



THE HARD WAY

BY ERIC RYDER MORGAN



Eric Senseman charging through the rain toward a third-place finish.
[© Melissa Ruse/SweetM Images]



When I got on the Black Canyon 100K website the day before the race, I was just planning to review the course profile and just generally get mentally ready for the race. What I discovered was that the race course was being changed due to heavy rains and resulting high waters in the Agua Fria river. My spam filter had blocked the notification sent a couple of days earlier.

The original course was a point-to-point race with a net elevation loss of almost 2,000 feet. The new course would be an out-and-back with almost twice the elevation gain. The good news was that it would still be accepted by Western States as a qualifier. But given the rain and additional elevation gain, I became more worried about making the 17-hour Western States qualifying time that I had failed to make last year on an easier, dry course.

There seemed to be few no-shows despite the rain that was coming down steadily when the race began. After the first couple of miles of roads, we turned onto a trail that was already so muddy that parts of it were barely runnable. Remarkably, the only real grumblings I heard all day were just concerns about the damage that we might be doing to the trail in such conditions. The runner's good spirits were a real credit to the improvised planning by the organizers, volunteers and runners.

One nice thing about the alternative course was getting to see the race leaders as they headed inbound. As they began to filter back past me, the rain had stopped which revealed some spectacular views of clouds and the surrounding hills.

It was completely dark before I got to the Hidden Treasure aid station (inbound) at mile 49. The pause from running started me shivering and it took a half-mile or so out of the aid station, pushing a little harder than usual, before that stopped. The trail conditions were fine all the way back to Antelope Mesa. At the next aid station, however I began shivering badly and it was only the knowledge that I was well within reach of making a sub-17-hour finish (and a WS qualifier) that got me back onto the trail.

ABOVE: Women's winner Nicole Kalogeropoulos powers down the trail with pacer Zach Bitter in tow. [Melissa Ruse/SweetM Images]

BELOW: Katie Piehl (front) and Tamra Fisher on the muddy trails during the 60k race. [Melissa Ruse/SweetM Images]

OPPOSITE: Alex Nichols focused on every step leading him to the win. [Melissa Ruse/SweetM Images]





The last five miles were miserably slow through shoe-sucking mud and ankle deep puddles that didn't allow me to keep moving fast enough to stop shivering. It was a relief to get to the final two miles of road, and an even bigger relief to get to the finish line under 17 hours and into the warmth of the high school.

Alex Nichols of Colorado Springs and Elov Olsson of Sweden earned their Golden Tickets to Western States by finishing first and second. Their sub-eight-hour times were made extra impressive given the muddy conditions for significant portions of the course. On the women's side, 2016 Leadville champ Clare Gallagher of Boulder came second to Nicole Kalogeropoulos of Dallas to punch their two tickets.

The entire event, and the elite race in particular, is documented nicely in a video posted by Aravaipa Running and produced by Steep Life Media. *Golden Tickets – The Hard Way* is available on YouTube.

As impressive as those elite finishing times were, I was most impressed by the twenty-plus runners who finished after 17 hours. Many of them must have known at Antelope Mesa that they weren't going to make a Western States qualifying time. Given the conditions, they showed some real grit to push through to the finish. They may not have gotten a Golden Ticket, but they definitely got a Black Canyon 100K finish the hard way. 🐾

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Black Canyon Trail

Mayer, AZ // February 18

4.3* // 100k & 60k

Elevation gain/loss: 100k - 7,000 feet/9,000 feet; 60k - 4,500 feet/4,700 feet | Point to point on the non-motorized Black Canyon Trail (a National Recreation Trail) featuring a mixture of single track trail, jeep roads and pieces of an old stagecoach route.

100K

| | | |
|----|-------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Alex Nichols, 31, CO | 7:55:31 |
| 2 | Elov Olsson, 27, CO | 7:58:09 |
| 3 | Eric Senseman, 27, CO | 8:05:11 |
| 4 | Charlie Ware, 31, AZ | 8:47:06 |
| 5 | John Fitzgerald, 29, CO | 9:07:24 |
| 6 | Paul Riley, 35, TX | 9:14:00 |
| 7 | Tim Freriks, 26, AZ | 9:29:14 |
| 8 | Nicole Kalogeropoulos, 34, TX | 9:30:16 |
| 9 | Anthony Kunkel, 24, CO | 9:35:01 |
| 10 | Clare Gallagher, 25, CO | 9:41:32 |
| 11 | Ailsa MacDonald, 36, AB | 9:47:48 |
| 12 | Alex Petrosky, 31, AB | 9:48:16 |
| 13 | Peter Dawson, 37, CA | 10:10:44 |
| 14 | Robert Peterson, 36, CA | 10:14:07 |
| 15 | Veronica Rudolphi, 35, AZ | 10:15:00 |
| 16 | Scott Hollister, 32, CA | 10:34:35 |
| 17 | Mark Bain, 40, OH | 10:34:52 |
| 18 | Chris McGraw, 38, AK | 10:36:25 |
| 19 | Sean O'Connor, 37, NJ | 10:43:04 |
| 20 | Austin Horn, 19, AZ | 10:43:10 |
| 21 | Cory Linfield, 29, CO | 10:44:49 |
| 22 | Kent Green, 30, AZ | 10:54:30 |
| 23 | Joe Owen, 45, AZ | 10:59:06 |
| 24 | Ryan Montgomery, 22, UT | 11:01:06 |
| 25 | Bill Dittman, 29, AZ | 11:01:52 |
| 26 | Harland Peelle, 42, AZ | 11:02:12 |
| 27 | Kyle Curtin, 30, CO | 11:04:18 |
| 28 | Jerome Jourdon, 43, AZ | 11:07:02 |
| 29 | Sam Johnson, 22, MN | 11:07:23 |
| 30 | Buck Blankenship, 35, AZ | 11:15:56 |
| 31 | Jesse Alexander, 50, AZ | 11:35:19 |
| 32 | Annie Weiss, 32, WI | 11:36:30 |
| 33 | Luzia, 35, WI | 11:37:43 |
| 34 | Jeffrey Urbanski, 31, CA | 11:38:45 |
| 35 | Anthony Lee, 23, WA | 11:44:44 |
| 36 | JonathanLee Fields, 31, CA | 11:46:21 |
| 37 | Adela Sait, 44, AZ | 11:47:42 |
| 38 | Clifton Trujillo, 33, AZ | 11:50:24 |
| 39 | Chad Bowen, 33, OH | 12:06:08 |
| 40 | Amanda Morgenstern, 28, CO | 12:08:33 |
| 41 | Drew Adams, 29, ID | 12:11:10 |
| 42 | Frank Morris, 35, WA | 12:11:13 |
| 43 | Bryan Jennings, 44, NC | 12:19:10 |
| 44 | Sandra Carpenter, 44, CO | 12:20:22 |
| 45 | Rachel Kelley, 36, NC | 12:24:45 |
| 46 | Matt Jacobson, 31, AZ | 12:34:05 |
| 47 | Lucas Tyler, 35, AZ | 12:41:14 |
| 48 | Fred Thompson, 43, MT | 12:42:48 |
| 49 | Ryan Koch, 29, AZ | 12:43:21 |
| 50 | Kert St John, 44, WA | 12:44:53 |
| 51 | Adam Newberry, 32, NC | 12:45:14 |
| 52 | Johanna Blanchard, 32, OR | 12:48:22 |
| 53 | Timothy Lupfer, 36, MN | 12:49:47 |
| 54 | Joe Blanchard, 35, OR | 12:51:07 |
| 55 | Chris Otrok, 46, MO | 12:55:29 |
| 56 | Sean Wildhaber, 36, MT | 12:59:15 |
| 57 | Jennifer Worth, 37, OR | 13:00:42 |
| 58 | Traci Falbo, 45, IN | 13:02:38 |
| 59 | Shiva Sankalp, 30, MO | 13:02:42 |
| 60 | Paul Nelson, 40, OR | 13:04:17 |
| 61 | Nicholas Laughton, 39, NV | 13:05:07 |
| 62 | Matthew Adrian, 35, CA | 13:07:30 |
| 63 | E.R. Nelson, 41, UT | 13:07:35 |
| 64 | Matt Jasper, 35, AZ | 13:14:47 |
| 65 | Nick Doelman, 38, WA | 13:14:49 |
| 66 | Jeff Hemperley, 50, AZ | 13:16:01 |
| 67 | Christopher Errecart, 41, CA | 13:16:04 |
| 68 | Brian Smith, 51, PA | 13:16:09 |
| 69 | Joshua Eddy, 35, NV | 13:17:44 |
| 70 | Eric Batchelor, 31, CA | 13:18:23 |
| 71 | Margaret Tides, 30, CA | 13:18:37 |
| 72 | Alan Smith, 52, WA | 13:20:57 |
| 73 | Zac Wilson, 38, GA | 13:20:59 |
| 74 | Alberto Garcia, 37, MN | 13:21:45 |
| 75 | Tiffany Carson, 33, NY | 13:22:28 |
| 76 | Peter Livingstone, 52, NM | 13:24:15 |
| 77 | Susan Kramer, 51, AZ | 13:25:48 |
| 78 | Brad Person, 52, AZ | 13:25:52 |
| 79 | Benjamin Ewers, 47, CA | 13:26:31 |
| 80 | Michael Shoup, 43, CA | 13:26:34 |
| 81 | Derek Sibley, 45, SK | 13:27:00 |
| 82 | Chris McElveny, 44, NM | 13:27:25 |

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| 83 | Edward Bylotas, 30, AZ | 13:28:48 |
| 84 | Brandi Garcia, 31, WA | 13:28:53 |
| 85 | Dave Houts, 53, CA | 13:35:09 |
| 86 | Angie Hodge, 37, NE | 13:37:41 |
| 87 | Stefan Eady, 42, GA | 13:41:54 |
| 88 | Luanne Park, 56, CA | 13:43:16 |
| 89 | Zandy Mangold, 43, NY | 13:45:14 |
| 90 | Rosendo Caballero, 41, AZ | 13:45:20 |
| 91 | Ryan Thrower, 29, IN | 13:48:11 |
| 92 | Gerardo Ramirez, 44, TX | 13:49:21 |
| 93 | Steven Tally, 56, CA | 13:49:59 |
| 94 | Jeffrey Dodd, 54, CA | 14:01:00 |
| 95 | Van Patterson, 42, AZ | 14:01:08 |
| 96 | Luis Blanco, 33, AZ | 14:06:29 |
| 97 | Hillary McKinstry, 38, WA | 14:08:28 |
| 98 | Jeff Stafford, 59, TN | 14:08:32 |
| 99 | Doug Oatis, 36, CO | 14:09:19 |
| 100 | Steve Makela, 52, MN | 14:10:06 |
| 101 | Mark Cliggett, 55, WA | 14:10:08 |
| 102 | Gerardo Ramirez, 44, NM | 14:11:03 |
| 103 | Brad Poole, 47, NM | 14:14:30 |
| 104 | Michael Hooker, 48, CA | 14:15:34 |
| 105 | Justin Bowles, 34, AZ | 14:15:56 |
| 106 | Brian Seaman, 36, CA | 14:17:07 |
| 107 | Trent Early, 28, TX | 14:17:57 |
| 108 | Tara Warren, 42, UT | 14:18:16 |
| 109 | Pargol Lakkan, 35, BC | 14:18:59 |
| 110 | Julius Dreflick, 50, AZ | 14:19:53 |
| 111 | Brigitte Schiess, 49, AZ | 14:20:24 |
| 112 | Meghan Slavin, 31, AZ | 14:20:53 |
| 113 | Nicole Ederle, 46, TX | 14:23:00 |
| 114 | Gerardo Duran, 37, NV | 14:23:58 |
| 115 | Emily Wijas, 28, IL | 14:24:15 |
| 116 | Carmen Lambert, 47, AB | 14:27:19 |
| 117 | Martin Lambert, 61, AB | 14:27:20 |
| 118 | Chad Johnson, 42, AZ | 14:28:21 |
| 119 | Rachel Dockendorf, 34, AZ | 14:28:32 |
| 120 | Chris Wolf, 36, AZ | 14:29:08 |
| 121 | Robert Lawrence, 31, MI | 14:30:30 |
| 122 | Violeta Jimenez, 31, GA | 14:32:57 |
| 123 | Andrew Featherstone, 45, WI | 14:33:10 |
| 124 | Chris Petterson, 35, CA | 14:34:06 |
| 125 | Terri Pfeil, 50, CO | 14:35:39 |
| 126 | Rachel Reilly, 34, CA | 14:37:54 |
| 127 | Scott Stromberg, 33, NM | 14:38:13 |
| 128 | Neil Blake, 51, NM | 14:38:22 |
| 129 | Dave Ashton, 46, CA | 14:38:34 |
| 130 | Nick Kaminski, 44, TX | 14:38:36 |
| 131 | Adrian Korosec, 46, AZ | 14:40:51 |
| 132 | Allison Pieja, 35, CA | 14:41:37 |
| 133 | Adam Tremblay, 40, NB | 14:41:53 |
| 134 | Dave Hope, 52, CA | 14:42:26 |
| 135 | Michael Bunda, 36, MN | 14:43:25 |
| 136 | Brian Pilgrim, 50, NM | 14:51:28 |
| 137 | John Onate, 43, CA | 14:53:41 |
| 138 | Connor Curley, 29, CO | 14:54:49 |
| 139 | Kevin Cox, 46, TN | 14:59:30 |
| 140 | Bill Hill, 37, WY | 15:00:43 |
| 141 | Anthony Carano, 43, AZ | 15:01:19 |
| 142 | Megan Galope, 43, AZ | 15:04:35 |
| 143 | Jean Sabater, 33, NV | 15:04:36 |
| 144 | Brenan Oliver, 34, CA | 15:05:30 |
| 145 | John Music, 32, NV | 15:05:39 |
| 146 | Jesse Peragine, 27, CO | 15:05:46 |
| 147 | Megan Sweeney, 36, CO | 15:06:33 |
| 148 | Trevor Davenport, 44, AZ | 15:07:04 |
| 149 | Allen Scarff, 38, NM | 15:08:49 |
| 150 | Michael Mayberry, 50, AZ | 15:12:40 |
| 151 | Joshua Uriarte, 34, AZ | 15:13:46 |
| 152 | Angela Gohlke, 42, AZ | 15:16:50 |
| 153 | Eileen Avery, 43, MO | 15:19:44 |
| 154 | Raymond Mullenax, 50, ID | 15:19:49 |
| 155 | Adam Christensen, 39, UT | 15:23:14 |
| 156 | Julieann Storm, 50, CA | 15:27:53 |
| 157 | Ronald Bastien, 52, QC | 15:28:16 |
| 158 | Lisa Kravetz, 54, AZ | 15:30:23 |
| 159 | Eric Kough, 41, MD | 15:35:47 |
| 160 | Jennifer Gustafson, 45, AZ | 15:35:54 |
| 161 | Jill Aho, 47, AK | 15:36:04 |
| 162 | Jacob Wyatt, 47, CO | 15:36:54 |
| 163 | Noel Kingston, 51, AZ | 15:38:20 |
| 164 | Kamran Talatoff, 62, AZ | 15:38:56 |
| 165 | Rick Wilson, 52, TN | 15:38:58 |
| 166 | Shawn Goertz, 44, MO | 15:40:45 |
| 167 | Timothy Beck, 39, SD | 15:43:21 |
| 168 | Casey Osmonovich, 48, AZ | 15:43:29 |
| 169 | Mark Spencer, 42, NV | 15:46:43 |
| 170 | Chris Agen, 45, CA | 15:46:47 |
| 171 | Matthew Della Bitta, 49, CT | 15:46:53 |
| 172 | Dean Hansen, 61, AZ | 15:48:03 |
| 173 | Wesley Smith, 56, FL | 15:48:54 |
| 174 | John Oster, 52, CO | 15:49:23 |
| 175 | Mike Melchioris, 56, AZ | 15:49:42 |
| 176 | Keith Straw, 62, PA | 15:49:48 |

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| 177 | Moghliis Shankool, 48, MI | 15:49:51 |
| 178 | Jen Laughlin, 41, AZ | 15:49:52 |
| 179 | Brad Addink, 46, WI | 15:51:28 |
| 180 | Nick Deguchi, 51, CA | 15:52:29 |
| 181 | Christopher Forgette, 42, GA | 15:52:36 |
| 182 | Jeff Porter, 44, FL | 15:56:15 |
| 183 | Jeffrey Koh, 57, OR | 15:56:19 |
| 184 | Eric Gras, 36, CA | 15:56:55 |
| 185 | Danelle Soto, 32, AZ | 15:58:47 |
| 186 | John Hampton, 50, CA | 16:00:11 |
| 187 | Colleen Cashman, 38, CA | 16:00:30 |
| 188 | Neeraj Egbert, 44, KY | 16:00:34 |
| 189 | Robert Garcia, 28, NV | 16:01:05 |
| 190 | Jenna Powers, 39, WA | 16:01:12 |
| 191 | Chris Valdez, 29, NV | 16:01:15 |
| 192 | Mark Nassi, 49, CA | 16:08:35 |
| 193 | Paul Deuchar, 41, AZ | 16:09:12 |
| 194 | Cheryl Bryll, 49, TN | 16:09:53 |
| 195 | Eric Morgan, 51, CO | 16:12:05 |
| 196 | Ken Lewis, 53, CA | 16:12:40 |
| 197 | Kirk Wilson, 39, AZ | 16:15:28 |
| 198 | Dennene Huntley, 39, AB | 16:15:33 |
| 199 | Ben Paxton, 37, AZ | 16:18:47 |
| 200 | Josh Blanchette, 32, AZ | 16:20:26 |
| 201 | Steve Day, 40, BC | 16:20:34 |
| 202 | Adam Smith, 42, AZ | 16:21:03 |
| 203 | Steve Deluna, 44, AZ | 16:23:32 |
| 204 | Joshua Motter, 42, AZ | 16:23:41 |
| 205 | Amy Novotny, 35, AZ | 16:24:38 |
| 206 | Derek Wallen, 32, PA | 16:25:22 |
| 207 | Rose Asquith, 57, CA | 16:25:28 |
| 208 | Alex Danner, 59, CA | 16:25:30 |
| 209 | Steven Grossman, 56, NM | 16:25:33 |
| 210 | Stu Clark, 47, TN | 16:27:31 |
| 211 | Danny Speros, 40, AZ | 16:27:54 |
| 212 | Tim Hackett, 50, AZ | 16:33:21 |
| 213 | Jim Ryan, 55, WA | 16:33:26 |
| 214 | Melinda Newton, 32, CA | 16:37:41 |
| 215 | Elizabeth Lee, 36, IL | 16:37:49 |
| 216 | Shelley Cook, 42, IL | 16:37:52 |
| 217 | Steven Crawford, 44, AZ | 16:39:57 |
| 218 | Cameron Balma, 42, CA | 16:43:52 |
| 219 | Michael Dino, 34, TX | 16:45:58 |
| 220 | Carson Galloway, 26, IA | 16:48:34 |
| 221 | Dave Elsbender, 62, OR | 16:48:35 |
| 222 | Jeff Jones, 54, AZ | 16:49:02 |
| 223 | Begered Ghazi, 41, CA | 16:49:46 |
| 224 | Satpal Dalal, 42, CA | 16:49:54 |
| 225 | Chris Worden, 39, AZ | 16:54:06 |
| 226 | Felix Ortega, 53, NM | 16:55:39 |
| 227 | Jeremy Mayberry, 46, AZ | 16:58:21 |
| 228 | Mindy Przer, 37, AZ | 17:04:27 |
| 229 | Mona Gutierrez, 55, CA | 17:25:46 |
| 230 | Scott Harlan, 48, CA | 17:27:13 |
| 231 | Sean Nakamura, 38, CA | 17:36:24 |
| 232 | Lynette Gurule, 41, NM | 17:40:49 |
| 233 | Matthew Watts, 60, CO | 18:04:36 |
| 234 | Dan Sifton, 46, SK | 18:14:04 |
| 235 | John Maroushek, 50, AZ | 18:14:06 |
| 236 | Kate Woodard, 29, AZ | 18:17:07 |
| 237 | Kody Cunningham, 30, WA | 18:17:09 |
| 238 | Richard Schlenk, 49, OH | 18:33:05 |
| 239 | Jo Bauswein, 29, AZ | 19:00:14 |
| 240 | Olga Bolan, 35, AZ | 19:00:16 |
| 241 | Eileen Chiang, 44, MI | 19:00:19 |
| 242 | Tatasha Collins, 44, WA | 19:00:25 |
| 243 | Todd Trimble, 45, AZ | 19:04:06 |
| 244 | Jonathan Nez, 41, AZ | 19:11:39 |
| 245 | Gamez, 44, AZ | 19:20:43 |
| 246 | April Tossie, 40, AZ | 19:20:55 |
| 247 | Elise Harrington, 61, CO | 19:23:45 |

60K

| | | |
|----|----------------------------|---------|
| 1 | Cody Reed, 25, AZ | 4:41:30 |
| 2 | Makai Clemons, 20, CO | 5:26:11 |
| 3 | Holden Rennaker, 25, CO | 5:48:23 |
| 4 | Zac Marion, 31, UT | 5:55:59 |
| 5 | Hannes Gehring, 31, CO | 5:59:11 |
| 6 | Travis Swaim, 28, AZ | 6:00:44 |
| 7 | Amanda Basham, 27, UT | 6:03:44 |
| 8 | Sean Meissner, 43, CO | 6:06:33 |
| 9 | Jec Ballou, 39, CA | 6:07:45 |
| 10 | Lauren Hendrix, 32, MO | 6:35:52 |
| 11 | Brian Zonailo, 43, BC | 6:35:54 |
| 12 | Jeffery Hayes, 58, PA | 6:50:00 |
| 13 | Raymond Pierce, 45, AZ | 6:50:29 |
| 14 | Joe Labrie, 51, AZ | 6:57:35 |
| 15 | Timothy Stackhouse, 35, AZ | 7:02:44 |
| 16 | Miguel Moreno, 38, AZ | 7:04:25 |
| 17 | Amy Tice, 28, OR | 7:08:32 |
| 18 | Rainey Weaver, 51, AZ | 7:10:40 |
| 19 | Tony Russ, 32, NM | 7:14:23 |
| 20 | Amanda Rosenberg, 41, AZ | 7:17:20 |
| 21 | Shonda Gill, 22, AZ | 7:18:41 |

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|----|-------------------------------|---------|
| 22 | Christine Garves, 44, NM | 7:19:36 |
| 23 | Douglas Donovan, 46, NV | 7:21:28 |
| 24 | Alan Cordova, 33, CA | 7:26:49 |
| 25 | Jitka O'Farrell, 39, CO | 7:28:17 |
| 26 | Christopher Cavanaugh, 39, AZ | 7:30:14 |
| 27 | Dave Corsten, 48, CO | 7:31:50 |
| 28 | Jacqueline Carlin, 46, NV | 7:32:00 |
| 29 | Jeffrey Jordan, 54, IN | 7:33:41 |
| 30 | Ronda Sundermeier, 49, OR | 7:33:54 |
| 31 | Jess Mullen, 42, WA | 7:37:27 |
| 32 | Joshua Hanekamp, 22, UT | 7:38:02 |
| 33 | Kathy Mann, 46, WA | 7:38:43 |
| 34 | Bill Bergeman, 41, AZ | 7:48:25 |
| 35 | Keith Hanson, 44, CA | 7:49:42 |
| 36 | Jess McNeely, 47, AZ | 7:53:23 |
| 37 | Heather Ekstrom, 27, AZ | 7:58:12 |
| 38 | Carmen Enns, 31, AZ | 7:58:54 |
| 39 | Michael Miller, 54, AZ | 8:01:35 |
| 40 | Jonathan Stringer, 49, AZ | 8:15:09 |
| 41 | Caterina Senecal, 48, NV | 8:15:54 |
| 42 | Steve Sanchez, 46, AZ | 8:17:00 |
| 43 | Mark Dahlyb, 53, WA | 8:19:32 |
| 44 | Aaron Berger, 45, AZ | 8:25:44 |
| 45 | Darren Hooley, 43, AZ | 8:31:12 |
| 46 | Ruth Busienei, 39, AZ | 8:39:51 |
| 47 | Barth Zurbuchen, 62, WI | 8:41:24 |
| 48 | Jan Howard, 49, AZ | 8:41:36 |
| 49 | Katie Pielh, 33, AZ | 8:41:38 |
| 50 | Teressa Verstraet, 43, AZ | 8:43:00 |
| 51 | Patrick Votruba, 42, AZ | 8:48:02 |
| 52 | Gladys Rionda, 48, AZ | 8:48:38 |
| 53 | Jourdy Thro, 38, AZ | |