

# My Experience with the Special Olympics

By **BILL McQUEEN**

Special Olympics basketball is currently being offered at the UPEI Sports Centre as a community based programme. Athletes in the programme reflect the true essence of sports by the smiles and laughs that echo in the field house Monday nights from four to five.

Pre-registration at UPEI was one of the factors that led me to be involved with the programme. During my six hour wait in registration lines last year, amidst the complaints of line-ups, and the shuffle of school calendars, I saw the advertisement for Special Olympics volunteers. After a quick phone call to the PEI Special Olympics, I met a group of individuals who were just as keen on basketball as I am. What surprised me the most when I first turned up was the friendliness of the

whole group. I was instantly accepted with smiles, pats on the back and lots of high fives.

The programme is essentially designed as a social activity and as an opportunity for athletes to practice their chosen sport and to encourage exercise. The athletes are of varied skill levels, but it is amazing to see the accomplishments they achieve in so little time. At the start of coaching, Yuri Marat could not dribble a basketball. He developed to dribbling with two hands, and now to one. One of the main reasons for the improvement is practice, but also the support he receives from the rest of the team.

Stephanie (Knickle) Currie is the main instructor for the group. She has been involved with Special Olympics for five years. Stephanie outlines her job as to "teach the basic rules of basketball and to help improve individual

skills." She mentions as well that sometimes it is hard to coach the athletes because of the different learning abilities. Some team members listen to instruction while others do not, and it sometimes creates difficult situations. Stephanie mentions as well that "most of the time we have a blast." Other volunteers are Joanne MacNevin, Toby Hansberger, who are rookie basketball instructors like myself. Joanne and Toby mentioned the same reasons as to why they help out: "it's a lot of fun."

Chris, Joanne, Yuri, Greg, Travis, Randy, Alfred, Steve, Wallace, and Erin are some of the regulars that attend basketball every Monday (I hope I haven't missed any names). If you are interested in assisting athletes like these for Special Olympics basketball or any other sport, why not volunteer? The PEI Special Olympics office contact number is 368-4543.

# Wild and crazy debating times

Debating fireworks exploded in the Main Building on February 28 as the 2nd Annual Lucy Maud Montgomery Debating Tournament commenced. Over the course of the next two days, teams from the Maritimes and Upper Canada engaged in an intense struggle in order to have their names permanently engraved on the Lucy Maud Montgomery Cup (second in importance to that other Cup associated with some guy named Stanley).

Some of the finest debaters in Canada participated in the tournament in what promises to be a fitting warmup to the National Championships which take place at Dalhousie University from March 14-16.

The climax to the tournament took place in the Memorial Hall of the Confederation Centre of Sunday afternoon. Pomp and ceremony and miniature horses were the order of the day as a team from Carleton University engaged in a titanic struggle with two premier Canadian debaters, Sudanna MacDonald from Dalhousie and W. Scott Thurlow from Carleton. The hybrid team of Ms. MacDonald and Mr. Thurlow emerged triumphant at the conclusion of this competition.

Michael Peters from Carleton carried away the awards for top individual debater and best public speaker. The Carleton performance at this tournament suggests that they will be a force to be reckoned with this weekend at the Nationals.

UPEI did not come away empty handed. The team of Chris Bentley and Shaun MacNeill finished the tournament with a respectable 3-3 record. Shaun MacNeill, in fact, placed fourth in individual debating points, a laudable accomplishment given the extremely high level of competition that participated in the event.

All of the participants, from far and away, praised the organizers of the tournament for putting on a major league show. This augurs well for the future of what is rapidly becoming the foremost debating tournament in Atlantic Canada. See you all next year.

## How to use your university degree to land a job in the new economy

ITI's professional placement team helps students plan a career and secure a job after graduation. By closely matching our graduates with specific employment opportunities, we get results - more than 85% of ITI graduates find employment in North America within six months of graduation.

Each of the companies listed here, and many more, have hired recent ITI graduates, because they have the skills they need.

To find out how you can acquire these skills, call today to receive a brochure, to arrange a convenient time for a personal appointment or to register for an information session in Charlottetown.

**1-800-939-4484**

774 Main Street, Moncton  
info@iti.ca www.iti.ca

**iti** Information Technology Institute

Our solutions are IT Professionals

When you combine your university degree with a post graduate program from ITI Information Technology Institute, you become a qualified information technology professional - the kind employers are looking for right now.

ITI's nine month Applied Information Technology program is completely market driven and is taught by qualified instructors. Program includes Novell, Visual Basic, Oracle, PowerBuilder, Windows NT, the Internet and much more.



HALIFAX OTTAWA TORONTO MONCTON

A SUBSIDIARY OF ITI EDUCATION CORPORATION LISTED ON THE MONTREAL EXCHANGE SYMBOL ITK

## news briefs from across Canada

**OTTAWA** — Canadian universities must attract more rich foreign students if they want to maintain their high quality of education, top federal officials told university and college presidents last week.

**TORONTO** — Sitting in the Toronto office of Earthroots, Dan McDermott is too busy to seem defeated. But saving an old-growth forest in Ontario may prove to be an impossible task.

**ONTARIO** — In mid-January, the Correctional Service of Canada sent shock waves through the federal prison system, when it announced female maximum security inmates will now be doing their time in male prisons until a long term strategy for their incarceration can be developed.