

## The Long Green Line

**Pipestone.** *Butte's Piss & Moan Runners* hosted a record 148 finishers in the fifteenth annual Montana Cup cross-country meet on the arid Bureau of Land Management property amid the boulder-strewn hills of Pipestone. The day was calm and warm with temperatures around 15 °C, but in a more autumn-like spirit of Halloween, race officials and volunteers were costumed in a "hillbilly-hunter-white trash" dress theme. Meet organizers wanted to have fun with it, and they did, with a lot of hoot'n, and holler'n and carry'n on. Runners may have noticed several scroungy looking course monitors and camera men along the race route who were dressed in theme.

The women's race started the meet at the stroke of noon with a black-powder pistol pop, fired by the "grisly old hunter" who was played by local Waterloo rancher, Dean Hunt. Pipestone's narrow trails made it necessary to split the starting line into three sections, with each section holding roughly one-third of the runners. The three groups merged less than 50 meters into the 7.4K race, sending a large bolus of 61 runners down the skinny, double-track trail like a pig through a python.

The race was run on a loop course, and Helena's Jennifer Thomas, who wanted to run free of the clog, bolted into an early lead with Butte's Nicole Hunt in tow. The course sloped gently downward over a forgiving, decayed granite surface for the first 2.5 kilometers before turning sharply off a ridge and twisting precipitously downward through the nightmare known as the "Spin Cycle." The Spin Cycle began a 1.4K section of trail that lead runners down, down, up, down, down, up, and down again, ending with a net elevation drop of 158 meters with several pitches of 10% or greater. The drop was great enough that several runners later reported sensing a warmer ambient temperature at the bottom than they had at the course's highest point, which was the start/finish area at 1681 meters altitude.

By the Spin Cycle, Thomas had been swallowed up by a seven-woman chase pack. Hunt, however, had remained out front, and had stretched a 9 second lead over second place Megan Lerch of Missoula, and Bozeman's Dani Salois-Shahan. Hunt continued to pull away from the others throughout the race, and finished with a commanding 2 minute 29 second margin of victory in a time of 31:08. This was Hunt's sixth individual title in her thirteenth Montana Cup. Most of Hunt's lead developed over the latter portions of the race where all of the lost elevation was regained. Salois-Shahan stayed closest to Hunt, finishing in 33:37.

In September, Hunt was the leading finisher on the gold-medal-winning Team USA at the World Mountain Running Trophy which was run in Turkey. Hunt, who was also the co-director of today's meet, compared Turkey's rugged Trophy race course to today's Cup course saying "before I went to Turkey, I would have thought this course was hard, but the Turkey race changed my perception ... On a scale of one to ten, I would call today's race a 6, and Turkey's was a 9.5." Hunt is currently in a heavy training phase in preparation for the "Worlds Richest Mountain Run" at Obudu Ranch in Nigeria. The race, which will be held during our country's Thanksgiving, earns its name by offering \$240,000 in prize money.

Today at the Spin Cycle, a long green line of Butte runners began to emerge near the lead, with seven Butte females in the top seventeen. If the race had been stopped there, Butte would have won with a score of 35 points, and little changed after that. Butte's winning score ended up being 31, nineteen points better than second place Helena. The Butte women's victory was their first ever team Cup title. Butte's team was fortified with youth, with their 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> finishers being teenagers. Butte High's fab freshman, Keli Dennehy, finished seventh overall and first among youth (0-19 years) at 34:50. Other Butte scorers (Vaia Errett, Kala Jauquet, and Kathy Peterson) finished in places 8, 9, & 10. Butte master, Susan Kaluza added a third individual title for the home standing team, finishing first among her 40+ age division. Kaluza's time of 38:09 was twelve seconds faster than second place Kathie Perrins of Billings. The Helena master's team prevented Butte from claiming both female team titles, when they strung together five of the top eight scoring positions to defend their Masters' Cup title with a 25 to 32 victory over Butte. Debbie Magilke of Billings won the Super Masters' (50+) division with a time of 40:46.

In keeping with the Halloween festivities, race organizers had secretly planned to have several costumed actors at various locations along the secluded course. The first actor was Jock Holmes of Whitehall who played a drunken and loudly obnoxious hunter at the top of the Spin Cycle. Holmes, surrounded by empty beer cans and blasting his music, rudely chastised passing runners for spoiling his "hunt'n groun's. Jock polished some other one-liners on passers by such as "Hey, lil' gal... you're a box of dynamite," "I got me a smorgesborg of little ladies com'n right at me," and "I've hearded old cows fast'n that in my day."

The next actors were stationed at 4.7K near the base of the remote hill labeled "Monster Hill." That name was originally decided on due to the monstrous nature of the incline which climbed for 600 meters at 10% grade. The name became even more apt when two Bigfoot monsters (one was a yearling) were recruited to hide in the bushes and to frighten runners at that spot. Mark Bausch and son Kaleb of Waterloo played the Bigfoot roles. Bigfoot's instructions were to "scare but not to impede, and to do whatever else Bigfoot would do." Standing 2.14 meters in his platform based big feet, and with a menacing sneer on his latex Bigfoot mask, it was feared that Bigfoot might scare some of the younger female racers into leaving the course. To prevent this, Bigfoot was asked to stay back a little more from the young girls. Bigfoot's post-race report refuted those fears. In a strange study of the affects of fear, Bigfoot noted that "males tended to scare about 20% more than females", and age seemed to play a role in potential for fright too. He recalled that older females tended to scream, but teenaged girls were more likely to give him a rejecting sideways glance, like he "hadn't seen since asking girls to dance at high school dances." Bigfoot's best scare of the day was on Don Tamietti, who 'swept' the course on his four-wheeler after all the women went through. "That guy just about crapped himself." Littlefoot added "people say bad words when you scare them."

After the Monster Hill, racers' quadriceps muscles were allowed to recuperate briefly while running through Woody's Alley, which was a flatter and winding single-track through a forested boulder patch. The path's name was derived from the wooden man who stood next to the trail there. The tranquil nature of this section may have led runners to hope and believe that their hardest climbing was behind them, but upon emerging from the trees, they saw the gargantuan climb ahead known as Angel's Landing. If they listened closely at this point, they could have heard distant music from a flute floating down upon them. On the juttred ridge above, stood a flute-playing "Angel of Mercy." That character, costumed in flowing white silk, was played by Kayla Hunt of Waterloo. Kayla got a lung burning workout, playing flute for two times 30 minutes. The ascent of Angel's landing was mercilessly steep and winding through 400 meters of immense boulders. The angel's music signaled a merciful end to the climbing, but then there was still the matter of making the legs and lungs pump for another flat kilometer before the finish.

The men's race got pumping at 1 p.m., and Butte High senior Hobie Beigler took the initial lead with a surprising burst of speed away from the starting line, but as his legs began to lose their rhythm, more proven speedsters emerged from the crowd behind. Bozeman's Keith Kimmons was the first to pass Beigler, with Alan King of Billings and Missoula's Casey Jermyn and Scott McGowan in pursuit. Kimmons continued to stride out on the downhill, building an eleven second lead by the spin cycle. At that time, McGowan was floating in fourth place, 14 seconds off the lead.

McGowan was running the Montana Cup against his coach's better judgment. Despite (or perhaps due to) the tradition of secrecy surrounding the exact route of the Cup course, Coach Tom Raunig of Missoula had heard that this year's Cup course was "dangerous," and that made him worry about the safety of the running conditions for his most talented charge. As Montana's first and only sub-four miler, McGowan has earned the label of "world class," and he has a sponsorship contract with *New Balance* to show for it. Montanans' hopes for a representative in the 2008 Olympics likely go where McGowan goes, and Raunig knows it. Raunig also knows that a huge obstacle between McGowan and a ticket to the Olympics is McGowan's health and injury status for the next two years.

McGowan does have a history of down time from training. During the summer of 2005, he experienced a string of maladies that included a neuroma in his foot, a common cold, and then a bout of influenza that left him in the hospital where he said he "lost fifteen pounds, when he couldn't afford to lose three." McGowan stands 1.93 meters, and he normally weighs 70 kg (155 lbs). After recovering from all of those ailments, McGowan started training seriously again but soon developed a stress fracture in the S.I. joint of his low back. He said that he has only recently begun to regain his previous fitness and training level. He did run one-hundred miles during the week of the Montana Cup, and despite his history of medical issues remains confident in his body's ability to handle running in places like Pipestone, stating that "The course was hard, but I do runs like that in the Rattlesnake [Wilderness near Missoula] all the time. Tom [Raunig] worries too much about stuff like that. I liked the [Pipestone] course. It's better than running on a golf course. Anybody who didn't like that course is being a 'wuss'."

*New Balance* plans to ensure McGowan's well being, and their plan requires McGowan and his new bride to move to Utah to join a new mid-distance training enclave. The newly formed group will offer coaching and medical support. With these plans and thoughts of his preservation dancing in his head, McGowan pranced effortlessly down through the boulders of the Spin Cycle, at "time trial" effort, as prescribed by Coach Raunig.

McGowan's cautious approach continued as he followed closely behind teammate Casey Jermyn, who was last year's individual Cup champion. McGowan and Jermyn are both products of class-B Montana high schools and of Montana universities, and they have raced each other many times, but in all those years McGowan had never beaten Jermyn in a cross country race before. The two Missoula runners trotted along with Kimmons still eighteen seconds ahead until the Monster Hill. Jermyn and McGowan agreed that they maintained their tempo up the Monster Hill, while Kimmons slowed, allowing his lead to dissolve within the next kilometer. McGowan was the first to get by Kimmons and he asserted himself a little more to gain a lead over Jermyn as well. McGowan said that he hasn't ever been a good downhill runner, but he feels that he is much better at uphill running, despite what people might guess due to his long thin legs. His legs were powerful enough to propel him to a 26 second victory over the final uphill 2K on this course. McGowan finished in 26:55, and Jermyn was second in 27:21.

The Missoula teammates' one-two finish also propelled Missoula to the team victory, with a 50 to 69 margin of victory over defending champion, Kalispell. Jake Roske was Missoula's third finisher in sixth place overall, winning the youth title with a time of 29:25. Thomas Jodoin (16th), and Anders Brooker (25th) were the other scoring runners for Missoula. The Masters' Cup went to defending champion Butte, which scored with the first two finishers and five others in the first 13 places. Butte's score of 29 was 16 better than second place Bozeman. The fourth member of Butte's masters team was super master, Don Sundberg, who finished in 32:43 to defend his individual title in the 50+ age division.

- Ray Hunt, Race Director

## In Other Cup News:

The 2005 Montana Cup hosts, from the Kalispell region, donated their entire \$84 profit from that meet to Butte as seeding money for the future of the Cup. That money was used to purchase a computerized timing system from *Perfect Timing* out of Bozeman. Immediately after the purchase, Chris Wareham of Butte set to work creating a complimentary program that takes data from the timing system to score cross country meets using Montana Cup scoring rules. In fact, the scoring program is so highly tailored for the Montana Cup, that Wareham named the program *Montana Cup Scoring* or *MCS*. Both programs are easy to use, and are available for use by subsequent meet hosts, at no charge.

The three members of the Montana Cup Hall of Fame considered one new nomination this year, and after some discussion they voted to accept former Missoula ace runner and team organizer Robert Sowers among their ranks.

This race director's old buddy, Diamond Jim, came up missing at the end of the day. This isn't the first time that Diamond Jim has just got up and left, without saying goodbye. He's probably off visiting friends again. If anyone sees him out there, please tell him to write. Perhaps I'll run into him again at next year's Cup in Missoula, or maybe the year after that in the "evil empire."

[Ed: On November 1st, Diamond Jim sent in his fortune cookie note (which read: "You will make a long journey.") for entry into the Montana Cup mail-in drawing. His envelope was posted with a *Flash of DC Comics* stamp. And the post mark on the stamp read -- you guessed it -- Helena.]

A veteran (who will remain unnamed) of eight Montana Cups, previewed today's course and then offered some historical perspective. He observed that each Cup race director seems to design a course that is more difficult than the previous one, adding that you can't keep having difficult courses like this one, if the goal is to attract your average runner.

## What others have said about this year's Cup:

"... just wanted to take a quick minute to say thanks for such a great event and congrats on such a successful one. Even though I ran like a dog, this was about as much fun as I have had at a race in a long time. You really set the bar high for future Cups. I got the DVD. It was great. For the limited cost, it is a great way to commemorate the race. I loved it. And I loved the personalized jewel case insert/video cover. Thanks so much for all your effort on this. It was much appreciated." -- Tony Banovich, Billings

"Thank you so much for the incredible experience of the 2006 Montana Cup -- you guys went way beyond what has ever been done before, and the event came off flawlessly! ... What a beautiful day, beautiful course, beautiful area, and with so many fun details ... I was also impressed by the terrific coverage in the Montana Standard ... Everyone had a great time -- you guys really outdid yourselves this year! ... [Helena's] highlights included the return of the women's master's cup, and a second place finish for the women's open team! The men's teams returned with less hardware, but lots of door prizes! In summary, the conditions were ideal ... and the camaraderie was unparalleled ... Also, Elaine and I watched the MT Cup DVD and loved it!" -- Patrick Judge, Helena

"...thank you for putting on such a well orchestrated race, on an amazingly painful, but absolutely fun and beautiful course (I personally had zero qualms with a course that represented more mountain running than xc running). That was really one of the best races, and hope that all Montana Cup organizers put the level of effort into creating a competitive, fun and community-oriented race like that. You've set the bar high, so thank you!" -- Dewey Peacock, Bozeman

"...you and all your volunteers put on an excellent race on Saturday! It was well organized, eventful (with Big Foot and all) and challenging as hell! ... Great cookie. I xeroxed my [fortune] message because I wanted to keep the original. I'm so curious about [the mail-in prize drawing]." -- Demaris Taylor, Helena

"Today was the best day of my life" said 10 year old Kaleb Bausch who filled the role of "Littlefoot" in the far wooded portion of the course. Kaleb's Father Mark, who played Bigfoot, explained that Kaleb was excited about riding out there as a passenger on a motorbike and about getting to jump out of hiding to scare people all afternoon. What could be more fun for a young boy?

"...all I can say is WOW! It was a great experience for me... My definition of training on hills has been redefined. :) ... I can't wait until next year's MT Cup! That race was a humbling experience that I will never forget. I can see why there is so much hype about the MT Cup ... it really is special. It makes me love being a Montanan more than I already do." -- Amber Osterman, Helena

"You guys crack me up... Great job on the race this year! ... Thanks for having the EMT on sight. I sprained my ankle, and he really helped me out." -- Kelly Fulton, Billings  
[It is worth noting that Kelly entered the mail-in drawing by sending in his Montana Cup fortune cookie message, and his message read: "Pay attention to where you put your feet."]

"Thank you very much for putting on what was clearly the best race in Montana. I personally felt the organization, timing, course, competition, refreshments, etc. were flawless. That course was indeed very challenging, but quite fun. It's obvious how much effort you guys put in, and it was a complete success. ... I'd come to that venue every year to run a fun-run or casual race, and I've heard many others say the same." -- John Zombro, Bozeman

"Thanks for a great course, great food, great weather, great humor & camaraderie, & just a wonderful day! It was a tough act to follow!" -- Robert Rasmussen, Helena

"The Montana Cup was great. It was hard but FUN! Good Job." -- Jim Ryan, Butte

"Thanks for the great day in the sun. Good race, fun." -- Sheila Franey, Butte

"...you all went to a lot of work for the race. It was reflective in all phases. ...I wish I would have been healthy but... I'm trying to be smarter when I have an injury. ...What a beautiful day it was too. ...Thanks for the nice shirt, food, friendship, and a great race. Tradition lives on!" -- Kent Hoffmeyer, Kalispell

"Thank you for a great race ~ that was a killer course! We had a great time ... Great cookies! -- Aimee & Tory Kendrick, Missoula

"Many thanks for all your effort with the Montana Cup 2006 edition; good fun, good course, superbly organized." -- Chas Day, Bozeman

"Your race was the most entertaining local trail race I've ever attended. Thank you x100." -- Michele Bazzanella, Helena

"Tasty fortune cookie. That event will be nearly impossible to top!! Your team did a great job. I loved the hunter, the fairy, the angel, the sasquatch and numerous other "things" and people on the course. What a beautiful day in beautiful surroundings. The DVD was great!! You did a fantastic job on it!! It's really cool. I can't even imagine how much time was spent putting it together. Thank you!" -- Mark Burke, Missoula

"I loved the course, and I wish the Cup was there again next year. And I've heard several others say the same. Missoula has their work cut out for them next year, trying to match that." -- Mark Slater, Bozeman

"...the MT Cup was nothing short of fabulous. Participating and helping with the event was a major highlight of my running career. I heard nothing but positive comments from everyone, and it sounds like the course was a hit." -- John Babcock, Butte

"For me, the most memorable part of the day was watching the other runners before, during and after the races enjoying themselves in the moment, in those glorious surroundings and in that wonderful weather. What a special company of runners we have in Montana: encouraging each other, like the two women from Helena— who hardly know me— calling my name to hearten me at the top of Angel's Landing. Pipestone rocks (and rolls)." -- Marvin Speece, Butte

[Ed: Only moments before Marvin summited, one of the same Helena women greeted the race director at Angel's Landing slightly less graciously, saying "I hope you're suffering."]

"Good job on the race. Every one I talked to enjoyed it. I wish I could have run that one." -- Bob Boland, Great Falls

"[The meet] was awesome and everyone loved it. Well organized, well marked and what great little touches were added to the course. The fairy, the flute, Big & Littlefoot. I can't begin to tell you how much fun I had, it would take pages, but thanks for making it come together soo nice. Great time was had by all." -- Eddi "Birthday Girl" Walker, Butte

"I'm writing to say how much I enjoyed your DVD! This is a great idea --it's not often one gets these views of a race. (Especially from my typical position...) Nice work! I think I can appreciate the amount of work that goes into producing this. The captions, music --everything, were just a lot of fun. Also, thank you for organizing this great event. Pipestone is a BEAUTIFUL place for a race. Riding up the gravel road on the bus, I think I heard more than one "Oh sh--!" -- Steve Rumley, Helena

"Thanks for running a good, fun race. I especially liked the costumes with the named sections of the course. See you next year." -- Dave Chandler, Great Falls

"I thought the DVD was great! Thanks!" -- Debbie Gibson, Helena

"That was the most fun I have ever had at a race. Having the runners' names on their numbers was a sheer stroke of 'rayhunting.' Everybody knew everybody. The only thing I would have added to the course would have been to loop back somehow, before finishing, and to go up Angel's Landing again. [only Jeff Thomas would wish for such a thing.] My only disappointment was that I did not see Bigfoot and Littlefoot. I saw everything else on the course, except them. I wish I would have seen them." -- Jeff Thomas, Helena

[One last note about Littlefoot. He and Bigfoot wore their costumes again while trick-or-treating on Halloween, and by the end of their outing, Littlefoot had stopped using the common "trick-or-treat" greeting. In stead, he had begun saying "I'm NOT an ape!"]