



What's Afoot

The newsletter of the Amazing Feet Running Club

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President's Message

It seems the first issue of the newsletter was all it took to bring out the writers in our ranks. Accordingly, I will be brief and let you get on to the really interesting stuff. Just remember, over the next couple of months pace yourselves and stay hydrated. ☺

Rob Brigham

Seven Wahine in Hawaii

On the evening of January 19th, seven wahine from New Jersey/Pennsylvania arrived in Maui for their Hawaiian running adventure: Jodi, her friends Martine and Florence, Renee and her sister, Lisa and mom, Shelia and Mary Ellen. The adjustment was difficult – time zone change, humidity, temperature in the 70's, balmy breezes, views of the ocean from their lanais, the sound of the surf breaking on the beach..... But, by 7am the next morning, they had adjusted and were out running in shorts and tank tops, and walking on the beach. It also took a little time to adjust to the locals, and Jodi finally did figure out that the "snorkeler in the wet suit" really was a whale. The ladies all understood the importance of tapering, so they spent the next several days on non-running activities – swimming, sitting on the beach, riding bicycles down Haleakala, whale-watching, and visiting the aquarium. Their pre-marathon diet also was important, and they dove with gusto into the local cuisine of wonderful fresh fish, meats, fruits and vegetables. Jodi, Martine and Florence had a very unfortunate introduction to "Hawaiian time": a one-hour bus trip from Lahaina to Kihei turned into a 3-hour exercise in frustration when the connecting bus never arrived.

Sunday was marathon day. Jodi, Martine, Florence, Renee and Mary Ellen ran the marathon, while Lisa ran the 5K, and Sheila was an incredibly gracious and enthusiastic support crew. The marathoners arrived at the starting area about 5:15am, for a 5:45am start. The temperature was 65 degrees. An open grass parking lot served as the staging area, lit only with a few lampposts. The unique aspect of the staging area was a group of Hawaiians, all in traditional dress, performing a blessing for the runners, complete with conch shells which provided a mystical air to the setting. These performers then led the runners down to the starting line on the road, with their torches providing the only light. The torches became the starting line; they parted, and off the runners went. Somewhere around mile 1.5, a rooster was crowing, clearly getting a head start on the day as it was still completely dark. The mileage signs were quite novel, as they showed the x.2 locations – so when the runners reached 1 mile to go, it really was 1, not 1.2 miles. Runners ran along the shoulder of the road which was a bit challenging in the dark; the drivers seemed to ignore the "runners on the road"



Jodi, Renée & Mary Ellen

signs and at times aimed straight for them. When the sun started to rise, the runners had glimpses of the ocean off to the side. About mile 9, the runners passed a wildlife preserve and were cheered on by the migratory birds. The course turned inward for a mile, directly into the wind, through the sugar cane fields, and with a long incline. Then a sharp left, a nice decline, and then the HILLS started. Beautiful views – the biggest challenge was not falling off the side of the road/cliffs when trying to whale-watch and run. At this point, the sun was in full force and there was no shade on the course. The remainder of the course was long stretches on the roads, no or little cover, some long inclines, and absolutely beautiful scenery that made it very tempting to stop for a swim in the ocean. At the finish line, all finishers were announced by name and a misting station provided brief relief – a thoughtful addition with the temperature in the 80's. Sheila and Lisa had leis for the five marathon wahine.

Mary Ellen Hennessy-Jones



Running: From Beginner to Boston Qualifier

My racing career started in August 2009 when I participated in a relay triathlon with two girlfriends. Because I had been spinning for a little over 8 months, I was nominated to do the cycling part of the tri. As I was waiting for one of my friends to cross the finish line, I thought: "If all these women can complete the entire triathlon, there is no reason I can't." The next day, I signed

up for my first triathlon, the "War at the Shore" in Long Branch, NJ.

I had only one month to train and running was not something I was particularly interested in doing, but rather, something I needed to do in order to finish a triathlon. So, I created some good playlists on my iPod and off to the gym I went, almost daily, so I would be ready to compete in what I then believed to be the hardest thing in the world: a sprint triathlon.

The triathlon went well even though I cramped on my right calf while transitioning from cycling to running. Three miles with cramps is not something I wish for anyone to experience. Following the triathlon that same fall, motivated by a couple of friends, I participated in a few local 5K and 10K races, and was shocked with my own results. After all, I was (and still am) considered to be a new runner. I started sharing with veterans my race results, which generated surprised and questionable looks. Someone asked me: "How can a new runner like you finish a 5K in less than 22 minutes?" Puzzled by it, I could not answer these or any other related questions. By being placed in the top 3 of my age group (F 35-39) in most of these races, I slowly started a medal/award collection, of which my family and I are very proud.

The motivation to run a marathon was triggered a few months later by the TV show "Biggest Loser: Season 8," in which the final four contestants, after losing over 600 pounds combined, had to run a full marathon. Yes, an entire 26.2 miles! Seeing these contestants finishing the marathon got me pumped up so much that the same evening the show aired, I signed up for the NJ Marathon. The following day, I was at the bookstore buying Jeff Galloway's book: *Marathon: You Can Do It!*

I was determined and convinced I could and would do it, and I started training for it on my own. I had 24 weeks to train, and with the support and understanding of family and friends, I found the time to pursue my running goals. It was hard to train for my first marathon in the winter and by myself. As a newbie, I did not know any better, but at least I had good rock and pop music to get me going. Back then, I had no idea how much motivation, inspiration and support a running club such as the Amazing Feet Running Club (AFRC) could provide.

Finally, May 2nd arrived and unfortunately, on that day, so did the heat. It was the hottest day of the year and the race started at 9 am. For this first marathon, my ultimate goal was to finish the race. I ran a successful race with a time of 4:07:06 despite temperatures in the high 80s. This first marathon was by far, "the hardest thing I've done in my life!" Sore and exhausted after this race, I contemplated quitting long distance running all together. I felt it wasn't for me.

Still, I was surrounded by friends who kept pushing me to give long distance running another try. Reluctantly, I signed up for the Chicago marathon through a charity. At that time, I joined AFRC to get additional support and

motivation during the long runs. I was soon introduced to several inspirational and hardworking members, and heard some amazing running stories! That was it! I was convinced that through hard work during the training for Chicago, I could possibly qualify for Boston.

Did I just say Boston? Was I that ambitious and confident I could qualify for Boston on my second marathon? Surprisingly, I believed it! Somehow, I had the determination! I started training with the goal of finishing the race under 3:45:00, which would qualify me for a spot in Boston. My time was 3:40:19, and once again, the heat was on (low 80s)!

The Boston marathon training came quickly, and during a very tough winter with several snow storms. Still, I had set for myself new goals: to finish around 3:30:00 (training from *Runner's World: Run Less, Run Faster*) or to set a PR, which I had heard it was something very hard to do at that course. It was hard, but not impossible. Once again, with the weekly runs with AFRC members and listening to the motivational stories from members who had run Boston several years in a row, I continued believing. I finished the race in 3:33:18, setting one goal, and missing the other by over 3 minutes. Don't get me wrong, I am still very happy with my results and accomplishment in Boston.

It was so nice to have several of us, members of the AFRC getting together in Boston prior to the race. I was able to get so many valuable tips from so many of you! I now feel ready and very excited for Boston again next year! It's official, I've got the marathon bug, and nothing is stopping me!

With proper training and support from the AFRC members, friends and family, there are no excuses! There is no "I can't do this!" Believe in yourself and that you're worth it! If I can do it, you can do it too!

Thanks Rob and all other amazing club members who inspire me on each and every run!

Cristiane "Cris" Caccavale

USATF-NJ Race Schedule – 2011

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Championship</u>
Sept 4	Jimmy D 5k	Masters Women
Sept 25	Liberty Waterfront ½ Marathon	All Divisions
Oct 23	USATF-NJ XC 5k	All Divisions
Oct 30	USATF-NJ XC 8k	All Divisions
Nov 13	Giralda Farms 10k	Masters Men/Women
Nov 24	Ashenfelter 8k	All Divisions
Dec 12	USATF-NJ 10 Mile	All Divisions

Welcome New Members!

We welcome the following new members to the Amazing Feet Running Club community:

Kanchana Leung, Chatham
Griff Welton, Summit
Polly Harrison, Basking Ridge
Michelle Quinlan, Chatham

River to Sea Relay - July 30, 2011

The 2011 River to Sea Relay will be the 16th annual team adventure race run across New Jersey. Beginning in Milford on the Delaware River and ending on the beach in Manasquan, R2C16 is a physically and mentally challenging endurance event.

Every team consists of 7 runners who each run 2 legs of the 92-mile relay. The event passes through 34 towns in Hunterdon, Mercer, Somerset, Middlesex and Monmouth counties. AFRC will have two teams in the race – one all women and one all men. We wish them a safe and exciting race.

Cindy Petersen Completes 7th Continent

SAFARICOM MARATHON, KENYA – 6/25/11
Cindy Peterson – 7:17:39 (1st Place Age 70 and Over)

Arriving in Kenya was Exciting, reaching the Equator Amazing and after settling down in the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, a few fantastic Safari Game Drives, finally comes "RACE DAY."

Seeing Warning signs all over stating "RUN AT YOUR OWN RISK" (LIONS, HIPPOS, ELEPHANTS ETC) is a little disturbing and dangerous. However, any running has a little risk, and is the nature of the sport. I was more concerned about my Grandson Matt, 23 years old, who was running his first Half Marathon on terrain that looked more like a tough Trail Run.



The GUN GOES OFF, for 926 Half Marathoners and 165 Full Marathoners. There was no sight seeing for me since I needed to keep my head down watching out for all the embedded rocks as well as the deep Ruts and Gulleys. About 6 miles into the race, I took a fall on my knees. A little embarrassed, I picked myself up and continued running with skinned knees.

Around the 9th mile, I took another fall, and this time had to have medical attention on my knees and elbows. This took time, but the Medics insisted that the dust and dirt in the wind on my open wounds was not good, and had to be cleaned and bandaged up. The bandages would not stay

up, but I had to keep running anyway. Since I didn't see Matt along the way, I knew he must be doing OK.

At that point I became anxious, because you had to cross the halfway point by 3 hours and 20 minutes, or they would take you off the course.

I was approaching the 12th mile when I tripped again for the 3rd time. I was devastated to say the least and didn't have time to stop for Medical assistance until after the halfway point, because the clock was ticking and I had a little over a mile to go.



I needed to give myself a blast of encouragement when I remembered a great quote. "OUR GREATEST GLORY IS NOT IN NEVER FALLING, BUT IN GETTING UP EVERY TIME YOU DO." *Confucius*

I DID NOT COME ALL THIS WAY TO QUIT NOW!

I had about 25 minutes to reach the halfway point, and, with a rush of adrenaline, I started running and reached the half way mark at 3 hours and 10 minutes, and was able to continue on to the Full Marathon. They did not care how long it took you to Finish after that.

At the 14th mile I had stopped for medical attention on my knees because by now they were pretty banged up and painful. However, I was really motivated now because I could walk the rest of the way, to finish my 7th Continent, until I heard the motorcycle driver announce that I was the Last Runner.

OMG. How am I going to face my friends and family as the last runner when I trained to finish a 5 and a half hour Marathon. I could see the next to the last runner way in front of me, and decided to catch up and pass him so I wouldn't be last.

All of a sudden I saw Zebras crossing in front of me, and Giraffes and Gazelles on either side of the road. The animals sensed that there were no more runners and could come back to their territory. This was frightening, and wasn't the same feeling as watching them from a jeep. Wow! I looked up to see the spotter plane and the helicopter coming down to chase the animals away. Then

came 3 motorcycles, 2 jeeps, and 2 Game Wardens with rifles to guide my way.

It sure was comforting to have all this attention, and the thought of passing the runner in front, suddenly left me. I FELT LIKE A ROCK STAR!

The Motorcycle guys assured me that they would stay in front of me all the way to the Finish, and the jeeps would be close behind, as well as the 2 Game Wardens with Rifles. I knew at that point that I could enjoy the rest of the Marathon, and another quote came to mind for encouragement. "IT DOES NOT MATTER HOW SLOWLY YOU GO SO LONG AS YOU DO NOT STOP. *Confucius*."

My knees were well bandaged now, and I was so excited stopping at all the Water Stops, taking pictures with the Volunteers, the Masai, and the Locals.

I was approaching the last 400 meters when I saw my directors Kelly and Jacquie, running towards me to guide me to the Finish. It was so great to see them that it brought me to tears!

There at the Finish were all my Teammates, and then some, cheering me on as though I was the First Runner. I slowly ran into the arms of my Grandson Matt. It was exhilarating, especially to learn that Matt finished his first half Marathon in 2 hrs and 29 minutes.

The Award Ceremony was later that night and after Matt roasted me, he put the 7 Continents Medal around my neck. How exciting is that!! It was a very moving experience for me to finish my 7th Continent in Kenya!

Out of 41 Marathons, this was the most challenging and difficult Marathon I have ever run, but the MOST MEMORABLE AND MOST REWARDING!!!!!!

I would like to finish with this last thought.

"IF YOU ARE NOT FAST ENOUGH TO FINISH FIRST, ENJOY THE GLORY OF COMING IN LAST LIKE A ROCK STAR!!

*LOVE TO ALL
Cindy Peterson*

