

## 26.2 Miles ... the Ultimate Test of Mind & Body Cont'd

Written by Southwest Orlando Bulletin Staff

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“Running a marathon was on my bucket list, so I thought I might as well continue training, since I was already running.”

“People aren’t joking when they tell you it is all in your mind. You train and train, and really it is all about the mind.”

Aside from Olympians, professional athletes and world-class nonprofessional competitors, most marathon runners are amateurs.

At the end of the proverbial road, a transformation happens. Some are proud of their accomplishment and some are not.



The Reserve at Belmere resident Sherri D’Argenio completes her first marathon in February 2011.

That was the case for Wintermere Pointe resident Kay Ownby, 54, who has completed 61 marathons and counting.

“I started running in my 20s, when I was in the military,” Ownby said. “I mostly did 5K races.”

Though she did complete a 15K race, which is equivalent to 9.3 miles, her interest remained with shorter races.

“I always thought you had to be skinny and fast to run a marathon,” she said. It was not until she read a book that she changed her mind.

“I had no idea how to train, so I did a lot of research online and read books,” she said.

At first she ran solo but soon discovered the benefits of joining a running group that followed a detailed training plan.

“According to the plan, we were suppose to do a 26-mile-long run,” said

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Ownby, who lived in Texas at the time. “My running partner and I thought if we had to run that far, we might as well have fun.”

“It gave me people to talk to about running, because if you aren’t a runner, it is hard for people to relate, so I had to be a runner.”

One friend she made has completed the 50-state challenge, in addition to running a marathon on every state.

“I didn’t consciously set out to do a marathon in every state, but by the time I had completed around 30, I had done it.”

There has only been one marathon she could not complete.

“I had a migraine headache the day before the Marine Corps Marathon [in Washington, D.C.], so I had to skip it.”



*Wintermere Pointe resident Kay Ownby, 54, is just two states shy of running a marathon in all 50 U.S. states.*

Determined as she has proven to be, Ownby went back the next year to compete in and finish that marathon.

Included in Ownby’s collection of medals is one from a marathon that took place in a game reserve in Kenya.

“It was a great trip, because we were able to go on safari and also traveled to Tanzania and hiked Mount Kilimanjaro.”

Ownby approaches marathons not as much with a competitive agenda, but with an eye to take in the experience.

While running the race in Africa, she talked with a ranger on the course.

“He stopped me and wanted to chat,” she said. “Afterward, he gave me an ostrich feather, which I still have.”

When one thinks of Kenya, visions of fleet-footed runners may come to mind.

“They aren’t all fast,” Ownby said, with a chuckle. “I beat a few of them.”

“I tell people not to worry about their time and don’t use age as an excuse not to try,” she said. “Running is a great way to stay healthy and fit.”

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