



Memphis Marathon Trip Notes December 1-6, 2011

There were certainly times when I was thinking “Let me count the ways: this was the marathon trip from hell” and many of you know at least a handful of reasons but fortunately working on the theory that there are more positives when you focus on them

I'm glad I visited Memphis

- Little Marie and family including aunt Loudean, uncle Parker and his new mate Tim, all came and we had some good family time over a couple of meals.
- Got to see brother-in-law Carl.
- Ran with pacer and friend Diane awhile, got 2nd Age Group Award and found I was likely the oldest female in the marathon.
- Saw a ‘flock’ of other friends.
- Spent some more quality time with friend Judy.
- Lots of good tourist things to do.
- The Peabody Hotel is always a delight.



Why participate in the St Jude Marathon?

- Funds go to the St Jude Hospital – but I might have preferred forgetting the scene in the hospital during my tour the prior day, but with sad signs all along the course of pictures of sick babies it was a never ending reminder that Memphis is -- UT is the second largest hospital in the country and St Jude is huge too.
- Expo is fairly large, well thought out, and with sufficient number of vendors. There were no lines on Thursday afternoon.
- The official shirt and the medal are tasteful enough but probably not worthy of any mention. The smallest shirt is huge on me.
- Pacers are offered to 5:40. I ran nearly the first third with Diane and her 5:25 group.
- Hills were pleasantly rolling and varied. Details of the course are pictured and described at the end.
- Starting line and finish line are in good and convenient areas. Also a multitude of hotels where you can leave your hotel room at 7:55am as I did for an 8am start. (Since I was in the last corral I could have left my hotel at



8:20am.)

- Weather is probably usually pretty good. It was for this year's marathon though they'd had snow a few days prior and snow predicted (then changed) for the day after. It did storm and rain the following day. (It's been said that Dallas the same day was brutal.)
- Memphis has a large array of good tourism including Graceland, churches, museums, and Beale Street which is sort of like a small French Quarter from New Orleans.
- Restaurants are varied and great fun and especially Beale Street.
- Southern hospitality is at its best.
- Did I mention the Peabody Hotel being a delight? I heard their Sunday champagne brunch is excellent.



Undies that say "Butt Quack" and "Shut the Duck Up" and a zillion little ducky mementos can be found at the Peabody Hotel's gift shop.

What's not to like?

- The starting line has 14 (or more?) corrals and from the back it took 25 minutes to cross the start line. Still hugely better than those Rock 'n Roll marathons.
- They sell out early: the marathon and the downtown hotels both.
- Course is quite congested and it was a few miles before one could move freely. Weaving and walking was the norm. It is almost a double loop as full marathoners return to within a couple blocks of the finish line at the half way point and do many of the same roads the second time.
- Traffic is heavy and often right to the side of the runners for much of the course.
- Food on the course was basically nil and we relied on residents who came out with food or allowed me to come onto their porch where I had no hesitation to beg for food. A bunch of us (pun intended) picked up bananas from the street where runners had eaten less than half. (Road kill wasn't available.)
- Primarily concrete and asphalt surfaces not conducive to weak hips. There wasn't grass or dirt to the side like I usually seek.
- Though the finish line is to be open for 7 hours, at 6 hours the food mavens had given away all the Crispy Cream Donuts (someone who came in at 5:25 said the same thing) as well as all of the pizza. I was not to be deterred – I asked some of those walking around with full boxes if they would share and of course they did.

The course

At the end is a blow by blow description from the organizers complete with photographs of every sight on the course. Here are some of my different observations during the course. I wonder what my time could be if I'd put the camera away? But then I wouldn't be honoring my reason for being! And I wouldn't have an excuse for my time either!



Diane, pacer at Memphis and recent 100 marathon finisher; Judy, recent 50 state finisher; a young gal claiming to be a maniac proven by the pink tutu; and our three family members Judy, Loudean and Parker.



There were many Elvis on the course but this was the only Ms Elvis I saw. Here's with Diane pacer for 5:25 and still at the start. Next, I like to see costumes since it makes my Liberty Lady crown seem less silly when I have company.



Some more help to make me feel like I fit in with my crown.



Some great signs: Raise your hand if you fartlek'd and May the Course be With You.



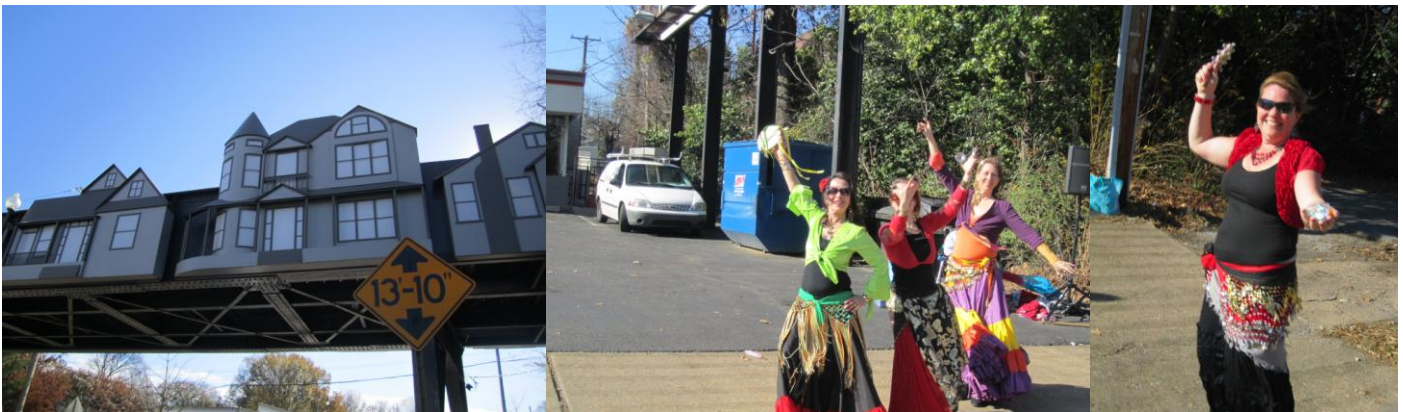
Maricar and I were the original Liberty Ladies from 2002 and here she is finishing her 50-states. Without her I might not have been running and without her coaching I might not have continued.



The signs say Toenails are for Sissies and Tis the Season to Run. Here's Maricar again with the banana and cow.



Never to be found guilty of modesty, Maricar wore her 50 on her crown, her 50 on her bib and her sign showing this to be her 75th marathon. You'll see her banner at the finish line.



This was an overpass – pretty novel decoration!



A tunnel of love that we ran through; a reminder of Tough Love; Young love on the course.



Great sign: All Walls have Doors. A local hero for providing food – donut holes.



At the finish line, there's Barb, Allison, and Maricar 50-state finisher. Waiting for all the photo opportunities to include a gaggle of Elvis look-alikes.



These are official photos: there were lots of pictures taken and almost as many as in Tulsa. Far too many of them had tissues at my nose! But clearly it was a good time suggesting that the following 'results' were even more meaningful.

Results

One might say that at this age just crossing the finish line is enough to be happy about. I am -- without a doubt. Exceedingly happy to be going at all! The prior week I was thrilled to manage Tulsa in 5:44 -- or was it the later modified time of 5:47 which included the Center of the Universe Diversion -- all of which gave me the cockiness to sign up for both Paris and Stockholm which have firm finish line closures. Stockholm pulls us at the half way mark at 2:45 so my 2:42 in Tulsa was seriously a happy and hopeful event. (Thank you to pacer Marie.)

Memphis has hills and almost as much as Tulsa but they are long rolling hills and not those that I love to run down like in Tulsa (which gives me an edge) so that fact and the warmer temperatures caused my finish time to become 6:01 -- though I did happily cross the half at a reasonable 2:48. It was after about 16-17 miles that my hips required walking. I was never able to find grass or dirt to soften the impact as I'm usually able to do.

Health: I continue utilizing dozens of tissues on the course and coughing away through the night before and the night after and on the course but I did that in Tulsa too so it's no excuse for being slower in Memphis. One toe was so annoying that I was sure it was bleeding but a review at around mile 16-17 and expectation of pouring on the Aquaphor revealed absolutely nothing. Some ghostly toe hurt. Then some weird food I begged on the course caused a stomach glitch but that too went away about as soon as I stopped to deal with it.

It was Maricar's 50th state finish

Clearly this is a big deal and like I've said before, and like Tom says of my marathoning in general, "I don't get it but I support it." There were parties and more parties. I attended the Friday dinner by invitation of Barb, took my traditional flat black bottle of 'champagne' that we all signed, in a huge

sequined red bag decorated with a 50-states finishers bumper sticker and containing an “American Flags” Buff Headgear.

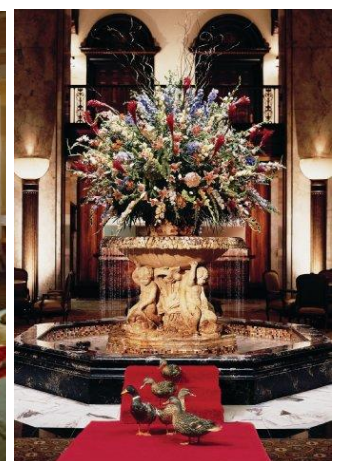


After the dinner everyone was loaned a Liberty Lady hat with '50' prominently displayed on it and a group picture was made out on Beale Street and immediately posted on Facebook. Then at the finish line there were banners and more pictures. Here we are though she was there for many group pictures and those of you on Facebook have likely already seen them: Do I understand correctly there are 500 Maricar Memphis pictures on Facebook?



Hotels

The Peabody Hotel is exactly at the start line but so are the Holiday Inn Express, Doubletree, and The Westin. I'd enjoyed the Memphis Peabody in years past for business trips, and been to the other Peabody Hotels in Orlando and Little Rock. They always live up to expectations. This one is the original and more historical. They all have the March of the Ducks. This one was at a good time of the year with holiday decorations and daily Christmas carolers and choirs joining the lobby show.



Peabody history from their website

The Peabody Hotel is a Mid-South institution, its name considered synonymous with Southern hospitality and Delta style. The 13-story hotel is an excellent example of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture and is Memphis' only historic hotel. The original Peabody was built by Colonel Robert C. Brinkley in 1869. Just prior to its opening, Brinkley received news of the death of his good friend, philanthropist George Peabody. As a sign of respect for Peabody, who endowed George Peabody College in Nashville and contributed much to the disadvantaged South, the new hotel was named The Peabody.

The original hotel was built at the corner of Main and Monroe in downtown Memphis and was considered one of the finest in the South. It had 75 rooms with private baths, a ballroom, saloon and lobby. It cost \$3 to \$4 a day for a room and meals, extra for a fire or gas light. Colonel Brinkley gave The Peabody to his daughter, Anne Overton Brinkley, as a wedding gift when she married Robert Bogardus Snowden near the end of 1869. For 96 years, the Snowden heirs would be connected directly or indirectly with the affairs of the hotel. Lavish balls were held at The Peabody. It was the place to see and be seen. The original Peabody was host to such notables as Presidents Andrew Johnson and William McKinley and Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee, Nathan Bedford Forrest and Jubal Early. Plantation owners, professional gamblers and movie stars frequented The Peabody.

The Peabody played a role in the musical history of Memphis as well. Blues musicians like Furry Lewis, Frank Stokes and Tommy Johnson all made their first recordings in rooms at the Peabody in the late '20s and early '30s, playing for talent scouts from big record labels like Vocalion and Paramount. One of just three national live radio broadcast sites during the 1930s and 40s, the Skyway and adjoining Plantation Roof of The Peabody were the undisputed attractions for big band dancers. Entertainers such as Tommy Dorsey, Paul Whiteman, Harry James and Smith Ballew appeared regularly in the Skyway. The Peabody became the hub of Mid-South social and business activities. In addition to guest rooms and apartments, the hotel offered space for 40 shops and offices, including the headquarters of the Chamber of Commerce, and the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Civilian Clubs. Cotton was "King," and Memphians were in high spirits. In the 1970s, downtown Memphis, like many urban areas, experienced a social and economic decline. Businesses, shoppers and retailers soon left the area, causing all of downtown to suffer. After several fires and changes in ownership, The Peabody closed. On August 1, 1975, The Peabody was purchased by Belz Enterprises, spearheading downtown redevelopment. After a six-year, \$25 million renovation, The Peabody reopened on September 1, 1981. Its restoration and reopening were greeted with enthusiasm, quickly restoring The Peabody to its rightful place in Memphis society. The Peabody remains the hub for downtown activity, both business and social. It retains its status as the most popular place in Memphis for weddings, debutante balls, proms, bar mitzvahs, charitable events and annual celebrations including the Cotton Carnival and Memphis in May. Many important business deals have been sealed over lunch or breakfast in the hotel's restaurants. And all summer long, Memphians enjoy amazing views of the Mississippi River at the Peabody Rooftop Parties and socialize in the Grand Lobby Bar, which Esquire magazine named "One of the Ten Best Watering Holes in America." Even celebrities continue to seek The Peabody as their place to stay during a Memphis visit.

Peabody Hotel was in full holiday bloom



Belz Museum of Asian and Judaic Art

This doesn't sound very serious, does it? Maybe that's one reason there were very few visitors. But it's a collection by the owners of The Peabody Hotel that quite spectacularly exemplifies 19th century Chinese art and reflects the opulence of Imperial China during the Qing Dynasty. Elaborate jade sculptures, intricate ivory carvings, period furnishings and textiles with symbolic meanings. Pictures weren't allowed but check out www.belzmuseum.org for some of the collection. They don't show the full size jade chariot or the full size jade horses – which I thought only the Taipei Taiwan collection stolen out of China contained. Most amazing but dumped into a series of rooms rather hodge-podge or scattered. If you know what you're looking at, it's probably worth a trip. (I've no idea where all these pictures that follow came from . . . but there were no guards anywhere.)

From their website: *The collection of Asian art at the Belz Museum of Asian and Judaic art is the largest and most comprehensive collection of Chinese art in the southern region of the United States. China is represented by outstanding works of art, many of which were created during China's Qing dynasty (1644-1911), and are*



characteristic of an ancient culture with rich artistic traditions. Artwork from this dynasty was created by artisans and craftsmen who spent many years perfecting each piece to convey the patronage of the Qing Court. The result is some of the most exquisite treasures the world has ever seen. The collection of more than 900 objects, which range in date from 202 BC to the early twentieth-century, includes intricately carved jades, ivories, sculptures, paintings, ceramics, lacquer, textiles and funerary art.



There was a room full of full size horses in jade and copper and tiger eye and cloisonné.



The white jade cabbage was most amazing in its delicate carving and lacy edges. The green jade was many feet high.



There was a large collection of Scholars Rocks and Suiseki (natural rock with a natural landscape appearance.)



I've seen these 'jade' trees in the Far East and sometimes as large as a foot tall or so. This tree was one of many that easily reached 6 feet tall. Again, here's the full size jade bridal carriage complete with full size horse.

St Jude Children's Hospital and Danny Thomas Pavilion

What a wonderful thing Danny Thomas did and the statistics amazingly show a cancer survival rate now of up to 80% versus the 25% when this research center opened. As part of our tour we saw the memorial gardens, campus, gift shop and some of us walked into the hospital. It is a scene not easily forgotten and haunted me through the marathon with all the sad pictures of sick children.



Memphis Rock 'n' Soul Museum

Excellent! No wonder AAA gives it a GEM rating saying: The museum examines the lives of such legends as Elvis Presley and B.B. King as well as the city's musical heritage and its contributions to blues, country, rock 'n' roll and soul music. Photographs, costumes and instruments shed light on rural sharecroppers' musical experiences and the sounds of Sun, Stax and Hi Records performers. Collections showcase the stories of musical pioneers in seven themed areas, including the social changes, soul music and rural music galleries. It starts with a 15-minute orientation film and best of all it offers an audio guide. Without that guide, many of the names wouldn't have meant much to me but the sounds of the artists and their background music made it all come to life for me.

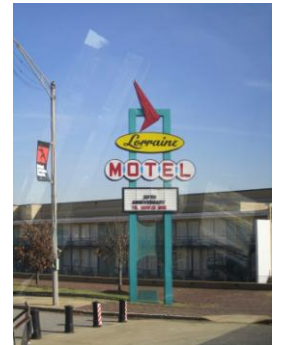
From their website: *The Memphis Rock 'n' Soul Museum's exhibition about the birth of rock and soul music, created by the Smithsonian Institution, tells the story of musical pioneers who, for the love of music, overcame racial and socio-economic barriers to create the music that shook the entire world. Located at 191 Beale, on the corner of legendary Highway 61 at the FedExForum sports and entertainment complex, the museum offers a comprehensive Memphis music experience from the rural field hollers and sharecroppers of the 1930s, through the explosion of Sun, Stax and Hi Records and Memphis' musical heyday in the 70s, to its global musical influence. The museum's digital audio tour guide is packed with over 300 minutes of information, including over 100 songs, and takes visitors at their own pace through seven galleries featuring 3 audio visual programs, more than 30 instruments, 40 costumes and other musical treasures.*

History: Born on April 29, 2000, the Memphis Rock 'n' Soul Museum, Inc. has welcomed over 200,000 visitors from all over the world, including thousands of school students who participate in the museum's Education Program to learn about the social changes that impacted the nation and led to the development of rock 'n' roll.

The “first born” of the world-renowned Smithsonian Institution and developed by the National Museum of American History (NMAH) to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Smithsonian Institution in 1996, the Memphis Rock ‘n’ Soul Museum became the first exhibition to have ever been developed by the Smithsonian Institution with another museum. In 1990, the NMAH set out to develop a traveling exhibition about “American music” and continually returned to the Delta and Memphis, Tennessee for what is finally declared as the ‘roots of America’s music’ – the sounds of field hollers, work songs, blues, country and gospel of the sharecroppers in the 1930-40s that eventually collided and fused with the urban sounds of Beale Street (urban blues and jazz), SUN Studio (rock ‘n’ roll and rockabilly), STAX Recording and HI Records (rhythm & blues, soul music). According to the Smithsonian Institution, the finest museum system in the world, “Rock ‘n’ Soul: Social Crossroads” is the story of the body of music that had the most influence on the culture and lifestyles of the world during the middle 20th Century unto this day. It affected the way we walked, the way we talked, the way we combed our hair and the way we dressed – not only in Memphis or the nation, but the entire world.

Civil Rights Museum

We can visit the Lorraine Hotel rooms where Martin Luther King was assassinated, see where James Earl Ray fired the weapon, and there’s even historically correct cars parked out front. I didn’t stay as I’d visited the National Parks MLK memorial in Atlanta and various civil rights museums and found the idea of looking at a death site darker than I wanted for a fun vacation. Others who visited came away with the same comment.



Victorian Village

Another fly-by tour through a group of 19th century buildings with homes and nine churches. During the warmer season the walking tour of this area should be good. We would run fairly close by this area too.



Beale Street

My Peabody Hotel was within two blocks and thus this was a convenient place for me to eat, drink, shop and wander. Rock ‘n’ Soul Museum was on the corner. The marathon start was at Fourth and Beale. Again, during the season there are walking tours, and also there are night life drinking tours. Judy and I wandered into a few of them and found many super noisy but worse they were thick with smoke, B.B. King’s Blues Club in particular. We stayed in the famous Silky O’Sullivan’s Irish corner bar where we’d previously seen the drinking and highwire sliding goats and where we didn’t indulge but saw the Gallon Size Beer. It is here that massive steel beams support an elaborate three-story brick façade which is all that remains of the 19th century hotel, saloon and gambling den.

Down on the opposite end of Beale Street is the Flying Saucer where we watched the wild Sexy Santa Costume party and book a load of pictures everyone was so cute. You know Flying Saucer? Drink one of each and every beer and you are inducted into the club. That could be a challenge because it’s known for its encyclopedic beer selection. A bank of windows on two sides opens up to create something like a patio to the outside. Scores of plates are displayed on the wall of those who joined this UFO Club.

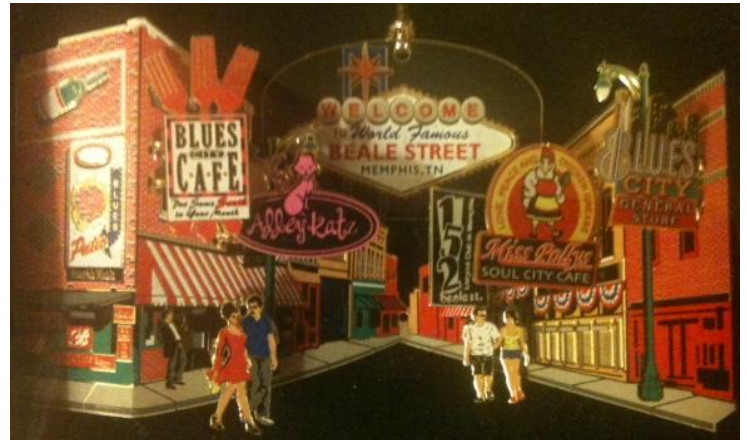
Just a couple blocks away but closer to The Peabody Hotel is Huey's where I saw frilly toothpicks covering the ceiling – it's a contest to blow these toothpicks through a straw and into the ceiling.

A favorite restaurant there was the Blues City Café where I returned three times and each time ate the whole Big Deal Plate of ribs and catfish with sides. In celebration of Maricar's 50-state finish we ate at King's Palace and were variously entertained, also with a band.

Beale Street might remind you of a small portion of the French Quarter and though it's only a couple blocks long, a bit farther down are balconies with similar FQ iron work. The tourist junk shops included the noted A. Schwab Dry Goods Store, an institution since 1876. They say if you can't find it there, you don't need it. How about the chain mail dress? Or toilet seats shaped as guitars? Even voodoo paraphernalia. Some of the stores have museums upstairs.

Only a block away is the Elvis Plaza with a full size bronze statue, overlooking the noted Orpheum Theatre. This was once the South's grandest vaudeville and movie palace and I would have liked to get inside to see and hear the 1928 Wurlitzer organ but their only showing was during a conflicting dinner arrangement. At the end of Beale Street is a Riverfront Park that was to be completed by now but apparently had flooding problems and now is scheduled for mid-2012 finalization. I walked the entire Riverfront trail with some of it bridging over the railroad and trolley tracks. It went down into the Visitors Center which overlooks Mud Island and the tram into that summer highlight, and also overlooking the "Dolly Parton" bridge (two big humps.)

The picture is of a small brass tree ornament (for Marie) showing Beale Street and the Blues City Café where Parker, Tim, Loudean, Marie and I ate the first night, and where Barb and Greg and I ate one of my last nights.



Gibson Showcase and Factory

Just one block off Beale Street, I shopped their showroom and looked at the displays but the factory tour didn't hit my fancy and I wasn't there at the precise on the hour time either. With more time I would have taken the tour.



The famous Gibson factory and showroom. No, those toilet seat guitars were not in Gibson but at nearby Beale Street and lends an air of amusement to the guitar world? It would be a guitar fanatic's utopia to step into the showroom.



Imagine being served a drink on the guitar-look table.

Graceland

Though I had nearly four hours involved with the Graceland complex and pretty much enjoyed it, I'm not sure it deserves that much time. I learned much more at some of the museums. The costumes and the car museum were my favorites. The house's audio tour was most helpful in reminding me of the sounds of the era.

From www.elvis.com: *Graceland offers a one of a kind journey through Elvis's humble beginnings and rise to superstardom with up close and personal looks at the influence that forever changed our music and our lives. Discover the ultimate rock 'n' roll experience through videos, photos, personal mementos and artifacts, movie memorabilia, stage costumes and much more.*

EXPERIENCE: Every king has a mansion. Elvis was no different. From the minute you enter the door of Graceland, you know you're on hallowed ground. The Mansion gives an intimate look into the personal life of Elvis Presley. From his humble beginnings in Tupelo, Mississippi to his Hall of Gold records, you will see the triumphs of the King of Rock 'n' Roll. It doesn't stop there. The experience is made even more personal by the audio tour narrated by Lisa Marie and featuring audio clips of the Presley family. There are exhibits, jets, automobiles and movie memorabilia to name a few. Plan to spend some time touring the Mansion and grounds.

HISTORY: The 13.8 acre estate was purchased by Elvis Presley in early 1957 at the age of 22. He moved from his home on Audubon Drive due to privacy and security concerns. The Graceland Mansion has 23 rooms including 8 bedrooms and bathrooms. After his purchase, Elvis made significant modifications to his home including a fieldstone wall surrounding the property, wrought-iron music-themed gate, swimming pool, racquetball court and the "Jungle Room" which features an indoor water fall. In 1982, five years after Elvis' death in 1977, the family opened Graceland Mansion for public tours. His custom jets, the Lisa Marie and Hound Dog II that had previously been sold, were brought back to Graceland in 1984. Later in 1989, the Automobile Museum was opened. In 1991, Graceland was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2005, it became a National Historic Landmark. With over 600,000 visitors annually, Graceland is one of the five most visited home tours in the US and is the most famous home in America after The White House. Over half of Graceland's visitors are under the age of 35.

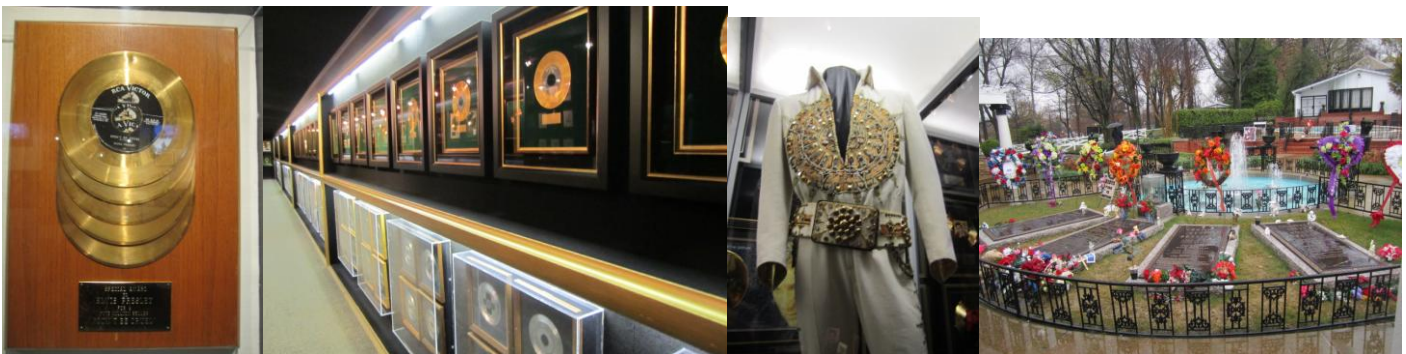
I went to Graceland for a short drive-by on the city tour, and then to spend much of the day a second day. That same day a story was breaking of a woman who claimed to be the real daughter of Elvis, suing for \$130 million, saying she was switched at birth and had DNA proof. Of course there was no mention of this claim during the tour.

*It's a Hollywood story that has endured for the best part of a decade, entwining myth and reality in a complex web of intrigue, and now it is set to get even more dramatic. A Swedish woman who has consistently maintained that she is the real daughter of Elvis Presley for the best part of two decades is now suing his estate for £83 million. Lisa Johansen, who first came to the world's attention in 1998 when she published the memoir *I Lisa Marie: The True Story of Elvis Presley's Real Daughter*, claims that Priscilla Presley was forced to give her a secret identity for her own safety after Elvis died. She sticks by the claim that Lisa Marie Presley, who was famously married to Michael Jackson, is an imposter. According to *Billboard*, the lawsuit was filed in a Tennessee federal court last week and to give her cause some fuel, she is rumored to be willing to take a DNA test.*

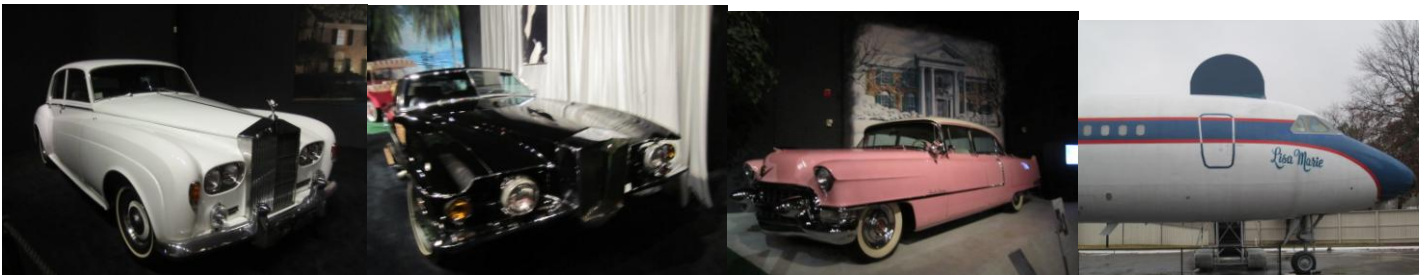
An amazing recording of Elvis and Lisa Marie together as only digitized computers can do but you'll have to request it from me or from Google since I couldn't figure out how to embed it.



Before I left there was a visit to the 50s cafe and indulging in Elvis's famously unhealthy fried peanut butter and banana sandwich.



Amazing number of gold records; separate museum for the costumes, for the cars, and for the aircraft. The gravesite just outside the house and large rolling grounds was well attended.



Elvis facts

- *Elvis Presley (not 'Elvis Presly' or 'Elvis Presely' as his name is often misspelled) (1935-1977) was the first widely known rock-and-roll singer star - and subsequently named the King of Rock and Roll. He rose from poverty to fame in the mid 1950s, attracting large audiences in concerts and especially teenage girls everywhere he went. Elvis was young and attractive, had great voice, and his sound and style were something totally unique.*
- *Elvis' musical style was a combination of black Rhythm & Blues, country, blues, pop music of the day, and gospel. His stage performance was a novelty thing in the 1950s, with lots of swiveling dance movements that some parents and church people considered vulgar and a dangerous influence to their teenagers. He even got nicknamed "Elvis the Pelvis" for his swinging dance.*
- *Elvis also started making movies in 1956 with the film "Love Me Tender" - acting had been his dream for a long time. Between 1956 and 1961 he was both recording, giving live concerts, and making movies (with*

the exception of his time in army) and achieved international fame. Other movies from this early period are "Loving You", "Jailhouse Rock", and "King Creole". Soon after returning from the army in 1961 he abandoned singing to live audiences and turned exclusively to film making.

- *1960s saw Elvis acting in one movie after another (for example "Flaming Star", "Blue Hawaii", and "Viva Las Vegas"), until finally his films ended up being produced like from an assembly line with a set pattern. Elvis grew dissatisfied with his acting career and totally quit making movies in 1969. Instead he started giving live concerts again - encouraged by the good response of the TV special aired in 1968 and by the triumphant success of a month-long concert engagement at the Las Vegas International Hotel in 1969.*
- *The time from 1970 till his death at 1977 Elvis spent touring in concerts all over the United States - around 1,000 concerts total. He also had long engagements in Las Vegas International Hotel each year. He made history with these elaborate shows, his costumes (most often various jumpsuits) breaking box office records.*
- *Elvis died totally unexpectedly in 1977 from heart attack, prescription drug abuse being indicated as a cause.*
- *Elvis Presley married Priscilla Beaulieu in 1967 after 7 years of courtship. They had one child, Lisa Marie Presley, born in 1968. They separated in 1972, Priscilla retaining the custody of Lisa Marie.*
- *Elvis has sold over 1 billion albums worldwide, has over 100 gold/platinum awards for his singles and albums within the United States and is by far the most popular artist ever. His records, CDs, and movies continue to sell well even today.*

What's next?

With only two days home, Tom and I would be off to Budapest from December 9-18 and then home through the holidays to host 13 year old Marie from Christmas though January 3.

The New Year will take me to Disney (for another try at Goofy 5 years later – sort of like a rite of passage?), touring in Winter Park, then flying to New Orleans for the Baton Rouge marathon, ending with a stay at the historical Monteleone Hotel in the French Quarter. I'll be home in time to pick up sister Beverly for a week's trip to include 5 days at Kripalu Yoga Retreat in the Berkshires. February brings a trip to Florida first for the Tallahassee marathon (I like capital cities) followed by Jacksonville's '26.2 with Donna." From February 17-29 hopes to be a hike Hawaii's Kauai and the Big Island, then after a marathon (and reunion of a large family of marathoners) at Red Rock Canyon outside of Las Vegas Tom will join me for a few days renewing acquaintances with the town and in particular two repeats of Cirque shows. Marie comes again for Spring break the day we get home and stays for ten days before I head out to Seattle for a journey to the Yakima River Canyon marathon in celebration of Bob Dolphin's 600th marathon. April to Paris from April 8-18 to include the marathon and so it goes.

If my legs cooperate then Stockholm's 100th anniversary marathon might be my 100th marathon, my 10th international marathon, and all before I turn 67. A nice birthday gift to myself? And for good luck and just in case, I'm trying to arrange the Australian Outback Marathon the following week yet logistics are proving to be a challenge. Tom and I were in Sydney in the early 70s and have at various times talked about returning.

Is Life Good? You bet!

Course description in detail



The final 3 miles of the half-marathon and the final 10K of the marathon are downhill

Race Day Logistics

The race venue is [Autozone Park](#) in the middle of downtown Memphis. For those staying at a downtown hotel it is a simple walk to the starting line. There is ample parking available at surface lots and parking garages. Arrive early for the best spots and to avoid the traffic congestion and street closures associated with the Memphis Grizzlies House 5K which starts at 7:15.



Autozone Park has covered areas in case of inclement weather, restrooms and is the location of bag check and the finish line

In order to allow for parking, walking, restroom visits, bag check and walking the 2 -3 blocks to your start corral you should plan to be downtown no later than 6:30 a.m. and have your gear dropped off at bag check on the concourse level inside Autozone Park no later than 7:15. Once you head to the start corrals there are porto-johns and water available. *(Tip: be sure and put some dry clothes and shoes in your gear check bag. You will get chilled quickly post-race. I see runners every year walking around shivering because they did not bring a change of clothes.)*

Spectators: If you are not intimately familiar with the course and the streets of downtown and midtown Memphis I strongly encourage you to remain downtown. Trying to drive out to see your runner on the course can lead to closed streets, traffic jams and the inability to get back downtown to see them finish. Watch the start near the [FedEx Forum](#). Then walk one block to [Beale St.](#) and see the runners pass by mile 3. The half marathoners will then finish inside Autozone Park on the field. The marathoners will pass FedEx Forum again near miles 13 and 14.

The Start



St Jude uses a wave start system that works very well. By staggering corrals by two minutes each runner gets a smooth start and is able to get up to race pace quickly. If you seed yourself correctly it is a great system. Look for the pace markers in each corral. It is simple. A slow runner too far up will get trampled and a fast runner too far back will be negotiating slower traffic.



The race begins in the shadow of FedEx Forum at 4th and Beale

The Early Miles - Downtown

The first mile meanders through downtown and the South Main district. The streets are wide and you should have no problems with crowding. After passing the [National Civil Rights Museum](#) and the first aid station next to Central Station you will soon be turning right onto Riverside Drive near mile 1.5.



One of the best views of downtown Memphis and the Mississippi River greets you as you run down Riverside Drive.

Take advantage of this nearly one mile downhill all the way to Beale St.



The Beale St Hill

Once you turn right onto Beale St., near mile 2.5, you face the first real obstacle of the course. The short, but steep, climb up the river bluff will get your attention. Relax and do not push too hard. It is too early to max out your heart rate. It is only two short blocks (about 275 yds).



You are rewarded with a downhill and the biggest crowds of the day on Beale St. as you make your way back past Autozone Park and mile 3.



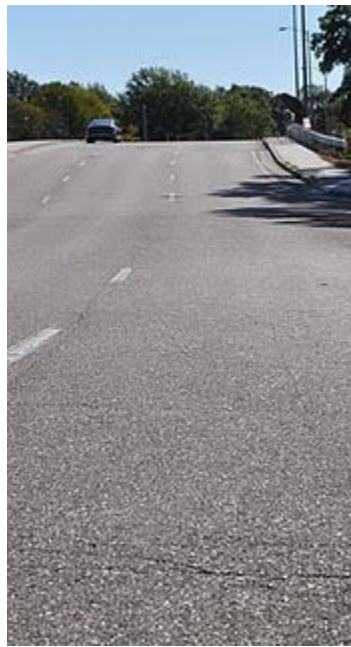
You will pass the Pyramid at mile 4 and then make your way through the St Jude campus



If being cheered on by the patients, families and caregivers at St. Jude does not put a lump in your throat... nothing will.

Heading East

After you exit the St. Jude campus onto North Parkway, at mile 5, you get a straight, three mile shot, out a tree-lined, relatively flat stretch, except for...



...the I-240 overpass at mile 6...



...and the Cleveland underpass just past mile 6

Between miles 7 and 8 you will pass the Overton Park Zoo on your right and Rhodes College on your left.



At mile eight you turn off of North Parkway into Overton Park.



Overton Park

Overton Park is the site of many local 5Ks and offers a nice tree-lined setting. However, be prepared for the 2nd surprise hill of the day.



After you pass the Memphis College of Art you take a hard left and face a fairly challenging hill at mile 9.5



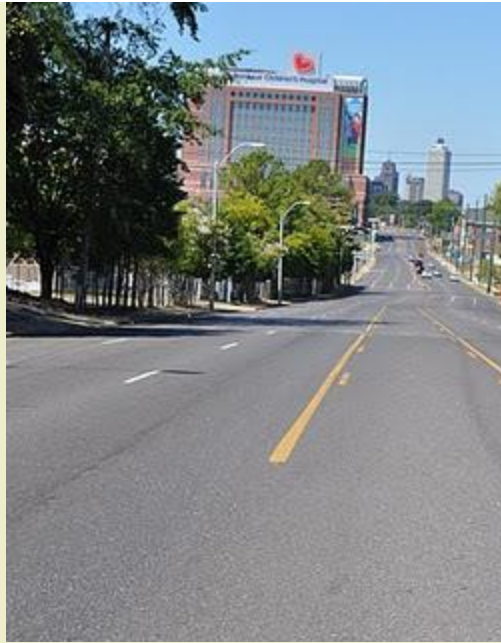
Art Museum Hill is about 350 yds long. It is manageable as long as you know it is coming.

Heading Back Downtown

After exiting the park and turning right on Poplar the half-marathoners are headed for home. The marathoners are headed to... well... halfway.



Poplar Ave has a few rolling hills along its two mile stretch. These hills are the type that you would hardly notice while driving.



Once you pass mile 11 you get a glimpse of the big red heart on top of LeBonheur Children's Hospital and the downtown skyline. Turn left at LeBonheur, on Manassas, and mile 12 is just ahead.

The Fork-In-The-Road



At mile 12.5 the half-marathoners turn right on Marshall and the marathoners continue straight on Union.



This intersection is significant in the history of music. Sun Studios is where Sam Phillips first recorded Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Howlin' Wolf, BB King, Ike Turner, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison and invented the rock-and-roll sound.

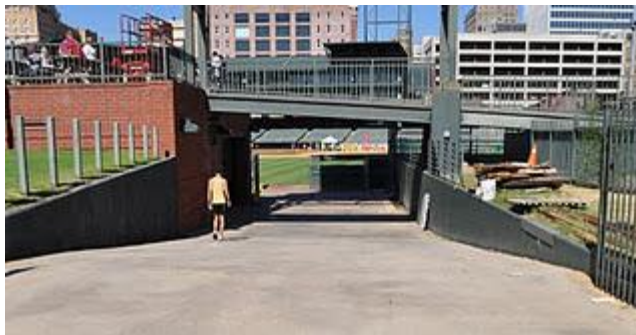
(Tip: Marathoners should be prepared mentally for a significant thinning of the crowd at this intersection when the half-marathoners turn for home.)

The Half Marathon Finish

After turning in front of Sun Studios there is just over a half-mile to the entrance to Autozone Park.



When you pass the Wonder Bread bakery (the scent of baking bread is well known to generations of Memphians!) you have a gentle 1/4 mile downhill all the way to the stadium.



Run through the outfield gate of the stadium, circle the warning track to the finish line.

The Marathon Continues...

Marathoners head down Beale St. again passing the halfway mark and circling a few blocks around the FedEx Forum. Spectators can catch you near 13.5 miles (4th and Beale) and then one block south just before mile 14 (4th and Linden) as you head out of downtown for your second loop.



Linden to Peabody to Cooper -Young

Miles 14 through 17.5 will lead you out Linden and then Peabody, a beautiful, tree-lined street in the historic Central Gardens neighborhood.



Peabody will roll a bit but has no significant climbs



When you pass under this decorative railroad trestle you will be in the Cooper-Young district of shops and restaurants and soon pass mile 18



Union Ave, underpass on East Parkway

When you exit Young Ave onto East Parkway you face two short hills between 19 and 19.5 miles as you pass under the railroad bridge near Christian Brothers University and the Union Ave. overpass. The downhills will hurt more than the short inclines. Once you get past these obstacles you are soon rewarded with mile 20 at Poplar and East Parkway.

Headed Home

Turn left onto North Parkway you will retrace your steps past Rhodes College and the Zoo (mile 21). It is flat except for the underpass/ overpass combo at mile 22.5 and mile 23. The short downhills will hurt more than the uphills. Be prepared mentally.



North Parkway underpass a mile 22.5



Between miles 23 and 24 you will begin to see glimpses of the Pyramid in the distance. Stay focused but know that the end is near!



When you pass mile 24 the sprawling St. Jude campus again appears to your left

As you make a counter clockwise loop around the St. Jude campus perimeter you can draw inspiration from the true struggles going on inside those buildings. That dose of perspective can help propel you over the last two miles



Fire Station #1 awaits just past mile 24.5

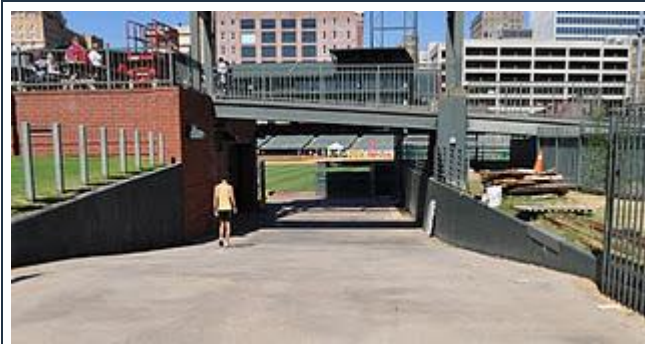


You will pass mile 25 on Alabama St. just before making this right turn onto Danny Thomas Blvd



Pass under Union then turn right to run up the entrance ramp

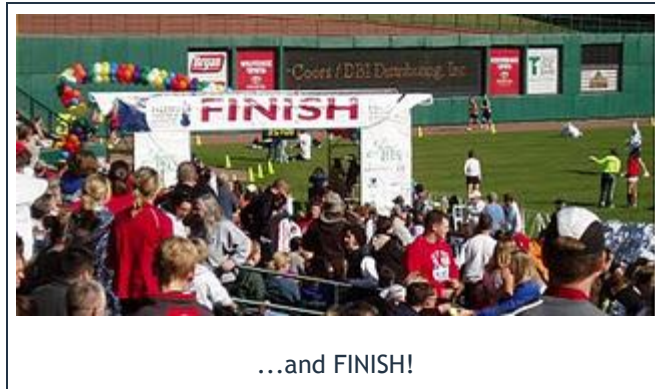
One last short incline awaits as you take the ramp up to Union Ave. Once you turn left onto Union, mile 26 and Autozone Park are visible. You have about 600 yards to go! Run down Union for approximately 350 yds. Turn right on 4th and the stadium entrance is less than 175 yds away.



Turn left and run down the ramp into the stadium



...circle the perimeter of the field...



...and FINISH!

After You Finish

Once you finish and receive your medal you make your way from the baseball field up the stadium stairs to the concourse. The concourse level will be very crowded with tired runners, family and friends. I encourage you to go straight to bag check and get your warm, dry clothes. Then head for the "runners-only" food area to refuel. Have your family meet you where the food area exits into the stadium plaza. Another great feature: the stadium locker rooms are open to runners to shower and change. Be sure and bring a towel.

Itinerary

Thu Dec 1

12:30pm Depart Newark EWR via CO#4218
2:00pm Arrive Memphis MEM

There is an airport shuttle by TennCo at \$15 each and runs until 6pm. Turns out TennCo never answered their phone nor came for a reservation by another passenger 40 minutes later so we shared a taxi for \$32 total. They equally failed for the return trip. A local company called "Last Minute Transportation" at 901 428 4854 came to the rescue and have good prices at \$25 over a \$32 taxi ride.

Noon Expo at Memphis Cook Convention Center, 255 North Main Street, until 6pm.
Walk is about .85 mile.

Hotel: Peabody Memphis
149 Union Avenue, Memphis, TN 38103 Tele: 901 529 4000

Following a tradition of Southern hospitality which began in 1869 when The Peabody first opened its doors. Located in the heart of downtown Memphis, Tennessee, the "South's Grand Hotel," is exactly where you want to be in the city - within walking distance of Beale Street, the Memphis Rock N Soul Museum, National Civil Rights Museum, Orpheum Theatre, Belz Museum of Asian & Judaic Art, Gibson Guitar Factory, and the sporting venues where the Memphis Grizzlies and Memphis Redbirds play. The Peabody Ducks are ready to greet you and your family and perform their twice daily march, maintaining a Southern tradition begun over 75 years ago.

Fri Dec 2

11:00am Expo at Memphis Cook Convention Center, 255 North Main Street, until 9pm.

5:30pm Dinner in honor of Maricar's 50th state finish at Kings Palace Café
162 Beale Street, Memphis 38103 Tele: (901) 521-1851 - <http://kingspalacecafe.com/>

Walk down Beale Street and you see blues club after blues club. If you want some jazz, drop in to King's Palace Cafe. A dimly lit, cozy little joint offering a full menu of appetizing Southern delicacies, such as the rack of ribs or Cajun specialties. The dining area features plenty of room for hungry patrons, but step off to the side area for a comfortable, relaxed evening of local jazz, usually featuring Memphis Jazz Trio featuring Michaelyn Oby.

Per Barb Damon -- Thanks to Mary's persistence and charm, we have secured a downtown location to gather your 'peeps' for a pre-marathon celebration (some people, such as Mary, will not be 'staying over' on Saturday night). It seems Memphis gets pretty full for St. Jude's weekend... The good news is that it is downtown, that we are reserved for 5:30 PM, it is a 'sister' restaurant to one of the recommendations that you had, and that it looks as if we can have separate checks (this was another arrangement Mary worked out, although gratuity may be added already).

Because the manager gave Mary the impression that he was making a huge exception even TAKING a reservation (it is supposed to be first-come first-served that evening apparently), he indicated that we have a pretty strict '15'-top (probably can't add). With your provided list, and with Nancy Marino and Paul Milo added, we are at 14:

Maricar Korff 908-907-5054

Allison Roth 732-357-5648

Mary Lenari 941-321-2367

Barb and Greg Damon 503-320-6614/503-522-5062

Loudean Marks, David Parker and Tim (I advised Barb that Marie would be along.)

David Holmen, Diana Burton, Carl Greeson, Pascal Radley, Nancy Marino, Paul Milo

Sat Dec 3

8:00am Marathon with wave starts at Autozone Park in the middle of downtown Memphis.
www.stjudemarathon.org/

With the race beginning (and ending) in Downtown Memphis, participants will pass many of the city's most popular landmarks and attractions including the Mississippi River, Beale Street, Sun Studio (where Elvis Presley first recorded),

the National Civil Rights Museum and the campus of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Runners will experience a dynamic finish at AutoZone Park, home of the Redbirds, Memphis' AAA baseball team.

Course description at end.

Celebrate at the Beale Street After Party and Awards Ceremony from 1:30 - 4 p.m. with live "Memphis music" as well as food and drink specials.

Tue Dec 6

12:17pm Depart Memphis MEM via CO#4462

3:55pm Arrive Newark EWR

Car at airport because Tom has Taurus Party at 6pm.

Participants:

Maricar Korf at Doubletree Hotel 185 Union Ave. Tele 901 528 1800

Deana from Greece at Peabody

Mary Lenari at Peabody

Diane at Comfort Inn Fri and Sat and pacing 5:25 group

Judy Altman at Gen X Inn arriving Thursday to Monday

David Holmen at Hampton Inn outside town

Parker, Tim, Loudean and Marie at Hampton Inn outside out of town

Barb and Greg Damon arriving Thursday pm to Monday am and at Marriott near to Expo
(dinner Thursday or Sunday evening?)

Bev, Carl and Krista

Plenty of things to do:

Beale Street entertainment and shopping district – a New Orleans feel

Peabody Hotel twice a day duck parade

Memphis is officially known as the “Home of Blues”

Art Museum at the University of Memphis

Museum of Asian Art

Center for Southern Folklore

Confederate Park

Cotton Museum at Memphis Cotton Exchange

Danny Thomas/Alsac Pavilion at St Jude’s

Dixon Gallery and Gardens

Elmwood Cemetery with gardens

Elvis Presley’s Graceland *

Elvis Fashion King Exhibit

Elvis Auto Museum

Elvis’s Custom Jets

Graceland Mansion

Sincerely Elvis Museum

Fire Museum

Forrest Park

Memorial park

Memphis Botanic Gardens

Brooks Museum of Art *

Memphis Pink Palace museum *

Memphis Rock ‘n Soul Museum *

Mud Island River Park with tours *
Mississippi River Museum
National Civil Rights Museum *
National Ornamental Metal Museum
Slave haven Underground Railroad Museum
Stax Museum of American Soul Music
Sun Studio
W.C. Handy Memphis Home and Museum
Woodruff-Fontaine House

*AAA Gems – more than many towns

Boat tours aboard the Memphis Riverboats – I'd be surprised if they are running in December
Bus and Carriage Tours
Gibson Guitar Factory Tours
Walking tours – several but if they are running is the question