossing the finish line at 30 hours 58 min. I received a buckle for completing the 100 miles.

The race director sent me to medical for a check up. They looked my feet over and checked for swelling in my hands and feet (sign of over hydration) my ankles were swollen from the shin injuries was all. I was good to go. I'm not sure I'll get a documented "official " finish but I got what I came for100 miles without sleep and a brass buckle to prove it.

I can't express the gratitude I have for my crew and their never say die attitude. I couldn't have crossed the finish line without their love and support. They really pulled me through some dark hours and cared for my every need, physical and emotional. It was one crazy roller coaster ride and I can't wait to exact my revenge on this course next year.

My training and planning were solid, just not much you can do about rain and macerated feet(like when you stay in the pool to long and your feet get wrinkled and soft). Big thanks to:

Michelle Berry, Michael Hirons, Jody and Stephanie Hodges, Mary Ann and Mike Lipin, and Sarah Cook. Couldn't have done it without you !!!

After the race Michelle and I went to Branson, MO for the rest of the week. If your gonna be off work for a week recuperating it might as well be somewhere fun. Its Tuesday now and the blisters on my feet are about all that hurts. Mild soreness in my legs but nothing major. I'll probably get in some short EASY runs next but not training type runs for 3 or 4 weeks. Just have to see how I feel.

Anyone wanting to attempt an ultra distance . Go for it, train hard but smart, and you can't possibly study enough. Get your head right and never give up. Relentless forward progress is the key to crossing the finish line !

Prep/Training

I followed a basic newbi plan from the ultra ladies running club website. I did modify it somewhat. I only ran 3 days a week, wed, sat and sun. Also the plan was 26 weeks long which I extended to about 36 weeks. Just in case I needed extra time to get over an injury, also the plan topped out at 70 miles per week. I went to 90 with 15 on wed 40 on sat and 35 on sun for my last hard week. This worked well for me and I had very little soreness post race. For next year I'll pretty much use the same plan but more speed work and more core exercises. I also trained on a variety of foods.

I used 2 of my 15 milers to practice recovering from a bonk. Don't eat anything after lunch and do the run after work. I carried a gel and sandwich, which I didn't eat until I bonked hard. This was very helpful on race day during the nauseous spells.

The First 100

Nate Smith
October 20, 2013

27:19:02

The air felt unseasonably warm and moist for 6am as we lined up for the start of the 2013 Arkansas Traveler. As I scanned my fellow starters in the early morning darkness, I recognized a number of faces. Most of the 120 or so participants were experienced 100-milers, but for 29 of us, this was our first attempt at the 100-mile distance. Based on previous years, a third of the starters could be expected to drop out at some point. Would I be one of them? Was my training adequate for this challenge? Over the next twenty-four to thirty hours I would find out.

“Don’t start out too fast!” That was the advice I had received from pretty much every experienced ultra runner I had talked to. Pete Ireland, who has completed the Traveler 11 times, helped me to come up with a target pace, based on my level of training and performance in other ultra events over the past year. I had selected a 26-hour pace with the hope of finishing in 26 to 28 hours. As the race began, I felt surprisingly calm and upbeat and was careful to set a slow and gentle pace for myself. “Pick a pace you can run all day,” I told myself, and another part of me added, “cuz you’ll be running it for the next 28 hours!”

The runners soon separated into smaller groups as each one found a comfortable pace. I was feeling good and looked around for someone whose pace was similar to mine. I soon found Cliff Ferren, an experienced and disciplined ultra runner. Cliff is great company, and I knew if I paced myself with him for a while, I would be in good shape.

The Ouachita Trail

At Flatside Pinnacle (mile 8.6) we went from forest service road to single track trail. I seldom have the chance to train on trails, so I knew this was going to be one of the more challenging sections of the course for me. Soon after entering the Ouachita Trail, it began to drizzle, and the dark clouds overhead suggested that we might be in store for more substantial precipitation. Now the last thing I wanted to do was get stuck on the Ouachita Trail in a rainstorm, sliding around on muddy trails and slippery rocks, so I decided to pick up the pace a bit and try to get through the 8 miles of single track as quickly as possible. Strategically that may have been a mistake, but I managed to get through the trail section 10 minutes ahead of pace and with only a few stubbed toes.

The next 15 miles to the Lake Winona aid station went quickly, and my clearest memory of this section was the delicious pumpkin pie and pumpkin cookies at the Pumpkin Patch aid station. (As an aside, EVERY aid station at the Traveler had something wonderful to snack on and was staffed by the most helpful and encouraging volunteers I have ever come across.) For a good portion of this time I ran with Chris and Nora from Florida, who are both experienced ultra runners with great stories to share. Making new friends and getting to hear their tales of the trail are some of the most enjoyable parts of ultra running for me, and the fellowship of these new friends helped the hours fly by.

Lake Winona

By the time I reached Lake Winona, it was almost 1pm, the sun had come out in force, and I was still about 10 minutes ahead of pace. Pete Ireland was keeping track of which runners came through but had time to say a quick hello. Tim Norwood was there to fill my water bottle and offer me whatever I needed to snack on. Tim is a good friend, a man of deep faith, and an impressive trail runner. Just the sight of him was enough to encourage me. As I headed out of the aid station, Maurice Robinson ran after me with some really good advice. "It's hot and sticky, so just relax and enjoy this next part until the sun sets and it cools down." Maurice is one of the kindest and most thoughtful people I know. He is in his seventies but still a strong endurance runner - he's the guy I want to be when and if I make it to seventy. Armed with sage advice from a highly credible source, I slowed it down a notch and aimed to get back on my pacing schedule by the turn around.

Because of the heat, I was vigilant to drink plenty of water and take Endurolytes every 45 minutes or so. As the afternoon wore on, I noticed that my left hand was getting puffy. (I was carrying my water bottle in my right hand, so I suppose the up and down movement when I took sips of water was enough to keep my right hand from swelling.) To my distress, I could tell my left ring finger was already too edematous to get my wedding band off, and I was afraid the ring might eventually cut off circulation. I tried running with my left hand in the air for a while, and

that helped a little. At the next aid station, someone had some pink elastic tape I used to wrap around my left ring finger just above my wedding band. I wasn't able to get the ring off, but at least the tape kept the finger from swelling any more. When they weighed me later that afternoon, I had actually GAINED 5 lbs over my starting weight! I cut back on my fluid intake, my kidneys kicked in, and I finally shrunk back to my normal size.

The heat of the afternoon eventually gave way to thunderstorms as I made my way over the long climb up Smith Mountain. Coming down the other side, I caught up with Rich Brown from Searcy. Rich is a strong runner with sub-24 hour times on previous Travelers, so I was surprised to see this far into the race. As soon as we were close enough to talk, I could tell he was struggling. Coming over Smith Mountain, a thunderbolt had struck close enough to him that his muscles seized up and his watch began flashing. He was obviously shaken but thankful to be alive. He continued on bravely, but I don't think his muscles ever really stopped cramping, and he ended up dropping out some time after the turn around.

Halfway There

At the Powerline aid station on the downside of Smith Mountain I had a drop bag and was able to get my flashlight and a long sleeve shirt in preparation for nightfall. A couple of miles out of Powerline, I came to the 50 mile mark. I was feeling pretty good, but I remember thinking that with my next step I would have run further than I had ever gone before in a single day - and I still had another 50 miles to go! At that point, I was venturing into the unknown and had no real idea how my body or my mind would respond.

It was dark by the time I reached the turn around point at mile 58. It was psychologically helpful to know from there on I was getting closer, rather than further, from the finish line, but at this point I was running in the dark by myself, and the joyful fellowship of other runners earlier in the day now seemed like a distant memory. I do most of my training runs at night, so the darkness felt comfortable to me, and I settled into peaceful contemplation as the miles rolled by.

About 2 miles short of my return to the Powerline aid station, I faced my first major challenge. Suddenly it began pouring down rain. I was carrying a lightweight rain poncho in my pouch, but in an instant I was soaked by the cold downpour. Visibility was poor by flashlight so I decided to press on rather than stop to put on the rain poncho. As the rain began to lighten, the wind picked up, dropping the temperature acutely. I was starting to shiver and was afraid that hypothermia might put me out of the race. For the first time that day, the thought crossed my mind that I really might not finish.

Sloshing back into the Powerline aid station, I changed into a dry shirt, put on a windbreaker, and switched from flashlight to headlamp. My good friend Joe Barnett from St. Andrew's Church was there to pace me to Lake Winona, and I was really glad to see him. I drank a small cup of hot soup, and we were on our way back up Smith Mountain.

Smith Mountain

By the time we reached the top of Smith Mountain, the wind was blowing powerfully, and the trees around us were groaning as if they were going to topple over on us at any moment. Recalling Rich Brown's earlier encounter with lightning, I wanted to get down from Smith

Mountain as soon as possible. I told Joe I was going to make a run for it and took off down the mountain at breakneck speed. It was all Joe could do to keep up with me on the rocky trail, but after a couple of miles we finally came to the Smith Mountain aid station. As I caught my breath and refilled my water bottle, it occurred to me that sprinting for 2 miles into a 100-mile race was probably not such a good idea. Heading out of the aid station, my legs would hardly move, and we had to walk for awhile before I was physically able to run again, even downhill.

It was around 2am when we came to the 80 mile marker, and I could feel my body beginning to shut down. My cortisol levels were at their low point, and my world was constricting to the small circle of light cast by my headlamp on the trail in front of me. Joe did a great job of carrying on a mostly one-sided conversation and got me through the worst of it. Arriving at Lake Winona aid station, Pete and Maurice quickly recorded my race number and weight before even recognizing me (those guys could have given even an industrial engineer a lesson in efficiency that night!). Pete told me I had plenty of time to make it to the finish line, and those words really lifted my spirits. My friend Michael Knox from the Arkansas Department of Health took over from Joe as my pacer, and we were off to finish the last 16 miles.

The Final Stretch

Believe it or not, 16 miles does not get any easier just because you've already run 84. It seemed like that last stretch would go on forever, especially the long, rocky climb from Rocky Gap to Electronic Tower. During a particularly long ascent, I remember looking down at my legs and being very surprised to see that they were still moving. "These do not even seem like my legs," I thought to myself. My feet felt like they were on fire (blisters can do that), my legs felt like lead, and I had been feeling queasy since mile 80. Michael kept me going with non-stop conversation, and I contributed to the dialogue with an occasional grunt now and then. As the sun began to rise, I could feel my strength starting to return. At about mile 90, we passed some folks who were in pretty bad shape. I turned to Michael and said, "Compared with those guys, I'm really not doing too badly." He laughed and replied, "I guess not."

After what seemed like an eternity, we emerged from the trail onto the forest service road that leads to Lake Sylvia. "How far to the finish line?" I managed to get out as we passed the volunteers at the Crossroads aid station. "About 2 miles," they shouted to us. The road ahead looked mostly downhill, so I turned to Michael and said, "I'm going to make a run for it." We started booking it down the road, Michael pacing me stride for stride. We passed at least one or two runners who were ahead of us, including my new friend Chris from Florida and another guy who was barely able to walk at that point. Michael had been telling me that once I saw the finish line, the adrenaline would kick in. "I don't think there's any adrenaline left," I replied. As we power-walked up the last rise to Camp Ouachita, however, I guess there were a few molecules left. I caught sight of the finish line and sprinted, leaving Michael several yards behind.

The Finish Line

When I first heard about the Traveler a few years ago, it definitely fell outside the realm of possibility in my mind. Over time, my fascination with the race grew into a steady determination to give it a try. During the many months of training and preparation, that determination became almost an obsession. Not until that final moment, though, at 27 hours, 19 minutes and 2 seconds,

did I know for sure that I could do it.

The sense of relief and accomplishment after finishing my first 100-mile race is difficult to describe. The emotions were almost overwhelming. The fatigue would hit shortly, but those first moments after crossing the finish line were like standing on the top of the world. Taking on the impossible, digging down deep and surprising myself with what was there, rediscovering the immense joy and value of friends - these were some of what I experienced during the 2013 Arkansas Traveler.

Without a doubt, I could not have finished the Arkansas Traveler without the support of family and friends, and the ability and opportunity to even attempt it have been wonderful gifts from God. Special thanks are due to Chrissy Ferguson, who was at the finish line to congratulate each of us, to Stan and to all of the other race organizers. I am also so grateful for the many volunteers who helped me on my journey and made this adventure so memorable.

Andi Stracner 2013 Arkansas Traveller 29:51:11

NO FREAKING WAY I WOULD BE DOING THAT” These are the words I would later be eating, and more than once. I said this laughing out loud when I told my friend Suzy that I would go to a marathon training meeting with her, when I had never even finished a 5k. Those words were nibbled away one mile at a time a few months later. I also said the same thing when I spoke to Chrissy Ferguson for the first time. I had signed up to run with AURA (Arkansas Ultra Running Association) on the women’s grand prix team, a series of mostly 5k’s, and 10k’s. She explained to me that I was signed up with a group of ultra runners. I was not sure exactly what that meant, but it sounded intimidating. She explained that it was people running 50k, 50 milers, and even 100 milers. I said to her “No freaking way that I would be doing that!!!!” I started eating those words a little more than a year later. My first ultra was the full moon 50k with my friend Lisa that Chrissy had introduced me to. Not long after that Lisa told me about a 24 hour race that she wanted to do and see if she could get to 50 miles. It was on Black Friday, and I had the day off work. I told her that I would hang with her as long as my legs would let me. Once again I said to myself after talking with Lisa, “No freaking way I could do 50 miles.” Well, when it was all said and done I had actually done 100k that day, and had fun doing it.

Well what could be next other than 100 miles? It was Rocky Raccoon. Even though I had told Chrissy there was no way, I suddenly felt hungry for those words. Unfortunately I was only able to get 80 miles. I had stumbled and fallen so many times on the roots that I injured my ankle, or at least thought I had. After icing it a day or two the ankle was completely better. That really annoyed me. Seems that my loving husband knew how much it upset me because my valentine’s gift about a week later was him registering me for the Arkansas Traveller 100. Now this is true love girls, although I had one friend who claimed he was probably trying to kill me and I should look for an insurance policy he was hiding.

The training was much better for the Traveller because my friend Belinda was training for the same race and did not live far away. We ran a lot of our long runs together and also drove out once a week to the Ouachita National Forest to do parts of the course. I had never been able to see the Rocky Raccoon course before the day of the race. I think this was very helpful.

On the day of the race I was nervous. I got rid of the negative thoughts using self hypnosis techniques, and it seemed to work. I continued those same techniques several times throughout the race. When the gun went off I had to focus on my pace. It would have been so easy to run at a 5k pace for a few miles, and burn myself out. The plan Belinda and I had made was to hike up any inclines, and run (not fast) the down hills, and take short walk breaks on long flat stretches.

We wanted to bank just a little time in the beginning to make up for our tired legs we would have the last few miles. We planned to stay together unless one of us had trouble and get to our first pacers between 12 and 13 hours.

We made it down Browns Creek road, and to the single track staying exactly on pace. Belinda was worried about the single track, but seemed to be handling it well. I credit it with the lucky pig charm that I gave her right before the race. We both got into Lake Sylvia aid station to see our amazing crew chief Mindy. She had mixed UCAN and given me a fresh Camelbak of tail wind to trade with her. It took me a few minutes to get a little ice put in by a volunteer, and when I left the aid station Belinda had already taken off quite a bit ahead of me. I was just about to take off running fast to catch up when I heard Chrissy Yell "Run Smart Andi" It was almost like she knew what I was thinking. I decided that I should not take off fast up the hill to catch her and drink my UCAN shake instead with walking and little bits of running up the incline. I was on pace, and was not going to chance it to catch up with Belinda. Instead around 19 miles or so I met up with a man named Randy, but I would later be calling him Princess Randy. I called him that because he said a sign was for him that said "run princess".

At Lake Winona I got to see my wonderful crew chief and her faithful dog again. She had another UCAN and a fresh Camelbak. I got out of the aid station as fast as possible. Princess Randy and I started getting closer to Smith Mountain when another runner came up named Vinnie who I would see here and there from that point on. I lost Randy somehow and eventually I got over Smith Mountain and headed towards Powerline Aid station. This was where I weighed the first time. I was actually down 8 lbs. I almost had to sit and drink for a while. My goal for my pacer Bill was to get me to drink as much as possible before I weighed when I switched pacers. So I let my crew fix my blistered feet, changed shoes and socks, and headed out. We had a great time out there together. We sang, and goofed off the whole 20 miles that Bill was with me. I also drank about 3 Camelbaks, many cups of soup, some ensure, and watered down soda. When I got back to the Powerline Aid station I was up 20 lbs from when I weighed 20 miles earlier. I was a little concerned but did not let it bother me. My next pacer I picked up was Elaine. She helped me over Smith Mountain the second time. When we got to the top I realized it was much easier than I expected it to be at 70 plus miles. I will admit that after that I got a little fuzzy. I know I mentioned seeing an alligator in a puddle at the top of a mountain to Elaine. She took it quiet well. She helped make up stories about why that alligator (which was probably just a rock) was there. She also helped reassure me that all the glow sticks we passed were not wild animal eyes. Eventually we got back to lake Winona. My weight was still up 20. My crew was showing concern about the size of my hands. I had not seen them until then. They looked like a balloon sculpture.

My husband was my final pacer. The two of us decided that maybe I should back off on the fluids. I only took small sips to wash down food. I was starting to slow down a bit with him. The next three aid stations I would let him know what I needed and I just would keep moving while he fetched things for me. I was so glad to see my friend Lisa at the last aid station. Not only did she have gluten free pumpkin pie for me, but it was the last aid station. I knew I was close. I had 2 hours and 15 minutes to finish. The next 3 or 4 miles were a little bit of a challenge, not just because I had run well over 90 miles, but because the unevenness of the terrain was making my left ankle hurt at certain angles that I would place my foot.

As soon as we made it to the cross roads I knew that I had about 2.5 miles left. I also knew that the road was a little smoother, and downhill for a bit. I had about 45 minutes left before the cut off. I ran a good bit of that downhill, and when it flattened out I ran small amounts. When I got to

the last uphill I forced myself to run little spurts. When I was about a quarter mile from the finish I saw about 10 of my friends there to run the last bit with me. I ran it in as fast as I could at that point to the finish. I did it with 9 minutes to spare. My only real goal was to finish in the cut off time. I had done that. I also learned my lesson about saying “NO FREAKING WAY”



Andi Stracner & pacer Bill Dobbins. Photo courtesy of ArkansasOutside.com



Big Shot filling a water picture at the Lake Sylvania Aid Station

Race Report from the Dogwood Canyon 50K by AURA Brother Tom Brennan

This is a hard race report to write. I'm still trying to see the bright side. Still trying to just be glad to have run in the beauty of nature and to be able to participate in such a great sport. Still trying to see the glass as half full. Two weeks ago I DNF'd at the Arkansas Traveller 100 because of severe sciatic pain that just would not allow me to go on. That made me especially nervous about running this race but I had signed up at a bargain price of \$40 way back in February and this is always a fun fall family get away. Dogwood Canyon is a private resort and it is beautiful and Bass Pro Shop who sponsors the race as part of their Fitness Festival always has the best race shirts along with finishers fleeces from North Face (this year it was a North Face hoodie) and then they also have great food. So if nothing else, this would be a great vacation. One other thing, they give a little prize money. \$500 for 1st and \$250 for 2nd but zero for third. Four years ago I won the race and at that time they gave away a \$1000! That's the most money I've ever won in my life at anything so I was pretty excited that year. Last year I took 2nd and \$250.

The race day turned out to be near perfect conditions. It was a beautiful fall day with a nice cool start with clear skies. Usually the fall foliage is at its peak here but this year it had not quite turned yet though there was a little color in the trees. The course runs mainly on jeep trails with tons of creek crossings and lots of short but very steep up and downs. I would guess the course

has about five or six miles that is on a paved trail that runs through the canyon. Overall it is a pretty tough and technical course and very scenic.

The first 12 miles Taylor Surley (who passed me at mile 24 last year to take the win) myself and Doug Assenmacher who was third last year are all running in a nice pack but Taylor really seems to be pushing the pace. Then we had about two miles of pavement and he really began running hard. It felt like 5K pace to me. When we reentered the trail and the woods for a big climb, I began to fall back and the hard effort for those two miles on the pavement really seemed to irritate the sciatic pain. At the top of this climb 50K runners divert from the 25K runners. 25K runs a half mile or so down the hill to the finish. I seriously contemplated quitting at this point as the pain was becoming pretty intense. But I thought I could at least run the next five miles because the course loops back around to that same point and then I could drop if I really needed to. These five miles are run in a huge open pasture that is really scenic and pretty. But I was hurting and soon Doug, whom Taylor and I had put a small lead on, caught up and passed me. At one point I even stopped and stretched trying to work out the pain of the sciatic. At mile 20, I seriously considered dropping again. But I knew my wife and kids would be waiting for me. I wanted that nice North Face finisher's fleece to give to her. I now only had eleven miles and I wanted to celebrate with my kids and it would not be much of a party if I DNF'd.

So I continued to run and slowly and amazingly, I began to feel better. It's not that the pain was not there, but it had gone kind of numb and was bearable. I started running faster and faster. I really didn't think I'd catch Doug but sure enough around mile 22 or 23, there he was. Doug is an amazing runner. At 47, he is five years older than I so I can't use age as an excuse. I kept running strong. I felt though like I could push even harder but was afraid to risk the sciatica coming back. Nonetheless, with only about six miles to go, sure enough I managed to catch back up to Taylor. What a great story this would be! To come back from a near DNF and then to end up winning!! He was at the top of a climb and he looked back and saw me. For a moment, I thought he might come back to me but I guess seeing me was enough motivation for him to pick up the pace. I stayed within sight of Taylor until only three miles left but upon entering back into the canyon and without seeing him ahead of me, I concluded he was too far ahead to catch. So at that point I had resigned myself to just finish as comfortably as possible. It seems as though flats irritate the sciatic more than going up and down steep hills. Weird, I know but that's the way it is. Now I am back to the pavement looking forward to getting second and \$250 when out of no where another runner named Nathan appears suddenly behind me. He was whooping and hollering as he passed me because he must of known I was not going to be able to run hard they way I was just shuffling along. So with a half mile to go, he passed me and I felt so angry and dejected.

I had run so hard and overcome so much to try to get that second. And to be honest, that \$250 was going straight for Santa money and now I lost it at the very end. To make matters worse, I only lost it because I thought I was all alone so I had really just let up those last three miles and by the time I realized he was there, it was too late. Oh, the agony of defeat. I write now only two days since the race and I am only now beginning to get over the loss. As I watch the World Series, I can't imagine how low the pitcher feels when working so hard, his one wrong pitch is the one that gives up the game winning run and then he has to spend the rest of winter with that memory. So I hope to get back to Dogwood Canyon and win again and more importantly, I hope to run without pain.

1. Taylor Surly 4:25:03
2. Nathan Sicher 4:30:40
3. Tom Brennan 4:32:28

AURA Tidbits

Leah Thorvilson ran a Olympic Marathon qualifying time of 2:42:55 at the Mid South Marathon.

Stacey Shaver-Matson ran the Palo Duro 50K last month with a fine time of 5:37:19

The Women's and Men's AURA team were the team winners at the Soaring Wings Half Marathon. With one race to go in the Grand Prix season the women are in first place and the men are in third place.

Retreads

First Wednesday of the month at Franke's Cafeteria @11:30AM

11121 N. Rodney Parham Road
(Market Place Shopping Center)

Dutch Treat

Wear something to show you are
one of the gang -- shirt, hat, scarf,
finisher medal, etc.

Just show up and look for the Old Runners: Retreads.

For more information contact Charley or Lou Peyton at 225-6609 or chrlypytn@gmail.com