

## A Journey of Spirit and Body

by John Moellmer

The pre-race meeting at Sugarhouse Park is a great opening event for the Wasatch Front 100 Mile Endurance Run. Old friends, new friends, and scared friends all gather to get instructions, pick up their numbers and packets, and celebrate what will begin the next morning. Family news and best wishes are shared. It's a special meeting—everyone thinks about the morrow and of each other.

It was a very cold 5:00 a.m. start for the 22nd Wasatch. At Grobber's Corner, 9,160 feet and 13.2 miles into the run (a water stop where race director John Grobber can personally greet each runner), the temperature was 27 degrees F and the water in the cups had a film of ice over them. But as the sun rose to greet 185 runners, the day warmed to a splendid example of late summer in the Wasatch Mountains. In fact, it was one of the finest two days for running in the history of the run. Did that translate into a huge percentage of finishers? It did not—a full 40 percent were unable to complete the course.

At every aid station the runners were checked-out, encouraged, and pampered by terrific, hard working volunteers. Radio communication kept track of runners from remote aid stations to radio control headquarters at Midway. A new communication tool for this year's race was having current runner times for each aid station posted on the web. Interested family and friends from all across the world could check the current status of a runner and follow their progress by simply accessing the web site. Thanks to Brett Neilson for putting this new feature together for the race. Interestingly, Brett was doing this at a remote site from Texas. Nearly 20,000 hits were recorded while the race was ongoing.

After 22 hours, the field had spread out from the Upper Big Water aid station in Mill Creek Canyon (mile 61.6) to the finish line at the Homestead in Midway—all between heaven and hell.

Leland Barker finished in 21:44:38 for first place, his second win. The last finisher was Robert Mason Tuller, Jr. from New York City, making it under the 36-hour limit in a time of 35:51:09. Last year Robert finished eight minutes over the limit.

The Homestead Resort in Midway, Utah, was gracious enough to offer their wonderful facilities for our finish. As a result, runners left the old course at Rock Springs (mile 87.3) and looped around Mill Canyon peak and drop to the Homestead Resort at Midway. "Drop" is an unfair description. The course climbs up and down again several times in tough country, which is grueling for those finding their way through this section. Names such as "The Plunge," "The Dive," and others not fit to print pretty much describe the territory. This year there were seven Crimson Cheetahs awarded, fewer than last year. Could there be a correlation?

Betsy Nye was the first woman to finish, coming to the Homestead in eleventh place with a time of 26:17:29. Pam Reed from Tucson, Arizona, was second in 28:03:51 and from Largo, Florida, Barbara Frye-Krier ran a time of 28:48:49. Curt Anderson, a former resident of Utah, now from Emerson, Colorado, was the second finisher in 22:35:27 and Derek Blaylock, from Riverton, Utah, collected his second Cheetah award with third place in 22:37:56.

Maybe the attraction of Wasatch is that it isn't a given and there is no quick satisfaction. A finish requires being free from serious illness and injury, moving along steadily, and most of all, digging deep. Perhaps Susan Hunter Yates said it best: "Life is about will, motivation, the power of the mind and body." For every runner that toed the start line, there was a story of perseverance, trial, and insight. Congratulations to all of the runners who had the courage to line up at the start that cold morning to test the mettle of their bodies and spirits.

## 2001: A Wasatch Odyssey

by Pepper Martin

Descending from Point Supreme, the highest point of the Wasatch 100 Mile Endurance Run, Betsy Nye of Tahoe City, California was greeted by the yips and yowls of distant coyotes. They spotted her lights 10,400 feet. They welcomed her to their domain and warned her of the tough miles ahead, where the precious water she carried would begin to freeze. They did not warn her about the emotional peaks and valleys she would traverse before the finish. Their calls framed the question, "Should you be here?"

"Here" covered "100 miles of heaven and hell," 26,824 vertical feet up and 26,050 feet down. Despite the altitude averaging more than 8,000 feet, the Wasatch course can be surprisingly fast—for a few. The course record of 20:08 held by Karl Meltzer of Sandy, Utah and the women's record of 22:27 held by Ann Trason of Kensington, California hint at the astonishing speeds that have been achieved. As if the distance, the mountains and the cold were not tough enough, the necessary speed to win added yet another danger.

Betsy Nye was in her element, however. The moon was out, and ahead lay steep, rocky, downhill miles into the Ant Knolls aid station. The aid station was perched high atop the Dry Fork drainage, on an improbable four-wheel-drive road. Volunteers hauled in food, drink, shelter and warmth. They provided a margin of safety. They shivered through the night ministering to the racers and sending steady radio reports. They did not report on the news announced by the coyotes. Above Ant Knolls is the Grunt, a half-mile climb so steep that the aid station volunteers followed Betsy into the woods with their lights, as if to say, "It's not too late to come back." But The Grunt was not enough to keep Betsy from asking, "Is there anyone coming?"

Like all of the other runners, what prepared Betsy to be there was racing and training. To master the descents, she ran repeats on the Mountain Run in Squaw



Valley, California. She rode the tram up, sprinted down and did it again and again. Her competitors were well-trained too. Wasatch was the third 100-mile of the summer for Betsy Kalmeyer. She obliterated her own record at Colorado's Hardrock 100 in July, becoming the only woman to finish under 30 hours. The legendary Laura Vaughan, a Wasatch finisher for the last ten years and five-time winner, entered late. She felt under-trained. Of course, everyone said that.

Ahead, Susan Hunter Yates was learning about speed. One of only four women to break 24 hours in the Wasatch 100, she was off to a tremendous start. At the Big Mountain aid station at mile 39, she looked unbeatable. Smiling and focused, she went through the aid station like it was a pit stop in an auto race. Off with her pack, onto the scale, a fast grab of some food, a switch to full water bottles, an acknowledgment of everyone's support, she was off, up the trail. "Number two—out," she barked. She was 40 minutes ahead of her winning 23:46 pace of last year. She held the pace through Brighton at mile 75, where she was two hours ahead of the next woman. Brighton has been called many things: a hospital, a morgue or more celestially, a black hole. Runners who fail to transition into night come in chilled and exhausted. The 8,800-foot altitude encourages nausea. Dehydration and lack of oxygen precipitate kidney failure. Minor pains in the early going can become excruciating injuries. The conventional wisdom of Wasatch warns runners to spend as little time as possible at Brighton. Karl Meltzer, who by all early appearances was cruising to another win, did not make it that far. He was forced out at mile 62 by a knee injury. "I am Karl" was a mantra for Betsy Nye's crew. Next year he'll repeat, "I am Betsy."

From the top of the Grunt, a rolling traverse took Betsy to the ridge above the aid station at Pole Line Pass. The lights of Heber glowed in the valley to the east. The moonlight made long shadows of the aspens in a high meadow. A long switchback dropped to a road and quickly into the Pole Line encampment. Betsy blew through the aid station like a runaway train. She grabbed GU, batteries and clothes from her drop bag and plunged into the night. In a tent Betsy had not noticed that Susan Hunter Yates was lying in a sleeping bag, out of the race, unable to keep anything in her stomach. The nausea had come on quickly. When

she heard Betsy's voice, she shouted encouragement, but no one heard her. After Susan withdrew, the aid station volunteers raised John Grobbsen, the race director, on the radio. "Put her on," he demanded. She didn't come to the radio tent.

The Wasatch 100 can be divided into quarters, like a mile race on the track. If everything goes well, the runners cruise along the mountain ridges, climbing out of Kaysville, Utah and heading south above Salt Lake City. The 14 miles of rocks and heat down into Lambs Canyon at mile 53 provide a grueling test. Beyond Lamb's Canyon, the temperature drops by up to 60 degrees, and the runners bundle up to keep from wasting energy to keep warm. The ridge above Mill Creek Canyon features a panorama of light—Park City to the east and Salt Lake City to the west bracket a billion brilliant stars. The horizon disappears. The rolling, rocky three-mile drop from Scott's Pass at 9,500 feet into Brighton tempts the runners to go too fast. Some people say the race starts at Brighton. A marathon short of the finish, the three-mile climb to Point Supreme is just the gateway to the indescribable tortures of the last quarter.

In her fourth quarter, Betsy Nye handled nightfall like an old Wasatch hand. She had climbed out of Lamb's Canyon powered by high-octane fuel. Her sister Julie, who would pace her for 36 miles, raced to keep up. Just before the temperature plummeted, they reached the Big Water aid station at mile 62. As they came up the road, Betsy warned, "I'm not waiting for you!" Fearing being dropped, Julie surged ahead, barking orders to the crew, "We need soup and potatoes!" They stripped out of wet clothes, got leg rubs from the crew and changed into tights and layers of shirts. They drank hot soup. They inhaled noodles. They loaded up on potatoes. They strapped on lights. At 12 minutes, it would be the longest stop of the race for Betsy. As they climbed into the growing

cold, Betsy complained that she hadn't gotten as much attention during the stop as her sister. But they were bundled up and loaded with food, water, diluted Cytomax and fresh batteries.

Seven hours later, just beyond Pole Line Pass, Betsy learned she was leading the women's race. Her second pacer, Tom Alber, caught up and announced the good news. She was energized. There were no city lights and no other runners to be seen. All the bursting agony of the last lap of a mile race takes less than a minute. Betsy had five hours to go. "Is anyone coming?" she asked.

Betsy picked up the pace, pushing closer to the edge of endurance. "Five and half miles of climbing ahead," warned Tom. "I don't want to know," she blew back in his face. Beyond the saddle at Sandy Baker Pass, they caught John Edgcomb and his pacer, Dave Hannaford. John had two finishes close to 22 hours in the Western States 100, and he was gunning for 24 hours here. He was behind that pace, looking like it was the last thing on his mind. The steeper it got, the more Betsy pulled away. Soon she could not see any lights behind. The traverse around Mill Canyon Peak turned ominous as she cursed the gentle grade. The cold deepened as well. The aid station at Rock Springs, the southern-most reach of the course, proved decisive. Betsy filled up her bottles with water the volunteers had heated on a camp stove. Before it chilled, the hot water would banish the cold for the rest of the race.



Wasatch women's winner Betsy Nye.  
Photo by Pepper Martin.

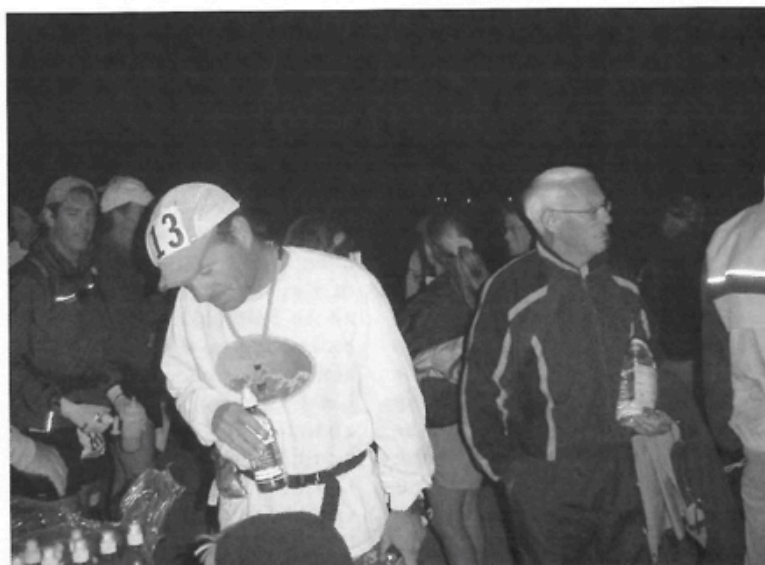


Just five miles after assuming the lead, Betsy announced that she felt like throwing up. She had choked down a few crackers at Rock Springs. She was well hydrated. But had she pushed too hard? Serendipity and her downhill training intervened. Betsy loves to fly down mountains. She had held back on the drop from Scott's Pass, avoiding the overexertion that cost her last year. Now she was poised above a 1,200-foot drop, called "the dive" and "the plunge." Wrestling with her alligator stomach, her first few steps off the edge were tentative. But before long, she had gathered herself into a headlong rush, slipping, falling, getting up, cursing, and bounding down into the darkness. The next glow stick marking the trail seemed miles away, but suddenly she was on top of it, turning the corner for the next drop. What better way to settle her stomach? The "plunge" did the trick.

Besting her nausea exacerbated what she later called "emotional puking." Before the finish, her vocabulary was enriched with words starting with F. At the crest of the last climb, the crisis peaked. "F, I can't F see," she cried. She had three lights. The fluorescent bulb around her waist had been out for an hour. Her booming headlamp had just blinked off. The cold had depleted her batteries. "I can't see!" Betsy was down to her last dim light. With only a descent ahead, she couldn't move. "Laura is just going to fly down this trail!" The hints of dawn on the horizon were not enough to show her where to put her feet. Her mind was still working. She put Tom in front and followed the reflectors on his shoes. "It's like skiing in a white out," he told her. And so it was. They picked up the pace enough for confidence. The dawn was her deliverance. She pushed back into the lead, flying again. Before the last drop, someone came up the trail toward them, asking about a blind runner, a victim of corneal edema. It wasn't her.

It wasn't all desperation. She laughed at some things, like the course marker ribbon tied to a deer skeleton! Six miles to go. Her crew cheered and enveloped her as she exited the woods onto the finishing pavement. "You've won!" "I'm not going to run on that F pavement," she had insisted up on the mountain, but she couldn't help it now. It's hard to win.

"What's it like to win the race?" a television reporter asked Betsy at the finish. Her smile was whole. She had never been the first woman in a 100-mile. In



Rick Gates completed his 17th Wasatch 100.

Photo by Adam Grobben.

1999, when she broke the course record in the Hardrock 100, she would have finished first except for the two women that ran faster. "It's not about winning," she said. "Everyone out there deserves a medal."

A television reporter covering the race? What is the sport coming to? The Wasatch 100 started in 1980 with five starters. Two finished. The impossibility of the event was confirmed in 1981. None of the seven starters finished. The next year, three of nineteen starters achieved the impossible. In 2001, half of the more than 200 starters beat the 36-hour cut-off time. Endurance running has become a sport. It has legends. It has media coverage. It has sponsors. One of the sponsors is the American Association of Retired Persons. Life as an ultra—these are big changes.

Leland Barker of Smithfield, Utah won the 2001 Wasatch 100. Finishing in 21:44 while Betsy was still climbing toward Rock Springs, he was long asleep by the time she finished in 26:17, in 11th place overall. Laura Vaughan eventually finished and visited. "Wasn't it great to run your own race?" she laughed. And so it was. Betsy couldn't stop smiling. She was awarded an ungulate skull trophy and a place among previous winners. She thanked the race organizers, the volunteers and the women who blazed her trail. Before her head hit the pillow that night, she was looking forward to running the 164-mile Tahoe Rim Trail with friends. Wouldn't that be great.

## Wasatch 100 Mile

East Layton, Utah

September 8

Mountainous Trails

1. Leland Barker, 43	21:44:38
2. Curtis Anderson, 38, CO	22:35:27
3. Derek Blaylock, 32	22:37:56
4. Kevin Shilling, 33	23:14:38
5. Jeff LaMora, 28	23:22:33
Brandon Sybrowsky, 30, CO	23:22:33
7. Tim Spence, 45	23:59:08
8. Paul Sweeney, 35, CA	24:14:42
9. Derrick Carr, 40, VA	24:46:21
10. Dave Terry, 39, OR	26:12:41
11. <u>Betsy Nye</u> , 36, CA	26:17:29
12. Tom Remkes, 39	26:28:11
13. Peter Riley, 40	26:38:41
14. Randy Albrecht, 45, KS	26:42:22
15. John Edgcomb, 42, CA	27:07:14
16. Ken Jensen, 33	27:15:10
17. Joe Winch, 45, IA	27:27:50
18. Patrick McMurtry, 42	27:35:35
19. Jeffrey Holdaway, 42, VA	27:38:05
20. David Klein, 37	27:55:06
21. <u>Pam Reed</u> , 40, AZ	28:03:51
22. Daniel Hendriksen, 47	28:06:29
23. Dale Heisler, 51	28:20:31
24. Kim Olsen, 47	28:21:20
25. Dana Taylor, 40, CA	28:28:17
26. Dana Miller, 50	28:36:32
27. Matthew Weatherly-White, 37, ID	28:38:35
28. Jim Haisley, 43	28:39:07
29. Richard McDonald, 25	28:45:49
30. <u>Barbara Frye-Krier</u> , 46, FL	28:48:49
Bobby Keogh, 52, NM	28:48:49
Mark Williams, 43, MO	28:48:49
33. Peter Lindgren, 31	28:52:20



34. Brian Stromberg, 36	29:03:45
35. Joshua Hickman, 32	29:04:54
Robert Tavernini, 34, TX	29:04:54
37. Tim Seminoff, 43	29:08:00
38. <u>Sally Marcellus</u> , 48, BC	29:09:54
39. Wayne Baldwin, 34	29:11:42
40. <u>Lorie Hutchison</u> , 37	29:13:37
41. David Hunt, 42	29:25:32
42. John Reynolds, 38	29:26:13
43. Paul Schmidt, 49, CA	29:28:19
44. Jason Dorgan, 35, WI	29:39:20
45. Rick Gates, 44	29:42:11
46. Steve Westlund, 50	29:45:30
47. Murray Schart, 42	29:49:45
48. Michael Suter, 54, CA	30:05:43
49. Jeffrey Welsh, 47, NC	30:22:04
50. Carter Williams, 43	30:35:56
51. Phillip Lowry, 35	30:51:44
52. Rich Baxter, 33	30:56:15
53. Carl Jess, 42, NM	30:56:38
54. <u>Carin Kutcipal</u> , 31, CO	31:01:01
David Kutcipal, 32, CO	31:01:01
56. Rick May, 53	31:03:08
57. Todd Scholl, 42, CO	31:12:39
58. Richard Hayes, 50, CA	31:30:23
59. Eric Pence, 35, CO	31:37:59
60. Karl Jensen, 52, BC	31:41:28
61. Rolf Thompson, 44	31:41:50
62. Jeff Huff, 39, HI	31:44:09
63. <u>Laura Vaughan</u> , 35, CA	31:50:15
64. Jim Knight, 48	31:56:30
65. Myrri McBride, 48, NM	32:00:08
66. Grizz Randall, 57	32:21:07
67. Mike Price, 51	32:24:11
68. Jim Williamson, 41	32:28:06
69. <u>Betsy Kalmeyer</u> , 40, CO	32:29:09
70. Dave Whitehead, 53, GBR	32:37:46
71. David Blaylock, 58	32:41:25
72. Renne Gardner, 43, CA	32:44:20
73. Jerry Bloom, 48, CA	32:56:30
74. David Mecham, 55	32:58:09
75. Robert Earl Green, 45	32:58:47
76. Russ Evans, 42, VA	33:01:19
77. Gordon Hardman, 50, CO	33:04:07
78. Bill Francis, 49	33:11:44
79. Max Bliss, 33, NY	33:13:02
80. Hans-Dieter Weisshaar, 61, GER	33:17:06
81. <u>Jeanine Carlson</u> , 47, MA	33:23:55
82. <u>Annette Lille</u> , 33, CO	33:27:11
83. Tim Coats, 40	33:29:12
84. Jon Gnass, 46, OR	33:30:15
85. Stephen Bailey, 32	33:34:33
86. Ari Menitove, 30	33:34:40
87. Thomas McCoin, 35, CA	33:41:30
88. Duncan Orr, 50	33:42:07
89. Dave Quivey, 38	33:43:01
90. Kenneth Hubbard, 54, VA	33:49:26
Bill Sublett, 44, VA	33:49:26
92. Don Lundell, 39, CA	33:52:39
93. Niels Bigler, 35	33:53:07

94. Mark Allen, 38, CO	33:56:55
95. George Sunderland, 46	33:58:31
96. Nicholas Palazzo, 54, NY	33:59:22
97. Hank Armantrout, 43	34:05:24
98. Randy Stillman, 51, OR	34:07:29
99. Chad Derum, 29	34:11:14
100. Fred Abramowitz, 49, NM	34:24:07
101. <u>Julie Nelson</u> , 40	34:47:12

102. James Salasovich, 25, CO	34:47:29
103. Chuck Wilson, 52, CA	34:54:20
104. Jim Drummond, 49, UK	35:20:16
105. Roger Jones, 62	35:23:02
106. David Capson, 40	35:28:06
107. Marc Collman, 44	35:29:05
108. Charlie Vincent, 41	35:47:02
109. Robert Mason Tuller, 37, NY	35:51:09
184 starters	

## Wasatch: A View From The Back of the Pack

by Marie Boyd

Following a fast disappearing pack at the start of the Wasatch 100, I wondered if I would ever see any of them again. The line of lights began stringing out, and before long I was plodding along a winding trail with a failing flashlight. Idiot! I thought I had replaced those batteries. Not to worry—a very kindly George Sunderland shared his light, as well as his insights into the final 15 miles of the course, newly added this year. Daylight came, George moved on, and soon I noticed the trail sweep sneaking along behind me—not a good sign.

As the day wore on, I actually passed a few runners, knowing I would not see them again. Cut-off times—the bane of my life—once again became part of my existence on the trails. Hurrying through aid stations, I gradually made up some time, only to see it disappear during the night on steep hills in cold winds and high altitudes. My pacers, Jan and Andy, moved me along purposefully; we nurtured the faint hope that perhaps I could indeed do the last 25 miles in seven hours.

Reality set in when the steepness and roughness of the trails started taking a toll after 85 miles. Very slow progress became the norm; our goals were re-evaluated. Having planned for so many miles the location of the finisher's plaque on my wall, the new belt for the buckle, and the joy of seeing faces at the finish line, these new circumstances dictated a revision. What did a buckle and plaque matter, when the plan called for 100 miles of relentless forward progress? Andy and I decided that a necklace, homemade plaque and photograph of the runner finishing the race were all that were needed.

At 93 miles (the Pot Bottom aid station), a relieved crew told us we would be given a ride to the finish, as it was 5:00 p.m. and time was up. To their amazement, we informed them that we knew we were now on our own, but would be finishing the distance as private citizens. After a radio call to the race director explaining our decision, refilled water bottles, and reassurance that the course was still marked, we set off through a herd of sheep and the last seven miles of “easy uphill for two miles and a very nice five miles downhill.” Wrong! It was steep, rough and far.

Eventually, all things end, even 100-mile races, and soon the finish line was in sight. Despite our request that the race committee not wait for us, we were greeted by several people and our excited crew, Jan Gnass. Being told I had “redefined the word ‘tough’ ” made the entire experience worthwhile. Receiving a necklace the next morning from John Grobbs was a special moment I will never forget.

While not suggesting that slow runners persist in finishing every race contrary to specific rules, Wasatch regards with sympathy the individual runner's desire to complete the distance. Finishing this race, regardless of time, is a rewarding experience I will carry with me always. Learning that one can persist, despite setbacks, and meet the goal is a critical lesson for life. My experiences in working with surgeons in long, arduous cases, has taught me that patience and persistence will bring a positive result, and there is no failure in taking longer than expected to finish a task.