

# TRAIL **ATRA** TIMES

American Trail Running Association • Volume 14, No. 48 • summer 2009

**Mission:** To represent and promote trail and mountain running.

## Cloud Running with the Little Engine that Could

by Laura Clark

This June marked my third ascent of Mt. Washington, which has the dubious distinction of hosting the world's worst weather. As though running 7.6 miles with a 4,650 vertical foot climb up an 11.5% average grade while negotiating 99 switchbacks weren't challenge enough! Not only

has the mountain clocked the planet's fiercest wind speed at 231 miles per hour, hurricane force winds check in every third day and snow falls every month of the year. While some challengers take comfort in the race's motto, *There is only one*

*hill*, directionally deficient runners such as myself find solace in the fact that it is impossible to stray off course.

While the climb is a given, it is the unpredictable weather that is the true wildcard. Basically, it is impossible to dress properly. What works at the start often proves to be woefully inadequate at the finish. For me, choosing the proper attire is one of the more stressful part of a race, so it was something of a relief to know that whatever I selected was bound to be the wrong choice.

After packing all the winter gear I owned, minus the snowshoes, Jeff and I set out for the wilds of New Hampshire.

The trip was mostly uneventful, but we did learn two things: (1) MapQuest will get your destination, but definitely not on time, and (2) there is a reason why small New Hampshire towns feature numerous Bear Inns, Black Bear Restaurants and carved Bear outlets, all having to do with truth in advertising. While we failed to spot the promised license plate moose, Jeff got up close and personal with a glossy black bear who dashed across the road heedless of red and green, a huge jaywalker with no fear of traffic cops.



Wisely, we chose accommodations at the Eagle Mountain House since we would be doing enough running without any ursine encouragement. As the designated race headquarters, this inn was a hub of activity. Basically, we fit right in as everyone was wearing T-shirts, lugging running bags, and obsessively checking multiple weather reports. That

evening Dave Dunham, race historian and past winner, spanned forty-eight years of race highlights. Amy Palmiero-Winters, a below-the-knee amputee who was featured in the April 2007 issue of *Runner's World*, urged us to take five more steps and then five more until we reached the top. Just like the Little Engine that Could.

While I was no where near as focused as John Pelton, author of last Strydewrite's *Mountain Running in General, Mt. Washington in Particular*, I did have an actual plan, which was somewhat reassuring. The beauty of this race is that there are no surprise entrants. I checked out all the women in my age group and determined that if I ran under 2:15 I had a shot at placing. Since my 2004 time was 2:10, this did not seem a pie in the sky possibility.

The first mile was relatively easy, with a grade resembling that of normal mountains at their steepest sections. But by the second mile the honeymoon was over. I concentrated on quick metronome steps, picturing the choppy railroad cogs that reliably haul Little Engine to the top. I tried sidestepping,

(continued on page 4)

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Mt. Washington 2009  
*Laura Clark*

Celebrating 50 with 50  
*Jim Houghtaling*

Running for a Lifetime  
*Dr. Jeffrey Matthews*

Trail Running in Alaska  
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## Volunteering

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Recently when discussing the subject of non profit board of directors with my friend Susan she said, "A board member should give time, talent, or treasure." At ATRA, we have a great volunteer board that gives back with these traits in mind.

We're looking for a new treasurer to sit on our board since our long time treasurer Doug Laufer steps down in July. He's finishing up our second quarter financials and then we're transitioning to a new treasurer and look forward to hearing from those interested in joining ATRA's board in this capacity.

I, along with our board members, appreciate all of Doug's input over the years — he will be missed. I ran with Doug last month on the Ute Indian Trail in Manitou Springs and he was getting ready for state #49 in his quest to run a marathon in every state. He's run road marathons and trail marathons on this journey. Doug has run the Pikes Peak Marathon so many times, most years doing the double — Ascent on Saturday and the Round Trip on Sunday — but he's never counted that as completing Colorado. Thus, he will complete his 50th state this October when he runs the Denver marathon. I'm sure in November Doug will be spending more time on the trails getting ready for his next running goal which may include an international trail race or two.

*Happy Trails! Nancy*

## ATRA RACE & CLUB MEMBERS

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*Taos Ski Valley Up & Over 10K Trail Run*

*The Endurables*

*Trail Runners Club*

*Tussey mOUntaiNBACK 50 Miler*

*Ultimate XC Moab Edition*

*Vasque Golden Leaf Half Marathon*

## GOALS OF ATRA

- ◆ Compile & publish a comprehensive listing of nationwide trail running events
- ◆ Educate and provide information about our sport to the rest of the outdoor community, to the media and to non-running entities that have similar goals and objectives
- ◆ Organize ATRA sponsored & supported events
- ◆ Be sensitive to the environment.
- ◆ Provide a forum whereby the business of the sport can be discussed and organized
- ◆ Create & nurture alliances with other associations
- ◆ Develop recreational participation and provide opportunities for families to enjoy our sport through events and clinics

A friend of mine was recently diagnosed with severe degeneration of the articular surface of his knee. He is a former world class runner, now in his mid forties whose competitive running career has come to an abrupt halt. I wouldn't want this type of debilitating injury to happen to anyone. Runners should choose when not to run, but never be forced to stop. Athletes must take every opportunity available to them to prevent injuries and prolong their running careers. Strategies for a lifetime of running include: stretching, rest (ie: recovery), appropriate training plans, good nutrition, at least 7-9 hours of sleep per night, choosing soft surfaces (ie: trails), proper footwear, and cross training.

The impact force of a runner's knee is between 2 – 3 times the runner's body weight. Over a typical training week a runner's knee can be exposed to thousands of tons of impact load. For example, a runner who weighs 170 pounds equates to 85 tons of impact load per leg every mile, consider this if the same runner logs 30 miles per week and the equivalent tonage is 2,550. Good running shoes can decrease the ground reaction force loading by 7 – 8% or greater. Remember, we're talking about thousands of tons of impact load, so this reduction is significant. This is why it is very important to choose asphalt over concrete and trail over road surfaces whenever possible. Always choose the soft surface, and keep as much "tread on the tire" as possible, for as long as possible.

It has been said that you can't run in walking shoes, but you can walk in running shoes. You may be able to run trails in road shoes, however, trail shoes are recommended for certain trails especially those with changeable terrain and varied surfaces. For advice in choosing the best trail running shoe, obtain an evaluation from a qualified running shoe specialist most often found at a specialty running retailer. He or she will consider your mileage, frequency, running surface, and foot strike which is best analyzed using a dynamic gait evaluation on a surface similar to what you are training on. After finding the correct shoe for your running needs, remember that 60% of the shoes' shock absorption is lost after 250 – 500 miles. Replace your shoes when needed. If you are not sure whether your shoe has reached its usable life, return to the point of purchase and have your shoe reevaluated by the experts.

Decreasing the impact of your weight bearing joints may also be achieved through cross training. Try to select activities

that reduce lower extremity impact while at the same time build strength and cardiovascular fitness. Some cross training may even help balance muscle strength ratios. Cycling increases quadriceps strength which may aid in proper knee alignment and patellar tracking. Other cross training exercises may include swimming, pool running, elliptical training, and weight training.

The human body is a marvelous machine that can respond to various demands placed upon it; however, it can wear out or break. Decreasing impact loads, forces and stress to your joints can add more running miles to your life. The winner of the race is not always the fastest, but rather the runner who is able to continue to stay in top form and run for a lifetime.

*Dr. Matthews is a 1989 graduate of Logan College of Chiropractic where he was Valedictorian. He is a certified Chiropractic Sports Physician, and certified in Active Release Techniques. At his practice in Colorado Springs (Champion Health), he specializes in helping athletes continue in their sport for life. He can often be found running on the trails in and around Colorado Springs with his children.*

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## USATF Mountain and Trail Championships 2009

Open and Masters' Championship Competition

USA Mountain — June 28, North Conway, NH

Champions: Joe Gray & Christine Lundy, Masters Champions: Simon Gutierrez & Laura Haefeli

USA 100 Mile Trail — July 18, Lake Tahoe, NV

USA 50 Mile Trail — July 25 Crystal Mountain, WA

USA 100km Trail — August 22, Willamette Pass, OR

USA 10km Trail — August 29, Laurel Springs Conference Center, NC

USA Trail Marathon — November 7, Ashland, OR



but the first miles were simply too crowded to get into any kind of rhythm. Dave urged us not to start too hard, which, of course, is exactly what I did, all the while feeling proud that I ran the entire second mile. Although I conquered the mountain in 2004, it was so foggy that I never actually saw the course, let alone the finish line. If I had, I would have known that the final miles present a series of recovery dips intersected by steep climbs. But by the time I had arrived at that point, I was simply too tired to take advantage. Next time!

Both Dave and John recommend cutting the tangents, but with 99 of them, I preferred to stick with Bob Dion's Mt. Greylock advice and aimed for the center of the road. This seems to work for me since I feel you waste a lot of mental energy cutting back and forth over slanty surfaces. Perhaps for the front runners, conditions are somewhat different, but in a crowd it is rather like playing a distracting game of uphill dodge ball.

The final push to the summit features a 30% gradient. Jeff, crew and guaranteed ride down for Chelynn Tetreault, Laurel Shortell, Rich Busa and myself, stationed himself at a critical point in this climb, just where we could hear Little Engine's whistle, and literally pushed us upwards with his "You're almost there!" I stuck my sneakers into the mental cogs and chugged away in tune to both man and machine, exceeding my time goal with a 2:06:56 finish and earning third place in my age group. All the while I was grateful to leave the most difficult part of the adventure to Jeff — driving back down all those steep switchbacks in the fog, with motorcade traffic coming up and folks running down.

I should mention that at this venerable event, 60 years does not even approach over the hill status. The 70 year-old age group is highly competitive, as is the 80+. Halfway up I finally passed an older lady, who crossed the line only five minutes behind me. She was 75 years young! Not to mention Rich, who at 79 and just coming off multiple injuries, placed third with a 2:20.

While I exceeded my goals, I discovered they were the wrong goals. Had I read the website carefully, I would have realized that only first and second age group finishers earn a lottery bypass for the following year. Which leads me to ponder once more Tim Noakes' central governor theory: I had set my

brain to achieve and it delivered as directed. What would have happened had I upped the ante?

Regardless, the reward at the top was glorious as our group experienced the true meaning of the term "undercast." We had run through the clouds to a spring ski weather summit in tandem with the cog railway's version of the Little Engine that Could, and now gazed in awe at the clouds below. Amazingly balmy, windless conditions lasted for half an hour until the fog once again rolled in, making us think once more of winter gear and hot showers.



Laura on course and at finish



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## Leave a Footprint

Most of us that go to the Islands have a goal of many hours just soaking in the sun on the world's most beautiful beaches. I now give you another way to see the Islands. Runners and walkers are a different group all their own. This group now has the opportunity to run or walk on more than one island, which gives their vacation a whole new experience. A seven-day vacation with four scheduled runs and walks on four different Islands.

This will give runners and walkers of various ages and abilities from all over the world to come and have fun. Not only will they enjoy scenic views they will have the opportunity to run with the local running clubs. What a fantastic way to see all of the sites and be active all at the same time.

You will not find a better value for a cruise than the one we are offering at this time. The cruise alone is huge but the cake is the run/walk routes. The icing however is guest speaker Lisa Smith Batchen. To have Lisa share her expertise and passion is a rare opportunity that does not come by to often.

The price for this cruise is \$693.00 CDN all taxes and port charges included. (Inside cabin) Depending with the exchange rate at the time of booking it will be around \$600.00 US with taxes and port charges. (Inside cabin) This rate will go up as of July 5/09 and this fantastic price will be gone. A \$265.00 deposit per person is required to secure a cabin at this price which is totally refundable up till Sept.5 /09. You will not find a better price for this cruise. Also include is a \$50.00 US shipboard credit per cabin. Run and walk the Islands and Leave Your Footprint. Please visit [www.leaveafootprint.ca](http://www.leaveafootprint.ca) and see what lies ahead on the ultimate running vacation.

## Be Active at Altitude

Active at Altitude is holding 2 one week women's running and conditioning camps in Estes Park, CO from July 10-17, and September 14-21. These exciting camps blend activities and exercise sessions designed to raise conditioning levels and will focus primarily on running —ideal for any woman who can already run at least 6 miles at 10 minute per mile pace or faster (road times). The camp is residential at Active at Altitude, a mountain lodge retreat and training center at 8,200 feet in beautiful Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park.

The camps will be led by Terry Chiplin, BOLD-RUNNING coach, fitness and life coach, and owner of Active at Altitude. Terry will be joined by elite and international conditioning coaches, Damon and Deborah Leedale-Brown. Terry, Damon and Deborah have a broad spectrum of experience working with Olympic, World Championship, and recreational level athletes.

The camps are a wonderful opportunity to benefit from high-altitude training in one of the most beautiful and scenic areas in Colorado. As well as training sessions, interactive workshops will cover nutrition, motivation, race preparation, running with passion, and more. Plus, attendees will receive a camp journal and will have an opportunity to create personalized action plans to incorporate learning.

Cost for the camp is \$995.00 plus tax. Refer someone else that books and you will qualify for a referral discount off your rate. Rate includes accommodations (two women sharing a room), all meals, water and juices, all sessions, group transport, journals, towels and bedding. Food will be primarily vegetarian; special diets can be accommodated. Space is limited to 12 women per camp. There are a limited number of short stay places (minimum two days) available. For more information, contact Terry Chiplin at [terry@activeataltitude.com](mailto:terry@activeataltitude.com), or visit [www.activeataltitude.com](http://www.activeataltitude.com).

## Patagonia Running Adventure



This 17-day running adventure (\$2995) includes runs in three National Parks in Patagonia: Torres del Paine, Parque los Glaciares and Tierra del Fuego. Runs are in mountainous terrain below 4,000 ft. Distances generally range from about

10.5 to 19 miles, with shorter options available on some days. You view spectacular glacier-sculpted mountains, soaring granite towers (like the one pictured above), and turquoise blue lakes, run to the base of the Towers of Paine, and Cerro Torre, and Fitzroy, and see Patagonian wildlife such as penguins, guanacos, flamingos, foxes, geese, and ñandus. Stay in fine hotels and comfortable mountain shelters (refugios) – no camping! For details on this incredible trip contact [info@andesadventures.com](mailto:info@andesadventures.com) or visit [www.andesadventures.com/runadv.htm](http://www.andesadventures.com/runadv.htm)

## Learn about the Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team at: [www.usmrt.com](http://www.usmrt.com)



**NEW ENGLAND HOSTED CHAMPIONSHIPS**



On Sunday, June 28, runners from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, competed at the 2009 NACAC Mountain Running Championships at Cranmore Mountain Resort in North Conway, NH. The event also hosted the USA Mountain Running Championships and served as a Teva U.S. Mountain Team Selection Race where the top three U.S. men and the top U.S. woman were awarded berths on the team.

The 11 kilometer course for the Cranmore race was run for the first time last year at the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Cranmore Hill Climb. It tested the runners' ability to ascend — some sections had a 25% grade — and their agility on technical downhill over a 5.5 kilometer two-loop course.

Washingtonian Joseph Gray, 24, Lakewood, and Californian Christine Lundy, 38, Sausalito out-paced one of the deepest U.S. mountain running fields in recent memory to become the 2009 USA Mountain Running Champions today running 48:37 and 57:16 respectively. The pair also led team USA to gold medal podium spots in the men's and women's division of the North American Central American Caribbean Mountain Running Championships.



With his win, Gray made his second consecutive Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team. Freudenberg and Byrne also were named to the team. All three were members of last year's bronze-medal winning team at the World Mountain Running Championships in Switzerland.

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Lundy, with her win, becomes a four-time Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team member earning the sole team spot at Cranmore for the women. Lundy was on her first U.S. mountain team in 2005 and is the only two-time team gold medalist



as a member of both the 2006 and 2007 U.S. teams at Worlds.

"We were really excited to have such high caliber runners come to the Mount Washington Valley and the race was a great success. We had 250 registrants and nearly 40 finishers more than our previous high. I would say this is due to the national championships which attracted runners from 22 states. The White Mountain Milers are planning to submit a bid to host the Championships again in 2011," said event director Paul Kirsch.

Results at [www.whitemountainmilers.com/cranmore](http://www.whitemountainmilers.com/cranmore).

The second and final Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team selection race will be held in Colorado Springs at the July 26 Cheyenne Canon Mountain Race presented by Walmart where the top two U.S. women and the top two U.S. men will earn a berth on this year's team. For details visit [www.trailrunner.com](http://www.trailrunner.com).



Join us Thursday, July 23 at 6:30 p.m. in Calhan, CO for the 4th Annual Teva Paint Mines 6km Trail Race



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My ultra marathon career started on my 40th birthday on June 21, 1999 when I thought it would be fun to run 40 miles. It wasn't exactly fun, but it gave me something to talk about. I didn't know much about running ultras and ran the whole thing on water alone – not pretty. So of course when I turned 50 this year I just had to run 50 miles. Even though I now have ten years of ultra running under my belt, I hadn't run more than 40 miles – saving the big 50 for this day. My personal goal was 10 hours, though I advertised 11 hours.

On Saturday June 20 at around 3PM I started getting my equipment ready and laying it out on a table. My plan for that evening was to get everything ready by 8PM, take a quick nap and leave the house by 10PM. I'd decided on two stash points for fuel and water refills - one at mile 17 & 33 and one at mile 43. I selected the first point because I could hit it twice and effectively break up the course into thirds. The last stash point was "just in case" I needed it for the home stretch. The course I selected was a simple out and back on the Erie Canal towpath trail. Flat with an even finely crushed stone surface. Here's a map of the second 25 miles: <http://www.usatf.org/routes/view.asp?rID=288730>

On Friday, Hammer Nutrition sent me their sponsorship supplies for Wakely including 100 packets of [Perpetuem fuel](#) - Caffe Latte flavor! It's their fuel for endurance events over 2 hours - their promo says "*Perpetuem's unique formula containing complex carbohydrates, soy protein, healthy fats, and key auxiliary nutrients such as sodium phosphate is unsurpassed for maintaining optimal athletic performance for as long as you want. Perpetuem provides consistent, reliable energy, maximizes stored fat utilization, and buffers lactic acid to prevent muscle fatigue. On the road or trail, Perpetuem is the breakfast, lunch, and dinner of champions.*" I especially fell for the hype that Perpetuem would minimize lean muscle tissue cannibalization - wouldn't want that to happen. I sampled the product Friday night and it tasted pretty good (like weak iced coffee complete with caffeine) so I decided I would try it as my main fuel and hydration source.

Mixing the Perpetuem powder with water proved harder when using more than one packet. I started out trying to shake up the mix in a 32 ounce water bottle but the powder clumped. So I ended up putting the mix in the blender and ran it on low for a few seconds. That worked fine but I ended up with a thick foaming head on each batch that took a long time to settle. I prepared 60 oz of Perpetuem for my hydration pack. Hammer does not recommend using Perpetuem in hydration packs because it has a tendency to settle over time. I think this warning applies mostly to bikers because they have no way of agitating the mixture during a ride. Though I'm as graceful as a swan while I run, I figured my stride would agitate the mixture plenty - and it did. I had no problems with the bladder.

Rounding off my on person kit (neatly carried in my Ultimate Directions Endofun pack) would be:

#### For the body:

- 60 oz Perpetuem in bladder.
- 20 oz water in hand bottle
- 20 Endurolyte electrolyte capsules
- 10 ibuprofen tablets
- 10 Tums tablets
- 5 oz Raspberry Hammer Gel in flask
- 5 oz Tropical Hammer Gel (with caffeine) in flask
- Small bag of salted cashews
- 1 [Slim Jim](#) (in case of emergency)
- Moleskin, Band-Aids, paper towels

#### For the soul:

- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini book on MP3.
- My entire David Bowie collection on MP3 along with other songs from my youth.
- Blackberry (just in case)
- Garmin GPS with [custom harness](#)
- Petzel LED headlamp.
- Old washcloth for wiping my face

I also prepared 80 oz of Perpetuem which I poured into 4 old 20 oz Gatorade bottles for my stash. For mile 17/33 I planned on 3 Perpetuem and 2 water all in the 20 oz Gatorade bottles. For mile 43 I figured one Perpetuem and one water -20 oz each as well as three single serving Hammer Gel Espresso with 50mg each of caffeine. I double bagged the contents of each stash using shopping bags and inserted a note in each bag that said:

*June 21, 2009  
Runner on Trail  
Critical Supplies  
Please Do Not Remove*

Finally, I prepared on bottle of Hammer's [Recoverite](#) for the ride home after I completed the run. I poured the mix into a [Polar Bottle](#) which I received as a free sample. I placed it in the freezer so it would be cold when I arrived back at my truck. It sat in my truck for over 12 hours and when I finally tried to drink it, I was amazed to find it was still frozen solid. Oh well, at least I know that they work!

*(continued on page 9)*

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**RUNNING TIMES**

I had everything ready to go by 9PM and headed up-stairs for a quick nap. I'm not a good napper. When I go down, I go down deep and usually feel worse for a while when I wake. Not this time as no sleep would come, I just went over the details of the run in my head for an hour - at least I was off my feet.

At 10 PM I got dressed wearing a Performance shirt, short sleeve, Coolmax underwear (thighs liberally greased with Vaseline), - [Drymax Trail Running socks](#) (toes liberally greased with Vaseline), baggie Under Armor shorts, Vasque Velocity trail shoes.

I loaded my truck said my goodbyes to the family and headed out. Allison made one last plea for me to go to bed and start my run early in the morning. My original plan was to sleep in my truck on the west end of the trail and start the run at 3AM. But on Thursday, Allison's coworker mentioned that I should not be surprised to get a tap on my window from the Syracuse police. Seems that this parking area is somewhat of a hang out for men seeking men for "friendship." Hearing this, I changed my plans and decided it would be best to start at the east end of the trail which is in the middle of rural nowhere. I also decided that it would be better to start at midnight and avoid the hassle of sleeping in my truck and waking in the cold. Allison thought running 5 hours at night without sleep was a recipe for disaster. What if I got hurt? What if I was attacked by thugs? What if.... you get the idea. Unmoved, I headed out the door at 10:15PM.

I set my GPS for my first stop, [mile 17/33](#). At the end of a dead end road in Chittenango, I crossed the trail on foot and stashed my bag in the woods.

I made my way to the second stop, [mile 43](#) - Lenox Basin, NY. On the way I discovered I was nearly out of gas so I filled up in Canastota. Then on to my [starting point](#) near Dumbarton, NY.

I arrived at the starting point just before midnight. The weather forecast called for 100% chance of rain with heavy showers starting at 3AM. The satellite photos confirmed we were in the middle of a huge weather system which had been producing steady rains all day. Great. It was a misty drizzle when I stepped out of the truck. I put on a Gortex shell and Gortex rain cap and hit the trail precisely at midnight. About a quarter mile down the trail I realized that I left my MP3 player on the seat of my truck. So I turned around and headed back to the truck. As I was fiddling with my ear buds a car pulled into the parking area. I thought for sure it was a cop and that he would tell me I couldn't leave my truck there all night and that I couldn't use the trail after dark. Great. Turns out it was probably some kids looking for a place to smoke a joint. They parked 50

yards away so I quickly grabbed my player and jogged off down the trail fiddling with my player and scrolling through the chapters to the beginning of the book. Having finally sorted out my entertainment for the evening, I realized that I left my hand bottle and washcloth on the hood of my truck. Great. Once again I had to jog back a quarter mile or so to my truck and retrieve my gear. These false starts probably cost me about three quarters to a mile.

With a new moon and overcast skies, the trail was pitch black. My headlamp gave me 10-15 feet of visibility and that was plenty as the trail is dead straight for the most part and completely flat and smooth. The rain had stopped and a thick fog rolled in along the canal. I tried to keep my glasses clear but with the headlamp's glare I could no longer see well enough to navigate. I tucked my glasses in my pack where they would stay. I'm not that blind so I could see just fine. I was running in a tunnel of blackness. When I looked off to the side I could see eyes glowing in the dark...they were everywhere and I imagined all manner of beasts lurking around each turn.

During training, I ran both the beginning and end sections of the trail. But at night, everything looked different. There is a 2.2 mile section beginning around mile 1 where the trail ends and signs direct you onto Canal Rd. There are a couple of jogs in the road and I planned to avoid the jogs by running on Rt. 46 for a stretch until the trail started again. It looked pretty straight forward when viewed on Google-maps. But somehow I got turned around and even with my GPS I could not locate where the trail picked up again. Smartly, I deleted my previous tracks just before I started so I could not refer to my previous run on this section. However, I did keep a few waypoints and manually navigated the streets to the closest one near an intersection with the trail just a quarter mile or so away. When I arrived at this waypoint with trail barricades on either side of the road, my intuition told me which direction to go. I headed over the top of this huge dam (the point I marked) and down the trail a quarter mile or less. That's when I came upon a trail sign that warns the trail's end for 2.2 miles. I went the wrong way - I got lost in the fog - on a stupidly simple canal trail. I figured out where I went wrong when I got home. This little mishap cost me about 1 mile.

(continued on page 10)

ATRA members at the \$35 level receive a one-year subscription to *Trail Runner* magazine.

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Once I got turned around, the rest of the trip was uneventful as far as navigation goes. After only 2 or 3 hours my stomach began to go south and I fought off nausea for the next 8 hours. Water tasted great, the Perpetuem tasted OK, but I convinced myself that it was making me sick so I used it sparingly. I tried to stay on plan and take an electrolyte tablet every half hour but during the night time stretch it was more like every hour – maybe that was my problem?

The fog was still thick but I was making good time. I tried to walk some even though I didn't feel the need to. I arrived at the 17 mile mark roughly on schedule and located my stash without difficulty. I refilled my water bottle but did not need any Perpetuem at that point so I pressed on. Around 4AM it was light enough to turn off my headlamp. At around 5AM it was daylight and I reached my turn around point. I stopped at a bench to empty my shoes of pebbles for the second time. I was on schedule for my 10 hour goal and figured even with the inevitable second half slowdown, I could hit my goal so long as I didn't get lost or leave any equipment behind like I did at the start.

My feet were starting to get sore and my quads were getting trashed. I started walking more but kept up a decent pace. When I got back to the 17/33 mile stash I refilled my water bottle and chugged what was left of the water stash. I poured 2 more Perpetuem bottles into my bladder and dumped the third into the canal. At the final 43 mile stash, I took all of the water and dumped out the Perpetuem.

When I reached the sign warning that the trail ended for 2.2 miles (for the second time), my quads were in no shape for 2.2 miles of pavement. I tried to stick to the shoulder as much as possible. This was the longest 2.2 miles I've ran/walked in a long time. It was along this stretch that my eyes started playing tricks on me. As I jogged along the shoulder there appeared to me a rut running along the edge of the road. It was about the size of a tire track about 3 inches deep. I didn't want to roll my ankle in it so I tried to plant my feet in the middle of the rut. I soon realized that there was no rut at all. The path was flat but I what I saw was distorted. Eventually I learned to ignore my eyes and run normally. Hard to explain, but very weird.

When I got back on the trail I managed to run the entire way back to my truck. Chrono time read 9:54:03.

#### Final stats:

Start Time: 12:00 AM midnight

Finish Time: 9:54 AM

Pace: ~ 5mph or 12 min/mile

Fluids consumed: ~130 oz (80 oz water, 60 oz Perpetuem)

Hammer Gel consumed: only 4 oz (this surprised me)

Endurolyte electrolytes Consumed: 11 tablets

Batteries consumed: 4 AAAs

Low Points: Lost in the fog, fighting urge to vomit, battling mother geese on trail.

High Points: Seeing my truck in the distance at mile 49.5.

The drive home was probably the most dangerous part of the day. At one point I had to stop for a passing train. Sitting in my car I worried that I would fall asleep. When I closed my eyes I could see the negative image of a trail stretching out be-

fore me. I would hear the train and think back on the trains that passed me on the trail. There is an active rail that runs parallel to the trail and a train would pass almost every hour. The sound and rumble of the unseen train was pretty spooky. I finally made it home after about 45 minutes, took a shower and went to bed. I woke a few hours later, unpacked my gear and was treated to my favorite birthday meal: Chicken-fried steak, gravy, mashed potatoes, corn on the cob and tomato slices with mozzarella cheese and fresh basil. As I type this report I feel my bed calling me. I suspect I will soon give in – it's been a long day.



Jim finishing the 2008 Damn Wakeley Dam Ultra

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## Turnagain Arm Trail ushers in mountain race season

Trail racing returned to Southcentral Alaska, as it traditionally does, with the Turnagain Arm Trail Run. To the delight of all involved, sunny tepid skies bathed the course for the Tuesday, May 26 evening race.

The annual race has two distance options, alternating direction from year to year. 2009 offered a southbound contest. The four-mile race began at McHugh Creek, with the 7.5-mile version starting simultaneously at Potter. Both races finished at the Rainbow trailhead, where tales and camaraderie awaited. Par for the course, Turnagain Arm Trail was not without its four-legged hazards. Upon crossing a bridge over Rainbow Creek, 74-year-old Al Pedersen exclaimed, "There's a beautiful black bear at the corner." The disinterested bruin moved away in short order.

A more brazen threat loomed near the final one-mile sprint down Rainbow Hill. Racers were forewarned by a woman, that an agitated cow moose with her day old calf, were trapped between the trail and the cliffs. One hundred yards ahead, a man directed runners' attention to their exact location, only 30 feet off the trail. "She's pretty upset," he said.

He was right. The cow displayed every sign of ungulate aggression. The impromptu volunteers not only kept the moose at bay, but did everything possible to alleviate the imminent threat.

While racers and volunteers escaped injury by angry mega-fauna, many showed signs of wear and tear from the trail. All the runners' wounds appeared to be superficial cuts and bruises caused by wayward branches, rocks and the occasional fall.

A year ago, Lindsey Flagstad (the wife of race director, Trond Flagstad) sprained her ankle, two miles from the Rainbow trailhead. She had to hobble out. This year Flagstad placed third in the women's eight-mile course. Leslie Varys and Gillean Mittelstadt (among others) took a fall, serious enough to trade paint

with the trail, as evidenced by the blood and dirt on their legs at the finish line.

Down but not out, Varys clocked a time of 38 minutes and 28 seconds, to win with a six-minute cushion in the four-mile women's race. Mittelstadt, age 12, placed a phenomenal 10th (40:04) in the men's.

Andy Liebner tackled the longer course (including over 1,500 feet of elevation gain) with a winning time of 53:18. Najeby Quinn set the standard for the women at 1:09:42. Brad Precosky won the four-mile in 31:52.

The Turnagain Arm Trail Run is the first of at least six mountain and trail races throughout the area. The next race of similar ilk is the Robert Spurr Memorial Hill Climb (Sunday, June 21), a grueling mountain race to the summit of the 3,500-foot Bird Ridge. The Solstice/Father's Day (start time 10 a.m.) race is limited to 250 entrants, so online registration is recommended.

Forthcoming summer races include the Resurrection Pass 50-Miler from Cooper Landing to Hope. And in the Girdwood area, the Alyeska Climbathon and the Crow Pass Crossing.

The Alaska Runner's Calendar, containing information about these events and many others, is available at [www.alaskamountainrunners.org](http://www.alaskamountainrunners.org).

*Doc Doxtater also contributed to this article.*



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