

How can I recap 100 marathons? Possibly by answering some of the questions I heard on Saturday at Newport, OR and from my friend Jack.

I am sorry this is going to be a long story. I stopped many times to get over the emotions that flooded back as I relived all these foot strides over 2620 miles.

I have so many people to thank for helping me get this far: Firstly, Mom and Dad, it makes me sad to think of them, but motivates me to keep going; my sister Beth, who died so young; Lucy who has survived cancer, never complains and laughs whenever I mention how difficult 26.2 is; my son Heath who is my inspiration and source of great pride; the Striders who collectively celebrate every finish with me when I get home, occasionally run a marathon with me and are forced to relive every marathon on Saturday morning runs; Ron Knecht from Oregon who has become my best friend on the marathon roads we have conquered together, Dick Vogt from Nebraska who is way more extreme than I and seems to be at most of the marathons I run, drives to all of them and in a low key way, makes the marathons fun; Harry Otto who just happened to join the Striders when I was President and we have been co-officers for many years since; Duncan Stewart who is an extremely talented Strider runner that tolerates a runner like me that measures quantity over quality, but he is shooting for a Maniac like "50 by 50"; Sonia Soprenuk who convinced me to join the Striders at the first Big D marathon in 2004, she is the kindest person, always smiling and forever making every other Strider think they are capable of anything; Anita Sanders who has accomplished marathons and Ironman triathlons, mentors new runners and has the ability to make every run fun and even came to see me when I had knee surgery; Paul Zaroba who was my Flower Mound trails running buddy for years before the Striders and we ran and talked trash for hours on Saturday mornings; Jack Garrity from Cincinnati, a friend of Lucy's that has become my friend and gotten me to run the Flying Pig twice and was my biggest cheerleader at my 50th State in Appleton Wisconsin, his home state. There are many many many more that have influenced, encouraged, marveled, questioned and wondered what I was doing. I enjoy seeing that puzzled, "how can he do it" look, more than anything! I even heard a Strider say she (no names mentioned here) wanted my body parts when I died, then back peddled for several minutes that "not all parts were needed"!



Here is my self interview:

What was your favorite marathon? Boston 2004, because I had to work hard to qualify for it and Lucy and Heath were there to celebrate with me. And the mutual stories I have with Striders, 50 Staters and Maniacs that endured the high temperatures that day. I



see more jackets from 2004 than any other year. All it takes is a head nod and “It sure was hot” comment.

What was the most difficult? Chicago 2007. It was a trifecta of heat, jet lag from Bangalore, India and a severe case of Ghandi’s revenge. I walked all of mile 7 after I let Anita go on. Sonia made me sign up for this race months in advance before Bangalore was even on my calendar!



What was the easiest? Oklahoma City 2008. I managed to lose all the Striders at the start so I ran in search of Marina, Lori, Melissa, Mark, Tracy and ML. After learning I had passed Marina I walked some, stopped and watched at miles 8 and 11 where Melissa and Lori ran by. I joined back in and stayed with them, walked backwards when they made pit stops and still managed a 4:00:15 finish. Which is a great time for me. Duncan wondered why I couldn’t find a way to shave off those 15 seconds. I could have, but it makes a better story this way!

Best hardware? See photo. Disney Goofy. 3 medals!

What was the most thrilling race? White Rock 2003 when I qualified for Boston. Lucy and Heath were on the course and Heath was watching my times so he knew it was going well and encouraged me. I finished in 3:29:31, 1 minute and 29 seconds to spare! That was the greatest feeling in my running career.

What was the most emotional race? Kentucky Derby 2007. My sister and dad had died a few months prior and my mom was in the hospital struggling for her life. That was all I could think of the whole marathon. I threw up

after that race.

Have you run a marathon in 50 states? Yes I have. That became my goal shortly after I met a 50 stater. I had run so many in Texas he said, “You know, there are marathons outside of Texas? After less than 5 years I finished of the W’s; Wyoming, West Virginia and then Appleton, WI as my 50th. Jack and Lucy were there to cheer and take photos and video. Jack and Lucy even got the local TV station to interview me at the finish. Which I was told by Tim Greenwald, an old childhood friend from Fort Madison, IA that we stayed with in nearby Oshkosh, appeared on the 10 o’clock news. Completing 50 states was my 2nd greatest running thrill.

What is my most favorite route? White Rock. I have run it 6 times and really enjoy remembering events of previous races. The first marathon when a 1 legged guy passed me at the railroad bridge, the Hooters water station, the Hash House beer station, the Dolly Parton hills and the long straight run down Swiss Avenue, the year I ran the entire way with Marina, the

hypothermic rain in 1986 and the 60+ year old grandma with gray hair that passed me at mile 20. I got over that, eventually.

What race do I remember the least about? Bristol, NH 2006. I don't remember anything, but the last 0.2 miles to the finish. Amazing. That was the last of 3 marathons in that month which may explain it all.

The most fun marathon? #100, Ron Knecht and I planned to run our 100th together at Newport, OR and we wore signs on our backs. Every runner made comments, congratulated us, said there was no way they would run that many, or Bob who was well passed 100 (an amazing 447), or Terry who had one more to catch us (#100 for him will be at Sequim, WA this week). We told stories and heard stories the whole way. The biggest contrast was the first timers who had no idea 100 was possible, even a first timer from Denton, TX, Doc Henry (who I heard announced at the finish and just had to go introduce myself).



Have you run a double (2 marathons on back to back days, like Saturday and then Sunday)? I can answer, "Yes, yes I have". 2 of those. Plural. Charlotte, NC and White Rock 2006 and Kenosha and La Crosse, WI just a few weeks ago.

Have you run Ultras? "Yes, yes I have". 2 of those. Plural. 50Ks at Rockledge Rumble 2007 (Grapevine Lake) and Cowtown 2008 with Harry and Sonia.

Loneliest? Crater Lake 2005. I was running down a highway and there was no one in front or behind me for miles. I was really afraid I had missed the turn and wondered where the highway would take me, but no way was I turning around. Eventually I did come to the turn-off and was so relieved to see a guy there to direct me. Whew!

Most extreme? Antarctica and Lucy was there to see it all. That was a trip of a lifetime that I will tell and re-tell to all my grandchildren. I can see it now, I will start with, "I remember the Antarctica marathon, the mud was 3 feet deep, it was -20 degrees F...a complete white out..." exaggerating more with each telling. And the grandchildren will say. "Oh, no grandpa, not Antarctica again!"



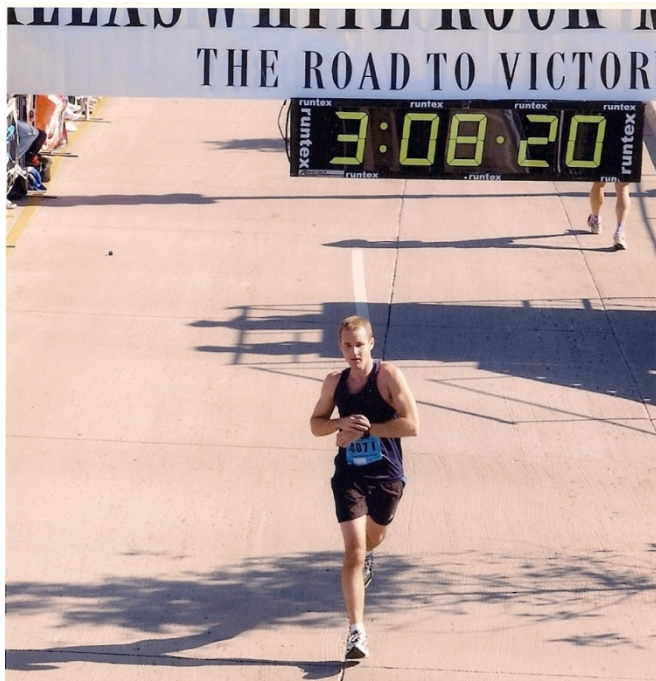
What about all those other marathons? I remember many details about these races and could go on and on. The water stops, the medals, the spectators, the costumes, the music and entertainment and the other runner's stories of goals, hardships, challenges and fun we had while suffering. I love it. Up hills, down hills, in the rain, in the snow, the wind chill, the heat, roots and rocks that tripped me, the crowds, the loneliness, the first timers, the weird runners (not me), the food, the lack of food, the fireworks, the fly-overs, the helicopters telling us to stop running, the leis, the orange Gatorade I hurled and avoid ever since and oddly, the pain spray sample I tried in Honolulu that nearly had me screaming in pain!

Who do I owe this all to? Lucy, who has been so supportive of such an extreme hobby. She inspires me, encourages me, celebrates my finishes from afar and gets really nervous if I don't call in right after crossing the finish line. She has been known to call my friends or Heath to check on my whereabouts. She attends some after she looks at the schedule and chooses certain destinations. Like Hawaii and Antarctica.

Why did I run my first marathon? I talked to a friend in college that had run a marathon and, though I liked to run, thought a marathon was inconceivable. Yet he had done it! It took me 9 more years to finally get most of the other sports out of my system (softball, soccer, bicycling, basketball...), then I purchased Jim Fixx's book and trained. I had huge doubts I would make it to the finish and had no one to train with. So I ran the streets and back roads of Double Oak, Bartonville and Copper Canyon by myself. White Rock 1986 was 42 degrees and raining as I lined up at the start at Dallas City Hall to "give her a whirl". Everything about it was new to me. There were no GU packs and I only drank water at the aid stations because that was all I ever drank in training. I finished in 3:41 with all my kids watching/freezing at the finish line. Unbelievable, I could run that far! I declared that I had "done that" and went back to all those other sports. It took me another 9 more years to run my second marathon.



How did the streak start? This is a long story. At age 19 Heath trained hard to run his first marathon at White Rock 2001. Heath was very fast and I told him before the race that if he could run a qualifying time I would take him to Boston in April 2002. Heath is very humble and said, "It's no big deal Dad, I just want to run this race." Lucy and I tracked him all around the course which I had already run twice before so I was already very familiar with it. About every 3-4 miles we were there to applaud him as he raced by. It wasn't long before I could see he had a great chance to beat 3:10:59, his qualifying time. We were there at the finish when he came around the corner at AA Center and crossed the finish line in 3:08. I was incredibly proud of him. I told him we could go to Boston, but he was very humble



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even in this incredible moment and said, “No big deal, he was just glad to qualify. So I told him to think about it and call me midweek. And sure enough he did and I think I was never more excited than when called to say, “I guess I would like to go to Boston!” Let’s go! I soaked in the whole experience in Boston, accompanying him to Hopkinton, watching him pass Newton Fire Station and then catching him as he raced to the finish up Hereford Street and around the corner on Boylston. It was while watching Heath that I decided I needed to run a marathon again. I started training and set White Rock in Dec 2002 as my next marathon. Even before the race I saw Houston had a marathon in January 2003 and I thought, “I wonder if I can run a marathon a month later?” So I signed up. I finished White Rock and saw Fort Worth had a race in February 2003 so I signed up. And that’s how it started and continued for the past 78 months and counting. Marathonguide.com is my most favorite “favorite”.

What is next? 7 continents, 4 to go, 13 Canadian provinces, 10 to go and my 200th marathon. 100 to go, so I will get started next week at the Sequim to Port Angeles Marathon on Jun 7th. I have already told many of you that when I told Lucy my next goal after finishing the 50 states was that I was going to run all the continents. She immediately said, “What’s next, planets? That was about the time Pluto was demoted so only 7 to go!

Thanks for reading and don’t hesitate to suggest a marathon. I’ll go anywhere for a marathon, you know it.

Maniac #94

