

5/272007 Charlie Horse Trail Race



After several years of relief, the Pagoda Pacers (thanks to Greg Deland - maybe) resurrected the Charlie Horse Trail Race. Formerly a 20k starting in French Creek State Park, the state of PA said no this year because it might conflict with the hordes of people hiking up hills in the heat this Memorial Day weekend.

The race meets at Plowville, near Beckersville. Then you are bused to a little park on the Hay Creek near Birdsboro. The course then returns to Plowville through Scarletts Mill and Robeson. If you know about these areas then you know, what you know will hurt you and you probably weren't there. If you don't know these areas then what you didn't know will hurt you.

The clueless Fast Trackers there were Ingram, Laslo, Jens, Mary Wood and myself. Apparently Monday night runs do cause some brain damage.

As we gathered next to the Hay Creek waiting for the buses some horse riders were having a ball laughing when we told them we were running back to Plowville. They had done it and thought it was difficult even with horses. Ron Horn eventually arrived, wished us well and hoped to see us again and then sent us off. At about 100 yards we reached the first downhill - into the Hay Creek. A cold Hay Creek wetted our shorts. A half-mile later we got to the second downhill - again into the Hay Creek. Halfway across I felt a tug on the back of my shirt, turned and saw a woman desperately holding on to two of us frantically trying not to go under and be trampled in the stream. We climbed out and then started the first hill. No puppy hills here like Mt Joy and Mt Misery. The next two miles were a constant climb from 200 feet to 675 where we got a break to go down the side of the hill to a water stop. Unfortunately we had to turn around and run back up it and continue on until we reached the ridge at 810 feet. We ran two miles on the ridge except for another water stop back down the side of the hill. Now at the 5.5 mile mark we had climbed over 800 feet without a down step except for the two downhills for water. The next 2.5 miles was all (almost) down hill so we could rejuvenate ourselves for the next hill. The first half-mile was a steep 400

foot climb but then we had another 2 miles to reach the summit at 830 feet. Ice pops and beer also at this water stop. A quick half-mile down and we could do the last 2 mile 300 foot hill and a mile dash to the finish. The last hill was all road and in the hot sun to drain the last drops of water out of you. The last dash did have its challenge though when 100 yards from the finish there was a chest high fallen tree. Here you could either jump over it, climb over it or fall to the ground and lose all dignity like I did and drag yourself in the dirt though a one foot clearance under it.

Ingram and Mary won their age groups. Jens and Laslo also did well but I haven't seen the results yet. Congratulations to them all as it is one challenge of a course to race. As for myself, I stayed behind them to make sure they were OK. And I also learned that if you are having some soreness in your heel that the odds of not coming down hard on a sharp rock at exactly the sorest spot is about zero. Around mile seven I discovered it was going to be a longer day.

Pagoda Pacers put on great races. The race ends at the Sleepy Hollow swim club. Pool, showers, plenty of food, burgers, hot dogs and drinks are at the finish. Everyone receives a shirt and finishers a beer glass that can be filled at the club bar. Charlie Horse plaques go to all award winners. Just ask Mary and Ingram for a peek.

Looking forward to seeing you all there next year. Jim Donaghy