



AFTON TRAIL

AFTON ULTRA CROWNS CHAMPIONS AND UMTR CHAMPIONSHIP RACERS

by **phillip gary smith**

The 15th edition of the Afton Trail 50K, held on the Saturday after the Fourth of July holiday, yielded its own brand of fireworks and was a momentous occasion all on its own. Call it a race in a race in a race.

Afton tested and recognized its champions and age group winners for the 2008 edition. The race is also part of the Upper Midwest Trail Runners "Fab 5 Fifties" trail series composed of top 50-km and 50-mile races in the region.

The Afton Trail 50K was selected this year by the UMTR Board as the site of its very first ultra championship race because of the growing prestige of this event and its location on the border of Wisconsin and Minnesota – a kind of midpoint of the UMTR's 1,000-mile geographical reach. Recognition for this group of winners will be at the Upper Midwest Trail Runners Awards Fest, a celebration to be held October 25, 2008. The location of the UMTR championship trail ultra will move annually among "Fab 5 Fifties" series races.

A FRESH LOOK

With new race director, John Storkamp, charging in with his hard-core approach, record entries filled the field to overflowing. John used his personal artistic skills to create one of the cooler looks for a Marmot race shirt yet seen; it was a definite hit with the crowd (www.aftontrailrun.com for pictures). Finishers' medals and winners' awards were fashioned by hand, creating a true memento. The medals were rimmed with John's six-word philosophy: Pride, Strength, Passion, Endurance, Fortitude, Discipline.

The race attracted participants from coast-to-coast. Melissa Chase, traveling from New York City to participate, commented that her

second place masters picture "was the coolest I saw. I think I'm lucky to have placed second just to get this particular one." Melissa led eventual master's winner Julie Berg to the first aid station of the second loop at mile 18 (each loop is 15.5 miles) before Julie used her conditioning on these trails to take the lead and keep it.

The Competition

Winning the Afton Trail race and the Upper Midwest Trail Ultra Championship, Eve Rukavina-Rembleski improved her women's course record by five minutes to 4:13:21, obliterating the women masters' course record and finishing third overall. Just like the heat today - big sun, July temperatures, a furnace breeze - Eve scorched the course. She thrives on balmy days, giving her a competitive and psychological advantage over the field. A few degrees hotter and who knows where she might have placed.

"She picked off three male racers for position on the hotter second loop between aid stations three and four," (mile 21.5 through 25) reported station volunteer Gretchen Perbix. Eve added, "The race doesn't start until the second loop." Helen Lavin came in second woman and 14th overall with her 4:36.

Joe Ziegenfuss won the overall victory with a stout 4:02:09 and knocked some 19 minutes off his 2007 seventh place.

A good rivalry is developing between Joe and pre-race favorite Wynn Davis. Joe won the Chippewa Moraine 50 km earlier this year, a race Wynn created and directs; Wynn bested Joe at the Superior 50 km in May. Wynn shared the Afton lead during the first loop with Tony Kocanda but faded to finish 11th. Tony kept the frontrunner spot to himself for a while during the second loop and took second overall with a finish of 4:06.

Joe said, "I knew it would be a tough field of competitive runners. I finished the first loop in fourth place at 1:59 and ran alone for the first three or four miles of the second loop, which was very enjoyable.

continued on page 54

12. <u>Christine Daly</u> , 46, NJ	5:21:12	34. Sean Kramer, 25, PA	6:23:18	56. Andrew Clark, 27	7:42:47
13. Gary Reilly, 52, MD	5:24:11	35. Walter Greenberg, 52, VT	6:23:41	57. <u>Laura Clark</u> , 61	7:52:22
14. David O'Neill, 41	5:26:05	36. Will Danecki, 58, CT	6:26:11	58. Mark Gelfond, 50, MA	7:52:48
15. <u>Jenny Chow</u> , 44, NJ	5:32:11	37. <u>Donna Graham</u> , 42	6:26:31	59. Kevin Vioral, 37, VA	7:56:41
Nathan Echols, 41, NJ	5:32:11	38. Bob Lantz, 54, PA	6:27:08	60. <u>Sophie Kashurba</u> , 15, PA	8:03:44
17. Kevin Woodruff, 50	5:36:27	39. <u>Kimberly Rapp</u> , 43	6:27:46	61. <u>Karen McWhirt</u> , 47, CT	8:05:51
18. James Miner, 59	5:37:03	40. Jamey Lister, 28, MI	6:27:23	62. <u>Mary Kashurba</u> , 52, PA	8:09:55
19. Allen Byrnes, 55, CO	5:40:17	41. Richard Detwiler, 59	6:28:34	63. Gregory Doyle, 62, PA	8:25:17
20. Charles Oatman, 56, ON	5:40:57	42. David Eck, 38, PA	6:32:01	64. Michael McCumber, 59, MD	8:29:55
21. Jim Lampman, 25	5:54:37	43. John Buzansky, 46, PA	6:36:50	65. <u>Annette Brenner</u> , 38	9:01:31
22. Timothy Hardy, 47	5:55:29	44. John Clark, 49, PA	6:41:31	66. Greg Taylor, 61	9:04:44
23. Wesley Berg, 28	5:55:42	45. Gregory Bachinsky, 47	6:42:48	67. <u>Laura Garrett</u> , 51, TX	10:43:48
24. Eric McGlinchey, 34, VA	5:58:01	46. David Stanton, 48, PA	6:47:07	68. <u>Cathy Troisi</u> , 62	10:44:31
25. Patrick Reed, 43, PA	5:58:44	47. Robert Scott, 54, CT	6:48:30	69. Dave Black, 57, CO	11:36:10
26. Donny Andreas, 41	6:00:37	48. <u>Ramonita Colon</u> , 37, PA	6:50:42		
27. Andrei Volik, 34	6:05:20	49. <u>Carrie Drummond</u> , 34, PA	6:56:59		
28. Tom Kubicz, 30, MD	6:11:21	50. David Weiss, 59	7:00:18		
29. James Allen, 50	6:12:25	51. <u>Leah Perry</u> , 45, MD	7:23:26		
30. John Nelson, 58, VA	6:13:28	52. Robert Perry, 45, MD	7:23:27		
31. <u>Lorrie Tily</u> , 47	6:16:09	53. <u>Anne Schwartz</u> , 52	7:30:53		
32. Jeff St. Germaine, 35, MA	6:20:55	54. Paul Weppler, 55	7:31:29		
33. David Fleming, 32, VA	6:23:41	55. <u>Laura Beachy</u> , 18, PA	7:37:32		



AFTON TRAIL

I saw Wynn right before the second aid station and passed him as he was stopped. I was only spending about 20-30 seconds at each stop.”

“Three miles later when I first saw Tony ahead of me on the first river straightaway, I was excited, but knew it would be a battle. He saw me as I was running over and he was running under the bridge. I caught him, and we ran together for a few miles. After the meat grinder (mile 26.5) I seemed to be fresher and pulled away. As I started the “Snowshoe” single-track I could feel some cramping coming on in the legs, and it slowed me down a few minutes, which was the difference between my two loop splits.” In other words, Joe was very close to running negative splits and had a good shot at a sub-four hour finish.

The course has never been in better shape. Racers breathed a “scythe” of relief as Afton State Park personnel had cut the prairie growth covering open trails in the area known as “Snowshoe.” The grass had been tall enough to obscure the more diminutive ultrathoners.

WHO REALLY WON?

With all of this competition, who was the biggest winner of the day? Deservingly, Afton State Park. The park is runner-friendly and is the chief beneficiary of the proceeds from nearly 400 entrants. The beautiful, challenging hills (eight key climbs per loop) make up this glorious Minnesota park ending at the scenic St. Croix River. This park was an important part of John Storkamp’s life as a youngster and later as a trail runner. Now he is in a position to really reward the park by building on previous race director Scott Wagoner’s efforts. What better way is there to commemorate America’s birthday week-end than to support one of its natural resources while ultra-racing its terrain.

Phillip Gary Smith is the author of ULTRA SUPERIOR, a book whose proceeds benefit the Superior Hiking Trail Association - phillip@ultrasuperior.com

afton trail run | 50 KM AFTON, MINNESOTA JULY 5 • TRAILS

1. Joe Ziegenfuss, 33	4:02:09	42. Matt Aro, 29, WI	5:27:35	88. Tim Potter, 54	6:38:26
2. Tony Kocanda, 35	4:06:54	43. Matthew Patten, 37	5:27:58	89. Steve Corner, 46	6:39:44
3. <u>Eve Rembleski</u> , 40	4:13:21	Hendrie Grant, 45	5:27:58	90. Lynn Saari, 42	6:41:06
4. Matt Howard, 39, WI	4:16:41	45. <u>Jenny Marietta</u> , 31, WI	5:29:43	91. <u>Barb Giles</u> , 40	6:41:07
5. Erik Brooks, 36, WA	4:19:19	46. Steven Cooper, 24	5:31:56	92. <u>Pam Petengill</u> , 42	6:44:04
6. Erik Elmstrand, 19	4:24:46	47. Phil Sheridan, 36	5:34:07	Joe Lovett, 41	6:44:04
7. Erik Kaitala, 36	4:25:29	48. Kevin Martin, 33	5:36:42	94. Thomas Rowe, 59	6:45:45
8. Matthew Cincotta, 20, WI	4:28:18	49. Kyle Snyder, 30	5:39:39	95. Troy Rand, 31, IA	6:46:29
9. Arley Anderson, 43	4:29:43	50. Greg Taylor, 61	5:40:41	96. Tom Weigt, 56	6:46:35
10. Ben Endres, 37, NY	4:29:50	51. Joe Winch, 52, IA	5:45:27	97. <u>Sara Lovett</u> , 39	6:50:10
11. Wynn Davis, 27, WI	4:30:11	52. Mark Klingelhoets, 54	5:50:00	98. Aaron Hansen, 27	6:51:51
12. John MacBean, 39	4:33:23	53. <u>Pam Nielsen</u> , 31	5:50:23	99. <u>Holly Karas</u> , 28	6:52:09
13. Kurt Decker, 37	4:34:45	54. Mark Hanson, 48	5:50:33	100. Mark Seaburg, 48	6:52:56
14. <u>Helen Lavin</u> , 31	4:36:05	55. <u>Julie Berg</u> , 43	5:50:46	101. Craig Swanson, 54	6:54:57
15. Jason Boon, 34	4:36:19	56. <u>Kami Holtz</u> , 36	5:50:47	102. Randy Zellmer, 53	6:59:17
16. Taylor Murphy, 21, NY	4:38:01	57. Brian Ferguson, 39, WI	5:51:16	103. <u>Maria Barton</u> , 42	7:00:59
17. Randy Niemiec, 37	4:41:23	58. Steve Quick, 45	5:52:01	104. Michael Casper, 38, OR	7:02:19
18. Jason Krezinski, 35, WI	4:50:53	59. Dave Bon, 37	5:52:12	105. Michael Segorski, 61, MI	7:02:36
19. Sean Faulk, 35	4:54:52	60. Rick Wagar, 45, ND	5:54:11	106. <u>Donna Creditor</u> , 47, IL	7:11:27
20. Andrew Davis, 39	4:55:26	Jacob Valento, 29	5:54:11	107. Tim Roe, 28, WI	7:15:54
21. <u>Laurie Kocanda</u> , 38	4:57:13	62. Bruce Smith, 59, WI	5:55:56	Steve Hagedorn, 49	7:16:54
22. Paul Holovnia, 46	4:57:48	63. Shawn Kelly, 48	5:55:58	109. <u>Karen Gall</u> , 48	7:17:20
23. John Maas, 47	4:58:21	64. Chris Mullin, 32	6:00:15	110. Brian Ferguson, 39, WI	7:25:44
24. Randy Peterson, 42	4:59:37	65. Steve Grabowski, 40	6:01:31	111. John Montwill, 47	7:31:33
25. Jeff Eggers, 50	5:01:30	66. <u>Melissa Chase</u> , 43, NY	6:03:23	112. Wally Goettl, 62	7:36:04
26. James Felling, 29, WI	5:03:23	67. John Kromminga, 43, IA	6:07:18	113. Les Martisko, 64	7:36:10
27. John Nichols, 43, CA	5:06:00	68. Karl Benson, 43	6:09:08	114. Liz Harper, 37	7:41:00
28. Dan Kasper, 50	5:06:40	69. Doug Thomas, 54	6:09:34	115. Mike Westermeier, 50	7:44:10
29. Brian Cloherty, 48	5:09:12	70. Kurt Rossow, 47	6:10:23	116. <u>Susan Canevello</u> , 40, IL	7:45:43
30. Mark Drapac, 46	5:09:13	71. Stephen Ambroe, 37, WI	6:12:15	<u>Lynn Karner</u> , 51, IL	7:45:43
31. Christopher Koch, 26	5:13:31	72. Mark Stodghill, 59	6:13:54	118. Londell Pease, 45	7:49:45
32. Robert Mitchell, 29	5:13:33	73. Jeffrey Storch, 40, WI	6:15:10	119. Joseph Galloway, 51, IA	7:54:54
33. Scott Turi, 42	5:13:45	74. David Lindgren, 50	6:15:57	120. Phillip Gary Smith, 60	7:59:18
34. Aaron Drevlow, 36	5:17:48	75. Carl Gammon, 53	6:17:09	121. <u>Denese Lenertz</u> , 49	8:02:07
35. Will Kemper, 38, WA	5:17:50	76. Pierre Ostor, 51	6:17:34	122. Laurence Macon, 63, TX	8:07:19
36. Nolan Barrios, 40	5:20:48	77. Zach Pierce, 35	6:17:58	123. <u>Valerie Raverty</u> , 31	8:11:39
37. Steven Sjolund, 57	5:21:24	78. Todd Rowe, 51	6:19:59	124. Marius Hansen, 25	8:22:54
38. Doug Strum-Smith, 34, IA	5:22:47	79. Kyle Raverty, 32	6:24:57	125. Kurt Neuburger, 27	8:24:04
39. Dorn Peddy, 50, IL	5:22:58	80. Herb Byun, 64	6:25:24	126. Philip Price, 28	8:30:19
40. Brad Birkholz, 40, WI	5:26:19	81. <u>Carrie Knapp</u> , 28, TX	6:26:03	127. Jesse Price, 54	8:36:41
41. John Gusafson, 56	5:26:37	82. Joel Button, 40	6:26:04	128. Dan Mattimiro, 46	8:36:44
		83. John Pitera, 57	6:27:46	129. Steve Barr, 51, IL	9:05:13
		84. Sean Foley, 36	6:32:19	130. Donald Clark, 56 (sweep)	9:52:10
		85. <u>Carrie Boyer</u> , 35	6:33:15	<u>Bonnie Riley</u> , 55 (sweep)	9:52:10
		86. Jim Wilson, 48	6:35:59		
		87. Jim Stocco, 55	6:38:25		