



NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 1

March 2004



Welcome!

Greetings and welcome to the first issue of the NYARA newsletter!

We are thrilled to bring you the first of what will be a monthly occurrence so you can learn more about what's going on inside the NYARA world.

This newsletter is designed to keep NYARA members informed about upcoming events, fellow members, gear reviews, and anything adventure racing-related. There are a lot of great posts on our Yahoo groups but we felt that we were missing a lot of good adventure racing stories and issues. So here we are.

Keep in mind that this

newsletter is written for you, our beloved NYARA members, and we would be thrilled to receive your valuable input.

If you're interested in contributing to the newsletter, we'd love to hear from you. Just submit your ideas, stories, race results or suggestions to media@nyara.org.

Every month we'll bring to you:

- **The NYARA Member of the Month** A profile of a NYARA member, whether novice or pro, to find out a little more about who they are in their personal lives as well as interesting tidbits about

their adventure racing prowess.

- **Inspiration Point** For you trivia buffs out there-you'll remember Inspiration Point was the name of the place where The Fonz, Potsie, Ralph Malph and Richie used to take their dates to make out, but in the NYARA world, it's where we highlight of some of our members' training schedules and nutrition tips.
- **Get In Gear** Although not in this issue, we will review some of the latest

gear and we'll field any questions that are submitted to us in regard to adventure racing gear.

- **Event Calendar**-Snapshot of some racing/training events in the area
- **Race Results** It's always fun to see what the rest of the club is doing. Be sure to submit your race results to media@nyara.org.

Again, welcome and we hope you enjoy reading the first issue of the newsletter.

Mountain Biking In New York City? Are You Nuts?

By Matt LeBow

It's not nuts at all to think that you could mountain bike in NYC. We have several locations in the city where mountain biking would and could be ideal. Staten Island alone possesses some 9,500 acres of forest that could be a mountain biking mecca. Some parks where mountain biking would fit in nicely (and in some cases illegally do already) are Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx, Forest Park and Alley Pond Parks in Queens, Marine Park in Brooklyn, and Mariners Marsh, Wolfe's Pond, Long Pond, Blue Heron, The Greenbelt, Arden Woods, the South Shore Country Club and Bloomingdale Park on Staten Island. All of these parks could sus-

tain a minimum of a three mile loop. By connecting the parks mentioned on Staten Island, we could have over sixty miles of rideable trails but there's a long road ahead to make it a reality.

To help further this effort, New York City Mountain Biking (NYCMB) was established in 2002 to help convince parks & city officials that mountain biking access in NYC's parks is not only viable but beneficial to the city.

With the support of several of our elected officials including Councilman Andrew Lanza, Congressman Vito Fossella and Staten Island Borough

President Jim Molinari and the full support of IMBA and ARFE, we are making progress slowly but surely. You can help by joining the e-group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NYCMB> and by taking part in trail care projects and advocacy days.

How does this effect Adventure racing you ask? With NYC trail systems in place, the amount of training clinics, races and just plain training for you could be tenfold. City dwellers would no longer have to leave the Big Apple to ride, race and train.

Believe me, I have nothing against getting out of town on the weekends but wouldn't it be nice if you didn't have to?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Jonathan Neely at the North Georgia Adventure Race</i>	2-3
<i>NYARA Member of the Month</i>	3
<i>March Calendar and Save the Date</i>	4
<i>Inspiration Point Featuring Jody</i>	5
<i>Recent Race Results</i>	5
<i>Swamp Stompin'</i>	6

Be sure to submit all race results, stories or anything you'd like to see in this newsletter to: media@nyara.org.

Jonathan Neely Tackles The North Georgia Adventure Race, Or Does It Tackle Him?

Jonathan Neely, an adventure racing veteran of such races as the Suburu Primal Quest, Odyssey Mega Dose and X-Treme Gear Gulf Coast Conquest, recently raced in the North Georgia Adventure Race on January 16/17. He was gracious enough to share his experience via e-mail and let us know that no matter how long you've been racing, every race provides a newly learned lesson.

NYARA Media: So, Jon you recently took on the second annual North Georgia Adventure Race, do tell!

Jonathan : The day before the race it was sunny and beautiful. High of 60. By the 6:00 am mass map handout/start it was in the low 30's or high 20's. Brisk but downright tropical when compared to the last year's -5F at the start. We carried our canoes about a mile and a half to the water for six hours of paddling (should have been five, more on that in a moment). My face hurt from the paddle splash being so cold. By the time we exited the water it had warmed to the mid 30's but had started to rain. And rain it did for the next 24 hours. Sometime around 3 am I think I spent the better part of an hour shivering as we trekked. It was just one of those "grind-you-down" cold and wet nights but it wasn't much past impending on the hypothermia scale.

Complete screw-up number one: During the canoe orienteering we typically had to paddle to a shore point and then run inland a bit to find the CPs-500 meters or so. As I returned from CP3 and jumped into our canoe the laminated piece of paper that served as passport popped out of the back of my Camelbak. I'd like to mention that I have a lovely waterproof passport case that I typically biner to a belt loop so I know where the passport is at all times. The passport didn't fit so I crammed it into the outside mesh of my Camelbak where I couldn't see it. Where nobody on the team could see it because I was in the back of the boat. Stupid. So we paddled on to CP4. We got there. I ran to the flag. And realized it was gone. I ran back to the boat, carefully retracing my steps. Nope, not there. OK, all the CPs had been manned so far but this was a punch point. I ran back, punched the map and we moved on. We hoped for a penalty (since they could verify that we hit all the points by looking at CP sheets) and not a DQ. But when we read the rules

there was no prescribed penalty for a missing passport. So we did the same at CP5 (punched the map). On the way back to CP6/TA1 we decided to go back to the CP3 shore (it was on the way) and look there. And there it was. Perched on the shore. We picked it up and decided to move on to the TA. CP captain was OK with the punched map for 4 and 5. Thought it showed good sportsmanship to go back to CP3 and find the passport again. We were in 11th at CP3. We were in 30th at CP6. Easily wasted 45 minutes. I stink.

NYARA Media: That's embarrassing. Do you really want to include this in the NYARA newsletter?

Jonathan: Yeah, I'd like to talk about being a total screw-up in the newsletter. Cause it gets worse....

We swapped out clothing and grabbed our bikes. I hopped on my saddle and the rain started. I'll take the blame for the rain too. Must have forgotten to disable that feature. The bike went quite well. It opened with a huge chunk of single track up and down a couple fair sized mountains. Impressive for AR. Jeremy was kicking my butt handily. But, fortunately, I could disguise the butt kicking as "hanging out with Kristel" (our third teammate). She was nice enough to not start kicking my butt until the trek.

We passed about ten teams. CP10 was well off the main trail and gave some teams trouble. The map showed a u-shaped loop going off and coming back on to the main trail. But if the first part of the U was there it was pretty thin. In planning, I thought the route to the CP looked easier by going to the second touch of the U and heading back in (less climbing). That was easy to find and we were dead-on.

TA2 was at a campground. We scored prime space next to a heated shower/bathroom. Good place to do maps, get dry and get out. The trek was monstrous for 24 hour race- 32 miles with several choices about where and how much to bushwhack. We left TA2 just before 8pm, well ahead of the 11pm pro cutoff. Conditions were deteriorating. Rain volume increased, fog settled in the woods and winds were hitting the gaps and ridges.

NYARA Media: Man, you stink (just

kidding). I hope I'm never on your team. Oh wait- I *have* been on your team! You'll still include this in the newsletter-right?

Jonathan: Fine, let me finish my tale of woe. You can include it. Actually why don't we just throw this string of e-mails into the newsletter. That way it



Jonathan Neely shown here at the NGAR somewhere between screw up number one and screw-up number two.

seems less like me seeking attention and more about you getting a bright spot in your day. What better way to feel good about you than to point out the fact that I stink.

Complete screw-up number two. So we trekked up a mountain, along a ridge, punch point, down the mountain. Across a river, on a swinging bridge no less, fun at night in the wet and the wind. Up a mountain, through a gap then up Little John Dick Mountain (precious name) down into another gap between Little John Dick and Big John Dick Mountains. CP14 was at the northern terminus of a forest road so if you're stupid you make only a small allowance for error and walk past it just to the north. If you're smart you make an exaggerated intentional error to make sure you drop south of the CP before heading west. Guess what I was?

NYARA: This is painful to listen to.

What was interesting after we realized we had walked past the CP is that we decided to just keep going west to a definite catching feature (FR 58) and walk around to CP14 on a road. Instead of just heading due south onto the

(continued from page 2)

Getting from TA2 to CP14 took most teams 4 to 4.5 hours. It ended up taking us 6. So, keeping track, that's 3 hours of cumulative Jon stinks time. We had only dropped to 24th by the time we got there.

CP14 to CP15 was uneventful road. But we ran to start working on the Jon stinks deficit. The run around took 4.5 hours.

Unfortunately, the pile of Jon stinks time had come home to roost. We arrived at CP16 around 7:00 am about 2 hours after the pro cutoff. Alternate course 1 it was (basically skipping CP17 and CP19). We ran from CP16 to

CP18 in about 40 minutes. The CP captain estimated a 45-minute walk from there to CP 20. (Important because you had to leave the next TA by 11am to continue). I looked at the map and real-

"We came in 10th overall out of 80 teams despite all of my best efforts to derail us."

ized he was off his rocker. OK, driving in to a point does tend to skew the concept of distance. We ran for most of the next 100 minutes and arrived at TA3 at 9:30 am.

TA3 was the same campground as TA2 (warm bathroom, sweet!) so it was easy

to transition quickly and get started on the final bike. Mentally we were working against a 30-hour cutoff at noon. . So, we left TA3 20 minutes after arriving, pushed and finished w/ 20 minutes to spare. We came in 10th overall out of 80 teams despite my best efforts to derail us.

In 2003 my team had the distinct pleasure of finishing NGAR in 30 hours and 6 minutes and were told that we DNF'd by being 6 minutes late. This year, however, race management decided to be more hospitable. Anybody who suffered through all the cutoffs was permitted to finish officially. I think the last official finisher came in just before 2pm. Had I known we would have stopped for a beer on the way in.

NYARA Adventure Racer Of The Month– Steve Katz!

How did you get involved in adventure racing?

I got involved in adventure racing around 2 years ago. I was really into road cycling and running. I decided to start doing some mountain biking and trail running in the winter mainly as cross training for road cycling. It turns out I really enjoyed those disciplines. My friend and riding buddy Howard Thau, mentioned something to me about a Hi-Tec Sprint Adventure race in, of all places, the Bronx. He described it to me as something like an off-road triathlon. As a former triathlete it sounded intriguing, so I decided to give it a shot. As soon as we started training, I thought I would be hooked. Once we did our first race, I was hooked.

What's your favorite race to date?

I don't really have a favorite, since each race has its own unique dynamic to it. I really enjoyed The Longest Day 2003. It was a great use of Harriman State Park. Given the time constraints I have due to family and career, The Longest Day was the perfect race for me to train for and participate in. It was both physically and intellectually challenging.

I particularly enjoy the Genesis race series. Last season I raced Ringwood, Harriman, Allamuchy and Douglas. Each of those events was really well run and each had its own challenges. I am looking forward to doing many more Genesis races.

Tell us about your biggest race blunder and what you learned from it?

Oh, there are so many to choose from. I think my biggest race blunder was



He's a lawyer, a family man and an adventure racer! Steve shows off his stuff on one of his favorite disciplines

in the 2002 New York Balance Bar 24 Hour. Instead of taking marked trails in a particular section, I, as the navigator, decided we should bush-

whack a straight line to a checkpoint. I led us right into a swamp. The swamp was right there on the map, and somehow I missed it when choosing the route. I learned that you have to be really patient with route selection and navigation. You should check your route carefully and then check it again. The extra 5 minutes you spend studying the map could save you from a bad decision that could cost you hours.

The piece of gear you can't live without?

My polypro waterproof socks. They have not let me down. Rain, snow, mud, no problem.

Who are you outside of being labeled an adventure racer?

I am 36 years old. I am married and I have a 10-year-old daughter and an 8-year-old son.

Races you plan on doing this year?

I am planning on doing as many Genesis Races as possible and the New York Balance Bar 24 Hour.

I am also planning on throwing a couple of 24 hour mountain bike races in the mix.

Where you'd like to see the sport of adventure racing evolve into?

I would like to see the sport of adventure racing grow. It is important to me that it not lose its vibe of being a sport in which there is a spirit of cooperation among racers and as a sport that really encourages new racers. I think the spirit of cooperation that you see at races and in training is somewhat unique to adventure racing.

As far as what I would like it to evolve into, well, let me put it this way, it would be nice to see it become mainstream enough that I would not have to spend an hour explaining what adventure racing is to my family, friends and co-workers, but not so mainstream that they don't think I am a little bit crazy for being an adventure racer.

Any advice for those just starting out?

Don't be intimidated. Even the top racers had to start somewhere. The racers I have met along the way have been extremely eager to share training tips and give advice. Don't be afraid to ask advice. Also, go to as many clinics as you can. They can be extremely helpful to perfect skills and techniques and you can meet potential teammates and other racers.

March Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Wednesday Woo-Hoo-Central Park NYC, 7:00 pm Contact: item4a@yahoo.com	4	5	6 Paddling Clinic Philadelphia, PA http://www.g-o-a-l-s.com Trail Run Staten Island daniel.kennedy9@verizon.net
7 Genesis Adventures Winter Race, Grafton VT www.genesisadventures.com	8	9	10 Wednesday Woo-Hoo-Central Park NYC, 7:00 pm Contact: item4a@yahoo.com	11 ScottTinley-Discussion of the Philosophy of Endurance Sports and the Ironman Race-NYC http://www.agtri-institute.org	12 ScottTinley-Discussion of the Philosophy of Endurance Sports and the Ironman Race-NYC http://www.agtri-institute.org	13 Trail Run Staten Island daniel.kennedy9@verizon.net
14 Seminar-Creating an Ironman Training Plan http://www.agtri-institute.org	15	16	17 Wednesday Woo-Hoo-Central Park NYC, 7:00 pm Contact: item4a@yahoo.com	18	19 Seminar: Maximizing Bike Performance Thru Fit & Positioning http://www.agtri-institute.org	20 NYARA Land Navigation Clinic Level II, Harri-man State Park Contact: www.nyara.org
21 Seminar-Bike Maintenance Expo http://www.agtri-institute.org	22	23	24 Wednesday Woo-Hoo-Central Park NYC 7:00 pm Contact: item4a@yahoo.com	25	26	27 Odyssey 1-Day Race http://www.oarevents.com Trail Run Staten Island daniel.kennedy9@verizon.net Wilderness First Aid—NJ http://www.wfa.net
28 March Madness Biathlon, Central Park www.nytc.org Seminar-Beg/Int Ironman Training http://www.agtri-institute.org Wilderness First Aid—NJ	29	30	31 Wednesday Woo-Hoo-Central Park NYC 7:00 pm Contact: item4a@yahoo.com			

Save The Date!

- April 17 NYARA Trail Building School
- April 18 NYARA Level I Nav Clinic
- April 24 AR Camp - Genesis Adventures
- April 25 Scout Schiff MTB Biathlon
- May 1 Genesis Sprint Race
- May 15 Genesis 12 Hour Race
- May 9 NYARA Urban Bike-O
- May 21 Endorphin Fix
- May 22 NYARA High Rock Challenge
- May 23 Balance Bar Sprint Race

Did You know...

...that **Team Hype** appears in a 2 page spread in the March issue of *Adventure Sports Magazine*?

...**Rich Raschdorf** is also mentioned in the same issue and comments on how to balance life, work and adventure racing.

...**Shannon Gattens** and **Matt Evans** are NYARA's newest board members.

...**Joe Brautigam** is setting the course for the Genesis Race Series-it's gonna be tough!

Inspiration Point

Featuring Jody LaPar

Jody LaPar is an amazing adventure racer and all-around athlete whose race resume includes numerous marathons, triathlons as well as top finishes in The Gap, The Longest Day and Balance Bar 24-Hour Races.

NYARA: Hey Jody! You're a perpetual training machine. Give us a sample of the weekly LaPar training regimen.

Jody: In addition to working a full time job, it goes something like this:

Monday: Run 6 miles (usu. at a 7.5 or better pace)
Lift (all muscle groups)

Tuesday: Spin class (1 hour)
Run 6 miles (at a 7.5 or better pace)

Wednesday: 1 hour Spinnerval session (Carmichael tapes)
Swim 1 – 2 miles

Thursday: Spin class (1 hour)
Run 6 – 7 miles (at a 7.5 or better pace)

Friday: Either a day of rest or swim
1 – 2 miles

My weekend activities are planned based upon weather conditions:

Saturday: A long run (15 – 20 miles) trying to include hills and a 1 – 2 mile swim or a road ride with Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey (currently 50 – 60 miles, gradually increasing the mileage as the weather allows) followed by a 1 – 2 mile swim

Sunday: Whatever activity I didn't do on Saturday in addition to lifting (all muscle groups)



Jody during the bike leg of the 2003 Lake Placid Ironman. We're pretty sure that's the index finger that she's holding up and not the middle one.



Jody at the 2003 Lake Placid Ironman where her training paid off. She finished the race (her first Ironman) in 13:10

NYARA: Wow! That's a pretty intense week. How about nutrition?

Jody: I usually don't watch my caloric intake. I just try to be aware that I am eating enough protein and carbohydrates especially prior to a long work-out. I also always remember to eat during long work-outs and between brick sessions.

NYARA: You must be training for some big races. What's on your schedule for 2004?

Jody: I am currently training for the Boston Marathon (April 19th), Appalachian Extreme (May 21-25), Eagleman ½ Ironman (June 13th) and the Lake Placid Ironman (July 25th)

NYARA: Good luck and we look forward to seeing the results!

Recent NYARA Member Race Results

Swamp Stomp—January 31 Tampa, Florida

Team ATP (First Place) 24:26
Team ARFE (Third Place) 26:15
Team Wormhole DNF
(Read all about it on the next page!)

North Georgia AR-January 16

Team Mason Dixon (10th Co-ed)
Team Towanda (11th Co-ed)

Genesis Winter Race-February 8 Northfield, MA

Team Wormhole (First Place) 4:57

Swamp Stompin'

By Hugo Walker

Aaah!! Nothing like temps in the low 70's and a warm breeze blowin' through your...um...across...your scalp.

This is what Team Wormhole encountered as we stepped out of Nightcrawler's H2 Mini at the Tampa International airport scant minutes after Mealworm's flight arrived. Not bad timing considering we'd been driving for 18 hours. It seemed to bode well for our upcoming adventure race: the inaugural "Swamp Stomp 24 Hour Adventure Race", put on by WeCeFar out of the Tampa area. Our team, Nightcrawler, Mealworm, Sandworm and Superworm, were deliriously content with the weather and the opportunity to race so soon in the new season. It would be a great chance to see how our winter training was going and an even better chance to test our gator scaring skills-or so we thought. Whooda think that in less than 48 hours the west central coast and swamps of Florida would be transformed into an "arctic jungle"?

The resort at Homosassa Springs north of Tampa was beautiful and unfettered with tourists...CHEAP too!! We did a little futzing around, got some extra maps at a local bike shop, (along with some missing bike shoes) and chowed down on some great food at a local seafood restaurant. I highly recommend getting to a race site early if at all possible...check out the local scene, oil the local economy, relax a bit and take your time getting all your gear ready. It's much more fun than staying up all night freaking out trying to get the brakes on your bike working just right.

The race had sold out the week before so we got to watch most of the other teams arrive and freak out to varying degrees. You could also tell that there were A LOT of first-timers- witness the new shoes, apparel and obsessive/compulsive pumping of bike tires. Like at all other races, there was also a good deal of posing going on: race faces on the alert for the competition. How do I know? I was one of them!! Ever watchful, I assessed these teams on a variety of points- girth;

lack of girth; degree of panic as they set up shop; loud and boisterous laughter amid piles of unidentifiable gear or its counterpart- silent racers, who labeled and packed away rows of shoes, socks, 'biners and bags of food with machine-like precision; the age/condition/make of the mountain bikes; the age/condition/gender of the racers- were they aging triathletes looking for a new game?

A million questions swirled through my pea-brain as I sought to maintain a cool but friendly demeanor. I just needed to remember my teammates were well prepared and so was I. We had one of the best nav dudes around in Nightcrawler and Sandworm was strong enough to tow us all. Mealworm was a veteran of Florida races and was intent on pushing the envelope for this race. I was ready to rock too, having spent most of December beating myself up on the bike, the

handed is damn impressive- and I know there are PLENTY of beefcakes out there who can kick my puny arse on the bike too; I just know that the teams I've seen crossing the finish line on TV ain't the ones on the cover of "Arnold Monthly"...might be a good ploy to garner sponsorship though!! Enough muscle-envy....

It was Saturday morning at last and after a restless night of "sleep" (in which I dreamt of a thousand race scenarios) Team Wormhole attended the morning meeting and got our maps. Nightcrawler shut himself in the room and we tried not to bother him...he was plotting and planning our route. The three of us packed and re-packed our bags, shaving an ounce here or there, questioning one another on the necessity of various items, getting rid of duplicate items and splitting up all of Mealworm's gear. In the interest of moving quickly, one of our not-so-secret weapons was for her to carry nothing but a personal water bottle. All her required gear would be mainly divided between Sandworm and me. Nightcrawler would get his share but just a little since he was the map-gawd. It was so unusual for a racer to carry no pack at all (and so intimidating to other teams) that as we stood at the start several hours later, I overheard quite a few remarks about it. (Note to smirking readers: I know this sounds absurd, but every little bit helps, ya know?!) The air temp was around 45F and it was overcast but quite comfortable. The threat of heavy rain was in the forecast however.



Team Wormhole blazing through the Swamp Stomp Adventure Race. Who knew Florida could be so cold?!

stairs and the ergometer at the gym. Speaking of gyms, the teams with 3 or 4 flexoidmen, guys who looked like they trained for a 60 mile mountain bike section by lifting weights all winter, I dismissed immediately. There were always 6 or 8 of these teams. Where do they come from? Why do they each have an extra 25 pounds of muscle? Skinny dudes all over the globe wanna know but I digress. Don't get me wrong- having the necessary bulk to portage a canoe one mile through the swamp single-

The promise of "1st registered, 1st to start" was a true one and even though it meant only that teams were queued in a file for the start, it was still nice not to have to race around all those people who inevitably go out WAAAAAY too fast. Half mile down the road, Wormhole was in the lead, save for a 2 man team who almost went the wrong way. Team ATP was immediately behind us and looking to pass. We let them go by and remained about 3-400 meters back, so they wouldn't see if we took a different route. We were all running strong and it felt great

to be underway at last. The first leg was about 8-9 miles on dirt/sand roads through the woods. Nightcrawler picked a sweet 'whack with a mile to go to the 1st TA and we arrived there ahead of ATP by about a minute. The ensuing gear check by race officials slowed us up and they somehow got out ahead of us. It had started to rain.

We blistered down the pavement, crossed a major highway and wound our way through a labyrinth of dirt roads on our way to the next TA. Here we dropped the bikes and carried our skates/scooters several Km's through the woods on our way to the optional foot travel section. It was raining in earnest by this time and we were no longer sweating. This section was shortened because of the rain and we sighed in relief for I was a poor skater and Mealworm was on her scooter. Nightcrawler and Sandworm towed us both a good deal on this 5 mile section, which was on a rolling paved path. We saw Team ATP come by the other way in a perfect paceline. Sweet synch and fast too. We would need to hurry. Team ARFE made great time and arrived in the TA just after us. We headed out quickly onto the orienteering section, which had perhaps 6 controls spread out over a 100 sq K area. Melissa Coombs was the navigator for Team ARFE and she was doing well. However, a strong-looking coed team with a Brit on the maps passed us towards the end. There was some confusion on this section regarding the controls. Numbers 1 and 7 were mixed up. The control marked 7 was in the #1 location and vice versa. It was obvious to us that this was merely a placement error but one never knows. It put a lot of doubt into many team's minds as they made their way through this section. The last control involved finding a "man-made" marker and recording the date on it. It was a surveying marker and only about 4" across so a lot of teams missed this too. I found it quickly (and luckily) and we TA'd back to the bikes. It was now raining hard and steadily. In the interest of saving weight, Mealworm had only brought the barest of shells and it wasn't doing the trick. She was cold and miserable and getting quietly worse. We were so gung-ho to beat the Brit's team out of the TA that we dispensed with the important questions that teams members are supposed to ask each other (Are you eating/drinking/how are you doing?). Thus we missed out on the building mis-

ery in our usually Florida-loving teammate. We took off on the bikes again and screamed through the rain and the mud. It was getting dark and soon we would need to hit the lights. We were in second coed to ATP with the Brit right behind us. There were also 2 teams of 2 males out there somewhere. Team ARFE was of course in the mix as well.

For the next 7 hours we slogged and carried and crashed and whacked and wept and moaned and laughed and ate and towed and stomped and bitched and fell and hurled and choked and shivered and shook our way through the backroads, mudholes and swamps of the Homosassa State Forest. Nightcrawler's nav was amazing, although we did get lost somewhere on one of the swampwhacks. These were such that at any given time any one of us could have disappeared forever into the depths. So much dense growth and so very much mud. I'm certain no one could have paid me to go through this stuff in the daytime! It was cold enough that our breath, caught in the beams of our headlamps, created a barrier through which we could not see. Straight lines were impossible and we zigged and zagged continually. That Mealworm could not keep up should have alerted us to her condition, but again, we made the mistake of just pressing on. By midnight we had seen Team ARFE again, shortly after the end of one of the swamp stomps. ATP was out there, less than 15 minutes ahead we were to learn later.

We had gotten back to the road and were flying again. Trouble was, it was destroying Mealworm. She was shivering violently and covered with muck- unable to eat or drink, she was shutting down, mentally unable to continue. It is always a hard point in a race when a teammate is unable or unwilling to continue. Sometimes it's a merely a bad patch and a change of clothes and a rest will make all the difference. The former was at work here. Although we were all in varying states of cold and miserability, Nightcrawler, Sandworm and I were on automatic pilot, moving fast to stay passably warm. Mealworm had reached her limit, however. She could no longer will herself to keep moving. We made it to the next control and discussed our options. Team ARFE came along as well as the remnants of another team. We were figuring out the quickest way back to the nearest TA when one of the race

directors appeared. She told us that teams were dropping in droves and that much of the course would have to be altered due to the driving, cold rain. She was willing to bring Mealworm into the HQ where she could recover more quickly than at a TA. Sandworm opted to go too as he could pick up the H2 Mini and meet us at the TA. Nightcrawler and I, with 2 guys from another team, headed in on our bikes, using the directions Jessica gave us to reach the nearest TA. Another hour or so and many crashes into the bogs later, we arrived and changed our clothes. There was a stove for soup and tea water. We got to see one of the 2 male teams come in and go out on the next foot-o section as well as the Brit team, which had passed ATP along the way. Sandworm picked us up and we headed in, sad but pleased Mealworm was ok. She had showered and eaten and was sleeping with a pile o' blankets back at the hotel.

We did much the same, hitting the sack around 4am, after dropping approximately midway through the race. Aarrghh! Later on, we rose and went for breakfast, packed the H2 mini and sat around waiting for the 1st finishers. Somewhere along the way, the Brit's team had disintegrated, a huge surprise. They had been the model of efficiency in that last TA. Team ATP had passed them and arrived at the finish some 25 hours after the start, looking worn but grateful for the applause. It had finally stopped raining earlier in the morning and the sun had warmed things back up to around 60F. In true sportsmanlike behavior, Nightcrawler got ATP wet anyway with a bottle of cheap champagne!

Our Swamp Stomp adventure was over and we piled into the H2 Mini and headed north.

Don't forget your extra shirt next race kids and train hard!!