





SPORTS FORUM

Sports Editor:

Dear Mr. McGuire:

Four years ago, after I ran in my first Island Marathon, I wrote a letter to you to express my appreciation to all the people who helped make that day one of the biggest of my life. In the few years since then, I have become much more sophisticated in running, rising to become the race director for the past two years.

At that time, I emotionally thanked the fans, volunteers, businesses and other agencies without whose support there would not have been an Island Marathon for me to run. This year, I saw those people from the vantage point of a volunteer and fan myself and it only reinforced my feeling that this event is truly a community happening.

Although we have one major sponsor, we depend heavily on a cross-section of the business community for support financially or through the provision of services. Without numerous contributions, including vehicles, awards, refreshment, etc., our Island event would not be known as the quality event it is. The fans along the route were wonderful again. One of the runners told me that he was so uplifted by the crowd in North Rustico that he sprinted through town so fast he missed the water stop. Believe me, it does mean that much.

Many people probably don't realize that we depend on three police forces and the Atlantic Police Academy for vehicle control. We, who have been closely involved with marathons, can tell you of one Maritime marathon which had to be cancelled because of a lack of funds to pay for police protection. Now, that's certainly not community spirit. We, on the other hand, for five years now have been able to depend upon the National Park wardens, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Charlottetown city police, and the cadets of the Atlantic Police Academy to be there on the course in all kinds of weather.



No comment on the marathon would be complete without mention of the volunteers who man the water stations, do the timing, put up and tear down signs, and provide medical assistance. These people are another of the cogs without which the marathon would disappear. Unfortunately, some of them never get enough thanks. a

In closing, I want to give you an example of why people "from away" come to P.E.I. to run the Island marathon. One of the runners from U.S.A. missed getting a cup of water at a water station or dropped it after he had picked it up. About a half mile down the road, one of the volunteers from that water station drove up to bring him a cup of water. We all know that it is just the Island way of doing things. If we keep doing things the Island way, the marathon will be a successful fixture for years to come.

Sincerely,
Jim Wyatt
Race Director
Island Marathon

