

Running for Their Lives

Running for Their Lives (Xlibris, 169 pages, \$20.99), by Karl W. Gruber, is an account of his successful effort in 1997 to run 52 marathons in 52 weeks to raise money for the fight against leukemia. Running 52 marathons in 52 weeks isn't necessarily unique; the challenge was first started in the late 1970s and continues today, since surpassed by the 50 marathons in 50 states in 50 days accomplishments of Sam Thompson and Dean Karnazes.

What makes a book like this work is the personality of the author. Karl Gruber is a likable fellow runner whose positive spirit, self-sacrifice, and low-key approach to the year's occupation of a marathon a week don't become boring or repetitive. He keeps his chapters short and produces a nice mix of his travels to and from races, along with tales about the races—most of which he finished in the four-hour range. Karl hoped to raise \$1 million to help the fight against leukemia; he fell far short of the goal, but as with many such efforts, the journey is what mattered most. "The greatest victories you achieve in your lifetime will always be the ones you dreamt the most about, visualized clearly, and worked the hardest for," Karl concludes. And of course he's right.

If you can imagine it, you can do it—if you're willing to dedicate yourself, your resources, and in this case a year of your life to it. Karl did. As he summed it up in a recent letter: "It was an amazingly intense year of running and traveling. . . . It was a year of victory, defeat, fatigue, inspiration, and perspiration, but mainly, as it turned out, it was a discovery of the great people along the way helping me to accomplish this great goal." —*Rich Benyo*