



Aussie Catherine Cruse putting a sticker with her race number on everything in her backpack. Runners have to pack it in, and pack it out, leaving no trace. Photo by Dennis Brunner.

**G2G**

Continued from Page 1

this important document is checked off the runners to-do list.

"We have six volunteer doctors who will be with the support entourage during the race," explained Dr. Josh Mularella, Boston, MA. As a return volunteer, he said he loved the Grand to Grand, and enjoyed helping the runners. He said primary injuries were dehydration, pulled calfs muscle tears, and definitely blisters.

Next, the runners took their backpacks to the check stations. All of their seven-day backpack contents had to be pulled out, weighed and examined for conformity to the race requirements. (All items must be numbered with specific runner numbers to ascertain a carry in/carry out tracking system.) After this, they had to repack the stuffed backpacks.

"I'm excited, but nervous," said Catherine Cruse, Australia, who was attending her first Grand to Grand. While an alumni of ultra marathons (she did

one in the Sahara, for instance), Cruse said this type of running was a passion of hers. She said her husband encourages her to use her holidays (vacations) to go to a spa and relax. "I have four children, it's an escape, it's what I like to do."

Edgar Palacios (originally of Columbia, more recently Florida where he manages a recycling plant), said he has participated in other ultra-marathons, but it's the first time at Grand to Grand. He praised the racing community in general saying, "they're wonderful, chill people. By running, we are seeking a better life, and races like this put me personally out of my comfort zone."

Kilt-clad Derek Stewart of Scotland had participated in an ultra-marathon in the Sahara, but was excited to be in southern Utah. He raises funds for his charity of a support home named Maggie's House for young cancer patients in Scotland. "I've been involved in fund-raising for them for the past nine years."

But Stewart was already enjoying southern Utah! He cited that everyone was so friendly, even the UPS guy greeted him and then

remembered his name later in the day when he was walking down the street. "My wife is going to meet me at the finish line, and we're going to take a little holiday afterward. This town is fantastic!"

Jim Raffone, New Jersey, said this was his second Grand to Grand. At his first one last year, the 240 pound man (heavy for a long distance runner), started vomiting violently on the third day and was ordered

by doctors to stop. He said he was returning to the race with friends in tow to run with him in support of his son.

"The reason I run is for my son, James Anthony Raffone. He's eight and suffers from the degenerative Ducheyne Muscular Disease. I run for disease awareness and to raise funds for research into a cure."

Raffone, with his great personality and message, does not only run, but has also taken his passion for finding a cure on the road, speaking at 184 motivational seminars in 39 states. Part of his signature is doing push-ups for the cause. The muscular man has encouraged benefit push-ups most everywhere, so he was especially thrilled last year when other Grand to Grand runners heard of his cause and all did supportive push-ups for James (Raffone's son) at the race's starting line. "It really touched my heart that they did that for him. This year my son is going to be waiting for me at the finish line!"

If all goes as planned the runners, after their extraordinary seven-day, 170-mile workout and adventure, will cross the finish line on Saturday, September 30 just south of Bryce Canyon National Park. There will be a final awards dinner at Angel's Landing at Best Friends that night.



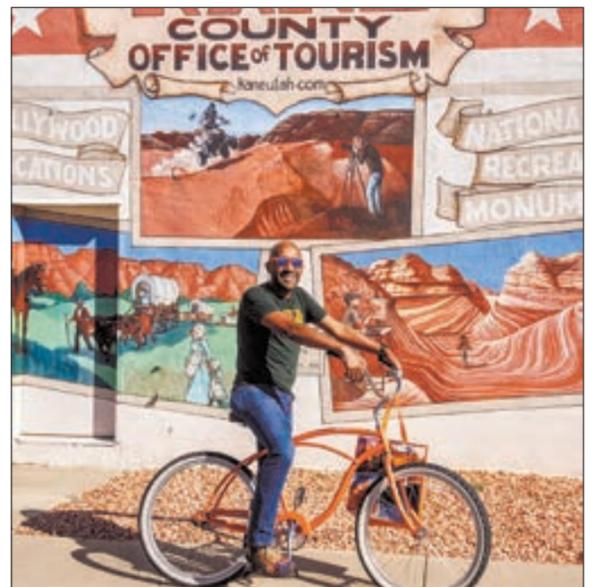
Derek Stewart of Scotland runs to raise money for his favorite charity, Maggie's House. No, he's not wearing the kilt in the race. Photo by Dennis Brunner.



Kanab's Tara Timpson checks out some hot spots at Checkpoint 4. Blisters are a common and painful occurrence. Photo courtesy Grand to Grand Ultra.



Front runner at end of Stage 1: 37-year-old Erik Clavery from France. Photo courtesy Grand to Grand Ultra.



To pick up his "runner goodie bag," Edgar Palacios arrived at the Kane County Visitor Center riding a bike provided by the Canyon Lodge - a hit with many of the G2G entrants. Photo courtesy Grand to Grand Ultra.

**Meet runner Edgar Palacios**

By Susana Young

At age 39, Edgar Palacios, who hails from Colombia, South America, had an awakening. He was 100 pounds overweight. He had high blood pressure and high cholesterol and was having to take medication for those conditions. He thought surely he did not want to live the rest of his life in this condition. "I felt like I was just living, without regard for what was best for me. I was not satisfied with my life."

In 2012, he read a book called *Finding Ultra*, by Rich Roll, and became inspired to try a new lifestyle, exercising and eating no meat, no dairy, no processed food. He began to lose weight, and though still packing 30 extra pounds,

he did his first Ironman in 2013. He was ecstatic, and knew he would continue to challenge himself.

He now does at least one major physical event a year. "One week a year is just for me ... to do something just for myself." He has a bucket list of events he wants to participate in. This year it is G2G.

Palacios's big smile and happiness reflect his joy in life and in his lifestyle. "When I put myself in an uncomfortable position, I learned that once you go through the pain, on the other side is happiness!" An added bonus of events like G2G, he says, is "I get to know so many wonderful people and make new friends."



Three eager friends from Japan are all smiles as they get ready to start Day 1: Naosuke Nishioka, Kohei Hata and Hironori Uranaka. Photo courtesy Grand to Grand Ultra.

**The 7th Annual Carmel Mountain Show & Shine**  
**September 30th @ Mount Carmel Junction**

**9am to 3pm**  
**Vendors**  
**Music by JC Hackett**