

An Open Letter to the Race Director

I started this letter as a simple reply to a reply to thank a race organizer for sending me info about a coming race, that I had requested perhaps a bit prematurely. I was in the throes of a migraine headache. It was the day after a very emotional day. There was something that I had been wanting to say for quite a while. I am 62 years old. I got carried away. The names have been changed to protect the innocent.

March 7, 2010

Firstly, thanks for the info. Maybe I get a bit anxious.

Next, just so you know, there are runners out there who are not online, who were there from the beginning and have been back every time, supporting this race. They depend on the mailed entry just to know the race date. Being part of the running community, they might get the info via word of mouth. They are mostly older runners (some are dyslexic and don't read thoroughly) . For example, a friend of mine, an older runner and a race director in his own right, has no computer, but, comes to almost every xxxx Run with his wife, who also runs. He is in his seventies. He is losing the ability to run, but, that's another story.

I am an older runner, who was there for the first xxxx Run. I don't have a problem with being online, since I maintain my own racing calendar website (tykie.com, where I've listed your races ever since I started my site). The only xxxx Runs I've missed were due to illness, injury or maybe a funeral. In all actuality, I've liked the way you handled online entries using the honor system. xx(city)xx would be too far from Huntington to go pick up an entry blank, in any event.

One more thing, age matters for young (teens) runners and old runners, but, not so much for runners in their twenties, thirties and forties. We become more sensitive to the age of our competitors as we get older, and yet we find that race organizers/directors widen the age groups thus causing a 69 year old runner to have to compete against a 61 year old runner, which is frequently impossible. Statistically, this seems an unfair burden, although, on a case-by-case basis, this comparison doesn't always hold up (we don't all age at the same rate). When a race that used to have narrow age groups (5 year), as yours did a few years ago, widens the category (what are they this year?) the older runner tends to not be disenfranchised, but, to feel disenfranchised.

What I am getting at is that some of us feel like we helped to get a race established and then we get cast aside. We no longer count for anything. This is the feeling.

Or could it be a version of leaving the nest? You've grown up and don't need us anymore?

I know that you have no intention of slighting us, or anyone else. I know that you are focusing on getting youth up and running and I'm all for that. (I even brought a couple of grandson's to race, one year - personally interesting and great fun) Do we want to introduce them to what should be a lifetime of health and fitness and at the same time show them that it doesn't really apply to their entire lifetime. If I sound bitter, it's probably because I am, but, only a little. We oldsters get used to it.

By the way, I'm currently rehabbing my right knee and might not make the race. I can always hope,

though.

I sat down to write a thank you note and just got carried away with something that I've wanted to say for a while.

I apologize for any goofiness that might appear here, as I am writing through the fog of a migraine.

Keep up the good work!

Charlie Stover

My grammar is not spot on, tenses out of sync, etc. Who cares - MIGRAINE!

I think that online is one word, regardless of what all my spellcheckers say. Isn't spellchecker one word?