

## Angeles Crest 100 #26, The Women Are Not To Be Denied

While Dominic Grossman Got His 2<sup>nd</sup> Win, Angela Shartel Smashed The Women's Record

By: Hal Winton, AC100 Co-RD

The preparation for this year's run was like WWII hell in the Pacific (on a different level) However the efforts were all rewarded by a solid race by the runners with more moderate temps this year. The burned over forest trails by the 2009 Station Fire recovery areas is producing a bumper crop of tall weeds, heavy brush and falling dead trees. A huge amount of work to not only open the AC100 course trails but we now clear access roads for our AC100 trail work crews and remote aid stations.

However on race day August 3<sup>rd</sup> we were ready to go one more time from Wrightwood. Having moved the run date from October in the early days to September for some time when we were cancelled in 2002 and 2009 for fires, then we moved to July last year and now early August (indefinitely) this year. Coincidentally a week after our run Wrightwood had a sizable "Sharp" fire on the East side of town with evacuations. Lots of California forest fires this year. Hard and often devastating results but natural. Vegetation grows, dries out and cyclically burns. Nature wins in the end.

The run started off as usual with a small group of the faster runners on or near Jim Obrien's 1989 record (17:35) pace. Down the line eventually the pace slows considerably at times to a walk and survival pace. Then depth of training and pacing oneself become important. Dominic Grossman with a win here before led the front runners from the start on a close to record pace. Eventually all slowed considerably by Chantry Flats (75 miles) while two former winners, Jorge Pacheco and Tom Nielsen called it a day at Shortcut Saddle (59 miles). Live on to run better on another day.

At Chantry Flats tough/wiry 46 year old Ruperto Romero came in leading by 2 minutes. However Dom in time regained the lead and pulled ahead again of Ruperto. In time Dom was moving quickly to Altadena's Loma Alta Park finish line in a good time on this course of 19:06

The biggest/hugest story coming out of our 26<sup>th</sup> year's running of the AC100 however was the women's record breaking run by 39 year old Angela Shartel from San Diego. At one of our required AC100 course trail work days Angela assured me that she was intent on running faster this year than last year when she finished just over 24 hours. Having gotten to know her fairly well I tended to believe her. But a new women's record by almost 40 minutes didn't seem likely. But that is what she did beating Suzanne Bon's 2007 time considerably. Next year when she turns 40 look out women masters. And by the way Angela was 4<sup>th</sup> overall with 21:21. That puts her time up there inside the top 100 men's times in the AC100, 26 year history.

So Dom earned the Ram trophy and Ruperto earned the Cougar (over 30 years) trophy at age 46 (amazing), Angela earned not only the women's Ram trophy but also the impressive solid gold and sterling silver buckle for the new women's course record. Likeable Pete Sercel (47 years) was 7<sup>th</sup> overall and earned the over 40 Rhino trophy. One minute ahead of Pete was Tia Gabilita (age 47) with the women's over 30 Cougar trophy, again demonstrating that faster older runners can pull down trophies away from younger competitors. Tia came down from Oregon where outstanding women runners, who have graced our event in past years. Another amazing story (almost all of them women's) is Darla Askew (also from Oregon) who placed 13<sup>th</sup> overall and 2<sup>nd</sup> woman at the recent HR100 race and still had the ability (endurance) to hang with the top runners all the way and finish in under 24 hours (which is not at all easy here) for the 15<sup>th</sup> overall position here and the last sub 24 hour silver buckle. She earned the women's Rhino (over 40) trophy while doing so. What is it about these Oregon women runners? This year the women were not to be denied their place in the winner's circle with three of them finishing under 24 hours.

All the runners deserve credit who finish the run. Many do not. About 50 out of 170 plus entered this year did not answer the call for the start line and almost 50 more did not finish the run. That is like a 60% finish rate (lower than usual) considering the more moderate temps this year. Explanation is difficult. Possibly some of it is supply and demand. Ultra running and racing appears to be busting out at the seams. Long term classic 100 mile races fill rapidly and in somecases are lotteries/drawings. So new to the sport runner's jump into what is available and since they are not seasoned yet they are less likely to finish difficult hundreds like the AC100 is. As to the AC100 being a difficult run, ask anyone who has finished it and the many including top runners who haven't finished on occasion. Their DNF list is rather long. Possibly some runners are now over booking their race entries also and eventually run out of gas or get injured which we see more often now.

Whatever; ultra running as a sport is dynamic and constantly changing. Just look at the size and drama of the UltraRunning magazine changes over the years. Sort of hard to keep up with it all. RDs come and go about every decade often and magazine owners and editors move around to fit the needs as well. Like running a hard hundred mile race survival often becomes the key factor.

Other note worthy AC100 finishes this year were Jamil Coury (Javalina Jundred RD) in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Two runners from Japan in 5<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> position. With less of a time window 24 to 25:06 only one runner, Matthew Ardine earned a Second Sunrise buckle. Adalberto (Flaco) Mendoza with a large "Flaco Team" shirt crew finished his 10<sup>th</sup> AC100 run and received a bronze Elk statue trophy (at age 61) And of course steady Garry Curry (moved from Boulder, CO to Hermosa Beach, CA) and fabled and filmed Jussi Hamalainen age 67 (won in 90 and 91) completed their 26<sup>th</sup> straight finish this year. Always smiling Wally Hesselstine at age 70 and eldest finisher had another good run in his long career. And Andrea Feucht (on the HR 100 board) came over from New Mexico and ran a cool (good) race smiling all the way. It was my privilege to finish the HR100 in 96 and help direct it in 97. The San Juans are incredibly beautiful but harder than sin to run in.

Our list of finishers with 4 and 5 or more finishes at the AC100 is growing longer every year. Super nice guy Tom Nielsen dropped out this year but says he will be back stronger and wiser next year for his 10th year finish (and the Elk trophy award). Seems like that concept is true for almost all non-finishers, that they plan to be back next year stronger and wiser.

Our 2014 AC100 run closed to entries in like 2 days to many people's surprise and for 2015 it may close in a few hours the way things are going. Enter early and don't be left out of the fun.

As is usual thanks go to the hundreds of run support people that made the 2013 26<sup>th</sup> yearly run possible and the USFS for permitting us to run in a beautiful forest setting even if a portion is still recovering from the 2009 Station Fire. We must particularly thank the ham radio operators (some of the best) who do such an outstanding job of tracking our runners and specifically for (ham radio and software programmer) Jerry Walsh for continuing to improve the run In progress reporting so anywhere in the world runner's friends and loved ones can see their runners progress in real time. Thanks to all participants and run support people and the So. Cal. AC100 run entrants for their trail work on our AC100 course or wherever they live beyond So. Cal. Those runners found trails they could improve and hopefully encourage other RDs to require work on trails as we at the AC100 do in order that they can start in Wrightwood our AC100 run each and every year. Wishing God's blessings to all.