



Golden Gate Coastal Trail Run and Kansas City Trip Notes February 7 – 16, 2013

This trip was much more than the marathon but since that's the usual first focus of my trip notes – so here goes if I can just remember back to this trip

I'd been expecting a week long hike in Maui but when it got canceled for lack of interest (their loss – it would have been my second hike there) I looked up www.marathonguide.com and found this February 10th marathon trail run. Forget that it was 4950 feet of elevation change on single track that it was rocks and gravel, etc. -- it was in my dearly beloved San Francisco and over the Golden Gate's north side where I really didn't know. (Much later note – just booked another trip to San Francisco for July.)



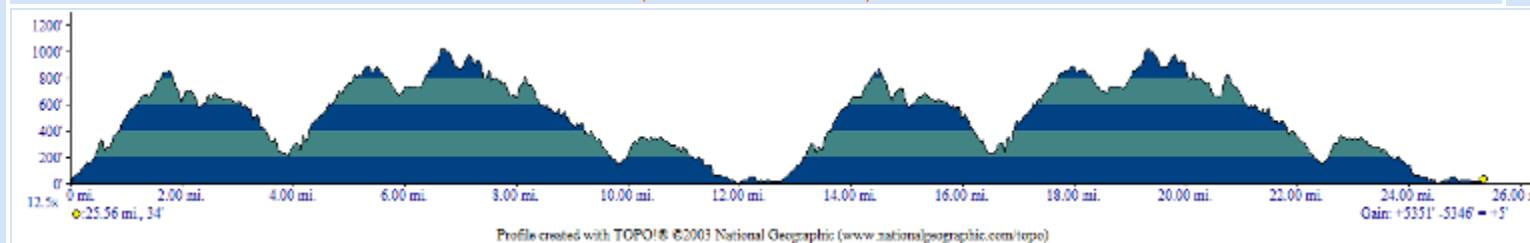
Headlines:

- A marathon organization group known for putting on good events. See www.coastaltrailruns.com/gg_golden_gate.html
- Location: Rodeo Beach, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, CA – enough said. I'd been to Point Reyes National Seashore about 30 miles north in October and though only about 30 miles north, a world away there being so much to see and do in California.
- Entry fee of something under \$55 which included nice tech shirt and loads of food.
- Marathon has 4950 feet of elevation gain over single track dirt. Views of one body of water or another were continuous.
- Rodeo Beach was on my recon the evening before and then on Sunday and it was hard to keep one's eyes off the surfer guys.
- I finished half in 4:18 and decided I had no need to do a second loop. This is a story of SIGNS in itself. Later.
- I got my first "sign" – I forgot my Liberty Lady Crown.
- Didn't help that I'd been walking and touring in SFO all day the day before.
- Got 1st place in my age group: honest story is that there were no others in my age group. Some might say that anybody my age should know better (smile.)



Distance	Elevation Gain	Single Track	Dirt Road	Asphalt
5 mi	1,010'	60%	33%	7%
Half Marathon	2,420'	45%	40%	15%
30 Km	3,900'	39%	47%	14%
Marathon	4,840'	45%	40%	15%
50 Km	6,320'	42%	44%	14%

(Per Avocet Altimeter)



Signs and more Signs

- First I forgot my Liberty Lady Crown. This was sort of good since I really don't like the LEO in me that needs the attention and I'd been thinking of getting rid of the Crown. Maybe it was a Freudian slip?
- Then I started out with some wonderful ladies, Tracy and Patty, and really didn't want to leave them and they were smartly only doing the half marathon.
- At the first hill, a very steep one, I wondered what the heck I thought I was doing there huffing and puffing.
- I've been thinking about all the muscle lost in marathons. I work hard at weight training and then have to go start over again after a marathon breaks down so much muscle. Are half marathons healthier? Could I do more if I didn't try to beat myself up?
- It's clear that if you're done in three hours there's food left. I'd never be done with a full marathon in less than 6 hours any more.
- Speed demon I am not and it's hard to find marathons that give over 6 hours. Was it only 2006 that I qualified for Boston with a 4:25? It won't happen again.
- Hikes I love: they give all day, time to eat along the way, no rush to the finish line so one can enjoy scenery and still get the same amount of distance,
- I probably wanted and needed a 'sign.'



So – I've just changed some marathons to half marathons and decided this was the SIGN of the TIMES. Something good to be said about being done with some things as in: been there/done that. I've qualified for Boston, I've done 100 plus marathons and I've done the Big Five.

Storms

I got away from the northeast just before the Storm Nemo hit. Remember last October I was in the SFO area (for the Morgan Hill marathon south of San Jose) and hurried home in time to experience Hurricane Sandy, then the year before I was stuck in Seattle an extra five days due to Hurricane Irene. Maybe the hurricane predictors will start using my west coast itineraries as a predictor?

I love San Francisco!

Upon arrival on Thursday I got to drive through the **Golden Gate Park**, seeing some of the sights from three of my marathons in SFO and more recently the Bay/Bare-to-Breakers run. My drive also went through the new **Presidio Park** and into **Mill Valley** and up even more north into **San Rafael**. It was more north than I'd expected or intended but only 10 miles north of the marathon host hotel which hotel didn't sound good at all.

Friday gave me a drive along the **Coastal Highway #1** curving up and around and around narrow roads to **Stinson Beach** and their little town and park area, onto **Mt Tamelpais** and into **Muir Woods**. I'd only been in these woods once before and always intended to do more hiking there so I got a 2 ½ hour hike up the **Coastal Skyline Trail**, down **Lost Trail** and through the 'boardwalks' of this national park. I had some thought of hiking a bit on the famous **Dipsea Trail** and started out on it but had enough and besides it's hard and one of the bridges was out. I would soon learn what hard is!

I continued the curvy roads and went up to the very top of **Mt Tamelpais** remembering that's where Dean Karnas trains. I watched for him along the roadway hoping to see him running his hundreds of miles all the while ordering whole pizzas delivered roadside which he'd roll up and eat on the run. True. His book and stories in "Marathon Man" are amazing.

Running tiring? That kind of curvy high cliff driving is very tiring and I pulled over often to let others pass and also to take pictures and stretch my legs. It was WAY WAY down to the wee village of **Stinson Beach** and then an overlook of **Muir Beach** before heading home by an even curvier and dramatically high **Shoreline Drive**.

Since SIRI and GPS was totally down (Can you imagine Siri saying "I'm very sorry but I am unable to help you now. Would you please try again later?") I was given the opportunity to drive through a number of smaller towns such as **Mill Valley, Larkspur, Corte Madera** then through the much too large and Plain Jane downtown of **San Rafael**,

Saturday I got up super early like 6:30am (ugh!) and found my way to **Larkspur** to catch the ferry to the **Ferry Building** and a **farmers' market** I love but which my last few traveling companions did not. I had the day to totally stroll, look, talk, taste and enjoy the market.

Round Trip ferry amazingly low price at \$9 one way or half that for seniors. It can be caught from Larkspur to the SFO Ferry Terminal or from Sausalito to the Ferry or to Fisherman's Wharf. I'd had the early big breakfast but was looking forward to eating my way through the Market anyway.

There were a bunch of obnoxious young Japanese adults in line and then on board. They seem to need to dress in a manner that calls attention to them too. Guess I'm glad it's not only Americans who make spectacle of themselves.

Not only am I getting a reputation of bringing storms to the East when I'm in the West, but I'm here just in time for record gas prices too. It's no wonder they have more electric cars here. Tom and I have talked about how we have a way of increasing foreign currency exchange rates by whatever countries we choose.

The Farmers Market was not a disappointment: Food and more food. Samples, shopping, and a whole bag of almond brittle with dark chocolate coffee. Californians much enjoy and are willing to pay for good food and they probably do so much more than any place I've ever been. Even the **Blue Bottle Coffee** shop despite high prices always has a very long line no matter when I go.

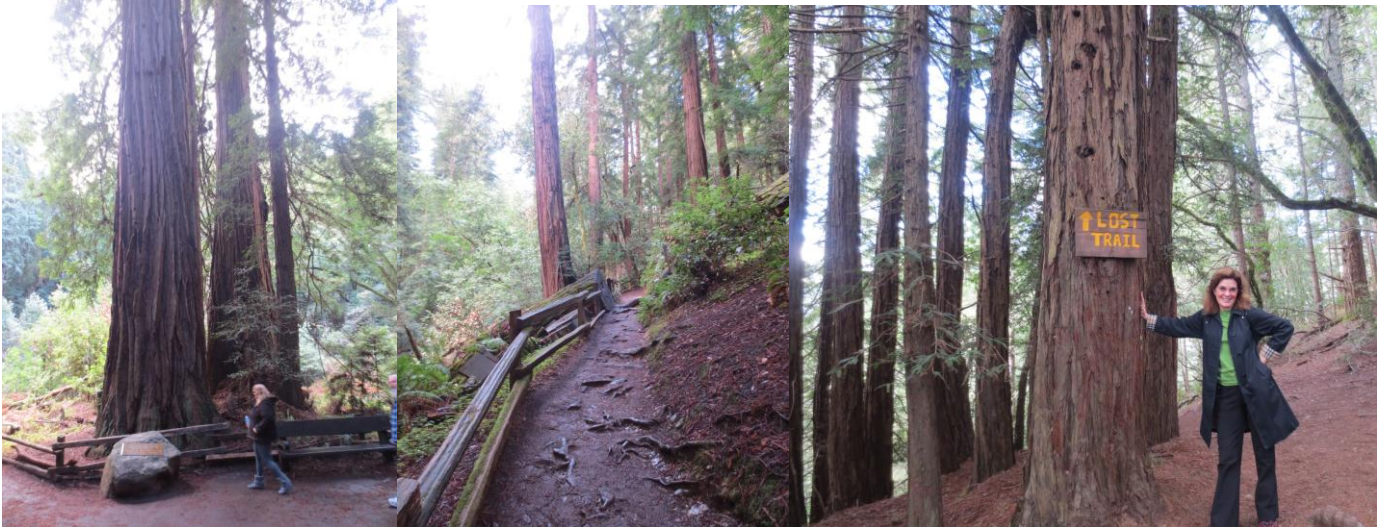
My second main goal of the day was to visit the **Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art** but not until stopping by **The Grove** at 3rd and Mission for coffee and where I would return later for early dinner.

Got back to Larkspur just in time to find the running store for bib and t-shirt pick up plus a few questions before heading out to Rodeo Beach for a recon mission. The sun was setting giving dramatic pictures and the next morning I would see the sun rise from there. And more surfer boys.

Sunday of course was **the marathon** and though I only did a half, it took longer than many take for a full (but flat) marathon. After leaving the gals I indulged in my usual pig out at my favorite post marathon eating place: McDonalds for a Swiss and Mushroom Angus Burger.

Monday took me down south to **Menlo Park** to meet up with Tracy who then toured me through local towns and in particular about five hours through **Stanford University** where she schooled and sometimes lectures and often takes in their resources and entertainment. I couldn't have had a better tour guide and even met the President of Alumni who was doing a favor for Tracy and who she'd only seen the day before so it was a coincidence to run into him plus some other friends.

Miscellaneous pictures



Drove to Muir Woods and I obviously wasn't dressed for it but when I saw a sign for a trail 1.7 miles UP, away I went. On the way down I switched to "Lost Trail" and wouldn't have minded as I had a lot of time but I uniquely and unusually found my way.



John Muir says: In every walk with nature, one received far more than one seeks. I collected a series of mushroom pictures within the woods – they looked like bouquets. This last picture of the Golden Gate Bridge was from the ferry crossing from Larkspur (just north of Sausalito) over to the Ferry Building for the start of my day in the city.



The greens are a combo of broccoli and cauliflower. Only in Peru have I seen so many types of potatoes. Then there's all the salmon in a variety of dishes. The oyster man is always there too.



With all those fresh vegetables and lettuces and mushrooms, there won't be many takers for the "Praise the Lard" t-shirts.



Tom loves roosters. They are lucky in Asian circles. There were cooking sessions going on. I'd entered from the water into the Ferry Building but I exited the Embarcadero as I started my walk in the city.



It's hard not to stop by and look into the Palace Hotel – and remember that we'd been denied entry before. After a stop by a favorite restaurant for coffee, it was the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) and their frivolous rooftop sculpture garden. The view included over onto The Marriott Hotel.



It's the building of MOMA that appeals to me. Much of the art work is hard for me to understand or appreciate but I did like the poster of the Golden Gate Bridge. I'd later walk through the parks and this is the MLK memorial where you walk behind the waterfall to read his quotes.



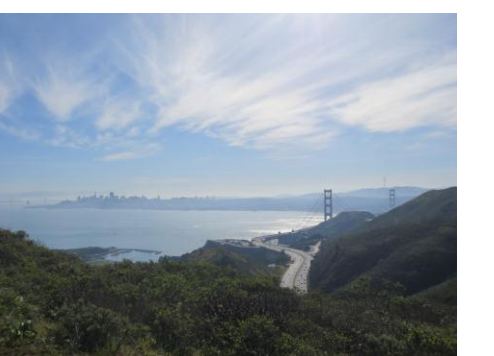
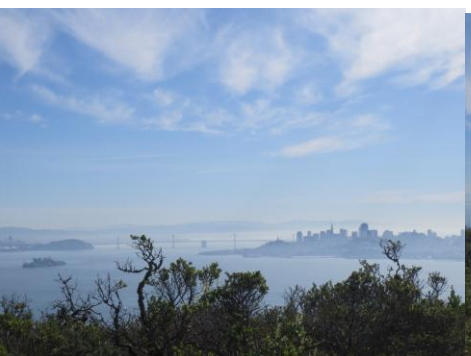
I'd fully believed this poster when I bought the pound of almond brittle and ate it all. Mind-blowing, Marriage-saving, Moan-Inducing fine chocolate. Had I been gone from home too long? Next up, a sunset at the Rodeo Beach, site of the next morning's marathon. What was I doing walking all day?



Tracy, Patty and I trying to stay warm at the start, then up high in the hills for our major climbs.

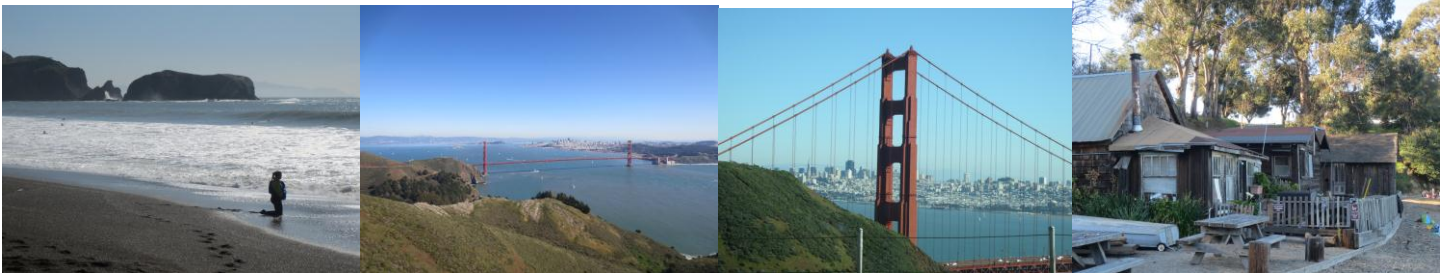


Most generous fluid and food stations and I'm sure that I gained on this marathon. The views were sometimes foggy but always dramatic. The trail was sometimes wide and covered and sometimes wide open and rocky. Going up was the easy part – some of the downhill was loose gravel and treacherous and yet always with fabulously glorious views.





Patty drove this little special sporty Tesla. I'd seen them when I visited Tracy in October as her home of Menlo Park is home to the Tesla's beginning. It about had enough room for two and a purse. No more! Hot car but only takes 19 cents to fill it up.



Some cold ocean water on the legs is always a good idea. After I would drive up to the top of those mountains on the north side of the bridge. Later I would drive out to China Camp Beach where an original setting of Chinese fishermen village remains. It was a very long way's out there. The next day – onto Stanford University in Palo Alto about 1 ½ hours south.



It was a special honor to have a five hour tour of Stanford by Tracy. We drove and we walked. The Cantor Museum houses massive numbers of Rodin sculptures and some were out on loan to my next destination – Kansas City's Nelson-Atkins Museum.



This series of couples in sculpture set off a roar at even Stanford but it must have been a very long time ago because single sex couples is the norm in this area now. It's often said that the most gorgeous professional good looking smart men live in San Francisco but they are already taken – by another man. Next is a kiosk type set up in one of the many eating establishments – it connects direct to MIT. Then is the chapel and that's gold mosaic on the front as well as all the art work inside.



One of many stained glass windows inside the chapel. The huge campus has many water fountains too and this one contains an odd sculpture referred to as The Claw. We stumbled upon a park multiple with wood carvings from the islands.



There are old buildings, there are modern buildings, and there are apparently competition to build buildings in one's own name. Tracy knew them all and I'd not be surprised but what to see a building in her name one day. We then drove the local town and saw the first Apple store.



The following day I drove up to Lincoln Park to explore the gardens and overlook the city once again. See the bridge in the background? The Legion of Honor Museum has a Thinker by Rodin. How many Thinkers are there? No wonder I thought I'd seen too many of them – there are 28. Seems Rodin gave all his estate to France with the right to cast 'originals' with a certain number going to museums and even more to private sales. I'd been in the Parisian Rodin museum as well as the Philadelphia Rodin, and soon would see even more in Kansas City.



I went to the Legion of Honor Museum for the “Louis IX to Marie Antoinette” exhibit but pictures weren’t allowed. If I looked, we had most of the pictures anyway as the items were on loan from the Louvre that we’ve seen recently. In this case the explanation was better and less numbers of items so it was more educational. While there I saw the Animals exhibit (look closely!), the book binding exhibit, many of the Rodin I’d seen last October while there in the famous organ recital room, and also the Olympic exhibit with one of the more emotional memories being the Golden Gate Bridge in a poster. I’ve run over that bridge for the marathon three times, rode my bike over a couple times, walked over it and down into Sausalito at least twice, walked over it in October on my way to Point Reyes, and now drove it four times.

Next up – Kansas City and family visits

I’ve never made family trip reports so I won’t add those pictures and start now but my first full day I did see daughter Alayna and grandson Joseph and his girlfriend Brittany both for lunch and dinner. Sister Beverly drove in from Columbia and joined us for dinner, staying over the next day for a visit to the Nelson-Atkins Art Museum. That afternoon we picked up Marie from school and then Marie and I shopped and had a Valentines dinner at the zillion year old Cascones. The next day I met Marie and Loudean and went over to Westport Village for Marie’s try-outs, then dropped her for a weekend of rehearsals and concerts at UMKC. That evening Joe joined us for dinner in historic Parkville where Tom had finished schooling when we met in 1968. The next day I drove to Liberty for some time with Brother Bruce before ending at the airport on my way home very late.

Miscellaneous tourist pictures



Some of these scrolls only come out once every ten years due to their age and sensitivity to light and being from 1100 and 1300. It is said they are like being able to see the Sistine Chapel in that they are so rare. Yet they were interspersed with Rodin sculptures and the like as well as Chinese mementos like this huge end tile of warrior.



We had our meal of the day in this courtyard between exploring more. Chinese, old masters, scholar's rocks and real suiseki rocks as well as many long scrolls.

All good things have to come to an end. Between family and touring it was a good five days but it was time to head home and get ready for my next adventure to Israel for the Jerusalem Marathon.

Itinerary

Thu Feb 7

8:30am Depart home to airport
11:00am Depart Newark EWR via UA#1120
2:32pm Arrive San Francisco (SFO)

Rental Car Thrifty #FRH40V standard car

Host Hotel Larkspur Hotel, 160 Shoreline Highway, Mill Valley 94941 – now a Holiday Inn Express
Tele: 415 332 5700

Hotel Embassy Suites San Rafael – Marin County
101 McInnis Parkway, San Rafael, CA 94903 Tele 415 499 9222
This hotel is about 11 miles or 15 minutes north on 101 from host hotel Larkspur Hotel, 160 Shoreline Highway, Mill Valley, CA 94941 Tele 415 332 5700

Fri Feb 8

Hike Muir Woods
Dinner with Tracy Hughes

Sat Feb 9

Pick up bib or is that only morning of marathon?
Ferry to SFO

Sun Feb 10

7:00 - 7:45am Bib Number & Shirt Pick-Up at Rodeo Beach
8:00am Golden Gate Trail Run at Rodeo Beach
http://www.coastaltrailruns.com/gg_golden_gate.html

Driving directions to Golden Gate Trail Run from hotel – 18 miles or 27 minutes:

1. Head southwest on McInnis Pkwy toward Civic Center Dr - 0.3 mi
2. Turn right onto Civic Center Dr - 0.4 mi
3. Turn left onto Manuel T Freitas Pkwy - 0.1 mi
4. Merge onto US-101 S via the ramp to San Fransisco - 10.0 mi
5. Continue onto CA-1 S - 3.6 mi
6. Take exit 442 toward Sausalito - 308 ft
7. Turn right onto Alexander Ave - 0.3 mi
8. Slight left onto Danes Dr - 0.1 mi
9. Slight left onto Bunker Rd - 2.5 mi
10. Slight right to stay on Bunker Rd - 0.5 mi
11. Continue onto Mitchell Rd
Destination will be on the right - 0.4 mi

Also 50 Km, 30 Km, Marathon (8:15 a.m.), Half Marathon (8:15 a.m.), 5 mi (8:30 a.m.)
Course: Vistas of the Pacific Coast and of the spectacular Marin Headlands with views of Tiburon, San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge. 9 hour limit and hikers welcomed.

Aid Stations - Fully-stocked every 4 - 6 miles. You can expect fresh fruit, salty snacks, assorted candy, water, and Clif Shot Electrolyte sports drink. It is highly recommended that runners carry at least 20 oz. of water between aid stations.

Awards - T-shirts will be given to all pre-registered runners. Award medals are given to the 1st female and male finishers overall and top three finishers in each age group. All full-marathon finishers will receive a medal.

Rodeo Beach = Windswept, exhilarating, and covered with unique red and green pebbles, this beach is just three miles northwest of the Golden Gate Bridge. Sheltered by cliffs and bounded by a lagoon, it offers good picnic sites and is ideal for kite flying or just watching the roaring Pacific. Attentive beach-walkers may see (but must not collect) jasper, carnelian, black agate, and jade among the beach sands. Two military forts once guarded these shores. Fort Barry and Fort Cronkhite—whose structures now serve as National Park Service facilities—were once nerve centers of Marin Headlands military activities long ago.

Tue Feb 12

? Depart hotel? Fill up car. Turn in rental car.
4:05pm Depart San Francisco SFO via UA#6289
9:28pm Arrive Kansas City MCI

Rental Car Thrifty #FRT0H7 intermediate mid-size car

Hotel Fairfield Inn and Suites at KC Airport
11820 NW Plaza Circle, Kansas City, MO 64153 Tele 816 464 2424

Wed Feb 13

Alayna off work. Drive to Plattsburg?
Joseph says he will be available and I offered dinner and with Brittany
Bev to arrive late evening and join us for dinner.

Thu Feb 14

To Norton Art Museum?
See Bruce?
Bev to leave pre 4pm

Dinner with Marie – pick her up after swim practice

Fri Feb 15

1:00-1:30pm Deliver Marie to Q-Hotel in Westport for auditions then to UMKC pre 5pm
Dinner with Loudean and Joe

Sat Feb 16

Alternate day to see Bruce and/or Joseph

3:00pm Depart to airport; fill up car and turn in
5:01pm Depart Kansas City MCI via UA#3734
6:30pm Arrive Chicago O'Hare ORD for plane change

7:45pm Depart Chicago ORD via UA#1004
10:50pm Arrive Newark EWR