

# TRAIL **ATRA** TIMES

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

## Running in Rocky Mountain National Park

by John Fridrich

During one of the Asylum Runners' Sunday trail runs in early June near Estes Park, Colorado, someone will off-handedly ask, "When are we running over the divide this year?"

Although nearly everyone is wearing a watch, no one ever seems to have a calendar handy, so Amy Plummer, who along with Shelley Doggett, figures out where the group will run each week, says she'll put out an email to the 40 or so 'members' to see which Sunday in July works best for everyone. After picking a date, Amy arranges for someone, generally her husband, Todd, to drop us off at the trailhead in Rocky Mountain National Park and pick us up on the other side, a decision is made about which of two routes to take and that's about the extent of the group's planning for the Up-and-Over-the-Divide run, a now annual event that began six years ago and climbs up the eastern side of the Continental Divide and meanders back down the western slope.

The Asylum's weekly runs take advantage of an extensive trail and dirt road system (back roads on snowy winter days) in the Estes Park

area, home to RMNP and Roosevelt National Forest. Anywhere from a few people to a dozen runners show up each Sunday, in fair weather and foul, winter, summer, fall and spring. The Over-the-Divide Run, however, invariably attracts a larger crowd, some of whom rearrange their plans so they can run. Friends from Boulder, Fort Collins and other Front Range communities,



looking for a new adventure, show up from time to time as well. Everyone meets at the RMNP headquarters at 6 a.m. to jam in a van provided courtesy of Harry Kent's Mountain Adventure Center for the 10-mile drive to Bear Lake, elevation 9,450

feet. An early start is mandatory since thunderstorms (why do people call them thunderstorms?— there's a flash of lightning that causes you to cringe in anticipation of having your chromosomes irreversibly scrambled then finally you hear the thunder) roll over the divide early in the afternoon on a regular basis.

"We've been fortunate weather wise," says Amy, who ran over the divide in the mid-90s with several friends to meet her husband, Todd, and several of his friends who had biked over on Trail Ridge Road. "Only strong winds back in 2004 that kept the leaders running and stretched us all out. But I'll say that we usually have some terrific wildlife sightings such as a huge herd of elk with young, a gathering of big bulls, multitudes of ptarmigan families and moose."

Once we pile out of the van at the trail head, people use the toilet, tighten shoe laces and chat about the prospect for foul – or favorable – weather. There's invariably an eager beaver in the group, someone anxious to turn our legs into jelly, who takes off running, smiling and urging on the rest of us laggards. After we trot up a short incline, there's a flat stretch of 50 yards or so, one of the few level or downhill spots for the next 2,849 feet and 4.4 miles.

*(continued on page 4)*

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## Adventures in Slovenia

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After the World Mountain Running Championships in Italy on September 6, I traveled to Slovenia with several of the World Mountain Running Association council members for a site visit of the proposed 2010 venue for Worlds. The natural beauty and spectacular trails were way beyond my preconceived expectations of this small country of the former Yugoslavia "bloc." In addition to the site visit, we visited the capital city of Ljubjana, hiked on the lower sections of Grintovec mountain, and hiked to the summit of Smarna Gora. The trails offer technical terrain, steep ups, steep and gnarly descents, rocks, tree roots, and fantastic views. I was amazed at the number of people recreating on Smarna Gora during the week. Our guide and fellow WMRA Council Member Tomo Sarf described the activity on the mountain, "On any given day at all hours of the day you'll see hikers and runners of all ages and ability levels on Smarna Gora." With a restaurant at the summit offering a deck with views to the valley floor some 650 meters below, it's an incredible resting point after the climb. The mountain will celebrate the 30th running of the Smarna Gora race, a wickedly tough 9.5k, on October 3 this year. The event is the final race on the international WMRA Grand Prix circuit ([www.wmra.info](http://www.wmra.info)) and attracts runners from across the globe. After visiting the area and meeting organizers of the proposed 2010 World Champs, I look forward to a return trip next fall with the mountain running team. Happy Trails, Nancy

## ATRA RACE & CLUB MEMBERS

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Contributors to this issue of *Trail Times* include:

Born to Run — Review  
*Laura Clark*

7 Sisters & Escarpment  
*Laura Clark*

Rocky Mountain Running  
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## 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



The trail climbs through Alpine forest, following an obligatory switchback or two or three or..., occasionally skirting Tyndall Gorge to provide glimpses of Hallett Peak, the lakes at the base of the gorge and higher up Tyndall Glacier sweeping down from Flattop Mountain.

While the altitude and uphill grind take its toll on the group, running on or stepping over rocks of all shapes and sizes requires balance and focus, makes it impossible to maintain a rhythm and drains the energy. A momentary lapse in attention can result in the evitable stumble and even the occasional fall.

As the trail continues toward the summit of Flattop Mountain, the trees become stunted and less dense, scraggly and twisted by the winds that blow over the top of the divide, until we're

running on open tundra, rocky and exposed to the elements. If the wind is persistent and strong, even the heartiest runners slow to a vigorous hiking pace. In late July, a large patch of snow covers part of the trail near the summit, but hikers have preceded us and punched steps in the snow.

The first runners pull up when the trail flattens out at the summit, 12,324 feet in elevation, a convenient spot to snack, regroup, take a few photos or walk a short distance to peer over the edge of Tyndall Gorge. Panoramic views extend to the horizon, to the Never Summer Mountains on the west, the Estes Park valley and Eastern plains beyond, the Mummy Range and Long's Peak.

Because our ride back to Estes Park needs to know where to meet us on the western side, we've already decided to follow either the North Inlet trail or the Tonahutu when, after a

short trot, we come to the fork in the trail. Both options ease downhill at first, more or less paralleling the divide for a mile or so before each begins to drop more sharply.

Although it's a relief initially to be running downhill, the 'easier' part of the run involves descending at least 3,500 feet; where power-hiking may have been preferable at times during the uphill, it's complement – power-braking on the steeper, rocky sections of the downhill – exacts its own toll on the legs. Steeper in places, with numerous acute switchbacks, the North Inlet trail is 17.4 miles in length, 1.3 longer than the Tonahutu. The descent is nearly the ascent in reverse, with views stretching for miles until the trail drops below tree line. Once down off the tundra, both trails pass creeks on occasion, providing opportunities to refill water containers and enjoy bracing dip in a pool.

First-timers are surprised (distressed too) to discover that it's not all downhill at this point.

Though no longer than a hundred yards, a series of several dozen heart-breaking inclines litter the trail; dirt has replaced rock and roots are more likely to cause a stumble. The reaction of people we meet hiking up the trail tends toward admiration, mixed occasionally with the skeptical look conveying the notion that we didn't need to get struck by lightning to have our chromosomes scrambled.

The camaraderie of having finished a challenging three to four-hour run continues at a restaurant in Grand Lake. In 2008, a group of friends of the cycling persuasion pedaled over Trail Ridge Road to join us for a dip in the lake and lunch.

"I enjoy being able to run 15 plus miles without re-tracing a step," says Amy Plummer. "There's nothing like running up on the tundra. The ride back in the van usually has its fun moments, too."



*Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen*, by Christopher McDougall. Knopf, 2009.

Just substitute your own problem body part for Christopher McDougall's simple question, "Why does my foot hurt?" and you can instantly identify with his dilemma. McDougall does not want to win a race or qualify for Boston—all he wants is his daily five mile fix. As an adventure writer and former war correspondent, his body seems remarkably indestructible. That is, until he laces on a pair of running shoes and begins to jog his placid Pennsylvania countryside.

In a desperate effort to feel whole again, McDougall's journalistic mind, followed by his hobbled body and financed by *Runner's World* and *Men's Health* leads him on a byzantine quest through cutting edge science all the way back to our hunter-gatherer beginnings. Refusing to accept his doctor's injunction that the human body simply is not designed for running, his journey toward redemption is in itself an endurance epic, pitting him against drug runners, Mexico's desolate Copper Canyons and firmly entrenched scientific myths. Somewhere along the trail he not only finds the answer to our perennial question/complaint, but learns so much more than mere bio-mechanics.

McDougall's quest to insert running man into the gazelle/lion scenario leads him to the desolate Copper Canyons of Mexico, the last stand of the Tarahumara Indians, an almost mythical tribe of Stone Age superathletes who call themselves the Raramuri, the Running People. And no wonder. They think nothing of running sixty miles or so across rough desert terrain just to get to the site of a forty-eight hour race.

After a cops and robbers scene worthy of Laurel and Hardy, McDougall finally locates the elusive Caballo Blanco, a former prize fighter with a former busted-up body who has lived restoratively among the Tarahumara for ten years. Caballo takes him for an enlightening run, explaining the basics: "Think *Easy, Light, Smooth, and Fast*. You start with easy, because if that's all you get, that's not so bad." Caballo's mantra is surprisingly similar to the techniques espoused by Chi Running, the Pose Method and the cult of barefoot running.

The price for these lessons? McDougall becomes the point man for Caballo's dream: a fifty mile race between Americans, Mexicans and Tarahumara on Raramuri stomping grounds. Billed as "The Greatest Race the World Had Never Seen," the United States contingent features Scott Jurek, arguably the top ultrarunner in the country, Jenn Sheldon, a surfer girl turned ultrarunner and Barefoot Ted, the authority on Vibram FiveFingers and now Tarahumara-style Huarache sandals.

Reading *Born to Run* is rather like deciphering those layered novels that shift back and forth across time and character subplots. Coincidental to McDougall's quest for unhindered running and Caballo's race director mishaps, we visit Western States and Leadville, sample a persistence running hunt with Bushmen and visit Bill Bowerman's waffle iron. We learn that less is more when it comes to shoe price but more trumps less when you are toting wilderness supplies.

As the fifty mile contest of mind over body nears completion, what shines through is the sheer joie de vire of the event

itself. It seems the secret to running like the Tarahumara has to do more with sheer delight and community spirit than with training tables or VO2 max. The spectators, basically the entire town of Urique, and the runners have themselves become the event. Although the race features a hard-fought photo finish, it is a finish that unites rather than divides. Small, unheralded acts of kindness feature just as much in the final outcome as leg turnover. In the end, those who get the most applause are those who have struggled the most just to make it to the finish line.

While I have read many books on running and written many reviews, I am always somewhat surprised and disappointed when a fellow runner comments, "Now that I have read your review, I don't have to read the book." Not so with *Born to Run*. Although geared to trail runners and ultra aficionados, it strikes an everyman chord with runners of all persuasions. McDougall's investigative forays are seamlessly interwoven with his personal journey so that readers never feel ping-ponged back and forth between time and place. Look for *Born to Run* to assume its place alongside such cult classics as John Parker's *Once A Runner*.

## Project Athena Foundation



The mission of Project Athena is to help women with breast cancer and other medical or traumatic setbacks live their athletic and adventurous dreams through the Project Athena Foundation. Awareness for Project Athena will be achieved through the ultra endurance endeavors of an experienced and high profile all-female adventure team who embody the spirit of Athena.

[www.projectathena.org](http://www.projectathena.org)



**2009 Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team**



**The area surrounding the World Champs venue.**

On Sunday, September 6, in the winter ski village of Madesimo, Italy, the 25<sup>th</sup> World Mountain Running Championships were held. The weather was clear and crisp with temperatures in the upper 50s for the start of the competition which featured thirty-five countries in the four races.



**U.S. Junior Women**

The junior women started the day with a single lap of the 4.3 km course. The runners were tested with steep climbs

and some rocky sections on the descents. The terrain was a mixture of grass, packed dirt trail, and grassy sections with some rocks and roots to keep the athletes focused on their footing. In order to run well the athletes would have to be strong climbers, fearless descenders and able to transition between the various grades.



Megan Morgan, 17, Del Mar, CA, was the first U.S. athlete of the day to cross the finish line, earning a silver medal – the best individual junior finish following last year’s bronze medal by Californian Alex Dunne. Turkey’s Can Yasemin won the gold medal with a time of 22:18 with Morgan just 17 seconds in arrears. Angelica Mach of Poland was the bronze medalist in 22:56. Robyn Arnold, 16, Redlands, CA, rounded out the U.S. scoring taking 23<sup>rd</sup> in 25:39. Alex Dent, 17, Scott Depot, WV, was unable to finish after taking a spill on a road crossing approximately two miles into the race. In all 42 juniors (at least 16 in the year of competition and not yet 20) completed the course. Turkey captured the team title with five points (the top two finishers on the team count in the scoring). Romania placed second with 13 points and Poland finished in bronze-medal position with 20 points. The next three teams were all separated by just one point. Team USA finished with 25 points in seventh position out of 14 full teams. This was the second best finish for the junior girls trailing only the 2007 team which finished second.

The junior men were up next, with two circuits and 8.6 km’s to complete. The teams from Turkey and Italy had a close battle with Italian Xavier Chevier taking a decisive victory, crossing the line in 38:26 nearly a minute up on his closest challenger. Turkish team mates Mzaffer Bayram and Alper Demir, took second and third respectively in 39:22 and 39:32. Nineteen seconds later Brandon Lord, 17, Hixson, TN, crossed the line after running a controlled and very-regulated race starting in ninth position and moving to eighth after the first loop and picked off other competitors to move up in the standings. Lord bettered Tim Smith’s fifth place from 2008 and is now the all-time top placing junior man. This is all the more impressive as this was Brandon’s first mountain race. Dan Nafziger, 18, Harrisonburg, VA, and Brian Rooney, 19, Arlington, VA, were the next two U.S. finishers closing out the team scoring in 39<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> places respectively. They finished 12 seconds apart in 44:11

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**Racing with Buffaloes on Catalina Island**

The third annual Catalina Eco Marathon, 10k, and 5k will be held on Saturday, November 14, 2009, and will showcase the



very best of Catalina Island, California. Run over 20 miles of single track trails and ridgelines with views of the Pacific Ocean on both sides of the island. Run through a variety of eco-systems, each with unique plant and animal life. Don't be surprised to see buffalo on the course, seals frolicking in the ocean, and bald eagles overhead. Last year saw entries of 200 for the marathon, 221 in the 10k, 60 in the 5k for a total of 471. *Competitor* magazine recently named Catalina's Eco Marathon's medal as one of the "most desired" medals. The event benefits the Catalina Island Conservancy.



ATRA members interested in racing Catalina this year, use CODE: ECO2009 for \$10 off your race entry in the Marathon Category. **Expires – October 25, 2009 at 11:59pm.**

**An Interesting Spin on a Lottery Entry System  
Massanutten Mountain Trails 100 Mile Run (MMT)**

The entry procedure for MMT has changed over the years to reflect the growing interest in the event. During the first ten years of MMT, the entry procedure was very straightforward. Runners would fill out the application and mail it with a check for the entry fee, and they were in. Runners did need to show that they

qualified as an ultrarunner (they had to have completed an ultra), or the application would be returned. During the past five years as more applications than available slots were received, a waiting list was introduced.

The entry process opens in December — usually December 1. This gives runners a long period of time to train once they've made the commitment to run the May event. At the same time, it means that other things get in the way of their participation and they may have to withdraw their entry.

When organizers receive a withdrawal request from an entrant, they move someone over from the waiting list to the entrants' list and provide the withdrawing runner a refund. There is a section on the race website entitled "Odds of getting Off the Waiting List." Many runners on the waiting list make it into the race. On race day organizers are always very close to the number of starters that their permit allows.

The surge in applications to MMT caused organizers to institute a lottery process and to accept online entries. The first year it took a few weeks to reach the entry limit, eventually the race filled in just a few hours.

Organizers knew they had to change the process to be fair to everyone who wanted to enter. They realized that if a potential entrant couldn't sit at a computer to enter as soon as the event opened the process, they wouldn't stand a chance of getting in. Thus, a lottery system was introduced — one in which everyone — fast or slow, last year's winner or the last place finisher — has the same chance of being selected. To a statistician it is a "fair" lottery.

Organizers draw every name in the lottery to also establish a waiting list. Of the 300 applicants to the lottery, 180 are accepted into the race while the remainder are put on the waiting list.

For the waiting list organizers give preference to their volunteers, previous winners, etc. The lottery losers are grouped by category — previous MMT champions, volunteers, etc. — and their place in the lottery then determines the order of the potential entrants within each of these categories.

The process works like this: Enter the lottery by filling out the on-line application; the system assigns a random number; on lottery day the last three digits of the closing value of the DOW is the starting point for determining who gets a spot in the race. If the DOW closed UP for the day, and its value was 9706.62, then the starting number is 662. The person who had that number is the first one into the run. Organizers then go UP, since the DOW was up for the day. So the next person is the one with random number 663, etc.

The DOW was chosen for two reasons. First the last three digits of its value are effectively random and second, organizers wanted a number that everyone could see and access easily. The entrants' list and the waiting list are maintained on the race website so that everyone can see who is in the run. In particular, people on the waiting list can watch as they move up the list as withdrawals occur. As they move close to the top, they know that their better be doing their training. For more information on the MMT, or to register for this year's event — slated for May 15, 2010 — visit: [www.vhtrc.org](http://www.vhtrc.org).

**ATRA is a proud member of the following organizations**



fill in the blanks between Ben's sections, knowing that each year will present a different challenge.

For Escarpment Trail, like Dunkerhook Woods, seems to live by its own rules, disdaining those dictated by outsider weather patterns. Witness last year when the weather guessers' "possible showers late in the afternoon" flip-flopped into three hours of thunder, lightning, torrential rain and hail commencing mid-morning and ending only as the last runners sloshed across the finish line.

So I crossed the bridge warily, not at all confident of my welcome. But as I began the first ascent of the day up Windham Peak, something magical occurred. The Dutch Masters' brooding clouds parted, revealing twinkling, rain-refreshed leaves wafting Dunkerhook's inviting, oxygen-filled breeze. With this personal invitation, I felt invincible; or at the very least, confident I would make the cutoff. But as with all enchantments, there is a price to pay. Escarpment could offer pristine air, fresh raspberries and encouraging bird-song one minute and then abruptly about-face with moldy jungle fumes, poison iridescent berries and haunted trees the next.

Escarpment is unique among most trail races in that all aid station supplies have to be hauled in by volunteers who get just as much exercise and definitely more weight training points than the runners. For this reason, participants must be almost self-sufficient, able to survive to the next oasis if one greeting point runs out of supplies. So I weighted my pocketed Hammer shorts (this is not an advertisement, I just am really thrilled with my latest gear addition) with gel, numbing Vitamin I and the mint candies I savor towards the end of any long effort when even the most extensive smorgasbord holds little appeal.

Somewhere between Dutcher's Notch and Stoppel Point, I decided it would be prudent to break out the business meeting mints my husband Jeff had thoughtfully acquired. These mints were green, matching the forest theme and a definite

change from my usual candy cane variety. Best of all, the wrapper was not a sticky twisty effort but a one-stop pop in your mouth affair. Except that there was no pop—rather like the champagne without the fizz. There I stood, rooted to the precipice defeated not by mud or rock slides, but by cellophane. At this point Rob Scott chivalrously paused, suspecting that I was perhaps hurt or otherwise in distress. Rob gamely donned his White Knight apparel and stepped back into the twenty-first century, letting five runners go past as he wrestled the wrapper to the ground. The cellophane won – a scary testament to the effectiveness of our modern germ-free, shrink-wrapped society. Or perhaps it was enchanted. Rob, meanwhile, was gladdened to be running this trail where the code of chivalry is still more valued than road minutes per mile. I was glad too, having received my peppermint mental boost without the calories.

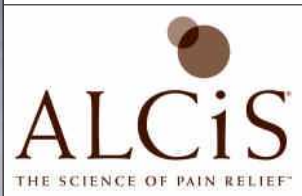
Apparently, the Woods enchanted entire groups of finishers, convincing them that this year's deep, slippery mud was so much worse than last year's torrential rain-swollen rivers, giant hailstones and lightning strikes. Granted, there was more tell-tale blood on the course, highlighted by a dripping trail of the stuff on the out-of-category climb up Blackhead.

Perhaps the problem was perceptual. Last year we abandoned all time goals in favor of survival. This year, with just slime to contend with, folks retained their high expectations. Puzzlingly, with mud the only contender, the unofficial word was that this was the first time in thirty-three years that more than half the field recorded over five hours on the trail.

Still, at least one runner remained unfazed and it wasn't even the perennial winner, Ben Nephew. As we were heading to the campsite to give the shower system a good workout, Jeff and I spotted a young lady running. Not an unusual sight, except that she was proudly wearing this year's race T-shirt. But at least she had the good sense to stick to the roads!



Photo: Garry Harrington



[www.ALCiS.com](http://www.ALCiS.com)



A recent weekend rendezvous with Garry Harrington in San Diego included trail runs with venues and terrain as diverse as one could find in an area with miles of beaches, and elevations



that vary from sea level to 1,500 feet or more in cities and towns adjacent to San Diego proper.

The first location we visited was one I had enjoyed two years ago while attending the annual Running USA Conference

— Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve, home of our nation's rarest pine tree - *Pinus torreyana*. The Reserve offers eight miles of trails and is located between La Jolla and Del Mar. It rises from the sea with cliffs buffeting the shore and trails to include single track, erosion-controlling



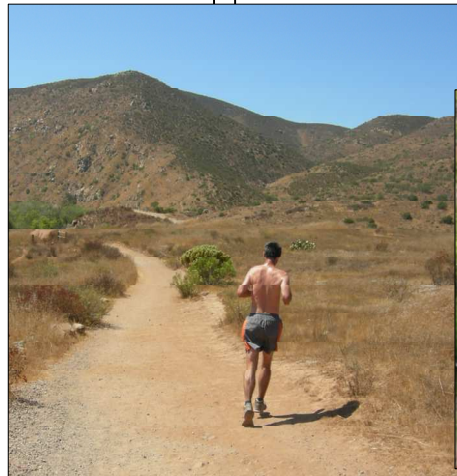
stairways, sand, rocks, and incredible vistas. A paved roadway flanks the side parallel to the sea and boasts a climb of some 300 feet in .8 miles — conducive to hill repeats,

or just a long, slow and controlled ascent. The trails in Torrey Pines can be accessed from the

roadway, or from a series of steps rising up from the beach.

The second trail run was in Mission Trails Regional Park located between San Diego, La Mesa, and Santee. The park was established in 1974 and encompasses some 5,800 acres of mountains, lakes, and valleys to include rugged canyons and hills with over 50 miles of trails. The highest point in the park is at Cowles Mountain — 1,592 feet — which is also the highest point in the city of San Diego. More than 30 archaeological sites have been identified within the park and it is also the site of the Old Mission Dam (pictured below), built to store water for the Mission San Diego de Alcalá.

With little to no shade, the trails get mighty warm. Temps were in the 80s when Garry and I started our run and there was not a cloud in the sky. Having carried no water, an hour run was plenty long enough considering the heat. Since our run touched just a few miles of trails, the area is certainly worthy of a return visit.



**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**

*Champions: Eric Skaden & Bree Lambert, Masters Champions: Robert Evans & Lambert*

**USA 50 Mile Trail — July 25 Crystal Mountain, WA**

*Champions: Anton Krupicka & Kami Semick, Masters Champions: William Emerson & Semick*

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

*Champions: Erik Skaggs & Joelle Vaught, Masters Champions: Neil Olsen & Beverley Anderson-Abs*

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

*Champions: Michael Spence & Kristin Price, Masters Champions: Andy Ames & Lisa Goldsmith*

**USA Trail Marathon — November 7, Ashland, OR**



Rooney

and 44:23. Tim Smith, 19, Roanoke, VA, took 55<sup>th</sup> place in 46:10 in the field of 68 finishers. Turkey was the top team with 14 points (three runners score) with Italy a mere two points back. Great Britain took home the bronze with 52 points. The U.S. team finished 8<sup>th</sup> among the 17 countries. The 8<sup>th</sup> place finish ties the second best (2006) all-time.

The senior women were the third to compete over two loops of the course which featured 1,800' of climb and descent. Average grades

on the climb were 20% and 10% on the descent. The U.S. women ran packed tightly together passing through the first lap with the four athletes each in the top 20. That grouping would not change by the finish with all four crossing within 48 seconds. Elisa

Desco (43:39), Valentina Belotti (44:04), and Maria Grazia Roberti (44:23) all used their "home field advantage" to lead Italy to a total domination of the team scoring (three runners score) with a perfect score of 6 points. Brandy Erholtz, 32, Bailey, CO, led the way for the USA finishing tenth in 45:23. Christine Lundy, 39, Sausalito, CA, (45:41) 13<sup>th</sup>, Megan Kimmel, 29, Silverton, CO, (45:46) 15<sup>th</sup>, and Megan Lund, 25, Basalt, CO, (46:11) 17<sup>th</sup> were able to grab the bronze medal with 38 points. They finished 16 points behind the silver medal squad from Great Britain. The third place finish trails only the two gold medal finishes of 2006 and 2007. In all there were 69 finishers representing 14 countries.



#56 Erholtz

The final race of the day was the senior men's three grueling circuits of the course, all between 5,000' and 6,300.' The African teams moved to the front in the early going. Geoffrey Kusoro of Uganda forged a 54 second lead by the end, crossing the line in 54:51. Azerya Teklag Welde-mariam of Eritrea placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in 55:45. The final medal was taken by James Kibet (Uganda) in 55:54.



Benford

The U.S. team was led by former junior team member (12<sup>th</sup> place 2006) Andrew Benford, 21, Roanoke, VA. He moved into the top 15 and passed teammate Joe Gray, 25, Lakewood, WA, with approximately a mile to go. Benford placed 13<sup>th</sup> in 58:09 with Gray finishing 16<sup>th</sup> in 58:43. The final four team members all finished in a tight pack in places 42, 46, 47, and 48, with only 12 seconds separating them. Matt Byrne, 34, Scranton, PA, and Zac Freudenberg, 31, St. Louis, MO, were the scoring members in 1:01:26 and 1:01:34 in a field that featured 138 finishers. Rickey Gates, 28, Boulder, CO, and Tim Parr, 27, Gunnison, CO, crossed seconds later in 1:01:36 and 1:01:38. The team competition was won by Eritrea with 24 points with Italy second with 39 points and Turkey rounding out the medals with 75 points. USA finished in sixth with 117 points.

To review hour-by-hour coverage of the World Mountain Running Champs from team leader Richard Bolt, visit: <http://twitter.com/usmrt>. For a complete list of results visit [www.wmrc2009.org](http://www.wmrc2009.org).

Slovenia is slated to host the 26<sup>th</sup> World Mountain Running Championships on September 5, 2010, on an uphill-only course. (The mascot of the Slovenia event is pictured to the right). Selection races for the U.S. team will be determined at the USATF Annual Meeting in December 2009.



In only its third year, the GORE-Tex® TransRockies Run has become a leader in the growing field of multi-day stage races, a spiking popularity that has led to a sold out field and international press coverage.

This year, 120 teams of two ran 113 miles of grueling terrain over six stages and 20,000 feet of vertical gain from Buena Vista, Colorado to the Beaver Creek resort, with the competitors staying in a Woodstock-like mobile tent village every night.

The organizers of the event also stage the wildly-popular TransRockies Challenge multi-day mountain bike race, and the move into running has been fairly seamless, according to Event Director Aaron McConnell.

“Stage running races are pretty big overseas, but North America really hasn’t had a chance to experience them,” said McConnell. “Our field has doubled every year, and with the help of sponsors like Gore-Tex and Salomon, we’re really feeding a pent-up demand and expect the running events to continue to grow.”

Most of the 240 participants enjoy the race as a sort of running vacation, but this year’s competitive field, fighting for a slice of the \$25,000 prize purse, was highlighted by a list of ultra running luminaries, including both Western States winners — Hal Koerner and Anita Ortiz — as well as Dean Karnazes, Kami Semick, Nikki Kimball, and Helen Cospolich.

The fastest time of the race was turned in by Flagstaff, Arizona-based Michael Smith and Robert Krar, who stunned the

organizers by completing the entire course in under fifteen hours.

The most competitive of the five divisions was in the all-women’s field, where young trail running stars Caitlin Smith and Devon Crosby-Helms built a huge-first day lead on North Face-sponsored Kami Semick and Nikki Kimball, as well as another strong team of Anita Ortiz and Prudence l’Heureux. The North Face veterans chipped away at the lead all week, and during the final day pulled far ahead of Smith and Crosby-Helms, who powered through the last miles with just enough time to win the GC by a slender two minutes.

**Other division winners included:**

**Men’s 80+**

Team Salomon PC — *Ted Russell & Greg Kotzbauer*

**Women’s 80+**

Team Twister Sisters — *Carolyn Hutchins & Jennifer Heffel*

**Open Mixed**

Team Montrail NSA — *Gary Robbin & Tamsin Antsey*

Registration details for the 2010 event can be found at the following link: [www.transrockies.com](http://www.transrockies.com)

Photo: *Women's Open Division winners Caitlin Smith and Devon Crosby-Helms crest Hope Pass during Stage Two of the Gore-Tex TransRockies Run. Photo courtesy; Dan Hudson/TransRockies*



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