

THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 56

"56ers Torchbearers Club Inc"

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President's Comments

Greetings once again Torchbearers and Partners

With all the activities of the Anniversary Celebrations behind us, it is now full steam ahead for our forthcoming AGM on 12th November.

Dennis has been very busy collating all the actions from our 60th Anniversary Celebrations and I am sure readers will appreciate his efforts.

Both our assisted athletes, Montana McAvoy and John Dodds have continued to impress at their chosen disciplines with John gaining 5th place at the recent World Junior Athletics Titles held in Poland. Both athletes have secured sporting scholarships from southern colleges.

Cairns City now boasts a spanking new Olympic standard swimming pool and has recently received accolades from both Olympians and Para Olympians with overseas teams eyeing off the venue for future training.

Looking forward to our annual get to gether at the RSL on 12th November.

Best of health to all.

Regards
Jim Vallely



Winners, 1500m men's final, 2nd Gordon Milne, 4:18.27, 1st Josiah McCarthy, 4:17.81, 3rd James Maguire 4:19.73.



Winners, 1500m women's final, 2nd Chantelle Yelland, 4:42.57, 1st Montanna McAvoy, 4:37.74, 3rd Hannah Hardy 5:06.67.

WE MUST NEVER FORGET THEM

I believe that I have run out of names of our era Australian athletes to include in this part of the newsletter so once again I will revert to other sporting identities worthy of remembrance. Perhaps the Para Olympians can start the coverage.

Louise Sauvage OAM

Members will be familiar with Paralympian Louise Sauvage however not so with her life and career.

Louise was born on the 18th September 1973 in Perth Western Australia. Her mother is from Leicestershire and her father is from the Seychelles. Louise was born with a severe congenital spine condition that inhibited the lower half of her body giving limited control over the legs. However in 1976 at three years of age she was Perth's Telethon Child as part of a Channel 7 fund raiser for children with disabilities. She used callipers to help walk until she received her first wheel chair.



Louise Sauvage as a child.

She had 21 surgical operations by the time she was 10 years old. She grew up in Joondanna WA and attended Hollywood Senior High School before leaving to complete a TAFE course in office and secretarial studies. Her parents encouraged her to participate in sport from a very young age. She started swimming when she was three years old. This activity was to help her build upper body strength. Sauvage started to compete in wheel chair sport at the age of eight and took up competitive wheel chair racing at the age of 15. She also tried wheel chair basketball as a youngster.

At the ages of 10 to 13 she represented Western Australia in the national swim championships but was forced to retire from swimming when she turned 14 because of surgery.

In 1990 Louise competed in her first international competition at IPC Athletics World Championships in Assen, Holland where she won gold in the 100m setting a new world record. She also won the 200m but was disqualified for moving out of her lane. At the Stoke Mandeville Games in England she took gold in the 100m, 200m, 400m and two relays.

In 1992 she represented her country in the Barcelona Paralympic games and won gold in the 200m and 400m and silver in the 800m. In recognition of her athletic feats she was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia. But was in danger of not going to Barcelona because of funding issues for the Paralympic Federation but an appeal by the Federation found funding through a variety of small donations to allow the athletes to compete.



Louise Sauvage waving to the crowd on the podium at the 2000 Summer Paralympics.



Sauvage on her way to winning silver in the 800 m T54 race at the 2000 Summer Paralympics.

Louise commented later 'If I had to pick my greatest moment it would be winning the demonstration event at the 2000 Games and coming back later that evening and having my medal presented to me by Juan Antonio Samaranch who was head of the IOC. I was on the dais in the No 1 position, and the flag was being raised and the anthem was being played because you were No. 1 and have 110,000 people singing the anthem with you, it's just unbelievable. There was no time to be emotional, I couldn't stop smiling- it was just awesome'.

56'ERS CORNER

ITEMS FROM THE ANNIVERSARY DINNER AND THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE NQ GAMES



President Jim and Montanna McAvoy leading 56'ers with the original torch (but with Jim's flame) to the RACQ North Queensland Games official opening.

GREGOR WALLACE –VICTORIAN TORCHBEARER

Gregor Wallace a 56'er who ran his torch 16 miles south of the Benalla control and his wife Norma graced our 60th Anniversary celebrations in Cairns with their presence. My discussions with Gregor were very pleasant and he was praise worthy of the manner in which the Torchbearers Club showed true mateship. There is nothing, (to his knowledge), existing in Victoria. Gregor commenced his working life in the Victorian Government as a forester. It was very pleasant to hear Gregor make such complimentary comments. Gregor and Norma proceeded to Arnhem Land for a holiday following the anniversary celebrations.



Gregor Wallace and his wife Norma with self and wife Lyn at the 60th Anniversary luncheon.

JIM VALLELY'S ENDEAVOURS

In this newsletter members will notice a few pictures of the original 1956 Olympic Torch alight with flame. The flame was not as bright as the lit canister we all experienced in 1956. However thanks to President Jim a bright light was produced by him and kept alight for the period of the march down the Esplanade. Jim sought a canister similar to the fuel used for the 1956 relay but after much investigation (also by many others) failed to locate a like canister. So unbeaten he looked at many alternatives and eventually chose a large wick powered by citronella housed in an empty baked bean tin.



The Vallely 'Olympic Flame'

His study even proved that spare citronella was not necessary. The wick was soaked in the fuel and kept alight until the RACQ Games torch was lit by Jon Sieben. Jim was also wary of trimming the wick so during the journey he was carrying a pair of scissors with which to trim the wick. Well done Jim.



President Jim with his mighty creation for the Olympic Torch flame.

VISITORS JOY AT THE FRUSTUM (Torch relay monument)

Whilst we waited at the torch memorial a number of visitors were drawn to the memorial. Two overseas visiting groups in particular graced us with their presence- a chap from the UK Rhys Williams who is a marathon runner in the Dartford Athletic club in England. He was photographed with the torch and enjoyed a long talk with Montanna McAvoy. The other group was a party of Vietnamese men who absolutely revelled in the opportunity to be photographed with the torch and the monument. How wonderful to assist in the 60th Anniversary of the Melbourne torch run.

SECOND VISIT FROM NOEL AND CARLA AZAR

Noel and Carla took their annual leave once again at Mission Beach. Noel ran his torch run 15 miles north of Gladstone and now has retired in Ulladulla in New South Wales. The Azars invited my wife and I down for lunch one day and provided a lunch of prawns and coral trout-how delicious. Much discussion on the Melbourne torch run was held strange enough!

THE OLYMPIC TORCH SONG

As mentioned the singer song writer Chris Wighton presented his brilliant song 'The Spirit of the Flame' to the members, wives and invitees to the 60th anniversary of the Olympic Games lunch at the Cairns RSL

During the 50th celebrations of the Melbourne Games I assume that our wonderful inaugural secretary Keith Barratt arranged a local music writer and singer-Chris Wighton to compose and sing a song called 'The Spirit of the Flame' The song was once again presented by Chris at the 60th Anniversary luncheon and drew significant applause. The words of the song are as follows.

THE SONG SPIRIT OF THE FLAME

*Every time we gather to commemorate
This country's many sporting greats
We can't forget the ones who showed the way
As the flame ignites Australia's best
We remember those who stood the test of time
Olympic legends of their day.*

Chorus:

*Time now to celebrate
They burnt their names into history as they
carried the torch throughout the land
When the finish line seems miles away remember
those of yesterday
The spirit of the flame will never die*

*In 56 the flame was born
From ancient Greece to Darwin
In the north on its journey to the games
And the light was carried night and day
By the bearers of the torch
They held the burning message proudly in their
hand*

Chorus

*There are many in our sporting hall of fame
Who strove to be the best they could be
Never thinking of the pain
But to those who kept the flame alight
Who ran the miles to Melbourne day and night
We salute you here today.*

Chorus repeat the last line by three.

Chris Wighton author of the lyrics and creator of the music for 'Spirit of the Flame'.

*You can listen to 'Spirit of the Flame', at the 56ers website
www.56ers.org.au.*

SNIPPETS FROM THE RIO GAMES

In newsletter 40 (November 2012) Leo Solinas provided visions of structures designed and planned for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games but featuring the structure for the Olympic Flame. As much as I looked, not one of those images was evident in Rio. I guess that Brazilian money was not available for such luxuries but why publicise the building of such attractions if they were not going ahead with them. The flame was housed in a bowl shaped receptacle but not housed in the main stadium. This is not a criticism of the Rio Olympic Committee as I think that the games went well save for the antics of some Olympians and the inclusion of some former drug cheats into a few events.



The Olympic Rings.

THOMAS BACH, IOC PRESIDENT

Thomas Bach, Olympian and World champion fencer, presided over the Rio Olympic Games. Bach was born in December 1953 in Wurzburg Germany. He is a lawyer and the ninth president of the IOC. He was elected president of the IOC in September 2013 and had five other candidates against him. He speaks fluent French, English, Spanish and German which explains the multi - language presentations at both the Opening and Closing ceremonies at Rio. I do not know if Spanish is close to the official language of Brazil-Portuguese.



Thomas Bach President of the IOC at Rio.

Bach was an accomplished fencer winning a gold medal in the team foil event at the 1976 Olympics at Montreal-he was representing West Germany. He has a Doctorate *honoris causa* from the Universidad Catolica de Murcia in Spain.

Bach appeared to carry out his first summer Olympics with much skill.

HISTORICAL IMAGES



Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand and his wife on the day that they were murdered. This assassination commenced WW1.



A French citizen gratefully lights Winston Churchill's cigar following the liberation of France from Nazi occupation.

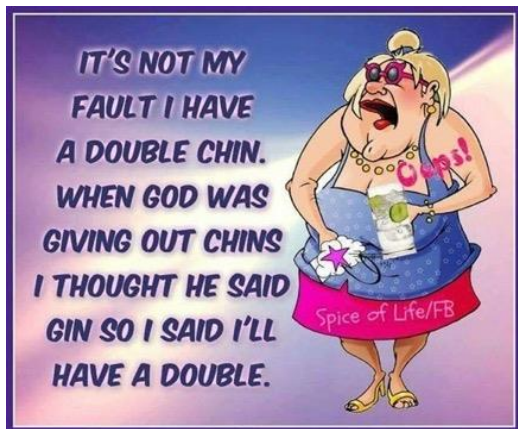
JOKERS CORNER

YOU'RE DRUNK

As I was getting into bed she said 'You're drunk'.

'How do you know?' I asked.

She replied, 'You live next door'





MAIL ORDER CATALOGUE

Two Irishmen were looking at a mail order catalogue and admiring the models.



One said to the other, 'Have you seen the beautiful girls in the catalogue?' The other one answered, 'Yes, they are very beautiful but have you noticed the price?'



The first one answers with wide eyes, 'Wow they are not very expensive. At this price I am buying one.' The second Irishman smiles and pats him on the back. 'Good idea and if she is as beautiful as she is in the catalogue, I will get one too.'

Three weeks later the youngest Irishman asks.

'Did you ever receive the girl you ordered from the catalogue?' The second Irishman replies. 'No but it shouldn't be long now. Her clothes arrived yesterday!!!'



Kind Regards

Dennis M Stevenson

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"The Running Scotsman"

A PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLAGE

Images of the RACQ North Queensland Games and the 60th Anniversary of the Melbourne Olympic Torch Relay.



President Jim Vallely, John Skennar, Gregor Wallace and Nev Crossley at the practice at the site for the opening ceremony.



56'ers at the torch monument before the march to the Games opening ceremony. Left to right John Lowe, Fred Hole, Dan Merrybor, Toby Morrell, Dennis Stevenson, Gregor Wallace.



Vern Tomacich, Jim Vallely, Patron Margaret enjoying the evening awaiting the march to the opening ceremony.



The original Olympic Torch and flame being Marched on the Cairns Esplanade by President Jim and Montanna McAvoy.



Attending 56'ers on the Games stage.



The RACQ Games Torch held by Jon Sieben being lit by President Jim and Montanna McAvoy.



Table 1 with Jon Sieben, Margaret Gill, Norton Gill, Mayor Manning, Claire Manning, Betty Veivers, Jim Vallely.



Jon Sieben lighting the RACQ Games torch. On with the games.



Table 2 with Councillor Jesse Richardson, husband Peter, RSM Dave Marendy, and wife Kellie, Bill Petersen, Lyn Stevenson, and Dennis Stevenson.



Winning men in the 1500m event. First Josiah McCarthy 4:17.81, second, Gordon Milne 4:18.27 third, James Maguire 4:19.73.



Bowen torch runner Dan Merrybor, Gaylene Nichols.



Bowen torch runner Toby Morrell, Lynne Morrell.



Norma and Gregor Wallace, Nev Crossley, Margaret and Bob Chester.



Helen Wood, Grace Hole, Fred Hole, Tom Lynch, Glenda Lynch.



Bev Tomacich, Margaret Lowe, John Lowe, Neil Stewart, Don Lowe, Vern Tomacich.



Keith O'Brien Sheila O'Brien, Cec Turner, Holly Turner and John Skenner.



A view of the RSL Cairns room for the luncheon- showing 56'ers examining memorabilia and highlighting the colours of the Olympic Rings blue, yellow black, green and red on the balloons. Serviettes were also chosen in the colours of the Olympic Rings. How appropriate.



Gregor Wallace and the editor at the 60th Anniversary luncheon.



Patron Margaret, assisting singer composer Chris Wighton present the Spirit of the Flame during the 60th anniversary luncheon.

Apologies are offered to Bill, Janet and Andrew Cummings and Margaret Cochrane for omission to capture their table. Also apologies to Ron and Glenda Entsch, Warren and Yolande Entsch for somehow losing the photo of their table.