

# New finish, festival planned for AOR

From staff reports

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- Those runners completing the final leg of the 2nd Annual American Odyssey Relay (April 23 & 24, 2010) will still take in the spectacular sights of the nation's capital, but they'll be crossing the finish line in a new location that will feature a fun-filled festival for all event participants.

According to AOR Race Director Bob Fleshner, the upcoming race will end at the Southwest Waterfront in D.C. at or near 7th Street & Maine Avenue. The Finish Line Festival will include music, food and beverages and plenty of surface lot and street parking will be available.

"We have Mayor Fenty and his office to thank for finding us such a great spot for the finish line – and for facilitating all the agreements needed to make it a reality," said Fleshner.

"Our runners will now have a chance to celebrate their completion of the course in a fun and festive environment. It will give them a chance to meet members of the other teams and 'soak up' a little more of the camaraderie and friendly competition that makes this race such a memorable experience."

The event will once again consist of a picturesque and historic 200-mile race from Gettysburg to the Nation's Capital for 12-person teams from across the country. The course runs directly through the celebrated Antietam Battlefield and onto the C & O Canal, the Appalachian Trail and through Harpers Ferry before passing Riley's Lock and entering Great Falls Park in Potomac, Md. According to Fleshner, there will be some improvements that the runners

will appreciate, the most notable of which is larger and better marked transition areas to eliminate any confusion as to the course direction or the finish point of a leg.

The AOR will continue the tradition started at the inaugural event by holding the Odyssey Oasis, a mid-race festival in Boonsboro, Md., that provides runners with some much needed food and drink, showers and other amenities. This year's festival will be condensed and coordinated to improve access and transition areas, but it still represents a unique opportunity for participants to meet and interact with their own teammates (from the "other" van) and other runners.

Some of the notable and newsworthy teams already registered include:

\* "Team Dane," comprised of only one runner, extreme runner Dane Rauschenberg (52 marathons in 52 weeks) will be running the entire 200 miles himself!

\* An Ultra Team (only six runners instead of 12) named "Can I Get In The Van, No Ya Stink," features all "Marathon Maniac" members.

\* The Bucknell Alumni Fossils will be back to defend their title, having finished first in just 23 hours while some teams took up to 35 hours to complete the course.

\* D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty's team (Fleet Feet

AOAT) finished second overall and is scheduled to participate again.

\* Teams from more than a dozen states have already registered, including one from as far away as Redmond, Washington.

This year's AOR, with a capped field of 175 teams, is again expected to attract teams from most if not all of the 32 states that sent participants to the 2009 race. The percentage of teams with military tie-ins – either past or current – was close to 30% last year and is expected to increase for the 2010 event.

For more information, visit [www.americanodysseyrelay.com](http://www.americanodysseyrelay.com).



SUBMITTED PHOTOGRAPH

A team of Iraq veterans gather for a photo during last year's American Odyssey Relay race. The AOR will again go through Gettysburg as part of its 200-mile course.