

## **Kona, Hawaii Trip — Training Journal — February 21, 2009 - July 3, 2009**

*by JoAnna Kai Cobb*

### **Saturday, February 21, 2009**

This morning, I found out that I received a Lilly Endowment which means ED AND I ARE GOING TO HAWAII, and I'M GOING TO RUN A MARATHON! Today, Ed came inside with the mail and said, "Jo, you have a thick letter from Lilly." In October, I wrote an application for a Teacher Creativity Fellowship, part of the Lilly Endowment Inc. The Endowment offers 120 grants of \$8,000 each to Indiana's public and private school teachers for projects of the individual's choice. I wrote my proposal to go to Keauhou-Kona, Hawaii to run the Kona Marathon, a marathon that supports CCFA. When I opened my letter from Lilly, the first word I saw was, "Congratulations!" I still can't believe it's real. In just 127 days, on our third wedding anniversary (June 28), I will run 26.2 miles on the west coast of the Big Island in Hawaii. WOW! I thought I would keep a journal to document the journey.

### **Sunday, February 22, 2009**

I entered the Kona Marathon today! Many people have been offering congratulations on Facebook.

### **Monday, February 23, 2009**

I booked the trip with Sun Tours & Travel. It's starting to seem real now. Folks at BMS are thrilled for me, with many of them asking for advice on writing their own proposals.

### **Wednesday, February 25, 2009**

There was a little blurb about my Lilly Endowment in the paper today. Some people have left comments on the online story indicating that it is a poor use of money: "Go to Hawaii & run a marathon.....give me a break! Lilly definitely did not spend that 8K wisely. I for one think the grant could have been used in a much better way," and "It looks like they're paying for someone to take a vacation for doing their job." Many have posted comments in my defense, my favorite being: "JoAnna, it's going to be tough to make you a better teacher.....You are one of our best. Lilly made an excellent choice for their endowment money." I'm really not upset about it, just a bit disappointed. No matter what anyone thinks, I'm going to Hawaii to run a marathon in 123 days.

### **Sunday, February 28, 2009**

I'm a bit discouraged today. I had been training in January in the hopes that I would get the Endowment and would then be physically ready for more rigorous training. I've even entered the 500 Festival Mini Marathon again. I ran my fastest ever 5K (26:50) on February 7. Since then, I've been having some difficulty with my left hip. When I got the news that I would be running the marathon, I started getting therapy treatments with Dr. Edwards at Bedford Chiropractic. After a gig in Kentucky last night, my hip is so sore, that I dropped out of a training 10K today. My goal for the Marathon is to get to the starting line in a healthy condition. I have the same goal for the Mini Marathon on May 2. I know I can do it, but the days that slide by without me being able to train are making me nervous.

### **Friday, March 6, 2009**

I had a Nutritional Microscopy today, meaning a little drop of my blood was analyzed under a microscope. It indicated what my nutritional needs are in order that I get to the starting line HEALTHY!

### **Saturday, March 7, 2009**

I am so encouraged! Today, I walked 5K without any hip pain, just tightness. (Time = 47:38.41; Pace = 15:22.07) I ran the last tenth of a mile, and that was OK too. I discovered that walking isn't so bad. My walking speed is about 16 min./mile, which is a bit frustrating for me. (My running pace is 9:30.) However, I found I really enjoyed the walk. Though I would be a bit disappointed to do so, I know I can finish the Marathon by walking the entire thing. However, I know I'll be healthy enough to run a lot of it. The plan right now is to keep getting my therapy with Dr. Edwards; walk three miles, five days a week; do a long walk/run once a week; and slowly add running back into the training. Days until Mini: 56. Days until Marathon: 113.

### **Sunday, March 8, 2009**

I woke up with sore gluteus muscles, but headed out for a 3-mile hilly walk. I chose the hilly US 50 route because I think its terrain most resembles that of the Kona Marathon—rarely flat with gentle to moderate grades. It was enjoyable (cloudy, windy, 65°), but the whole time, I was thinking, "I want to run!" So I did run the last quarter-mile. My hip felt like it had a little "catch" in the beginning, but ironed out eventually. I am determined not to injure it further, so I'll be careful!

### **Wednesday, March 11, 2009**

I saw the chiropractor today, and he recommended that I not run the Shamrock Run 4-miler I've entered this weekend. He said, "You're going to risk an injury from running too soon when you've got a marathon in Hawaii to consider?" He's right. No Shamrock. I did a short workout today where I warmed-up with a half-mile walk, then did a run/walk at a 4 block/2 block ratio for a mile and a half. The whole thing took 25 minutes. Again, my hip was stiff, but it worked its way out of the tightness as I ran. After the run, I did some calculations. Here's what I found:

- If I run the entire marathon at a 10-min. pace, I will finish in 04:22:00.
- If I walk the entire marathon at a 16.-min. pace, I will finish in 06:59:12.
- If I run half the time, and walk half the time, I will finish in 05:22:28.
- If I run half the distance, and walk half the distance, I will finish in 05:40:36.

I know I should be focused on getting to the starting line healthy and not on times, but it's interesting to me. I'm curious what my first marathon finish time will be. I hope it's under 6 hours, but I don't care if it's 10. My guess is that it will be around 5:45.

### **Sunday, March 15, 2009**

Today was Day One of my "official" marathon training. Due to the hip tenderness, I walked my mileage today. I'm trying to get myself in the mindset that it's OK to walk. Hopefully, I'll be up to running soon. I ran the last quarter-mile of my two miles today. Speaking of the "official" training plan, here it is. Dr. Jimmy Sowders, my running expert and coach, developed this schedule that includes 15 weeks of four-day-a-week training:

3/15: 2 - 2 - 2 - 4

3/22: 2 - 3 - 2 - 5

3/29: 3 - 3 - 2 - 6

4/05: 3 - 3 - 3 - 7  
4/12: 3 - 4 - 3 - 8  
4/19: 4 - 4 - 3 - 8  
4/26: 4 - 4 - 3 - 13.1 (Indy Mini on 05/02)  
5/03: 5 - 4 - 4 - 10  
5/10: 5 - 4 - 4 - 12  
5/17: 4 - 4 - 4 - 14  
5/24: 5 - 4 - 5 - 16  
5/31: 5 - 5 - 5 - 16  
6/07: 5 - 5 - 5 - 20  
6/14: 4 - 4 - 4 - 10  
6/21: 3 - 2 - 1 - 26.2 (Kona Marathon on 6/28)

Here are the stats for today:

Total Time = 2 miles @ 29:29.60	Overall Pace = 14:44.80
Mile Splits = 15:07.28 / 14:22.32	
Run Time = 0.25 miles @ 2:36.92	Run Pace = 10:27.68
Walk Time = 1.75 miles @ 26:52.68	Walk Pace = 15:21.53
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 6:26:21.76	

### **Tuesday, March 17, 2009**

Happy St. Patrick's Day! I have a light case of laryngitis, but still managed to get in some training today. I did a walk/run today: walked the first half mile, ran a mile, walked a quarter mile, and ran a quarter mile. My time was 24:15.40. Hip still tight. I'm ready for it to heal. Yesterday, my check from Lilly arrived... \$8,000! I took a picture of it. Marathon = 103 Days! Here are the stats for today:

Total Time = 2 miles @ 24:15.40	Overall Pace = 12:07.70
Mile Splits = 12:31.92 / 11:43.48	
Run Time = 1.25 miles @ 12:16.99	Run Pace = 9:49.60
Walk Time = 0.75 miles @ 11:58.41	Run Pace = 15:57.88
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 5:17:45.74	

### **Friday, March 20, 2009**

I am off work today in order to get my Crohn's treatment (Remicade) at the hospital. However, because of the laryngitis, the doctors didn't think it was a good idea for me to get my treatment. No worries... I'll get it next week. I forgot to write yesterday to say that I did another walk/run. It was much like Tuesday's training; except on the last half mile, I walked for only two blocks, and then ran the last four. I finished in 23:19.73. I'm officially on Spring Break, and the marathon is exactly 100 days away! Here are the stats for yesterday:

Total Time = 2 miles @ 23:19.73	Overall Pace = 11:39.865
Mile Splits = 12:34.74 / 10:44.99	
Run Time = 1.4 miles @ 13:57.75	Run Pace = 9:58.39
Walk Time = 0.6 miles @ 9:21.98	Run Pace = 15:36.63
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 5:05:36.463	

### **Saturday, March 21, 2009**

Today was the first official long run/walk of my marathon training. I went six miles, even though my schedule said to go four miles. I want to build some distance quickly because I have a 15K on April 4. Today, I walked the first 75% and ran the last 25% of each mile for the first 4 miles, then went 50%-50% for the last two miles. My hip actually felt better on the runs than it did the walks.

Stopping running was hard. It's still hard for me to gauge what's best for my body. It felt good to have a distance day, and I can't wait until the next one! Here are the stats for today:

Total Time = 6 miles @ 1:19:51.02      Overall Pace = 13:18.50  
Mile Splits = 13:27.65 / 14:12.00 / 13:33.05 / 13:36.30 / 12:36.58 / 12:25.44  
Run Time = 2 miles @ 20:18.08      Run Pace = 10:09.04  
Walk Time = 4 miles @ 59:32.94      Walk Pace = 14:53.235  
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 5:48:40.79

### **Sunday, March 22, 2009**

I had no hip pain this morning after yesterday's long walk/run! Yeah! However, Mom, Dad, Ed, Mac, and I went bowling tonight, and it feels a bit tender now. Looks like I might have to forgo some activities for the time being in order not to risk injury prior to the marathon. It's worth it.

### **Monday, March 23, 2009**

Today, Ed, Mac, and I hiked to Stack Rock, a local area in the woods where limestone slabs are stacked quite high. Some of the climbs to get there and back were nearly vertical. Also, Mac and I actually climbed Stack Rock. So much for forgoing some risky activities! ☺ It was really fun, though, and I'm glad we went.

### **Tuesday, March 24, 2009**

As predicted, my hip was pretty sore before, during, and after today's 3.1 mile walk/run. It felt better afterwards than it did before, so that's a good sign. I'm trying not to be obsessed with times; but as can be detected from my previous entries, I'm not doing a very good job! I've always been over-focused on time and pace, and it's gotten me into some injury trouble in the past. I typically train at about a 9:30 pace, so seeing these 12 and 13 paces is hard for me. However, I will be OK with any marathon FINISHING pace. I need to focus on that. Here are the stats for today:

Total Time = 3.1 miles @ 37:56.22      Overall Pace = 12:14.26  
Mile Splits = 12:23.05 / 12:24.51 / 12:17.30 / 00:51.36  
Run Time = 1.6 miles @ 15:23.01      Run Pace = 9:36.88  
Walk Time = 1.5 miles @ 22:33.21      Walk Pace = 15:02.14  
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 5:20:37.73

### **Thursday, March 26, 2009**

I missed a day of training today. I hate to do that, but I am doing my best to listen to my body and not push through pain that I believe to be harmful. My hip is sore today, so I'm giving it a rest. That's harder to do than one would think.

### **Wednesday, April 1, 2009**

Happy April Fools' Day! I hope my hip isn't April-Fooling me today. I have ZERO pain in my hip. None. I think all the rest and chiropractic therapy are finally reaping rewards! I went outside in the 65° weather and ran/walked 3 miles at a 4 block : 2 block ratio, but I ran through the last walk break. Here are the results:

Total Time = 3 miles @ 34:01.62      Overall Pace = 11:20.54  
Mile Splits = 11:40.00 / 11:48.54 / 10:33.08  
Run Time = 2 miles @ 19:49.10      Run Pace = 9:54.55  
Walk Time = 1 mile @ 14:12.52      Walk Pace = 14:12.52  
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 4:57:10.148

### **Saturday, April 4, 2009**

I had an amazing 15K today! Today's 9.3 mile race was a training race held by "Let's Go," the local group that trains for the 500 Festival Mini Marathon. At the beginning of the race, I was not nervous. This was unusual for me, because I'm usually very apprehensive before a race, either about a time goal I've set or the sheer distance ahead of me. However, without any goal other than finishing and having fun, I found myself totally without fear or apprehension. My plan was to run when I felt like it, and walk when I felt like it. When the race began, I purposely ran slower than that with which I felt comfortable. I didn't want to hurt my hip right at the beginning. This was easier to do than I thought it would be, but it was still hard to watch people pass me. However, I put my competitive nature aside, knowing that staying healthy was most important. I kept up that pace for half the race, pleased that my hip wasn't giving me any trouble at all. However, I started feeling a little "catch" in my knee that was uncomfortable. That development prompted the beginning of the walk breaks. At Mile Marker 6, it was starting to feel like I was harming my knee by continuing. With 3.3 miles to go, I didn't know what to do. I wanted to finish the race, but not at the expense of harming my knee and being unable to be in my best condition for the marathon. I didn't know what to do—stop, walk, wait, what? At that exact moment, I looked up, and I saw a church marquee that said, "GOD ANSWERS KNEE-MAIL." Wow. In that moment, I said aloud, "God, give me a plan." I immediately felt like I was OK to walk/run to the finish. I took several walk breaks, but I made it in 1:38:29, only 10 minutes slower than my fastest 15K time. After this race, I am confident that I can train to do well at the marathon!

Total Time = 9.3 miles @ 1:38:28.89

Overall Pace = 10:35.36

Mile Splits = 09:34.33 / 09:55.97 / 09:58.26 / 10:04.79 / 10:51.84 / 11:39.11 / 12:40.88 / 11:37.61 / 09:36.35 / 02:29.75

If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 4:37:26.55

### **Sunday, April 5, 2009**

I woke up this morning with sore muscles, but NO hip or knee pain! Ed and I walked a leisurely two miles to work out the soreness. I am so encouraged! The marathon is 12 weeks from today.

### **Tuesday, April 7, 2009**

I had three miles on my schedule today. However, I chose to rest, and give it a shot on what was supposed to be a rest day tomorrow. It is difficult for me *not* to run when I have a number in my training plan. However, I'm trying to listen to my body a little more closely. Staunchly sticking to a training schedule has earned me injuries in the past. However, I still feel lazy when my training schedule says "3," and I log "0."

### **Wednesday, April 8, 2009**

Today is my stepson Sam's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. I have an adult for a child, and I'm not even 30 yet! Ha! To celebrate, I did my first bit of official training since the 15K. I covered 2 miles, and ran most of it. Felt great! I have soreness in my right arch, but it's not unmanageable. Also, I think I have a toenail getting ready to turn black. It's sore to the touch and feels like a giant bruise. Shoot. I was hoping I could get away with just clipping my nails short. It looks like I'm going to have to start taping them on long runs.

Total Time = 2 miles @ 20:28.57

Overall Pace = 10:14.285

Mile Splits = 10:47.37 / 9:41.20

Run Time = 1.75 miles @ 19:49.10

Run Pace = 9:44.05

Walk Time = 0.25 miles @ 3:26.49

Walk Pace = 13:45.96

If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 4:28:14.267

### **Saturday, April 11, 2009**

Long Run Day! I planned to do seven miles today, and that's what I did. I walked the first mile as a warm-up, then ran a half mile and walked a half mile for five miles. I ran the final mile completely. I felt like I could've run more, but I don't want to aggravate my hip. I also am having some pain in my right arch. However, I felt great post-run, and maybe that's because I didn't push myself too hard. I'll take it.

Total Time = 7 miles @ 1:24:15.90                      Overall Pace = 12:02.27  
Mile Splits = 14:24.98 / 12:40.21 / 11:59.20 / 11:46.00 / 11:36.30 / 12:14.20 / 9:35.01  
Run Time = 3.5 miles @ 34:25.02                      Run Pace = 9:50.01  
Walk Time = 3.5 miles @ 49:50.88                      Walk Pace = 14:14.54  
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 5:15:23.51

### **Wednesday, April 15, 2009**

For the second year in a row, BMS is hosting a 5K for all faculty, staff, and students, and I'm on the organizational committee. The kids have been given training sheets and information, and they're pretty excited. My teaching team is going to present a running interdisciplinary unit in two weeks in order to get the students more excited. Many are eager to compare their training with my marathon training. Today, as I was running up a particularly difficult hill, I heard, "Get it, Mrs. Cobb!" I looked over, and there were half a dozen or so of my current and former students cheering me on. I waved, and didn't think about the hill again until I was beyond it. If only I could take the kids with me to the hilly Kona Marathon! It's so neat to see how the kids and I can encourage each other as we train. Tonight, I walked a quarter-mile, ran a half-mile, walked a quarter-mile, then ran the rest (2.1 mi.). NO PAIN!

Total Time = 3.1 miles @ 31:53.72                      Overall Pace = 10:17.33  
Mile Splits = 11:37.74 / 9:54.73 / 9:31.76 / 00:49.49  
Run Time = 2.6 miles @ 24:57.36                      Run Pace = 9:35.91  
Walk Time = 0.5 miles @ 6:56.36                      Walk Pace = 13:52.72  
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 4:29:34.02

### **Saturday, April 18, 2009**

Long Run Day, and Croonin' for Crohn's Day! Every year, my husband and I host a concert called "Croonin' for Crohn's." We invite our talented friends from around the region for a one-night jam-fest to raise money for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America. This is the third year we've hosted the concert. It's tradition for me to do a long run on the morning of the concert. I did eight miles today. It was so cool; I started in the dark at 6:15, watched the sunrise, and finished in the light. The temperature was about 50°—perfect. I walked the first mile, then ran for 5 min. and walked for 5 min. x7. Finally, I ran the last mile. My feet are a bit blister-y, but I have no hip or knee pain. The marathon is in 71 days!

Total Time = 8 miles @ 1:34:26.01                      Overall Pace = 11:48.25  
Mile Splits = 15:00.44 / 11:45.02 / 11:27.95 / 11:32.59 / 11:32.89 / 11:37.91 / 11:58.60 / 9:30.61  
Run Time = 4.5 miles @ 44:30.61                      Run Pace = 9:53.47  
Walk Time = 3.5 miles @ 49:55.40                      Walk Pace = 14:15.83  
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 5:09:16.18

### **Wednesday, April 22, 2009**

It occurred to me yesterday that I haven't had any unusual hip pain for more than a week. I think it's time for me to start to carefully get myself closer to my original training schedule. I don't want to hurt myself again, though, so I promise to be careful! I ran 3.1 miles today with no walk breaks or walk warm-up. It felt great! By the way, Croonin' for Crohn's was awesome and raised over \$3,500 for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America!

Total Time = 3.1 miles @ 30:33.75      Overall Pace = 9:51.53

Mile Splits = 9:52.29 / 9:55.25 / 9:56.23 / 00:49.98

### **Friday, April 24, 2009**

I bought a new pair of running shoes today. Thanks to the grant, I was able to buy the best shoes and socks on the market for people who need cushion-y support. The shoes are red and white Asics Gel-Kayano 15. I can't wait to break them in!

### **Saturday, April 25, 2009**

Today, I had a 10-miler scheduled. I'm getting kind of tired of the old out-and-back courses, so I decided to try something different. At 6:00 A.M., my husband took me to Mitchell, a town 10 miles south of Bedford. He dropped me off, and I ran home. I'd never done something like that before! It was so much fun. I even liked not knowing how far along I was. I mean, I could guess based on my time; but with all my other courses, I know EXACTLY how far I've run, to the decimal. Not knowing made it fun to just run. Here is a list of cool things I saw on the run:

- crescent Venus as a morning star.
- bunnies darting around.
- barns silhouetted against a not-quite-risen sun.
- the sunrise over the river.
- birds flying high over the river.
- beautiful fields of green grass dotted with purple flowering trees.

The first 7.5 mi. were awesome, but I got a bit weary on the last 2.5 mi. They were all uphill, and I was fiercely in need of water. In any case, I felt like a rock star when I hit my porch. I yelled, "I just ran home from MITCHELL!" to no one. The best part is that my hips, knees, and feet don't hurt beyond the normal soreness of distance running! YEAH!

Total Time = 10 miles @ 1:51:52.65      Overall Pace = 11:11.265

If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 4:53:07.143

### **Wednesday, April 29, 2009**

It's been a fun week at school. It is state standardized testing week (which is not the fun part), and that has allowed my teaching team free afternoons to teach our interdisciplinary unit that is BMS 5K-themed. On Monday, I taught the students how to read an elevation chart using course maps of the BMS 5K, the Indy Mini, and the Kona Marathon. On Tuesday, I took each class to the track to run a half-mile time trial. Today, the students used their half-mile times to determine their 5K goal times. Tomorrow, they will determine what their individual minutes-per-mile paces should be to reach their goal times. Both they and I are having so much fun with it! They've asked me a lot of questions about training, races I've run, and races I'm going to run. Training for the Kona Marathon is *perfectly* timed for this unit!

### **Thursday, April 30, 2009**

I did a two mile run today in the clothes I plan to wear for the Mini on Saturday. Everything went well! I took a personal day for tomorrow in order to rest up for the crazy weekend (gig in Nashville Friday night, followed by the Mini on Saturday morning). As jazzed and excited as I am about the Mini, I'm \*twice\* as jazzed and excited about the Marathon!

Total Time = 2 miles @ 19:26.60

Overall Pace = 9:43.30

Mile Splits = 9:45.30 / 9:41.30

### **Saturday, May 2, 2009**

Today's Mini left me without words, but I'll try to do my best to describe it. ☺ I awoke at my aunt's house this morning at 5:15 after four hours of sleep. (I got to bed so late because I was performing in an awesome show in Nashville.) I got ready, and then met my parents and training buddies from Bedford at the 465/37 junction. We parked at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indy, walked to the start line, and then split up to go to our respective corrals. I was in Corral G. Mom and Dad stuck with me until I started the race. I reached the start line three minutes and 13 seconds after the starting gun sounded, which was 45 minutes sooner than the folks in Corral Z. My plan was to run 10 min. / walk 2 min. over and over, and I stuck to that plan. The first six miles were awesome. I was high-fiving spectators and cheering. There was a hot air balloon race running concurrently with the Mini, so it was cool to watch the balloons, as well. Mile Markers 6-8 are on the Indianapolis Speedway, and that's always a difficult spot for me. The track is quiet (no fans allowed), hotter than the street (even though it was a perfect 50°s and cloudy), banked (for the racecars), and seemingly unending. Two cool things did happen on the track though: I ran into a friend, and I saw Al Unser, Jr., and blew him a kiss! When I exited the track and hit the 10 mile marker a little later, things started to get tough for me. I took a double walk (4 min.) at mile 12 in order to finish strong; and that I did, in 2:15:39. (My chip time was 2:15:39, but my watch time was 2:15:41.30.) The odd thing is that in 2007, when I ran the entire race without walk breaks, I finished in 2:18:22. It looks like walk breaks are the key for me! I recovered within two or three minutes, and I had no harmful pain. My muscles were just long-run sore from working hard to get a PR. Many of my Let's Go training friends had PRs as well. It was an awesome race!

Total Time = 13.1 miles @ 2:15:41.30

Overall Pace = 10:21.47

Mile Splits = 10:08.32 / 10:22.19 / 10:19.83 / 09:38.00 / 10:06.06 / 10:03.42 / 09:40.17 / 10:20.46 / 10:24.55 / 10:35.33 / 10:35.67 / 11:39.04 / 10:53.78 / 00:54.48

5K Split = 31:42.23

10K Split = 1:02:42.63

15K Split = 1:34:15.14

Run Time = about 24:00

Walk Time = about 1:51:39

If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 4:31:22.60

### **Tuesday, May 5, 2009**

Today was my first run since the half marathon. I just did a two-mile jog to loosen up my sore legs. I wore my new red Asics for the first time, and they felt great. However, after the run, the nagging pain in my discolored toe was at an all-time high. Therefore, I decided to inspect it a bit while I was in the bathtub. When I did that, it bent all the way back. EW! I now have only nine toenails and one sore little red stump. ☺

Total Time = 2 miles @ 19:23.01

Overall Pace = 9:41.505

Mile Splits = 9:51.37 / 9:31.64

### **Saturday, May 9, 2009**



Last night, I had a gig in Bardstown, Kentucky (three hours away) and got home at 2:00 A.M. At 5:15 this morning, I got out of bed and ran to my friend Lisa's house. She lives 10.64 miles away, straight up Highway 37. It was a HILLY run, and I did a run/walk at a 5 min. / 2 min ratio. Near the middle, I knew the hills were only going to get fiercer, so I started a 6 min. / 2 min. ratio to bank minutes in case I needed shorter run times on the hills. However, I didn't! I find I like these runs when I don't know how many miles I've gone. It's good for the psyche somehow. I ended up walking for only 30 minutes of the run. Surprisingly, the run seemed to get easier as I continued. I was really struggling in the beginning, perhaps due to lack of sleep, and found that my energy built as I ran. Cool. I really should've gotten more sleep though. ☺

Total Time = 10.64 miles @ 1:56:27.25

Overall Pace = 10:56.70

If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 4:46:45.45

### **Friday, May 15, 2009**

Today was one of the most amazing days of the year so far—BMS 5K Day! I arrived at the track at 6:30 to help set up the race course. At 8:15, the students started arrived; and a little after 9:00, the race began. I can't describe how cool it was to see nearly 700 students, faculty, and staff running and walking through Bedford. Everywhere I ran, I saw smiles and encouragement. I finished in 27:48, obliterating my goal of finishing in under 30:00. (I've been strictly working on distance training, no speed training, so I didn't know how a 5K would go.) More importantly, the best part was seeing how much fun the kids had, how proud they were of themselves, and how encouraging they were to each other. Kids were high-fiving as they passed each other on the course. I took some cool-down laps with some of the students, and it made me proud to hear them cheer for the students who were finishing. Even some elementary students made signs of encouragement and came to support the middle school runners and walkers. My favorite part of the day was watching one of our heaviest students finish running, and listening to the crowd erupt as he did. On a funny note, one of my students said, "Mrs. Cobb, how are you going to run this distance eight-and-a-half times in a row?" ☺

Total Time = 3.1 miles @ 27:48.06

Overall Pace = 8:58.08

Mile Splits = 9:05.97 / 9:13.66 / 8:34.44 / 53.99

### **Sunday, May 17, 2009**

Long Run Day! I usually run long on Saturdays; but because of the 5K last Friday, I thought it would be best for me to put a day between the 5K and the long run. I did 12.15 miles on a new course today, and did a 6 min./3 min. run/walk ratio. I planted water at miles 3, 6, and 9 last night before leaving for a show in Scottsburg. All of them were there, and two of them were still upright. I twisted the caps without breaking the seal before I planted them; thus making it easier for me to open them while still being able to make sure they hadn't been tampered. I drank almost all 20 oz. of the last bottle. I also took three GU energy gels at 33:00, 1:09:00, and 1:45:00. I got five hours of sleep last, and I felt great. That's probably still not enough though. One problem to solve is the blisters I'm getting on my chest and my toes. I don't want to lose anymore toenails, so I have them cut very short; thus, blisters are occurring where there should be toenail. I'll talk to Coach Jimmy about what to do. I don't want to tape my toes anymore, because that makes worse blisters on the sides of my toes. What still surprises me most is my recovery time. Within five minutes, I feel like I could go do it again! YES! Marathon in SIX WEEKS!

Total Time = 12.15 miles @ 2:13:01

Overall Pace = 10:56.87

If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 4:46:50.06

### **Thursday, May 21, 2009**

I had a nice 5K training run this morning. I had the day off due to my Remicade infusion. Those usually make me pretty fatigued, so I thought it best to rise and run early. It was a nice run, and I enjoyed negative splits. After the run, I spent several hours at the hospital due to a delivery snafu, but still got to enjoy some time in the sun in the afternoon.

Total Time = 3.1 miles @ 30:15.70      Overall Pace = 9:45.71

Mile Splits = 10:07.92 / 9:50.89 / 9:26.34 / 50.55

### **Saturday, May 23, 2009**

Oh, man. What an awesome run I enjoyed this morning! Ed and I left home at 4:30 A.M., and made our way to Harrodsburg up Highway 37. We stopped every few miles to drop water for me. We arrived at my starting spot at 4:55 A.M., but I felt like it was too dark to begin. We hung around in the median for half an hour, then I took off at 5:25 A.M. I did a 7 min. / 3 min. walk run ratio, had four water stations, took four gels, and took four salt tabs. FELT GREAT! This was my favorite-ever training run (so far). I was hoping to keep a sub-11 pace, but I enjoyed the run so much that I don't care. I'm writing this about ten hours after having finished, and I have a sore muscle or tendon on the front of my left leg just above my ankle. I've Bengay-ed it and wrapped it up. I have a show tonight, and I may perform barefoot. I just hope this is soreness and not injury. Eek. Here are the things I saw on this morning's run:

- a sign that said, "Bedford 13" (as in miles)
- morning fog over the creek bridges
- a beautiful sunrise
- a semi driver who blew his horn and gave me a fist pump out the window
- a gigantic turtle (by Indiana standards)
- a deer that started to cross the road in front of me, but changed his mind
- lightning bugs
- springtime green and happiness everywhere

Total Time = 14 miles @ 2:35:56      Overall Pace = 11:08.29

If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 4:51:49.09

### **Monday, May 25, 2009**

I am happy to report that the pain in my leg/ankle is all but gone. It wasn't ever intense, but it was nagging enough that I was worried that I had injured it. In any case, me worrying about an injury has been enough to get my family, especially Ed and my Dad, to chime in regarding their opinions about my training. Both of them think I'm overtraining, and thus risking injury and loss of the marathon. Ed says all that matters is maintaining my cardiovascular fitness, which I can do with 3-4 mile maintenance runs every other day. Dad agrees, and says he'll be happy with whatever I do as long as I'm not doing any long runs. I understand that they care about me and don't want to see me get hurt. However, I feel like if I stand at the start line with my longest run being 15 miles, I will feel unprepared. I'm already following a minimalist training schedule. I don't know what to do now. I don't want to worry my family or hurt myself, but I want to be prepared. I think I'll email Coach Jimmy. I'll also talk to my chiropractor tomorrow.

### **Thursday, May 28, 2009**

For the first time in months, I did not enjoy my run today. I did a humid hill work out on Hwy 50. The humidity was high, there was sidewalk construction at every intersection, the traffic was

heavy, and did I mention the HUMIDITY? What a baby I am. I felt great after the run; I could immediately feel the strength I'd gained on the hill workout. Still, I was glad it was done. I've got a nagging sore muscle just above my knee behind and outside my right leg. It's starting to be lasting and troublesome, so I may talk to the chiropractor about that. Speaking of the chiropractor, he said I am fine to do my long runs as long as I keep my weekly mileage under 25 miles. My husband seemed OK with that, but my Dad is still freaking out. I know I'm a 29-year-old adult (only for four more days), but I still feel uncomfortable doing something with which my Dad has a problem. So, I think I'll do a 16-miler sometime in the next week, then start tapering. Not what I want, but maybe Dad has a point. Here are today's stats:

Total Time = 3 miles @ 29:09.01

Overall Pace = 9:43.00

Mile Splits = 10:03.96 / 9:43.80 / 9:21.25

### **Monday, June 1, 2009**

I am 30! I celebrated by buying some new training necessities. However, while jogging around the Indiana Running Company store to make sure my new running gear wouldn't chafe, I noticed a lurching-muscle feeling in that tender spot on the back of my right thigh, just above the knee. I'm going to have Dr. Edwards check it out tomorrow. My band performed at my birthday party, and I noticed it felt tender then too, especially when I was on my toes.

### **Tuesday, June 2, 2009**

Today, Dr. Edwards decided to do therapy on my new soreness instead of on my hip. It felt like he was hitting the right spot on the therapy. He gave me a nutritional supplement to help with the soreness. This new injury makes me a bit nervous, but I'm not losing focus. I \*know\* I can finish that marathon with the cardiovascular fitness I've built in the last three months. However, I was sort of starting to have my eye on a finish time. Looks like I will need to forget about that and take care of my muscle. As long as I can finish that marathon, I will be a happy gal, no matter how long it takes.

### **Monday, June 8, 2009**

Today, I ordered some waterproof paper to make a pace/prayer band. It will be a wristband where I list the splits I'll need to finish in under five hours. I understand that it's not likely that I'll meet that time goal now after I've had the issues with my hamstring. However, if things are going unbelievably well on June 28, I will want the pace info, so I'll have it just in case. It will also be a prayer band, though, because I'll list the name of someone to hold in my heart for that mile. So far, I've dedicated miles to my husband, each of my stepsons, each of my parents, my puppy, some friends, those with Crohn's, and myself.

### **Wednesday, June 10, 2009**

Dr. Edwards told me yesterday to go ahead and give it a shot last night. However, I was having a belly ache, so I waited until this morning. I did a slow two miles, walking the first third of each mile, in order not to harm the hamstring. It started out feeling pretty tight. However, sometime during the run, it started to feel fine, and it hasn't even felt sore since! (I ran about 12 hours ago.) That's thrilling news. I should be tapering right now, but after missing nearly two weeks of my intense training, I feel the need to get in some more runs. I won't overdo it though; I'll stick to the taper schedule. I want to try 10 miles this weekend. Today's pace is what I'd like to have at the marathon. At an 11:25 pace, I'd meet my original time goal with 53 seconds to spare. Ha!

Total Time = 2 miles @ 22:50.03                      Overall Pace = 11:25.015  
Mile Splits = 11:26.75 / 11:23.28  
Run Time = 1.333 miles @ 12:43.19                      Run Pace = 9:32.3925  
Walk Time = 0.667 miles @ 10:06.84                      Run Pace = 15:10.26  
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 4:59:07.393

### **Saturday, June 13, 2009**

I don't know what to think about this morning's 10 mile run from Mitchell to Bedford. My original plan was to give a 9 min.:3 min. run/walk ratio a try. I thought it might be a little difficult, and was shocked when it felt *perfect*. The nine minutes of running didn't overtax my energy, and the three minutes of walking was the right amount of time for my joints and heart to get a little break. There was some soreness here and there, but nothing that felt unmanageable. Even all my little "lessons learned" during training were paying off: I wasn't getting blisters on my chest, my toes felt safe, I was hydrated, my baggie-pocket was working well. Then, at 1:16:16 after having completed about seven miles (10:54 pace), my knee lurched—just like it did in the 15K on April 4. It had been feeling a little sore for a half mile, but it wasn't feeling unusually painful. I hardly had time to complete the thought, "Hey, this sort of feels like it did in the 15K..." when WHAM! My knee shut down. Because I was working hard on my 9:3 plan, it upset me to have to walk. However, I knew it was the right thing to do. For the remaining three miles, I ran a total of 8 minutes and 42 seconds, and I never ran more than a minute at once when my knee would lurch again. There was even a moment when I could only run for 11 seconds. The pace of my last three miles was 14:50. While it was discouraging to watch the seconds tick by while I walked, I learned some important lessons. First, crap happens. This may happen during the marathon, so I need a plan to deal with it. Second, time is not that important; *starting* and *finishing* this marathon is. I think the solution to the first lesson is in the second lesson: if "disaster" strikes in Kona, walk it out. I had no pain when I was walking. When I finished my 10 miles today, I felt like I could turn around and walk back to Mitchell. While I would love to keep a consistent run/walk ratio going strong in the marathon, that plan may end up blowing up in my face, and I need to be ready for it. So, as a result of writing this paragraph, I've decided this morning's run was a good run, with good lessons learned. Oh, and I think I'm losing another toenail. Ha!

Total Time = 10 miles @ 2:00:45                      Overall Pace = 12:04.50  
If I finished the marathon at this pace, my finish time would be: 5:16:21.9

### **Friday, June 19, 2009**

Tonight, I ran 12 laps around the track (3 miles) during the Relay for Life festivities. I used my 9 m in./3 min. run/walk ratio. It was difficult due to the nearly unbearable humidity. I ran at 10:00 P.M., so I didn't have to deal with the sun. However, I *did* have to deal with bugs. Ew. I ran as a member of Dr. Sowders's (my coach's) Running Team. We ran for Cole, a five-year-old boy recently diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. I was planning to run 5 miles, but my hamstring felt a little tight; and I'm not about to risk injury at this point. Ed and I are leaving Bedford at 2:00 A.M. on Sunday to catch a plane to Hawaii, and the marathon is in just NINE DAYS!

### **Sunday, June 21, 2009**

I have been awake for 43 hours. FORTY-THREE HOURS! Gordon picked us up at 1:30 A.M. (Eastern Time) at our house, so we just didn't sleep before we left. Our Indy to Phoenix flight was about 3.5 hours and uneventful. After a four-hour layover in Phoenix, we boarded a 6.5-hour flight to Honolulu. That was a LONG flight. We hardly had any time to enjoy Honolulu. In fact, all our

time in Honolulu was spent stressing. In Indy, our bags were only checked through Honolulu, so we had to get our luggage, get it re-checked, go through security, get to the other side of the airport, and get our boarding passes. We split up to get everything done, and they still had to hold the plane for us. The island-hopper flight made me sick, but I stared at one spot for 30 minutes to get through it. When we landed at the Kona Airport—surprise!—no luggage. Because we checked-in late for the flight, our luggage was delayed to the next flight. THAT flight was delayed 3.5 hours. Because we were sad about our luggage, we upgraded our rental car to a convertible. We went to a Wal-Mart and had some McDonald's there. Above the exit at the Wal-Mart was a sign that said, "Mahalo for Shopping at Wal-Mart." It's so funny to see "Mahalo" instead of "Thank you." It was a crazy day, but we are here in KONA!

### **Monday, June 22, 2009**

Today was our first full day in Kona. We enjoyed a free breakfast at the hotel, and then explored the grounds a bit. We walked on the lava by the ocean at low tide, found a nice sitting place, and watched some snorkelers. After that, we drove the marathon course. It's going to be awesome! Then, we checked out a beach near the course's turnaround, ate at Panda Express, and checked out a sports shop. Some people laughed at us for having the convertible top down when it looked like it was going to rain (but it didn't). After some time back at the hotel, we went to Outback Steakhouse on Ali'i Drive. Then, we came "home" and played cards with our new Hawaiian Islands card deck. Nice day!

### **Tuesday, June 23, 2009**

I began today with my first run in Hawaii! Yesterday, Ed and I measured one mile from our hotel room down Ali'i Drive, and found the end to be a house that has a sculpted manatee wearing leis. I ran to him, and then ran back. It was a great run! After my run, Ed and I attended an Island Orientation meeting hosted by the Expedia "Local Expert" (concierge), Amanda. We learned a lot about island activities in the one-hour meeting, and won a buy-one-get-one-free submarine tour. We scheduled a helicopter tour, a submarine tour, and a luau. Then, we went to lunch at a pizza place and looked around a shopping center. We tried to go to the Kona Brewery, but the tours were full. We'll go back later. We walked around the Ali'i shops instead. We ate dinner on the veranda at the hotel and watched the sunset. Everyone on the veranda clapped when it was over.

Total Time = 2 miles @ 18:22.38

Overall Pace = 9:11.19

Mile Splits = 9:15.74 / 9:06.64

### **Wednesday, June 24, 2009**

I had my first sunning experience in Hawaii this morning. Unfortunately, I only enjoyed about an hour of sun before the clouds rolled in. That's OK; we'll be here for another week! Lots of sun in the future! After sunning, Ed and I sent postcards to friends, and then we drove up the mountain to the Makalei Golf Club. The lowest elevation on the course is 1,800 ft., and the highest elevation is 3,000 ft. It was gorgeous, but we both noticed we felt a bit out-of-sorts in the elevation. It was chilly and rained a bit. The best part was that the course is overrun by about 100 peacocks. They were EVERYWHERE! One nibbled my toe! We came "home" to a nice sunset dinner on the veranda. Ed took still pictures of the sunset, and I took video footage.

### **Thursday, June 25, 2009**

The day began with a beautiful run. For the first time, I saw the top of the mountain because there was no vog in the sky. The vog showed up by the time my run was finished. This was my last training run. I had originally planned to run every part of the marathon course, but my chiropractor thought that might be unsafe, both physically and psychologically. He suggested I just drive the whole thing and run part of it, so that's what I did. Next in today's adventures included sunning (or more accurately, "clouding"), for three hours. After that, Ed and I had lunch Kona Brewing Company and enjoyed a tour and tasting there. We met some nice people from Texas and California. After a trip to the store, we were so tired that we didn't even go to dinner. Good thing we weren't hungry!

Total Time = 2 miles @ 18:23.87

Overall Pace = 9:11.935

Mile Splits = 9:20.06 / 9:03.81

### **Friday, June 26, 2009**

This morning, we took a helicopter tour of the Big Island. Oh. My. Gosh. This type of tour is the only real way to see the island. We saw rainforests and deserts, waterfalls and lava fields, beaches and gardens, etc.—all on one island! It was a neat tour. At one point, we were able to see lava pouring into the ocean and the sulfur gas, smoke, and steam rising where the lava hit the water. However, the best part by far was landing at "Jack's Place." Jack Thompson is the last resident of the area in which he lives. Lava flows have destroyed every house except his. He took us on a hike over two new (and hardened) lava flows: one from March 2008 and one from October 2008. We were able to see actual flowing lava in some areas. It was beautiful, and HOT. We were a few feet from the lava, but the heat nearly burned my face. Once we got back to the hotel, we relaxed for awhile, and then we went to a luau. We sat by the ocean and watched the huge waves, then enjoyed a meal and some traditional Hawaiian dancing. Unfortunately, we missed the end of the luau because it started POURING rain. It was OK though. We're in Hawaii, and I have a flower in my wet hair!

### **Saturday, June 27, 2009**

Oh, man. It's the day before the marathon. I'm freaking out. I'm excited, scared, thrilled, worried, etc. I ate tons of rice for breakfast, and then drank a 32 oz. Gatorade while I sat next to the pool. I chatted with some other folks who are here for the marathon. A lot of marathon participants arrived at the hotel yesterday. I went to the race packet pick-up and received my race number: 72. Ed and I had lunch at the hotel. After a rest, we went to explore South Kona, and then checked out the Ali'i Drive shops to get souvenirs. We ate at Rocky's, an Italian eatery that has BAD spaghetti. It tasted terrible, but I ate it because I know I'll need the carbs tomorrow. When we got back to the hotel, my CCFA singlet was waiting on me. I got all my marathon clothes together, pinned on my number, pinned in my fuel bags, and got my emergency bag (that Ed will have) ready. Oh, man. This is happening tomorrow. TOMORROW. In nine hours! I can't believe this. I don't doubt myself—I know I can do it. It's just such a daunting task that I have feelings of unusually strong apprehension. I CAN DO IT.

### **Sunday, June 28, 2009**

MARATHON! I was so nervous when I woke up, but it ended up being an unforgettable day. I stuck to my 9 min. run / 3 min. walk plan for about nine miles, then I started walking a lot more due to some loosey-goosey hips. I finished in 5:53:27. I have so much to write about the marathon, but I'm going to wait and document it all when we get home. We took it easy the rest of the day.

### **Monday, June 29, 2009**

I'm not as sore as I thought I would be today. My legs hurt about as much as they did yesterday. I do have a little more aching in my back, and my toes are hideous. Many toenails are pulling away from the skin, and I have the nastiest looking blisters I've ever seen on my own body. WORTH IT! After a couple hours in the sun, Ed and I went to a time share presentation which we were bribed to attend. (We received \$100 off our helicopter flight if we went.) We kept saying that a time share wouldn't fit into our budget, and the different people talking with us would say, "Well, you managed to afford a trip to Hawaii." Nope! We would explain about the Lilly Endowment Teacher Creativity program, and they would leave us alone. Ha! We spent the rest of the day working my sore muscles with walks and shopping for souvenirs.

#### **Tuesday, June 30, 2009**

I was very sore this morning, but the soreness worked its way away as the day progressed. We enjoyed a submarine tour today! Last week, we won a buy-one-get-one-free sub tour in a raffle. The tour was so beautiful. There are some amazing fish in the waters off Kona. Our guide was very knowledgeable about the different species. There was also lots of coral, lava, and even some sunken ships! The only bad part of the tour was the fact that we had to take a boat to the sub. I'm not a boat fan, and I got a little seasick. We found a driving range, and Ed hit some golf balls there. We enjoyed our last night at the hotel with a sunset dinner.

#### **Wednesday, July 1, 2009**

Ed and I sat on the balcony a long time this morning, really appreciating and drinking in our surroundings. I cried a little, but smiled through the tears at all the wonderful memories I will have forever. We checked-out of the hotel, and then drove down Ali'i Drive for the last time. We ate at Bongo Ben's, did a little shopping, and crashed the lobby of the Royal Kona Resort to watch the waves for awhile. Next, we played an 18-hole putting course. I shot even par, and Ed was 1-under. After dinner at McDonald's we headed to a beach near the marathon turnaround. This beach had both sand and pahoehoe lava. We sat on the lava for an hour watching the sunset, the waves, and the crabs' activity on the lava. When the sun set, we headed to the Kona Airport to catch a redeye to Phoenix.

#### **Thursday, July 2, 2009**

After a long flight to Phoenix (on which we were lucky to have exit row seats), we quickly boarded a flight to Indy. We landed at 3:30 P.M. Eastern time, but it felt like 9:30 A.M. to us due to jetlag. Ed's parents, sister, son, and niece and nephews were there to greet us. His five-year-old niece was wearing a grass skirt and a flower in her hair, and gave us flower leis. She said, "Aloha!" too. It was cute. We were weary of traveling and missing Hawaii, but were glad to be home. The first thing I did in Bedford was blow a tire on my truck. Welcome back to reality, Jo.

#### **Friday, July 3, 2009**

Today began as a rough day for me. I lost FOUR toenails, and two of the remaining six toenails (the big ones) have turned black. As I was doing laundry and unpacking, I kept thinking about the trip. My mind was playing tricks on me, making me believe that the trip and the marathon were beautiful dreams that never happened. I spent some time looking through our Big Island maps and literature, and found myself crying because I was longing for that magical place. However, I am a firm believer in the statement, "Don't cry because it's over; smile because it happened." I saw truly amazing sites on an island the size of Connecticut that has 11 of the 13 climate zones, I learned

about the culture of its people, I shared every moment with my husband, I made new friends, and I ran a marathon. There will not be a day in my life when I won't think about this trip and what it taught me. It taught me that the world is not as big as you think, that there is always something to learn, that I can do anything for which I properly prepare, that the mind is a powerful thing, and that dreams come true. Thank you, Lilly, for funding my dream.