

Reflections ... Through 60 and Beyond

January, 2009

New years ... New beginnings ... New runs. Old years have gone and have been placed in memory ... for whatever purpose.

On December 6, 1950, we were given the news that our father had died. He was 48. We suddenly became a "single-parent" family before the term was used. It was a traumatic event. I was one month shy of my 9th birthday. Life would never be the same. It was a long time ago.

In November of 1964 I boarded a troop ship headed for South Korea. We left Oakland, CA, on November 4th and arrived in Korea on November 27th ... 23 glorious days on the Pacific with stops in exotic lands such as Hawaii, Japan, and Okinawa. It would be 12 months before I would be home again ~ a long time out of the country ~ a long time away from family ~ a long time ago. Currently there is more time behind me than before me. Therefore, I tend to wax nostalgic.

The world of 2009 is upon us. And the events of our time leave us with doubt as the issues before us are too complex and very unsettling. It's as though there is no longer any place to go and no place to hide.

So I take all of these memories and complexities out on a lonely road and run in the cold and wind. And with each passing mile I deposit some of it along the trail. The load lightens and the pace quickens, but nothing like it used to be in places like Charlotte, Athens, Detroit, Boston, Columbus, Louisville, Dayton and Wheeling... some of the most memorable running moments for me ... good memories of good times and good paces ... the good old days... keeping it simple with a light heart and without answers to all the issues. The burden is lifted, if only for a short time.

I arrive at a local race and see an old man stretching. He looks tired. He's been doing this for a long time, but he showed up again and raced off down the road as soon as the gun cracked the morning silence. He struggled throughout but gave everything that was left ~ at the finish line and through the chute ~ another race ~ another moment ~ it's almost fun. I looked for the old man and found myself standing in that spot ~ it was me I saw stretching an old and tired form. But I learned once again, regardless of the pace, that "It's what you do with what you've got."

Another birthday comes and goes this month "Fly high and free ... beyond birthdays and across forever ... and we'll meet now and then in the one celebration that can never end." (Richard Bach) ... And may the wind be always at your back.

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