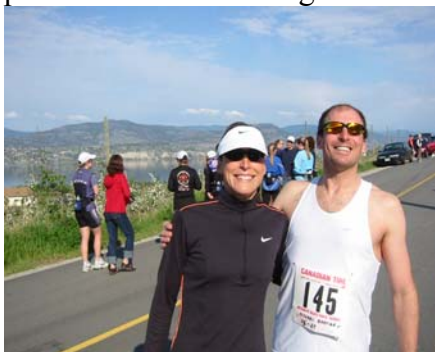


## *The Blossom Ten Miler*

I decided to enter a road race this weekend. I normally race in the Bare Bones Duathlon which is on Saturday evening in Penticton, but I decided to try a change of pace and run the Blossom Ten Miler on Sunday morning. Some people do the double and race both races but that is too much for me, especially because of all that pounding on the pavement while running.



Jill and Mike Bartier (Training Partner and winemaker extraordinary) at the start line.

I tried to remember the last time I raced in a road race. In 1997 I ran on a Haney to Harrison relay team and the last one before that was a 5 km in 1996. Even though it had been a while I still remember the pain of road racing so I knew it wouldn't be easy.

The run is point to point very scenic and hilly; it goes from Naramata to the Sicamous (famous stern-wheeler) in Penticton. A good group of people showed up on a beautiful sunny morning (it is always sunny in Penticton). My plan was to build each 3.3 miles, not necessarily by time but by effort. Steve King started off the race with the horn and everyone began running basically straight up a big hill. The first mile felt easy even going up that hill. The 2<sup>nd</sup> mile felt a little harder especially going up the second big hill. After the first two miles I fell into a comfortable rhythm. When I say comfortable I am referring to my running form, it was fluent, but I was still punching it aerobically. I was running on a gentleman's shoulder for a while and he set a good pace for us. That was until we hit the first aid station at mile 5. I tried to drink some water and practically choked. I am use to drinking water out of bottle, but this water was served to us in styrofoam cups and when I tried to drink the water came at me from all different directions. I started hacking and coughing because the water had made its way down the wrong pipe. I actually had to walk for a couple steps to get enough air. This incident lost me my free ride on that fellows shoulder but I picked it back up and kept chugging along.



Jill chasing the lead men at about half way.

After the last large uphill which finished at about mile 7, I picked up my leg speed slightly and tried to accelerate down the long descent back into Penticton. The downhill portion here is nearly 1.5 miles. At the bottom of this long downhill there is 1 mile to go that is dead flat along Lakeshore Drive. This proved to be the toughest mile as my quads were burning from the long steep downhill. I looked at my watch and knew I would have to make the last mile in less than 6 minutes to break the 60 minute mark which was my goal. So I picked it up with all I had left and managed to click off about a 5:45 to bring me in at 59:43. It was tough but fun. Kind of like life.....



Jill looking strong on the biggest hill of the race.