

# Newsmaker at the Grove

## Sailor roots guides runner to 50th marathon...

What started out as preparation for attending officer candidate school turned into a quest to run 50 marathons before turning 50-years old. That goal of Dana Jones, the project manager for construction contracts here, became a 'check in the block' when, wearing race bib 50, he crossed the finish line at the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in San Diego June 6, Jones' 50th birthday.

"It was a great event and it was really nice to see the city again," said Jones who, as a Navy photographer's mate, was stationed at then Naval Air Station Miramar and on board USS Kitty Hawk (CV-63) at NAS North Island in the 1970's. "I'm thankful to have the health and opportunities to compete in these events. I enjoy running and will continue to

do marathons, but probably not as many as I have in the last 10 years."

As an enlisted man, Jones wasn't a big fan of running. He said that he was more into bicycling then. However, after get-



"50 at 50" ... Dana Jones, the project manager for construction contracts here, holds medals from his previous 49 marathons, as he stands by the finish line of the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in San Diego June 6 after completing his 50th marathon on his 50th birthday. He now has a goal of running a marathon in each of the 50 states; he's already run in 23 of them. (Photo provided by Dana Jones)

ting out of the Navy to attend college, he decided to reenter the Navy in 1988, but this time as a commissioned officer with the Civil Engineering Corps. Knowing that the Navy had put a big push on fitness while he was in school, Jones thought it would be a good idea to lace up some running shoes to get ready for all the running he'd be forced to do at OCS.

"I guess I can attribute the Navy's (Physical Readiness Program) for getting me into all this," said Jones. "Even though it was my uncle who actually inspired me, in the early 90's, to run a marathon because he had completed one at the age of 60, but it was the Navy that gave me the foundation that run-

ning is really a good thing."

So in 1994, shortly after turning 40, Jones put on his running gear set on finishing the 26.2 mile track in Philadelphia. Four hours, 22 minutes later, Jones completed the marathon with a thirst for more. He came back to Philadelphia the following year to run again. Then a month later he laced up his shoes to run a marathon in Jacksonville, Fla., and then his quest to run marathons just took off.

Finally, sometime in 1996 or '97, Jones came up with the idea to run 50 marathons before his 50th birthday.

"It hasn't really been that hard since I've only really 'raced' about a half-dozen or so (marathons)," said Jones. "Most of all the other ones were done more as just an event to be at and to keep from being the last one to finish."

That hasn't been a problem for Jones who's best marathon time of 3 hours, 19 minutes at the 1998 Philadelphia marathon qualified him for the Boston Marathon that year. His slowest time of 5 hours, 29 minutes came during the 2002 New York City Marathon.

Jones blames the camera and stopping to shoot five rolls of film during the race for his slow time in what he calls, his favorite marathon.

Now that he has accomplished his '50 by 50' goal, Jones' next goal is to run a marathon in each of the 50 states.

"Twenty-three states down, 27 to go," said Jones. "I'll definitely join the 50 States Marathon club now. Or maybe, on second thought, I'll run my 100th marathon on my 100th birthday. That sounds even better."

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