

Relay race debuts in April

By Joe Slaninka
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The inaugural running of the American Odyssey Relay Race will take place this April 24-25, and will span across three states.

The 200-mile race will begin in Gettysburg, PA, will go through Montgomery County and will finish among the shadows of the monuments in Washington D.C.

The founder of the race, Bob Fleshner, is a running enthusiast and had a career change in recent years from the corporate world to a career in physical therapist.

"It's was the right time in my life," Fleshner said about his career change and founding the race. "I have run in many events like this, and I wanted to crate my own."

The race will consist of 150, 12-member teams that will encounter several covered bridges and streams in the early going before crossing the famous Mason-Dixon Line into Maryland. In the town of Boonsboro, Maryland, runners will then experience a different kind of history-making event-the first-ever Odyssey Oasis, a mid-race festival offering runners some much needed food & drink, showers and other amenities. This unique gathering spot will give all participants the rare opportunity to interact with their "other" teammates (those riding in the other van), along with all of the runners.

"This race is a great opportunity for individuals to accomplish there goals as runners," Fleshner said. "It is also an opportunity for people to get together and experience the camaraderie of a team."

The course continues directly through the celebrated Antietam Bat-

tlefield and then onto the C & O Canal, the Appalachian Trail and through Harpers Ferry in West Virginia before passing Riley's Lock and entering Great Falls Park in Potomac, Md. Runners will then head toward the historic home stretch, pointing to the finish of a lifetime amidst many of the landmarks that manifest the magnificence of our nation's capital. Teams will wrap up their multi-state adventure against the beautiful backdrop of the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials and the Kennedy Center, with the finish line located adjacent to the FDR Memorial in the shadows of the Washington Monument.

"We've spent close to a year constructing a course that will be incredibly scenic, safe and simple to follow," said Fleshner. "Whether you've done other relays or this will be your first, you'll absolutely love running where the locals run."

Prizes will be awarded to the top finishers as well as to those with the best team name, best costumes and best van decorations. The course was designed from starting point to finish line with the help of experienced area runners, thus creating the opportunity to "run where the locals run."

Teams are encouraged to sign up immediately to ensure they secure one of the 150 spots. Any group that registers (www.americanodysseyrelay.com) prior to the "Early Registration" deadline of July 31, 2008 will receive one-of-a-kind inaugural American Odyssey Relay long-sleeve t-shirts for each of their runners.

For further info, please contact AOR Race Director Bob Fleshner at bob@americanodysseyrelay.com.