



Stockholm Centennial Marathon Trip Notes with Copenhagen Add-On July 9-19, 2012

"Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened" by Dr. Zeuss

I am almost sorry its over as it's been a unique adventure, a big deal celebration, and yet I became more than ready to be home.

Usually I write the pros and cons of a marathon but in this case it was the 100th Anniversary of the Stockholm Olympics and as such a one –time event so I'll simply give some highlights and at the end add my daily notes sent to Tom.

- It was my many-things! (It just happened without planning.)

100th marathon finish
10th international marathon
10th marathon of 2012
10th anniversary of my running
10th anniversary of my first marathon – 2002
10 days – about – to my 67th birthday

- Is it overreaching or just adding to the 100s and 10s to add in that my other big event was the 110th running of Boston where I had qualified to run? That year was headlined 6 and 6 in '06 for my 60th. It was said that the-devil-made-me-do-it, aka fellow Liberty Lady Maricar. Thank you Maricar for the long path to my 100s. I'm done. Well, sort of.
- The marathon was first class. Website (pictures and videos and history), course (despite the shocking elevation gains), organization (no glitches), costumes (amazing and abundant), food on the course (very generous), food and goodie bag thereafter, and the weather even cooperated.
- Finish time was better than expected at 5:29; especially since I didn't put more than 50/50 on even finishing.
- Travel was unique and different. I'd never been to these northern countries and after five days in Stockholm there was five days in Copenhagen.



The picture is obviously in the hotel lobby at a very odd time – 1pm. The start was to be at 1:48pm which was the start of the Olympic Marathon in 1912. Now this is a challenge but I sort of liked it. Remember how we complain at Boston and New York about the late start? Little did we know! There's Marie in her Viking hat, Ginny with her red-red hair, and me in my usual Liberty Lady.

Marie is an ultra-marathoner and pacer. I'd met her as a pacer in Virginia Beach's '08 marathon and then again in Philadelphia, Rio de Janeiro, Tulsa and Richmond. She does runs like Death Valley's 137 mile Badwater where she came in 14th overall. She does things like Western States 100 and got her belt buckle despite falling and breaking a rib or two. She does back-to-back weekend 100 milers and full Ironmen coming in first or high in her age group. She paces marathons for Cliff Bar and some on her own and sometimes twice in a weekend. She's done nearly 300 marathons and countless ultras. So imagine my good fortune when she insisted on pacing me! I had been worried about the cut off (said to be 2:42 for the half but later relaxed) and she wanted to make sure I made it. It was a big deal for me to do so and I'll be eternally grateful. She brought me into the half at 2:36 and the full (original marathon 40-plus kilometer) at 5:29.

What are my international marathons? Reykjavik, Rio de Janeiro, Athens 2500th, Rome, London, Medoc, Berlin, Dublin, Paris and Stockholm. Coming up is Ayers Rock, Buenos Aires, Jerusalem and Madagascar. Only because of conflict I had to give up Tokyo, Cuba, and Easter Island.

Pictures from the marathon



The expo workers plus many runners were dressed on 1912 costumes and quite a few old cars were brought out too. The sad thing is that great big hail came along and must have caused a lot of havoc at the open Expo. The photo with the bib number at the antique car was to be superimposed with marathon pictures.

The Expo was on the grounds of the 100+ year old Olympic Stadium, one of the oldest and still in use stadiums. It also has one of the fastest tracks and has earned a disproportionate number of Olympic medals. Having the start and finish at the Stadium gave us indoor toilets and dressing rooms. Too bad for the Expo with the hail that they couldn't have had it indoors but when we were there it was under the perfect sky with temperatures and sunshine that couldn't be better. It was so delightful that folks were lounging around the grounds with picnics.



Mr. Hurdy Gurdy was on the marathon course too, as well as the Expo. See what I mean about the lovely weather. This was while we were staging for a 1 ½ hour guided tour of the stadium by some cute little Olympic endurance runner known by Thom of Marathon Tours who took us around.



Three of our Marathon Tours participants and then Thom who owns the company and advertises his sold out Antarctica Marathon that has a waiting list until 2016 or is it 2018? No, I am NOT on that list. Here's Lynne and Ginny deciding which direction they'd want to go at the end. The first marathons were 40,075 meters and that's what many of us did in honor of the 100th anniversary. We were timed for that distance. Some felt a need to Go All The Way to the 42,195.

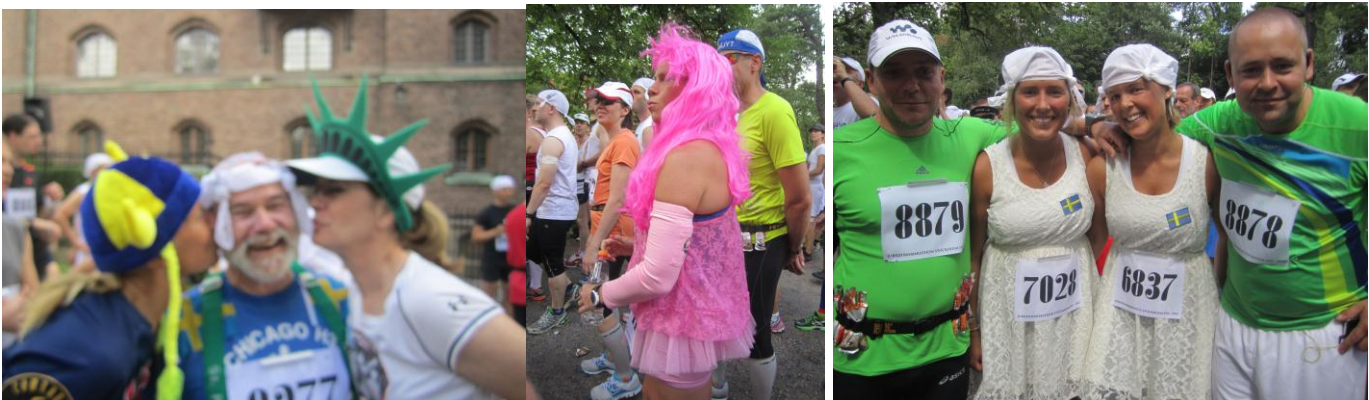


The opening ceremonies at the Stadium were pretty spectacular as were the costumes worn for the event. Too bad we were lined up outside the stadium waiting our corral to be called but I used the

time well by taking many pictures. The costumes on the course were equally well done, by both the spectators and the runners too.



Notice how most of the folks are thin? Spectators and runners alike. While in both countries I never saw a fat person, but I never saw pastries on the breakfast buffet either, but I did see vegetables. Runner #3113 looks like a Chippendale Wannabe? There were a few of them. I enjoyed them all.



We all also enjoyed Mr. Lynne. He is 3-4 years older than me and has done about 200 marathons and all over the world. He'd researched the tourist spots and probably saw the sights somewhat like I do. Mr. Pink might have been Ms. Pink – I could tell even walking around 'it.'



It is something akin to meeting family when you find a costume and even more with you find a fellow Liberty Lady. All of my picture taking was putting me at risk for not finishing but I decided that having fun was my priority so I have a couple hundred pictures.



The course was lovely in sections such as this tree lined and covered stretch but part of it was on a path next to a highway which obviously wasn't so picturesque. Remember that the course was to have duplicated as close as possible the original marathon. The fire engine is 100 years old and had been at the Expo also. Along the way we had old time music played by 1912 costumed folks. They put Rock 'n Roll to shame.



Fluid stations were plentiful and manned by young and old. Lynne had wanted to buy a hat at the Expo but they were only for volunteers. Marie would eventually get one for herself as well as a second one for Lynne. Here she is wearing two hats and trying to hold them on as well as retaining her pacer balloon.

Pacer Marie brought in a number of runners. We saw an official pacer but he had no one. It's no wonder: she entertained and encouraged us the whole way and I really felt guilty at the last not doing the final 2 kilometers. I noticed that she got us in at a better pace the longer we went so surely I could compute what I might have finished the entire 42K in? It was 5:29 with 2K to go. At about the 30K mark she had predicted a 5:45 finish and she's usually right on.



My video of the finish is amusing. I stopped to take pictures before I crossed the finish line. I was also seen stopping some way before (at the entrance to the stadium) to hug Marie when she went off to the 42K. Yes, that's my marathon uniform – it should be threadbare by now. I'd brought a nice shirt but then decided that this had worked so well so many times, let's just let Houston shirt do its thing again.



Champagne or not? You're kidding! I hadn't really realized how dehydrated I was or I not have had three glasses of champagne. I waited for friends and took a lot of finish line photos. This gal really did run in that dress. I hope she won something in the costume contest.



After waiting for Ginny we went back into the stadium to look for her sister and found these two lovely costumed gals waiting for their runners. The big surprise, after all the worry about the firm 6 hour cut off, was that they were still letting runners cross the finish line at 7 hours. We would need to walk up the hill, then down multiple stairs into a court area to retrieve our t-shirts. I bounded down and up those stairs for various runners to collect their package and save them the steps. I don't know why I don't get sore but I expect someday I'll get my due. Here's a picture of what we're in it for – the shirt and the medal both of which were very good examples of quality and design.

Talk about Stockholm

I would do my usual in both Stockholm and in Copenhagen. Take a guided water tour first to get the lay of the land, as both cities are built within a lot of canals, and then follow it up with a guided bus tour. In Stockholm I took three guided water tours and followed those up with miles of walking, choosing one section each day to explore closely. I'm prone to go it alone; it's a lot easier to change one's mind and/or just follow your nose and explore.



There are free bikes in Stockholm. Borrow them and return them to any public rack. They are well used because there are a lot of bike trails and pretty much all streets have bike ways separate from pedestrian ways. For pedestrians one has to be very careful to watch for bikes as they are everywhere and you've got to watch at the crosswalks.

Old Towne was an easy walk through the park, by a major shopping district and cross the canal and I found myself there any number of times either on my way across to the opposite side island or one day to explore every single street I could find. It is touristy and then it is suddenly vacant with not a sole but a bright red Ferrari that somehow managed to negotiate the smallest and narrowest streets to park outside its home. If I were staying in an apartment in Stockholm I'd want it to be in Old Towne. The Sheraton on the water seemed to be the most centrally located. Old Towne is on the same island as the palace and connected to another island so well that you hardly notice you're changing islands.

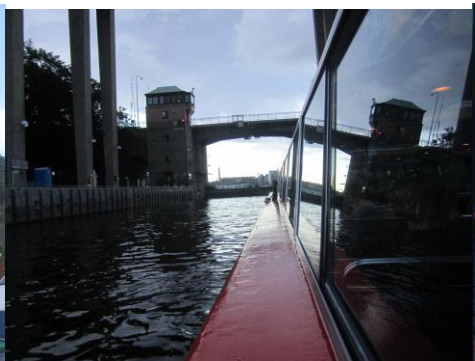


One tour told us they had 30,000 islands. Another tour said there were 24,000. No matter it's a lot. Our second day we took the 3 ½ hour cruise through Stockholm's Archipelagos to get the real flair. The destination was an old fortress at Vauxholm (sp?) that looked to be an island sufficient to spent an afternoon on but we simply docked then left. The ferry offered white tablecloth dining. Another day I took the Royal Canal Tour, but the best was the Under the Bridges tour of 15 bridges and covered a lot of the town from quite a different view than the bus did or my walking did.

This picture is of a poster/post card taken to give the aerial view. You see the palace to the right, with the central city off farther to the right. That's Old Towne in the center.



The percentage of people with a boat is very high, as much because it's an easy way to get around, but also because some live on islands not connected. I think the number was 700,000 boats in Stockholm but since they aren't controlled or licensed they don't know for sure. Additionally there are a large number of houseboats to include youth hostels in boats.



The Under the Bridges cruise took us through two locks from the Baltic Sea to their huge lake. As we were nearing one of the locks there was an area for rock climbing (below.)



See the walk way around the rock cliff? I saw many of those and this one was for the rock climbers. The large white boat either IS or is similar to the best youth hostel ever known.



My camera was acting up so I ordered a new one while away. The auto focus wouldn't work when in any zoom mode.



City Hall is a glorious building within its own rights and the public can't tour without an established guide which we had been given by Marathon Tours. It is where the Nobel Prize is awarded and the dinners are held. Here are some of the flat wear and dishes used. Then we're off to the Old Towne streets where some are purposely made to look longer as they get narrower at the end. Then back to the Grand Hotel area where there is the old Opera House. Operas apparently are rare in the summer but a tour and a concert was open so I spent one evening with a piano and clarinet concert following champagne and a light meal on the Opera's balcony. It was held in the famous Gold Room since the actual theatre and stage were in renovation.



This is the famous Gold Room of the old Opera. One day I walked the Diplomatic section, Nobel Park and along the Strand and ended up at what I called Museum Island. It was on the way into there that I saw these boys – look at the socks. They remained there for hours. Boys and socks.



I wasn't too hot on the Modern Museum but here are some of their sculptures. I was very happy with finding museums to be a good place to eat. I presume its subsidized because it was some of my best and cheapest eating. Here is sitting over the water on the balcony of the Modern with a herring salad. See the steps at the end of the narrow street? Don't think Stockholm is flat! At times I thought of it as San Francisco and at one place in city center a plaza has as many as four levels of streets. Stairways and overflys are common.



The palace complex is one of the largest in Europe and of course has guards, a treasury, and a huge complex that I got lost in. I particularly liked this street and the Jerusalem Café since I'd just been planning the Jerusalem Marathon. Pretty picture anyway and certainly representative of old streets in Stockholm.

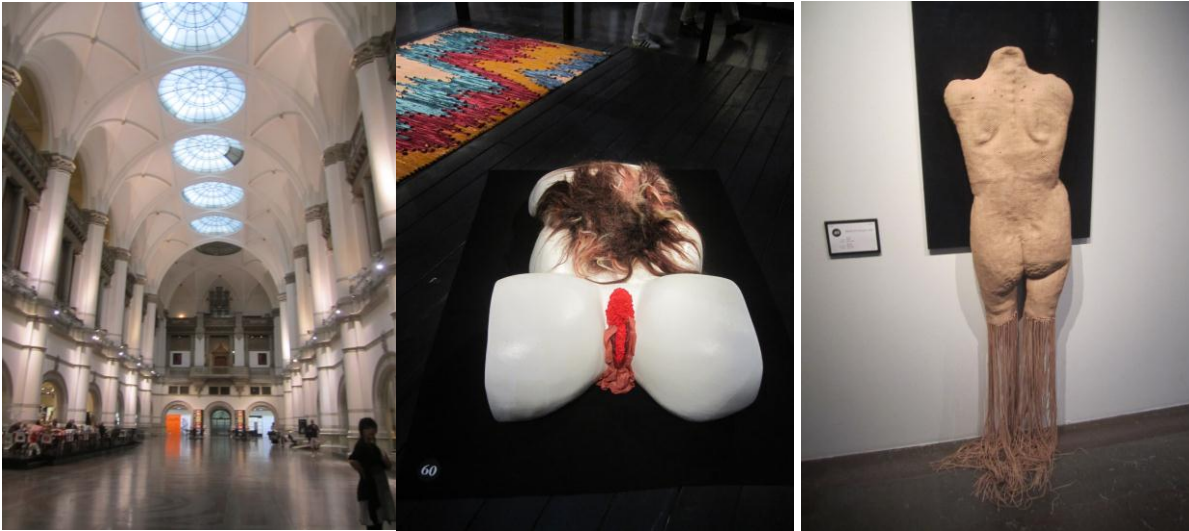


Wooden boats are coveted, and they are also used for tourists. A Spirit Museum? And a Nobel Museum, and a Nordic Museum, on and on. I believe there are 70 museums in Stockholm and you could find something for everyone.



It took me a while to chase down the old restored trolley cars and their museum but here's one of them. On Museum Island is a large garden and inside is an area with walls of names representing

the 850 or so people that went down on the ferry from Estonia to Stockholm. The old 1800s building is a monster and absolutely castle like. It's the Nordic Museum and by far my favorite (though another person didn't like it.) It's what I go for – to learn about the history and peoples. I ate in this museum café too.



The main hall is worth a trip. Inside was a temporary exhibit of fabrics with a lot of weavings and flags and rugs, as well as a series of rather X-rated fabric designs. Or was it just my imagination? Yes, those last two are fabric art.



A floor was devoted to dinners, dinner ware and porcelains. There were a series of rooms showing Nordic life from early days. Also some old cabins. One floor contained rooms from one of the palaces. But certainly bigger on the agenda was the Vasa Museum across the street as its probably the largest frequented tourist site. An extravagantly expensive 1600s vessel went down within the first couple kilometers of being launched and it stayed in the mucky waters until 1960 having now been found, brought up, and lovingly restored. The Vasa museum sits on the water and is a mainstay in the sights; it devotes at least four floors, a half hour movie, and the masts stick up the rooftop of the building with a moat.



***From my emails to home and to those who inquired
Day 2 – in the beginning***

Day 1 of course was used up traveling. Too bad I don't sleep on a plane and too bad I stupidly let Marathon Tours book my flight. It was on SAS which would be fine but I don't get my Platinum 1K upgrade, extra miles, easy boarding, etc. But I did get to use SAS's lounge in Newark and that was

helpful. And I did get an empty seat next to me and that was very rare on this full flight. The young gal next to me moved to sit near to her friend even farther back of the bus.

SAS food is better than any American liner. They make so much more sense and serve healthy stuff too. Wine and beer are free so I could quit complaining about not being able to use my United free beverage coupons.

Getting into Stockholm airport is plenty easy. I was near the back of the bus and thus back of the lines for passport of which I'm also spoiled with Global Entry ease but I had good company. A 50ish nice looking Swedish guy made conversation due to my marathon shirt (Baton Rouge) and turns out he's always wanted to do a marathon but was afraid to try. He downloaded Jeff Galloway's app and I bet he does one now. He could have flown through the EU passport line but chose to stay with me through baggage. Even better is that he's a composer and travels the world and was last in NYC but before then in Sydney.

Taxi costs are egregious, train is about \$45 so I happily took the bus at about \$15. The hotel had suggested taking a taxi after the bus ended at Central Terminal but I thought 1 ½ miles was easy enough and I'd just walk instead of the expected additional \$15 taxi but I hadn't realized how like San Francisco is Stockholm. They have triple decker streets. They have long, long stairways from street to street. Like San Francisco the hills aren't everywhere but they are a surprise. I wouldn't complain and I later chose some of the stairways.

Into the hotel was a nice surprise that they let me have my room at 9am. (I'd landed at 7:15am and had to wait for luggage since SAS won't let economy folks take much of any suitcase on board.) The room is well appointed, quality like the Swiss, but practically as small as our cruise ship suite. Compact! The next nice surprise was that the fabulous breakfast buffet goes to 11am and they didn't even question me using it this morning. I ate and ate and packed and packed. The kind of smorgasbord foods you would expect and a very good coffee machine that grinds beans fresh.

After calming down I was calmer than I intended to be and I just had to lay down for a few minutes. I do NOT sleep on a plane. Stunningly I stayed down on my little hotel bed for 2-3 hours. Did you know the Swedes have a platform and then what looks like a futon on top? That's it!

Now that I say that, and talking about bed time, and I realize it near midnight here, I'm getting sleepy . . . so I'll shorten this.

A very long walk back to central station via a circuitous route and into the old town was a delight. Cobblestones, clean everywhere, and you could almost think you were in Germany it's so precise. Not nearly as fun as the French but unique to me. Water everywhere. They have dozens of islands and you are walking over bridges all the time. One place there are seven streets intersecting. I was oftentimes (pleasantly) lost. After old town and the tiniest streets I have EVER seen (even smaller and taller than St Paul de Vence) I got into the palace area near the water and saw a tour boat. It was fortunately close to boarding and was the "under the bridges" tour so I hurriedly got a big chorizo sausage sandwich and sat for a tour that went through two locks and put on a lot of miles, all miles I'd read about but my legs certainly wouldn't have ever managed to see all that.

I limped home at 10 or 10:30pm finishing up my breakfast sandwiches for dinner and now I'm sure to sleep like a baby after having indulged in a couple glasses of duty free liquor.

Oh, looks like a glass of wine could cost \$20 but that doesn't seem to stop anyone – on my way home the bars were overflowing and it's only Tuesday. Everything pretty hefty in price. But as Tom would say

Day 3 of the Stockholm/Copenhagen Adventure

Where to start? Maybe with the really good stuff: the fact that I got to have what the Brits call a 'lie in' – it's very kind of the hotel to serve their smorgasbord type breakfast until 11am. I surprised myself by sleeping soundly until something like 8:30am. I'd looked for a long day tour out of town but was unsuccessful and each alternate plan didn't require an early rise. . . . or did I sabotage that plan?

As I was finishing a long leisurely breakfast along comes a load of Marathon Tours participants who had just landed. Marie Bartoletti and her fellow John, a Boston maniac type, a young fellow from Minneapolis who teaches at international schools like Dubai and now Burma, and the tour leaders.

Eventually Marie decided she wanted to take the Archipelago cruise which sounded fine to me since coming to Sweden seems to necessitate seeing some of the 30,000 islands that make up the Stockholm area and getting an idea how they live. (That 30,000 is no joke and I confirmed the number.) Many islands are connected by bridges but some are only by boat and thus it's no wonder there are some 700,000 boats in Stockholm area and that is about 7% of the population. Yesterday we learned about one island resident who was able to go grocery shopping when the lake froze as he'd walk to town, or when he could use his boat. But when the ice was too thin, a friend would ride the train across the island (it didn't stop) and toss him bags of food.

Speaking of lake versus sea: the boats go through locks to get from one to the other. Yesterday we went through two different locks. Could it really be that the lake is higher than the sea? I think so. We went under 15 bridges and saw considerably more.

The cruise destination today was a summer resort called Vauxholm (sp?) where there are old fortifications on one island, and a thriving little community on another. While the 3 ½ hour tour was a little bit like watching corn grow, I'm glad I went. The challenge was trying to hear the tour guide while my fellow tour folks talked. Well, a couple of them slept and solidly and I'm not any surprised they needed it. The ship was a historically correct restored vessel with a white tablecloth restaurant. We spent much of the tour on the top deck outside.

They were all wanting to participate in the 4:30pm training run. I felt like 26.2 miles on Saturday especially after hours of walking yesterday would be enough so I left them at the docks and wandered, eventually back to yesterday's dock for the Royal Canal Cruise which was still different than yesterday's or today's cruise. Or maybe I could just hear it better on the second (and alone) cruise.

Returning to the hotel via a totally different route showed me a totally different side of the city. I like to remember how Ellen says some of her best experiences were when she was lost – sure enough I got quite lost and a lovely older lady (maybe my age but lovely) sat on the park bench with me and figured out the map layout and sent me on my way through a residential area and coming into my hotel area by a back route. I was pleased with my walk and glad it got longer than intended.

The hotel room is a bit too warm. I'm told they do NOT have air conditioning in Stockholm and that I should be safe to open my windows as they have very few bugs. We'll find out. If there's even one mosquito in the city I'm convinced it will find me.

Marathon Tours offers us a meet-and-greet 6:00pm reception. We aren't expecting much as they are noted for only offering the minimum. In Dublin I think it was those little wrapped wieners Some of the participants are also suggesting that Marathon Tours really needs some competition and I totally agree.

So unless I think of a Day 3(a) report, I'm off for some drinky-poo or at least as much as Marathon Tours will provide.

Day 4 - Thursday in the land of a zillion islands

Thursday Day 4 started with me feeling like a kid. Remember when you'd find out that the party started after you left? And you wondered if it was because you left or that you always left too early? At breakfast there were my friends in Ice Bar cute t-shirts and with photographs showing a really lot of fun. It wasn't much more than about \$30 for one drink with entrance fee. Me? I was well rested yet momentarily jealous. Seems these Ice Bars are made of ice from northern Sweden (clearer ice made from purer water) and they ship this ice and create them in many major cities to include NYC. (Some were going to Hard Rock Café and Harley Davidson too. You can't make this up!)

Well, actually the day started earlier yet. It was 2:52am when the birds started singing and as much as I enjoy them, I had to shut the windows and the drapes to make it quiet and dark. There isn't much true nighttime here. Except in the Ice Bar having a good time and the Swedes sure have a good time standing around drinking and the bars and outside eating areas are seemingly full despite the fact they are said to be mostly away on holiday.

The 9:00am bus tour of the city area was excellent and while I'd seen pretty much everything on foot and on my own, it all made more sense the second time around with a guide. The bus did climb us up to a major lookout on the adjoining island where I'd not gone UP, only ON. It also got us inside City Hall where only guided tours and not individuals can tour. The bus tour was however one of those quickie type try-to-see-a-touch-of-everything that the Japanese seem to partake and I would be very disappointed to only see Stockholm in that manner. It's a way to say "Oh, I saw that" -- but it's all just the level of touring one wishes to do. Those that took an apartment for a summer to learn Stockholm and some Swedish would laugh at my mini-sightseeing.

Did you know that this Shangri-La still has unemployment numbers like we do? High 8s with the young population even triple that. The safety in walking streets is said to be pretty good but that pickpockets are on the rise. But like our country, I can't tell that the economy is any depressed so it too is hidden from the main areas.

Did you know that this Shangri-La really IS if you don't want to see fat people. Zilch. Lots of running and bicycle trails and they are well used. Lots of transporting by bicycle to include racks of bikes that are free, totally free. And nowhere are there pastry sweet shops; on our breakfast buffet there were vegetables and noticeably not a single fat sweet pastry or muffin or bagel. Lots of peel-your-own fruit.

The weather was said to be iffy with rain predicted at 70% but we've only had sprinkles the first day and even much blue sky today. I'd frankly wish for showers instead of 70 degrees for Saturday's mid-day marathon. But do I have a choice?

After the bus tour and recharging my batteries (camera and iPhone) I put to use the fact that these feet were made for walking. I went down by the port again to check on other cruises, to the Opera house to try for a guided tour that I'd just missed, bought a ticket for cocktails and concert later the evening, around the Strand by the famous Grand Hotel again, out over the bridge to the museum island, into various museums such as the Modern Art and the Architecture Museum, and ended in the restaurant of the Modern. It was outside on a deck overlooking the water and facing the Djurgarden and Old Vasa Boat Museum. I'll go there tomorrow. I was looking for and found a very Swedish plate of salads, soft boiled egg and herring. Sort of a Salad Nicoise Swede style. I shared my table with a Northern Swede couple who were most talkative and I could have spent a lot more time with them.

There was enough time to do the hike back around and over more bridges to Gamla Stan also known as Old Towne. It really is and amazingly intact and amazingly cobbly and hilly. I am certain to have covered every square foot that I hadn't already on my first day. Then I was amazed at myself for walking that far and that much as I went over still another bridge and onto their Sodermalm Island. Today I'm feeling more Swedish and not much worried about using up my legs for the marathon. (I only expect 50-50 chance of finishing it in time anyway.) Before heading back to the Opera I wandered in and through the Palace which is a huge complex and easy to get totally lost. I saw the guards and a mini-changing of the guards. There is a big ceremony that I probably won't push to see.

Highlights of the bus tour included going over some bridges I'd gone UNDER in the Under the Bridges cruise and going up high on Sodermalm for the overview of the islands and main city. I'd gotten comfortable enough with the town to be able to follow the bus route on the map and know where and what I was seeing.

Highlights of the evening was sitting on the balcony of the opera overlooking the water and with a plate of food and a glass of champagne and meeting a couple from San Francisco who had just come off a Baltic Sea cruise. There are so many huge cruise ships docking here in these deep harbors. The mini concert was held in the long chandeliered gold room that's a famous design for this old Opera House. Their stage was being refurbished. I walked back home via another shopping area and found a lot of designer shops plus a hidden top notch mall. There are parks everywhere – and many of them have outdoor cafes which are all full of young folks out drinking.

I was in by 9:30pm and easily thinking I'd had a very full today. Tomorrow is up early again to go with the group to the Expo and a tour of the stadium. There are to be films and museum items at this 100 year old beauty. Oddly there is NOT a pasta party but when you think about how much food costs and that our marathon doesn't start until 1:48pm (the time of the Olympics 100 years ago and who knows why it was then.)

Suddenly I'm very tired. It must have been waking up at 2:52am to the birds. It's time to call Tom before I'm dead asleep.

Day 5 in Stormland

Sweden is not as fun as Paris. It's too precise. Too clean. Gee, who said that?

Are you wondering what charm I found for my charm bracelet turned necklace turned belt and now referred to by Judy as my lasso? I think 100 is time to QUIT. This one was a challenge but for the 100th I was willing to buy a gold memento. I've used gold for my six ultra-marathons already. But I hadn't come up with anything until we toured City Hall and found that is where the Nobel Peace prize folks have their big celebratory dinners. The gift shop was full of Nobel mementos so when I saw a little gold charm with three crowns, which is the symbol of Stockholm, I bought it pending anything better. It is possible that the little mermaid of Copenhagen will be available in gold in which case I'll get it.

Big story: I was just in from the Expo and Stadium tour, sitting in my room about 1pm wondering if I needed a nap, when a huge storm of lightning and thunder claps started and then HAIL. Big marble size hail and frightening sounding thunder. Earlier I was thinking it might be good weather for the marathon if it would hold and stay cloud covered with the light drizzle. Darned if I can think what they'd do about HAIL for the marathon but the size of these could be very hurtful. On our favor for the continuation of the marathon is that they aren't likely to be the litigious society as is America. I sure feel badly for all the costumed folks of the Expo. It is ALL outdoors with 1912 perfect antique cars, an old 100 year old fire engine, most workers and some runners dressed in extravagant costumes, walking tours of the old 100 year old Stadium, and nowhere to shelter.

Just as odd is that my last marathon had major hail too. What is going on here? Then the rest of the day was fine and even more sun than I might have liked. So this means I'll have to go dressed for any and everything.

Oh, I maybe didn't say that we had a famous runner/athlete give us a 1 ½ hour walking tour of the Olympic Stadium. I need to figure out who this Finnish gal is who has some age on her but is still very cute and blonde. She's a friend of Thom of Marathon Tours is why we got her. The entire morning was taken up with Expo and tour.

I've learned we don't start tomorrow/Saturday at 1:48pm even. That's only the elites. The last corral is about an hour later. I think in this case Ginny and I might try to corral-jump because they WILL be closing down the course and the finish line and where they threaten to take us out at 2:42 at the half way point, how will they know we didn't get to start for a full hour? I've come too far to not try, but believe me, I am only with a very tiny bit of concern. Finish or not won't make the trip. If I don't finish here, I will at Ayres Rock.

The hail hadn't any more than melted than I was out again and decided to take a totally different route to the water. There is a diplomatic/embassy area that sounded appealing but it wasn't anything particularly different. Then to the Nobel peace park which was nice and on the edge of the water with some fine specimens of their famous wooden boats but that was all. The bridge going onto the old Kings park island plus the gate were worth pictures and I was almost knocked out by the 1889 huge elegant castle that is a Nordic Museum where I went first. I'd seen it from the water, and the edge of the bridge, but it was obstructed by woods and I had no idea how huge it would be. Five floors of just what you'd expect: palace rooms moved into the museum, doll houses, recreated rooms, art and crafts, a collection of flags, etc. All my kind of thing in a huge and elegant museum on lovely park grounds. (Later another runner said that he thought it was boring.) Then onto their big time famous museum on the edge of the water housing the 1600s ship that went down on its maiden voyage and was brought up and refurbished in 1960. It would remind you of Steamboat Arabia in Kansas City with all the elegance and preserved items. The thirty minute movie about finding and restoring it was worth the trip. I walked a lot of the island with many other museums such as the Spirit Museum, but realized I couldn't go into all of the Museums – there are 70 in Stockholm, the museum capital of the world.

Lunch, as often is in a foreign country, was taken in the museum. I like to find local foodstuff but this wasn't as odd as yesterday's herring salad. I eat a big hearty breakfast and take away enough for a couple snacks as well as retain a small grocery store in my room. Food is so very pricey in Stockholm but I suspect that Museums are partly supported by the government or at least by the admission cost plus you can usually count on good and local food.

I've decided that most marathoners are OCD. And ADD. I share those traits so I can relate but get a group of them together and it's impossible to get a word in edgewise and everybody is interrupting everybody else and the bragging is impossible to keep up with. I now know better than to tell anybody this is my 100th ; I learned that the first couple hours here – I'm the baby of the group. So I don't tell. It reminds me of Maricar and my trip to Wilmington Delaware Marathon when I wanted to paint on my calf muscles "7 and 7 in '07" when suddenly Maricar reminded me that we weren't a bag-of-chips after all. Folks there were finishing their 400s and more. They were starting their quest for 116 marathons in one year. Now we have Yolanda emailing how she finished 8 in 7 days, then followed it on with something like 10 in 8 days. It's time for a new hobby. Are we sane yet?

Have I ended my report each day with saying I am pooped? That is so again but if it's like every day so far, I don't really end my day until after midnight anyway and 7am comes fast to me. Last night

some sleeping time was spent battling mosquitos. I'd heard that they rarely have any and that no one has complained of them yet but sure enough they found me which is no surprise.

So I'm off and don't hesitate to email back. Please. It's only text and phone calls that are pricey while I'm in Europe.

Day 6 - Marathon Day!

Sometimes I think this only qualifies as a 'so what?' event and other times I think what a superwoman I am to get here. Can it really be that I'm at the Stockholm Jubilee, their 100th anniversary, as well as my 100th? My many-things!

100th marathon finish
10th international marathon
10th marathon of 2012
10th anniversary of running
10th anniversary of first marathon – 2002
10 days – about – to my 67th birthday

A nice birthday gift, I'd say? But remember that I booked the Australian Outback Marathon at Ayres Rock as a potential 100th since Stockholm has a fast cut off time, can be hot, starts later in the day, etc. I had hopes of giving myself TWO birthday gifts. (I had breakfast with Thom of Marathon Tours who showed me pictures of Madagascar and that's certainly to be a big birthday gift to myself for my 68th.)



As wonderful gifts today, thank you all for your good wishes. Judy's is particularly worth repeating:

JUST DO IT!!!! or as we say in the south "git-er-dun." Just know that we're all gonna be helping you in the marathon. Lean on us while you're running, jogging, walking or crawling the marathon. "Visualize us" (unless that creeps you out to have us looking at you...or hey, pretend you're Katie Holmes running away from Tom Cruise, that ought to get you movin' and groovin.' Signed: Pit Crew

Also from Judy who thinks like I do: While I don't want you to get hurt of course...the HAIL makes a good story...now if you were a mailman or mail-lady or mail-person, you'd have this situation beat, as the mail- carrier-people perform despite rain and snow, and probably hail as well. My money is STILL on you to finish the marathon in time...DO NOT USE THAT PITIFUL WHINING STORY ABOUT HOW IT WAS HAILING AND ALL.

When to start? From Ginny who is a 6 to 6 ½ hour marathoner too and will be us: Saw that only the first 2 waves were placed by finish time supplied on entry. Therefore I plan to start in the 3rd wave @ 14:08 and will be in that corral at least 30 minutes ahead of start (13:30, leaving the hotel at 1-1:15p) let me know if you're with me! Cut off time is 3 hours for 20km and 4:25 for 29km. Also confirmed that those who choose to do 42 will be timed for 40. No question which I will choose. Good luck and hope to see you before the start!

with



Now I'm finished and back to the hotel and flying high. Marv says it all for me: Diana . . . You came in like an hour before we expected you. Wonderful performance. Can't wait to see your report. Here's the scoop off the website. Again . . . congrats.

Name Diana Burton (USA)
 Bib number 9450
 Class Women
 YOB 1945
 Place 1628
 Result 5:29:15
 Average pace 08.13 min/km

Mellantider

Split	Result	Lap time	min/km	km/h	Place
5 km	37:40	37:40	07.32	8.0	1765
10 km	1:16:55	39:15	07.51	7.6	1729
15 km	1:56:23	39:29	07.54	7.6	1721
20 km	2:36:27	40:04	08.01	7.5	1695
25 km	3:18:23	41:57	08.23	7.2	1662
30 km	4:03:10	44:47	08.57	6.7	1660
35 km	4:45:02	41:52	08.22	7.2	1640
40,075 km	5:29:15	44:13	08.43	6.9	1628
42,195 km	5:29:20	0:06	00.02	1461.3	858



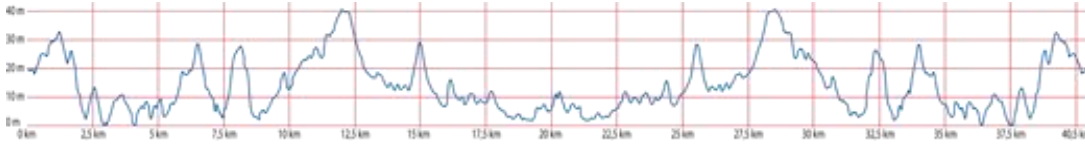
Still from Marv: Hey Miss Liberty!!! We just saw you enter the stadium, give a hug to someone there at the gate (that was Marie Bartoletti our volunteer pacer and my hero!) and then cross the finish line. Congratulations on doing the Big 100. You are definitely our hero. Marv and Maryanne

Coming from these Tulsa friends who have done a zillion and a zillion more fast short races I am very flattered first that they followed me and second that that they were impressed. Remember that 1912 the marathon was only 40.075 kilometers. It was later increased to 42.195. Some of my friends went onto do the 42 kilometer and finished about 5:45. I couldn't see the point of it since I'd come for the 100th recreation anyway and besides, now I can call Ayres Rock my 100th and celebrate again?

The day and weather was favorable with a light overcast most of the day and only anticipated to get to 67 vs the 76 or 78 degrees that had been predicted earlier. There was a light breeze and sometimes a light drizzle. Having Marie give up her run to pace me was a very special benefit and it's no doubt that I've done my very best for some time with her. She acted like she was disappointed I wouldn't go on to the 42K but she sailed through it with 8 minute pace so it was good she went off. I stayed at the finish line for some friends who were behind and they all came in fine.

The organizers did so many things well. The spectators were amazing in number and many in costume. The food wasn't expected but was generous. The bands were outstanding and old time and it would be hard to think Rock 'n Roll could do any better. Despite a threat to pull folks I watched the finish line stay open until 7 hours. I'd pushed to do the cut offs and made them fine and in fact the half way turn around at 2:37 was about the fastest I've managed and even faster than my 2:42 at Tulsa in the cold. The shirt and medal were of the best of most marathons and the goodie bag at the end was about the largest I can remember. And let me tell you: there was real champagne at the end and I had three glasses. Maybe that's why I could run down the stairs and up again to collect the shirt and goodie bag for my friends.

And I still had time to take about 200 pictures which were absolutely irresistible. Pictures couldn't show the huge hills, but in a perverse sort of way, I do well on hills. Some have to walk up when I would be walking anyway then for the downhill I'm strong because my quads never bother me and my lungs get the downhill relief. When you look at this elevation chart, remember that it's an out-and-back course.



Now it's almost 10pm and that's what happens when you don't start until 2pm. (We jumped to an earlier corral and I only felt mildly guilty.) We leave the hotel early for our flight to Copenhagen and thus it's time to shower, eat my peanut butter sandwich, and pack up. It will be hard to calm down and find sleep before midnight if that.

Thanks to you all for your very kind best wishes which meant a lot to me. And my hero husband who supports all this crazy stuff with the most generous good wishes and questions and understanding. Life is good and I feel over-the-top lucky.

Costumes: While we missed the post-race party on Sunday when we left (was that poor planning or intended since it was an expensive event?) it was well reported upon in the website along with the costume contest.



Top 18 Winners:



Now we're off to Copenhagen! See part 2.