

## 50 was Nifty!

Hard to believe I am finally done with the quest that started so long ago. I doubt I would have ever come this far if it hadn't been for a couple of key players. When I first decided it was taking me too long to walk the sort of mileage I wanted to do and try running, I accidentally met a wonderful lady who was soon to become a close friend. It was 2005 while mindlessly running on the treadmill at the park district that Char Green, a personal trainer and runner extraordinaire herself, asked me if I would like to run with her club. I was thrilled to even be considered a runner especially coming from Char. I promptly joined the Parks Plus Running Club and soon met my future running partner, Annette Tomal, a local Wheaton College professor and no running slouch herself. She had run several Chicago Marathons already. Another member of our group was Scott Freer, together Scott and I made a little pact, if we completed the Great Western Half Marathon we would both sign up to run The Chicago Marathon in Oct of 2006. We trained well and enjoyed the half, went home that day entered the Chicago Marathon and I had one state and one marathon done. I had no idea there was a 50 States Club or a group called Marathon Maniacs or any of the great running clubs that exist near to me but I soon would. My first marathon was miserable, the weather was cold and awful and compounded with an injured hip I finally finished alongside my husband. We both looked at each other and thought this race has to be better or why do so many people do it, so we decided to try again. But why wait a year. We trained outside all winter and spring and ran Cleveland the following May together. I ran 30 minutes faster and really enjoyed the race and the trip, which included some local sightseeing. I continued to run with Annette Tomal and many of you to whom I send these annoying trip reports. After a couple more out of state marathons I found the Maniac group online and told Annette, she replied she already qualified but she would find me another marathon and together we would become Marathon Maniacs. That was 2008! 40 some marathons and states later I get to this race report. Thanks buddies I could never have gotten half this far without any of you!

### HONOLULU MARATHON DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup> 2010 STATE 50 MARATHON 56

Larry ran my first marathon, a big one with me so it seems reasonable to finish my last state a big one too with Larry. So one night this summer we both sat down at our laptops across the table from each other to look at which flights we could get with miles and which HI marathon sounded best. Kona was the week after Anchorage and while I had done many back to back weeks of marathons I was unwilling to cut my Alaska vacation short by even a couple of days to get HI checked off the list. Maui, which I heard is the Garden Island and gets high ratings for a HI marathon was too expensive to fly to so to Honolulu we would go. Our plans started off somewhat badly. While we both clicked and submitted away online with United Airlines, my flight costing a few bucks but strangely Larry's free flight with miles turned up costing over \$1400. Seems he had OK'ed the auto populated first class upgrade feature. Nice try, except I meanly made him contact the airline and get back in coach with me. We left Thursday December 16<sup>th</sup> so we could have a few days pre race to sightsee. I was thrilled to find out several good running pals would be in Honolulu too! I won't go into detail with what we saw but am putting in a must see/maybe skip list at the bottom of my race report for those who might be interested.

Honolulu clearly is a race for EVERYONE for a couple of reasons; the course does not close until the very last runner crosses the finish line. The last runner actually has their picture in the news the next morning. Also the majority of participants are Japanese. I have heard from many reliable sources the reason for this. One is that the marathon in Japan is a lottery and

the day results are announced all those who fail to gain entry into Japan immediately register for Honolulu, the other is to run a marathon in Japan the runner must qualify so the Japanese come to Honolulu. Whatever the reason, the race is run mostly by the Japanese, however they are a interesting and lovely group of people. Quiet spoken, so polite, addicted to some wonderful costume attire and such a tiny group of folks that I felt like an Amazon when in the elevator with them! Early Friday morning Larry and I drove over to the Expo. We splurged this time and got a Mustang Convertible! Park in the mall for free right across the street if possible. The Expo was pretty empty. Many of the vendor exhibits were in Japanese and catered specifically to the Japanese participants only. Very few samples of anything, but by far the biggest line of marathon related clothes and trinkets. We had decided ahead of time to buy some race shirts even though we would be getting a finishers shirt AFTER the race. There were shirts galore, jackets, vests, sweatshirts, hoodies, shorts, pants, duffle bags, backpacks, hats, visors, socks, towels, bottles, pin, pens, stickers, etc., etc. Ladies cut and men's cut. Many colors to choose from too. More than any of the big expos I have been to. Prices seemed about average too! Only one booth offered some really interesting food, some kind of sea asparagus, which was delicious!

A friend of mine from San Diego was in town too for his 29<sup>th</sup> consecutive Honolulu marathon and he had accepted a paper flier on the street earlier in the day advertising a little mom and pop kind of Italian place for a pre race dinner. He made reservations for a dozen of us and much to the surprise of all of us we were thrilled with the little place. It was exactly what we wanted small, inexpensive, pretty good food, BYOB but a corkage charge (seriously) and personal able. We were asleep by 8 pm and up at 3 am. We encountered several young hookers and lots of bar fights on our walk over to pickup Boise friend, Donna, her daughter and fellow Maniac Ed Loy, then we headed over to the Hilton Village (a massive compound where Liberty Lady Diana Burton wisely choose to stay), to meet San Diego friend John and several of his buddies. John had a secret approach to the start which we all appreciated as it eliminated the huge bottleneck logjam at the beginning of the race. With 20,000 plus runners/walkers the back of the pack tends to line up way to close to the front. Many walk 5 to 10 abreast and passing is next to impossible, couple that with the fact that several very young Japanese children compete too. I am talking 6 year olds here, full marathon too! Sorta like child abuse as only one really looked happy after mile 20! Some interesting things were noted in this marathon. There was a huge propensity for really outlandish costumes. A Roman gladiator complete with spear and minimal thong under his flowing cape. Many, many newlyweds in full wedding gear, long dresses, veil, top hats tails and even bouquets.



Too sweet!

Two guys in these great goose costumes where the neck was at least three feet tall ending with the head several feet above the crowd! Lots of Santas and other Christmas themed runners shared the course. Lots of cartoon characters too. The first couple of hours it was very warm and humid, fellow Maniac Martha C. from Vegas mentioned the humidity cleared

out once we left the city proper. I ran in a grass skirt and got several shout outs to “Hula Girl” yea sure!



It is 5 am and I am fueled by a huge Starbucks coffee!

The course was all paved and not the prettiest, we had some ocean views in Diamond Head and toward the end of the course in Maunaloa Bay. Water and Gatorade on ICE was fairly plentiful and distributed by very enthusiastic young volunteers. One gal in a neighborhood around mile 19 had trays of homemade brownies she was handing out, Delicious! Beats a GU any day. I did not see many folks with beer which lately has been sorta the norm in the races I have done. The finish was interesting; as we approached there were two announcers one in English, the other in Japanese. We were sent down a long chute to receive our cheesy shell beads. Larry and I looked at each other in disbelief; we spent how much to do this race and no medal!!!! He asked a few volunteers but they had no idea if there was a medal for each finisher. We had to keep walking, and we came upon the Spartan finisher’s food, one water, one apple and two dry cookies. Then we began to see signs in the distance for the Finisher’s tee shirts, the majority of the signs were in Japanese and many of the volunteers directing runners were Japanese speakers only. Finally at the tee shirt tent a sign announced medals. We were handed our shirts and a small plastic wrapped medal/key chain. Perhaps the shell necklaces broke easily and that was why the two pieces were separated. The volunteers most graciously exchanged my shirt for a smaller size, as they were all a men’s cut. We hung around the tee shirt tent for awhile hoping to see some familiar faces then headed back to soak in our hotel pool before heading to the beach for our first beach visit of the trip. The race finishes at the Zoo so staying close to the zoo (a block away at the Marriott made it simple to get back to our room).

Having never been to Honolulu, Hawaii, or any of the other islands we choose to add days before and after the race to our trip. We did some major sightseeing and hiking thanks to Larry and dear friend, Traveler and Mega Maniac though she has yet to join the club, Diana Burton aka Liberty Lady from NJ. I have traveled and run with Diana many times and she is the one who encourages me to see so many neat unusual things. For great trip reports you must check out her web [www.libertyladies.weebly.com](http://www.libertyladies.weebly.com). Her notes are extensive and her pictures are outstanding.

#### Must see

- Pearl Harbor of course try to see the USS Utah it is on Ford Island. Great history behind this ship also few get to see it.
- Punch Bowl
- North Shore - think surfing heaven big waves, cute shops and restaurants
- Bishop Museum

- Koko Head Crater great climb to the top just don't look down while crossing the open railroad tie bridge
- Saturday Swap Meet in Aloha Stadium near Pearl Harbor, if you want fun cheap souvenirs, fresh fruit, etc stop here
- Ala Moana Shopping Center, thanks to Diana and her tip to visit the Japanese department store and it's a Japanese food court. It was wonderful!
- Stairway to Heaven is now closed but you can sneak in before the guard arrives but you will have to hike with a flashlight if you do, tough hike
- Valley of the Temple with 900 year old replica of Byodo-In Temple outstanding, serene and beautiful
- Sandy Beach and Sunset Beach and Blowhole
- Many great micro brews available we tried them all
- Halona Cove "Here to Eternity" was filmed on this beach, small but pretty park next to Blow Hole and walk over to the Cove
- Eggs and Things for breakfast get there early or be prepared for an hour plus wait, sort of like Mothers in New Orleans Excellent Coffee
- Dukes (famous), food was okay but we had a very nice post race celebration there with friend John Backman and some new acquaintances made on the course!
- COCUNUT M & M's not available in many other places though did hear you can get them on Ebay or in Seattle from another Maniac Friend, bring some back for good buddies at home, I have hidden my stash from my kids!

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### **Maybe See**

- Any of the botanic gardens, while I will always go out of my way to see a garden I am not that interested in tropical plants so even though it was on our extensive to do list I skipped it each time
- Dole Plantation I thought it was just so so skip the train ride
- Manoa Falls Trail is a long rocky trail up to some not real exciting falls, go early to avoid the crowd as the viewing area was tiny, pick a dry day as the rocks can get very slippery and muddy
- Makau-u Lighthouse trail hard to find, long uphill paved trail to the lighthouse which is so far off it is not really worth it in my opinion
- International Market - a good couple of narrow long blocks filled with so-so stuff, the vendors are all over you, late at night I found it creepy! We did not buy anything, flea market a more fun option
- University of HI, only because one of our kids thinks he will be there as a full ride swimmer in 3 more years and we wanted to tease him with a Swim Team tee shirt, the book store did have some good souvenirs

**ALOHA AND THANKS FOR READING!**