

AURA NEWS

Arkansas Ultra Running Association

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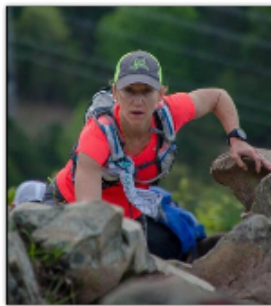
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From the Editor



Big thanks to Lisa Gunnoe and Robert Vogler (aka Podog) for hosting a fun event at White Rock on a brand new course and with a quick turn around on a makeup date due to weather.

Thanks to Rachel & Dustin Speers and the race committee for another challenging Lovit 100 mile and 100k experience.

Jacob Anderson also put on another great race on the Ozark Highlands Trail.

I know many of you had great success in these events and and some had a few struggles but you toed the line and that is brave! A big congratulations to all of you who participated!!

We are nearing the end of the Ultra Trail Series and we are getting excited about the awards and picnic that will be held at the Catsmacker. I hope you have this on your calendar because we are going to have fun celebrating you and your successes!! Party Time

We are near the end but not there yet. If you aren't running in the upcoming races I hope you will consider volunteering. We can really use your help.

I hope to see you on the trails soon!

~Happy Trails~
Stacey & the rest of the AURA Board



**Upcoming AURA Events
And
Volunteer Opportunities**



March 18th - 20th
3 Days Stage Race
[Click Here to Register](#)

Fri - 50k - optional
Sat - 50 mile - UTS
Sun - 20k - UTS Lite

31st Running
50K & 50 Mile
April 9th at 6am
Maumelle Park -Pavilion #8

[Click Here for Website](#)
[Click Here to Register](#)
[Click Here to Volunteer](#)

*We look forward to hosting
you next month!*

**Register fast to guarantee your shirt size*



April 23rd
50k & 25k
Devils Den State Park

[Click Here for Race Website](#)
[Click Here to Register](#)

[Click Here for More
Racing Options](#)



**Mt Magazine
18 Mile
May 14th
Mount Magazine State Park**

[Click Here for Race Website
& Registration](#)

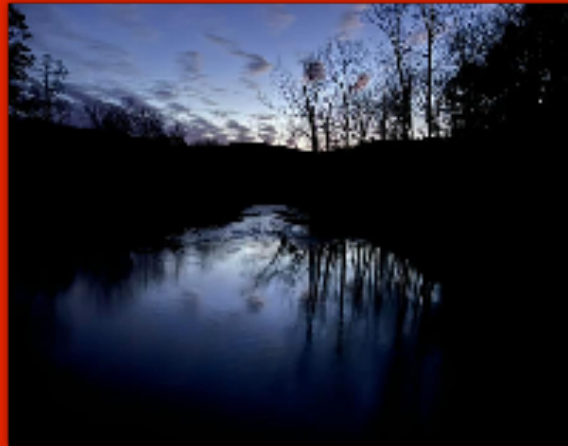


**Catsmacker
May 21st
20ish & 12ish miles
Lake Sylvia**

[Click Here for Website](#)
[Click Here to Register](#)

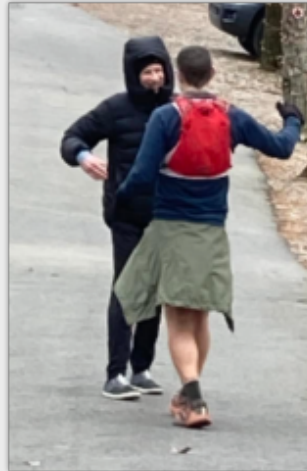
***UTS Awards &
Picnic After**

WHITE ROCK 50K



LOViT 100





I'm dying.

~by Chris Beason



I vividly remember the day she said it. I was at the back door of the office juggling a cup of coffee, my purse and my keys, trying to unlock the door while I answered the phone.

"Hey Mom, can I call you back in a minute?"

"I'm dying", she said.

"What? What's wrong?"

"I don't know. I just feel it. I think I have two years left."

I just stood there for a minute trying to process what she just said. This wasn't the first time she had said something off the wall. Over the past 20 years I had become so accustomed to it that my typical response was to just go along with it and ask no questions. This time it was different. I could tell she really believed she was dying. About a month later the doctor would confirm that she had a year at best.

It wasn't long after she died that I started running again. Fast forward almost 9 years and I'm still at it. This past Saturday I ran the Lovit 100k. I knew the race was going to be physically tough and I was already at a disadvantage because I had skimped on my training. My mental state was unstable at best. The Tuesday before the race I flipped Lovit the bird and said no one can make me run. By Friday night I was all in and was going to finish even if it killed me. Saturday morning came and I had decided to just do the best I could.

At 6:00 a.m. I heard "GO!" Damnit, they started without me. I was only a few feet away from the start line so I ran against the runners who had already started, put my foot over the line and turned around. After about a mile of asphalt we turned and got onto the trail. I just put one foot in front of the other and pretty soon I had settled into a comfortable pace. It wasn't long before the memories started flooding back.

"Let's meet once a month and do something fun. My treat."

"Remember, we are all dying. I just happen to be doing it a little faster than most."

"What if you only had 30 days to live? What would you do? Who would you spend it with?"

She really didn't have much of a choice. I made her spend her last 30 days with me. A few months before she had talked about moving out into her storage shed and letting a homeless

person live in her house. Eventually that personality faded away. She never even knew she almost ended up living in her shed. It seemed like one by one the personalities that were left started, well, dying.

Fortunately, the course was well marked. As I drifted in and out of thought I tried to take in all of the beauty of the nature that surrounded me while being assured I was still on the right path. The snow and ice that covered some of the trees and the ground in places was just a bonus. The majority of the course was single track trail complete with plenty of creek crossings and amazing views. There was a section about 8 miles or so that ran along a ridge. It was a hellacious climb getting there, but the view of the lake for the next several miles made every foot of climb worth it.

I tried entertaining myself with stories of "What had happened was..." but pretty soon it just got depressing. I started imagining that the trees were people and that became even worse. Finally I decided I wasn't happy running. I wasn't sure I even liked running anymore. I felt broken down going in and decided at Mile 29 my mind was straight again and I was done. It was news to me, but apparently I wasn't done yet.

Just prior to the turn around I was told if I quit, they quit. Not fair, but well played. At the turn around I was given two shots of blackberry whiskey and a ham sandwich and told to get back out there. I put on my headphones and hit play. One Last Breath by Creed started to play. Then the tears came. Please come now, I think I'm fallin', I'm holdin' on to all I think is safe, It seems I found the road to nowhere, And I'm trying to escape.

Not long before she died her lucid moments were fewer and farther between so I sent her an email in case I wasn't there when she was awake.

"Mom, I'm not ready for you to go yet. I finally feel like I have my mom and not just one of the pieces of my mom. There's not enough time left."

Her reply was what only my mother would say, "I love you but not near as much as God does. You are so precious to Him. He will bless you with your hearts desires just like He has blessed me. love, Mom"

About a mile before the next aid station, a friend who had my shared sense of morbid humor, came looking for me and asked how my mom was doing. How she knew exactly what to say I'll just chalk it up to we must share a little sixth sense as well.

Beautiful Day by U2 started to play. It's a beautiful day, Sky falls you feel like, It's a beautiful

day, Don't let it get away. It wasn't about my past anymore. It wasn't about my future. It was about living in the moment and me finishing this race. It was about proving to myself that I did have it in me to do this. I am not a victim of my past. I might have tucked a few things away here and there, but I was not broken. I just needed a little patchwork and reinforcement.

"Who will pray for me when you're gone?"

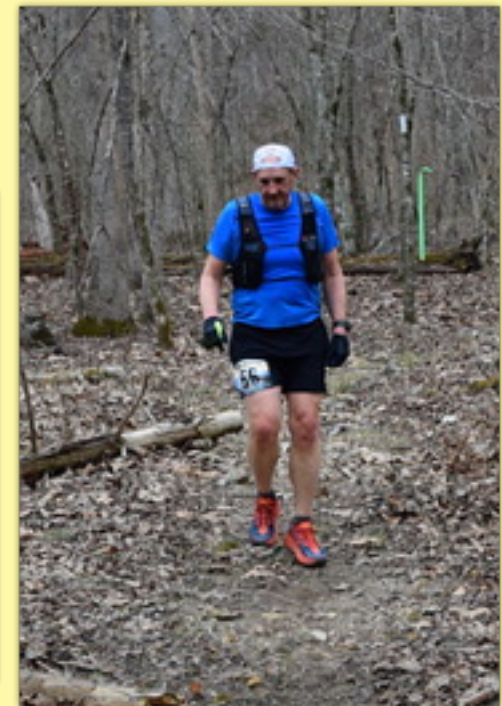
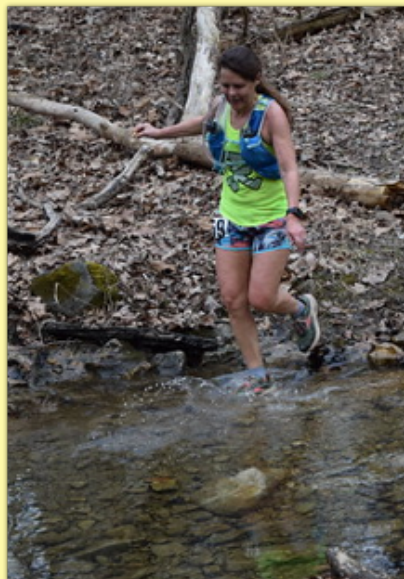
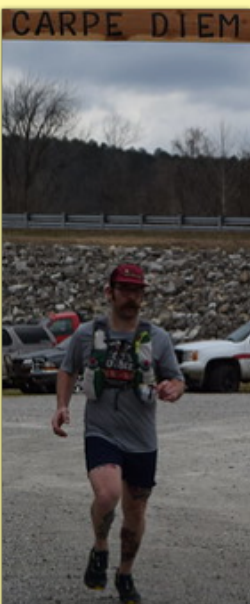
I got to Brady and was finally able to pick up a pacer just before it was going to start getting dark. We headed out for another hellacious climb to get on top of the ridge, but this time there was no view. The clouds had settled on the ridge and snow and sleet had begun to fall. Just run the downhills the best you can. We need to make up a little time.

My daughter, Marina, sent me a text "Run til you can't, then run a little more!!" I found the little aid station in the middle of the woods. All I had to do now was get to the next aid station to pick up my next pacer. A few miles later I saw a light in the distance coming the wrong way. Hey pretty lady, you need an escort to the finish? I was so relieved. What I really wanted was to be carried because by this time my feet were soaked and I was getting blisters. The creek crossings had become too high to cross without getting my feet wet.

"You can do whatever you set your mind to do." It was the last thing she told me as she slipped away.

I set my mind to finish and that is just what I did. One last turn onto another muddy trail in the dark and I started to see the lights from the street. I was on my way to the finish line. Finally, not only did I finish, I finished well ahead of my goal. I don't remember saying it and I wouldn't have believed it except there's a video. At the finish line the race director said, "Are you Chris?" My reply was, "Yes. Last I heard."





RETREADS

The Retreads will be meeting on April 6th at 11:30 at Homer's on Rodney Parham.

*Note: Homer's is moving to the old Frankies. If you need more information or just want to get on the retread's email list contact Charley at chrlypytn@gmail.com



AURA MEMBERS

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

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

CLUB OFFICERS

George Peterka - President

Stacey Shaver - Vice President

Lisa Gunnoe - Secretary

Katie Helms - Treasurer

