

# *Runner's Bucket List: 200 Races to Run Before You Die*

BY DENISE MALAN

Around here, the term “bucket list” is wearing out its welcome. Sort of like the phrases “at the end of the day” and “I’m reaching out to you” (usually to sell you something). Since the beginning of time, people have had “dreams of doing that” or “set that as a goal before I kick the bucket.” That was fine. Let it continue to be fine.

So once past the first hurdle of wrestling with Denise Malan’s book title, the rest of the trip was quite pleasant.

As the title makes clear, the 328 pages of this book present 200 races that a runner might want to consider if the runner wants to have pleasant and colorful memories of his or her races as he or she rests on the beach of retirement and looks back at a life well run. Quite simple. Ms. Malan and her friends (She admits that it would have taken her about five years to complete all 200 races on the list.) do a pleasant and information-filled job of presenting the unique races after breaking them into 25 categories. Although the major races like Boston, Chicago, and New York are included, most of the entries are included more for their fun quotient. Just a glance at the 25 categories gives you the idea: Bag the Best Swag, Run Naked (Or Close to It), Chug-a-Lug, Party Hardy, Run Wild, etc.

The book is also nicely produced and printed and is saturated with color and overall is a quality job for \$16.95.

It’s one of those books you can open at random and enjoy reading about an exotic or crazy race you might never get around to running, but that you can vividly imagine doing merely based on the description.

Which marathoner with a stoked metabolic furnace that allows the consumption of virtually any consumable wouldn’t want to travel to The Twinkie Run in Ann Arbor on April 1. “The recent apparent demise of the Twinkie was sad news for junk food lovers everywhere. Perhaps no one was worse off than the folks running the April Fool’s Twinkie Run in Ann Arbor, Michigan. ‘When Hostess was in bankruptcy status, we had to buy faux Twinkies from Canada,’ said Joel Dalton, a co-director of the race. ‘They weren’t the same.’ That was in April 2013, when the world was Twinkie-less. Hostess, maker of the sweet treats, had

gone bankrupt. But the Twinkie Run went on as scheduled that April Fool's Day, with the Canadian version of the treat and T-shirts proclaiming 'Twinkie Lives.'"

Or how about Blister in the Sun Marathon: "The first few lines of the waiver you have to sign for Blister in the Sun should be enough to scare you away: 'I acknowledge that participating in running Blister in the Sun Marathon is foolish and make this choice of my own free will. I understand that marathon running imposes harm to the body and will not hold the race director responsible for any injuries that I may sustain during this event.'" Makes ya wanna sign up right away.

Even if you no longer run, this book provides several hours' worth of entertainment, and there is no doubt that at least a half-dozen of the races listed will get you up out of your rocking chair grubbing around in the back of the closet to find your old running shoes.

The book captures many of those irreverent races that used to characterize the Good Old Days when running was challenging but fun, when a good number of races were conceived on the far side of a six-pack of cheap beer, and when lying around after the race asking each other why we bothered to do this dumb race was enough to ensure that you were going to sign up for it again next year.