

Arete

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Autumn 2007



OLYMPIA: From the ashes a new phoenix will rise

By Rusty Wilson (USA)

*The Gods who hear us
Know what tempests
Tangle our lives, and
bewilder our voyage
In their criss-cross winds.*

*But if there is a future
A huge tree can tower
From a tiny seed.*

~ Aeschylus, "The Oresteia"

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Early on the morning of August 25th my telephone rang waking me from what I hope would be a long sleep. As I answered the phone I angrily wondered who would be calling me this early on a Saturday. It was Athanassios Kritsinelis, the former director of the flame lighting ceremonies in Greece and a good friend of mine, and the IOAPA.

"Rusty? Nassos speaking. Olympia is burning to the ground." After a hurried conversation I immediately got on my computer to find out as much as I could about the situation. As is the case in the initial stages of a tragedy there was a lot of mixed reports. Throughout the day my phone rang from Nassos and other friends in Greece updating me on the latest news from Olympia. As I am sure was the case with all of you, my heart sank. This place that means so much to all of us was about to disappear from the earth after thousands of years. It couldn't happen.

Luckily the initial reports were not as devastating as we first thought. There is an old saying, "Our greatest hopes and our worst fears are seldom realized." Thank goodness this was the case with Olympia. But the IOA and we all owe a great deal of gratitude to the brave

fire fighters who fought the blaze and to a special group of IOA employees who stayed and fought the blaze and saved the International Olympic Academy. It is to these people that we send out thanks and appreciation:

Yannaras Charalambos, Mantzavinou Konstantinos, Kalantzis Panagiotis, Anastassopoulos Nikolaos, Vlachos Themistoclis, Antonakopoulos Georgios, Nikolopoulos Ioannis, Kallimanis Nikolaos, Gyftopoulos Anastasios and Tzouanos Nikolaos. To you all, Ευχαριστώ πολύ!!!

Throughout this issue of Arete there will be several articles about the situation in Olympia and what you, and others, can do to help restore our beloved Olympia. Just as Aeschylus wrote thousands of years ago, from this tragedy "a huge tree can tower from a tiny seed."

This August also saw the passing of one the IOAPA's strongest supporters, Nikos Filaretos. As we turn our thoughts to Olympia and what we can do to help we should say thanks for the selfless work of the IOA staff and that we had the opportunity to know Mr. Filaretos.

UPDATE: Arson linked to summer fires

Kathimerini, 15 September 2007

Police are examining 30 incendiary devices including one found in Ancient Olympia, which may have caused some of the recent wildfires around the country, sources told Kathimerini yesterday.

The device found in Ancient Olympia, which was ravaged by fire last month, consisted of 15 flares. Sources said four of the flares have not been damaged by the fire and could provide vital clues. The fire service has not been able to establish whether the fire that threatened the museum and stadium at Ancient Olympia started from the point where the flares were found.

Preliminary estimates by the fire service indicate that there has been a 30 percent rise in cases of arson this summer. Initial findings suggest that 14 of the 137 fires recorded in the Peloponnese between August 23 and 31 were caused by arson. The fire service, however, is unwilling to repeat the government's assertion that there was an "organized plan" behind the fires, sources added.

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Mt. Kronos near the entrance to the Ancient site



Mt. Taygetos where the IOAPA carried the Olympic flame in 1996

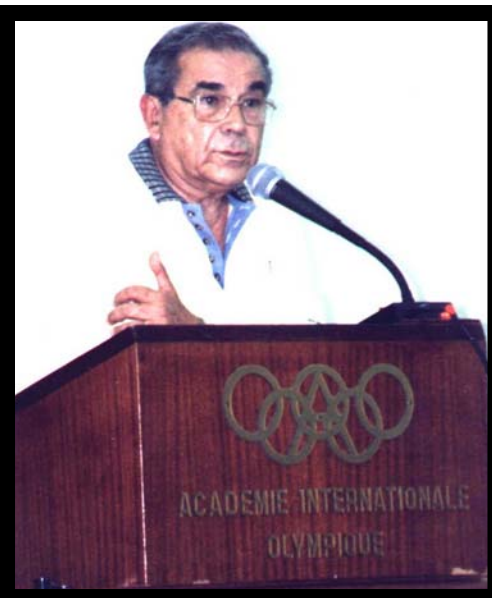


Left: The entrance to the Ancient site at Olympia.



A Eulogy: Nikos Filaretos (26 March 1925 – 23 August 2007)

By Laurel Brassey Iversen (USA)



I received the news of Mr. Filaretos passing on Friday, August 24th. Everyday since then, I have thought of his family and about Mr. Filaretos' impact on my life. It is not easy to find the right words. It is impossible to adequately express how I feel about him and what he meant to me.

As many of you probably know, we had a very stormy beginning and he was always criticizing me and lecturing me in IOA protocol. I would send him letters asking questions regarding the IOA and the IOAPA and he would write back to me and correct all of the mistakes in terms of how to address my letters, and to whom, and how to sign them, but he would not answer the questions I had asked. That would make me so mad.

When we finally began to understand each other, I think we both gained respect for the other. He was a great mentor and benefactor for the young IOAPA organization, and I am sure if not for his support the association would not have survived. I am eternally grateful for his patronage although at times he made me crazy. On the other hand, I take some delight in knowing that I caused him the same insanity. Thus, his pet name for me of "Mrs. Impossible" became my personal acknowledgement of affection from him.

All of the great people who have affected my life have similar traits. They are very stubborn. They have great conviction in their beliefs and their passion is unquenchable. Mr. Filaretos was our champion of the Olympic Ideal. He embodied the fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement. He taught us tolerance and understanding. He gave to us, the incredible opportunity to be a part of the International Olympic Academy and live the dream of world peace and unity. Through the IOA I have so many cherished friends.

These great people in my life also love to laugh and enjoy life. I will never forget how we greatly enjoyed beautiful Olympia evenings in the cafeteria or out on the steps laughing and joking with him. Years ago he treated us to dinners with him in Katakalo or Miraka. I have so many wonderful memories that make me smile.

Often times he was quite tough on us, but as we came to know him we realized that he loved all of us very much, and wanted only the best for us.

I hope that the young people who attended the Academy during his Presidency know how fortunate they were to be in his presence, part of the most productive years of the IOA and some of the most amazing sessions ever held.

It is very sad to realize that we will not talk, argue and laugh again. I am so happy that I had a couple of chances to talk to him last summer. He will always occupy a special place in my heart and I will honor his memory.

With love and prayers,

Laurel Brassey Iversen

Past IOAPA President & "Mrs. Impossible"

NIKOS FILARETOS: wife: Vassiliki Liverakos, two sons; education: Economics and Commerce, Athens University; Elected as an IOC member in 1981, became Vice-Chairman in 1987 and then Chairman of the Commission for the International Olympic Academy and Olympic Education (1988 to 1999); held other IOC posts, including Vice-Chairman of the Commission for Culture and Olympic Education and membership in the following Commissions: Press (1982 to 1983), Programme (1983 to 1984), Pierre de Coubertin (1994 to 2002), and IOC 2000 in 1999, before becoming an honorary member in 2006. Participated in rowing, football, tennis, swimming; member of Panathinaikos and Panellinios sports clubs, Athens Tennis Club, Greek Touring and Automobile Club; member of the board of La Commerciale SA Insurance Company; Employment: Commercial books examiner, Shell Greece (1953-56), Credit Bank foreign desk manger (1956-84).

The President's Message

Dear IOAPA friends,

Within only two days of August, we were moved twice by the sad news coming from Greece. On the 24th came the death of Mr. Nikos Filaretos, former IOA President and highly regarded by IOAPA members who knew him well, and on the 26th, the fires that devastated many parts of the country, taking the lives of many Greeks and badly affecting the International Olympic Academy grounds.

My deepest gratitude and recognition to Mr. Filaretos, who was fundamental in the creation and development of the IOAPA. Living the example of hard-work and full dedication to the Olympic Principles, Mr. Filaretos gave us the best homage we can now pay to him.

We were all impressed by the testimonies from our dear Greek friends explaining the situation throughout the country. The feelings experienced after watching the pictures coming from Olympia told us how much this place means to all of us. A special recognition should go to the IOA employees that risked all to save the IOA. You will find in this issue of Arete several relief initiatives. I would like to encourage all those who have the possibility to show solidarity with our dear Greek friends and with the IOA.

Numerous representatives of the IOAPA will take part in the pilgrimage to Olympia during the 24th and 25th of November. This is a great initiative including symbolic acts and discussions over the future of Olympic Studies and the IOA. I will hand to the IOA on that occasion the money that IOAPA is collecting in its fundraising action in favour of the IOA.

It was also in Greece, although sometime earlier, in the first week of July, when at the last IOAPA session I was elected as new president and re-elected as internet officer. I am delighted to have been given this opportunity and I look forward to serve the Association and fulfil this double commitment. I have been extremely fortunate for being part of a good number of IOA sessions, I am very keen in continuing that effort, and through IOAPA, give back to the IOA and the Olympic Movement a humble part of all what I have received during these last years.

I look forward to a continuous and close relationship between the IOA and IOAPA. We all should realise that the stronger the IOAPA the better for the IOA, and vice versa. The possibilities of collaboration are countless and I can only see benefits for both institutions.

I believe in teamwork and after more than three months working with the new Executive Committee, I am very glad to see a great team, an impassioned group capable of effectively carrying out the several projects we are already undertaking.

The IOAPA Executive Committee intends to give tools and resources to all of you, IOAPA members, for your better involvement in the Olympic Movement. You can count on us!

Yours in Olympism,

Héctor Argüelles

IOAPA President



Help Needed for IOA and Ancient Olympia!!

Dear IOAPA members,

As you might have heard, during the last days of August huge fires throughout Greece killed 65 people and affected vast areas of the country including Ancient Olympia and the surrounding areas. Now, we would like to give you detailed information on the damages on the IOA grounds and surrounding areas and inform you about the fundraising action that IOAPA will conduct.

The good news is that the archeological site and the museums in Olympia have been saved. Nevertheless, Mount Kronion has been completely incinerated. Also the nearby village of Miraka and the seaside region of Zaharo have been very badly affected.

The buildings of the International Olympic Academy have been also saved. However, **approximately 50% of the trees at the IOA have been destroyed**. In the whole area between the new lecture hall and the Coubertin Steel including the Coubertin Walk basically all the trees have been burnt. The Coubertin stele itself was luckily not damaged.

The IOA is the very special place for all of us, and we all have unforgettable memories and experiences from Olympia. This is very sad news and it is difficult to put into words the feelings we all have. We give all of our support to the IOA officials and its entire staff whose bravery resulted in saving what remains of the IOA premises.

It will take probably lot of time to see the IOA back as it was before the fires. However, the quicker we act the sooner and better it will be restored again. There are already plans to replant the area affected at the IOA. The IOA is the very reason of the existence of IOAPA and therefore we will take action.

IOAPA starts a fundraising action for collecting money which will be directly donated to the IOA in order to replant the affected IOA grounds. We encourage all IOAPA members who have the economic solvency, to make the donations through credit card. Please, use the link below to fill in the form provided and send it to IOAPA Treasurer, Carlo Farrugia, at carlo@ioapa.org

http://www.ioapa.org/doc/IOAPA_Fundraising_for_IOA.doc

With the warmest regards to all the members, especially to all our Greek friends, in these very sad moments.

In the Olympic Spirit,

IOAPA Executive Committee

Olympia: The Aftermath

Photos by Panos Vasilaris and Panos Giannaras



The 47th IOA Session for Young Participants

By Tim Mitchell (AUS)

The 2007 International Olympic Academy's Young Participants Session was an unforgettable life changing experience. The theme of "Athens to Beijing," was intended to provide an insight into the values of Olympism and the progress of the Olympic movement between the Athens and Beijing games. However, it turned out to be much more than that.

For two weeks over 180 delegates from 100 countries across all five continents congregated at the International Olympic Academy, located in the scenic and indescribable hills of Ancient Olympia. The session provided participants with the chance to celebrate, learn and discuss the values of Olympism, whilst debating various viewpoints concerning the evolution of the Olympic Movement. Daily lectures and discussion groups covered numerous topics that ranged from the origins of the Olympic Games, to its educational and strategic planning and the potential effects of Beijing 2008.

Our initiation into the Olympic movement was also nurtured outside the lecture rooms where we had multiple opportunities to participate in sports, social evenings, arts and culture workshops or as we simply spent time having informal conversations relaxing by the pool, exploring the village of Olympia or through making lifelong memories at the famous Zorbas bar in town. It were these priceless moments that allowed all cultures to bond with the traditions of Greece, its lifestyle and its society, which warmly accepted and accommodated the needs of the participants throughout the duration of the session.

The session was also one of historical education. Throughout the two weeks, the participants were exposed to many of the ancient and sacred sites that enrich Greek history. A tour of Athens included the Panathenean Stadium, the Acropolis, the National Archaeological Museum, the Hill of the Pnyx followed by the ruins of the ancient Olympic site in Olympia. These mystical places bestowed a profound insight into the significance of Greek culture in both sport and society.



In a world that is separated by social, political and economical differences, the Academy undoubtedly created a utopia that removes all of these obstacles for the duration of the session, allowing all people and ideals to exist in unity and equality. This inspires the ideals of Olympism in anyone.

On behalf of all participants in the 47th session I wish to extend a sincere thank you to all coordinators, lecturers and officials for organising this unique opportunity. If this session has taught us anything, it is that all members of society should be exposed to, and educated about, the Olympic Movement and the impact it has on their personal values and objectives in creating an equal and harmonious world.



The 10th IOAPA Conference by Federico Gallo (ITA)

Dear international friends,

It's not easy to write down the feelings that pervade me every time I come back to the IOA. I don't think I can consider it an "ordinary vacation".

First of all, there is the pleasure of visiting the special country of Greece once again, with its legendary history. A country of friendly people, which well deserves the title of the "cradle" of European and Western civilization and that has donated to us great myths, fascinating philosophies and some of the most amazing events in the world.

Among them, of course, the Olympic Games — a peaceful struggle of ancient people to put fair rules in confrontations between men and also to take over human limits in order to achieve divine glory.

Second, comes the chance to be back at the premises of the International Olympic Academy, a place where every former member of any IOA session still keeps within some of the best memories of his or her life.

No other place in the world offered me the chance to meet some of the best youth of the world gathered in the same place at the same time.

That's why having been in Olympia means that you always feel part of it and that you bring a part of that place inside your heart wherever you go.

Passing through the buildings, the sport courts, the swimming pool and all the roads embracing the facilities is never going to be a simple walk for those who have memories in their mind. Go to a site and stop and listen ...there is a story to tell.

The cheerful spirits of all the people that were there still permeate the ground and you can feel it every time. You remember that in some particular corner special words were told, hands shaken, smiles given, feelings expressed, inner richness exchanged.

Everyone has some spots inside the heart because of some great friendship or, why not, love had begun. And finally it comes the wish of meeting some old friends and making new ones.

A friendly bunch of people are united again in a beautiful place, with whom there will be new great moments to share, to produce new cultural thoughts, or last but not least, to have fun.

You feel that people coming to the Olympic Academy are special. Because of their passion for physical activity, because they share common values, because they want to stay in a place without any troubles or issues of materialistic interests.

In this inspiring place you have the opportunity to learn about other cultures in a much more direct way, by interacting with people representing their cultures and to discover that there are more similarities than differences. When I wondered how it was possible to achieve that, I realized that socializing in a peaceful international environment, practicing activities

at all levels and living together day by day are all ingredients that contribute to creating strong ties and understandings inside a group.

And certainly a good touch of Olympic idealism helps.

It produces friendships forever.

It is always great to be back, indeed.

That's why I need to thank the IOA and Olympism.

Sincerely,

Mr. Federico Gallo
(ITA)



Scholars' Pilgrimage to Olympia 24-25th November 2007

(from an e-mail distributed by Jim Parry, GBR)

(<http://olympicstudies.uab.es/s4olympia/>)

In August 2007, the terrible fires in Greece threatened the ancient Olympic site and the museum in Olympia blackened Kronos hill, and burned the grounds at the International Olympic Academy. Fortunately, due to the brave efforts of the people of Olympia and the staff at the IOA, the ancient monuments and the buildings were saved.

Maybe it is only when you nearly lose something that you fully realize its value. For those scholars who have been inspired by visits to Olympia and the IOA over the years, this tragedy has awakened a new sense of the importance of the IOA to Olympic Studies and the Olympic Movement.

Scholars recently gathered in Beijing for two conferences and had the opportunity to discuss what we can do to express our solidarity with the people of Greece and to help restore the IOA to its former beauty as quickly as possible. The proposal is to make a pilgrimage to Olympia on the weekend of the 24 and 25th November 2007.



Scholars for Olympia

www.scholars-for-olympia.com

Dear Colleague,

Recently the terrible fires in Greece threatened the ancient Olympic site and the museum in Olympia, blackened Kronos hill, and burned the grounds at the International Olympic Academy. Fortunately, due to the brave efforts of the people of Olympia and the staff at the IOA, the ancient monuments and the buildings were saved.

Maybe it is only when you nearly lose something that you fully realize its value. For those scholars who have been inspired by visits to Olympia and the IOA over the years, this tragedy has awakened a new sense of the importance of the IOA to Olympic Studies and the Olympic Movement. As it happened, 7 scholars were gathered in Beijing for 2 conferences in September, which gave them the opportunity to discuss how to express solidarity with the people of Greece and help restore the IOA to its former beauty. They developed a plan for a pilgrimage to Olympia. Mr. Kouvelos, Vice President of the IOA, and Dr. Georgiadis, Honorary Dean of the IOA, have already accepted the invitation to join the event. There will be an effort to get media coverage.

THE PLAN FOR THE PILGRIMAGE TO OLYMPIA

*On 24 November 2007, in the early afternoon, the participants will take a specially-chartered bus from Athens to Olympia. In Olympia, they will stay in local hotels as an expression of support for the recovery of tourism. It is suggested that you bring small gifts from your home country to give to the people of Olympia and the staff at the IOA in appreciation of their efforts during the fire and the recovery. In the evening there will be a group dinner to which will be invited the mayor of Olympia, Mr. Aidonis, along with representatives from the town of Olympia and the IOA. The next morning, there will be a ceremony to plant an oak tree at the IOA, which will be marked with an engraved stone. The International Society of Olympic Historians (ISOH) and **the International Olympic Academy Participants Association (IOAPA)** will hand over the money they have collected toward the restoration of the IOA. Information about how to make a donation to the ISOH fund is at the end of this letter.*

Then there will be an open session to draft a letter to be sent to Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee, and He Zhenliang, Chairperson of the IOC Commission on Culture and Olympic Education. The letter will recognize the importance of the IOA in the Olympic Movement and will be signed by those present. There will also be a broader discussion of the past and future of the IOA and Olympic Studies. Drawn together by this tragedy, this will be an occasion for Olympic scholars to achieve an unprecedented level of solidarity and to consider future actions that might be possible with a greater level of cooperation. There might also be an academic session in which scholars give short presentations about their latest research, which could be published as a special edition of the Journal of Olympic History (further information will be provided later). The bus will return to Athens on the afternoon of the 25th and participants will

spend that night in Athens. Many of us have benefited from the generosity of the Hellenic government, which has funded the activities at the IOA. This pilgrimage will be funded by ourselves. It is estimated that the maximum cost per person will be €280, which will include 1 night in Olympia, 1 night in Athens, the bus to Olympia, and the group dinner in Olympia. You will be responsible for your own transportation to Athens.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND IN PERSON

You are invited to make a donation to the ISOH fund (see instructions below) and to write a letter of support for the IOA through the project website at www.scholars-for-olympia.com. Your letter will be sent along with the letter signed by the participants in Olympia.

IF YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE

Please contact Roy Panagiotopoulou before 20 October. Roy will make the arrangements for rooms in Athens and Olympia and will collect the money from you for the bus, group dinner, etc. Let her know if you would like to stay extra days in Olympia.

Dr. Roy Panagiotopoulou
Department of Communication and Media Studies
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Stadiou 5
105 62 Athens, Greece
Tel: +30 210 3689415, +30 210 3689451
Fax: +30 210 3220820
E-mail: rpanag@media.uoa.gr

IF YOU WISH TO DONATE MONEY TO THE FUND FOR RE-PLANTING THE IOA

Please send a check to:
John Grasso, Treasurer of ISOH
257 Joslyn Road
Guilford, NY 13780, USA
Tel: (1)-607-895-6846
E-mail: jgrasso@frontiernet.net

If you wish to use VISA or MASTERCARD please contact John Grasso for more details.
If you use Euros (no cheques, please) contact:

Anthony Bijkerk, Secretary-General of ISOH
Vogelrijd 16
8428 HJ Fochteloo
The Netherlands
Tel: (31)-516-588520
E-mail: tony.bijkerk@planet.nl

You may use direct payment (without any extra charges) into the Dutch ISOH account:
International Bank Account Number [IBAN]: NL 98 RABO 0340558113
at the RABO Bank De Stellingwerven in Oosterwolde (Fr.). Swiftcode: RABO NL 2u.

Thank you for your attention.
This plan was developed in Beijing by:
Roy Panagiotopoulou
Miquel de Moragas
Susan Brownell
Chris Kennett
Hai Ren
Karl Lennartz
Richard Cashman



IOAPA Winter-Session 2008



Dear Friends of IOAPA and Winter sports!

It has already been 2½ years since the 3rd IOAPA Winter-Session 2005 took place in Innsbruck / Austria. At the last official IOAPA Session at the International Olympic Academy in Olympia we got great feedback to organise the session again. We are now happy to announce the next IOAPA Winter-session to be held in March 2008 in Bad Gastein – Salzburg, Austria.

I encourage all members of IOAPA to take part in this week, to experience the element of snow and to enjoy skiing, winter sports and the friendship we share in our organisation.

After long research we received a very good offer by the Euro Youth Hotel in Bad Gastein which is normally fully booked at this time of the season. We are even more happy as the price is sensational. We promise you that we will try hard to host you as good as possible and to offer you a perfect Winter-Holiday!

Nevertheless please consider that skiing is still an expensive sport. But if you compare our offer with a normal week of skiing, we can tell you, that this price is already less than half the price you normally pay for accommodation, half board, skiing instructors, no long ways to the ski slope,... If there are any changes, which means the price is lowered, we will tell you as soon as possible!

Here are the details:

WHEN: 1st to 8th of March 2008

WHERE: EURO YOUTH HOTEL & Krone
Bahnhofplatz 8
5640 Bad Gastein
Austria
www.euro-youth-hotel.at

INCLUDED SERVICES:

- Accommodation (7 nights / 8 (12)-bed-dormitories)
- Half Board (Breakfast / Dinner (3 courses))
- 4 Day Skiing-Pass
- Rental skis for 4 days
- Lessons by experienced Ski Instructors

PRICE/PERSON: 472 – EURO (excl. flight and transfer to the hotel)

PARTICIPANTS: Minimum Participants: 20
Maximum Participants: 40
If there are more applicants then places available, the bookings are “First come, first serve” – Basis

NEAREST AIRPORTS: Salzburg - approx. 100 kilometres by train
Munich - approx. 250 kilometres by train
Klagenfurt - approx. 60 kilometres by train

OTHER USEFUL LINKS: www.gastein.com

DEADLINE for APPLICATIONS: The **deadline** for applying for the 4th IOAPA Winter-Session 2008 is the **18th of November 2007**. If you are interested, please request an application form from Axel Bammer, complete it and send via e-mail to axel@ioapa.org

As soon as we have enough applications we will then inform everybody so that you have enough time to make your travel arrangements (flights, train tickets, etc.)!

Are you a Fan of Winter sport or do you want to learn how to ski? If yes, don't lose time and join in!!!!

All the best