

Aggie races against extremes

Runner moves past fast

By TERESA ROACH

Thomas Abbot is a 23-year-old runner who claims to be the first Aggie to finish the La Luz Trail Run in Albuquerque, N.M.

The La Luz Trail Run, a race often requiring about two and one-half hours to run, is sponsored by Albuquerque's Police Athletic League each August.

The seven and one-half mile run extends from the bottom to the top of the Sandia Mountains, a 3,700-foot gain in altitude. The racers begin at the Juan Tabo picnic area and finish at the 10,678-foot Sandia Crest.

As the trail winds higher and higher, the air becomes thinner, and most runners are forced to slow down.

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The runners race against high altitudes, time, heat, and the mountain, rather than each other.

"I never ran over three miles in my life before I found out about the race," said Abbot.

In preparing for the race, Abbot ran two miles each morning, noon and night the first two weeks. He doubled this the third week. During the fourth week, he ran four miles each morning. Each evening he ran up the Corps of Engineer's Dam slope in Coleman, Tex., more for the conditioning of running uphill than for distance.

"I hated the workouts, but I had to prove to myself that I could do anything once I made up my mind to do it," said the recreation and parks graduate student from Austin, Tex.

During the race, the combination of heat and thin air almost caused Abbot to quit the race several times within the last two and one-half miles.

"I felt the worst pain I had ever felt in my life, but I kept telling myself, 'will. I couldn't think negatively,'" he said.

Of about 270 men and women, 200 finished the race. Abbot came in after two hours and 20 minutes, two-thirds of the way behind the winner.

Abbot said he felt as though he

"could do anything after I finished."

Abbot, the heaviest runner, weighed 210 pounds before the race and weighed 198 pounds afterwards.

He said he ran the race mostly because it was a challenge, but also because "I wanted to prove an Aggie could do it."

"There are very few things I've enjoyed in life. I take everything as a challenge," he said.

Besides training, Abbot's advice to future runners is "to pray a lot."



Battalion photo by Dick Wells

La Luz runner Tom Abbott advises runners to "pray a lot." This summer, Abbott completed the seven and one-half mile run through the mountains of New Mexico.

Scientists seek moon mines

United Press International

LA JOLLA, Calif. — Experts say space mining is feasible by the end of this century.

A 30-member scientific panel asked by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to study "near-Earth resources" talked of fabricating satellite solar power stations out of material taken from the moon and asteroids.

Dr. James Arnold of the University of California, chairman of the group, said the concept is that metals, chemicals and gases from the moon and asteroids could be readily used to build solar power stations in high Earth orbit, in addition to the space colonies that would be needed to support the station builders and maintenance people.

Scientists already have a pretty good idea of the materials available from the moon. The moon can provide aluminum, iron, and titanium, and silicious lunar soil would yield substances to make fiberglass and inorganic adhesives.

But the researchers are anxious for more detailed data to come from an unmanned geochemical mapping satellite that NASA hopes to be able to rocket into a polar orbit around the moon within a few years.

Arnold said the panel was not yet ready to say when resources from space could be mined.

"Much depends on many things we do not understand," he said. But it's generally agreed that "a significant level of production of useful material can occur, say by the year 2000."

It may take as long as 15 years to develop the facts needed.

Much less is known about the Earth-approaching asteroids — the first Earth-crossing object was discovered in 1932, Arnold said, was promptly lost and not seen a gain until 1973. "Therefore we have much to do before we will be in a position to evaluate the importance of these bodies in a program of space utilization."

Some asteroids are almost solid metallic iron and nickel. One good-sized asteroid, Arnold said, could

represent about 20 years' production of steel in the United States. Scientists think the asteroids have a wider variety of useful materials than the surface of the moon.

The panel suggested that NASA embark on a program of near-earth resource evaluation.

Thomas Young, director of planetary programs for NASA, was present and said "Our response is this proposal is something that seems directly in line with our mission. We are extremely interested. It is a mission we expect to properly support."

As first steps in evaluating asteroid mining potential, the panel recommended larger telescopes and more intensive study of the asteroids. Space missions to recover some asteroids for detailed analysis should begin in the mid-1980s.

"These missions add a new dimension in planning for NASA," the panel said.

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