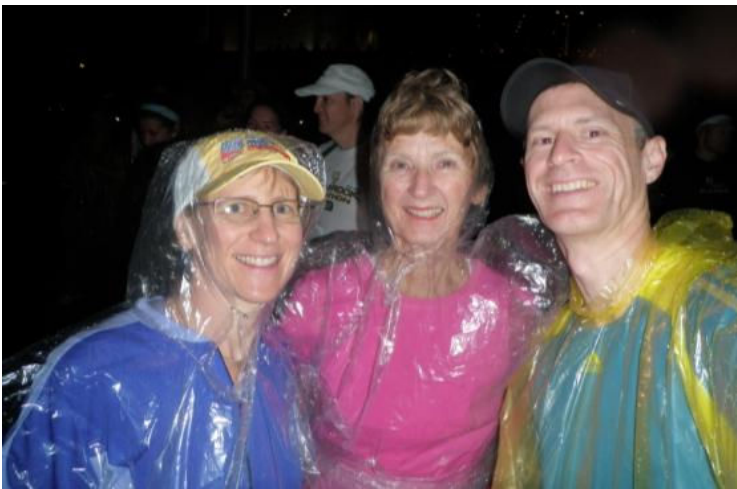


## 2011 Flying Pig Half Marathon

As many of you may remember last year's Flying Pig Marathon was quite difficult for me. I felt sick through most of it and was in a bit of a daze. This year I decided to run the half instead of the full and had a totally different experience. While we started in a rain like last year, they had implemented "Pig Pens", known as corrals in most other races for this year. I was fortunate to be in pen A so avoided much of the congestion that I had in last year's race. The only problem I had was a technical difficulty with my GPS, which was no big deal. I actually experienced things along the route this year. As we passed into Kentucky we had a great view from the bridge. I could see the police stopping traffic in the distance and an old River boat. I could hear an excited spectator yelling "only 25 more miles." I took my own Gatorade to eliminate the chance of unfamiliar water causing a problem. I did have flashbacks to last year as I passed bushes and trees that I considered throwing up behind last year.



I really enjoyed the stretch through downtown where the streets were lined with people on both sides cheering loudly. It was fun to see the pig outfits and all of the signs people were holding. I compared notes with Julie afterwards and we saw: "Pigs must be flying, because you're not last", "Run like you stole something", "Run faster I'm tired off holding this sign", and "Run Human Run" (held by someone in a gorilla outfit). As I looked into the eyes of the spectators, some seemed to be cheering for everyone and others were intent on finding specific runners. I got the chills from all of the energy and at one point probably picked up the pace more than I should have.

Shortly after the Greyhound bus station I saw something I had never seen before in a race, and I've been to a lot of races. I saw a runner down and thought how sad so early in the race. Then I noticed the runner was buck naked. Then I saw his hands cuffed behind his back and some road rash. Finally I saw the police officers putting on their rubber gloves. I guess someone was not having a good day. On the morning news the race director was talking about the Flying Pig Streakers, which is the name given to people who have run all of the races. I guess this guy was confused. I told a friend about it later, and all she wanted to know was where did he pin on his number?

(See <http://www.wlwt.com/news/27736463/detail.html#ixzz1LKUW1759> for the news story.)

The big climb into Eden Park of the race was next. The route passes a pond with a fountain and winds its way up the hill. The route continues past the Conservatory with big butterflies advertising their butterfly exhibit and a “fat” Elvis singing out front. Finally we got to the best view of the race - an overlook of the river and valley. I even saw a barge on the river. (Julie & Shirley stopped for a photo.)



As we approached the half and full split, I felt like I was cheating to take the half route, but kind of thankful that I was about done. The downhill was a welcome relief. I had slowed some on the up hills and the 1:45 pace group caught up with me. I made up some time on the down hills and finished strong. The route back ran along the outbound route and crossed under it on an underpass. It tied up a bunch of roads with police directing traffic at some intersection. At one traffic backup there was a lady yelling “Go” from her SUV, but I don’t think she was supporting the runners.

They need to give out bags at the food line. This year they had fruit cups, bananas, apples, dried fruit, water, bagels, granola bars, Ho Ho’s, chocolate milk, chips, squeeze yogurt, and doughnuts. There was a vendor area outside of the recovery area. I spun a wheel and “won” ready to eat rice. I got more chocolate milk, a tee shirt, and water. I got cold even with a Mylar blanket and rain poncho so decided to go back to the hotel. I asked a policeman for general directions and he pointed where he thought I needed to go. He told me good luck getting there though. I found some steps that led to an overpass over the finish line. It was a great view of the finish and of the sea of Mylar blankets with the eerie rustling as they blew in the wind. This was a fun race that all three of us would recommend.

