

Wasatch Rocks!

by John Medinger

Wasatch rocks! In this day of perpetual Bill and Monica jokes, I'll start with a rare non-suggestive double entendre: this race rocks, and rocks are this race.

I really like this race. I cannot totally explain why, since it has a lot of elements that I usually don't like. Such as rocks. And more rocks. Altitude. Exposure. Big hills. It is hard and it is totally unrelenting. But I like it anyhow. Oh, did I mention the rocks?

When you dare lift your eyes from the trail, the scenery is truly spectacular. Aspen, pine and alder forests. Sweeping panoramic vistas from the ridge tops. Alpine lakes and grassy meadows. Beaver dams, avalanche chutes, and any number of world-famous ski hills. And for those on about 30 to 32-hour pace, the spectacle of sunlight slowly enveloping the massive granite slab that is Mt. Timpanogos, across the vastness of Mill Canyon, is truly worth the effort of running until the second sunrise.

The race is seamlessly presented in a wonderfully understated manner, led by low-key Race Director John Grobden. The prevailing attitude is to go out and enjoy the mountains, have some fun and see if you can't get to the finish line. The volunteers are exceptionally friendly and helpful and seem to be having a lot of fun themselves. The severity of the terrain and the remoteness of the trail add a distinct element of adventure to the proceedings.

Karl Meltzer from nearby Sandy, Utah,

showing remarkable improvement over the past two years, was the first to reach the Midway finish line. In 1996, he finished in 28:26, a quite respectable but not especially noteworthy time. Last year, he was in second place at mile 85, but his iliotibial band locked up and he had to walk the last 15 miles, eventually finishing seventh in 23:35. Still, it was a five-hour improvement. Continuing this dramatic trend, he not only won the race this year, but also broke Dana Miller's eight-year-old course record in doing so, with a 20:08:32 time.

Meltzer passed David Terry from Portland, Oregon about 100 yards before the top of Catherine's Pass (mile 76) to take the lead for the first time all day. "He was struggling a little and I wanted to be decisive, so I really hammered the downhill into Ant Knolls," Meltzer said. "Also, I could see Dan Barger's light and he was only a few minutes back. I just wanted to get out of sight.

"I had planned my race based on a 21:15 finish and was ahead of my splits but was still 15 minutes behind at Big Mountain and 22 minutes at Lamb's," he noted. "I figured I'd better just run my own race. Either those guys (Terry and Barger) had gone out too fast, or else they were going to shatter the record."

Perennial contender Leland Barker closed fast for second place, 40 minutes back. Remarkably, the next three finishers were newcomers to the course: Terry, from Oregon, and Northern California stalwarts Kevin Sawchuk and Barger.

Despite having run three 100s in the previous eleven weeks, Ann Trason from Kensington, California not only beat all the other women by more than three hours, but set a new course record by more

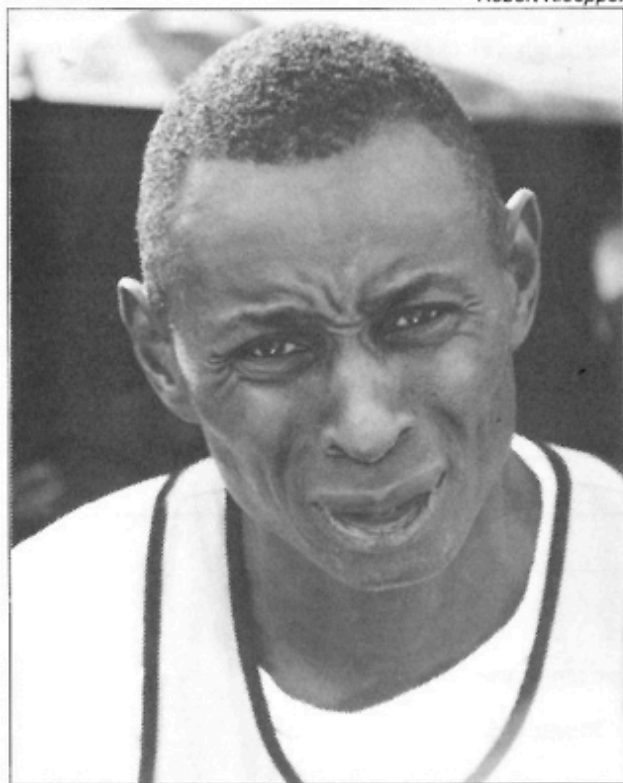
than an hour, with a 22:27:08 finish. In yet another stellar summer in her exceptional career, Trason won all four Grand Slam races (Western States, Vermont, Leadville, and Wasatch), and now also holds the women's course record in all four events. She joins Laura Vaughan and Martha Swatt as the only women to have broken 24 hours at Wasatch.

Trason noted, "The Utah people were wonderful to me, really hospitable. And I loved the course, though I have to admit that by the time I got to Cascade Springs (mile 93), I was so wasted I'm not sure I even knew my own name." Nonetheless, she indicated that she would love to run the race again in the future.

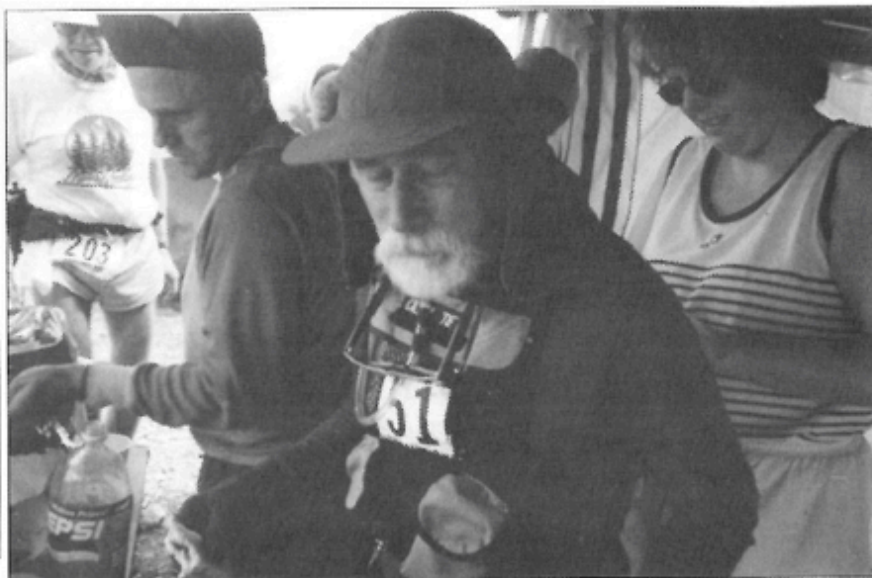
Trason was doubly a winner as she also returned home to California with a newly adopted puppy. She found an abandoned puppy on a training run ten days prior to the race near the Bountiful "B" check point and decided to keep it. There was little doubt what to call it. The puppy's name, of course, is Wasatch.

It was a nearly perfect weather weekend. One intense—but mercifully brief—thunderstorm rolled through the course about 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, dumping hail and high winds on the participants. Other than that most interesting half-hour, though, the conditions were excellent with temperatures significantly cooler than normal, never exceeding the low 60s on Saturday, under partly cloudy skies. Nighttime temperatures dipped to near freezing at the higher elevations, a fairly normal condition that most runners had prepared for. Sunday dawned sunny and mild.

More records: The race accepted 206 runners this year, about 25 more than in the past. Of those, 199 started and 152 finished, both surpassing previous totals. Twenty-one runners completed the four-race Grand Slam, the most ever. For Burgess Harmer from Reno, it marked the sixth consecutive year he has completed the Slam.



It's a Grand Slam face—Errol Jones in his final glorious lap at the Wasatch Front 100 Mile Run.



Dick Opsahl is all business at an aid station enroute to his Grand Slam finish, too.

Seventeen runners, also the most ever, broke 24 hours and were inducted into the Royal Order of the Crimson Cheetah at the post-race awards ceremony. The last sub 24-hour finisher was Tom Niederee, who amazingly was running his first 100-mile. Course director Irv Nielsen, whose sole title in the Wasatch hierarchy is "Prince of Rocks," seemed despondent over the number of Crimson Cheetahs. "The course is getting too easy," he was heard muttering to himself. For those who may be contemplating running this race in future years, consider this fair warning.

David Adams from Teton Village, Wyoming might beg to differ with Irv's assessment, as he missed the magic 24-hour barrier by a mere minute and five seconds.

Bob Henderson and Chris Campbell both recorded their tenth Wasatch finish and received special commemorative rings. Rick Gates finished, too, for a record 14th time, despite the fact that he suffered a badly broken leg last winter in a fall while shoveling the snow off his roof. It didn't seem to slow him much.

Larry Gassan from Los Angeles had trained exceptionally hard in the hopes of being able to break 24 hours here. He didn't, but finished in 28:16. When asked after the race what happened, his response was cryptic but classic. "Wasatch happened."

Laura Vaughan from Tahoe City, California, a four-time winner here, finished the race nine weeks after giving birth, duplicating her amazing feat of 1996. She finished in 34:51 despite taking time to nurse baby Emma at the checkpoints.

Bill Andrews, from Richmond, California, running his seventh 100-miler of the year, collapsed about two miles from the finish. An ambulance was summoned, but he was able to convince the EMTs to allow him to walk to the finish. He did, with the ambulance in close pursuit, before being taken to a nearby hospital and being treated for dangerously low potassium levels.

Ian Rothfels from Salt Lake City also set a record of sorts, by making it to the finish despite leaving the halfway point later than anyone ever had in the past. In so doing, he was one of the few folks who have run a negative split on this course.

Salt Lake's Fred Riemer is a pretty capable runner who is determined to enjoy himself. Every year he takes a longish nap or two and finishes within 10 or 15 minutes of the 36-hour cut-off. This year was no different as he finished for the 13th time with fifteen minutes still left on the clock. "Hey, I paid for 36 hours and I'm gonna get my money's worth," he told me as we were running together early in the race. He also spent a few minutes during the aforementioned hailstorm helping the Big Mountain aid station people get their computer gear under cover. "All in a day's work," he added. "Or rather, a day and a half."

Duane Arter from Tucson won the

"Spirit of Wasatch" award, given annually to the runner whose attitude most exemplifies the spirit of the race. Duane had started three times previously without finishing, and after the first "DNF" swore off ice cream until he finished Wasatch. Running step for step with his wife Julie, the 1997 Leadville women's champion, he made it in with fourteen minutes to spare. It can be no coincidence that Ben & Jerry's stock rose 15 percent in the three weeks following the race.

There will likely be some changes made for the 1999 race, as the Midway town park that has been used for the finish since 1994 will no longer be available on Sundays. Various alternative finishes are still under consideration, but the two that appear most likely are either a state park about three miles south of the Midway finish, or a return to the Sundance finish that was used in 1993. Either one would require the addition of some new trail, a prospect that has the Prince of Rocks smirking in a most devious fashion.

Finally, please allow me one self-indulgent and totally gratuitous comment: I beat the Rocket! I beat the Rocket! Sorry, Errol, but on the off chance that that fact has escaped anyone's attention, I had to say it.

Stephen Mitchell adds

With the 19th running of this challenging course completed, I thought I would share some thoughts and experiences on the event, as well as my training and preparation for it.

A total of 199 runners started Wasatch at 5:00 a.m. September 12th, and by 5:00 p.m. Sunday, 36 hours later, 152 had crossed the finish line in Midway. My time was 26:40, enough to place me 29th. That was 56

minutes better than my 1997 time.

For those of you wondering what Wasatch is about, the course gains and loses 24,000 vertical feet. Only Hardrock (33,000) and Barkley (50,000) give you more for the money. Ninety percent of the course is on trail. Some of the trail is steep and rocky. Some of the steep and rocky comes late in the race when one's legs may not be as limber as one would like. Temperature differentials range from 90-100 degrees on some sections of the course during the day to 30 degrees or less at night. This year was cooler for me on the typically hot section from Big Mountain Pass (36 miles) to Lambs Canyon (51 miles) and colder than normal through the night. Throw in the stream crossing of Provo Deer Creek just prior to the aid station at Cascade Springs (92 miles), and hypothermia becomes a concern for some of the frontrunners, those who passed through before the sun was up.

While many *UR* readers are former marathoners who have decided to push on to longer distances, my climbing and running partner and pacer Jon MacManus and I are mountaineers who realized long ago we could bag a lot more peaks by going lighter and faster. One thing has led to another, and now we find we can do 30 to 50 miles of mountain terrain in designated wilderness, bag some peaks

Robert Klopper



Ann Trason nailed another course record and completed the Grand Slam, too.

(always off-trail), and not only finish, but get a good time at an event such as Wasatch.

All of my training occurs in mountain terrain. Roughly 60 percent of my time is spent on trail and the other 40 percent off. Because I like to climb real mountains, and because a run such as Wasatch has lots of ups and downs, my emphasis is on the vertical. Going into Wasatch, I had 1,620 miles and 501,000 vertical feet for the year when I started up Francis Peak, Wasatch's initial climb, last Saturday morning.

Following Wasatch each year, I cut my monthly totals back to the 100 to 120 miles and 30 to 40,000 vertical range from October through December. In January I begin ramping up. By May or June through August I'll be accumulating 250 to 300 miles and 70,000 vertical feet per month.

Rarely do I work out more than three days per week. If I do one long day on the weekend, I'll do two after-work runs (8-16/3-5,000). If I do back-to-back long runs on the weekend, I'll usually just do one after-work run—eight miles and 3,000 vertical is my minimal workout. It usually takes a little over two hours if I'm doing Chimney Gulch/Lookout Mountain/Mt. Zion. When I lived in Castle Rock, I

could get the same totals with eight trips up the local Rock, which would take less than two hours even with eight third-class scrambles up the summit block.

By May, I'm into a three-week cycle concerning the weekend workouts. One weekend will find me doing one long run entirely on trail (40-50/8-12,000). The next weekend will find me doing one long day concentrating on the vertical, often with a lot of off-trail (30-40/9-12,000). The last weekend is either two long back-to-backs or three long back-to-back days. I intend to get in at least two weekends of the three-day long back-to-backs prior to Wasatch. The totals for the two three-day runs this year were 92/24,000 and 99/25,600. I did both in Colorado's awesome eastern Weminuche Wilderness near Pagosa Springs.

The latter totals this year came five weeks prior to Wasatch. Afterwards, I noticed I had developed some inflammation in the muscles of my feet. Over the next 12 days, I only did four of my minimal 8/3,000 variety workouts.

Three weeks prior to Wasatch I did a 16/4,850-day on the Beaver Brook Trail followed by a 41/10,200 day on Pikes Peak. The Pikes run took 11:10 elapsed time of which 10:10 was spent running. There was again some inflammation following the long run, so I took two days off before doing a 15/3,850 after-work run on the Beaver Brook. The inflammation was more intense than ever following this run, so it was time to visit the doctor and get a referral to an orthopedic specialist.

Over the next nine days I did only three after work "hikes," doing my minimal workouts without any running. With a lot of stretching, new insoles, and use of "Arthrotec 75," an anti-inflammatory, the foot problems gradually lessened.

Saturday through Monday and the Wednesday morning before Wasatch I did minimal runs just to keep myself loosened up.

My big concern going into Wasatch was how the feet would hold up, and if my running would be affected since I hadn't tapered going into Wasatch like I had intended to.

The feet held up well. Although sore by 80 miles and swollen somewhat following the run, the muscles that were previously inflamed seem to have weathered Wasatch well. I would attribute this to the combination of stretching as recommended by the orthopedic specialist, the new

insoles, and the use of the anti-inflammatory.

Stamina-wise I was able to hold a near 24-hour pace until Brighton. However, my stomach was nauseous from 30 miles on, and I ate little but GU throughout much of the run. At Ant Knolls (78 miles) I got sick, and I believe I took in only a couple of GU thereafter. That wasn't enough, as I hit a wall on the next to last steep but short uphill between Pole Line and Mill Canyon. Fortunately, most of the course is downhill from there and I was able to run a decent pace.

Prior to Wasatch I had developed a "crew's checklist" for my crew and pacer which detailed everything I might need at any given aid station, as well as my actual arrival times, run times, and time spent in each station for both '97 and '96, as well as my "expected" and "desired" times for arriving at each station in '98.

My "desired" time for '98 was 26:30 whereas 26:40 was my actual. In '97, my "desired" time was 27:50 whereas I ran 27:37.

In '97, I spent 25:22 running and 2:15 in aid stations. After analyzing the splits for the 31 who finished ahead of me in '97, I realized the average time spent in aid stations by those who ran faster than myself and were over 24 hours was in the 1:15 to 1:30 range, although some spent much less time in the aid stations. I figured in '98 I could cut my time by 45 minutes not by running faster but by simply managing the aid stations better.

In reality, I cut only one minute off the time I spent in aid stations in '98, whereas I ran the course 56 minutes faster! I suspect the key for my going faster, beyond training harder (or better), is to figure out how to get in and out of the aid stations quicker.

As for my emphasis on training the vertical, it is interesting to note that I get passed often by the 25 to 35-year-olds on the uphills, whereas being able to fly on the downhills seems to have become my forte. I make up a lot of ground going downhill.

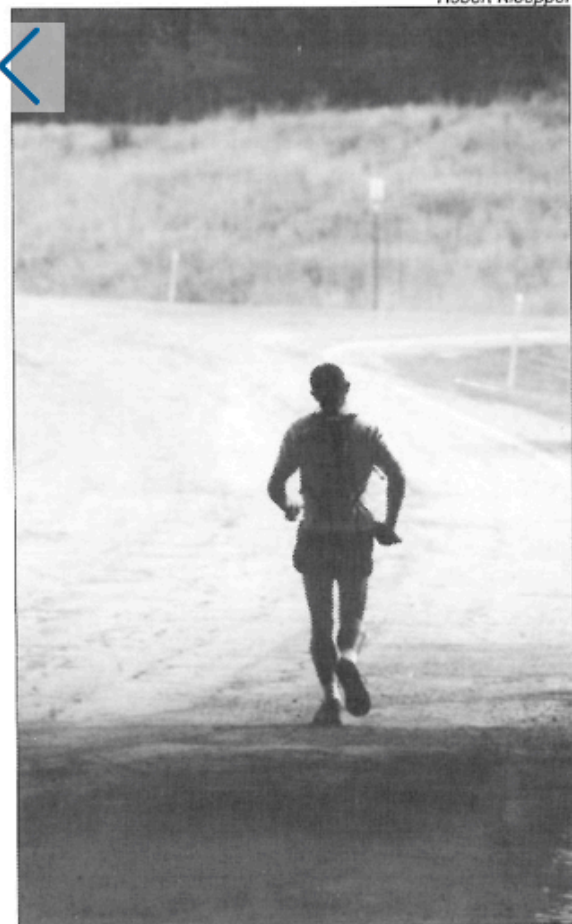
Common sense dictates that spending all 12 hours of a long run on trail would yield "faster" legs than does spending six hours off-trail peak bagging and the remaining six hours pounding trail. However, the peaks are what I live for! If you don't know what I'm getting at here you haven't spent enough time alone in the mountains. If or when it comes to giving up one or the other, you'll be seeing my "see 'ya all later" posted here.

I hope this gives some insight into what is probably an unusual approach to training for Wasatch.

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A lone runner heads out of Lambs Canyon aid station.

Meltzer Translates Speed Into Success

by John Medinger

Wasatch winner Karl Meltzer is a relative newcomer to the ultra scene. A former New Hampshire state high school champion at 5,000 meters, he moved to Utah in 1989 to do some serious skiing. At that point, he hadn't run in three years but started running trails in the Wasatch mountains during the summer just for some exercise. He jumped into a couple of short trail races and discovered that he was pretty good at it.

After a couple of years, he started to take his running a little more seriously and started winning a number of shorter trail runs around the Salt Lake area. His first longer race was the Pikes Peak Marathon in 1993. Meltzer, 30, works at the Snowbird resort as a bartender and met 14-time Wasatch finisher Rick Gates who also works at Snowbird.

"Rick talked a lot about what a great race Wasatch is, and he got me intrigued," Meltzer said. "But boy, 100 miles sure seemed like a long ways to go." Finally, in 1996, he decided to give it a shot. "I was pretty conservative and hadn't quite figured out what to eat but was doing o.k. Then, just after Cascade Springs (mile 93) I went straight instead of making the right turn to go up the Wall. I guess I was just too tired to pay attention, but anyway we went about 45 minutes before we realized the mistake and turned around. So, I lost about an hour and a half and sort of figure it was more of a 27-hour effort instead of the 28:26 I finished in." And then he was hooked.

"I really like hard trails, the steeper and rockier the better," Meltzer continued. "Plus I live near Catherine's Pass and so the last part of the course is sort of like home to me. Rick (Gates) was right. It *is* a great race."

Meltzer trains only 50 to 60 miles a week, but says that he always runs hard and also does a lot of big hills. During the winter months he switches back to skiing, now doing mostly Telemark skiing. "I hate running on roads, so when the trails get snowed out, I just back way off."

His plans for the future? "I would like to try some of the other 100s. Western States, of course, and maybe the Grand Slam in a few years, but what really intrigues me now is Hardrock."

Given what happened when he got intrigued by Wasatch, those folks planning to run in Silverton next July had best be aware of a relative newcomer from Sandy, Utah.

Wasatch Front 100 Mile Endurance Run

East Layton, Utah September 12, 1998
Trails, 23,510' of climb

1. Karl Meltzer,30	20:08:42!	74. Robert Youngren,24,CA	30:12:04
2. Leland Barker,40	20:49:13	75. Chris Campbell,37	30:43:24
3. David Terry,36,OR	21:22:42	76. Pam Reed,37,AZ	30:43:24
4. Kevin Sawchuk,33,CA	21:27:54	77. Debbie Moss,43	30:47:49
5. Dan Barger,33,CA	21:47:44	78. Gail Bazeley,48,CAN	30:49:00
6. Curt Bates,40	22:02:39	79. Raymond Bailey,41,AR	30:50:56
7. Tim Spence,42	22:21:20	80. Robert Green,42	30:51:53
8. James Nelson,37	22:24:38	81. Lorraine Sorenson,48	30:57:45
9. Ann Trason,38,CA	20:27:10!	82. James McGregor,55	31:08:53
10. Brandon Sybrowsky,27	22:35:31	83. Frank Hanson,40,ID	31:12:53
11. Thomas Burke,32	22:44:11	84. Robert Solorio,51,CA	31:13:59
12. Tom Remmkes,36	22:59:02	85. Grizz Randall,54	31:21:43
13. Kevin Rumon,37,CA	23:06:27	86. John Medinger,47,CA	31:24:36
14. Tim Seminoff,40	23:36:32	87. Burgess Harmer,56,NV	31:40:14
15. Paul Terry,33,WA	23:36:45	88. Michael Dunn,40	31:48:38
16. Curtis Anderson,35	23:39:52	89. Eric Scaife,31	32:35:40
17. Tom Niederee,38	23:55:03	90. Joe Thomas,43	32:35:56
18. David Adams,46,WY	24:01:46	91. Ted Cooley,56	32:36:18
19. Michael Tilden,31	24:40:48	92. Seth Roberts,46,MA	32:39:56
20. Michael Mitchell,39	25:06:30	93. Lisa Allen,34,CO	32:52:08
21. Phil Armstrong,39	25:12:30	94. John Smith,44	32:57:21
22. David Klein,34	25:28:54	95. Joe Prusaitis,43,TX	33:04:11
23. Susan Yates,26,WA	25:40:41	96. Errol Jones,48,CA	33:04:12
24. Michael Ehrlich,35,CO	25:46:51	Steve Niday,45,MT	33:04:12
25. James Kerby,35,WA	25:52:27	98. Allen Belshaw,31	33:08:16
26. Stuart Nelson,58,CO	25:57:40	99. Gary Holloway,36,ID	33:13:37
27. Jay Grobeson,37,CA	26:28:59	100. David Tanner,39	33:14:26
28. John Diroll,41	26:29:44	101. Randy Jue,31,AZ	33:21:07
29. Stephen Mitchell,42,CO	26:40:14	102. Mike Shaffer,50	33:22:25
30. Kevin Reynolds,37	26:45:29	103. Cynthia Daniels,49	33:30:05
31. Gordon Hardman,47,CO	27:09:25	104. Steve Westlund,47	33:32:02
32. Kim Olsen,44	27:23:48	105. David Blaylock,55	33:35:34
33. Diane Ridgway,49,CO	27:40:37	106. John Lindblom,41	33:37:08
34. Matthew Knotts,30	27:49:05	107. Sandee Miller,45,CO	33:41:16
35. Tyler Curriel,42,TX	27:59:50	108. Helmut Linzbichler,57,AUS	33:42:29
36. Derek Blaylock,29	28:05:27	109. Marc Collman,41	33:46:28
Ken Jensen,30	28:05:27	110. Janice O'Grady,49,CA	33:50:37
38. Dale Heisler,48	28:05:49	111. Michael Dewool,42	33:54:39
39. Chris Scott,49,CA	28:06:27	112. Jan Gnass,48,CA	33:59:09
40. Kelly Stevens,37	28:07:19	113. Tony DeArcos,45	34:08:47
41. Nick Bassett,53,WY	28:18:17	Nicholas Palazzo,51,NY	34:08:47
42. Rob Byrne,40,CA	28:09:04	115. Bert Meyer,56,CT	34:11:16
43. Daniel Hendriksen,44	28:12:10	116. Richard Opsahl,66,NY	34:16:34
44. Linda Dunn,39	28:13:33	117. Lani Rasley,28	34:19:15
45. Larry Gassan,42,CA	28:16:44	118. John Weis,43	34:23:34
46. Michael Suter,51,CA	28:17:05	119. Fred Robinson,45,MT	34:26:30
47. Phil Lowry,32	28:21:30	120. John Hoenigman,33,CA	34:27:09
48. Tom Knutson,48,MN	28:25:09	Kevin Sayers,39,MD	34:27:09
49. Randy Stillman,48,OR	28:29:00	122. Paul Schmidt,46,CA	34:31:32
Janine Duplessis,44,WA	28:29:00	123. Robert Tuller,34,NY	34:34:43
51. Dan Quinn,24	28:35:33	124. Stephen Simmons,32,WV	34:40:06
52. Patrick English,49	28:39:54	125. Conrad Cole,47,CO	34:41:23
53. Daren Anderson,29	28:41:39	126. Gregory Sharp,46,VT	34:46:07
54. Butch Adams,44	28:48:07	127. Barry Craig,48,NC	34:47:59
55. Alan Cohn,43,CO	28:50:11	James Ballard,48,MT	34:47:59
56. Mike Price,48	28:51:02	129. Mary Workman,37	34:49:34
Nelson Stritehoff,47,MD	28:51:02	130. Laura Vaughan,32,CA	34:51:58
58. Wendell Robison,46,WY	28:51:32	131. Ellen Ives,44	34:55:47
59. Roch Horton,40,CO	28:56:54	132. Kenneth Mick,39,IL	35:02:22
60. Betsy Nye,33,CA	28:57:10	133. Leon Draxler,56,WA	35:03:21
61. Harriet Greenlee,27	28:57:33	Fred Stafford,41,WA	35:03:21
62. Bob Henderson,52	28:57:50	135. Bill Andrews,46,CA	35:05:08
63. Charles Wight,43	29:07:32	136. Stephanie Jones,28,NC	35:08:26
64. Tom Wilson,46	29:08:05	137. Hiromi Hatta,37,JPN	35:16:23
65. Brian VanOene,43,CAN	29:15:23	Katsuyuki Hatta,34,JPN	35:16:23
66. Briant Badger,47	29:21:23	139. Jeffrey Holdaway,39,VA	35:18:26
67. Neil Hewitt,38,TX	29:24:51	140. Bruce Burnham,50	35:18:39
68. Don Platt,44,CO	29:30:10	141. Ian Rothfels,41	35:21:56
69. Rick Gates,41	29:37:11	142. Dorothy Helling,48,VT	35:22:22
70. Hughes Martin,38	29:38:12	143. Steve Swanson,60	35:29:33
71. Jim Knight,45	29:43:40	144. Keith Anderson,42	35:29:57
72. Chris Avery,35,AZ	29:49:44	145. Douglas Nast,45,WA	35:31:08
73. Perry Croll,30	29:51:19	146. Fred Hermann,59,CA	35:32:11
		Tonya Mauldin,34,CA	35:32:11
		148. Terri Taraska,34,CO	35:36:11
		149. Cindy Andrus,42	35:45:17
		150. Frederick Riemer,51	35:45:29
		151. Julie Arter,37,AZ	35:46:11
		Duane Arter,38,AZ	35:46:11