

Barker and Vaughan Conquer New Course at Wasatch Front 100

by John Medinger

Now and then nature produces a combination of land, water, sky, space, trees, animals, flowers, distances, and weather so perfect it seems like the hatching of a romantic fantasy . . . Every time we go out into the wilderness, we are looking for that perfect primitive Eden. This time, we have found it.
— Wallace Stegner

Stegner, the great American author and environmentalist, spent his teenage years in Salt Lake City. He was describing his favorite spot in the Wasatch Range when he penned this passage. It is as succinct a description of the severe beauty of this course as one could imagine.

Changes to the course were made this year at the beginning and at the end. But the core of the course along the ridge-tops of the Wasatch Front remained the same. Mild temperatures and crystal-clear skies graced the event on both days. The nighttime was quite cold, with temperatures dropping to the low 20s on the crest at Scotts Pass, at an elevation of 9,900 feet. But even the cold night had its beneficial aspects. Similar nights had persisted for the previous two weeks, resulting in unusually early color among the aspens, alders, and birch trees, adding to the splendor of the magnificent mountains.

The finish was moved to the Sundance resort, a truly spectacular setting. Runners were able to finish in relative wilderness, with the massive granite slab of Mt. Timpanogos, looming at 13,000 feet above the proceedings. The new finishing stretch which involved 11 miles of relatively tricky

single-track trails was undeniably slower than the previous Midway finish, which was mostly dirt roads at the end.

The start was moved to the East Mountain Wilderness Park in the town of Kaysville. The race started with a 3.6-mile stretch of clean and fairly wide trail which allowed the pack to sort itself out before going right past the old starting line and up the huge climb to Chinscraper.

The new start was universally praised, but there was some grumbling about the slowness and difficulty of the new finish, and about the fact that the course was probably a couple of miles longer than last year. This, no doubt, was music to the ears of course designer Irv Nielsen, whose official title in race hierarchy is "Prince of Rocks." He commented after last year's race that the course was getting too fast. It seems that his wishes were fulfilled, as this year, even with perfect weather, only 49 of 190 starters managed to finish in less than 30 hours.

It is clear that the finishing stretch is more consistent with the nature of the rest of the course than the Midway finish was. "After Alpine Loop (mile 93) I was cursing Irv about every other second," women's winner Laura Vaughan commented. "But after finishing and seeing the beauty and the elegance of Sundance, maybe it was all worth it."

Leland Barker of Smithfield, Utah, had hoped that the third time would be a charm. Last year, Karl Meltzer won in his third attempt. Two years ago, Tim Spence won the race in his third attempt, having finished fourth and second in his first two. Barker finished fourth and second in his first two attempts, also. This was to be his third.

"The first two years, I got a little too

excited and got out front for the first 30 or 40 miles and then got passed," Barker noted. "This year I was determined to hold back and not lead until after Lambs Canyon (mile 53)." Thirteen minutes behind at Lambs Canyon, Barker caught and passed defending champion Karl Meltzer in the 61st mile, just below the Big Water checkpoint. "He looked pretty beat up at that point," Barker said, "and I was really psyched. I was able to run most of the road up to Big Water and had always walked there in the past."

Barker, who owns a commercial trout farm, pulled away and was never threatened, although he wasn't quite sure about it. "It's weird being in front because you have no idea where everybody else is. For a while, I thought I could break 20 (hours), but those miles at the end took a while. With about five miles to go, my pacer and I thought we saw lights behind us and I ran scared at the end." Meltzer hung on for second, noting, "last year I nailed it, and this year, he did."

Laura Vaughan, from Tahoe City, California, employed a similar strategy in winning the women's race for the fifth time in nine years. Vaughan, along with Susan Yates and Betsy Nye, shared the lead until Big Mountain (mile 39). At that point, Nye—Vaughan's Tahoe City neighbor and occasional training partner—pulled ahead as Yates dropped back. "Betsy was feeling good, and Susan didn't like the really rocky downhills," Vaughan noted. "I felt really strong, but didn't want to push it anywhere." Vaughan took the lead for good just after Lambs Canyon. She stretched it out to about 45 minutes at Pole Line Pass (mile 83) and held off a late charge by Yates to win by 29 minutes. Yates was second for the second straight year and is no doubt hoping that Leland Barker's numerology holds up for her next year. Nye, suffering from nausea and hypothermia, dropped after 89 miles.

In events of this magnitude, there are at least as many stories as there are runners. Some of them:

Gordon Hardman of Boulder, Colorado, and Mike Price of Park City, Utah, each finished the race for the tenth time, earning commemorative rings and also original painting by renowned local landscape artist Fred Denys, who finished the race for the 12th time himself this year.

Rick Gates finished for a record fifteenth time, continuing to hold his one-finish advantage over Fred Riemer. Remarkably, Riemer ran a PR in his fourteenth finish.

Jose Wilkie, of Louisville, Kentucky, finished his tenth 100-miler of the year.

Eleven runners: Edward Boggess, Karl Jensen, Eric Hodges, John Wagner, Janine Duplessis, Stan Jensen, Lisa Conover, Steve Burrows, Jeff Washburn, Leon Draxler, and Robert Tuller completed the Grand Slam, by finishing four major 100s in one summer.



Eventual winner Leland Barker pulls into the aid station at Upper Big Water, mile 61.9, with his "cheat sheet" in hand. His third attempt was a well-paced run for the win.

Age group competition also proved fierce. Sherry Kae Mahieu of Albuquerque edged Debbie Moss of Salt Lake City by seven minutes for the women's masters' title. Nick Bassett of Arizona finished 17 minutes ahead of England's John Amies for the 50 to 59 crown.

Pacific Northwest runners fared well, as Dave Terry of Portland, Oregon, and James Kerby of Issaquah, Washington, were the first sea-level runners to finish and Susan Yates from Olympia, Washington, and Janine Duplessis from Gig Harbor, Washington, were the first women flatlanders. There is, of course, no official award in this category, but in a race where most of the terrain is above 8,000 feet, perhaps there should be.

Dick Opsahl, a New Yorker recently transplanted to Los Alamos, New Mexico, was the oldest finisher, at age 67. Curiously, no woman older than 50 finished, and I'm not altogether certain that Cynthia Daniels would want it noted that she was the oldest woman to finish.

Cindy Andrus, the race committee member who handles registration for the race, was forced to drop at Big Water (mile 62) with a sore foot, only to find out later that she had broken two bones.

Three runners completed the course after the 36-hour time limit and each has a story to tell:

Petyon Robinson of Arlington, Virginia, made a spirited last sprint across the meadow to the finish line with everyone in attendance holding their breath, only to cross the line in a disheartening 36:00:11. Peyton, ever the gentleman, would have none of the complaining about the length or difficulty of the new finish. "I knew I was on the edge, I thought maybe I could make it in time. But I didn't."

Eight minutes later, 68-year-old Grant Holdaway of Vineyard, Utah, finished the course and collapsed, exhausted, at the finish line.

Just at the conclusion of the awards ceremony, nearly 38 hours on the clock, David Hardy completed the course. It was a closure of sorts for Hardy, who had open-heart surgery four years ago and wanted to finish the race one more time.

Nine runners were inducted into the Royal Order of the Crimson Cheetah for their sub-24 hour finishes in the annual bit of whimsy that punctuates the low-key awards ceremony.

The prestigious Spirit of the Wasatch Award was given to Paul Schmidt of El Cajon, California. The award is given to the runner that most exemplifies the spirit of the event; Paul's recovery from a near fatal fall in the Swiss Alps and his perseverance in recovering to the point where he was able to complete the race was cited as the reason for the award. All who know him would add his humility and encouraging demeanor to the reasons cited.

Owing to the 36-hour time limit and the remoteness of the terrain, the volunteers

in this race have to endure about as much difficulty as any race anywhere. What is especially remarkable is that you see the same folks at the same checkpoints year after year, and the vast majority of them are not runners themselves. "You guys just amaze me," one aid station volunteer told me. "No," I replied, "you guys are the amazing ones."

After 100 miles of rocky trails, huge climbs, steep descents and the deep-seated fatigue that that brings, it is probably unfair to ask a runner to attempt to match Stegner's eloquence. Susan Briers of Gambrills, Maryland, was, however, equally succinct. "It kicked my butt," she said of the course, "but man, was it beautiful. I'd do it again in a heartbeat."

Wasatch Front 100 Mile Endurance Run

East Layton, Utah September 11, 1999
Trails, 23,510' of climb

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Leland Barker,41 | 20:24 |
| 2. Karl Meltzer,31 | 21:49 |
| 3. Ken Jensen,31 | 22:28 |
| 4. Dave Terry,37,OR | 22:53 |
| 5. Brandon Sybrowsky,28 | 23:14 |
| 6. Edward Boggess,41,CO | 23:30 |
| 7. James Kerby,36,WA | 23:31 |
| 8. Stephen Mitchell,43,CO | 23:37 |
| 9. Todd Schmidtke,35 | 23:59 |
| 10. Tim Spence,43 | 24:14 |
| 11. James Nelson,38 | 24:40 |
| 12. Michael Tilden,32 | 25:01 |
| 13. <u>Laura Vaughan</u> ,33,CA | 25:17 |
| 14. Tom Remkes,37 | 25:23 |
| 15. <u>Susan Hunter Yates</u> ,27,WA | 25:46 |
| 16. Dave Atlas,40,MT | 25:57 |
| 17. Gordon Hardman,48,CO | 26:42 |
| 18. Derek Blaylock,30 | 26:43 |
| 19. Alex Feldman,42,ID | 26:46 |
| 20. Jeffrey Holdaway,40,VA | 26:47 |
| 21. <u>Liz Moroney</u> ,39,MT | 27:12 |
| 22. Tom Noll,44,ID | 27:16 |
| 23. Phillip Lowry,Jr.,33 | 27:19 |
| 24. Mark Oftedal,40 | 27:20 |
| 25. Nick Bassett,54,AZ | 27:40 |
| 26. Dale Heisler,40 | 27:42 |
| 27. Dave Klein | 27:47 |
| 28. John Amies,57,UK | 27:59 |
| 29. Scott Mason,37 | 28:11 |
| 30. <u>Lorie Hutchison</u> ,35 | 28:18 |
| 31. Larry Hall,45,IL | 28:32 |
| 32. Hughes Martin,39 | 28:32 |
| 33. <u>Julie Arter</u> ,38,AZ | 28:42 |
| 34. Karl Jensen,50,BC | 29:18 |
| 35. Grizz Randall,55 | 29:18 |
| 36. Matt Culbertson,42 | 29:23 |
| 37. Ray Greenlaw,38,GA | 29:25 |
| 38. Daniel Hendriksen,45 | 29:28 |
| 39. John Mason,48 | 29:28 |
| 40. Eric Blaine Hodges,50,CA | 29:29 |
| 41. David Dent,35,AK | 29:41 |
| 42. John Woeste,38 | 29:41 |
| 43. <u>Sherry Kae Mahieu</u> ,44,NM | 29:45 |
| 44. Rick Gates,42 | 29:48 |
| 45. Ted Heal,52 | 29:48 |
| 46. John Wagner,50,WI | 29:51 |
| 47. <u>Debbie Moss</u> ,44 | 29:52 |
| 48. Daniel Wolfe,49 | 29:52 |
| 49. Frederick Stafford,42,WA | 29:58 |
| 50. <u>Janine Duplessis</u> ,44,WA | 30:03 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 51. Randy Stillman,49,OR | 30:03 |
| 52. Chip Lee,44,CO | 30:48 |
| 53. Mike LaVelle,43,CA | 30:58 |
| 54. Michael Mitchell,40 | 31:00 |
| 55. <u>Pam Reed</u> ,38,AZ | 31:00 |
| 56. Chris Scott,50,VA | 31:06 |
| 57. Ron Nicholl,56,WA | 31:11 |
| 58. Michael Schlier,43 | 31:19 |
| 59. Mike Price,49 | 31:23 |
| 60. Butch Adams,45 | 31:31 |
| 61. Jim Knight,46 | 31:31 |
| 62. Peter Lindgren,29 | 31:32 |
| 63. Chris Reveley,47 | 31:39 |
| 64. Tom Wilson,47 | 31:44 |
| 65. Bob Henderson,53 | 31:46 |
| 66. James McGregor,56 | 31:52 |
| 67. <u>Jency Brown</u> ,47 | 31:56 |
| 68. José Wilkie,36,KY | 31:57 |
| 69. Niels Bigler,33 | 32:06 |
| 70. Chris Campbell,38 | 32:16 |
| 71. Chris Avery,36,AZ | 32:28 |
| 72. Gary Webster,32 | 32:28 |
| 73. Mike Ehrlich,36,CO | 32:29 |
| 74. Wayne Baldwin,32 | 32:36 |
| 75. Stan Jensen,46,CA | 32:36 |
| 76. Olaf Questereit,31 | 32:41 |
| 77. <u>Lisa Conover</u> ,41,WI | 32:47 |
| 78. Frederick Riemer,51 | 32:50 |
| 79. Jill Bohney,35 | 32:51 |
| 80. Brent Manning,49 | 32:51 |
| 81. Bret Bosen,32 | 32:53 |
| 82. Mitchell Rossman,43,MN | 32:54 |
| 83. <u>Lynn Yarnall</u> ,49,WA | 32:55 |
| 84. <u>Lorraine Sorensen</u> ,49 | 33:01 |
| 85. <u>Janice Page</u> ,43,BC | 33:11 |
| 86. Brian VanOene,44,BC | 33:11 |
| 87. Steve Burrows,48,ON | 33:18 |
| 88. <u>Jennifer Eyre</u> ,28 | 33:29 |
| 89. Steve Westlund,48 | 33:39 |
| 90. Don Platt,45,CO | 33:53 |
| 91. Mike Shaffer,51 | 33:57 |
| 92. Alex Bennett,27 | 34:13 |
| 93. David Clouse,31 | 34:15 |
| 94. <u>Susan Briers</u> ,44,MD | 34:21 |
| 95. David Mecham,53 | 34:27 |
| 96. Max Bliss,31,NY | 34:28 |
| 97. William Maples,35,CA | 34:29 |
| 98. <u>Jeri Pugh</u> ,47 | 34:36 |
| 99. <u>Leslie Hunt</u> ,43,NC | 34:40 |
| 100. Kerry Trammell,43,TN | 34:40 |
| 101. Jeff Washburn,49,MA | 34:41 |
| 102. <u>Caroline Spencer</u> ,37,WI | 34:49 |
| 103. Mark Wood,43,WI | 34:49 |
| 104. Jeff Thompson,50 | 35:04 |
| 105. Leon Draxler,57,WA | 35:18 |
| 106. Richard Opsahl,67,NM | 35:18 |
| 107. Paul Schmidt,47,CA | 35:20 |
| 108. Robert Tuller,Jr.,35,NY | 35:21 |
| 109. Gregg McCulloch,42,ID | 35:22 |
| 110. John Darrow,30 | 35:24 |
| 111. Heikki Ingstrom,41 | 35:25 |
| 112. Thomas Bauman,51 | 35:37 |
| 113. <u>Cynthia Daniels</u> ,50 | 35:37 |
| 114. James Ballard,49,MT | 35:46 |
| 190 starters | |

Vaughan Returns to Winner's Circle

There is probably no woman in ultra running who has accomplished more and received less attention than Laura Vaughan. The 33-year-old high school science teacher has now won Wasatch five times and also won Hardrock in 1997. She was the first woman to break 24 hours at Wasatch; to this date, there still are only three to have

done it. She has placed second at both Western States and Vermont. Perhaps even more amazing, she finished Wasatch less than nine weeks after giving birth. And she did so twice, first in 1996, then repeating the feat in 1998.

I caught up to her a few days after her fifth win at Wasatch in the Tahoe City, California home that she shares with husband Eric Deslauriers, her three-year-old son, Wildon, and her one-year-old daughter, Emma.

JM: So, tell me, where do you find the time to train?

LV: I don't know. Sometimes I don't. I have never been a high mileage runner and I don't run all that much in the winter because of all the snow up here. Sometimes Eric can watch the kids while I run. But part of the time he travels a lot. (Eric Deslauriers produces—and stars in—extreme ski films. He was, for instance, filming in Chile just days prior to Wasatch.) I taught G.E.D. courses over the summer and am still waitressing a couple of days a week.

JM: How did your race go?

LV: Actually, I had a good time. I felt more ready for the race than I have in a long time. Last year and in 1996, I just had a baby. I mean I had to stop and nurse at the checkpoints. In 1997, I had a pretty good

run at Hardrock, but wasn't really totally recovered from that by the time Wasatch rolled around. Anyway, I felt pretty strong all day and I was patient. Betsy (Nye), Susan (Yates) and I basically shared the lead until about mile 40. Betsy took off after Big Mountain and I didn't see her for a while. Susan and I stayed together but she really didn't like those rocky downs in there, so she dropped back a little.

I passed Betsy just at Lambs Canyon. I was pretty steady all the way over to about Pole Line. For once I didn't even throw up!

JM: What do you attribute that to?

LV: Well, you never know. My dad (Dr. Bill Vaughan, the biochemist who formulated the original PowerBar and then founded GU) made a special electrolyte replacement for me that seemed to work. I basically just ate GU and pretzels, which is pretty normal for me, but this year they stayed down.

JM: From the splits it looked like Susan Yates was closing on you at the end.

LV: Oh, I'm sure she was. I fell several times after Pole Line, especially in that stretch between Alpine Loop and Aspen Grove. I liked the old course better in there. I was cursing Irv (Nielsen, the course designer) about every other second for a while. I didn't want to kill myself. My goal has been to finish 10 Wasatch's in a row, and this was number nine. I didn't want to

break a leg or something in the last five miles.

But, I was pretty slow after Pole Line, maybe even slower than the year you paced me (1995).

Wendy (pacer Wendy Ackermann) just told me to keep moving. At the end I was really happy because this was the second fastest time I have run.

JM: How did you like the course changes?

LV: I liked the new start. It is pretty easy for a couple of miles

and gives you a chance to warm up before the big climb (up to Chinscraper). It also lets the field spread out a little. It wasn't near as crowded going up the hill.

The finish, I don't know. It seemed really long to me, more like 105 miles or something. I was having problems with the footing in the dark. I just kept tripping and falling. We were going pretty slow after Pole Line; I kept expecting people to pass me and maybe another woman to show up. I never really knew how far ahead I was. Sundance was beautiful, though. It's a really nice spot for the race to finish. I guess maybe that made it all worth it. I wish I could have stayed there, but I had to be at work on Monday. It was the first day of classes.

JM: So you went home Sunday night?

LV: Yeah, we drove all night and got home at about 3:30 a.m. Actually, I didn't drive much, my crew did most of the driving, but I couldn't really sleep in the car. I got about two hours sleep and then went off to school. My lecture pretty much sucked, especially the first class. My eyes were too tired to read my notes, and my voice was shot. I told the biology class what I did over the weekend, but I don't think the kids believed me.

John Medinger



Volunteers at Bountiful "B" aid stop get great views of the hills and runners.

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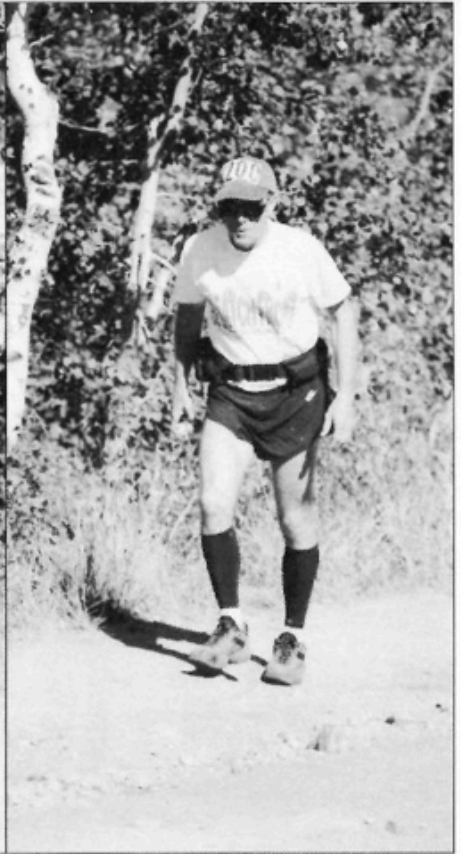
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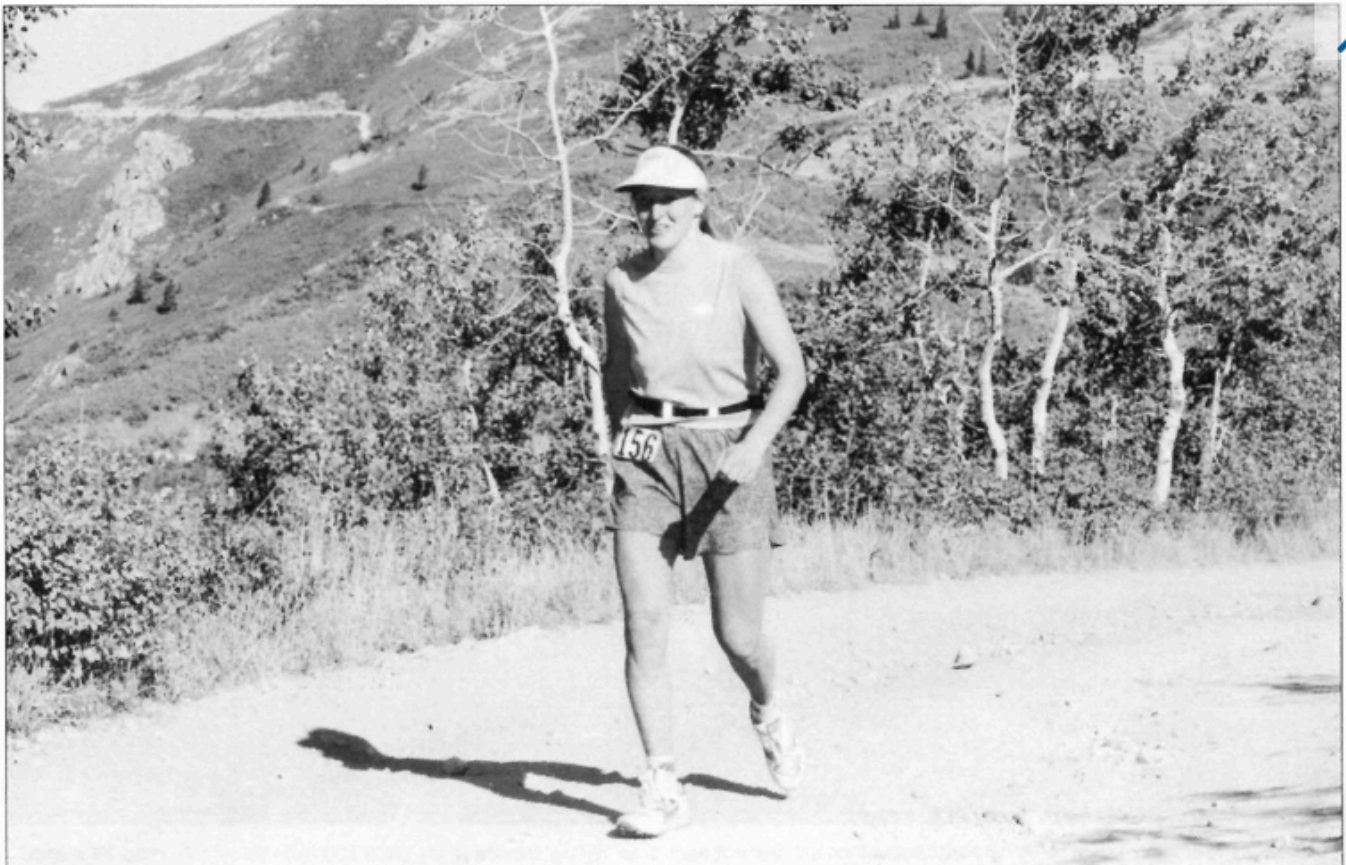
Carl Gross strides into Bountiful "B" aid station.



John Medinger glides gently uphill at mile 23.



"Prince ManyDots," aka John Moeller looks good after 23 miles.



Laura Vaughan earned her fifth win this year, made somewhat easier by the fact that she didn't have to stop to nurse any of her children.



Wasatch Front 100 Mile Endurance Run
FINISH LINE



Clockwise from upper left: The dusty roads beckon an unknown runner. José Wilkie enroute to his tenth 100-mile finish this year. The Grand Slam award winners for 1999: (front, l to r) Steve Burrows, Ed Boggess, Rick Hodges, and Ken Jensen. (back, l to r) John Wagner, Janine Duplessis, Jeff Washburn, Robert Tuller, Stan Jensen, Lisa Conover, and Leon Draxler. Photo by Steve Yarnall. Top photos: Wendy Grant.