

# AURA NEWS

Arkansas Ultra Running Association

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## From the President & Editor



I always start with a quick update on club news and it is typically all joyful. Unfortunately, this month I must begin by sharing the news of the passing of one of our long time club members and wonderful volunteers. Alston Jennings passed away recently. He will be missed by many.

On a happier note, we have new race directors for both Styx n' Stones and the LOViT Marathon. Joining Steve McBee in directing the SnS event will be Cliff Pittman, Matthew Myers, and Will Landreth. They are returning this event to a "free/pay what you can" event and also back to the shorter distances of a marathon and half marathon. I assure you that this group is very passionate about this event, about making it safe (think well marked) and providing you a great running experience. I am very confident that this group will do a fantastic job as guardians of this classic event.

As you know, Phil and Bonnie Carr stepped down as RD's for the LOViT Marathon after 15 years. I am happy to announce that Steve Campbell will be taking the reins. Steve is from Hot Springs, is a seasoned ultra runner and knows this course and the area very well. You can count on him providing the same excellent trail experience that you are used to.

One final addition to the AURA Race Directing team will be Tina Mitchell. Chris Baldwin has stepped down as co-director of Full Moon and Tina will take on filling that role of assisting Sharon with this fun event! I want to thank Chris for his years of directing and co-directing at Full Moon. His level of volunteer service is huge as he also continues to help with other events in various capacities. Tina has been a long time club member and volunteer. She is a seasoned runner and mnt biker with a great passion for this race and our community.

Please say thank you to these wonderful souls for volunteering their time to plan, organize and direct these free AURA events and giving back to our community in a big way!!

Until the next race Happy Trails

~ Stacey & the AURA Board ~

**Upcoming AURA Events  
And  
Volunteer Opportunities**



**White Rock Classic 50K  
Saturday, February 4, 2023  
9am Start**

Start/Finish area is now at the pavilion of the [Shores Lake Recreation Area](#)

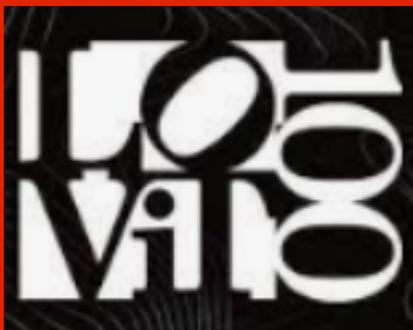
This is a no fees, no frills, no wimps event. This AURA event is part of the UTS and UTS Lite series.

[Click Here To Register](#)

For more information please visit the [race website](#).

Questions: email [Lisa Gunnoe](#)

COME JOIN THE FUN - Bring your chair and plan to hang out after!



**LOViT 100k**

**6am Saturday, February 25, 2023**

This event is part of the UTS series but not an AURA event.

[Race Website](#)  
[Registration Page](#)



# Three Days of Syllamo

## March 17 - 19th

### Fifty Six, AR

This three day event offers a 50k, 50M, and a 20k. Sign up for one or all three! Pack your bags and buckle up because whatever challenge you choose you are in for a fun weekend in the Ozark Mountains!!

This event is part of the ultra trail series but not an AURA event. The 50 Mile and the 20k are part of the UTS and UTS Lite.

[Click Here to Go to the Website](#)

[Click Here To Register](#)

[Email the RD](#)



# Styx & Stones Trail Race

## Marathon and Half Marathon

### Devil's Den State Park

### Sunday, April 2nd

This AURA event is part of the UTS and UTS Lite series. It is a free/pay what you can event. Please bring cash to the race to help cover the RD's cost. Both the Full and Half Marathon race distances will explore the beautiful new Monument Trail system, Butterfield Hiking Trail, Devil's Den's unique rock formations and rock gardens. You may even experience running under a seasonal waterfall!

[Click Here For The Website & Registration](#)

[Click Here To Email The RD](#)



# Ouachita Trail 50K & 50 Mile

## Endurance Run

### Saturday, April 15th

This AURA event is part of the UTS & UTS Lite. The race begins at Maumelle Park and will take you up to the top of Pinnacle Mountain where you will be rewarded with a beautiful view before going down the West side and continuing on the Ouachita Trail. You will get your moneys worth at this event with a cotton tee, top notch aid station fare, finishers awards, a catered post race meal, and hand painted awards presented to the M/F Overall & Master winners in each distance as well as our traditional "first blood" and "DFL/Spirit" awards.

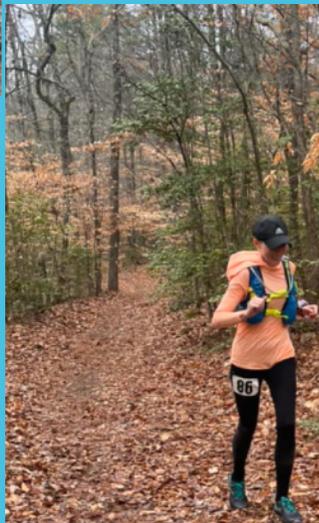
[Click Here to View Website](#)

[Click Here to Register](#)

[Click Here To Email the RD](#)

# Athens Big Fork Trail Marathon -Hosted by Stacey Shaver-Matson







Overall Winners  
for 17 Mile  
(top)

DFL/Spirit Award  
(middle)

Overall Winners  
Full Marathon  
(bottom)



## Athens Big Fork '23 by Kenny Garner

ABF 2023 almost never was for me. I had basically taken off the last month from training except for pushing the final week of the year to reach my mileage goal for 2022. Leading up to the race I kept telling myself I need to give up my spot to someone else who has put in the training. But being the procrastinator that I am, I let it get too close to race day before considering skipping the race. I was not really worried about completing it, but more worried about not having a good experience on the day. Boy was that foreboding.

The race started off just as any other. The first few miles for me are usually spent catching up with friends and their recent adventures. This time was no exception. As the race settled in I found myself pretty much running alone except for a couple of young guys that would pass me on the uphill and I would roll by them on the downhill. If I ever figure out the art of climbing I might be dangerous.

One thing I didn't prepare for was the temperature. I had only brought with me two salt tablets, thinking it was going to be cooler than it was. Normally I am a hawk when it comes to race day weather but my nonchalance leading up to the race showed its face again. I stopped and talked to Mandy Ferguson after the turnaround for a minute or so and we both were underprepared for the warm temps. That made me feel better, that I was not the only one who might struggle to the finish. When I passed through Blaylock Creek aid station, Noelle Coughlan gave me some tailwind and offered up some liquid IV, which I declined.

So here is when things get interesting. I stopped for a couple of minutes and talked to Christine Meroney and Amy Hill. The two young guys passed me again, as did Gavin May. I took off soon after and caught up with Gavin. He offered to let me pass but I declined. We talked for a mile or so going down the trail at a decent clip, both of us agreeing that our effort was not going to increase for the last 10k. Another half mile goes by and we are coming up on two runners and the next thing I know is I caught my right toe on something. I fall forward in slow motion but unable to get my hands up. This was not a very rocky section of trail but tell that to my head because it sure found one. I bounced right back up wiped at my forehead and blood just started gushing down my face. Gavin and the other two guys, Brian and I'm not sure who the other guy was, had me lay in a ditch with my feet elevated. Gavin went for help at the Little Missouri aid station while Brian and one of my trail angels stayed with me. At that point we were trying to get the bleeding stopped with no success and I was feeling okay so we decided to try and move down the trail. I started out applying pressure to the wound to try and stop the bleeding but pretty quickly gave way to the other two guys to keep pressure on my head. Brian stayed on me about my hydration, and the guys helped me through a water crossing or two. We ran out of water pretty quickly so I resorted to drinking creek water to try and keep fluids in me. We had a couple of runners come by during this time and each would offer to run ahead and send help. We made it to the base of the next climb when I began to get light headed, nauseas, and experiencing leg cramps.

We ended up camping out here for over an hour. The bleeding was still going strong when we initially stopped. We had some wet wipes and napkins at first and my shirt was of sweat wicking material so it was near impossible to control it. I remember runner after runner coming through saying they thought they were following the trail of a deer that had been shot. My legs were drawing up really bad on me and I had not salt.



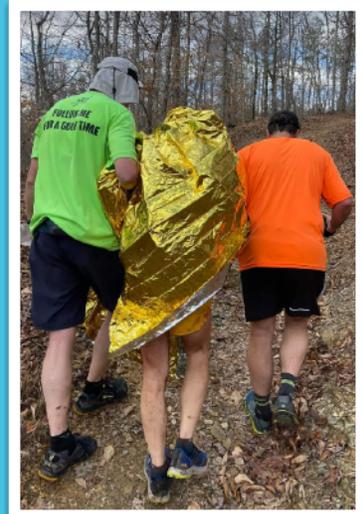


I was having to massage them just to sit still. Laura Kerns offered up a couple of salt pills and they were magical. The nausea was not so easy to get rid of. At that point I wasn't sure if it was the creek water or a result of my injury. Looking back I am sure it was because of the injury and was glad

Brian suggested that until we could raid all of the runners passing by of their spare water. Many thanks to all of the people out there during this time checking in, offering support, taking pictures of the carnage (I'm looking at you Brian McCullar!), and just keeping me calm and alert. This is where we gathered our party that would later assist me into Little Missouri AS.

We got word that a runner coming through had a med kit on him. If we just gave it time we could get the wound tended to. The bleeding had slowed some at this point but was still running down my face. When Steve Griffin got there with his kit he looked at it and decided to leave what we had on it since it was beginning to clot. There is a pretty big gap during this time that I really don't remember. I remember Baylee King sitting down in front of me and asking some questions. I remember Mather Chaney deciding to stay with me and see me to the aid station. I remember Karl Doege and his dog bringing a kit from the Little Missouri and word that he was the only help coming. I remember thinking that I have all of these strangers giving up their race to see that I survive this. That is around the time I thought I could start walking again. I knew the situation and the only way to make it better was to get to that aid station.

So off we went. Just two mountains. I had Reid Landis (I think) on my left arm and Mather Chaney on my right. I was feeling okay until we crossed some water and then I started freezing. But my trail angels were prepared to get me out of there and they just wrapped me tighter in my space blanket and Karl put his beanie on my head trying to keep me warm. For quite a while I was assisted by one person on every step. After a little while I began walking on my own and feeling like every step was one closer to rescue. I don't remember stopping again, maybe we did briefly. By the second mountain I was feeling like I could finish the race. Me and my crew passed a couple of people and someone from the crew said they were going to need to pull out their poles to keep up with the pace. We trudged on and were soon at the aid station.



Chrissy Ferguson was the medical director for this year's race. Chrissy was already at the aid station when I got there and her EMT experience was my blessing. She filled me in on what was going on, what she needed out of me, and why there was a helicopter circling overhead. We ended up waiving off medflight and an ambulance took me to Mena Regional Hospital. The nurses were so enamored by the hole in my head. They don't get much action in the trauma center so they were all excited to see my misfortune. Fourteen staples and a lot of hair loss later I was bandaged up and sent home. The CT scan was negative for any blood on the brain or concussion.

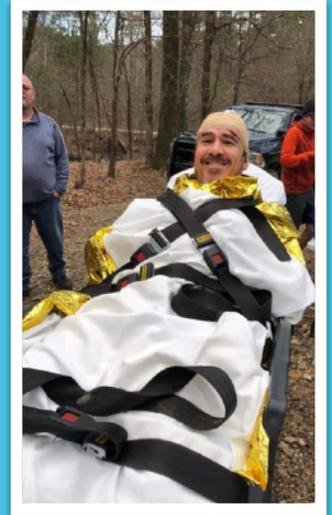
Two or three days after the race my memory was not so sharp. I would get confused doing the simplest things. I even got nauseated trying to multitask while cooking so I decided to go to the ER and get another opinion. Another CT scan looked good but they said I definitely was suffering from a concussion and the symptoms I was experiencing were normal. They likened it to a bruise. It may not show up at first but give it some time and there it is.

I am so blessed to have close family that could watch over and assist me this past week. My parents have been coming by and walking my dogs at least a mile a day. Tracy Ward drove me back and forth to work multiple times and walked my dogs one day. The Arkansas running community was constantly checking in on me. Between telephone, text, Facebook Messenger, Strava, and email I probably received over 100 people reaching out to me.



There were so many amazing people who gave up their day to see that I could live to see another. I know I have left out many names. I can see the faces of people that helped along the journey but never asked their name or have forgotten it under the circumstance. Please the next time you see me reach out and let me know you were there so I can thank everyone individually. I know if this had been a training run I would not have made it out. It just makes me realize all the times I have taken such a big risk and not even realized it.

Thanks to this trail running community. It is such a privilege to be a part of AURA.



## All Systems Tested At ABF - An RD's Perspective ~By Stacey Shaver-Matson

Anyone who has ever run the Athens Big Fork Trail Marathon knows that we make every effort to make sure runners know that this event is not only difficult but remote and an emergency extraction will take a lot of time. That is the reason that we require certain gear and recommend additional gear.

We expect our runners to do their part but what you may not know is that we also do our part in order to be fully prepared for the unexpected. Directors for all AURA owned event spend a lot of time ensuring our events are safe. Part of that means following the clubs Standard Operating Procedures. Within those procedures are guidelines for preparing an emergency plan in the event a runner becomes injured. For the first time in the 25 years of this race that plan had to be executed and all systems were tested. I am happy to say that those systems passed the test.

I will share the unfolding of events, from my perspective at race headquarters, and what working with our HAMS at Net Control was like. First, let me say that we love our HAM radio operators and are so grateful for their help every year to ensure we have good communications with each of our aid stations. They also help greatly with bib count at each station. They do not make decisions or call/communicate with rescue services, that falls on the race director.

The first radio communications informing us of an injured runner came into Net control from Little Missouri aid station. A runner stated they passed runner #45 with a cut on his head but that the runner was still moving toward Lil Mo and was moving really well. At that point it did not sound like I needed to bring in the major services but I did know that I needed to have my Medical Director, a retired Fire Captain, Chrissy Ferguson make the long drive out to Little Missouri so she could tend to him as quickly as possible. Thanks to our sponsor and volunteer, Charlie Sellers of Sellers Heat & Air, for driving her out to the aid station so quickly. At the same time I had radio get word to Lil Mo to send out a volunteer, Karl Doge, with a medical kit to meet up with #45. I also had them send another communication to Blaylock Creek aid so that they were aware of the situation and prepared to go out in the event that our injured runner were to turn around. Once these things were in motion I was in constant communication with our HAMS at Little Missouri trying to get answers to my unanswered questions from the runners coming into that station. As soon as word shifted from "he is still moving and looking good" to "he is sitting down and not able to walk unassisted" I made the call to bring in the cavalry and to have them bring a stokes basket just in case. At little Missouri we had Polk County Sheriff, Arkansas Game and Fish, and an EMT unit. At headquarters we had an additional EMT unit stationed and Medflight circling overhead waiting for word on if they needed to land and at which of the two landing pads they should land in the event that #45 needed to go to a trauma center.

It was also at this time that I had to make the uncomfortable call to #45's emergency contact person, his mom. I have three adult kids of my own so before I made the call I tried to think about what and how I would want to receive uncertain news of my child's condition. Basically I gave all of the details but focused on the positives. The emergency contact was unaware of the race or the area but I was able to give her GPS coordinates and directions to both HQ and to Mena Regional.

At the same time this was all going on, I received word of a sick runner at Blaylock Creek. Another great volunteer, Chris Davis, drove an hour out to Blaylock Creek to pick up our sick runner. When Chris arrived back at HQ, our sick runner was looking worse, none of the typical things for mild dehydration were working and our medical director was still on site at Lil Mo with #45. Julie Ingle, was close by, saw our need and with her medical knowledge looked him over and suggested a trip to the hospital for fluids. The dad and mom of our sick runner had volunteered that morning at Little Missouri Aid and were waiting at the finish line to watch him cross the line. I gave them a map and printed directions to Mena Regional and off they went.

Very soon after they left I got word from Little Missouri saying Medflight could leave and that #45 was going to be ok with ground transportation to Mena Regional. At that point I called his mom to give her the update. Later that evening I called and sent messages to the parents of both runners to get an update. I knew I wouldn't sleep until I knew they were both ok. Thankfully both were treated and released that night.

I have since had follow up visits with our radio guys and emergency responders who helped. I think we all agree that everything went as well as possible in such a remote area. A large portion of the profits from this race will go to Ouachita Amateur Radio Association so they can purchase extra radios that we can use to send out with a volunteer as well as our standard med kit. The remainder will go to the Polk County Sheriff's Department and the Big Fork Community Center.

There were so many volunteers and runners who played a valuable role in assisting these two runners. I always prepare before the race and have everything on hand that "might" be needed and even run through scenarios in my head but I was so impressed with the number of runners who were on stand by waiting and willing to jump in and help if needed. I was incredibly impressed with the way my finish line crew jumped into

action to ensure every runner was properly counted and accounted for when I had to step away for this large chunk of time to help orchestrate the emergency plan. I can't tell you all how much I appreciate you all!



The runners who packed a med kit and heat sheet should be commended for being so well prepared. None of us expect to need those extra items in our packs but this situations shows a very good reason to carry them. They are worth the weight and space they take up. Even if you don't need them, you may be able to help someone who does. Also, kudos to Kenny for continuing forward on the course. There are four mountains between Blaylock and Lil Mo, he was directly between the aid stations when he fell and I feel like he got a lot more assistance than he might have otherwise because he chose to move forward on the course.



Even though ABF is remote and cell service is spotty, I think all of the systems and services involved in the rescue of #45 passed with flying colors. When you register for an AURA owned event you can count on our directors to be prepared and to put your safety above all else!

Keep reading if you would like suggestions on how you can be better prepared for a fall or accident on your training runs or future races. I do not claim to be an expert but these are the things I carry in my kit and have gotten me and fellow runners out of a pickle over the years. In a zip lock bag that weighs next to nothing I pack the following: a real SOS whistle, small pen light or headlamp, second skin strips, a strip of KT tape, a safety pin, various bandages, duct tape and Leuko tape wrapped around a small pencil cut to size, gauze, antibacterial wipes, antibiotic ointment, a \$1 poncho, a heat sheet, my very small Swiss army knife (with scissors and tweezers) a variety of tablets for aches and pain, my medical card and ID. So many of these items can be found in small sizes in medical kits that you can buy at your local outfitter.



If you find yourself injured and alone on the trail you should blow your whistle six times in quick succession, wait one minute then repeat as often as needed. If it is dark you should also flash your headlamp 6 times. This is the International distress signal. If you are waiting on a Search and Rescue helicopter, flash your light on the ground, not up at the pilots. A rescue team will flash three times at you in response. Be sure to give as clear information as possible on your condition and situation to those helping you, and stay as calm as possible until help arrives. Depending on how remote you are rescue could take hours. It is also good to know your insurance coverage because without insurance a helicopter rescue here in Arkansas can cost up to \$50,000. That's what a rescue flight out of the Ouachita will currently cost you.



If going alone, always let someone know where you will be racing or training and give an estimated check in time.

I hope you don't ever have to use this knowledge but it is wise to know it and share it with your running buddies. Stay safe out there so you can keep running for years to come!

# David's Trail Endurance Run







## Rest in Peace Alston Jennings

Alston Jennings, a long-time member of the AURA, passed away on January 10 at his home in Birmingham, AL. He was 75. He and his wife moved from Little Rock to Birmingham in early 2019 to be closer to their daughter and family. Alston was a graduate of Hendrix College and the Vanderbilt University School of Law. Until his retirement in December 2013, Alston was an attorney in Little Rock. A competitive swimmer in college, his later hobbies included motorcycle racing when he was younger, and competitive target shooting. He didn't start running until he was in his mid-50s. He was quickly drawn to trail running and the AURA by both the challenge and the people.

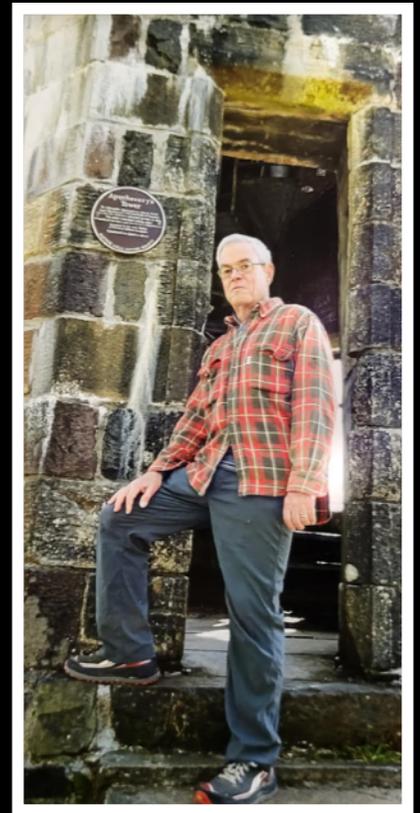
He ran his first AURA race, the Ouachita Trail 50k, in 2006. He was a frequent volunteer at the Winona aid station in the Arkansas Traveller 100, and volunteered at other races as well. Along the way, he and his daughter Laura ran a number of trail marathons and 50ks around the country from California to Maine, and places in between. In 2009 Alston completed Heartland 100 mile race in Kansas with Laura pacing him part of the way.

In 2015, Alston was diagnosed with colon cancer. He lost a substantial amount of weight, but surgery and treatment were successful and he soon returned to running and hiking.

His final regular ultra was Tunnel Hill 50 mile in Illinois in 2018 at age 71. He subsequently completed 72 miles at A Race for the Ages, a timed event in Tennessee, in 2019. His final race was Delano Park 12-hour Solo in Decatur, Alabama, in March 2020 at age 72.

Alston was a true gentleman and a scholar. He was a dedicated runner and hiker, and a pleasure to be around. Those of us who knew him well were sad when he moved, and further saddened by his passing. Our condolences go out to his family and other friends.

Mark your calendars. A memorial gathering and fun run are planned for April 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Lake Winona picnic area. The Jennings Family will provide BBQ and buns, soft drinks, paper goods and plasticware. We encourage AURA Members to come do a fun run of any desired distance starting at 8:00am or later. A memorial service/lunch will start at the Lake Winona Pavilion in the park at 12 noon. Bring a side dish to accompany the BBQ, lawn chair and stories you would like to share about our AURA Running Buddy Alston.





## RETREADS

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

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



Thanks, Charley and Lou Peyton



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW AURA MEMBERS!

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

## CURRENT MEMBERS,

Thanks for Renewing Your Membership

[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](#)

