

# **Promise Land 50K: The BEST 50K in the NATION**

**By David Horton, Race Founder and Director**

Those are BOLD words, but I believe them to be true. On what basis?

Pizza blast cooked on-site and a variety of desserts brought by the runners.

Over 80 percent of the runners camped at the Start/Finish

Competitive field with a fairly liberal time limit of 10 hours

Patagonia running shorts to all sub 10-hour finishers

Beautiful course with a spectacular waterfall, great streams, good trails, and lots of climbing

Great finish, last 4 miles downhill, signature climb from 23 to 26 miles

Fantastic bonfire and great fellowship on Friday night

The best aid stations (with ice cream at one and grilled cheese sandwiches at another)

The largest contingent of young runners at almost any ultra you will ever see, mostly Liberty University students.

. Best cookout (superb Nancy Horton Burgers and Hot Dogs) ever on Saturday after the race.

Believe it or not, I am not trying to recruit more runners for our races. We had more starters than we have ever had for Hellgate 100K in December, Holiday Lake 50K in February, and now Promise Land in April. I feel we have reached the limit of runners that we can handle while maintaining the quality we demand. What does that mean? We WILL reach our runner limits even sooner next year. There will not be enough slots for everyone that desires to run Hellgate, Holiday Lake, and Promise Land. That is good news and bad news.

As usual, we had rain on Friday and Friday night, and there was even a little rain during the early morning hours of the race. However, the rain stopped and the fog finally left to leave us with a good day for running, but a little too hot and humid to have great times overall.

The men's field looked to be a four-way battle between Jake Reed (Lynchburg, VA), Eric Grossman (Emory, VA), Jonathan Basham (Allentown, PA), and Jeremy Ramsey (Lynchburg, VA). Reed won Promise Land last year and Grossman and Basham were previous winners of PL. Ramsey had won two of the last three Hellgate 100K's. The ladies field looked to be a two person race between Jill Perry (Syracuse, NY) and Sandi Nypaver (Parma Heights, OH).

Surprisingly, Grossman took the race out very hard, taking a 4-minute lead over Reed and Basham by Aid Station 2 (Reed Creek, 8.6 miles). Grossman maintained a lead that was from 4 to 6 minutes over Basham through Colon Hollow (19.3 Miles). However, Basham closed to within 1 minute by Cornelius Creek (23.9 Miles) with Reed another 5 minutes back and Ramsey had closed to 6 minutes behind Reed. Grossman increased his lead to 3 minutes after the tough climb up Apple Orchard Falls. He maintained his minute lead to the finish taking his second PL title in a P.R. of 4:37:23. This is the third fastest time ever on the course, only surpassed by Clark Zealand's course

record of 4:30:43 and Scot Jurek's time of 4:36:35. Basham took second in 4:40:55, a P.R. for him. Reed held on for 3<sup>rd</sup> place in 4:42:37. Ramsey took 4<sup>th</sup> in 4:50:36, the first time for him to break the 5-hour barrier.

Nypaver took the lead for the women by the aid station at Reed Creek with Perry 6 minutes back but in trouble. Perry started having stomach problems by mile 3. By the aid station at Sunset Fields (11.9 miles) Perry called it quits. From there on Nypaver ran away from the field winning her PL debut in 5:31:36, the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest time ever for ladies.

The men masters winner was really the overall winner, Eric Grossman, who is 42. Reagan Petrie (Arlington, VA) took 3<sup>rd</sup> overall and first masters in 6:03:58. The Grand Master's titles went to Jay Avitable (Branford, CT) and Rebekah Trittipoe (Bedford, VA) in 6:08:31 and 7:05:36 respectively. The Super Masters title went to Dan Lehmann (Helvetia, WV) in 6:33:06.

Bill Keane and Konrad Gannon (both of Winston-Salem, NC) finished their 10<sup>th</sup> PL 50K and received their embroidered shirts. Jay Finkle, Grattan Garbee, and Gene Potter kept their record perfect, finishing PL 11 times in 11 starts.

I would also like to thank our sponsors who we could not do without: Montrail, Patagonia, DryMax Socks, GU, Clif, and Frank Villa.

Most of all I would like to thank my wife who allows me to direct this race and who buys ALL the food and masterminds a picnic for over 400 folks. On Saturday night, she asked me, "And why do we do this?" At that point, I was not sure. Putting on this EVENT (and that is what it is) is a LABOR of love. It destroys us, but we LOVE it (my words, not hers), most of the time.