



Kings Mountain SC and Charlotte NC Trip Notes **March 6-12, 2014**

This trip would start in Charlotte NC with a renewal of friendships, go onto Gastonia NC for hotel accommodations, then westerly to Clover and Kings Mountain SC for the marathon; and then the last three days renewing friends through Koi in Flat Rock, checking out Tom's hometown of Burnsville, and visiting with family members there.

From Beauty to the Beast



The first night's dinner with Liz (here) and La; Tom and Judy; then with Dick to Carl Sandburg's home and Sandburg's wife's goat collection. Forgive me ladies for adding your pictures with the goats. I love you all!

The Run - A Historic Challenge for 400 Brave Adventurers

It was a little army and a little battle, but it was of mighty portent. In 1780, atop Kings Mountain the Patriot Militia toppled the Royal Loyalists in the Revolutionary War. When the smoke cleared on the mountain's steep western ridge, the Patriot Militia stood victorious.

"This is a place of inspiring memories. Here less than a thousand men, inspired by the urge of freedom, defeated a superior force entrenched in this strategic position."

President Herbert Hoover, October 7, 1930, atop Kings Mountain.

President Teddy Roosevelt once called this small but strategic victory the "turning point of the American Revolution." And to this day, the battle's spirit lives on in the inhabitants of York County, South Carolina. Folks here carry a certain dignity because of their home's unique place in history. And why shouldn't they? It's beautiful and rugged land they live on. - which is why it won't surprise you to hear that exactly 230 years after the famous triumph, a small band of runners came directly to Kings Mountain for their own "battle."

A freak snowstorm and a last minute race cancellation had left them with little choice. You see, just like the Patriot militia, they had something to prove. And if they could just get a race organizer to meet a few simple demands, they were going to fight for it. So they got in touch with Jefferson Nicholson, Co-Founder of Adventure Geek Productions, and inside an hour, the battle was on! Only

this time the enemy wasn't a red coated army. It was the terrain itself: specifically 26.2 miles of it. They called the challenge Kings Mountain Marathon.

God willing and the creek don't rise

I kept thinking our creek was rising and now I find out it's the Creek Indians for heaven sakes. Nothing to do with the storms and floods and monsoons we had on our first day.

I liked Charlotte a lot during my past visits, but I must say that this time has been a challenge beyond any sense of logic or even belief. From monsoons to getting to the registration area for this marathon. Wild and crazy finding the registration: we followed the newly advised GPS address and found some place out in the boonies. Two and a half hours of driving and we never made it. Some will remember my DNS for Did Not Start or some will remember my DNS for Did Nothing Stupid. Some will think about DNF being for Did Not Finish. Well, we did a DNFS for Did Not Find Start. Honestly, we drove around for over two hours looking for the registration area which was the start line. Honestly, and we never found it. Honestly, we found other people who did not find it either and/or spent two hours trying to find. After figuring out that the GPS was so wrong, and then finding the real location, the Kings Mountain State Park Rangers had locked the gate causing us to drive right by it. You just can't make this stuff up.

The Players

The most important 'player' was Jefferson the race director and his co-director and new wife Kirsten. It was Jefferson who created this South Carolina marathon for 14 of us in 2010 and we've since followed him on his new quest for more races to direct under his Adventure Geek Productions. We were with him in June for a trail run and celebrating his engagement.

The next players included Judy from Atlanta, Jim from Vienna VA, Diane from Nashville, La and Liz from Charlotte, and Charlotte from Wrightsville SC.

The missing players included 12 of our original band of 14 who we pretty much keep in touch with and whose pictures and stories are included in the 2010 trip report below. Last June some of us went to Rob's inaugural race directing in Paradise, Upper Peninsula, Michigan. He was one of the two 50-state finishers at this marathon in 2010. He couldn't get off work for this, and the other 50-state finisher David is not running any longer.



Judy and Jim; Diana and Charlotte (always in lovely costumes); Roscoe and Judy

I've been with Judy for many marathons since meeting in Albuquerque in 2009 and was last at a half marathon in Arizona mid-February. Charlotte has given us a lot of lovely entertainment with her

costumes that are customized for each marathon. I have a trip report with many of her and friend Tara's collection. I met Roscoe in Manchester NH. He and Judy have finished their 50-states. I have had 3 states undone since about 2008. Guess it won't happen.



**Our Charlotte hiking friends La (for Lauren) and Liz;
Diane still doing two marathons a weekend;**

Dog running buddy for a long time - we named BINGO as we sang the B-I-N-G-O kid's song.

Reunion?

Diane and I were the only two at this 2014 event from the Inaugural in 2010. Plus Charlotte who had joined us for dinner in 2010 and ran it this year. Maybe we'll find Bingo again next year.

Generous Marathon

- Entry fee is amazingly low
- Goody bag included samples, a Kings Mountain bracelet, an Adventure Geeks BUFF headgear and coupons
- T-shirt is a nice design
- Food on the course is not only Gatorade but pretzels and power bars of various types
- Finish line food is always good and this time it was BBQ sandwiches with chips and sides as well as canned soft drinks
- Medals were burned wood on a nice ribbon with elaborate hook and opening
- Prizes are three deep despite how few are registered and include backpacks with bladders and well-designed quality mugs



The shirt: front with “medal” in wood, a BUFF headgear



How about the 2010 Inaugural shirt?
 A prize mug for 2nd place age group – there were even 5 in my AG!
 The Kings Mountain bracelet.

Course

This is a rolling course; think the difference between a golf course and the little engine that could. It has some hard packed dirt and even more asphalt. We had more neighborhoods in the 2010 course whereas this time it was primarily in the Kings Mountain State Park.

Results



I did do all the 13.1 plus some and I did finish to a record time: 4:44. Honest. Lots of fun going forward and backward and stopping and chatting and encouraging some on. It was equally thrilling to keep up with the fast gals for three miles of it but then I lost sight of them though they did return to us on the course – in their vehicle. That official picture at the finish line was me saying “What? Run? Why start now?”

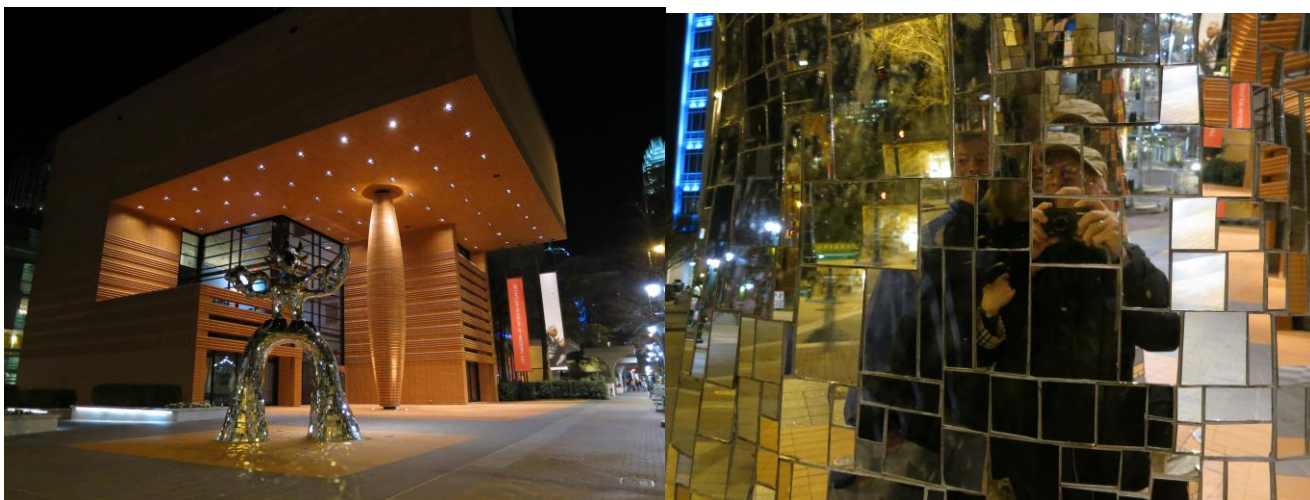


Congratulations to La (Lauren) for her first half marathon. We only suggested it on Thursday over dinner and here they were. It was Liz's second. I'd like to say that I enlarged this picture in honor of La's First (A Virgin NO More!) and/or because I love these 30-year-olds so much but part of the reason is that I even liked my picture. I worked hard to keep up with them and lost them at about the 3 mile mark. They finished in 2:30. I'm hoping to do more hiking with them; we met last August at the Glacier National Park hike.

Touring – always a priority



Our first evening into Charlotte to dine with Liz and La and Judy, it was pouring like a monsoon so there were no pictures of outside. Our next time into Charlotte was with Jim and we walked the streets to enjoy this lovely town. I'd been here both for the Charlotte marathon and during the inaugural Kings Mountain marathon. The buildings are of monstrous size. The town was alive with folks. This is an original Wells Fargo mail carrier. I saw it within the Omaha parade for the Omaha marathon.



The modern museum of art. Can you guess? We couldn't. But that's US in the picture.



Onto Flat Rock and a lovely ritzy community called Kenmure. We were so pleased to see koi friends Wayne and Susan in their lush new house. What two people do with all this space is beyond me? Here is the living area – surrounding the other thing we did well while there: EAT!



On one of Wayne and Susan's decks for wine and snacks plus lots of catch up conversation.



Onto Biltmore Estate, the largest residence in the country. We hadn't seen it since the 70s.



Biltmore sandwiched between another thing I do well – wine tasting at Biltmore.



We were guests of Dick and Betty who were the original founders of the Koi Club and so instrumental to our early days of pond building and koi keeping. Their back pond is huge, their front pond is equally so but of different style. The guest accommodations were lush with our own apartment, two bathrooms, kitchen and living area looking out over the main koi pond. Dick and Betty are Tom's age yet still manage their entire garden.



Scotty and Helene are the age of Tom's older brother. They live next door to where Tom's mother last lived and are the remaining family in Burnsville NC where Tom grew up. We toured the town, had some visiting time with Scotty and Helene and they treated us to lunch on the Town Square.



We had to see Asheville's Grove Park Inn and some craft stores, then downtown Asheville where I might have enjoyed spending a full day.



This restaurant sign suggests that Asheville might have more than just 60s hippies like we thought a few years ago when all we saw were candle and macramé shops. Our last day was at Carl Sandburg's home in Flat Rock where the entertainment resided in his wife's goat collection. She might have been what kept his home and writing going as she raised prize winning goats and sold milk and cheese. The home is a National Historic site and situated on lovely grounds overlooking the mountains and a lake.

Carl Sandburg home – with goats!

<http://www.nps.gov/carl/planyourvisit/hours.htm>

Photos – Tom will supply us with a photo show at www.TomsKoi.com

Our home in Flat Rock for three days



Dick and Better have quite the collection of koi knick knacks and collector items. These wine glasses which we filled with true moonshine were the most unique. (I like eau de vie and grappa so moonshine hit the spot.) Their home has some true museum treasures but the real treasures were Dick and Betty who through their hobby have influenced so many folks with their volunteerism which continues to this day but in new areas – they are now out of the koi club.

What's next?

We are off to the Kathrine Switzer inaugural marathon in Majorca. I say marathon but I don't think a FULL is in my future as I'm more so enjoying shorter endeavors, being back in time for food, and having some of the day left. My weight trainer likes that I'm not eating up all the muscle I paid for too. After 5 days in Majorca we head to Barcelona for a week in a very special looking apartment – we hope!

A summary of 2014 so far: It started with Jan 7-12 Boston Ice Skate Olympic trials; Jan 12-17 Kripalu Yoga Retreat; Jan 31-Feb 4 Huntington Beach marathon; Feb 14-18 Surprise AZ marathon; Feb 21-Mar 1 hiking in Joshua Tree and Palm Springs area; Mar 6-12 Kings Mountain SC marathon with Flat Rock NC reunion.

Booked: Tom and I to Majorca for a marathon then Barcelona; an Amish weekend and marathon ; week long hikes to Santa Fe and Taos; Canyonlands; hiking and touring out of Avignon and Provence area including Tom; running tour in Portugal; Black Forest with Tom then hiking the Dolomites; more week long hikes Yellowstone and Tetons; Rocky Mountains and Salida with a Pikes Peak type effort thereafter; Lassen Volcano; High Sierras and Yosemite. Then Tom and I go to Milan for a week before I start a 7 day hike through Lakes of Italy. A marathon and touring in London and maybe one in Myanmar along with a 10 day tour.

Tom is looking for a BIG trip to bring in his 80th. These aren't big enough? But I solicit ideas!

“Kings and Queens of the Road” Marathon in Blacksburg SC – Trip Notes
April 9-12, 2010



Winner of Overall Female Diane, with Annette and Diana

Diane was our First Queen for setting up this marathon. When Myrtle Beach Marathon got snowed out on Valentine’s Day she went into battle-mode and saved quite a few Marathon Maniacs who desperately needed South Carolina in order to complete their 50-state quest(s). Herself included. Jefferson was our First King for having volunteered to create this marathon. I suspect he expected more than 14 participants but fortunately we 14 were very grateful and made due effort to impart our appreciation to him. I can truly say that this is one marathon out of many that I will surely not forget and will be a treasured memory.

The logistics

Most of us flew into Charlotte airport and then drove about 20 minutes to either Gastonia NC (David and I) or Kings Mountain/Shelby NC (the rest, other than those who were camping at Kings Mountain) for our hotels and then about 20 minutes over the border to SC for the marathon.

While I’m not one of the Maniacs or even a serious 50-stater, I wanted to be with my friends and to support their effort. I’m glad I did. It had been thrilling to be with David Williams last month for his 50-state marathon completion at B&A in MD so to be with Rob Klein and David Reid for their completion was irresistible. Even better, I got to know Annette Wulffe better while running with her over the Kings Mountain course for over 6 hours. Annette, David and I, with Lis Cooper for a while, were partnered enough in speed (or lack of it) and there were enough hills, turns and ways to get lost to need to stay with other runners.

The course – we all loved it! Despite the high hills, gravel and/or dirt roads, and sometimes bright and hot-hot-hot sunshine, we loved it. The company was the best and the scenery equaled the effort and the entire trip was well worth it.



The amenities – we didn't expect much and we got hugely more than 14 runners deserved. There were good course markings, two port-a-potties, about 5 fluid stations stocked with bananas, oranges, trail bars, cookies and Gatorade given by smiling young and good looking runners. At the end there were practically awards for everyone as well as the promised gift in lieu of a medal – a Mason jar with gold painted "Kings & Queens of the Mountain" Marathon and the date. (I can understand why Jefferson kindly didn't grant me the damnation of a deserved Geezer Award.) T-shirts are promised via mail and even in customized sizes. Later: Annette says "We should have gotten lids to our Mason jar so we could put our HOOCH in it too! And later still: "Uh oh now poor Jefferson will have to change his opinion of us mild mannered well behaved running ladies." More on Annette and amenities later.

Thank you Jefferson! He's a young fellow from Clemson University but not so young that he hadn't managed other races. He had a good support staff and a hospitable southern attitude. Had we known how much extra effort he was putting into it we might have increased our bag of gifts (smile) as we'd brought him a bottle of champagne autographed by all the runners, a pair of Texas flag colors running shorts, a bag of tangerines, and all sorts of goodies represented by the states we came from.

The players – here are some of the Maniacs who attended: Rob Klein and David Reid finishing their 50-states quest. Diana with Charlotte (who came to celebrate but not to run this time). David Williams who just finished his 50-states.



The dinner – thank you Annette for setting it up! We celebrated in Gastonia at Milano's Italian Restaurant and it served us very well. Southern Belle Charlotte Johnson was visiting family nearby and joined us for the dinner but having just completed the Knoxville TN marathon and being a devoted daughter, she was off to visit family instead of running and had disciplined herself by NOT bringing running shoes so as not to be tempted.



Then the finish line celebrations! Diane won the Crown for overall female and then Jefferson had made crowns for 50-state finishers David and Rob. (Hey you single gals – Rob is soon to be single too and he’s sure to have a line formed at his door by then.)



But here – let Annette tell you about the weekend. She says it so well and with such humor that its silly for me to try:

First her email caveat which created a frenzy of reply emails saying “Don’t stop! We love your reports just like they are!” Dear friends: I really have to write these reports for myself and my files as I have already forgotten so much about the first 30 states I have done and seriously regret that I did not keep details, I only send them on to you for a couple of reasons some of you might be considering these races, others ask me what I am up and other friends I just want to share these with. I know my writing and grammar skills are poor to say the least, but no excuse I know I do them quickly as I have so little free time and strongly encourage those of you who are sick of getting these to delete now before opening the attachments. For those of you who read thanks. I look forward to seeing many of

you soon. Happy running Happy spring EVERYONE. Annette -- "Forget the potholes in the road and celebrate the journey ahead"

Kings and Queens of the Road Marathon April 10th 2010
Kings Mountain Military Park, SC
Put on by Adventure Geek Productions - Race Director Jefferson Nicholson
State 39 Marathon 41

What a hoot. This race was specifically arranged for a couple of Marathon Maniacs and 50-staters that had the misfortune to be snowed out on Valentine's Day in Myrtle Beach, SC this year. A dear running friend of mine Diane Bolton, Nashville is due to complete her round of running a marathon in all 50 states this June and really needed to get SC completed so AK and HI could be numbers 49 and 50 for her. She did some searching and found an Easter Bunny Run (half marathon in Clemson, SC last weekend) She contacted the Race Director, Jefferson Nicholson, to see if he could add a second loop to the half for us but he was unable to. Still determined to come through for fellow runners Jefferson took it upon himself and organized his first ever marathon! He called it Kings and Queens of the Road and held it in the Kings Mountain National Military Park in Kings Mountain SC. and Kings Mountain State Park. If any of you have been there or nearby it is between Gastonia, SC and Charlotte, NC, a lovely area of the country. Earlier last week temperatures had reached a very unseasonable 90's and the pollen was intense even for those used to it. A fellow Maniac from NC described the streets as "puke green" with the stuff and sent me survival tips, sunglasses, inhalers etc.! Lucky for us a little rain fell on Thursday and or Friday and really cleaned things up.

I flew into Charlotte, NC on a very early flight on AA, problem free we left and arrived on time, actually slept reroute. Heel pain very much in evidence from the PF as well as a newly diagnosed heel spur and the best part.....had spent three hours Thursday in CDH ER (girl stuff, not cured yet, but had a marathoning ER doc who was super cool and gave me the go ahead to run conservatively!) Gotta love a running doctor they totally understand the insanity we deal with. Charlotte is a great airport, I flew in a couple years ago and Concourse B through E are really nice, A is just ok. Lots of good food, stores, and those wonderful rocking chairs in front of the huge sun filled windows plus lots of quiet places to relax. I had a couple of hours before meeting my friend from Nashville. Diane and I ended up not renting a car but instead getting a ride from new friends David Reid MM and Rob Klein MM from CO., both men would be completing their first round of all 50 states tomorrow! We were staying outside of the park in Kings Mountain at a very nice Holiday Inn Express, clean quiet and inexpensive. Hotel was more than accommodating with a very late checkout (after 3 pm) and a full breakfast that started at 6 am. We were able to take advantage of it as we were only a few miles from the start and the race was to start at 8 am due to the fact that the park opens at 7 and RD had to set up the course.

One member of our party had a 3pm flight home to NJ and she and others were concerned what the course would be like. The website, turn by turn directions and elevation chart left us thinking a course drive would be a very good idea to calm our many reservations about what good buddy Diane had gotten us into! We piled into a couple of cars met up with more friends, Diana Burton also NJ, Tracey Newenhouse NJ, Lis Cooper OR and David Williams TX. David Reid had turn-by-turn directions and we followed him. Oh boy it was gonna be interesting come race day. Hardly any street signs, lots and lots of big rocks to run over and hills and hills and hills. Looks like potty breaks would definitely be au natural and the RD mentioned a sweep car would be on the course with us and would supply TP! We finished the tour and Diane wondered if her friends might be planning a little lynching as several of us wondered if we would be lost on the course. While parked in the State Park lot, we meet the park ranger who nicely asked for our parking pass. We had neglected to buy one. He gave us a pass on buying one as we mentioned we were there for the next day's marathon, but not before he mentioned how unhappy the State Park and National Park were about the marathon plans. Uh Oh

never good to have the feds angry with you! We were nice and thanked him and promised to be good little runners.

Now for my big debut as pasta party planner. Diane Bolton usually does this with a lot of grace and style but I offered to give her a break. Last month I Googled Pasta Blacksburg, SC and came up with half a dozen possibilities, quickly dismissed a couple of chain restaurant names and settled on Milano's. For those of you who have traveled out of state with me, you might remember I enjoy finding two things local beer and local food. They graciously offered to accommodate any size group we might present. Stupidly I looked at websites that rated the restaurant and found hugely contradictory reviews some that even mentioned the words Chef Boyardee. We could have been in trouble but my fears were soon relieved when we drove into Gastonia and found Milano's to be a lovely place. Dinner was fine and a tradition was continued when Diana Burton presented each "to be" 50 State Finisher with autographed bottles of Champagne. Both men were delighted and encouraged to open their gifts Saturday afternoon! Another 50 stater Jean from KY who was making SC State 46 joined us. She has walked all her states and brought her husband.

A good night sleep and woke at 6 am (5 IL time). Our neighbors, military personnel, were pretty quiet, the weather was perfect, chilly clear skies and the promise of 70 and more sunshine) we assembled our gifts for Jefferson and were off. Everyone bought a running related item from their home state and several were very well thought out! One member of our group had headed out to the park early, hoping for a chance to run 4 or 5 miles before the official start as the 3 pm flight home was gonna be another kind of race for her. We spotted her with a big smile on her face as we turned into the park already running! Our group numbered about 14 for the full and 2 for half. We posed for a silly start picture and I found my running partners. I was pretty sure that I would be lost even with my reading glasses and a turn-by-turn map in my baggie. I really wanted to talk with Diana Burton, as we had only met briefly in during Happy Hour in Indianapolis after the Monumental Marathon last fall. We had been emailing each other throughout the winter and spring and I was looking forward to getting to know this very interesting well-traveled lady. She runs my pace and together with David Williams we were off.

Kings Mountain National Military Park was the Battle of Kings Mountain occurred was considered the turning point for the Revolutionary War, as it was the first significant Patriot victory following the demise of the Continental Army at Charlotte and Camden. The course was marked every two miles and Jefferson had enlisted some friends to assist at the aid stations. He supplied more than we had anticipated. Gatorade, water cups of sliced oranges, bananas, cookies and more. The volunteers were absolutely delightful and never let on that they were spending a glorious Saturday afternoon catering to our fanatical quests instead of their own. Spent time as usual posing for pictures and taking some of the local scenery. The course was hilly and some were quite long. Much of the route was on a rocky unpaved almost a service type road but was easy to run on. We were in two different parks the State as well as National park. We went by some beautiful pastures, cows grazing, some creeks, historical markers noting the Revolutionary March trails, blooming azaleas, wisteria and dogwoods, lots of dogs; none appearing any too friendly, most chained except for one little fella, a beagle with a gimpy leg that decided to run onto and down the state road portion with us for a spell. I gather he gave up when the limp, fake or otherwise failed to earn him any treats. We passed a farm that had probably a hundred Martin houses, only these were in the shape of white hens actually a lot like the White Hen Pantry logo and next door was a simple shack like home with lots and lots of laundry hanging out on the front porch and spilling into the yard. The race was a loop with two short out and backs and enabled us to note our new acquaintance Jean the marathon walker was not fair behind and past the halfway point had actually passed us. A support car drove the course and checked in many times with us, which was great. TP prominently displayed on the dashboard. While Diana and David wanted us to finish in a three-way tie for last I really wanted the chance to claim dead last for myself. Now had this been a race of triple digit runners or more I doubt I would have

wanted the glory of being last but it was fun to add this to my accomplishments or lack of. I finished up with enough time to ensure I would make my 5 pm flight home and was able to spend a little time chatting and thanking Jefferson before heading back for a shower and photo time. If you get a chance do look up his website, he is a terrific organizer and really follows through for his runners. As we approached the hotel lobby door out strides royalty, Diane Bolton, Rob Klein and David Reid all sporting crowns, the best at least to me is a very accurate replica of the Parkay Margarine commercial velvet crown worn by the women's overall winner, Diane. She and Rob kept theirs on throughout the airport and elicited many fun comments from fellow travelers and airport personal. It was a wonderful short weekend to accomplish another state and I am looking forward to May 2nd NJ where we again celebrate the completion of 50 states for good friend Tim Marquardt, IL who has worked really hard in only, I think, barely two years to achieve his first round even while battling injury. End

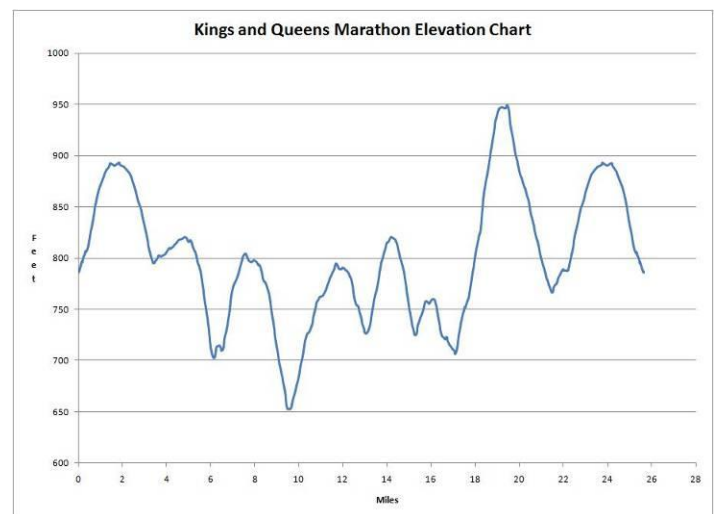
See what I mean? Who wouldn't want to run with Annette! And who would try to write such an interesting report instead of using Annette's?

Results

Think hills and more hills. Here's an elevation chart.

We knew that we had to be out for a good time and that we did. We even stopped and chatted with the fluid station folks. At the end Annette insisted on being the last to cross the finish line. Here's our total numbers. How often can you cut and paste in the entire group of participants?

Bolton Diane	Full Marathon	5:00:21
Burton Diana	Full Marathon	6:11:17
cooper Elisabeth	Full Marathon	5:26:45
Klein Rob	Full Marathon	5:04:40
McDonald Mary	Full Marathon	6:02:42
NewenhouseTracey	Full Marathon	4:49:18
Reid David	Full Marathon	5:19:51
Reid jean	Full Marathon	5:52:21
Sinclair Joe	Full Marathon	5:15:08
Snuggs JOHN L	Full Marathon	4:22:36
Temblador Silvana	Full Marathon	5:15:23
TRUE Lee	Full Marathon	3:58:15
Williams David	Full Marathon	6:11:15
Wulffe Annette	Full Marathon	6:11:27



Me? I think this was my 57th marathon finish and I'm *still* on my 36th state though after 2010 and those I've paid for there are only 5 states remaining. It is unlikely that I'll "finish 50-states" but I'll sure tour in a lot of destinations. Well, one could say that I'm on my 7th time around for New York State - having completed 5 NYC Marathons, Buffalo and Lake Placid.

Next up? Wow, I don't know that it will work but one week later will be Salt Lake City Marathon, a trip to family in K.C., followed by NJ's half marathon while all those 50-staters celebrate their completions here, followed by Capon Valley WVA 50K over Mother's Day, Boise's Marathon in May, a week's hiking the Grand Canyon later May, another week's hiking the Columbia River Gorge after some days in Portland touring early June, the Pacific Crest Trail Marathon later June, touring in Washington DC and Philadelphia with little Marie from late June through July 12th and Rio's Marathon in July.

Touring with David

David had declared that now that his 50-state quest was completed, he'd stop a bit to smell the roses. I have plenty of experience at that and had just the day before returned from a week's worth of

smelling Los Angeles' roses and would return home for a mere two days before heading off to Salt Lake City and see what roses they could supply. Plus I was incentivized to stay over another day for a major airfare discount (smile). I had moments of thinking I'd misled the poor guy about touring with me but we ended up finding plenty to do despite North Carolina nearly closing down on Sunday and Monday.

Kings Mountain is both a state park and a military park, side by side. We'd run through both. David and I toured the museum one day and returned the day after the marathon to hike the battlefield trail.



Botanical Gardens – I'd heard that some visit the region specifically to tour the 110-acre botanical gardens and I can agree that it was at least worth a visit if in the area. It's not quite Longwood Gardens but getting close. There was an art competition of park benches ongoing and that coupled with butterflies throughout we had a delightful half day through the gardens and conservatory. Middle picture is David and Diana reflected in the glass of an orchid collection.





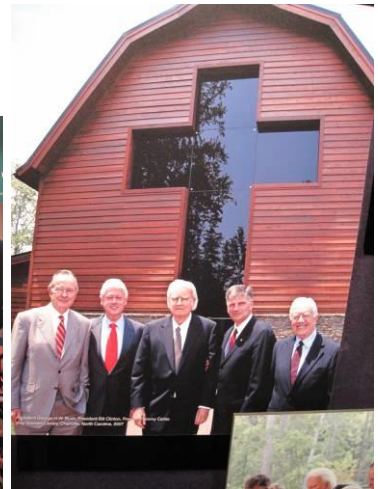
Cracker Barrel Restaurant – who knew that eating at a Cracker Barrel would be an experience. Everyone should try at least once eating what Annette calls ‘gray food’ full of grease, oil and gravy. It’s also the shopping experience.

Charlotte – The Queen City. As a city she can be a surprisingly lovely experience. Big gorgeous buildings, a few parks, lots of sculptures, and plenty of walk through downtown malls. (Note - that’s The Queen as in Britain, not Queens like in San Francisco – drats.) I’d been in Charlotte for the December 2008 marathon and felt sure that an afternoon and evening would be worthy of our time. Little did I know that the tourist office would be closed, the trolleys not running, no tours offered, the shops and many of the businesses totally shut down. So without a tour guide we walked some of the famous historical Fourth Ward of Victorian houses, a couple parks and through a few of the architecturally significant buildings. At a local bar I had champagne and David had a lush chocolate dessert but that was the end of our Downtown Charlotte experience.



Billy Graham Library – Who would guess that someone who has traveled to visit the Presidential Libraries would have the surprising opportunity to tour the Billy Graham Library. (I’d just come from Ronald Reagan’s in Simi Valley and Richard Nixon’s in Yorba Linda.) Billy Graham who has been adviser to many presidents (and who I’ve seen in many of the presidential libraries) was born and grew up in the Charlotte area, with not only his family home on view but a newly renovated Library quite near to the airport. It had just re-opened from renovation on the day we toured.

Note the picture of three presidents with Billy Graham, probably taken at wife Ruth’s funeral, and at the Billy Graham Library.



Fascinating was the last room and exit. It had a Thomas Kinkaid wall mural and archways of lights. As was wife Ruth's exit from this world – she asked to have her tombstone read: “End of Construction – Thank you for your patience.” She'd seen the sign at the end of a highway construction project and requested this.

I did have to remind the lovely volunteers that I was there to see it as a museum, not to be “born again” and there were times that David and I both wondered if they'd let us out if we didn't repent our sins right there on the spot, but 99% of it was a good tour. We saw videos, museum mementos, and a few very creative rooms all set in a new building complex. I'd recommend it to anyone and can only guess that it was NOT in the AAA guide because it'd been closed, or maybe because it was religiously oriented. It's said that Billy Graham at age 91 didn't want featured at all so it was a good

in-between. It's also said that he's well enough, though mostly home bound, that he's writing his next sermon and hoping for a come-back. His last public appearance was in NYC maybe in 2008.

Penguin Drive In

Featured on the Food Network, listed as the best hamburger in the world by *Gourmet Magazine*, and winner of a huge number of awards, this little dinky old drive in restaurant gave us our second BBQ experience. And fried pickles! It was David's birthday and all he got was a banana pudding.



The end

We left the Charlotte area happily since David and I both got upgraded to First Class on our way home.

Itinerary

Thu Mar 6

10:30am Car to airport

12:31pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#4640

2:30pm Arrive Charlotte NC CLT

Rental car Avis confirmation 08895907US6

Hotel Fairfield Inn Charlotte Gastonia
1860 Remount Road, Gastonia, NC 28054 Tele 704 867 5073
Conf#86106476

Fri Mar 7

Packet Pickup will be available from 5:00pm - 7:00pm and again on race day from 6AM to 7:30AM.

Directions to packet pick up and race start:

From I-85: Take exit 8, turn left onto Hwy 161, go across NC/SC state line and park entrance will be on the right.

From I-77: Take exit for Hwy 5 toward Rock Hill. Follow Hwy 5 through Rock Hill to York. In York, turn N onto Hwy 321, then bear left onto Hwy 161, entrance will be on the left.

Dinner with marathon friends

Sat Mar 8

8:00am Kings Mountain half (full available) – 400 max

www.KingsMountainMarathon.com at Kings Mountain State Park, SC

Address: Lake Crawford Rd, Clover, SC 29710

For a discount on registration - Referral Link:

<https://register.adventuregeekproductions.com/KingsMountainMarathonHalfMarathon&Tickets/diana-burton> - Referral Promo Code: ZCFWWE

A Historic Challenge for 400 Brave Adventurers

It was a little army and a little battle, but it was of mighty portent.

In 1780, atop Kings Mountain the Patriot Militia toppled the Royal Loyalists in the Revolutionary War. When the smoke cleared on the mountain's steep western ridge, the Patriot Militia stood victorious.

"This is a place of inspiring memories. Here less than a thousand men, inspired by the urge of freedom, defeated a superior force entrenched in this strategic position." – President Herbert Hoover, October 7, 1930, atop Kings Mountain. President Teddy Roosevelt once called this small but strategic victory the "turning point of the American Revolution." And to this day, the battle's spirit lives on in the inhabitants of York County, South Carolina. Folks here carry a certain dignity because of their home's unique place in history. And why shouldn't they? It's beautiful and rugged land they live on. Which is why it won't surprise you to hear that exactly 230 years after the famous triumph, a small band of runners came directly to Kings Mountain for their own "battle."

A freak snowstorm and a last minute race cancellation had left them with little choice.

You see, just like the Patriot militia, they had something to prove. And if they could just get a race organizer to meet a few simple demands, they were going to fight for it. So they got in touch with Jefferson Nicholson, Co-Founder of Adventure Geek Productions, and inside an hour, the battle was on! Only this time the enemy wasn't a red coated army. It was the terrain itself. Specifically, 26.2 miles of it. They called the challenge Kings Mountain Marathon.

Course: This is a rolling course (think the difference between a golf course and the little engine that could). This race fulfills all of the marathonmaniacs.com requirements to count towards a marathon

completion in all 50 states. A half marathon and full marathon course have been designed and tested by local runners to provide the best scenery, safety, and support for your race experience. All half and full marathon participants will receive event t-shirts and all finishers will receive a custom finishers medal and other goodies!

Dinner with marathon friends

Sun Mar 9

Early pm Depart to Flat Rock/Asheville area – approximately 2 hours via Highway 74

Staying with Dick and Betty Roemer

Eve Susan making reservations for dinner at Champa -- an Asian fusion restaurant in nearby Hendersonville; see <http://champanc.com/menu>

Tues Mar 11

Visit family in Burnsville

See tourist sites near Asheville in Flat Rock, Biltmore. www.biltmore.com and the Grove Park Inn www.groveparkinn.com

Wed Mar 12

Drive approximately 2 hours from Flat Rock to Charlotte – turn in rental car

6:29pm Depart Charlotte CLT via UA#3444

8:30pm Arrive Newark EWR

Participants

Judy Altman arriving from Atlanta Thurs noon via DL; departing Sun 9am via DL; at same hotel

Jim Mellody arriving Thur late; at same hotel

Diane Bolton driving in from Nashville time unknown; at different hotel

John Backman?

Roscoe Douglas driving in from Macon

Charlotte C. – staying at mom's home north of Charlotte Fri night

Sent info to Rob Klein, David Reid, Lis, David Williams

See Liz and La in Charlotte?