

Another beautiful run is the race around the "Bagsvaerd So". It was here, a couple of years ago, that world class boat races took place. We ran through woods, past two castles and a tiny village, all nestled along the waterfront. Also, here we discovered the Danish hills -- yes, they do exist, although perhaps this is only realized by a runner -- five kilometres of the run was an uphill battle. Since then, we've mentally marked every rise in elevation from home to "Louisiana", a fabulous small gallery of modern art, currently displaying works by Yousuf Karsh.

Months into our training an American friend asked to join us -- Warren immediately became our fourth running buddy and we did some local races together. We were all very slow in comparison with many of the locals who are so keen and young. The "citizen runner" is in the minority here. We had fun and bragged about our times to each other.

A few weeks before the Marathon, we ran the "City Lopet", a 10 km race through town. Our sons volunteered to help with the race by directing traffic. We started near the famous Tivoli Gardens, and ran along the Stroget, a very large and lively shopping area, always filled with street musicians, stalls and restaurants. At one end is our Embassy -- how ever do they get things done in the midst of so much activity? We finished the run along the waterfront, and returned to the finish line for coffee and fruit pies. Very unusual -- we're generally welcomed by water and fruit. The Danes always have to add some excitement for us -- one being no water stops during 10 km runs -- I guess Vikings don't need hydrating -- not with water anyway.

Marathon Day rapidly approached and all our diplomatic friends and colleagues, along with close Danish friends, wished us well. Friends arrived from England with special T-shirts, complete with Canadian and Swedish flags for us "gals". T-shirt printing is not done here on the same scale as at home.

The race began, (again downtown) and we were off with 2,500 other runners -- not enough for me since I'm slow and would almost always be near the end. We ran through parts of Copenhagen we didn't know even existed and I'm sure are not found in any guide books. We struggled past many famous sights -- the Carlsberg Breweries, the Queen's Palace, King's Gardens, countless museums and around many downtown lakes. Last, but not least, the "Little Mermaid" watched as the struggling, weary, broken runners dragged themselves by -- at least those around me who were hours behind the winners. Then finally we crossed the finish line. We were cheered and awarded medals, then went off to Britt Marie's for a victory party. What a thrilling, but certainly not an easy, tour of Copenhagen!

The next day we hobbled to the award ceremonies in the Tivoli gardens, where we proudly wore our medals and smug smiles. So much history and a perfect ending to our long hard months of training.

Now, Warren and Jim are back to running their old routes -- Warren along the wooded bike paths near his home, Jim along the garden paths downtown, past sunbathing Danes and the Little Mermaid. Britt Marie is back in Stockholm, in training for "London", and I am back to my usual 5 km runs from home around the local lake, where I watch ugly ducklings growing into lovely swans in "Wonderful, Wonderful Copenhagen".

