

ed; To Relay Years Eve & Day

A startling sports event is scheduled for the entire Lake Tahoe region commencing at 11:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 31. This important athletic endeavor will be a four man relay race to be run non-stop completely around Lake Tahoe, a distance approximating 75 to 80 miles.

Harvey's Wagon Wheel Saloon and Gambling Hall situated on Highway 50 at Stateline will be the official sponsor of this grueling relay marathon, and Nevada's only world champion, Moe Smith of Carson City, the world's light-heavyweight wrestling champion, will be the official starter and timekeeper.

The relay marathon will encompass two states, Nevada and California, and due to the unusual starting time at the end of 1958, will be run in two different calendar years, 1958 and 1959. In addition it will be run off in two different days, Wednesday and Thursday, and will take an estimated 11 hours over all of continuous running.

The race will positively be held regardless of snow, rain, cold or ice.

Here is the story briefly of how this all came about:

Two outstanding marathon distance runners, Jack Marden and Jerry Laird of San Jose, Calif., came to Wagon Wheel public relations man Lew Hardy on Dec. 14, seeking a sponsor in their desire to be the "first" to engage in a marathon relay race around high altitude Lake Tahoe. Hardy and Wagon Wheel owner Harvey Gross put their stamp of approval on the monumental athletic event, and all important details have been worked out as follows:

Starting time—11:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 31.

Starting line — Highway 50, in front of Harvey's Wagon Wheel, Stateline, Nev. (South Shore of Lake Tahoe).

Race route — From Harvey's Wagon Wheel to Zephyr Cove, Cave Rock, Glenbrook, Crystal Bay, Tahoe Vista, Carnelian Bay, Tahoe City, Homewood, Meeks Bay, Emerald Bay, Camp Richardson, Al Tahoe, Bijou and back to the Wagon Wheel at Stateline in that order.

The race will be conducted as follows: All four marathon racers

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MARATHON

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will start the race at the scheduled time and will continue running together for the first 15 minutes in order to set the pace. After 15 minutes have elapsed, one man will continue on alone while the other three men will follow in an automobile. It is estimated that each man will run for an hour before he is relieved by a rested runner riding in the car. During the hours of darkness the racer will run in the headlight beam of the car bearing the other three racers. The race will be run non-stop and the runner in action must not stop until the man relieving him has the baton. In case a marathoner becomes tired or lame before his hour of continuous running has elapsed, he will signal for his relief man to take over. The baton must be in forward motion at all times and absolutely no stops will be allowed until the man taking over is in full running stride.

Food and drink consisting of roast beef, green salad (no dressing), jello, orange juice and hot tea will be eaten by the racers while riding in the relief auto.

It is believed that this marathon relay will establish a pioneer record for other relay contestants to "shoot at" and nationwide interest and attention will no doubt focus on the Lake Tahoe marathons as the result of the pioneering of the four young men who will establish the initial record on New Year's Eve and the first day of the new year.

The current weather is cool and mild at Lake Tahoe and a little snow is on the peaks. Roadside conditions are good on Highways 50, 28 and 89 on which this tough race is to function. The extreme altitude may handicap the four runners somewhat, but they have been training for months in anticipation of this difficult feat.

Here is a rundown on the four men who will "pick 'em up and lay 'em down" in Lake Tahoe's pioneer relay marathon:

JACK MARDEN — 24 years old. Graduate of College of Pacific at Stockton. Now living at San Jose. Holds the world's record for 10 mile relay. Voted most valuable track star for COP in 1957. Has run the measured mile in 4:14.0. Winner of many other outstanding marathon and cross country races.

JERRY LAIRD — 22 years old. Native of Corpus Christi, Texas. Now attending San Jose City College. Competed on Texas cross country championship team in 1955. Chosen to represent U. S. Marine Corps in 1957 Boston Marathon, but didn't compete in Boston due to red tape at Washington, D. C. Has covered three miles in 15:22. Presently running for Santa Clara Youth Village, Santa Clara, Calif. Plans on attending and competing for University of Texas.

FRANK WULFTANGE—22 years old. Sophomore in accounting at San Jose State College. Has two years cross country experience and one year of track. In 1958 he galloped the half-mile in 1:58.0 and one mile in 4:25.3. Won a mile race at Redwood City, Calif., as early as 1953.

LES DABRITZ — 24 years old. Hometown, Sacramento. Graduate

of College of Pacific, where he was a two year letterman in track. Now with the San Francisco Olympic Club track team. Northern California AAU walking champion for 1958; took eighth place in national AAU walking championships at Bakersfield last June; has covered well over 100 miles in track and cross country races during 1958.

This imposing array of track and cross country runners will arrive at South Shore Lake Tahoe at noon on Tuesday, Dec. 30, and will be billeted at El Ru Motel.

The Wagon Wheel will award sweaters and trophies emblematic of the Lake Tahoe pioneer relay marathon race.

Marathon Racers Tour Tahoe Circuit On New Year's in Just Over 8 Hours

The Lake Tahoe pioneer relay marathon, race has been entered in the record books. This outstanding athletic feat was accomplished for the first time under most unusual and colorful circumstances.

Four top notch California collegiate cross-country runners, Lee Dabritz, Jerry Laird, Jack Marden and Frank Wulftange, comprised the first team to make the high altitude gallop around beautiful Lake Tahoe, situated in the center of "America's All Year Playground".

Here in detail, is how this grueling race was conducted from start to finish... All four of the well conditioned racers lined up for the start amid a huge New Year's Eve crowd in front of Harvey's Wagon Wheel, on highway 50, at Stateline Nevada, and at 11:32:15 P.M. Dec. 31, 1958, they "were off" with shouts of "good luck" and "you'll never make it" ringing in their ears.

After fifteen minutes of fast pacing, three of the racers boarded a Wagon Wheel courtesy bus and Les Dabritz of Stockton carried on alone. As the New Year arrived Dabritz was "giving it everything" at Zephyr Heights.

Several news photographers were awaiting Dabritz and the two car caravan from the sponsoring Wagon Wheel, when they entered Cave Rock tunnel at 12:24 A.M. of the New Year.

Frank Wulftange a very strong competitor from San Jose State College took the baton from Dabritz at 12:28 A.M. and entered highway 28 at the Carson-City-North Lake Tahoe Y at 1:05 A.M.

Jerry Laird the littlest runner of the group (he hails from Corpus Christi, Texas) relieved Wulftange at 1:27 A.M. and tore another 8 mile chunk out of the long run before handing the baton to Jack Marden at 2:26 A.M. near Incline Beach.

into Tahoe Valley (the race was now back on highway 50) before Jerry Laird went into action at 7:54 A.M. The four men were now approximately 4 miles from the race finish line at Harvey's Wagon Wheel and they were functioning mostly on nerve and a strong desire to "get it over with".

Marden replaced Laird after Laird had put in a four minute burst of speed and when the group arrived at the "two miles to go" marker they all joined the smooth running Marden and covered the remaining distance in good time.

The finish of the race came of-

ficially at 8:19:20 A.M. on Jan. 1, 1959 and a good crowd of some three hundred supporters, press and radio were on hand to greet the fatigued marathoners.

A most remarkable time and an initial time record was set when the four youthful athletes covered the 74 5/8 miles of mountainous pavement in only 8 hours-47 minutes-05 seconds.

Wagon Wheel owner Harvey Gross was lavish in his praise of this athletic "first" and the four veteran track men were in turn very pleased with the excellent treatment and supervision accorded them by the Wagon Wheel's staff assigned to the Lake Tahoe race.

No race is complete without statistics and the pioneer marathon race around Lake Tahoe has unique

statistics aplenty... (1) It started in 1958 and ended in 1959 (2) It started on Wednesday and ended on Thursday (3) It was run in two states (Nevada and California) and the state lines were crossed twice in the course of the race (4) Most of the 74 5/8 miles was covered at night although the weather was mild and ample moonlight shown for several hours (5) Much of the race was conducted at altitude in excess of 7000 feet, which makes it in all probability the highest marathon race ever run in the world (6) An average running speed of 8:49.48 miles per hour was attained by only four men participating over the varying course.

It is the fervent hope of everyone connected with the 1958-59 Lake Tahoe marathon that some other four member marathon team will

challenge and attempt to better the pioneer record set by the Wagon Wheel's wonderful group.



FRANK WULFTANGE, San Jose, "eats up" mileage near the Glenbrook turnoff. Each runner was relieved after about one hour of running on the long course.

Marden, an elongated and dedicated type of athlete crossed the California-Nevada line on Tahoe's north shore at 2:54 A.M. and a considerable amount of California real estate passed in the darkness before he turned the running chores over to Les Dabritz at 3:24 A.M.

At this time a bit of comical pathos entered the race when a pair of deputy sheriffs from Placer county, California stopped everybody except the runner in action and demanded an explanation of "what are you people doing out here at this hour?" Race trainer and supervisor Ted Walker gave a hurried description of what was taking place and with the admonition to quit shanting at the racers the caravan was allowed to proceed and be quiet by the minions of the law.

Now all of the runners had completed their first contributions and Les Dabritz was deep into his second grind when he entered highway 89 at Tahoe City at 4:13 A.M.

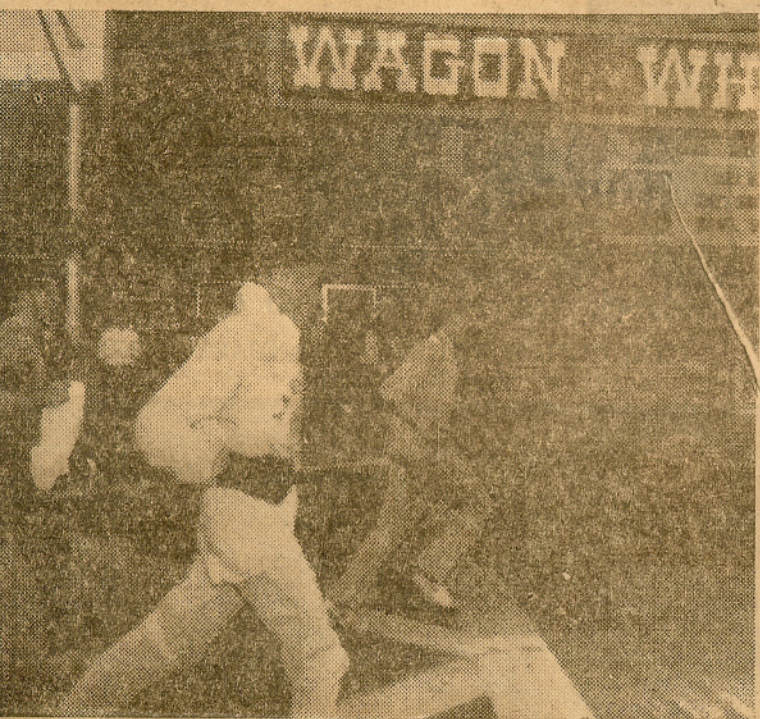
Wulftange grabbed the baton from Dabritz at 4:26 A.M. and a lot of the North Shore's snow covered terrain passed before Jerry Laird replaced Wulftange at 5:26 A.M.

The long grind was now starting to tell and a very tired little Laird surrendered the baton to Jack Marden and mountainous running at 6:14 A.M.

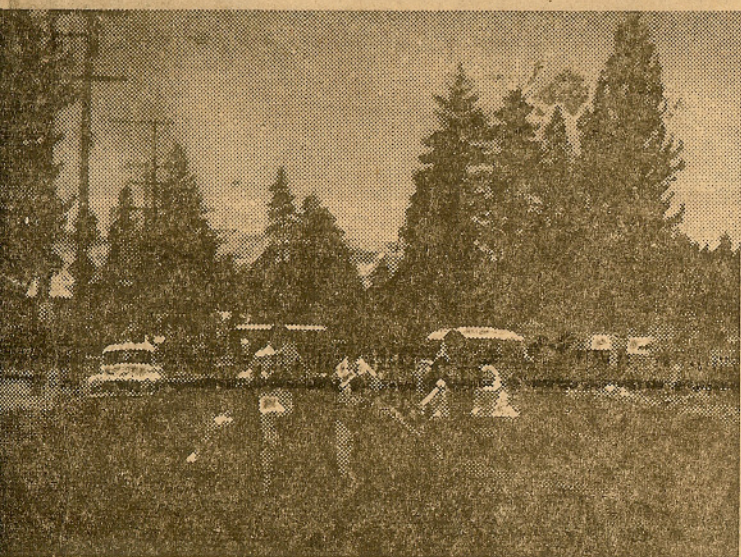
The race was now going in daylight and for the first time since the race began, the men could take a long glance ahead, something they hadn't been able to do while running in the headlight beams of Harvey's courtesy bus during the past darkness.

An interesting sidelight was the fine meals of roast beef, green salad, jello, hot tea and orange juice that was served periodically aboard the Wagon Wheel courtesy bus bearing the three resting racers. The Wagon Wheel courtesy busses have gained great favor in their year round service of providing transportation to the Wagon Wheel for guests of the many fine motels lining Lake Tahoe's south shore.

Les Dabritz started his third "heat" when he relieved Marden on the Emerald grade at 7:10 A.M. and he maintained a killing pace before being replaced by Wulftange at Camp Richardson at 7:30 A.M. Wulftange carried the load well



"IT'S ALL OVER" at 8:19:20 in the morning of the New Year as the dedicated Lake Tahoe marathon record setters cross the finish line in front of Harvey's Wagon Wheel. Official elapsed time was 8 hours, 47 minutes, 5 seconds to encircle beautiful Lake Tahoe.



THE LONG JOURNEY is nearing the end as the marathoners come up Highway 50 near Stateline with Harvey's Wagon Wheel vehicles affording a protective rear cover as was the case all through the long night.



FORMER College of the Pacific track great Jack Marden proved to be a sensational type of "iron man" and reeled off the mileage with reckless abandon. It's now daylight and the powerful Marden is "headin' home" along Lake Tahoe's south shore.

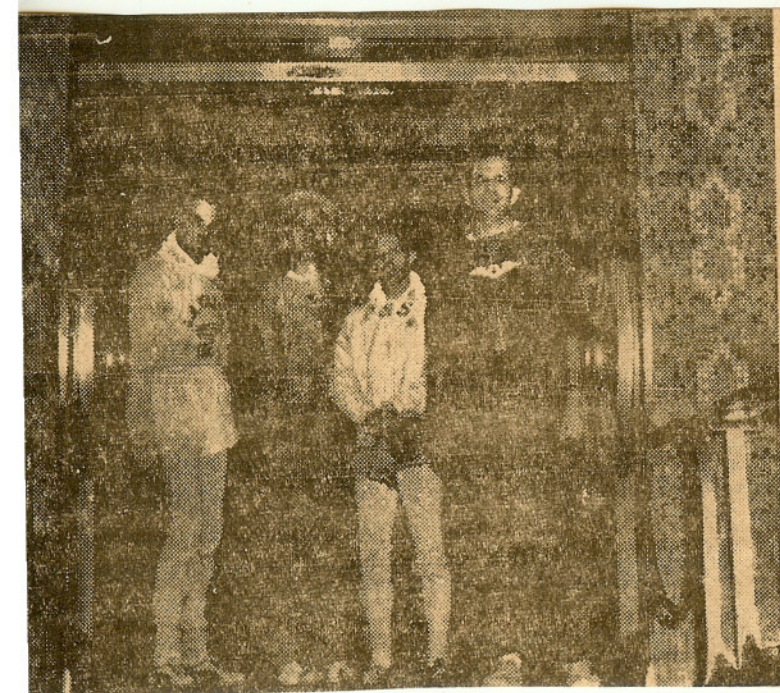
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HERE ARE THE FOUR Lake Tahoe marathon runners lined up for the start of the 74 $\frac{3}{8}$ mile jaunt round the lake. On the mark left to right are collegiate track stars Jack Marden, Frank Wulftange, Les Dabritz and Jerry Laird. KOWL radio man John Murphy and official timer Moe Smith (white overcoat) are having a "last minute" visit before the start of the history making race at 11:30 p.m. New Year's Eve. Harvey's Wagon Wheel sponsored and officiated this high altitude marathon relay contest and the handy courtesy bus shown at the left side of the photo was used to haul relief runners and hot food that was served periodically throughout the tough grind.



EXTREME FATIGUE is mirrored on the faces of four tremendous athletes as they pause on their "walk" to the showers. Left to right, Frank Wulftange, Jack Marden, Jerry Laird and Les Dabritz who contributed unselfishly in writing another page of Lake Tahoe's athletic history. Many firsts are attached to the initial mara-

thon race completely around Lake Tahoe because it functioned in two different years, 1958-59, started on Wednesday and finished Thursday, most of the 74 $\frac{3}{8}$ mile course was covered in darkness, the race encompassed two states, California and Nevada and the statelines were crossed two times—the highest altitude race ever run in the United States and in all probability the highest in the world, but for certain the most unique & unusual.

Thurs. Jan. 8, 1938

Dear Mr. Nelson,

I thought I would drop you a letter telling you about an interesting race that took place on New Years Eve. A relay of four men. Jack Marden graduate of C.O.P. now running for Santa Clara Youth Village, Frank Wulltange student at San Jose State, runs for Youth Village during the summer, Les Darbrity graduate of C.O.P. runs for San Francisco Olympic Club, and myself Jerry Laird attending San Jose City College. run for Youth Village planning on attending Texas Univ. next year. All of us with the exception of Les are training under Mihaly Jglov.

We ran a relay around Lake Tahoe a total distance of 73 miles. We covered the distance in 8 hr 47 min and 5 sec. We felt it was a pretty good time considering the weather and the altitude in which it was run, at times we were close to 7,000 feet. We believe this to be the highest relay in the world. We ~~figured~~ figured you would come ^{more} close to knowing than any one else. The temperature dropped down to a low of 18° degrees.

We were sponsored by the Wagon Wheel and we believe this would be a great race for marathoners. Its a great course, plenty of hills and downgrades. They are trying to build this race, make it an annual thing or maybe even during the summer which is a better part of the year to run in that vicinity. It seems like there are never enough races for the long distance runners. We feel that this can grow being that there has been an established time to shoot at. Some runners have already mentioned of getting a team together and running against our time later on in the year.

We thought this might be interesting enough to print and possibly get something started in this area. I believe it has good possibilities. Thank you for your time. Sincerely Yours, Jerry D. Laird

Thursday, January 15, 1959

Dear Bert,

I believe the best man to get in touch with is Mr. Ted Walker. He is an assistant publicity director, but knows more about sports than anyone else there. The only address you will need is his name; Wagon Wheel, Stateline Nevada. That address will get to him. They didn't get in touch with us about the run, we went up and talked to them and they thought it was a good deal. They said they were interested in supporting something like this but didn't know how to go about it. I know they would like to build this race ~~particularly~~ particularly. As for the expenses, we got food and housing.

We didn't run against anyone, strictly time. We started at 11:32 Wed night Dec. 31 and ran right into the New Year and finished at 8:17, Thurs morning. There were four of us and we carried the baton at one hour intervals and then handed off to the next guy. While one guy was running the other three were in a truck following him. Each man averaging 8 miles an hour after each man had run two hours we split the remaining distance up to 20 minutes apiece, being as it was only a short way and one man wouldn't have to run a third hour. I believe in the last letter I told you off the temperature and the terrain. I don't know if it's needed but I'll give it again. The temperature dropped to the coldest of 18° and was 22° when we finished. The complete distance around the lake is 73 miles. In a couple of places the terrain is very hilly. The altitude from 5 to 7,000 ft mostly around 6,200 to 6,400 ft.

I guess that is about it. I hope you can get something going. Thanks you for your time.

Sincerely Yours,
Jerry R. Laird