



## **Huntington Beach Surf City Marathon Trip Notes**

### **January 31 – February 3, 2014**

On the way to Huntington Beach I was thinking this is absolutely silly and against my usual theme or mode of travel. I was only coming for three days. Many of the reasons I was coming to Huntington Beach did not pan out: Judy wasn't interested despite her family being in the area. Ellen in Santa Monica was farther away than I realized and she was busy on the political campaign. Visiting the Getty museum which I'm keen to do required a car rental with a drop off fee that was outrageous if not double the price of the air ticket. Huntington Gardens where I wanted to visit bears no relationship to Huntington Beach and in fact is about 50 minutes away. The host hotel was much more expensive than I anticipated plus only a suite was available. Parking at the hotel was something outrageous like New York City parking rates. On and on.

Yet I'm still pleased to visit Huntington Beach.

A number of other friends were still to be there and some including Sharon and her friends were at the same hotel. Gene DeFazio and Jim Simpson go every year. Then at the last Sharon and her friends canceled out of the hotel and decided to drive the hour and a half one way on both of Saturday and Sunday. I was to meet them either earlier in the day or at the expo.

This didn't go exactly as planned either. Sharon was a little farther away than she expected and then there was no parking causing her to do a long walk from the south and finally at around 3 o'clock they arrived. I had a long walk in between and was about 15 to 20 minutes north when they were on their way in.

When I met Sharon outside the expo at around 3pm we laughed a lot about the huge, huge and outrageous lines to get inside. I explained to her that yesterday it took three separate trips before I was willing to stand in line. I was willing to give up my shirt and my bib before I stood outside in the cold wind in a line that strung at least two blocks long. Then once inside the expo there was the feeling that it was going to eat you alive it was so jam-packed. Silly set ups with things like booths with giveaways all in one area. A "spin the wheel" game right in the middle of the worst of it. Much too much unused space.

Still I am glad I came to Huntington Beach.

So Sharon and her friend went inside and I stood outside waiting for what I expected to be at max ten minutes but turned into an hour and 15 minutes at which time I decided that they had gotten eaten alive. A call revealed that NOPE, they were either still shopping and or trying to settle a missing registration for one of their friends. They managed to get themselves out of the expo about three

minutes before closing time which was 5 o'clock. There was still no resolution about the missing registration.

I was shivering from the cold and my hips were very tired at having done all the walking and also the hour and a half standing. It was okay with me then that Sharon and her friend, despite feeling bad about it, preferred to go on home. I was glad I had not purchased the snacks and the wine for serving in my hotel suite.

Still I'm glad I came to Huntington Beach.

So I decided that I would give myself a very nice meal and a nice glass of wine. So I went to the good dining room at the Hilton where I am staying and looked at the menu and agreed that though it was pretty pricey that this is what I wanted to do for myself. But alas, there were no tables to be had. I argued thinking surely there was something available and I told them I was staying at the hotel and that I just presumed that they would make room for a hotel guest. No do.

It was cold but I had a couple extra layers of which I donned. I went back the same walk of about 15 minutes north which went faster because it was cold and windy so I moved faster myself. I returned to the same little taco hut I'd found yesterday. It is like a little hole in the wall and you walk up and order your meal and though there is a lot of selection it's all pretty simple. They bring the food to your table. Can you imagine a fish taco on a plate with black beans and brown rice and a good sauce and all that for under five dollars? This being Saturday night and this being the night I was going to give myself a big meal I doubled the number of tacos and added guacamole and a special slaw. All that for about nine dollars. Frankly I was pretty happy with my meal and I can't imagine being happier with the meal at the Hilton that might have added up to \$60 or \$70. The walk home with the surf sound beating a song and the lights glistening were magnificent. Another sit on the balcony charmed me to no end. Imagine coming from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean all in one day. Isn't that amazing? Isn't that lucky? Something as big a deal as going to the moon!

So I am glad I came to Huntington Beach.

Then I am double glad that I came to Huntington Beach because even though a lesser price room opened up I stayed with the suite. It has a wraparound balcony and all of the wall opens up to the balconies with a view of the ocean to both directions and looking almost immediately over the ocean as well as the start and finish line. Everything is super comfortable and very special in this room.

In the morning I am going to be triple glad to be in Huntington Beach because I can walk out of my hotel room at the exact moment when the starting gun goes off and there I am. Even better I am only doing a half marathon which will put me back in time where there's still some food left and the band will still be playing and the beer garden will still be open. I will have a big chunk of the day left which is quite different from full marathons consuming all of it.

Sharon and her two friends might come to my room prior to the start. They might come to my room after the marathon. But all these things I am learning not to hold my breath on and I understand life changes.

I'm just glad to be in Huntington Beach.

### **The Hotel**



I saw the sun rise. I saw the sun set. I dried my hair while sitting on the wrap-around balcony with the wind blowing cool and the sun burning hot. I watched the start before I went downstairs and then the finish; I watched and listened to the band as the marathoners were finishing.

From <http://www3.hilton.com/en/hotels/california/the-waterfront-beach-resort-a-hilton-hotel-HUBWHHF/about/index.html> - *Set in an ideal location, The Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel is situated on the picturesque coastline of Southern California and just a short drive from Disneyland® Resort. This Huntington Beach hotel is also convenient for several major California airports, including Los Angeles International (LAX), Long Beach (LGB), and John Wayne Orange County (SNA).*

*Watch the sun rise and set from your private balcony. All guest rooms are enhanced with modern 32-inch LCD flat screen televisions with DVD/CD connectivity, in-room refrigerator, wet bar, high-speed internet access and ergonomic desk chairs. Swim a few laps in the heated swimming pool overlooking the Pacific Ocean, surrounded by lush landscaping and a waterfall. Work out in a fitness center featuring the latest exercise equipment.*

*The resort's highly acclaimed Shades Restaurant & Bar offers an ever-changing menu dedicated to farm and market fresh seasonal produce, grains, seafood and meats. Shades PM is an exciting extension of Shades Restaurant with live music Friday and Saturday evenings. Sip a Blue Shades Mojito on Shades patio while gazing at the sunset beyond the fire ring.*

*KING BED STUDIO SUITE OCEANFRONT - Our Executive Suites are 550 square feet of luxurious coastal living. With wrap around balcony and spectacular ocean front views, this suite is ideal for those in need of a little more space or a couple indulging in a romantic retreat. In addition to a king size bed, this suite features a sofa bed, an open living and dining area, and two 40 inch LCD flat screen televisions. The suite is equipped with the Hilton Serenity Bed which features an allergen-free down comforter and pillows, elegantly striped 250 thread count sheets and duvet cover, plus a mattress set custom designed for added support and comfort.*

It was a delight but it was pricey. The next closest hotel is the Hyatt which was pricier. Just a few blocks away is a Best Western oceanfront that might be a good idea if saving money is an issue. I'm getting too old to worry about saving money. I've saved long enough.

### **The Marathon - [www.runsurfcity.com](http://www.runsurfcity.com)**

- Surf City Huntington Beach is rightly highly rated. Running all along the water always gives high ratings but this is no San Francisco or Rio or Big Sur water course. There are stretches that are highly boring and where the major scenery might be the oil rigs.
- The town is cute and all surfing oriented. It stretches from the pier and is clean, modern and entertaining for a day or two. The surfer boys offer good views too and I found myself out on the long pier a second time looking at the eye candy. Not that I don't have my own at home but fortunately we both enjoy looking.

- Organization is professional though they might have grown too fast and are trying to accommodate too many runners as evidenced by the long expo lines and the massive wave start times.
- Expo was far too tight and near impossible to get through. There was numerous full size samples given then outside the popcorn stand just couldn't rake in the money fast enough.
- Course was good for ocean views but dull and tedious in sections. The poor marathoners had to do the boring part twice. Separate groups gave out food stuff. The pacers for both full and half (different courses) were plentiful. At the finish line the food was generous and given in a bag.
- T-shirts: we were given choices to include two colors and women or men cut. There were many well designed choices for purchase. Many freebie bags were given in part because California bans plastics and charges for grocery bags.



- Medals: famous for the wooden surf board with a medal overlay. Then there are numerous additional medals offered for legacy runners and/or other local marathons run in sequence.
- Finish line comes complete with ocean side location, a beer garden and live music. There were numerous vendors giving out more samples and/or selling.

## Results

I intended to use up every minute they allowed and I came close. I probably did pretty well (for me) until around mile 6 when I caught up with Sharon and then we sauntered in after having stopped and even backtracked some. Who cares? If you can't go FAST, at least go FUN.

At the three and five mile mats I was still at a 14 pace, but finished with a very pleasant 3:45 or 17 pace. To reinforce how easy going I was, it was a 4:14 gun time. There were even at least 400 behind me. No sense in not getting your money's worth of the sun and fun!





## Spectators

While they were modest, they were enthusiastic and signs were plentiful. It always helps when a marathon is established as this one has been in existence many years.

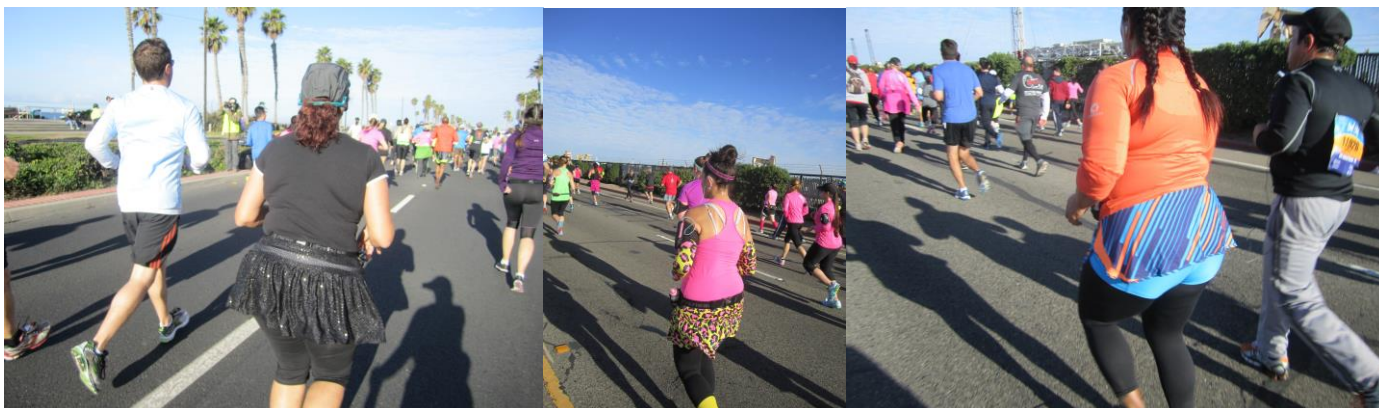






### ***Running skirts***

I know a handful of gals who can pull it off, but it's rare. Kathrine Switzer is slim hiped and looks great in her skirt; beside the fact she started the fad and also earned the right to wear a skirt. Diane, Annette, Maryanne and Marie all come to mind as slim hiped and looking good in skirts. Not so some others:



I couldn't. I wouldn't. Not only would I not risk looking like this but I'm enough of a fraud runner as it is without wearing a skirt.

### ***Tourist***

- Without a car, the town is about 15 minutes north which includes the pier and town of a few blocks square, all new and modern and filled with the country's most expansive surf shops. Add a modern library and their central park that is within a 20 minute walk. It's probably too cool normally to enjoy the 500 beach front fire pits but the surfers were in the water. Bicycle rentals were still popular despite the strong wind and 50s temperatures. The beaches are deep, clean and meticulously maintained, and stretch 10 miles. They are noteworthy to a Jersey Shore resident for being unencumbered by development.
- With a car, there's Newport Beach, Long Beach, Dana Point, Huntington Gardens, all a lengthy drive away. Huntington Gardens has their own harbor or canal system and in season gondola rides are offered.
- Orange County is the closest airport. Ontario is about 50 minutes and offers cheap flights as does Los Angeles about an hour away.
- I'd wanted to see Huntington Gardens again, the Getty Museum as well as the Villa, my friend in Santa Monica, and on and on, but I didn't understand the map when I had these wishes and I didn't understand the Los Angeles area traffic, the car packing costs, and the rental car drop off fees. I'll just have to return and have it be about an hour and a half north.

### ***Departing Huntington Beach***

As I was leaving the beach, I had some mixed emotions. While I'm hoteling it with a balcony overlooking a little piece of Mother Nature's best graciousness, it's not much of a walk away to realize how all around is this artificial environment. A short walk away is an oil refinery, trailers, oil pumps, and some housing that blows the mind that they obtained a Certificate of Occupancy.

Even coming to a marathon gives me mixed emotions. I wonder why we pay to run. Is it the adrenaline that comes about from being with other like-minded people? It does seem there is some silliness to come so far, to pay to run, to pay to reside in an artificial environment, and yet we're all doing it. Big business all these marathons.

Then as I headed to the airport I was socked with the added wonderment about coming when I see that about 2000 flights are canceled in and around the New York City airports. Will I get home today? Fortunately it does not terribly trouble me. Later: Flights to the NYC airports were suffering long



delays and the flight after mine was canceled but amazingly mine went and was on time. I felt a wee bit of guilt at taking a seat where there were so many standby passengers who didn't get on.

### ***Next up? So far . . . .***

Feb 14-18 Phoenix for Surprise AZ marathon; Feb 21-Mar 1 Joshua Tree hike

Mar 6-9 Kings Mountain SC marathon with Mar 9-12 Flat Rock NC and Burnsville NC friends

Mar 25-Apr 6 Majorca for KV 261 marathon then Barcelona for a week

Apr 18-26 NM - Santa Fe and Taos; May 2-10 Canyonlands hike

May 13-18 Avignon France with Tom followed by May 19-25 Provence hike and May 26-27 Paris

Jun 3-16 Portugal running and tour

Jun 24-27 Munich, Kitzbuhel and Dobbiaco with Tom followed by June 28-Jul 4 Dolomites hike

Jul 4-8 Innsbruck and Munich with Tom

Jul 18-26 Yellowstone, Tetons and Mammoth hike

Aug 8-9 Colo Springs followed by Aug 10-15 Colorado hike with Aug 16-18 Pikes Peak climb

Aug 22-30 Lassen hike; Sep 5-6 Reno with Sep 7-13 High Sierra and Yosemite hike

Sep 23-27 Milan with Tom followed by Sep 28-Oct 5 Lakes of Italy hike

Oct 9-14 London's Royal Parks marathon – tentative

Nov 9 Myanmar marathon and tour; Dec or Jan Hong Kong

### ***Why do we travel?***

“Once a journey is designed, equipped, and put in process, a new factor enters and takes over. A trip, a safari, an exploration, is an entity, different from all other journeys. It has personality, temperament, individuality, uniqueness. A journey is a person in itself; no two are alike. And all plans, safeguards, policing, and coercion are fruitless. We find after years of struggle that we do not take a trip; a trip takes us. Tour masters, schedules, reservations, brass-bound and inevitable, dash themselves to wreckage on the personality of the trip. Only when this is recognized can the blown-in-the glass bum relax and go along with it. Only then do the frustrations fall away. In this a journey is like marriage. The certain way to be wrong is to think you control it.”

— John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*



## **Itinerary**

### **Fri Jan 31**

8:40am Depart Newark EWR via UA#362  
12:05pm Arrive Orange County SNA about 8 miles from Huntington Beach

Super Shuttle to hotel – about 8 miles and \$24 one way or taxi flat \$35 from hotel back to airport

Hotel The Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel – 3 nights  
21100 Pacific Coast Highway, Huntington Beach, CA Tele 714 845 8000  
King Studio Suite Oceanfront with wrap around balcony; yes refrig; no free Wi-Fi.

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Expo open from 3pm to 7pm at Beachfront parking lot near Hilton

### **Sat Feb 1**

Expo open from 9am to 5pm – Bib #19280 with approximately 15,000 half marathoners

### **Sun Feb 2**

7:45am Start of half marathon in front of the Hilton with wave starts; last wave at 8:11am

### **Mon Feb 3**

Shuttle to airport?

11:15am Depart Orange County SNA via UA1599  
5:09pm Arrive Chicago O'Hare ORD for plane change

6:05pm Depart Chicago O'Hare ORD via UA#1492  
9:20pm Arrive Newark EWR

### **Participants:**

Sharon Kerson  
Theresa

Bernadette

Gene DeFazio

Gary

Don Heuman ?

Linda is running her local half marathon same day



### ***Some of the pre-planning- save for a future trip***

Huntington Beach is 59 minutes from Santa Monica, according to the web. Huntington Beach is a bedroom community with a large State Park beach and a surfing culture. There are a number of surfing events that draw international participation through the year, and a beach culture on coast highway. When the kids were growing up in Whittier, Ca, that's the beach we'd go to. Unless there's something new that I don't know about, there's not much to see in Huntington Beach. However, South of there is Newport beach, and if you enjoy the Beach scene and a rather civilized town on the water, It's a lovely place to hang out. John Wayne once lived on the end of Balboa Peninsula, a neighborhood in Newport. That area has a lot to see and do, but none if city culture. It's Orange County beach culture, and relatively high end. South of Newport is Laguna Beach, with its artistic culture. Each of these towns has its own look and feel and it's just fun to drive through them as an explorer. But this is not walking country. You really need a car.

South of Laguna (with a tiny downtown that's fun to walk through) is Dana Point and inland is San Juan Capistrano and the Capistrano Mission. Richard Henry Dana, who wrote "Two Years before the Mast" about his sailing adventure from New England, around the horn, and up the coast of the Americas and his sailing along the coast of California talks about the padres from Capistrano, bringing their hides here, and throwing them off the top of the bluffs to the sailors of boats who bought hides and tallow from the missions.

When Bill Voelkle (from the Morgan library) was here last, his scheduler precluded both the Getty Center and the Villa because of his schedule and when they were open. So I suggested a safari that turned out to be fun. I took him to the Self-Realization Fellowship lake, garden and temple. Then we drove out to an authentic Hindu temple out in Malibu Canyon. Then we had lunch at a funky place that's been there forever - the Malibu Sea-Food Company - You order, wait for a boxed seafood lunch, then take it across the driveway to a series of roofed open-air pavilions with a view of the water. This would only be fun if it was warm and not windy. Then we went out to Pepperdine University to see an art exhibition in their Museum.

Or I could take you on a tour of UCLA and we could catch a bite for lunch in one of the student restaurants. Not great food, but cheap and handy.

Now both Getty museums now charge \$15 for parking. UCLA charges \$11 Food at the Malibu Seafood lunch is about \$13-\$14. Food at one of the student restaurants can be from \$4- \$8.

Or, you could park your rental car at a parking structure in Santa Monica and we can take the bus to UCLA, then catch the bus to the Getty center and home for a bit \$1.35 cents each.