

Arete

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NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY
PARTICIPANTS ASSOCIATION



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President's Message



Dear IOAPA members,

Hope this issue of Arete finds you all well. You are surely all looking forward for the Olympic Games in London. Again many of you will be involved with the Games in many different ways from competing to volunteering to working in the NOCs and the OCOG. Once more we will have the chance to meet during the traditional IOAPA reunion at the Games. That will be on Friday 3rd August and we hope to meet as many of you as possible there.

Recently IOAPA hosted a reunion as well during Innsbruck Winter Youth Olympic Games where a good number of IOAPA members were involved in many areas of the Games. We look forward to keep these gatherings at the YOG as well. I would like to thank our fellow member Susanna Proell for her good work putting together this reunion.

We are very glad to see that the International Olympic Academy has managed to maintain most of its sessions during this difficult economic times in Greece. Sessions for Young Participants, Directors or NOAs and also the Postgraduate Seminar are scheduled for this year 2012 to be held as traditionally in Olympia. The IOA Masters will also start its fourth edition next September.

Hope you enjoy reading this edition of Arete. Please send us your contributions for upcoming editions of the Newsletter, tell us about the Olympic projects you are working in your country, a conference you have attended etc. As always if you have any ideas on how we IOAPA can be a better resource for you please let us know.

Warm regards,

Hector Arguelles

Volunteering at the World Special Olympics

Vagelis Alexandrakis (Greece)



In 2006, I heard that the Greece was hosting the XIII Special Olympics World Games in 2011. The experience of volunteering at the 2004 Olympic and Paralympic games being fresh, I immediately said to myself “nice, that would be cool!!.”

June 5, 2007: I turn on the radio and listen to the news...one of the last things mentioned: Special Olympics International Committee entrusts to Athens the Organizing of the Special Olympics World Summer Games for the year 2011.” Wow, just wow, that soooo made my day!!!! Holding strongly to the belief that sport should have a role in social inclusion and integration, I immediately thought “You bet I will be there!” I spent the next days and weeks telling everyone how great this thing was...how important the Special Olympics are and that everyone should be there to support this organization....But, almost nobody knew about this organization- not even sportspeople. So there was a mission I should accomplish: Raise awareness about the institution and convince as many people as possible to volunteer!

The Special Olympics was founded in 1968. Eunice Kennedy-Shriver, sister of US President John F. Kennedy inspired and founded the Games. Her vision was born in June 1962 in a summer camp at her home, where she invited children and adults with intellectual disabilities to explore their abilities in various sports activities. Only two years later, the first International Special Olympics Summer Games took place in Illinois with 1,000 participating athletes with intellectual disabilities from 26 states of the U.S. and Canada. From then on, Special Olympics have evolved to a Global Movement that offers the opportunity to **3.1 million athletes** with intellectual disabilities **from 185 countries**, mainly through sports, to reinforce their self-

esteem, to discover their special abilities, and in this way become active and useful members of their societies.

The years went by and the Games were approaching. I was so excited to meet the athletes who I consider real Olympians. So, May 2011 arrived. Greece was having under its worst financial crisis and the media seemed to care more about the costs of the Games rather than the values and the essence of it. A team of 25.000 inspired volunteers provided high quality services to the athletes and the Games participants. I was so happy to be one of them. I was appointed as a credentialing assistant which was an office-based position. I worked there for 10 amazing days. I met amazing people. I made friends with happy and helpful volunteers and I got to meet some special and inspiring human beings: some of the athletes. The opening ceremony on the 25th of June was awesome - just like the Games.

Greece finally managed to organize very successful Games and I was very happy that Greeks embraced this event so warmly. I was even happier that more people learned about the Games. I was also moved to see the athletes demonstrate their optimism, hope, passion for life and determination. Taking into account their achievements, everyone of us, should make an example of them and stand up and stay strong in all the problems life may challenge us with, show passion and determination in every difficulty and never stop following our dreams and objectives. If it wasn't for sport, these people probably would not have the chance to travel, meet other people, make friends, live intense moments, and most importantly, believe in themselves. These games also help everyone of us to get to know these special issues, find out more about them and realize that these people are actually not different.

I thought about other issues during these Game such as whether there should be a distinction between the Olympics, the Paralympics, the Special Olympics, and the Deaf Olympics etc.? Why can't we have all the Games happening at the same place at the same time? I guess, though, this is quite a controversial issue and could trigger a very an extensive discussion.

Anyway, the place of the World Special Olympics 2015 has not been determined yet. However, there are always volunteering opportunities at any place, any time. If you would like to volunteer for the Special Olympic movement, which I totally encourage you to do, visit the website www.specialolympics.org.

With you in Olympism!

Vagelis



The YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES

Philip Barker (England)

Three flames burned brightly above Innsbruck to herald the inaugural Winter Youth Olympic Games. There were many who doubted that the idea would work in a winter setting but with a fraction of the budget spent on the first Youth Olympic Games held in Singapore two summers ago, Innsbruck somehow pulled it off.



It helped that they could use the facilities put in place when the city staged the Winter Olympics in 1964 and 1976. The Ice Hockey tournament was in the same arena where the mighty "Red Machine" from the Soviet Union won gold in 1976. That side included the legendary goaltender Vladislav Tretiak. Thirty six years on, his grandson Maksim kept goal for the Russians, who won silver this time after an enthralling final match against Finland.

To be sure there remain concerns about "hot-housing" youngsters towards elite competition. These were not entirely laid to rest by IOC President Jacques Rogge's assertion that "they are under the supervision of the National Olympic Committees, so the danger of them falling into the hands of unscrupulous agents is remote."

That said, it cannot be denied that Innsbruck did seem to be a place where the youth of the world "had fun". Many took part in the Cultural and Educational Programme, which even had its own acronym "CEP". As in Singapore, this involved many activities for the athletes, some usefully tailored to the environment such as a session on alpine safety and the dangers of avalanche.



More athletes visited the World Anti Doping Agency booth than any other stand," said Rogge." That is a very good sign. It shows a healthy interest in the prevention of doping."

We had a fun mascot that everyone seemed to like. Yoggl was everywhere, dancing to Lady Gaga, leading the cheerleaders for a junior ice hockey tournament and even hugging IOC President Jacques Rogge who manfully affected not to mind.

The ceremonies were low key, from the opening at Bergisel where a galaxy of Austrian stars had a part to play including Franz Klammer, the lighter of one of three cauldrons in a spectacular finale.

Karl Schranz was another local hero. He was chosen to carry the Olympic flag. It cannot have escaped the notice of older members of the crowd that he had been expelled from the Sapporo Winter Olympics 40 years before by then IOC President Avery Brundage. His crime? infringing the rules on amateurism then in force. Many in Austria and elsewhere felt he had unfairly been made a scapegoat. Believe it or not effigies of the IOC President were burnt in Vienna at the time.

"I've discussed the Olympic affair of 1972 with Karl and I invited him to be present at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games and we have the best of relationships," said Jacques Rogge. "The fact that Karl carried the flag is a sign that the wounds are closed."



Most medals were presented in the city centre at Marie Theresienstrasse, where the Olympic cauldron had been moved after opening night for “practical and environmental reasons.”

The flame incidentally had been kindled in Athens rather than Olympia for similar reasons.

The Games received some unexpected media coverage when an unexploded wartime bomb forced the cancellation of an evening medals ceremony. Happily it was defused in time for the nightly concert to proceed. This featured the splendidly named “Elephant Commando.”

A feature of the Games has been the introduction of new events designed to appeal to younger participants. In the Singapore Games we had three on three basketball. Here the event billed as the winter equivalent was “Ice Hockey skills”, designed to include competitors from countries that were not part of the main tournaments. It was essentially, training drills made into a competitive format. Whilst it didn’t entirely hit the spot, it could work with a greater emphasis on presentation, and it is not hard to see it used in future Summer Youth Games in say, Football.

The parallel mixed team slalom is something that could translate to the Olympic Winter Games themselves. It is a format that would lend itself to competition under the lights.

“I think there is a great future for this kind of competition. We are looking at evolution, we are learning right here but we do not want to overload the Olympic programme,” said Rogge.

The next Winter Youth Olympic Games will be held in Lillehammer. Eighteen years ago, set what many still believe to be the benchmark for Winter Olympics. All the signs are that they will follow the Innsbruck model with modest Games.



“The infrastructure from 1994 will have a central role for Lillehammer 2016.” Said Mayor Espen Johnsen.” We will have to make smaller adjustments to some venues, to make it fit better the sports of the day. The athletes’ village will be the new addition to the infrastructure in Lillehammer, and will serve as a part of the legacy of YOG 2016.”

The 2014 Summer Youth Olympics will be in Nanjing and will no doubt be magnificently staged in superb venues but many remain concerned that the level of expenditure could be excessive for a Youth Games.

The 2012 European Figure Skating Championships

Elizabeth Hanley (United States)



Elizabeth Hanley attended the 2012 European Figure Skating Championships in Sheffield, England. Betz reports that "it was a great arena, and the attendance was excellent as the skaters headed toward the final competitions."

"My friend, Sheila, and I were there from Tuesday through Saturday! Quite the competition. I loved it! I was particularly pleased the Carolina Kostner did soooooooooooooo well in the ladies' competition. Also, Plushenko was absolutely brilliant in his skating.....and deserved to win! The Russians remain strong. The cute gal from Finland, Korpi, was also a delight to watch."



OLYMPIC FRIENDSHIP

John T. Powell

We really don't know each other—we hardly know ourselves.

Yet we're all here – a common bond compels.

We all believe in amity, in vigour, having fun,

The circle entwined rings, the colours, the unity,

The one idea Olympic, the binding bond of wish,

**The strengthening of new found friendships – they are all
upon our list.**

We hope, we want, we need, yet even now we fear

Some politician's curse upon something we hold dear,

To be spoiled by twisted concepts polluting what we very badly need.

Yet each Games wins a battle, each Games plants a seed.

**We need many an Olympiad to nurture it, and to stop our
needless greed.**

We all know what we want, we all know what we need.

We know it takes some sacrifice, we fully know its creed.

For every little effort, for every handshake meant,

For every smile we give, for every help that's spent,

We make our contributions as we reach to show its worth.

And love brings folk together to achieve real peace upon this earth.

John T. Powell

OLYMPIA'S QUIETNESS

John T. Powell

Great things come quietly to earth
Sunrise is silent, and life itself
Comes like a breath indrawn
As still and quiet, as the dawn.

All tides wax and wane
Moving on a soundless plane
Answering to the pull and draw
Of some undisputed law.

The seasons come and go
Like a moving show
Across the stage of time and space
With quiet dignity and, sometimes, grace.

A snowflake falling to the ground
Doesn't make the slightest sound
Stars come out rank upon rank
As do wild flowers on a roadside's bank.

The giant trees, many a towering pine
Live in their own peaceful silent time,
Yet there is neither noise nor sound
'Neath the outer roughness of the ground.

So we to Olympia's vale have come
And in silent rapture we will go,
Quieter than when Alpheus river's flow
Meets the far deeps of the sea.
Both river, and ourselves,
Are held through some magic harmony.

John T. Powell

NEWS

IOAPA MEMBER CHOSEN AS CHAIR OF SWEDISH ASSOCIATION FOR SPORT RESEARCH

Ann-Christin Sollerhed of Sweden has been chosen as the Chair of the Swedish Association for Sport Research. Ann-Christin attended the Educator's Session in 2008 and 2011. Congratulations!

2012 IOA SESSION DATES

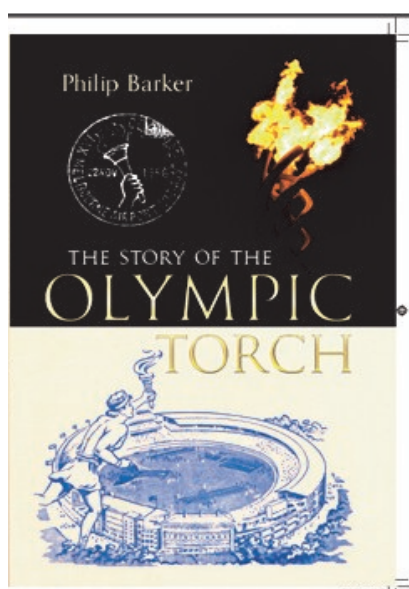
Session for Presidents or Directors of National Olympic Academies and Officials of National Olympic Committees : 24/5/2012—31/5/2012

Young Participants Session: 16/6/2012– 30/6/2012

Post-Graduate Session: 1/9/2012—30/9/2012

THE STORY OF THE OLYMPIC TORCH

IOAPA member, Philip Barker of the UK has written a book. Congratulations Philip!



OLYMPIC STUDIES & OLYMPISM IN THE BRAZILIAN AND INTERNATIONAL SCENARIOS

“OLYMPIC STUDIES AND OLYMPISM IN THE BRAZILIAN AND INTERNATIONAL SCENARIOS”, by Professor Katia Rubio and Professor Roberto Maluf de Mesquita had the support of the Sports and Leisure Foundation and the Regional Council of Physical Education of Rio Grande do Sul. It includes a message written by **Dr. Konstantinos Georgiadis** and a Preface written by Prof. Dr. Eduardo Henrique De Rose. It is a bilingual edition and was translated into English by Professor Vera Müller, of the School of Letters of PUCRS.

