

# The Heartland 100

by Randy Albrecht R.D.

Running in the prairie was a new experience for many of the first-time participants in the Heartland 100. In his book *Prairie Earth*, William Least Heat-Moon describes the prairie as, "Whatever else prairie is—grass, sky, wind—it is most of all a paradigm of infinity, a clearing full of many things except boundaries, and its power comes from the apparent limitlessness; there is no such thing as a small prairie any more than there is a little ocean, and the consequence of both is this challenge."

Temperatures were in the mid-40s for the start of the 100-mile, as a cold front moved through the area. Winds out of the north would become an obstacle for runners to deal with throughout the event. The projected rain never materialized and the sky was crystal clear by late morning however, providing the runners with unsurpassed views of the Flint Hills tall grass prairie. High temperatures for the

day were in the upper 50s, and by early evening the winds had lessened. As the runners were enjoying an evening of running under the clear star filled skies, Mother Nature decided it was time for some more Kansas wind. The increasing wind along with temperatures falling to the low 40's caught many runners off guard between their drop bags.

Returning champions Charles Stodter and Monica Scholz highlighted the field, along with 48 percent of last year's participants. Phil Sheridan set the early pace, covering the first 50 km in 4:03. Mark Henderson and David Wakefield, who was running only his second ultra, followed. By the turnaround it looked to be a two-man race, with Phil reaching the 50-mile mark in 7:05, followed by Mark in 7:33. Phil was forced to retire from the race at 83 miles however, and Mark continued on his mission of redemption after his second-place finish last year and finished in a fast 17:17:50—an impressive course record. Charles Stodter demonstrated the same consistent pacing as he did last year, finishing in 20:40:06. At the awards ceremony he proudly displayed a perfect Indian arrowhead he had found on the course during the race.

Early in the women's race, Monica Scholz and Molly Gibb were closely matched, however Monica's consistent pace allowed her to gradually pull away. Monica went on to defend her women's title, set a course record of 20:32:34, and finish second overall. What makes her performance even more impressive was that she had an equally fine performance the previous week at the Arkansas Traveler 100. Yen Nguyen ended up passing Molly and continued on to finish second in 25:18:10, with Molly finishing third in a time of 25:56:31.

For runners seeking a different adventure, or just a good race for their first attempt at 100 miles, the openness of the prairie presents challenges and views uniquely



Monica Scholz is all smiles.

different from other races. We look forward to seeing everyone next October for the third annual Heartland 100.

*Jack Menard adds:*

The October issue of *UltraRunning* contained 39 reviews of ultras across the nation. This attests to the number of races being offered. My wife and I wanted to run something different for my first-100 mile and her first 50-mile. The Heartland 100/50 looked good and was also within driving distance from our home base of Denver, so we decided that was the race we would attempt.

It is easy to be humbled when running a mountain race. We were to find that same feeling while running beneath a blanket of stars, with only the unending horizon filling one's vision. This race is unique, to say the least. It is no cakewalk. The 6,042 feet of climb through the Flint Hills tall grass prairie provides a serious challenge. Nowhere else can you run with a 360-degree field of view, with nothing but open space as far as you can see. Occasional oil rigs churn with the same sounds they have made since the turn of the century.



Kevin Guest broke 24 hours.

Cattle crossings become welcome distractions from the pace.

Forget pasta at the pre-race dinner—this is Kansas, and meat is king. The Cassoday Café (founded in 1879!) catered a great menu of home cooking; in addition, the aid station at miles 31 and 62 offered Dave's famous "Prairie Power Pellets," a unique blend of prairie beans mixed with wieners. Our thanks go out to all the great volunteers. We made a lot of new friends who we hope to see again.

## Heartland 100 Mile

Cassoday, Kansas

October 13

Fields and trails

### 100 Miles

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Mark Henderson, 41, TX         | 17:17:50 |
| 2. <u>Monica Scholz</u> , 34, ONT | 20:32:34 |
| 3. Charles Stodter, 44            | 20:40:06 |
| 4. Butch Allmon, 46, TX           | 22:18:01 |
| 5. Max Roycroft, 37, TX           | 22:18:08 |
| 6. Fred Dummar, 32, MO            | 22:55:19 |
| 7. Kevin Guest, 33, MO            | 23:26:34 |
| 8. Dimitri Kieffer, 35, WA        | 25:12:25 |
| 9. <u>Yen Nguyen</u> , 39, TX     | 25:18:10 |
| 10. Phil Wright, 57, CA           | 25:19:21 |
| 11. Peter Bennett, 26, TX         | 25:21:40 |
| 12. Conrad Pomykala, 47, IL       | 25:52:17 |
| 13. <u>Molly Gibb</u> , 40, OK    | 25:56:31 |
| 14. Kevin McCormick, 42, TX       | 25:56:32 |
| Jim Sullivan, 49, FL              | 25:56:32 |
| 16. Jack Menard, 51, CO           | 26:58:23 |
| 17. Richard Maloof, 40, IN        | 27:34:12 |
| 18. Vincent Swendsen, 39, AL      | 27:38:09 |
| 19. Douglas Dziedzic, 39, NY      | 27:55:31 |
| 20. Lee Norris, 53, TX            | 28:06:02 |
| 21. Nels Bentson, 57, OK          | 28:18:56 |
| Rex Friend, 47, OK                | 28:18:56 |
| 23. <u>Louise Mason</u> , 48, IL  | 28:28:36 |
| 24. Lynn Karner, 44, IL           | 28:31:58 |
| 25. Long Vu, 52, OK               | 29:06:19 |
| 26. <u>Anita Fromm</u> , 30, CO   | 29:13:36 |
| 27. Jim Perry, 52, OK             | 29:18:54 |
| 28. Bruce Hilton, 63, ONT         | 29:29:22 |
| 29. <u>Angela McEwen</u> , 33, IN | 29:29:40 |

39 starters

### 50 Miles

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. James Maher, 46               | 8:02:28  |
| 2. Raul Flores, 45               | 8:29:28  |
| Dave McGuire, 47, MO             | 8:29:28  |
| 4. Mark Crisman, 37              | 9:31:57  |
| 5. Scott Demaree, 50, TX         | 9:36:32  |
| 6. Chris Haigh, 36               | 11:22:52 |
| 7. John Blaylock, 58, CO         | 12:55:16 |
| 8. <u>Dottie Duncan</u> , 47, IL | 13:06:58 |
| Rocky Holly, 47, CO              | 13:06:58 |
| Jerry Sullivan, 40, LA           | 13:06:58 |
| 11. <u>Jaime Menard</u> , 42, CO | 13:32:55 |

11 starters

# Plain 100 Course Wins Again

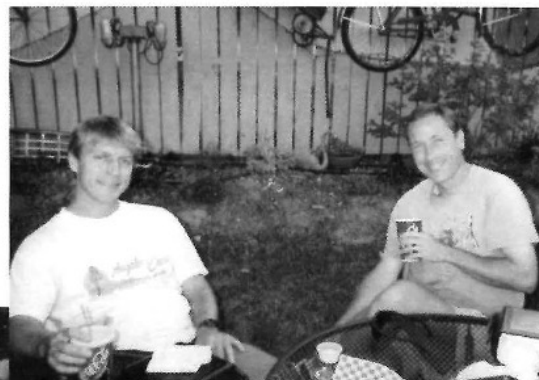
by Tom Ripley, R.D.

The Plain 100 reached its limit of 25 runners with five on the waiting list by May of this year. Runners from 14 states and three countries signed up—the most experienced field yet to attempt Plain. The terrorist attacks on the Tuesday prior to the race and the resulting travel complications reduced the starting field to 13 runners. These runners had among their ultra finishes multiple Hardrock, Badwater, Barkley, Iditasport, Marathon Des Sables, Wasatch, Leadville, Angeles Crest, and Western States races. With that many experienced runners we were looking forward to the runners gaining the upper hand on the course this year. Everything was in place for a great run: Clear weather, good trail conditions, experienced runners to push each other over the 100 miles of climbs, rocks, heat, thick dust, and rutted trails—all with runners carrying everything they needed to survive in the back country for at least 55 miles before again being able to restock.

After the pre-race breakfast Randy Gehrke, one of the only two runners ever to finish Plain (and a detective for King County in Washington State) held a brief ceremony for all who had lost their lives in that week's tragic events. Randy presented all runners with an American flag bandana to wear during the race. This sign of solidarity was evident all day as runners met each other out on the trails.

The 5:00 a.m. start this year allowed for an extra hour of daylight at the end of

the day to give the runners a better chance of getting through the first loop in daylight. In addition to battling the course, runners had an extra foe this year, as the temperatures at the Entiat River were in excess of 90 degrees F when most runners were there. The heat compounded the difficulty of the climb from the Entiat River to Tyee Ridge, which rises 4,500 feet in five miles and is dry and exposed. This forces runners to carry enough water for the dry section up the long climb. The extra hour of daylight did not make a great deal of difference, as only four runners were able to get out of the Deep Creek drop bag station at 55 miles to start loop two. This was after taking 18 or more hours to complete loop one. All four of the runners were out of the race by mile 67 at Twin Creek/Alder Ridge. For the second year in a row runners had navigational problems in the most accessible portion of the trail, which made it very difficult to commit to going back to the high country with little or no chance to beat the 36-hour time limit. Thanks to all the volunteers who made this year's Plain 100 safe and possible.



George Trahern and Mark Hartigon relaxing at the pre-race dinner.



Hans-Dieter Weisshaar and wife Suzi at the pre-race dinner.