

Imogene Pass Run draws a thousand



Outdoors

By John T. Unger

High above timberline last Saturday morning, a mile below Imogene Pass, Rick Trujillo re-positioned an orange cone bearing a large black numeral 9. That meant that hundreds of us had run and hiked up 9 miles so far, and gained about 4,000 vertical feet. Looking behind and below us, one could see hundreds more runners, putting one foot in front of the other. Ouray native Rick Trujillo had first put on this race 49 years ago.

Joining mountain runners from all over, Montrose area men and women signed up, trained up, and showed up before dawn in Ouray last Saturday to run from the starting line on Main Street of Ouray to the finish line in downtown Telluride.

First Montrose area finisher was Ryan Wisler, finishing in just over three hours. The first female Montrose finisher was Kim Bessler, who earned a spot on the podium for her age group, with a time of three hours and thirty-three minutes. Juan Carlos Bermudez was the next Montrose finisher. Following him was Heath Hibbard, who won first place in his age group again this year.

The next five local finishers were Cameron White, Jamie Saff, Will Cole, myself, and Ryan Cushenan.

Alex Ganskow, Sheena Wisler, Levi Brown, and Cindra London then crossed the finish line in



The last remnant of the original single-file miners' pack-trail is used by every participant to gain the final hundred feet of elevation to Imogene Pass. (John Unger/Special to the MDP)

the near perfect weather that had been the good fortune of this year's runners, organizers, and volunteers.

Speaking of volunteers, there were nearly two hundred of them. They staffed everything from the packet pickups in both Ouray and Telluride the night before, to the six aid stations on the 17 miles of the mountain course. Gratitude also goes to the communications and emergency services personnel.

More Montrose area runners came in: James Parmer, Emily Imus, Connor Hardy, and Doug Buss, making it in before the increasing heat of midday developed at the finish line.

Well before the end of the event, three more local runners completed it: Kevin Kipp, Aimee Quadri, and Amy Jensen. Much

later, the last one of 1,088 finishers made it across the line, in just over seven hours. 1,249 had begun the race at 7:30 in Ouray.

As happens every year, many runners who signed up in the 20-minute window at 6 a.m. on the first of June had been unable to be at the starting line. Recent COVID infections, summer injuries, and other conflicts kept away about 20% of the 1,546 who were registered.

Among both the faster and slower finishers that day, one comment was most widely reported. That is the observation that the loose rock underfoot on the rutted mining roads of the downhill side were exceptionally difficult to run on.

No surprise here, as the run registration forms repeatedly point out that "this is an extremely diffi-

cult race for well-prepared athletes." Many of the experienced Imogene Pass runners from previous years and decades reported having been hoping for some rain the day before the event.

That is because a prior rain can provide moisture that acts as a binder and stabilizer for the loose dirt, naturally occurring gravel, and even larger stones on those steep, historic mining roads that are 99% of the course. When those roads have no moisture in them, that gravel and those stones become ball-bearings underfoot.

Therefore, unless having significant experience with running on such surfaces, a runner is at increased risk for falls and injuries unless they greatly decrease their speed. Previous experience can produce better eye-to-foot



John Unger crosses the finish line of the annual Imogene Pass run last week. (Bruce Grigsby/Special to the MDP)

coordination and allow surprisingly fast running on those downhills.

The upper 4 of the 7 miles of downhill road through the ghost town of Tombay have almost no level spots of even the size of a footprint. It is extremely mentally fatiguing to be quickly, constantly, making several judgments on foot placement every second.

To pass another runner on such a convoluted surface requires even more complicated combinations of depth perception, limb coordination, and control of acceleration.

Most of the thousand runners in this race spend an uninterrupted hour or two running downhill, after having ascended the five thousand feet of elevation gain up to the Pass on their own two legs. It is quite remarkable and certainly praiseworthy that prior months of training keep the number of injuries from falls very, very low, given these conditions.

Minimizing potential leg cramps that often occur with dehydration is another skill that one learns in such a multi-hour event at high altitude in somewhat austere conditions such as these. Knowing how much liquid an individual needs to consume at each of the six aid stations is somewhat of an art and a skill to be acquired over time.

All of the above challenges combine to create the experience that drew participants from 35 U.S. states and six foreign countries.

Plus, the views from the race course are spectacular, as most of us around here know already.

John T. Unger is a Diplomate of the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians, and in 2022 achieved the credential of Fellow of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine. He appreciates all of the work that race organizers and volunteers put forth. Your feedback and ideas for future columns are welcomed at [www.sportsdocunger.com](http://www.sportsdocunger.com).

Don't run afoul of the Lacey Act



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Imagine you have a wonderful neighbor, whom we will call Bob. Bob is an avid hunter and fisherman, who travels everywhere in search of game. While Bob is in North Dakota on a walleye fishing trip, you,

being a good neighbor, have agreed to water Bob's lawn and pick up his mail.

When good neighbor Bob returns home, he is happy with you for taking care of his yard and collecting his mail. Bob gives you several packages of frozen walleye filets he caught in North Dakota on his trip, as a thank-you gift. You head home with the filets under your arm, all the while saying what a great guy neighbor Bob is.

Three weeks later, after you have just finished eating one of the packag-

es of walleye filets from neighbor Bob, there is a knock on the door. You open the door to find two distinguished officers from the United States Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

It is from these officers you learn that neighbor Bob fished for, and caught walleye in North Dakota, while the season was closed. Bob violated North Dakota law doing this. When neighbor Bob brought those walleyes back to Colorado, he crossed state lines, breaking a federal law. When

Bob gave you some of those walleyes, you broke federal law.

These two officers inform you that you are under arrest for violations of the Lacey Act. You tell the officers that you had no idea the walleye was caught illegally, but they inform you, "Ignorance of the law is no excuse," as they cuff you and load you hastily into the back of their Suburban, all the while the song Bad Boys is playing in the background.

See ACT page A13



Anyone who hunt, fishes, or otherwise enjoys the outdoors should be aware of the Lacey Act. (Mark Rackay/Special to the MDP)



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# Picking the best produce

Hopefully you're one of those experiencing a bountiful harvest from your garden and delicious fruit from your fruit trees! I think one of the true joys of summer is having a backyard garden or a few containers with some delicious homegrown produce. I love stepping out of my back door and munching on a few fresh picked pea pods or picking a handful of lettuce to have with dinner.

Sad to say, those days are coming to an end and we've reached the time of year when I want to get serious about harvesting and storing my produce before the garden freezes and winter becomes a reality.

I guess other people are feeling this way too because I've been asked by a few people, how do you know when your produce is ripe for the picking? If you're also wondering that, here are a few tips that may help you out.

A lot of knowing when to harvest for optimal flavor is just common sense, so don't make it harder than it is. The best time to harvest is in the morning right after the dew has dissipated. That's when your vegetables will have the highest water content. If that doesn't work for you, pick on a cloudy day for the same reason.

When harvesting produce, be careful not to break, nick or bruise it. The less you handle your produce, the longer it will



## Gardening A to Z

By Linda Corwine McIntosh

last in storage. Harvest only the highest quality vegetables for storing and preserving and don't allow them to sit in direct sun. Rotting produce will not keep and can spread disease to other stored vegetables.

Ask most gardeners and I'm sure they'll agree, the best way to tell when produce is ready for harvest is simple, taste test it! Even if it's not quite ready, you probably won't regret trying. This is good advice for apples, peaches, plums and grapes.

Did you notice I didn't mention pears? That's because tree ripened pears are not good eats. Pears left on trees become "gritty" or become brown and mushy on the inside. So pick your pears when they're slightly immature.They'll come around and ripen uniformly with a smoother flesh consistency when stored in a cool location away from direct sun.

Different varieties of apples reach their peak at different times, so watch for a change in

color on the side of the apple facing the inside of the tree. Even with most red apples, when the inside changes from green to a yellowish green or cream color, they are probably ready to harvest. As I said, you will probably want to give it the taste test.

When picking an apple, give it a slight twist while you gently pull it. You'll know that an apple is ripe and ready to pick when you can lift it off the tree without pulling hard or twisting it hard. Also, if the birds start eating your fruit, they might be telling you that it's time to harvest. When you have picked your apple, be sure to treat it gently. Don't drop it into the bucket or sack. Ripe apples bruise easily, and bruised apples may rot.

Plums turn color early, but are not ready to pick until they become softer. I tend to eat them a little on the green side though, because I just can't wait! If you need to pick them before they're at their prime, they will ripen in the house if you can resist eating them.

I hope you've been pulling up a few carrots, beets and onions, and have been enjoying them throughout the growing season.

Potatoes may be eaten any time during the growing season, but won't keep well until they're mature. Wait until the vines die down before you dig them for storage. If you didn't mound the soil up a bit over

your potatoes as they grew and the top of the potato is showing and has a green color, don't eat them.

Harvest your onions as soon as the tops fall over. This will prevent basal rot during storage. Simply remove the tops and store the onions in mesh bags until the necks have dried down. During this drying time, hang the bags outside in a protected area where they'll get good air circulation.

When the onions rustle while handling, they are ready to move into indoor, protected storage where it's cool and dry. All of these root crops can be dug with a pitchfork. Just be sure to dig far enough from the plant to ensure you're not piercing your produce.

Green peppers can be harvested when they appear to be full sized and firm, although harvesting a few to enjoy while you're waiting on them certainly can't hurt. If you want red peppers, let them stay on the vine longer. They'll eventually turn red if frost doesn't hit them.

I hope you haven't turned your back on your zucchini for a couple of days. They have a way of becoming the size of a houseboat almost overnight. If you do have a monster zucchini or two, don't worry. They're great to use for baking!

Green beans should be picked on a regular basis. Keep-

ing them picked will keep them producing. Harvesting them when they are a bit immature will give you a far better quality bean.

Look for a slight bulge in the bean where the seed is, but pick them before they become firm. If they get lumpy, they've gone too far. They should snap when bent. Cutting the bean from the plant rather than pulling them off is advised.

Herbs will taste better if you harvest them before they've gone to seed. Don't wash the leaves or aromatic oils will be lost. Dried herbs can be kept for two or three years but are best if you use them within a year. Any longer than this, and they won't be as tasty or as fragrant.

If you want to use your produce for canning, freezing, or dehydrating, you'll want it to be at its prime to ensure top quality. Over-ripe produce will not store as well and is not nearly as tasty.

I hope this information will help you enjoy the fruits of your labor. You might even enjoy it so much that you'll want to share with a neighbor, someone in need, or display it in a bowl on the counter for quick and easy munching.

Linda Corwine McIntosh is an ISA certified arborist, licensed pesticide applicator, Colorado advanced master gardener.

## ACT

FROM PAGE A12

Sound far-fetched and not likely to happen? Guess again. Scenarios like this, and many much more severe cases, play out regularly across the United States. From 2017 to 2019 there were 5,087 Lacey Act cases, and another 1,746 in 2020 according to a report from the USFWS.

The Lacey Act was signed into law in 1900, by President William McKinley. The act protects plants, fish, and animals by civilly and criminally penalizing those who violate its provisions. Under the Lacey Act, it is unlawful to import, export, sell, acquire or purchase fish, wildlife or plants that are taken, possessed, transported or sold in violation of U.S. or tribal law, or in violation of any state or foreign law.

The civil penalty for violating the Lacey Act can cost up to \$10,000 per offense, and the criminal penalty can reach \$20,000 plus five years in the slammer, per offense. The original purpose of the law was to stop the mass killing of wildlife that occurred during the market-hunting days. It made illegal the interstate shipment of illegally killed game, and the killing of birds for their feathers.

In 2008, the law was amended to include timber and plants. Gibson Guitars and Lumber Liquidators are two very publicized cases for illegal lumber. The fines against Lumber Liquidators were in excess of 13 million bucks, so this law is serious business.

Let's say, as an example, you and a buddy are in Kansas hunting white-tail deer. You drove your truck on the trip. Unbeknownst to you, your buddy does not have a valid hunting license in Kansas. Your buddy bags a whitetail deer and you and he drive it back to Colorado.

Once you clear the state line, it becomes a Lacey Act violation. Under the law, any vehicle used to transport that illegally

taken deer can be seized by federal officers and you can be charged along with your former buddy. The moral of the story is that it would be smart to make sure all of your hunting and fishing buddies are following the law, especially when they bring your truck on the trip.

You can also violate the Lacey Act by hunting with an unlicensed guide in a state that requires a guide to be licensed. In Colorado, technically guides do not need to be licensed for hunting and fishing trips, but unlicensed guides must be employed or contracted by a duly licensed Colorado outfitter. All outfitters in Colorado must be licensed if they are providing outfitting services on land they do not personally own.

As I stated earlier, ignorance of the law is no excuse and cannot be used as a defense. If you hunt with an unlicensed outfitter, and harvest game or fish, and take it across state lines, federal officers could be knocking at your door. Check the laws of any state you plan on hunting or fishing in. If the state requires an outfitter to be licensed, ask your guide to provide a copy for your files.

The same deal applies if you pay the licensed outfitter, but you don't have a valid hunting license on your person. That alone will get you in trouble because you are exchanging money to shoot wild game illegally. If you score an animal and transport it across state lines, it will be called Count 2 in the criminal complaint.

Party hunting and fishing used to be a big thing, but thanks to law enforcement, it does not happen with the regularity it used to. Say you and three other buddies are hunting bull elk and all four of you have valid licenses. This means each of you can legally take and tag one elk each.

If one of your buddies shoots two bulls and puts someone else's tag on one of them he shot, then transports the animal back to their home state, it becomes a Lacey Act violation, in ad-

dition to the Colorado laws that were broken. That party hunting can really stack up the charges.

If everybody played by the rules, we would not need things like the Lacey Act, but unfortunately, not everyone sees it that

way. It is up to you to protect yourself and ask the proper questions. In the case of neighbor Bob, it would have been proper for you to look a gift horse in the mouth.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose

Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for several saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world

in search of adventure and serves as a director and public information officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org



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