

PLAZA EXTRA

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**The 9th St. Croix
 INTERNATIONAL MARATHON
 HALF-MARATHON
 MARATHON RELAY**
December 5, 2010
 St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands
<http://virginislandspace.org>



General overview

With the running of The 9th St.Croix International Marathon on December 5, 2010, we have a special opportunity to celebrate the 32nd Anniversary of **The Virgin Islands Pace Runners**. It all started in 1978 with "The V.I.Pace Run for Fun, Run for Health, Run for Life" Saturday morning runs at the beautiful University of the Virgin Islands St.Croix Campus. One of the first long distance V.I. Pace runs was **The National Library Week Run to Your Library** which included a group that ran from the public library in Frederiksted (then located in the current V.I. Legislature building) via Centerline Road of St. Croix (now Queen Mary Highway) to the Florence Williams Public Library in Christiansted. It covered the distance of approximately 25 kilometers.

For each of its thirty-plus years, V.I.Pace has conducted an average of 30 events/races/running related activities totaling approximately 900 activities, representing and estimated \$1,260,000.00 in cost. We figure that there have been approximately 30,000 participations in these events over the 30+ year period (at an average of 30 per event). Thousands of miles run! Millions of calories burned! Tons of pounds lost! And thousands of lives saved!

V.I.Pace runs have helped raise thousands of dollars for abused women and children, the homeless, Muscular Dystrophy, Cancer and for the causes of numerous St. Croix non-profit organizations including: The Women's Coalition of St.Croix, Camp Araway, The Queen Louise Home, The Rotary Club of St.Croix, The Rotary Club West, The St. Croix Dolphins, The Virgin Islands Track and Field Federation, The Virgin Islands Olympic Committee, The Florence Williams Public Library, The American Cancer Society, MOTEEP; Muscular Dystrophy; The Ten Thousand Helpers of St.Croix; The University of the Virgin Islands, The St. Croix Environmental Association, Crime Victims Advocacy and others.

Runners associated with and benefiting from the V.I.Pace movement have represented the Virgin Islands in major competitions including: The Central America & Caribbean Championships, The Pan Am Games, The World Cross-Country Championships and The Olympic Games. They continue to participate in major races around the world including: The Boston Marathon, The Classic Athens Marathon, The Chicago Marathon, The New York City Marathon, The Marine Corp Marathon, The Comrades Marathon, among others. They run as members of numerous USA college and university teams.

V.I.Pace introduces children to running at an early age in the annual **Children Race** which kicks off the annual Children's Parade, **The Children Run Christiansted** at the start of the annual Triathlon Jump-up and in **The Annual V.I.Pace Runners/4-H Cross-Country Series** at the University of the Virgin Islands St. Croix Campus. Over the years there have been numerous sponsors, supporters and volunteers who have played a major role in keeping the idea, goals and objectives of V.I.Pace Runners alive.

Run for Fun, Run for Health, Run for Life, the motto for the Virgin Islands Pace Runners early on is being revisited as a major effort to continue to introduce running to the Virgin Islands community.

To all the runners, sponsors, supporters, volunteers...we express our sincere appreciation.

Wallace Williams
Founder,
The Society of Olympic Marathon Runners

We much appreciate the work of David E. Martin and Roger W.H. Gynn in the book [The Olympic marathon](#) / David E. Martin, Roger W.H. Gynn. Champaign, IL : Human Kinetics, c2000. And others who have also study and written and documented this special event.

AFFILIATIONS

V.I.Pace Runners Training Camp
Road Runners Club of America
The Virgin Islands Track and Field Federation
The Association of International Marathons and Distance Races
The Women's Coalition of St.Croix
(The Women Race)
The FRIENDS of The Florence Williams Public Library
(National Library Week Run To Your Library)
The Martin Luther King Jr. Committee or Raleigh, North Carolina
(MLK Fort-To-Fort Run)
The National Conservancy (CoastWeeks Beach Relay)
The Fort-To-Fort Relay Road Race—Run For Respect
(Ten Thousand Helpers of St.Croix)
The University of the Virgin Islands
(The 4-H Program Cross-Country Series)
(The Queen Mary/UVI 5K Road Race)
The Virgin Islands Olympic Committee (Olympic Day Run)
The American Cancer Society/Relay For Life



SOMar Tribute to Maria Polyzou, Greece

When " Greek women's marathon record holder Maria Polyzou had announced her intention to run the 520 kilometres (325 miles) from Athens to Sparta and back to Marathon virtually nonstop within six days, to mark the battle's 2,500th year anniversary. As a result she set off from the Acropolis July 26th and reached Sparta on July 29th, before running back to The Tomb of Marathon. This required her to run the equivalent of a double marathon every day for a week, with minimal rest.

"The marathon celebrates the run of soldier Pheidippides from the battlefield near Marathon to Athens in 490 BC. Pheidippides was carrying the news of a Greek victory over the Persians and is said to have collapsed and died at the completion of his efforts. But the original legend whose first report was 600 years after the battle, was that the messenger first went to Sparta to ask for help but was rebuffed due to the fact that the Spartans were in the middle of a religious festival. He then ran back to Marathon before going to Athens to announce the Greek victory following the successful efforts of 10,000 Athenian soldiers and 1,000 Plataeans who repelled King Darius' invading army of Persia.

Maria ran in the Atlanta Olympics Marathon and finished 22nd with a time of 2:41.33.

"This is a special year for the sport and I want to be a part of our history... To put it simply, the marathon is part of my soul. You can't undertake something like this if you do not believe in the whole idea of the marathon" Polyzou stated at the start of her run from Athens to Sparta and back. Polyzou was well prepared to spread the marathon spirit. At 42 she has been running marathons for 23 years. She is also the director of The Museum of Marathon and Vice President of Greece's athletic federation SEGAS. She also lights the marathon flame at the tomb of the fallen soldiers in the battle of the Athenians and the Persians annually.



SOMar Tribute to Stefano Baldini, Italy

Stefano Baldini (left) of Italy has the distinction of being the second man to win the Olympic Marathon on the original Athens course. He won the 2004 Athens Olympic

Games Marathon with a time of 2:10.55. At the age of 33 he became the second Italian to win the Olympic Gold Medal in the Marathon (Gelindo Bordin Seoul 1988). Four years later he competed in the Beijing Olympics Marathon and finished 37th. Baldini was honored in Athens at the Athens Marathon/2500th Anniversary of the Battle of Marathon for his achievement in the Athens Olympic Games. "Baldini moved up from the After disappointing results at the Atlanta Games (18th and last in the final of the 10.000 m and eliminated in the semi-finals of the 5000 m), Stefano Baldini found that his strength was in marathons, a discipline in which he started in Venice in 1995. He wasn't in top condition at the 2000 Sydney Games and dropped out at the 18th km, whereas in Athens he obtained his greatest accomplishment, becoming the second Italian to win the Olympic marathon after Gelindo Bordin. Baldini held back from the other competitors in the main stages of the race, then attacked at the 36th km, closing the gap on the American Meb Keflezighi and the Brazilian Vanderlei de Lima, reaching the Panathinaiko Stadium first. Earlier in the race, leader de Lima lost seven seconds when he was attacked and shoved to the ground by Cornelius Horan, an ex-Irish priest. In addition to his Olympic gold medal, Baldini won two European titles (1998 and 2006) and 2 World Championship bronze medals (2001 and 2003) in the marathon, a half-marathon world title (1996), six Italian titles in the 10.000 m and five in the half-marathon, in addition to winning the marathons of Rome (1998) and Madrid (2001).



About The Virgin Islands Pace Runners

The Virgin Islands Pace Runners organize and host running events and running related activities in the Virgin Islands, of the United States, particularly in St. Croix. This non-profit organization was founded in 1978 by Wallace Williams, an Olympic Marathon Runner at the Seoul Olympics in 1988. V.I. Pace serves runners throughout the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean, as well as visitors to the islands from the United States, North, Central, and South America, Africa, Europe and other countries.

V.I. Pace strives to develop the competition and physical fitness aspects of the sport of running. In addition, it places a heavy emphasis on public and community service and participation in club events. It accomplishes this by conducting races, fitness runs, fun runs, tour runs (for visitors), clinics, and safety sessions on running, fund raisers for charity, marathon classes at the University of the Virgin Islands and

other running related activities. It gathers and provides literature and information on running.

V.I. Pace accommodates all types of runners, from beginners to international/world-class athletes. V.I. Pace projects are suited for children, adults and masters runners. It is a member of the Virgin Islands Track & Field Federation (the V.I. governing body for the sport) which is affiliated with the Virgin Islands Olympic Committee, The International Association of Athletic Federations (the world governing body for the sport), The Association of International Marathons and Distance Races and The Road Runners Club of America. V.I. Pace serves as consultant on long distance running, cross-country running, road racing, the marathon and track events. It also consults on triathlon, duathlon and ultra running. It organizes the V.I. National Cross-Country Championships and several V.I. Road Race Championships. A number of V.I. Pace Runners have represented the V.I. in Central America and Caribbean Championships, The North America, Central America and Caribbean Championships, The Pan American Games, The Olympic Games, The Central America and Caribbean Cross-Country Championships, Cross-Country Championships, North America, Central America and Caribbean Cross-Country Championships, World Cross-Country Championships and other events.

V.I. Pace was the initiator of the Central America and Caribbean Cross-Country Championships. It was the organization responsible for organizing the staging of the Central America and Caribbean Cross-Country Championships held in St. Croix in 1990.

V.I. Pace produces a schedule of running events in the Virgin Islands annually and provides information on events in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, the U.S. and other international locations. Many children who go on to become V.I. National Team members have their first run in V.I. Pace Runners events. Its website is: <http://virginislandspace.org>



St. Croix International Marathon Event History

The St. Croix International Marathon follows the trend established in the 70's during the initial stages of the running boom, popular in the USA. Wallace Williams, Olympic Marathon Runner, for the V.I. in the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, continuing his efforts to develop the interest in running in the Virgin Islands realized that no marathon had been run in the Virgin Islands since 1979 and put into play the plans for the first marathon of the new millennium to be run in St. Croix.

With the coming of the "new millennium" his idea was to stage a major marathon to bring in the new year, the new century and the new millennium. As it turned out, The St. Croix Marathon Relay was staged instead and a couple of days after New Year's Day in the year 2000. That race started the Grapetree Bay Resort in the East of St. Croix and traveled West via the South Shore Road to Fort Frederik.

For 2001 (the actual new millennium) The St. Croix International Marathon was held and was technically the first to be run in the world for the new millennium. The race is now in its ninth year (12-05-10) and is now run in Frederiksted on an Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS)/International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) certified course. This makes it possible for runners to qualify for major events including: The Olympic Games, The Pan American Games, The Central America and Caribbean Championships, The Boston Marathon, among other races.

The marathon has become a major movement in the world. Most major cities have annual marathon races which attract as many as 40,000 runners each year. They have become major tourist attractions to the point that the Europeans have coined the term "marathon tourism".

The goal is to continue to develop The St. Croix International Marathon, to make St. Croix and the Virgin Islands a destination in the evolving "marathon tourism" tradition.

Annual sponsors, volunteers, The V.I. Police Department, St. Croix Rescue and of course marathon runners help make our race exist and continue to grow. To each we express our sincere thanks.



About The Society of Olympic Marathon Runners

The four year period between The Olympic Games is known as the "Olympiad". The one event considered by most to be the foundation of the Olympic Games of course, is the Marathon. This 26.2 mile road race is embraced by the city of Marathon, Greece, There the victory of the Athenians over the Persians who outnumbered them at The Battle of Marathon is associated the myth which task the runner Phillipedes (Phidipedes) to run from Marathon to Athens to tell of the Athenian victory in this historic battle.

The run from Marathon to Athens was key to the revitalization of the modern Olympic Games which were held in 1896 in Athens, Greece. The Greek marathon runners Spiridon Louis won the first Olympic Marathon. Since then over 2,000 Olympic Marathon runners (1984 women ran the marathon in the Olympics for the first time) have cover the distance of 26.2 miles (adjusted for the London Olympics Marathon on July 24, 1908). These runners have become heroes in their countries and around the world, indeed, they are a society of unique athletes!

The Society of Olympic Marathon Runners (SOMar) was founded by Wallace Williams, Olympic Marathon runner in the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games and a member of the Virgin Islands Olympic Team. The goal of SOMar is to chronicle the efforts of all the marathon runners who have run the Olympic marathon, including, of course, medal winners and non-medal winners.

Williams, other scholars and fellow marathon runners concur that each of these runners has a special story and that they have made significant efforts and sacrifices to achieve the lifetime goal of a long distance runner, to run the Olympic Marathon. Many legendary stories are associated with the Olympic Marathon runner their race and their lives outside of the Olympic Games.

With each opportunity, Williams takes the photos of Olympic Marathon runners he comes into contact with on his travels and is continuing to build a database of these storied Olympians.

Contributions of information, photographic images are welcome and will accessioned to the SoMar database.