

# AURA NEWS

## Arkansas Ultra Running Association

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## From the Editor

### *Cha-Cha-Changes*

As our club's Ultra Trail Series Wrapped up we had a club meeting with a vote on officers. PoDog has served for many years on the AURA Board and is stepping down to take on a new roll of Trail Manager. He will be filling a great need of "proper" trail maintenance, which he has learned through his volunteer work with Friend's of the Ouachita Trail (FoOT). He will be elaborating and inviting our members to be a part of this soon. I will attempting to fill his shoes as Vice President and Katie Helms will be taking my spot as Treasurer. George and Lisa will remain President and club Secretary. Additionally, Stan Ferguson will take on the role of Equipment Manager. He will be overseeing all of AURA's equipment. He will be working with our RD's to ensure their equipment needs are met and will be ensuring our equipment is in proper working order.



We are also adding something NEW to the Ultra Trail Series! In an effort to help our members that run shorter distances to still feel connected to the club we will be hosting the UTS & UTS LITE!! Check out the 2021-2022 UTS Calendar on page 8.



# OUACHITA TRAIL 50 - 20 AND DONE!

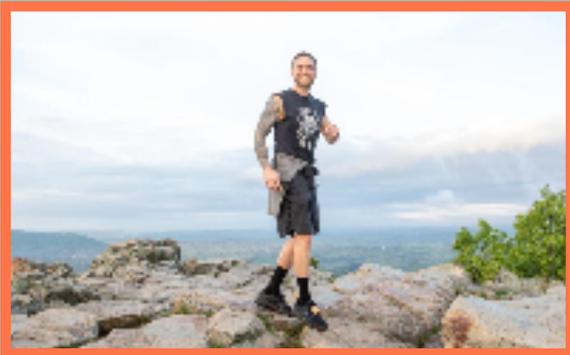
~BY CHRISSY FERGUSON~



Slowly over the years Stan and I have been weaning our way out of Race Directing. At one point we put on Big Rock Mystery Run, Ouachita Trail 50, Catsmacker, Orange Crush Cross Country, Heart of Traveller (HoT) Training runs and Arkansas Traveller 100. As one race wrapped up, we were neck deep in alligators into the next one! We are pleased to transfer after 20 long years our last race, Ouachita Trail 50 Endurance Run to the new Race Director Stacey Shaver! Stacey has been working closely with us for over a year to make the transition for next year's race as seamless as possible. Stacey has the "Go Get It" personality, an eye for detail and organizational skills that are needed to make the Ouachita Trail 50 even better than it already is - That's saying a lot! So please welcome Stacey and support her as much, if not more, than you've supported Stan and me over the years....

A BIG "Thanks!" to the AURA Members for the sweet OT50 dedication plaque and gift card to my favorite restaurant Bone Fish Grill. I will display my plaque with pride and enjoy a meal, sip a glass of wine with a toast to AURA.

For the event—the Thirtieth edition of the Ouachita Trail 50, we had 198 runners and over 100 volunteers. The runners came from thirteen different states besides Arkansas. Congratulations to our OT50 winners: Jeremy Provence from Alabama won the 50 mile in a new course record time of 7:01:12, Laura Kearns won the women's division in a time of 9:51:27. Jake Anderson had his first overall 50 km finish this year in a time of 4:49:17 and Nancyanne Hickman from Tennessee was the women's 50km winner in a time of 5:39:19. As for our DFL winners Tanner Stephens from Oklahoma was our last official 50 mile finisher and our very own Thaveep Leach took home the award for last 50km official finisher! Wesley Leach cleaned up well after 5 staples to the back of his head to clinch the Best Blood and Hardest Head award...



Tanner Stephens



Thaveep



Wesley (before).



Wesley (after)

COVID 19 played a significant factor with our volunteers this year – I want to thank our return aid station captains David and Cindy Edwards for captaining the East Pinnacle aid station morning shift, Pete Ireland for captaining the afternoon shift at East Pinnacle, Lisa Mullis and Joe Jacobs for captaining the Lake Vista aid station. Thank you to Rhonda Ferguson and Kim Johnson who stepped up and took on Northshore this year, along with Charlie Dunn stepping up to Captain the 50-mile Turnaround. Thank you to Charles Redditt and Shauna Veazey for their first year as co-captains of Hwy 113 aid station. You all ROCK IT!

In the last AURA Newsletter Stacey Shaver talked about how important it is that we ALL as AURA members do our part to volunteer at least once each year at an AURA event. There are those that volunteer at almost every event, and there are those that are leeches and takers, you know who you are or aren't, give back, don't just be a taker... Thank you to Paul Turner and Chris Davis for stepping up to take over as aid station captains to replace very valued volunteers that are retiring. We are still actively looking for a replacement captain for the evening shift at East Pinnacle for next year's race - Any takers?

Before transferring the race to Stacey, we will be changing cut off times for next year's race. Stan has been hard at work crunching numbers to ensure that runners have every chance of finishing under the 13 hours cutoff time, but to also ensure our valuable volunteers are not stuck out waiting for runners that will not make the 13-hour cutoff.

**The new cutoff times are as follows:**

Northshore 10:15am – 50 mile out bound

Northshore 1:20pm – 50km out bound

Northshore 3:20pm – 50 mile in bound

East Pinnacle 6:05pm – 50km/50mile in bound

A very special “Thanks! “again, to our Aid Station Captains, volunteers, CAREN, Central Arkansas Water, Core of Engineers, RRCA, GU, Pulaski Sheriff Dept and Pinnacle State Park. With all of their/your help Ouachita Trail 50 is the best DAMN race in Arkansas! Remember “Finishing is Winning and Don't be a Dumb Ass!”

Happy Trails,

Chrissy Ferguson

The first running of the Ouachita Trail 50 was on May 13, 1989. It was called the Long Crossing: 50 Miles on the Ouachita Trail. The Race Director was Teresa Laster, and the Big Shot was Assistant RD. Tom and Tammy Chapin, Bill Laster, Otis Edge, Lou Peyton, and Nick and Sharon Williams also assisted with the organization. It was aptly named by the Big Shot to reflect the long distance runners would have to travel between the North Shore Aid Station and Hwy 113 (8.3 miles).

The following year, the name was changed to the Ouachita Trail 50 and the race was directed by Bill and Teresa Laster. They continued as race directors until 1993. The race was in jeopardy of not happening in 1994 until Nick Williams took it up as a low key, no entry race. In 1995 and 1996 Bill and Teresa returned again as race directors, putting on a low entry, limited aid race. In 1997 Nick again administered it as a no entry, low-key event. Sadly, there was no Ouachita Trail 50 in 1998 or 1999.

In 2000, Ann Moore resurrected the OT50 as a full-fledged race, adding the 50K distance. One night after having several margaritas, Chrissy Ferguson agreed to replace Ann as race director, so she and Stan began directing the race in 2001. They made the 50K distance a little longer. For 2002, the bright idea was hatched to utilize trails going over Pinnacle Mountain on the “out” route, making both races a little longer (and tougher). For 2003, a full loop over and around Pinnacle was incorporated—lengthening the routes again to the current version of the course. While there were a couple of close calls, the only subsequent course alteration occurred in 2019, when there was no choice but to enact the rain route—bypassing the top half of Pinnacle Mountain. Those who thought that would result in a faster course were severely disappointed, as all-day storms turned much of the trail in a non-stop creek. Covid-Madness in 2020 caused a delay of Chrissy's and Stan's 20th running of the event (and 30th overall) until 2021. They learned a lot during this time, and amazingly neither one killed the other. To keep it that way, Stacey Shaver graciously agreed to take the reins and direct the race as it proceeds into its fourth decade.

OT 50

Overall Female & Male  
Laura Kearns & Jeremy Provence



OT 50

Master Female & Male  
Amanda Lynch & Brian

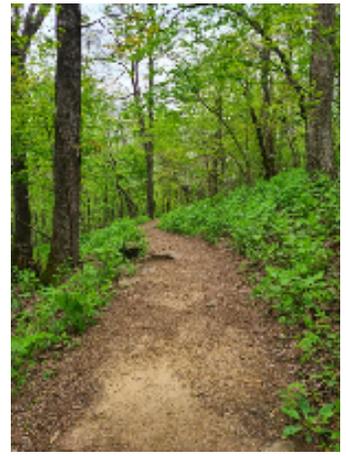
OT 50k

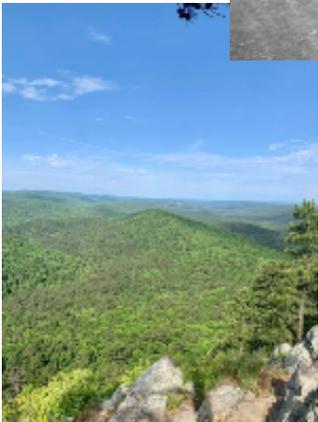
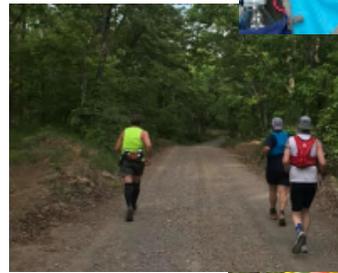
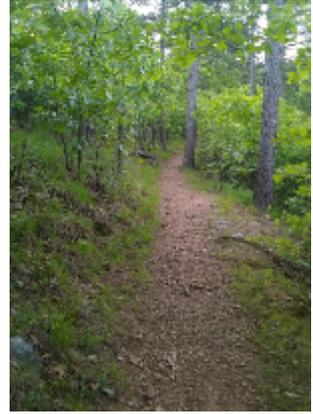
Overall Male & Female  
Jacob Anderson & Nancyann Hickman

Ot 50k

Master Male & Female  
Matt Walker & Denise Cook



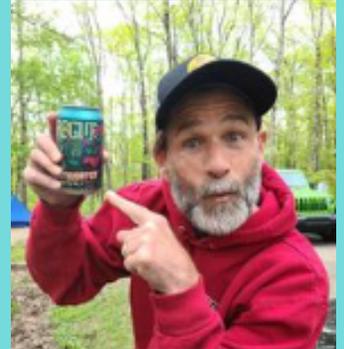




## Winner of the 2020-2021 AURA Ultra Trail Series

*\*Due to the pandemic we didn't have the full series because several races were cancelled*

**Overall King** -Blake Miley, **Overall Queen** - Ashley Gramza, **Master Male** - John Haddock, **Master Female** - Mary McDonald, **Grand Master** Paul Turner, no Grand Master Queen



AURA would like to thank the race directors that hosted events for this series:

Stacey Shaver RD for Athens Big Fork

Mark Den Herder for Styx n' Stones

Jacob Anderson for Ozark Highlands & 3 Days of Syllamo

Chrissy Ferguson for Ouachita Trail 50

Paul Turner for Mount Magazine

Chris Baldwin, Ronnie Daniel, and Sharon Bennett for Catsmacker

We would like to also give a Super Big Thank You To All of our AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!!

You make racing possible and we appreciate You



## Introducing the 2021-2022 Ultra Trail Series &amp; NEW Ultra Trial Series Lite

Good Luck to All of Our Participants

[Click Here to Register for UTS](#)

RACE DATE	EVENT	UTS	UTS LITE
<b>JULY</b>			
7/17	Full Moon	50k	
<b>AUGUST</b>			
8/14	Scorchin' Squirrel	20M	15M
? 8/29 ?	Mt Nebo	14M	14M
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
10/2-3	Traveller	100	
10/16	HS 18M	18M	18M
<b>NOVEMBER</b>			
11/27	Sunset 6-12-24	Any Distance Minimum 26M	Any Distance
<b>DECEMBER</b>			
12/4	LOViT Marathon	26M	14M
<b>JANUARY</b>			
1/8	ABF	26M	17M
1/15	OT Switchbacks	50k	25k
<b>FEBRUARY</b>			
2/5	White Rock	50k	25k
2/26	LOViT 100	100k or M	
<b>MARCH</b>			
3/?	Styx n Stones	30k	15k
3/18-20	3 Days	50M	20k
<b>APRIL</b>			
4/9	OT 50	50M/50k	50k
4/15/21-22	Choose Your Own	Marathon	Half
<b>MAY</b>			
5/14	Mt Magazine	18M	12M
5/21	Catsmacker	20	12
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>

\*If you volunteer for an UTS Series event or do trail work through Podog's new Trail Maintenance Group you will receive points toward the High Mileage Awards.

\*If you register for an event but can not make it PLEASE unregister or email the Race Director in a timely manner. This is becoming a VERY big problem.

# Upcoming Races

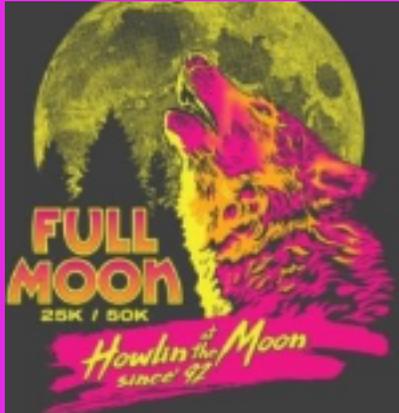
[Click Here to Volunteer](#)

### Volunteers Needed

The event is full but you can still be a part of the party and a hero to so many!!

### BONUS

UTS Members get points toward high mileage for volunteer duties!



[Click Here to Register](#)

We are happy to have this event in the UTS for the first time. It's a great race and you are all in for a real treat!!

This event will be part of both UTS & UTS Lite



RD, Tom Aspel said that race information is coming soon and that the race will likely be held on Sunday, Aug 29th.

This event will be for both the UTS & the UTS Lite



**TIME TO RENEW YOUR AURA MEMBERSHIP**  
Most memberships are due to expire on June 30th

If you have friends who are new to trail running please invite them to join the  
Arkansas Ultra Running Association

Cost is still only \$12/Year because we aren't looking to make money but rather trying to bring people into the trail community, introduce them to new trails and to help them have a good experience. This has been the mentality of the club for decades.

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

[Click Here To See If You Need To Renew](#)

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



**Trail Maintenance Group**

Podog said that the Trail Maintenance Group will not start training until mid to late August with work beginning in September. He is quite passionate about this new group and is looking forward to this project. For those of you that are interested in joining this group know that an email will be sent out to all our our AURA Members as soon as details are finalized.

A bonus for helping with this group is the opportunity to earn points toward the Ultra Trail Series High Mileage Awards