IOAPA OFFICIAL REUNION AT PARIS 2024

We are excited to announce our IOAPA Official Reunion during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games!!!! After four years, we will see each other again during an Olympic Games edition on on August 3rd. Thanks for everyone who signed up (p. 6)

READ MORE

2024 AFRICAN GAMES THROUGH THE EYES OF A VOLUNTEER

Christiana Ashley (GHA) worked as a volunteer at the 2024 African Games held in Accra and shared with us her work and how that experience has helped her in her daily job in community outreach programs that promote sports (p. 8)

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IOAPA PRESENCE AT THE 2024 TORCH RELAY

IOAPA continued its long-standing tradition to have members running on the Olympia leg of the Paris 2024 Olympic Torch Relay. Caroline Bujold (CAN) and Hsin-Wei Chen (TPE) write about their experiences on their preparation and on the road (p.10)

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Dear Readers,
Welcome to the second 2024 edition of the Arete Newsletter!

As we head to Paris, many questions arise regarding the Olympic Games. Many complain that the population is not ‘feeling the Olympic spirit’, others complain that the city is not ready to deliver the event, while there are those that question the sheer existence of the Olympic Games amidst wars and crises around the world. It would not be a mega-event without these things.

Trust me, I’ve been there - twice! First, in Rio de Janeiro, where I lived from 2006 to 2013. The party at Copacabana Beach when IOC President Jacques Rogge announced the Games in 2009 transformed into (important) questions and (valid) protests over the transformation of the city for the Games. Many had serious doubts that it would play out, albeit usually in characteristically Carioca humour, but by the time of the Opening Ceremony, Rio was already in love with the Olympic Games.

Five years later, I had the privilege to attend the 2020 Olympic Games as a journalist. We all arrived in Japan, warned both by the media that the local population was not happy about the Games and by organizers that we should not engage with locals, as they were fearful we would spread covid-19 into the country. Although I saw some small protests outside the National Stadium at the Opening Ceremony, by the Closing Ceremony, thousands of Japanese were outside the same Stadium, trying to catch a glimpse of not only the athletes, but of everyone that had anything to do with the event - including me and friends, posing for dozens of selfies on the way back to the metro station.

We once again reach with questions of how the Olympic Games will play out, given current wars and problems around the world. I believe we should try to live everyday in Olympism and spread its world around the world. But I truly believe that Olympism is best experienced... at the Olympic Games. In Paris 2024, we will not only see amazing stories from the Field of Play, but we will also have the chance to make new friends and reconnect with IOAPA friends from around the world. IOAPA is organizing an official reunion at the Olympic House on August 3rd, thanks to our amazing friends from the World Olympian Association (WOA), who generously are helping us to host the event. The Canadian Olympic Committee has also graciously invited
us to visit their Paris 2024 House on July 31st, as a warm-up for our official meetings. We sent a message in our WhatsApp community for this event and it was rapidly sold out. If you’re still not there, please send an email with your phone number (and IOAPA as a subject) and we will add you. You can find a list of all the National Houses, plus others (as Pride House, etc) here. Some are free to enter! So, if you’re in Paris, you have a lot of options!

IOAPA members from the COC have regularly sent news about their activities, which reminds me that we really want to publish all the hard work you’ve been doing out there! Please, help spread the word, and send us bulletins, news or reports on events, activities, conferences, or meetings you are involved in! We would gladly publish them here in Arete and on our social media!

Please tag us in pictures you take in Paris and send us photos of other meetings that might occur between members before, during, and after the Games! If you are also staying for the Paralympic Games or only going to them, let us know as well!!

In this edition, we present Anidev Singh from India, the new Hans van Haute Committee Chairperson, and his amazing team. We also have three testimonies: Christiana Ashley from Ghana tell us all about her experience in the 2024 African Games, held in Accra and how it helped her in her current work; Caroline Bujold from Canada and Hsin-Wei Chen from Chinese Taipei share their memories of the time they spent running in the Olympia leg at the Paris 2024 Olympic Torch Relay.

We start a new section of ARETE: “Arete Archives”, in which we look back at past editions. In this number, I recall the excitement shared by then-President Laurel Brassey Iversen, OLY, and current Vice-President over IOAPA’s participation in the 2000 Torch Relay. As you can see, IOAPA participation has become a ‘new tradition’ in this exciting feature of the Olympic experience.

We also look back at the 2023 Young Olympic Ambassadors Session, as we publish a moving piece from Helia Asghari, from the Islamic Republic of Iran. I remember watching the entire session via online streaming, and even though I hadn’t met any of the participants, her speech brought tears to my eyes! It sounds silly, but I guess that’s what IOA and Olympism does to us!

And now... Paris 2024, on arrive! À bientôt! With Olympic regards,
Mateus Nagime, Arete Newsletter Editor. nagime.mateus@gmail.com
Dear IOAPA Members and readers of Arete:

Here we are, days or hours before starting a new Olympic Games. After Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022 were marked with social distancing, I am, as I imagine all of you are, excited about the idea of seeing stadiums full of spectators and fans from all over the world walking around the host city. And obviously, to reunite with many friends from Olympism.

We are very excited to host our official IOAPA meeting at Paris 2024. It will be this August 3, 2024, from 14:00 – 17:00, at OLY House - World Olympian’s Hospitality, on 5 Rue de Masseran, Paris 7th Arrondissement. We have reached a maximum capacity for the event and registration is now closed. Thanks to everyone who signed up. I’m sure we will have a memorable reunion at Paris 2024 and I’m happy that we all connect in person after our online gatherings during Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022.

I also want to give a big welcome to Alexandra de Navacelle de Coubertin. As a 4th generation descendant of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, she is currently the president of the Pierre de Coubertin Family Association and a member of the Olympic Culture and Heritage Committee of the IOC. She officially represents Pierre de Coubertin’s family at the IOC and at Sport and Olympic events. She was a guest speaker in our IOAPA 2023 Session and has supported our organisation throughout the years. Therefore, our Executive Committee voted on the decision to invite her to become an honorary member, which she gladly accepted. Welcome to the IOAPA family, Alexandra!

Now as we all get ready with travel arrangements, I invite you all to take a deep breath and remember the importance of Olympism and to once again, value our connection through Olympia, before enjoying these days. IOAPA hopes that you all have memorable games, either in Paris or at home, and wish all the best to our members working there!!!!

Looking forward to seeing you in Paris,

Yours in Olympism,
Eleni Marina (Marilena) Soukera
IOAPA President
We are all thrilled to announce our IOAPA Official Reunion during Paris 2024 Olympic Games!!!! It will be held at OLY House, 5 rue de Masseran, Paris 7th Arrondissement, on August 3, 2024, from 14:00 to 17:00.

We have reached capacity for the event. REGISTRATION IS NOW CLOSED. Thanks to everyone who signed up.

Due to the maximum capacity limitations informed by the World Olympian Association (WOA), members are not allowed to bring guest (unless your guest is an Olympian).
Anidev Singh (IND) has been approved by IOAPA’s Executive Committee to chair the Hans van Haute Committee.

The former chair, Elizabeth Hanley served the committee for many years and announced her retirement at the session in Olympia in June of 2023.

Ani has been busy putting together the committee members representing all continents. This impressive team will be meeting regularly virtually to begin the process of the selection of Hans van Haute scholarship recipients for the IOAPA Session which will take place in Ancient Olympia in the summer of 2025.

Members of the committee are as follows:
Anidev Singh (IND)
Christian Kern (BRA)
Chloe Abou Chabake (LBN)
Monica Zachau (GER)
Motto Williams (KEN)
Lucia Giamberardino (ARG)

IOAPA Executive Committee liaison to the committee is Laurel Brassey Iversen (USA)
"Volunteers are the unsung heroes of our communities. They are the driving force behind many of the positive changes we witness every day. Whether it is organizing sporting events, mentoring young athletes, or participating in community outreach programs, volunteers bring energy, passion, and a spirit of service that inspire us all", said Hon. Mustapha Ussif, Minister for Youth & Sports of Ghana.

I participated as a volunteer assigned to the role of Venue Manager (Alisa Hotel) to the 13th edition of the African Games, held from March 8th to 23rd, 2024, Accra. Behind the scenes, I had to wear multiple hats, and with a formidable force, can say at the end that I made a contribution to the success of the event.

My operations center was the Alisa Hotel, where I had the opportunity to work directly with top officials from the World Chess Federation (FIDE), Africa Chess Confederation (ACC) and Ghana Chess Association (GCA) to ensure a smooth execution of the Chess Event.

My role as venue manager at the Alisa Hotel was to ensure that all events ran smoothly and that athletes, officials, and guests had a memorable and well-organized experience.

I am a sports administrator with a passion for volunteer work. I am also pursuing...
At the recently concluded Africa Games, I gained invaluable experience in event coordination, team management, and community engagement. Now, I am applying these skills to my professional responsibilities, actively involved in community outreach programs that promote sports and healthy living among youth.

I am currently back to work, serving as a Principal Event and Marketing Officer at the Ghana Sports Authority, where I hope to enhance my recently gained knowledge in event planning and marketing strategies, fostering greater community engagement and promoting the development of sports in the region.
The Olympic Torch Relay is already a tradition from the Olympic Games. And now, the participation of IOAPA members is already becoming also a tradition of these events. IOAPA was fortunate to have been granted 3 positions on Day 1 of the Paris 2024 Olympic Torch Relay, and the segments took place almost immediately after the Flame Lighting Ceremony on April 16th, 2024.

We conducted a random draw with names from participants who attended either the 2023 Online IOAPA Session and the live Session held in Olympia, also last year.

We thank once again the HOC Torch Relay Committee for inviting us to join this amazing event. And we also thank all our members who participated in the random draws.

In the following pages, let’s read the memories of two of our members: Caroline Bujold (CAN) and Hsin-Wei Chen (TPE).
How running with the Olympic Flame gave me a new appreciation for my contribution to the Olympic Movement.

I never dreamed of running with the Olympic Flame.

Frankly, I didn’t think that was a possibility for me. I’m not an athlete, or someone closely involved in sport or the Olympic Movement. Besides the IOAPA, I’m somewhat of an outsider when it comes to the Olympics.

So when my name got selected as a potential runner at the 2023 IOAPA Session, I didn’t even react. I thought: “Well, it’s never guaranteed, so let’s see what happens“.

When the application process came out and it looked like I was actually going to run with the Olympic Flame, in Olympia no less, I told a few people around me, and a funny thing happened. They started telling me how proud they were.

To tell you the truth, that made me uncomfortable. If people had said “wow you’re so lucky“, I would have understood, because that’s how I felt. How lucky I was to have this amazing experience!

But proud? That left me confused.

But it kept happening, over and over again.
So off I went to Greece, with this weird mixed feeling in my stomach.

When we got to Olympia, I was nervous. Anything that puts the spotlight squarely on me, will forever make me feel uneasy. But as soon as IOAPA friends started to get together, it made everything better, because I knew we were in good hands.

The day before the run, a group of us gathered for dinner and made plans for the next day: who was going to get the uniforms, last-minute measuring of our sections, when and where to meet, who would run first (me), second (Hsin-Wei), and third (Emilio), etc.

On the morning of April 16th, I changed into my white Paris 2024 uniform, laced my running shoes, and headed to the meeting point with my husband. Other runners were already in place with their escorts and you could feel the giddiness in the air.

When I got to my spot, I noticed that the police escort was stationed at the last Greek runner ahead of me, and I thought: “Uh oh, we’re not part of the plan “. I could tell they were having a discussion and maybe checking a few things.

Eventually, the police came over to confirm I was part of the Relay. I was hoping they were not going to ask me to prove who I was because I had no ID on me, not even my phone!! When I confirmed I was in the Relay and that 2 more runners were ahead of me, they seemed a bit surprised but quickly reorganized themselves.

Because I was on a section of the ramp out of Olympia where there wasn’t enough
shoulder space on either side of the road, the police asked everybody around me to move further up.

What a surreal feeling, to be there on my own, waiting for the Flame!

Then it was finally there, lit in my hands, the Olympic Flame! I tried to take my time, because running 170 meters goes by so fast, even when running on a small incline, even when you try to savor it. As soon as you’re done, the torch is taken away to be given to another runner, further along the way. So just like that, it’s like it didn’t even happen. I’m happy I was the first runner because I could run along with my friends for their section, making the whole thing last a little longer.

Later that day, another IOAPA friend said something that finally made everything click. She told me how proud she was and how it could not have gone to a more deserving person, considering all the work I had done as a board member for the IOAPA. That’s when I finally got it!! Yes, I had contributed, for years, in my quiet way and not only within the IOAPA, but ever since I volunteered for my first sport event as a teenager. And I should definitely feel proud of this honour.

I will always marvel at the fact that the IOAPA has brought and continues to introduce me to so many wonderful friends from around the world. People I may never have interacted with, simply because we come from different walks of life, and would not have otherwise had the opportunity to meet.

Special thanks to Christos, Marilena, Richard, and Jordan for making this happen and taking care of everything. And thank you Anfisa for your kind words. They gave me a new appreciation for my own Olympic Journey.
Since childhood, sports have been an integral part of my life, shared with my family. My passion evolved from playing sports to researching them. Never did I imagine I would one day hold the Olympic Torch. So, when I saw the notification about the chance to participate in the torch relay, I couldn’t believe it.

Thanks to the IOAPA, I was able to join the group and receive detailed information about what to expect. The day before the relay, we walked from town to the IOA to pick up our uniforms. Even though it was our first time meeting in person, the familiar route made everything seem less strange and more welcoming.

On that day, when I saw the first person wearing the torchbearer uniform. Excitedly, I cheered and took a selfie with her. Meeting Caroline and Emilio in their uniforms further highlighted the magic that brought us together, regardless of whether we knew each other beforehand.

Before the relay, Richard and Jordan helped us identify our exact location and we kept “practicing”. After getting into position, I felt a tranquility as if I was alone on that sacred path. It wasn’t until I saw the convoy approaching that I realized the moment had come. Facing Caroline, I took the torch and began to run slowly, just as Richard advised: "The distance is short, so remember to run slowly and enjoy the moment of holding the torch." During the relay, I felt a surprising calmness, focused solely on the torch in my hand.

As a non-athlete, I never imagined participating in such a prestigious event. The emotions truly hit me that night at a torch exhibition with other IOAPA fellows. Seeing the torches from previous Olympic and Paralympic Games, I felt a deep connection, realizing I had experienced holding one. Participating in the
torch relay in Olympia is one of the most honored and best experiences of my life.

I express my deepest appreciation to the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee for giving me the chance to attend the 2022 IOA postgraduate session, leading me to this amazing journey. I am also grateful to IOAPA for providing equal opportunities to every member, allowing everyone the chance to hold the Torch one day. Special thanks to Richard, Marilena, Jordan, Lou, and all who made this event happen.

This was my first in-person IOAPA reunion in Olympia, and without your support and warm welcome, I wouldn’t have felt at home in Olympia again. The stories and people I encountered each time in ancient Olympia are truly amazing. Shout out to all the “family” of the 2022 IOA postgraduate session; it is all of you who made my first IOA experience so full of happiness. This has made me never want to stop revisiting and creating new memories.

I’ve always remembered the conversation during the 2022 postgraduate session when Dr. Jan Tolleneer asked if that was my last visit to the IOA. My response was a promise to seek any possibility to return. And here I am, and I will never stop.
Good Morning/Afternoon everyone!

I am Helia Asghari from Iran and I am honoured to speak today on behalf of all participants of this year’s session.

I would like to firstly thank President Kouvelos, Prof. Georgiadis, Stella, all of our amazing IOA staff and coordinators without whom this session would not have been possible.

My experiences at the academy have been nothing short of amazing. Being here for me is a dream come true as I am sure it is for my fellow participants. Fate had a hand in us being joined here at the same place at this very time. I am so glad to have met all of you.

My journey began with self-doubt, as I was unsure if I would fit in with my fellow participants at the academy. However, those fears soon faded away when I felt the warmth and the love of my fellow participants during the session. Here, I experienced Utopia - a perfect setting for us to partake in the values of Olympism while learning to form bonds with people from all around the world, who came from different places and embodies different cultures. I especially loved trading pins - a longstanding Olympic tradition and now with the pins I have received, I will always carry a small part of each of you with me.

It was such a pleasure for us to be able to attend lectures by esteemed professors, to have lively and open debates with each other while enjoying funny conversations over meals. We won’t forget the views of the academy as we took the long walk every morning to our lectures. Lush greenery surrounds the area, with the birds chipping in the background adds to peace and serenity of this place. It is no wonder, Pierre de Coubertin was inspired greatly by this place.

Sports was a big part of our lives at the academy and this is where I saw the Olympic values come to life. Respect, excellence and friendship guided our interactions with one another. Our differences did not matter, what mattered was that we saw each other as ONE.

I want to share a personal story, about me playing football. When I arrived at the field, I found out I was the only female player for the match and almost decided not to play. But my fellow teammates insisted I join them and encouraged me greatly. I enjoyed myself so much
and I assisted a goal and even scored one myself (fist pump!). Thank you dear friends for believing in me!

For 12 days, living alongside my fellow participants made the academy feel like home. Every participant was like a family member, and it was a great joy getting to know each one of them, learning their cultures, and hearing their stories. These are memories I shall never forget, and will always hold dear to my heart. I cannot express the overwhelming feelings that I have now as I make this speech. 12 days may have seemed like a long time at the start, but now I feel it’s much too short! Even though at this point everyone is pretty exhausted, we refused to sleep more than necessary because we simply don’t want to miss a single magical moment!

As we reach the end of our stay at the academy, I shall always look back on the last 2 weeks as some of the best days of my life. I don’t remember when I laughed so much ever, thanks to all the amazing friends I have made here. We have been deeply enriched by the experience.
in Greece and we will not forget the lessons we learned while we were here. I hope that all of us here will return home and continue to spread the message of Olympism and Olympic Values, and we must know that we have the support of our fellow participants and the entire community of the IOA behind us. This is what it truly means to be YOUNG... OLYMPIC... AMBASSADORS.

As we get ready to bid farewell to the academy, I know that we will not forget our time spent here. For like Coubertin, we all left a part of ourselves here.... our home. It is my hope that we will once be reunited here, in the sacred grounds of the academy.

Thank you so much once again for the honour of representing all the Young Olympic Ambassadors of the 63rd Session.

Mamnoonam, Shukran, Efkaristo, Xie Xie, Merci, Gracias, tusen takk and Thank you!
Starting this edition, we will revisit some of the Arete past editions, and even publish some of the articles that made history in our newsletter. You can of course, always read the - practically - full archive on our website.

We are on the lookout from some of the old editions of ARETE. If you, by any chance, have them stored on your floppy disk, cd-rom, usb drive, mail inbox, hard disk, or even printed out, reach out, so we can republish them!!!

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Arete

Volume 5, Issue 1

Spring 2000

IOAPA PARTICIPATES IN THE 2000 OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY By Carlo Farrugia (Malta)

In February the IOAPA was invited by the Hellenic Olympic Committee to participate in the Olympic Torch Relay in Greece. The executive board of the IOAPA was very excited at this news and started working immediately to try and set the best criteria of how the participants would be chosen.

Since time was very limited all the members who had e-mail addresses were invited to attend the lighting ceremony in Olympia and also managed to visit the ceremony and to Tripoli for the torch relay run and back to Athens on the 11th May. The feeling was great and all the members formed a fantastic group with which it was easy to work. We were like to thank Youla and Igor and all thirteen runners for making this event so easy to plan and...
SEND US YOUR NEWS!

We are continuously looking for news from our members. Are you working on a sport or Olympic education project that could be of interest to others? Does your country have a National Academy and you're taking part? Are you travelling and meeting IOAPA members or want to host IOA friends in your city? Do you have a great Olympic/Paralympic story? Did you meet the love of your life in Olympia? You’re hosting a mini IOAPA reunion? WE WANT TO KNOW! Send us the details with a couple pictures/videos at info@ioapa.org and we may just publish them.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 30 September 2000

KNOW A PAST PARTICIPANT WISHING TO BECOME A MEMBER?

This form was in our first 2000 edition! You don’t need to clip the application form and send us by mail anymore!! Please refer them to IOAPA MEMBERSHIP and they will be able to register and pay online directly!

FEEL FREE TO JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & LinkedIn

www.ioapa.org — ARETE NEWSLETTER — JULY 2024 ISSUE
Our reunion at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games is approaching!

We will be back for a warm and sunny reunion after 4 years!!!! Our last meeting was during the 2020 Young Olympic Games (YOG) in Lausanne, as you can see in the photo below! Due to maximum capacity, registration is now CLOSED! Thanks for everyone who signed up!!!

For any ideas, do not hesitate to contact the Newsletter Editor, Mateus Nagime, at nagime.mateus@gmail.com.

I’ve missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life.
And that is why I succeed.
-Michael Jordan- 1984 and 1996 Olympic Gold Medalist