

Paul Tilley's Clarenville History Shorts

Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope visits Clarenville- April 17, 1980

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In April of 1980, Clarenville welcomed a young man whose quiet determination would soon capture the conscience of an entire country - world. Only days after dipping his artificial leg into the Atlantic Ocean at St. John's, 21-year-old Terry Fox made his way along the Trans-Canada Highway, passing through our town at the very beginning of his cross-Canada Marathon of Hope.

On the evening of Thursday, April 17, 1980, Terry arrived in Clarenville to raise awareness and funds for cancer research. The moment was captured on the front page of the April 24, 1980 edition of The Packet, preserving a powerful snapshot of history in the making.

Pictured alongside Terry were Clarenville Mayor Lloyd Thompson, Shoal Harbour Deputy Mayor Harris Thistle, and Judge Lloyd Wicks of the Newfoundland Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society. Both municipal leaders stepped forward with donations on behalf of their towns, and Mayor Thompson entrusted Terry with a letter of greeting to carry across the country to deliver to the mayor of Vancouver. In those early spring days, running through raw North Atlantic winds with little fanfare, Terry's journey was carried forward by small communities like ours, handshake by handshake.

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Terry Fox, 21-year-old amputee from British Columbia, who has undertaken a cross-Canada run in aid of cancer research, arrived in Clarenville on Thursday evening, April 17. He was met by Judge L. W. Wicks, an official of the Newfoundland Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society. Deputy Mayor Harris Thistle of Shoal Harbour and Mayor Lloyd Thompson of Clarenville were also on hand to greet the runner. Both Deputy Mayor Thistle and Mayor Thompson made contributions to the cancer society on behalf of their respective towns. Mayor Thompson also presented Terry with a letter of greeting from Clarenville to be delivered to the mayor of the city of Vancouver. Shown above during the presentations are (l-r) Mayor Thompson, Terry Fox, Deputy Mayor Thistle and Judge Wicks. Pledges to the cancer society in support of Terry's efforts may be made by telephoning 466-2375 or mailed to post office Box 126 Clarenville

The Community Run Tradition

Since the inaugural national Terry Fox Run in September 1981, Clarenville has maintained an unbroken annual tradition of bringing the town together each September: Grassroots Community Organizing: The Clarenville run has historically relied on dedicated local volunteers, service clubs, and recreational coordinators. Organizers map out accessible 1 km, 5 km, and 10 km walking and running routes—frequently tracing scenic local corridors such as Memorial Drive and now, Elizabeth Swan Park, the town's trail networks, and the waterside along the inlet—allowing walkers, runners, cyclists, and families with strollers to take part. School Engagement: The school runs at Riverside Elementary, Clarenville Middle

School, and Clarenville High School (along with former area schools over the decades) have been central to keeping the legacy alive. For generations of local students, Terry Fox Day in mid/late September means educational assemblies, pledge envelopes, lap-counting on the school grounds, and coin drives that regularly raise thousands of dollars per building. Local Generosity: Newfoundland and Labrador has consistently maintained some of the highest per-capita donation rates in Canada for the Terry Fox Foundation.

In Clarenville, the event regularly punches well above its population weight, supported by local businesses sponsoring t-shirts, donating water and snacks, or matching employee contributions. The run remains completely non-competitive, open-admission, and focused squarely on Terry's founding vision: ordinary neighbours gathering along coastal roads to ensure cancer research continues forward.



