

USATF Annual Convention 2001 - Mobile, Alabama

USATF - Mountain/Ultra/Trail (MUT) Sport Council Minutes from USATF Convention (FINAL VERSION)

Thursday, November 29, 2001 4 pm - 7:30 pm (106B 2nd level)

Friday, November 30, 2001 11 am - Noon (107B 2nd level)

Attending: MUT Council members - Janice Anderson, Ruth Anderson, Dave Dunham, Lorraine Gersitz, Nancy Hobbs, Brian Metzler, Kevin Setnes, Theresa Daus-Weber. MUT Council members absent: Doug Laufer, Jim Garcia, Tom Johnson.

Guests attending: Barb Arveson, John Cosgrove, Tom Cotner, Jerry Crockett, Charles DesJardins, Bruce Guter Joyce Hodges-Hite., Linda Honikman, Carol McLatchie, Ed McGinnis, Gary Morgan, Eric Morse, Ed Parrot, Roy Pirrung, Mike Polansky, Brad Precosky, Ken Robichaud, Bill Roe, Mike Roul, Ian Seecof, Larry Smithee, John TenBroeck,

1) **Introductions and attendance:** A notepad was circulated to collect names/contact info so everyone attending will receive minutes from the meeting either by e-mail or snail mail. Everyone at the meeting introduced themselves and their affiliation. Bill Roe stopped in for a brief visit to congratulate Alaska for receiving the nod as host of the 2003 World Mountain Running Trophy and to Nancy Hobbs who was elected to a four-year term as treasurer of the World Mountain Running Association.

2) **Review and approval of minutes** from '00 meeting: Approved unanimously.

3) **Financial report and Budget '01:** Hobbs provided the MUT treasurer's report. With \$1500 operating dollars (\$500 from each of the LDR chair budgets), the majority of expenses are for postage, copies, phone calls, and related expenses for MUT programs. Gersitz reported that Ultrarunners Supporting Ultrarunners (USU) provides additional financial support to the 100K team. The USU led by Chrissy Fergusson raises funds at ultra events and through individual donations. Hobbs reported that the All American Trail Running Association (AATRA) provided financial support (\$1000) to the mountain team this year. In 2000 MUT requested \$5000 from USATF to be used for mountain and ultra team athlete travel to the international competition venues (this translates to about \$100 per athlete). MUT was awarded \$3000 for 2001. In 2001 MUT again requested \$5000 (for 2002) and received a line item of \$4000. Although this is an increase from 2001, MUT will no longer receive funding from the LDR chair budgets. Essentially MUT will have \$500 fewer dollars in 2002. Jerry Crockett, LDR Division Chair, stated that there may be some dollars in the LDR budget should MUT require additional operating funds. Crockett suggested that MUT's request for funding go to CEO, Jim Elias, and Larry Jenks in the future.

4) **Question from the floor** regarding Masters programs within MUT: In 2001 the first international competition for masters was held - The World Veterans Mountain Running Championship in Poland. More than 500 athletes participated. In 2002 the event will be renamed the WMRA Masters World Mountain Running Championships and will be held in Kitzbuhel, Austria on September 21 (one week after the World Mountain Running Trophy events). Distances range from 8K-10K and age divisions are in 5 year increments starting at 35 for women and 40 for men. In the past there has been a World Masters 100K championship held as part of the 100K World Challenge. One female masters runner participated in '00 representing the US. In 2002 at the World 100K Challenge in Belgium there will be a masters division.

5) **Report on World Championships '01** -Hobbs and Dunham provided the mountain report. This year's team included Dan Verrington, Dave Dunham, and Nikki Kimball who earned berths on the team at the USATF New England Mountain Running Championship, May 12 in New Ipswich, NH (this was the fourth time that New England USATF Association has hosted a mountain running championship and the sixth year for the New England USATF mountain running circuit - the only association within USATF to stage a mountain circuit) and Julie Flynt Bryan who earned a slot on the team at the Barr Trail Mountain Race, July 15 in Manitou Springs, CO. Eric Morse, Jeremy Wright, Ryan Pauling, Brad Precosky, Kari DiStefano (alternate), Danelle Ballengee, and Suzy West were named to the team based on their running resumes and past mountain running team experience. The team participated in the 17th World Mountain Running Trophy in Arta Terme Italy, September 15 (women 8K) and September 16 (men 13K). Several of our athletes were unable to make the trip to Italy following the September 11 tragedy (Dave Dunham, Eric Morse, Nikki Kimball, and Suzy West). Our team went through some shuffling, but we were able to field a full men's and women's team. Ryan Pauling led the men's field finishing 24th followed by Dan Verrington in 79th, Jeremy Wright in 85th, and rounding out the scoring was Brad Precosky 107th. The men's team was 18th out of 25 teams. The women had their best team finish placing 9th out of 22 teams (just a few points out of 7th place) and best individual women's performance in the seven years of fielding a women's team at Worlds. Kari DiStefano was the top American in 21st position followed by Julie Flynt Bryan 28th, and Danelle Ballengee in 31st to round out the scoring. Next year's trophy race will be held in Innsbruck, Austria September 14-15 on an uphill-only course. Gersitz provided the 100K team report. Gersitz was the women's team leader at the August 27 event held in the Brittany region of France in Cleder comprised of two 50K loops.

The top 3 men and top 3 women at the 100K USATF National Championship in Pittsburgh in March were named to the team. In Pittsburgh, two newcomers to the 100K - Anne Riddle and Nikki Kimball - finished 1-2, followed by Chrissy Fergusson in 3rd

(Chrissy has been on seven 100K teams). The remaining 3 women were selected based on 100K times - Jennifer Pfeiffer, Danielle Cherniak, and Christy Cosgrove. Then men's team included Jim Garcia (seven-time member) who won Pittsburgh event, Rich Hanna 2nd in Pittsburgh, and Bob Sweeney. The remaining three named to the team were Howard Nippert, Dave Dunham, and Tom Johnson. Dunham and Kimball are the first two athletes making a 100K and mountain team in the same year. The World 100K Challenge was two loops of 50K. Hanna earned a silver medal for his second-place performance. (Over the years the US has earned two golds - 1M/1F and 2 Silver - 2M.) Nippert finished 13th and Garcia finished 64th to score for the men's team. Cherniak led the women with a 13th place finish followed by Pfeifer in 17th, and Kimball in 21st to round out the scoring. The women's team finished 4th overall. Next year's 100K Challenge will be held in Torhout, Belgium on June 21.

6) **Athlete selection for world teams** - One of the goals of MUT is to stage selection races in the east/central/west. There are two selection races slated for 2002 including the Mt. Washington Hill Climb June 15 and the Vail Hill Climb July 7. Brad Precosky representing the Alaska Mountain Runners and Alaska USATF association presented a bid to host a third selection race in Anchorage on June 9 - the 9.4K Wolverine Hill Climb. Precosky feels that a selection race in Alaska would give runners an opportunity to preview the World Mountain Trophy course of 2003 and provide exposure for the Alaska Mountain Runners. The event is held annually although the location rotates from year to year. The course mirrors that of the 2002 World Trophy event. Some of the event specifics included: 100% trail, course record of 47 minutes, no prize money, no travel assistance, lodging provided to top athletes in host homes, comp entries for top athletes, limit of 150 runners. The MUT council met separately to consider the event as a selection race and awarded selection-race status to the event with the following provision. The top US male and top US female finisher will earn an automatic berth on the 2002 mountain team provided they post an equivalent 10K time of 32 minutes for male and 38 minutes for female in the year prior to the competition (window would be June 9, 2001 through June 9, 2002). Earlier in the MUT meeting Hobbs had asked Bill Roe about adding a junior component to the mountain team. Roe stated that the MUT council could make that determination and suggested canvassing cross country coaches and potential athletes for feedback. Hobbs spoke to some coaches and athletes earlier this year about the prospect of adding a junior team and was met with positive responses. The MUT council agreed to add a junior component starting with the 2002 team. The MUT council will develop selection criteria for the team and this will be communicated to cross country coaches (high school and collegiate) and be posted at www.trailrunner.com. For the 100K team, Dan Brannen chairs the men's selection and Lorraine Gersitz heads up the women's selection. For the 2002 team the selection window ends February 16. On March 1 the team will be announced. Credentials include road performances over 100K and 50 miles. The selection criteria is posted at www.americanultra.org.

7) **Question from the floor** regarding selection process for masters. There is no set criteria now since the World Masters 100K is not held every year. Four years ago invitations were extended for masters team competition in the World Masters Challenge and two years ago individual invites were extended. Roy Pirrung agreed to work with Setnes to set up selection criteria for masters. Chuck DesJardins representing WAMA (used to be WAVA) reported that the 2004 event held in Auckland, NZ will include a first-time 50K road event. DesJardins will work with MUT masters reps to promote the event. DesJardins added that at the 2003 World Track and Field Championships in Paris a 100K road event may be included.

8) **Sponsorship** - Hobbs reported that Teva has signed a three-year contract (cash and product) as the official footwear and name sponsor of the mountain team. Starting in 2002 and through 2004 the team will be referred to as the US Teva Mountain Running Team. Hobbs and Setnes have put together the MUT sponsorship levels that includes \$10,000 annual investment as name sponsor and \$2,500 annual investment for official supplier/product status. There was a question from the floor whether we had approached REI as a sponsor. Anyone who has a sponsorship referral or idea should contact Hobbs or Setnes.

9) **Runner of the Year Awards** - Performances considered eligible for the award include those from November 1 (of prior year) through October 31 (of current year). Ultrarunning awards are presented to the outstanding male ultrarunner of the year - Ted Corbitt award and the Ruth Anderson award for the outstanding female ultrarunner. In addition there are masters awards for the top male and female ultrarunner of the year. The selection criteria for the Ted Corbitt award includes character and performance. For the Ruth Anderson award nominations were compiled by Gersitz and MUT council members were asked to vote and ranked athletes 1 through 5. Masters awards used to be part of masters LDR but now the voting is by MUT council. Mountain awards are presented to the top male and female mountain runner of the year. Anyone can send in a nomination for mountain runner of the year (request for nominations posted on various running-related websites). Nominations are compiled, USATF membership verified, and MUT council votes. This year's recipients are Kari DiStefano and Eric Morse. This year several of the mountain nominees were not USATF members. When these athletes were removed from the nomination list, negative comments about the awards process ensued. The MUT council suggested that another association could start an XYZ mountain runner of the year award or perhaps the media would respond and start a mountain runner of the year award or ranking. Brian Metzler (editor of Trail Runner magazine) said the magazine is looking into such an award or ranking system. In 2002 a masters male and female mountain runner of the year will be added to the MUT awards. All MUT awards are presented at the annual awards breakfast. Last year the awards were presented during LDR awards. It was suggested by Carol McLatchie, women's LDR chair, that a representative from MUT request a separate category for MUT awards starting in 2002 and to see this year's organizer about the schedule for tomorrow's ceremony to see where the MUT awards will fit in this year. In 2000 MUT presented an ultra contributor of the year (USU) and planned to announce the award recipient for 2001 after the convention.

10) **MUT Promotion and Publicity** - Gersitz reported that MUT will have its own page on the Running USA website. Information for the page will be provided to Linda Honikman, RRIC/Running USA. Links will flow to the AUA and AATRA sites (AUA and AATRA are both member organizations of USATF).

11) **MUT Championships** - (Janice) Anderson, chair of the championship committee, reported that press releases were sent to websites and race directors describing the championship program (which presently includes ultra distance only). Anderson received about 17 requests for the bid package (2002 and 2003 events) and received one complete bid and one incomplete bid. Setnes hand-carried three bids to the convention and one bid was sent, but not received. For 2002 bids were received from Withlacooche 100K Road on February 15 in Florida; Olander Park 24 Hour in Toledo, OH September 14-15; GNC 50K Road in Pittsburgh March 23; Ed Fitz 100K road (previously hosted the USATF 100K Championship and the World 100K Challenge) in Duluth, MN on October 19; White River 50 Mile Road in Washington on July 27; and the Headlands 50K Trail in Sausalito, CA on August 24. A bid from Olander Park 100 Mile Road was received for 2003. The MUT council met to discuss the bids and awarded championships to all of the events listed above for 2002 except for the 100K Road (the bid was incomplete and Anderson will contact the bidders to encourage them to apply for the 2003 championship) and tabled the Olander bid for 2003. MUT liaisons for the events will be Brannen (or Setnes) for Olander Park 24 Hour; Brannen for GNC (it was requested that Brannen also validate certification); Setnes for Ed Fitz; Metzler for White River; (Ruth) Anderson for Headlands 50K. (Janice) Anderson wants to establish two deadlines for 2003 bids so there is not such a rushed process before the convention. Bids for 2003 events will be accepted through June 30 with the championships announced in late July after the MUT council meets. Should championship distances still be open after July, additional bids will be considered at the convention with a November 1 deadline and bids for 2004 will be considered at next year's convention. We're working toward awarding bids two years out. Events historically bid for ultra championships to cover all divisions: open men, open women, and masters. Ultras are very competitive in the 5 year age groups. The addition of mountain and trail championships at distances below the marathon was discussed. Metzler suggested that we start with one and grow from there. A question from the floor to consider adventure in the title. The response was that adventure is implied in trail and mountain running. It was suggested that MUT survey race directors to find out what they'd like to see in a national championship and if they would be interested in hosting a national championship. Metzler stated there is a lot of competition in trail and ultraruns on the regional level and that White River 50 Mile amassed a great field and brought out national competition. Pirrung stated that national championships provide a venue for recreational runners to run with top competitors and bringing in the elite-level athlete raises the bar of competition. Cosgrove suggested that the trail and mountain community has an untapped market. It was agreed that MUT would consider bids for 2003 mountain/trail championships (under the marathon distance) using the same deadlines as the ultra bids (MUT will consider bids for trail/mountain championships under the marathon distance for 2002 provided the bid is of high quality). Metzler will be the contact for mountain/trail bids. Anyone can run in a USATF (MUT) championship, but in order to be a USATF champion, the athlete must be a USATF member. To be eligible for prize money and/or to score as a team competitor at a USATF (MUT) championship, an athlete must have a card at minimum the day before the event.. We don't want to alienate potential competitors by mandating membership, but will encourage membership by providing sign-up tables at championship events. Dunham reported that at two of the races in the USATF New England Mountain Running Circuit 80% of the competitors were USATF members. Dunham sets up a booth with membership applications and lets people know that one of the programs USATF New England provides is the mountain circuit (in response to "What does USATF do for me?")

12) **IAU/AUA Status** - Setnes received a report from Dan Brannen, executive director of AUA, who was unable to attend the convention with last-minute work commitments. AUA mission is to promote and develop ultrarunning. AUA appoints the delegate to the IAU and follows the international scene very closely. In 2003 AUA will host elections. Everyone that marks "U" on their USATF membership card is an AUA member and eligible to vote. AUA will post an annual report on their website as well as a performance list and championship events. AUA funding comes from Brannen and his event management business and sponsorships. Administrative costs are split between Setnes and Brannen. The USA trail community would love to see a World Trail Ultra event and the AUA would support the USA desire for some trail recognition if it saw an opportunity. There was a 24 hour Worlds in Italy this year. There was a question about the relationship between IAU, the IAAF, and AUA. A brief history of the IAU was provided by Setnes including the dissent within IAU a few years ago between English-speaking countries and European nations revolving around the IAU Constitution. There was a question whether the IAU delegate should come from MUT or AUA. Since AUA is the organization recognized by the IAU, the delegate must be from the AUA (USATF has also been supportive of the IAU rep coming from AUA). It was requested from MUT that AUA communicate the election process to ultrarunning members. Ed Parrot reported that, for the past week, he has researched the cost (about \$1500) to compile a joint USATF/AUA mailing to the ultra membership - approximately 3200 members. AUA may absorb the cost to prepare such a mailing.

13) **USA National 100K Team Program Update** - Setnes distributed a handout that outlined the program for 2001 and goals for 2002 including team status, training, travel to the 100K World Challenge, team selection, team captain, recruiting, team leaders, and sponsorship. If anyone would like a copy of the report, contact Setnes at Ksetnes@aol.com.

14) **Proposed efforts to further organize the MUT subcommittee** to include: An e-group was set up by Ed Parrot after last year's convention. It is the goal of MUT to accomplish much of its business through the e-group (and phone calls where necessary) prior to the convention so that most items can be rubber-stamped at convention with a minimum of discussion. Gersitz has amassed an e-mail list for running-related media that has been instrumental in MUT exposure.

15) Final Comments:

a) It was requested from the floor that MUT consider creating a "nuts and bolts" guide to ultra training and race directing. Gersitz mentioned that Hobbs co-authored a book this year entitled "The Ultimate Guide to Trail Running" that is available for order at www.trailrunner.com. The book includes a section on race directing.

b) MUT will be attending the associations meeting to make a presentation about starting a MUT program within existing associations. It was mentioned that many associations are heavily youth oriented and that it would be difficult to encourage involvement with anything other than youth. The goal of MUT is not to infiltrate associations, but to offer ways of reaching out to another group of runners.

16) Next meeting - Kansas City, Missouri 2002. Times and dates TBA.