

# EPIC ULTRAS NEWS



## Welcome From Epic Ultras Founder, Eric Steele



Welcome to our 24th issue of Epic Ultras News! It's hard to believe we have been publishing our newsletter for two years now and celebrated our 3rd Year Anniversary as a business a few weeks ago in July. During this short period of time, we have hosted 18 separate events, with a combined total of 31 races contained therein. We have attracted runners from 35 states and three countries, while introducing hundreds of newbies to our "beloved sport" of ultrarunning AND launching a Kansas Grand Slam in 2014. Our initial goal was to turn Kansas into the premier "Midwestern Ultrarunning Mecca" and we are confident this has indeed been achieved, but, of course..."we've only just begun!" Speaking of our Kansas Grand Slam, in 2015, we now have seven exceptional ultrarunners who are halfway to earning this "coveted honor" after completing the 2nd Leg at our recent Honey Badger 100 Mile Ultra Road Race a few weeks ago on July 11th & 12th. They are; Mory Bailey from Indianapolis (IN), Krystle Dalke from Wichita (KS), Elden Galano-2014 Kansas Slammer- from Wichita (KS), Kodi Panzer from Marion (KS), Ron Ruhs from Blair (NE), William Sprouse-2014 Kansas

Slammer-from Enterprise (KS), and Peggy Ward from Wichita (KS). Congratulations to all of these outstanding athletes for being 50% of the way to earning 2015 Kansas Grand Slam status, with two, Elden Galano and William Sprouse going for it a second year in a row! Next leg (3rd) of our Kansas Grand Slam is the Hawk Hundred, scheduled for September 12th at Clinton Lake, just outside of Lawrence (KS), with the 4th and final leg being our Kansas Rails-to-Trails Fall Ultra Extravaganza 100 Miler, scheduled for October 24th on the Flint Hills & Prairie Spirit Trails in Ottawa (KS). Up next, is our 21st Annual FlatRock 50/25K's, held just outside of Independence (KS) on the absolutely stunning Elk River Hiking Trail, scheduled for September 26th. This is the oldest contiguously running ultramarathon in the state of Kansas and though we have been "sold out" since last October, we have received enough cancellations in the past couple months that we have opened up more spots. So, if you want to come join us for all of the fun in late September, please go to our registration page to get on our wait list immediately and chances are high you could still get in. Our featured runner this month is Missouri ultrarunner, Jenna Mutz from Joplin (MO), who recently set a New Female Course Record at our Flint Hills Trail 40 Miler back in late May. Ron Ruhs, from Blair (NE), and 2015 Kansas Grand Slam Hopeful reports on all the "hot action" at his recent finish of our Honey Badger 100 Mile Road Race, while our very own "In-House" Blogger, Mr. Zach Adams, shares his rich insight on several VERY important lessons he has learned participating the past five years in our "beloved sport" of ultrarunning. Enjoy!

Be Epic,  
Eric

## August 2015...In This Issue

Upcoming Events P.2  
Newsletter Bios P.3  
Honey Badger 100 Mile Report P.4  
Featured Runner P.5  
Lessons Learned P.6

## Our Mission

The primary mission of EPIC ULTRAS is to organize, manage, facilitate and deliver the highest quality ultrarunning events in the world. Our vision is to provide an environment that strongly encourages runners of ALL ability levels to discover, nurture and maintain their own personal greatness and "Be Epic" while co-creating EPIC "ultrarunning experiences of a lifetime" with us!



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Kansas Rails-to-Trails Fall Ultra Extravaganza

R2T 100 Mile (Flint Hills & Prairie Spirit Trails)  
Prairie Spirit Trail Fall Classic 50 Mile  
Flint Hills Trail Fall Classic 40 Mile  
Prairie Spirit Trail Fall Classic 50K  
October 24, 2015 - Ottawa, KS

Take advantage of a \$20 discount now!  
Click Here To Register Using The  
Discount Code Below Good Through  
Sunday, August 9th, 2015!

Enter Code At Checkout to receive a  
\$20 discount:  
**20NEWSBUCKS**  
(All one word, no spaces)

## Kansas Rails-to-Trails Fall Ultra Extravaganza

Choose from your choice of four race distances all set on the Prairie Spirit Trail, Flint Hills Trail or BOTH. With a 50K, 40 Mile, 50Mile and 100 Mile option, this ultra event really lives up to the name "Ultra Extravaganza"!

### Course Description

All of our race distances that make up the Kansas Rails-to-Trails Fall Ultra Extravaganza are great ultras for first timers, as they are all relatively flat and easy courses...they are also certainly excellent courses for more experienced ultrarunners looking to set a PR at any one of the four distances we are offering. Equally appealing for more social runners is the 8-10 foot wide trail, as it allows runners to easily move along the trail 3-4 abreast at any given time...in addition to the extremely easy to find (and get to) multiple crew access points on all of the courses, along with plenty of room for your crew to hang out and relax while cheering you on...AND the spectacular fall foliage along all four course routes is "absolutely stunning" this time of the year, to put it mildly!

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept 26, 2015  
**SOLD OUT**  
FlatRock  
50K/25K

October 24, 2015  
Ultra Extravaganza  
100M/50M/40M/50K

January 2, 2016  
WinterRock  
25K/12K

April 2, 2016  
Prairie Spirit Trail  
100M/50M

April 30, 2016  
FlatRock 101  
101K

May 28, 2016  
Flint Hills Trail  
40M/Marathon

July 9, 2016  
Honey Badger  
100M

All EPIC ULTRA events  
sponsored by:





# Newsletter Bios



## Zach Adams - Blogger Extraordinaire

Zach's been competing in ultras since 2010 and is most certainly an EPIC ultrarunner. He loves running and has the sense of humor that Epic Ultras thrives upon! He's been our blog contributor since our inception and has a true passion for this sport. If you're easily offended, well, read his blog and get pissed, or don't! He "calls it like he sees it" and has no shame in doing so. Visit page six to "get a taste" of Zach's most Epic humor about our sport!



## Jenna Mutz - Featured Runner

*In her own words.*

I was inspired by a staff development session at work to run a half-marathon in 2009 without previously racing any distance longer than two miles (and that was back in high school track and cross-country). It was horrible! I never imagined I would run any longer races, but now I have completed 22 half-marathons with a PR of 1:28:33 and seven marathons with a PR of 3:09:05. I ran my first ultra at the Prairie Spirit

Trail 50 Mile in March 2015 and discovered I really enjoy ultra-running. I am looking forward to many more Epic Ultra Races in the future.



## Ron Ruhs

*In his own words.*

The journey to losing more than 50lbs started with my wife convincing me I should train for a "destination" 5k in Hawaii while she trained for the 1/2. I couldn't say no to that and a great experience turned into the desire to try a 1/2 later in the year. The next year brought a few more races and another 1/2. And then I read Ultramarathon Man by Dean Karnazes. You know where things went from there! Two marathons in

2009 snowballed into becoming Marathon Maniacs and then Ultras and trails took over. I'm just a back of the pack guy out there for fun, but from my first 5k to my first 100 miler to trying to complete the KS Ultra Slam this year, I'm proud of how far I've come. Nothing beats the stories and lifelong friends we've gained from the running community.

## Epic Ultras Needs Your Help

Epic Ultras needs YOUR HELP! With the expansion of events on the EU race calendar and the increasing popularity and participation in our beloved sport of ultrarunning, we need to add to the Epic Ultras Brigade. Just because you may not be able to run every event you would like does not mean you can't be a part of Epic Ultra's mission to "co-create experiences of a lifetime". It takes amazing people to pull off the absolute BEST events you will find ANYWHERE. By working at an aid station and assisting in other race day duties, not only will you be a part of the Epic Ultras Brigade, you may even earn your way into an Epic Ultras event. To find out more go to:

[www.epicultras.com/brigade](http://www.epicultras.com/brigade).

Thank You!



# EPIC ULTRAS

# Honey Badger 100 Mile - Is that bacon I smell burning?

By Ron Ruhs

*Is that bacon burning? Wait...that's me.*

Have you ever just signed up for a 5k or something without training for it because "It'll be ok"? Well, when an opportunity came up to run the Honey Badger 100 Mile, I thought "It'll be ok".

The Honey Badger 100 Mile (HB 100) is Epic Ultra's version of Badwater in Kansas. Different from most races that have full aid stations every X miles, the HB 100 is modeled after Badwater in that a crew/vehicle are mandatory to provide self support for the duration of the race (although there were 3 ice and water stops and roving ice/water replenishment - much appreciated). That and the fact you're on asphalt hell with no cover and temps approaching 100. But hey, it's flat, right?

The BW and I headed down to Wichita Friday afternoon to meet up with the other half of my Ultra Crew, our good friend Donnie from KC. We got in too late for packet pickup, but got a chance to meet some outstanding people from a group called Midwest Vikings at the motel that were running before pretending to get some sleep for the race.

Race morning started tense as we had a wee bit of trouble finding the starting line in the dark. Luckily, we came across some knowledgeable people headed to the start/finish with more than ample time for packet pickup and to visit with friends before the prerace meeting. Honey Badger is the second 100 Mile race in a four race series, sponsored by Epic Ultras, called the Kansas Grand Slam. There was a group of about 8 people trying to get the second leg in.

The first part of the course was a nice short out and back inside Cheney Park. After that only 1 loop (rectangle)! A simple 92.5 mile loop in Kingman County. Simply asphalt. Simply hot. Simply no shade. Aside from the section in the park, your crew was able to assist you at whatever interval you wished while on the course. I liked the thought of seeing people and only carrying my Orange Mud handheld, so we started out with BW/Donnie jumping ahead about every 2 miles on a crossroad. When it really started warming up late morning, I switched to a hat with the drape in the back and a long sleeve white shirt. I wasn't going to bring the hat at all, but glad I did. It made a tremendous difference with the sun constantly beating down on you. This was what a typical stop looked like. Hand off my bottle and hat. Bobbie would soak my hat in ice water in the cooler and give me a wet towel. While they filled my bottle, I'd have a seat and try to eat something.

The first 27 miles or so were uneventful, but then I started having stomach issues. Nothing appealed to me, but I kept up some salt pills to try and settle while mostly saying NO to anything offered me. Finally Donnie convinced me to take some Pepto pills. This settled me down pretty good, but still didn't feel like eating much. After the 3rd time he offered Ensure, I said ok. Wait a minute...this goes down fine! That ended up being a savior as I was getting 260 cals in 8 ounces and not having any adverse effect from it. Learning from other Ultrarunners regardless of what you currently use/do. Never stop listening.

# EPIC ULTRAS

*...continued on page 7*

# Featured Runner - Jenna Mutz

## The Basics

**Date of Birth:** December 3, 1980  
**Place of Birth:** Fort Worth, Texas  
**Currently Residing:** Joplin, Missouri  
**Marital Status:** Dating ultra-runner extraordinaire, Nathan Sicher.  
**Job(s):** Talent Search Advisor and Adjunct Faculty at Crowder College.  
**Children:** None  
**Height:** 5'2"  
**Weight:** 112-ish  
**Shoe Size:** 7.5  
**Best Physical Feature:** Ankles  
**Worst Physical Feature:** Toes  
**Religion:** Christian  
**Political Affiliation:** Conservative  
**Educational Background:** Bachelor's in Political Science from Baylor University, Master's in Political Science from Sam Houston State University.  
**Personal Strength(s):** Making everyone feel included.  
**Personal Weakness(es):** Being a little too competitive.  
**Make Of Car You Drive:** Toyota Prius  
**Make Of Car You Would Like To Drive:** Subaru Crosstrek  
**Pets:** None

## Ultra Stuff

**# Years Running Ultras:** Less than 6 months  
**# Ultras Finished:** 2  
**Best Ultra Performance(s):** Flint Hills 40 Miler.  
**Most Memorable Ultra:** Prairie Spirit 50, my debut ultra with a borrowed Garmin that only stayed on for the first mile.  
**Typical Training Week(s) Before A Major Race:** If I'm training for a marathon or longer race, I try to run between 50-70 miles per week. I can only taper for a week or I'd become unbearable!  
**Injuries:** Luckily, I've been largely injury free until this year and even then, I've not had an injury that kept me from running for more than a few days. In February and March of 2015, I had a knee problem (possibly IT-band related) that managed to work itself out after the Prairie Spirit 50.  
**Ultrarunning Idol:** Kaci Lickteig – saw her effortlessly running in the heat at the Psycho Summer 50K and she beat almost all the guys.  
**Why Do You Run Ultras:** I have several friends in my Tuesday night speedwork group who run ultras, and I think their peer pressure finally wore me down! But I discovered I enjoy a race distance that doesn't require you to run at maximum effort the whole time.  
**Advice For Other Ultrarunners:** If you can run a marathon, you can run an ultra. Just start thinking in hours instead of miles for some of your long runs. And on race day, don't borrow a Garmin from Nathan Sicher!

## Spare Time

**Book Currently Reading:** Eeny Meeny by M. J. Arlidge  
**Hobbies:** Running, watching sports, and reading  
**Collections:** Sweaty bands.

## Favorites

**Favorite Author:** Lee Child, Johnathan Kellerman, Harlan Coben  
**Favorite Book:** How the Grinch Stole Christmas by Dr. Seuss (the second greatest Christmas story ever told).  
**Favorite Non-running Magazine:** The Week  
**Favorite Movie:** I don't normally sit still long enough to watch a movie!  
**Favorite TV Show:** Pardon the Interruption or Judge Judy.  
**Favorite Actor/Actress:** B.J. Miller (my cousin who is currently on General Hospital).  
**Favorite Music:** I listen to a wide variety of music – Alternative Rock, Pop, Contemporary Christian, Country, Classic Rock.  
**Favorite Musical Performer:** Ed Sheeran  
**Favorite Artist:** None (I clearly need more culture in my life).  
**Favorite Spectator Sport:** College basketball  
**Favorite Subject in School:** Social Studies  
**Favorite Game:** Capture the Flag (we play this every summer with our students).  
**Favorite Vacation Destination:** Sarasota, Florida  
**Favorite Time Of Day:** 4:30pm, when I get off work!  
**Favorite Item Of Clothing:** I have an impressive collection of sweatpants.  
**Favorite Non-Running Leisure Activity:** Shopping or reading.  
**Favorite Running Shoe:** Newton Distant Elites  
**Food/Drink During An Ultra:** Rice Krispie treats, Skittles, and Goldfish crackers.  
**Favorite Food/Drink Before An Ultra:** Race mornings I have to have something from Panera, either a wildberry scone or cinnamon roll.  
**Food/Drink After An Ultra:** Coke  
**Favorite Crew Person(s):** Brian Smith and Ken Schramm are the best!  
**Favorite Pacer:** I've yet to run long enough to need a pacer.  
**Favorite Place To Run:** Frisco Trail  
**Favorite Type Of Running Surface:** Crushed gravel.  
**Favorite Famous Quote:** "Don't stop believing, unless your dream is stupid. Then you should get a better dream." – Kid President

## Achievements / Goals / Memories

**Personal Hero:** Ann Neill (my Sunday school teacher when I was in junior high).  
**Personal Philosophy:** Start the way you intend to finish.  
**Short-Term Goal:** Run a marathon in under 3:08 by the end of 2015.  
**Long-Term Goal:** Retire as early as possible and then spend my time volunteering and traveling.  
**Most Prized Possession:** I can't think of any one item that it would devastate me to lose.  
**Most Proud Achievement:** Graduating from college in three years.  
**Happiest Memory:** Going to my grandparents' house in Texarkana every Christmas and seeing all my cousins, aunts, and uncles.  
**Secret Ambition/Fantasy:** To own a doggie day care or a dueling piano bar.  
**Greatest Adventure:** When I was in college, I took the Greyhound bus from Waco, Texas, to Princeton, New Jersey, by myself. It was a bad decision...I flew home!

# Lessons Learned

By Epic Ultras Blogger Zach Adams

## 2015 FlatRock Triple Crown

### Lessons Learned From my First Five Years of Running Ultras

This post is inspired by a presentation given by Dr. David Horton – yes THAT David Horton – the night before the 2014 Prairie Spirit 100. His presentation was “Lessons Learned from 100,000 Miles of Running”, and it had a great impact on me. Not only did his words of ultra-wisdom echo in my mind while running that race, the excitement and passion he exuded while sharing his experiences have stuck with me ever since. While I am nowhere near covering 100,000 cumulative miles on foot yet, I have been competing in ultramarathons since July of 2010, and I have learned a lot and changed a lot in that five years. Not only have my body and mind been tempered by the challenge of training and running ultras, but so has my attitude and perspective on ultras, and life in general. It is my sincere hope that maybe a fraction of what I share in this blog will stick with you and inspire you like Dr. Horton’s did with me.

### There Is No Easy Way

In ultras, the only way to get it done is to study and train. Study and learn the skills you need to accomplish your goals and then go put them into practice. Train your body and mind to do what you are asking them to do. You cannot expect to go run a 100 mile ultra after you finished your first half-marathon. Yes it has been done before, but what HASN'T? Life is the same way – if you want something, it is attainable – but in most cases not without a high level of commitment. Finding and maintaining motivation to meet your goals is the hardest thing in ultras. I feel this applies strongly to everyday life as well.

### Pain Really Is Temporary

Be it mental or physical, pain in an ultra is temporary. Yes there are some pains worse than others, and some never truly leave you. But over the course of life (and ultras), you will experience pain – the difference between being successful or not lies in your ability to “ride out the storm” and get past the pain. It will hurt, you will suffer, but if you are persistent and keep moving forward, you WILL get past it. It is possible to build a tolerance to pain – effectively making you a tougher runner and person.

### Failure is an Effective Teacher

Some of the hardest, and best, lessons I have ever learned in my five years of running ultras have not come in PR’s when everything goes right. Failure has taught me things that success never could. The sting of failure will help burn into your mind the mistakes you have made, allowing you to draw on those experiences in the future. If you choose to accept responsibility for your mistakes and learn from them failure can be a powerful motivator as well as a vehicle for personal improvement – in ultras and everyday life.

### Hard Work Pays Off

Hard work is the cornerstone of ultrarunning. Without hard work you can’t train effectively, eat effectively, or do anything else effectively. You get what you put in. Are you really going to be surprised if half-assed efforts do not yield the results you are looking for? Maybe this is just restating my first point – but yeah – it is THAT important.

The 2015 FlatRock Triple Crown Series was 2/3 of complete and we currently have 18 hard core trail runners still on track to receive the title of: “2015 FlatRock Triple Crown Honoree” They are: Zach Adams, Dave Box, Shay Caffey, Polly Choate, Krystle Dalke, Carson Galloway, Joseph Galloway, Dennis Haig, Matthew Hall, Dave Meeth, Michael Mora, Debra Norman, Candi Paulin, Tom Rogers, Ken Schramm, Ryan Schwatken, Brian Smith, and Henry Yount. Upon completion of the 50K at our SOLD OUT Flagship event - FlatRock in September each will receive special recognition, an award, and be only the third group honored into the “FlatRock Triple Crown Series”!



...continued on page 8



# Honey Badger 100 Mile

...continued from page 4

**\*\*INTERMISSION\*\***

*I CANNOT overstate the benefit of having an experienced crew (and both who have run the distance) in races. Especially one like this. Left to your own devices, this race could have been a disaster with an inexperienced crew. The BW and Donnie knew things to look for, what to offer and when to keep pushing things on me and keep me moving. Also the teamwork between all the crews is always awesome. You give support and get support like those people were your own runner or you were theirs. Much love to all those we shared the race with.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Around mile 38 we turned south on a 14 mile stretch called "Convection Alley". Constant 17-21mph hot headwind that didn't let up. Luckily for my slow ass it was a little later in the day and I didn't get the pleasure of this furnace blast at the highest heat of the day. This was one of two low spots in the race. It just seemed like I was redlined even trying to creep along. The BW & Donnie knew I was struggling and stopped about every mile on this section just to make sure I was keeping after it. I fully expected to need the small grace period Eric would give on the cutoff at 53 miles, but with the Ultra Crew keeping me moving, I hit the turn off from Convection Alley and finished the last mile to the 53 mile checkpoint 10 minutes before cutoff.

From here on out, I'd have the BW or Donnie with me. They tended to switch off every 6-8 miles while the other continued to crew. A tough job for sure! Early evening through morning was smooth, if not slow, and everything seemed to be moving along fine. About 5:30am I did have a bout of dry heaves coming into an aid stop. Big hurt like hell heaves that don't do anything. Got another Ensure down and carried on. Funny how your perspective changes as you do longer races. Didn't matter we had almost a marathon left, at 75 miles I knew I was going to finish this. Sunday ended up hotter than Saturday and by late morning the sun was taking its toll. But at this point we were down to the final half marathon. Mile 93 was when the second low point hit. At this point, the asphalt was just a reflective heat nightmare. The actual temp of the asphalt would have been probably 125-130. I know you're thinking I exaggerated that to make it sound bad, but one year at an IRL race at KS Speedway it was 94-96 degrees and the track

## The All New Epic Ultras Mobile App



Be sure to check out the ALL NEW Epic Ultras mobile app on the iTunes Store and Google Play store! You can easily access race information, Epic Ultras social media sites, as well as special discounts and a TRULY UNIQUE Customer Loyalty Program. For each Epic Ultras event you run, you will get your virtual card "digitally punched" eventually earning yourself a totally FREE entry into ANY Epic Ultras event. Learn more today by downloading the app to your IOS or Android smartphone or tablet!

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...continued on page 8

## Honey Badger 100 Mile

...continued from page 7

was over 130. I think I'm making a fair assumption. Anywho, at this point I got kind of light headed and we decided it would be good for me to take a little break in the car with the AC on . From here on out was just a get it done slog to the finish. We did get offered a ride from a nice old couple about 3 miles from the finish, but politely declined.

No matter how you feel, you can always get up the ambition to trot on in to the finish and make it look like you're still capable of moving. I always feel like its home court advantage when I come down to KS for a race. We've gotten to know a number of people from the area and they treat us like family. Thanks Eric, Warren, Zach, Joell, Justin, Deanna, John, Eric & Lori S and everyone else that I didn't mention for a great race!

I couldn't have done this without my outstanding Ultra Crew of the BW and Donnie. No, really - they wouldn't have let me start the race. Always thank your crew/pacers more than you think you need to. It's a long, tough job that nobody in their right mind would volunteer for. Believe it or not, listening to you bitch, smelling your nastiness or touching your horrible feet and being cooped up in a car for 30+ hours aren't terrific selling points.

## Lessons Learned

...continued from page 6

### Judge Your Success Based on Your Effort NOT the Achievements of Others

I cannot stress this enough. In ultras there will ALWAYS be someone faster than you. There will ALWAYS be someone slower than you. Nothing frustrates me more than when people say things like, "When will I be a REAL runner?" or "Can I call myself an ultrarunner now?" Set your goals for YOU! What do you want to accomplish and when? Once you reach that point, re-evaluate and set new goals. Do not compare your times, distances, or achievements to Meb or Krar to determine your success or failure. Stop comparing apples to tire irons. It makes no sense and is a waste of energy. Just like in life, your ultrarunning goals should be a function of what you want to achieve and how much work you are willing to do to get there. Focus on YOU - that is the variable that IS directly in your control.

## Featured Runner

...continued from page 5

### Dislikes / Fears

**Least Liked Subject:**

Science

**Least Liked Household Chore:**

Cleaning the bathroom.

**Pet Peeve:**

People who drive slowly in the left lane.

**Greatest Fear:**

Spiders and snakes.

