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By SARAH HARMON Staff Writer, The Intelligencer / Wheeling News-Register

WHEELING - Participants in this year's Ogden Newspapers Half Marathon Classic Run and Walk will see a familiar figure moving and grooving at the top of 29th Street in Bethlehem.

For the past seven years, disc jockey Jerry Schultze has been inspiring racers with triumphant music atop the highest hill on the Half Marathon course. He plays everything from "Country Roads" to the "Rocky" theme song "Gonna Fly Now" in an effort to help get runners and walkers over the top.

However, Schultze said this will be his last year as a DJ for the race - or any other event.

Article Photos
"I've been doing this off and on for 30 years," Schultze said. "I've run my course, no pun intended. It's time for a younger generation to take over."

The Half Marathon will serve as Schultze's last public event as a DJ. He said he is proud and honored to have been a part of the Ogden race for the past seven years.

"We have been very blessed to have Jerry to be an inspiration to the runners in reaching the top of the highest hill in the half marathon," said Race Director R. "Scat" Scatterday. "He's a source of encouragement as the runners and walkers find themselves being challenged by the length of the hill."

Events related to the Ogden Newspapers Half Marathon Classic Run and Walk are scheduled for Friday and Saturday, May 25-26, in
Wheeling. The Run and Walk takes place the morning of May 26.

Scatterday said Schultze plays inspirational music and often will physically dance for the runners as they approach him - and he even calls out to many by name.

"I like to get out into the race and talk to them, pat them on the back and be a good old boy," Schultze said.

The challenging course is known for its changes in elevation. Schultze, who played college football at West Virginia University, said being a former athlete helps him appreciate the exhaustion racers experience climbing the big hill on 29th Street.

"The contestants are really beat at the top of the hill," Schultze said. "You get tired driving up the hill."

Participants often show their appreciation for the musical boost by doing the "YMCA" dance or the electric slide. Some even stop to shake Schultze's hand.

Bethlehem residents also enjoy Schultze's presence at the race.

"The residents of Bethlehem that gather around the location are highly entertained by his antics," Scatterday said of Schultze. "I tried a few years ago to move him down the hill. I was met with such resistance from the residents of Bethlehem that I had to leave him where he's always been located."

It will be difficult to imagine the race without Schultze playing "Ain't No Stopping Us Now," but he said he is happy to advise and consult with the race committee on finding a new DJ for next year.

"We'll miss him and will find replacing him difficult," Scatterday said.

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