

## Staying Well at the U of L – June 2014

**Carol Williams, U of L Faculty in Women and Gender Studies and History, stays well at the U of L** by running marathons. Carol started running in 1996 while finishing her PhD in Victoria BC. Carol started and slowly and began running at a leisurely pace on street routes to fulfill her curiosity about local domestic architecture, the ocean, the trees, sky, and birds. After Carol completed her PhD in 1999, she began running more consistently. Carol entered her first off-road trail race while stationed in Huston Texas. This form running is called ultra-running with races typically lasting between 50-100km. Carol was hooked and has ran 3-4 mountainous and trail ultra-races each year. Over the past four years Carol has ran across the Grand Canyon non-stop twice! **(She will be running the Grand Canyon again this June!)**

Carol tells us the academic life of a historian is very sedentary. She needed to counter balance her sedentary lifestyle during the day so she began running. Carol joined a marathon club at the Runner's Soul here in Lethbridge. She says she found a compatible running partner to help her get out all year round on the really cold, and windy days.

Running can be an inexpensive way of becoming active. Carol tells us that all you really need to get started is a good pair of shoes. Other gear can be purchased second hand. Once you get running long distances you need good wool socks, hydration packs, and yak traks which are studded rubber grips that fit onto your shoes to prevent falling on ice while winter running. Good layering in the winter is also very important, including facemasks and double gloves and socks.

If you would like to get started running, Carol suggests finding a great running partner, or running pals. This is the best way to sustain commitment she says. Other exercises such as yoga are also useful because they strengthen the body and increase flexibility.

Carol tells us that running is central to her mental health. Running helps her avoid fatigue, to build fitness and ability, and also to help keep a good work-life balance. "You are never too old to run or seek ways to improve fitness and health," says Carol "the main caveat is to start gradually". Taking up running at age 40, during one of Carol's most stressful times in her professional life transformed her sense of physical well-being, increased her mental health and self-confidence, and allowed her to realize accomplishments and goals unrelated to running. **Thanks Carol, for showing us how you stay well at the U of L.**



Carol smiling at the end of 100 Km Ultra 2012

