

## Kevin Dean and Suzanna Bon win the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual AC100

by: Hal Winton and Ken Hamada

With the numbers of run entrants increasing steadily every year, this year's cool weather on race weekend yielded a higher than usual finish rate and more runners buckled under 24 hours. 125 runners started the race and 89 runners finished. Our average finish rate over 20 previous years is 63 percent but this year's cool weather brought the finish rate to over 71%. The weekend before the race was very hot, almost 100F; race weekend was cool and the weekend following the race we had a torrential rainstorm that caused large mud slides in local communities.

Moving our race weekend up one week, three years ago has worked fine for avoiding the local "Santa Ana fire conditions" in late September and early October. But it has made the race very close to Wasatch Front 100 impacting those that are attempting the 4-100 and 6-100 mile races. This is what makes Don Brenden and Phil Rosenstein finishes at AC100 so amazing, since they only have one week's rest after Wasatch.

In 2002, fire problems and race cancellation, made it difficult for many ultra races and AC100 was no exception. Everyone has cooperated to help us get back on track, to where we were before the 2002 cancellation. The Angeles National Forest rangers and fire fighters have kept fires controlled below 10 acres by increasing the number of patrols and having very quick response with heavy fire fighting equipment. This year we had no major fires because of this new aggressive policy. The USFS also modified their policy, so that they no longer have "forest closures" during extreme fire hazard season by placing restrictions on open fires and smoking to minimize potential forest fires. This year their new policy has helped keep the forest open to keep the race going during an extremely dry hazardous condition. This year we worked very close with the USFS to keep our race on track.

Runners participating in 100-mile races, even on their best days, may have trouble finishing. The local favorite, Jorge Pacheco who ran well at Badwater and won most of the local ultras was able to lead the first half of the race with a few young guys hot on his heels. But Jorge slowed down after Chilao Flats (mile 52) and stopped at Chantry Flats (mile 75) and 22-year-old Carlos Herrera (younger brother of Juan Herrera, who set the record at Leadville 100 some years ago), a Tarahumara Indian from Chihuahua, Mexico went into the lead. Carlos has improved his time here every year and may win this race someday. However, a local runner Kevin Dean (age 36) from Lake Hughes (where the Leona Divide 50 is run) took the lead after Chantry Flats and stayed in front the rest of the way and was the 1<sup>st</sup> 18+ runner winning the Bronze Ram Award. Kevin ran a very respectable 19:34:41. Troy Howard (age 34) picked up his pace late in the race and passed Carlos after Chantry Flats for a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish and was the 1<sup>st</sup> 30+ runner winning the Bronze Cougar Award. Carlos Herrera came in third and won the Bronze 10 Point Buck Award.

Not to be outdone, two women raced all the way to the finish line. Ashley Nordell (age 27) from Mt. Baldy Village, who was last year's winner, was in an all-out race with Suzanne Bon (age 43) from Sanoma. They both ran a race of a lifetime. For the first half of the race Ashley led by no more than about 10 minutes, but Suzanne started edging ahead by about 10 or so minutes after Chantry Flats. However Ashley closed the gap down to 4 minutes. She came into the Sam Merrill checkpoint (89 miles) just when Suzanne was leaving. Then Suzanne really turned on the after burners, blowing through the last aid station at Millard campground (mile 96) and passing startled male runners, as she finished 14 minutes ahead of Ashley. We are very proud of both women for running so well and finishing 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> overall. This is the first time we have had two women finish in the top ten in twenty-one years of the race. Suzanne Bon was the 1<sup>st</sup> 18+ runner winning the Bronze Ram Award. Ashley pushed Suzanne to a new women's course record beating Evelyn Marshall's 1995 record by one minute and one second. For her amazing record-breaking run she also earned the Solid Sterling Silver/Solid 14K Gold buckle which hasn't been awarded for 12 years. For her outstanding effort, Ashley reduced her PR on the AC100 course by over one hour.

Seventeen men and the two women earned the traditional Solid Sterling Silver buckles for finishing under 24 hours. Brian Polley was the 1<sup>st</sup> 35+ runner and won the Bronze Arabian Horse Award. Ruperto Romero was the 1<sup>st</sup> 40+ runner and won the Bronze Rhino Award. Mark Marcelli was the 1<sup>st</sup> 45+ runner and won the Bronze 8 Point Buck Award. Stacey Bunton from Tigard, Oregon was the 1<sup>st</sup> 30+ women runner and

won the Bronze Cougar Award . Adalberto Mendoza was the 1st 50+ runner and won the Bronze Buffalo Award. Honey Albrecht from Glendale, Arizona was the 1<sup>st</sup> 40+ women runner and won the Bronze Rhino Award.

The Second Sunrise Buckles are awarded to those runners that finish before 25:47. The runners that won the Second Sunrise Buckle are: Stacey Bunton, Adalberto Mendoza, Donald Welch, Lee McKinley and Grant Sisler.

Mike Palmer from Berkeley completed his 10th finish earning him the Bronze Elk Award. Garry Curry and Jussi Hamalainen after completing their amazing 20th consecutive finish at the AC100 last year; finished their 21<sup>st</sup> race this time. Dan Brenden from Phoenix, Arizona completed both Western Grand Slam (4-100s) and the Last Great Race (6-100s) for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row here. Phil Rosenstein from Wisconsin in spite of having to deal with walking pneumonia after the Leadville 100 managed to finish the Wasatch 100 and the AC100 race to also complete the Last Great Race (6-100s). Both received distinctive acid etched plates mounted on a solid walnut plaque for their outstanding efforts. Phil carried his friend Lisa Conover's race bib under his official bib throughout the race in honor of one of the finest ladies we have known, who finished the AC100 several times. Lisa lost here life this spring to a severe viral infection. She will be missed.

We wish to thank all of those who helped us put on another successful race. This includes the following volunteers: aid station, HAM radio operators, Search & Rescue, EMTs and medical volunteer and those that staff the kitchen at Johnson's Field. Also we would like to thank San Bernardino Cal Trans Supervisor Gary Ratliffe who escorted the race directors over the large earth slide area on Highway 2 between Vincent Gap and Islip Saddle so that we could manage the race in a timely manner.

Special thanks to:

- Tom and Patty Dwyer (also USFS Volunteers) for becoming our new Medical Directors this year. They and their crews fixed blisters along the course, checked runner's vital signs and saw to the runners needs late into the night.
- Young ladies in "princess costumes" that serve spaghetti at the pre race evening meal to the runners and support people and donated the proceeds to charity..

The stories could go on and on about the runners in this year race:

- Nick and Jamil Coury, two brothers from Tempe Arizona finished together in 18<sup>th</sup> place under 24 hours.
- Bill Walz with low training mileage, we encouraged to come and do what he could and was able to finish in a respectable 28 hours.
- Guillermo Medina, who won AC100 in 2005, now with increasing family responsibilities and a move up the coast to Santa Maria finishing in 13<sup>th</sup> place for 8 straight under 24 hour runs.
- Amelia Valinsky-Fillipow who ran very well for her 1<sup>st</sup> 100 mile finish
- David Goggins from San Diego broke his toe at the Plain100. He wanted to withdraw from the race but we talked him into running and do the best he could. To his credit he ran an excellent 22:15 with a broken toe!
- Scott Sullivan with 9 straight finishes.
- Rick Bearden from Calimesa with a crowd of "orange clad fans" at the finish line.
- Hal Chiasson (age 64) who dislocated his shoulder in a fall near Mt. Islip during the race last year and came back this year to get his 6<sup>th</sup> finish.
- George Velasco who finally was able to get his 9<sup>th</sup> finish after several frustrating years of doing reserve duty overseas.
- Hans-Dieter Weishaar (age 67) completing his 104<sup>th</sup> 100 mile run.
- Susan Johnston, who recently broke the men's record for running the John Muir Trail (under 4 days) and possibly due to the effects on her endurance and recovery had to drop out at Shortcut Saddle.
- Jorge Pacheco, who has become a local legend, with very fast ultra racing talent in the last 7 years. But, not able to win at the AC100 in the last 3 years, after winning three times earlier.