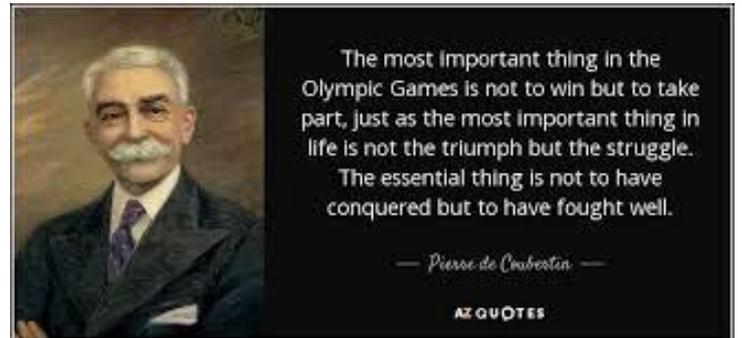


C O N T A C T

Club meeting 06/08/2024

Windy Hill Venue, Cnr Napier & Brewster St, Essendon 3040

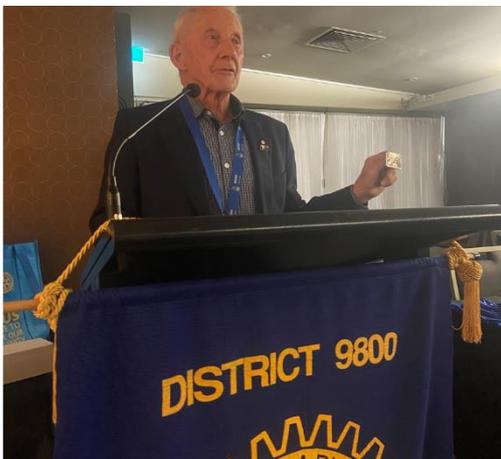


For the past two weeks we have watched people strive to achieve the best result they can in the Paris Olympic Games 2024.

They have dreamed and planned and trained for the one moment when they can look at themselves and say “I did the best I could.” For many the dream is simply to take part in an Olympic Games. For others who have been there before it may be to do their PB (personal best – time or score or result). For an elite few it is to win the gold medal that sits as their goal of the ultimate achievement. But for all it started as just taking part in a sport they love. And for every success the participant will inevitably thank their team. That their individual achievement was only possible because of the team that was around them.

Let us take the inspiration from these sportspeople to do the best we can in all of our personal efforts. Let us all remember that we achieve our best results when we have a team around us committed to achieving the same goals. Rotarians are part of a great team that achieves so much. When we install a medical waste incinerator or provide warm clothes and somewhere safe to sleep we are winning gold.

May it be in Rotary or in life it is all we can hope to do – our best.



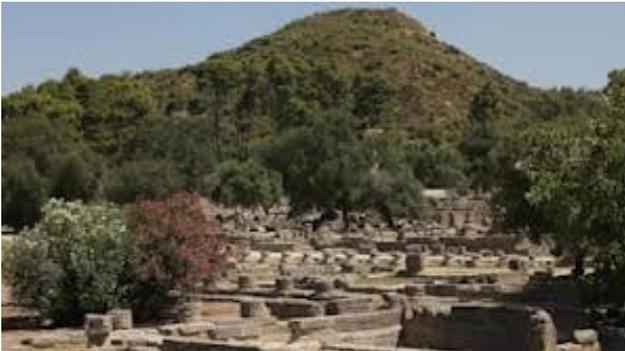
This week we were incredibly lucky to have as our guest speaker a past member of our club who has attended to champion sportspeople in elite events and is an Olympic Games genius – **Peter Duras AM**.

Peter a.k.a. Petros the Greek travel tour leader, took us on an adventure as we meagre Italians departed to travel to far off lands to attend the ancient Greek Panhellenic religious sanctuary of Olympia, where the most highly regarded men went to compete in a range of athletic endeavours to represent their city-states in the honour of Zeus and for the pride of winning.

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Now to take you there I pass over to Petros who is in Patras, the gateway to Greece for the pre-tour talk.

“A very warm welcome as we gather before heading off for the trip of a lifetime to the Olympics. And what sights await us. The 11metre high statue of Zeus made entirely of gold and ivory, fashioned by the same sculptor who designed the friezes on the Parthenon. The Sanctuary filled with golden artefacts and statues of Gods, champion athletes and military victors. You’ll see spectacular religious ceremonies and sacrifices, followed by the Games themselves.

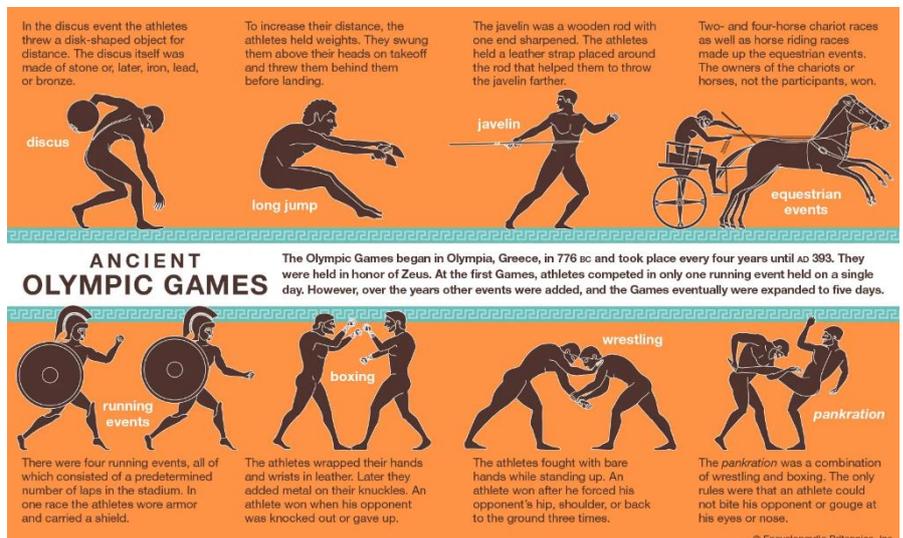


I am Petros Duras, owner of Durassic Tours, the Mediterranean’s leading tour company. Our CEO Petros Condos has gone ahead to secure the best catering, the best spot for our tents and the best viewing areas for the Games and religious ceremonies. Some of you have come a long way from Northern Italy. Well done. It’s unfortunate that you we cannot have our wives with us, but, as we warned you no female spectators are permitted at the Games. If detected they would be thrown off the nearby cliffs. Not worth the

risk. Tomorrow we’ll board the cargo ship for the 2-day trip to Olympia. You’ve avoided steep rough tracks, constant wars and bandits in Greece by travelling this route with us.

And now for a few moments of truth. The area around Olympia is a flat river valley normally occupied by sheep, goats, cattle and a few farmers. For the next 10 days this area will house 100,000 eager Olympic pilgrims. This is the hottest month of the year. There is little shade, minimal sewerage and inadequate rubbish removal. A few wells have been sunk to provide fresh drinking water. In a few days the area will smell to high

heaven and be overrun with flies and disease carrying mosquitoes. And endless parties may keep you awake at night. But don’t worry. We’ve chosen the best tent sites and if it gets too oppressive, we’ll shift a bit further out. A further warning. The place will be full of crooks quacks and charlatans plus hundreds of busy girls of the night who may well leave you with an unwelcome souvenir of your visit. Better to spend your drachma elsewhere.



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So, let's get back to the focus of our trip, the Olympic festival.

Legend has it the Games started as a contest when Zeus out wrestled Kronos or perhaps when Pelops absconded with Hippodamia in his chariot.

The athletes come from all over the Greek Empire to compete, from as far away as Egypt and the Iberian Peninsula. Many are wealthy professionals. To qualify they must train seriously for 10 months and move to Elis, 30 kilometres from Olympia to train under the close supervision of the Olympic judges. Any athlete who is caught cheating or taking bribes at the Games brings disgrace to his city and may be flogged and heavily fined. If they win they become virtual gods in their home cities, where statues will be erected and walls broken down to welcome them home.

Once we've settled in, we'll take a short walk to Perri to greet the grand procession travelling down from Elis. We'll see at close hand the horses and chariots, the competitors, the 9 judges in their purple robes and the whip bearers who will punish anyone who blasphemes against the gods during the Olympics.

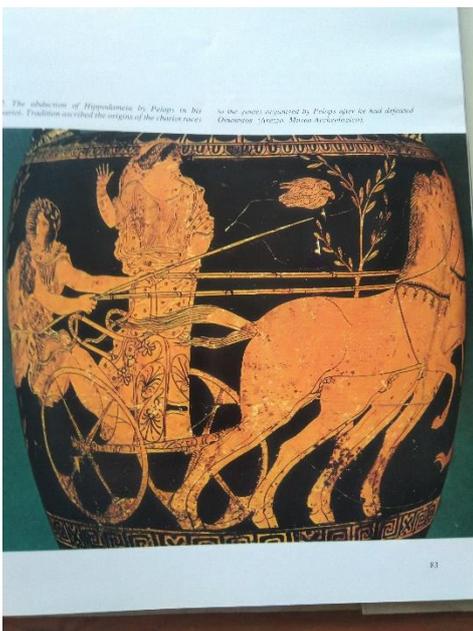
So, let the Games begin. First day is the Opening ceremony and boys' events. We suggest you give that a miss and take time to absorb the treasures of the Sanctuary.

Day 2 is the highlight of the Games. Head out early to the Hippodrome.

The 4-horse chariot race is excitement plus. The owner gets the olive wreath while the driver, usually a slave takes all the risks. The straights are 300 metres wide allowing plenty of room for the 20 chariots, while the



bends only allow space for two. Every turn is a potential disaster with chariots made of wood, leather and cane offering no protection. Charioteers often disappear under hooves and other chariots. Few chariots finish the race of 12 laps unscathed. Next is the horse race of 1 lap with the young jockeys riding naked with no saddle, no stirrups and possibly, no future. Final event is the 2-horse chariot race over 8 explosive laps.



As soon as this is over race over to the main stadium where the afternoon's event is the pentathlon. All male (of course) and all naked (of course). First event is the discus, followed by the long jump where athletes hold stone weights called halteres which they throw away to gain extra momentum. Javelin follows with a rope attached to gain a slingshot effect. A short sprint the length of the stadium is next. The top three placegetters at this stage then wrestle for the victors' crown.

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Day 3 is devoted to religious ceremonies celebrating Zeus. A colourful procession is followed by the ritual sacrifice of 100 oxen. Be there. No one goes hungry that day.

Day four starts with a busy morning of athletics. Sprints over one and two lengths of the stadium and a middle-distance race of four kilometres. In the afternoon we have the Greek favourites; the fights. Wrestling is followed by boxing, with the head as the only target. Next the bloody and sometimes fatal Pankration where only biting, and eye gouging are banned. We finish the competition with the race in armour where athletes wear only a large shield, a helmet and shin pads.

The crowning of athletes takes place on day five with lots of banquets, feasting and one party after another. We'll let you sleep in next day and then it's back to the boats for the return to Patras."



We also had Olympic trivia questions – who knew Steve Chandler was such an expert?!? Prizes of Australia flags were given to those who had correct answers. The room was decked out in Australian flags and many showed their support by wearing green and gold or Aussie flags, and there were even a few chocolate treats for those who attended. With



such amazing results from our Olympians this year it is easy to celebrate our sporting achievements in Paris. (Although we'd be in the plops if it wasn't for our women there. More funding for women's sports! Ed.) Many thanks to Peter for a fun and informative talk.



VP Sam Tartaglia has very kindly stood in for our travelling President Tony. Watch out Tony 'cos it looks like Sam has settled in very nicely...

Club meeting Aug 20, 2024 6:45 pm - 8:00 pm

All Committees will have had a chance to set their goals, now will be the time to share them.

We will also be involved in a special general meeting regarding updating our constitution, rules, bylaws, codes of conduct and we will need to vote on these.

Be sure to review the email our secretary Steve Roe sent out on Wednesday

24/07/2024 with the details before you come to the meeting.

Our nomadic President will be back to lead us too. I wonder what souvenirs he bought back for all of us? (I hope I get a fridge magnet. Ed.)

C O N T A C T



Rotary Moonee Valley Art Show 11-13 October 2024

<https://mooneevalleyartshow.com.au/>

Ukrainian Community Centre, 3-11 Russell St, Essendon VIC 3040

The Art Show is our biggest and most public fundraiser every year. YOU are the key to making it a success. Contact Regina to discuss how you can be involved.

Club meeting Tuesday September 3rd 2024 We will be welcoming the District Governor Michael Lapina. Be sure to attend to be informed and inspired by Michael. <https://rce.org.au/event/dg-michael-lapina-visit/>



3rd December will be our Christmas celebration. Put it in your diary and watch out for more details.

17th December is our annual breakfast meeting before having our summer break.

The Editor has a special request to all members. I will be on leave of absence from 20 August to 12 October and need a helper in publishing Contact during that time.

So, if you have a penchant for being the reporter, photographer and editor of an elite publication please contact the Ed. this week. Free training provided!

NOTE; If nobody can assist there will be no publications during that time.

You and your family and friends are invited to visit us at an upcoming meeting

<https://www.rce.org.au/Events>

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