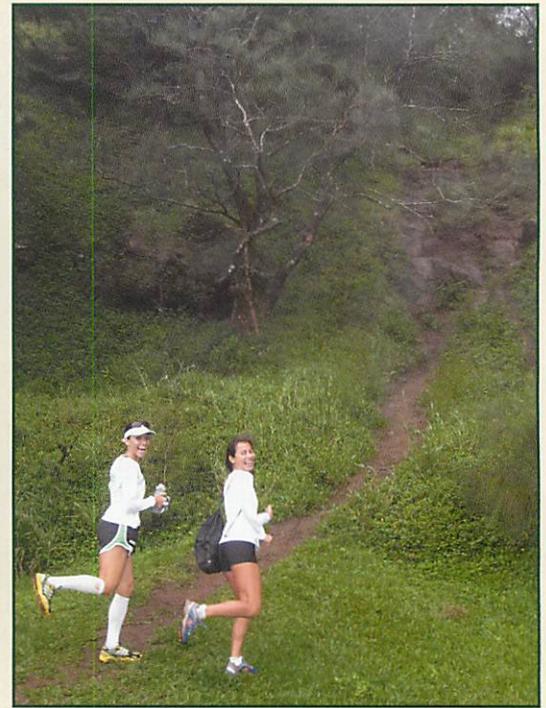


# Maunawili Trail Draws OCC Runners

By Don Eovino



ABOVE: Mariane Uehara Saori, Candes Meijide Gentry and Don Eovino, RIGHT: Maunawili HURT Out and Back Race on the urban legend of the Waimanalo Flume.



It was a race and it was an adventure. The race was the annual Hawaii Ultra Running Team Maunawili out and back 22 miler on August 1. Many Outrigger runners used to run this trail with Fred Hemmings in the 90's. We would shuttle and drop off cars at his then Maunawili home, race from the Pali hairpin down to the nursery's in the backside of Waimanalo, and eventually end up in his pool with cold beers, local stories and light breakfasts.

Fred showed us the landmark legendary Waimanalo Flume where we would run through a four-foot wide trough, two-foot deep into a spooky tunnel 100 yards long, carved through the Olomana ridge. We'd exit on the side of Waimanalo only accessible by duck walking. It is still being used to carry rainwater from the Pali to the local farmers from the turn of the century.

The trail became off limits with the development of the Luana Hills Golf Course. As bandits, we broke off the trails and ran the flume until Hurricane Iniki obliterated the unseen paths in 1992, rarely to be found again.

Some of these intrepid runners included Gerry DeBenedetti, Nora Meijide-Gentry, Katy Bourne, Paula Jenkins, Andrea Lehman, myself, and the late Ruth Munro. The run was so popular that Katy, Paula, Bob Dewitz and I inaugurated it as a New Years Day tradition to be held promptly at 7 a.m. come rain or come shine, or come hangover, and it was all three, and still continues.

So there was no excuse not to do this race when the HURT organized it. In order to be called an ultra, it became an out and back, or 22 miles, since instead of starting at the Pali hairpin, it started at the windblown Pali Lookout, adding two miles each way to the course.

As an ultra, the runners had the option of doing a relay out and hand off to your partner in Waimanalo, or do the whole

event. It ended up about half and half. Shivering and shaking at the start and with little body fat was Candes Meijide Gentry with her partner, equally trim-Mariane Uehara, and Candes' husband Milan.

I picked a friend, banker Terry Flynn who I recently coerced to run the previous HURT event-the Mango Madness, a figure eight of ten treacherous Tantalus Trail miles earlier this year.

Bob Dewitz was there full of exuberance as he just completed the Grand Canyon out and back 50 miler in May, and would do the race solo.

The gun went off in two minute intervals to keep the runners from bunching up, and Candes was about the 10th to start. Milan, Mariane, Terry and I raced in the car down to Waimanalo to start the up section.

Terry wasn't hearing any suggestions from me about running in trails again after getting royally lost in the last Tantalus race, and ended up doing 15 miles instead of 10. In order to convince him to run, we decided not to race the event, but rather just have fun running together, pay the fee, and run it backwards uphill at our leisure. Convinced I knew the trail, he reluctantly agreed.

While Mariane and Milan waited for Candes, Terry and I readied ourselves to start up the slope knowing we had all the time in the world since we were already at the bottom, and only were going to run the 11 miles uphill. The last words we heard were from a race official at the bottom were: "Just follow the pink ribbons, don't follow the blue ones as they go off trail"

Confident, we scrambled up the trail filled with the knowledge that I knew the trail. We didn't count on the fact that the race official marked the trail from the top down, and didn't realize that from the bottom up there were many trails leading off with pink ribbons going all over the valley. Dutifully, we fol-

lowed the first set of pink ribbons, promptly setting us off course, and eventually realizing we were getting lost. The good thing was that we had some unusual trails that eventually led us to the urban legend termination point of the Waimanalo Flume.

Along the steep trail was a pipe gushing water into an open catchment protected by rotten decrepit planks that we were walking on to avoid slipping down the hill. After following this death defying route, and feeling like Indiana Jones in the Raiders of the Lost Ark, we arrived at the cave entrance as it opened up into the Olomana Ridge.

At that point we deduced that it didn't make much sense that the race organizers would make the runners navigate what we had just been through, so we turned around and found our way back to the start. To our surprise, who did we see whooping and hollering, but Candes careening down the hillside oblivious to the slippery mud and tripping tree roots and floating like a fire - fly from turn to turn with Milan huffing in the distance trying to catch up.

The race officials handed a color coded pink piggy doll to the first runners for each division, boy, girl, relay, and solo, and when

one got passed they had to hand off the piggy to that runner so you could always tell who was in first place. Candes was holding the piggy and was in first place, and first overall as well.

Happily Terry and I now knew we were on trail and after spending an extra hour and an extra couple of miles out of the way, proceeded to trudge up the hill against the few runners now coming down.

In a few minutes, here came Mariane, with the pink piggy, again in first place, and equally bouncing like a bumble bee up the trail having the time of her life, fearless of the churned up muck and slime from runners sliding downslope. She and Candes proceeded to win their division, and finished first overall as well, hardly breaking a sweat.

Terry and I barely beat in Bob Dewitz who did the whole 22 miles in approximately four hours and 20 minutes. We calculated that instead of the 11 we were supposed to run, we probably did 16 uphill, but still had a blast and had great stories to tell. However, I am having a hard time getting Terry to agree to run the next trail race with me.