

D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty is surrounded by other members of his Fleet Feet AOAT team as he completes the final leg of the Inaugural American Odyssey Relay Run Adventure. From left are, Jeff Horowitz, Clarence Labor, Mayor Fenty, Wolfgang Koehling & Lloyd Henry.



AOR puts runners on back roads

IF YOU HAPPENED to see a series of runners on lonely country roads last weekend, you may have seen participants in the American Odyssey Relay.

For approximately 36 hours, teams of mostly 12 runners traversed the back roads of Frederick and Washington counties as they ran from Gettysburg, Pa., to Washington, D.C.

Among the nearly 1,800 runners was Washington D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty, who was a part of the team Fleet Feet A.O.A.T., or All Out All the Time, which finished second overall in 24 hours, 16 minutes. There was also a team of Iraq war veterans running.

The winning team, the Bucknell Alumni Fossils, finished in 23 hours, 5 minutes.

Runners began Friday morning, April 24. Each team divided in half, with six members occupying a van. Team members ran relay legs of 3 to 8 miles, with the team van meeting each runner at a pre-arranged relay exchange area. Teams set off with maps and food and changes of clothes.

"Nobody got lost," said Bob Fleshner, race director. "Nobody got seriously hurt." Fleshner, of Rockville, has taken part in three similar relays, and wanted to organize a relay in this area.

Runners used local roads, not highways. He asked local runners and townspeople along the route to help him devise the exact course.


"Next time, we'll have more portable toilets, and we'll have lights on them at night," he said. "We'll also have signs. We learned that lesson."

There will be a second annual American Odyssey Relay Run, Fleshner said. Runners and volunteers told him they would be back for next year.

Boonsboro High School was the central meeting place for relay teams, as well as the relay exchange point for four legs of the race. That mostly went well, although some of the relay vans couldn't get to the school in time to meet their runner, causing delays for some teams, Fleshner said.

"For the nighttime legs, the vans stay in close proximity to their runner, and they weren't able to get in and get parked in time for the exchange," Fleshner said. He said he will figure out a way to make the transitions smoother next year.

Volunteers in Smithsburg



**GOING THE
DISTANCE**

By **KAREN GARDNER**

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adopted a Hawaiian luau theme to greet the runners in the evening hours. Runners passing by the Antietam Battlefield in the pre-dawn hours were greeted by a costumed Union soldier with a lantern.

Santa Claus and his elves greeted runners in the early morning hours at Dargan's Bend.

"It was a very fun and festive atmosphere," he said. Some of the teams, including Fenty's, had run Hood to Coast, a well-known relay in Oregon, and thought the American Odyssey Relay was as good, if not better. "It will rival Hood to Coast," Fleshner said. "This event is going to be going on for years to come."

This was Fenty's second relay, after Hood to Coast. "We're delighted that he chose ours," Fleshner said. Another team, the Mighty Mount Airy Moms, who finished in 31 hours and 4 minutes, is planning to recruit a second team for next year.

Team names were quirky, ranging from Night Crawlers to Love Mom to Our Drinking Club has a Running Problem.

All 108 teams that participated, including a few teams of six runners, finished within the 36-hour time limit.