

THE SPARTAN

CLUB PATRON - Robert de Castella

April 2024

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FROM THE PRESIDENT **Jay Fleming (S1012)**



Running events and festivals have always been an excellent excuse for travel. We regularly exchange stories with each other regarding events we've got coming up or events we've just returned from. Usually we all try to tack on a bit of a holiday after the event in case we don't return there for a while, if ever. The sightseeing holiday bit generally works better after the event rather than before, just in case of misadventure or perhaps twisting an ankle traversing Greece's many historical sites or clipping the back of someone's rear wheel while cycling. Sightseeing and rewards also work better after the event due to the pleasant muscle soreness after the run and the calming satisfaction of overcoming an obstacle we ourselves have placed there. Rewarding ourselves with the sights of Berlin around the Brandenburg Gate or the exquisite vistas of Davos or Dubrovnik justifies our toil and pain. There isn't a place in the world that doesn't have at least one major established running event, and similarly we're certainly quite blessed here in Oz.

There are a plethora of themes that are excellent excuses for global travel from vintage cars, wine tasting or special interest exhibitions or competitions. I may be a little biased but running to me is one of the best travel excuses, particularly for us Spartans. The great thing is that the travel doesn't need to be to exotic places to be memorable. John Kaparelis and I had a super-enjoyable train trip for some pacing duties for the Wangaratta Marathon. Loved the train trip, the food, the people we met, the beautiful sunshine on the day, the 60's inspired motel we vacated in the wee hours to walk to the start line. We've got a similar itinerary planned for Mildura Marathon which I'm really looking forward to. Conversely, I've had a crammed period of travel with work lately to China and Kiribati. Even though I didn't attend any running events, I did take the Spartan singlet for a spin around Shanghai and Wuhan. This afternoon I arrived in Fiji and donned the Spartan singlet for a brief few km before dark due to two-hour time difference. For sound mental health, I tend to find it essential to keep scheduling things on my horizon, something to look forward to, the upcoming attractions, and from numerous conversations with my fellow Spartans, I'm not alone with this. Enjoyable things are experienced three times: looking forward to them, doing them, reflecting on them.

When I return to Melbourne on April 30, I look forward to running around my beloved foothills of Upper Ferntree Gully again. I have particularly been enjoying a new side of my running over the last 6 months or so, which I refer to as drifting away, a kind of a state of

flow where I just totally let go with no regard for how far I've run, my cadence or how far I've got to go, sort of drifting away Billy Elliott- style, in the scene when he was describing to the judges his feelings during dancing. I have found letting the mind regularly wander off-lead is not only a great release and freedom at the time, but also enhances discipline and focus when these are called upon in other tasks.

The neutral gear of the mind is achieved by releasing effort, not applying it - so instead of criticising yourself when your mind wanders, celebrate it - Unknown

JOHN DOBSON (S21) RETIRES FROM COMMITTEE

John has decided to retire from the committee after first joining in 1995, serving terms as Treasurer and Vice-President. He wasn't the most vocal of members, but when he spoke, everyone listened. He was awarded life membership of the club many years ago. A generous man, he could always be counted on whether it would be to give a lift to someone in need or to assist at club functions.

There are no plans to leave his total of MMs at 45. Despite illness and injury, he has always finished, and won his age group recently.

He is one of the most recognisable Spartans: one of my neighbours said "I saw the bloke with the bandana running yesterday" after spotting Dobbo on a training run. The Legends have attracted some publicity in recent years, and it has usually been Dobbo who has provided the succinct quote.

David Foskey (S25)



HONORARY SPARTANS David Foskey (S25)

Some time before the 2016 Marathon, the committee learned that Brenton Ponza and Tate Kemp were each about to run one of the shorter Melbourne Marathon Festival events for the tenth time. Tate and Brenton were a little different from the other incoming Spartans running their tenth as they were or had been students at the [Cerebral Palsy Education Centre](#). CPEC is an official charity of the Marathon Festival and encourages its students to participate as part of their physical development.

The Spartans Committee recognised that finishing a 3km or 5km walk for these children was a significant achievement. The concept of "Honorary Spartans" was born, and it has led to these boys (so far!) being presented with a singlet at the Annual General Meeting and allocated a permanent Spartan number.

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Despite a significant injury in 2020 which left him on 13 MM finishes, [Tate Kemp](#) (SH001) is playing FIDA football for the Kyneton Tigers and is heavily involved with the Gisborne football club, helping at training and game days. He decided to start his own business – educating others about everything Disability, Inclusion and Diversity related – “All Abilities Public Speaking”.

[Brenton Ponza](#) (SH0002) is a very busy young man in a range of activities, including volunteering and coaching as well as participating in paid research projects. He has received multiple awards for his work in the community. Last year he completed his 15th event so was awarded a blue singlet at the 2023 AGM.

[Tyler Parfuss](#) (SH0003) became the third member of this group in 2018. Tyler will be presented with his blue singlet recognising 15 finishes at this year’s AGM. He has run every year except for the Covid year and plans to run/walk the 5k this year in his new blue singlet. He also does the occasional triathlon!

In 2019, [Tom Roach](#) (SH0004) became the fourth Honorary Spartan. He is now in year 10 at school and participating in a wide range of sporting activities, recently competing at the National Athletic Championships. His collection of medals must be immense! He was the 2023 Boroondara Community Athlete of the Year.



The photos above show Brenton, Tate, Tom and Tyler early in their MM journeys, while those below have been taken recently.



Each Honorary Spartan has their own page on the website containing much more information and many photographs. These pages can be reached through the links in the prior brief paragraphs.

We look forward to welcoming more Honorary Spartans in the future.

Many of the volunteers who ensure that Melbourne Marathon events run smoothly are associated with CPEC.

436 AND COUNTING **Karin Thorburn SF0184**

My marathon running journey started approximately 25 years ago at the Sydney blue line marathon in 2000. It was to be my first ever marathon and I was totally clueless on how to prepare and really didn't know what to do. I remember turning up to the start line in North Sydney with enough gels for five runners and thought that if I swallowed all of them I'd make it the end of 42.2k ... funny story but very true!

My first attempts at running distance came from entering the City to Surf in Sydney where I completed the race three years in a row and figured I'd like a bigger challenge so I joined the Sydney Striders and ended up completing many Half Marathons as a stepping stone to someone suggesting .. 'you should try and run a marathon' I was hooked!



Come forward many years and how things have changed for me especially when it comes to running marathons ... these days I love the challenge of multi day marathons and setting new challenges for myself along the way.

Back in the day I really didn't know much about running clubs or being part of groups who focus themselves around up and coming races around the country and the world. It was at my 6th marathon (MM2003) that I noticed a person running in a singlet that said 'Spartan' and so I began the conversation and this runner told me how he'd achieved the singlet and I should consider it as a goal.

To give you my history ... I was diagnosed with Scoliosis (curvature of the spine) at age 12 .. major surgery followed and I was inserted with a Harrington Rod attached to my spine to help stop further curve ... I still have the rod and all the nuts and bolts ... I was told at age 13 I'd never play sports again nor would I be able to have the career I wanted and even worse not bear children ... So for many years I did believe the medical profession and chose to not participate in many sports as I could injure myself and my back.

But there was something inside me saying to just give 'jogging' a go and see how I felt.

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I slowly built myself up from nothing, no skill, no experience, and no real desire to better myself as I felt I just couldn't do it.



But ... time has a funny way of sorting things out and I decided that when my third child was born I'd buy a jogging pram and see if I could make it around the block pushing my youngest son ... sure enough I did ... and so the big adventure to running around the world was born.

I'd see those green singlets at all major events around Australia and thought if I worked hard enough than I too could proudly wear one. Sure enough MM2023 I not only ran my all time PB (3:36:40) I received that Spartan singlet proudly after the marathon.

To date I now have completed 436 marathons and counting - this past weekend I've run Paris Marathon before we fly to Boston where I have qualified not once but over a dozen times! I do compete and run Multiday Marathon running events and believe they are the ultimate

challenge for me.

I have also completed running Magnetic 30in30 x 2 times now (30 Marathons in 30 Days) the only runner to do this so far. I also have now completed 6 x 10in10 events (10 Marathons in 10 Days). The most completions in Australia.

I believe I have not yet reached my true potential with running ... this year will be focussing on my next major event to tackle and proudly for my age am very lucky to be continuing the way I am.

I'd like to add that I've been very fortunate along my journey to not only run with amazing runners but inspired by many who have shown me the way ... Jane Sturzaker and Bruce Hargreaves to name two Spartans have been part of my journey and I thank you all for the encouragement and support along the way.

See you at the next marathon somewhere in the world.

COUNT HER IN Pamela Young SF0093

The issues women of the world still face are staggering. International Women's Day held on 8 March every year provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the past, to consider how far we have come and acknowledge our achievements, and to simultaneously accept that we are 'not there yet'. The theme for 2024 is *Count Her In: Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress*.

In the days preceding and following this special day there were many articles written and screenings of documentaries about women and their stories. An 'in conversation' with legendary Australian feminist, activist and author, Germaine Greer, revealed a colourful and sometimes difficult life which has been filled with a strength of opinion, a rejection of conservatism, and now in her later life, the revealing of a vulnerability bravely displayed alongside a love of nature and being an earthling.

When the interviewer complimented Greer for her part in changing the lives of women, following the release of her book *The Female Eunuch* in 1970, Greer refuted the assessment. She attributed a change in any woman's life to the woman herself. She would not be credited or discredited for the choices individuals make.

It was a humble response, because the book had resonated with women across the world, was translated into more than 12 languages and became an international bestseller. It questioned stereotypes and conditioning and raised awareness of the female gender and the oppression women had and still are experiencing, through the examination of history, literature, and popular culture.



As a proud Spartan Female, an active participant and now a Secretary of the Melbourne Marathon Spartans Committee, I often try to describe the Spartan Female experience to non-Spartans. My story is always this: That in a world where women are striving toward equality and equity, it is an irony that a club that is so equity challenged statistically (male to female ratio is 1521:184) can provide the rarest and most satisfying sense of gender equality. I have never felt less than equal.

Whilst there have been many inroads and changes across millennia, and women from Ancient Greek times (no doubt some of them runners) up until today have fought the good fight, it has been the increase in social commentary, and the change in women's own thought processes, access to birth control, and the rejection of societal expectations that were repressive, that has had the greatest impact. The waves of feminism during the latter part of the 20th Century and into the 21st Century have had a positive influence, as has access (for many women in many countries) to a decent education from the primary years through to tertiary, and further education being available to women from all types of backgrounds, career paths and sectors. Women have also made significant and impressive inroads in all areas of sport and have achieved remarkable results across a wide range of elite competitions.

Whilst females can never statistically or in actuality attain equity in the Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club, we do have, by way of completion of ten Melbourne marathons, equality in the acknowledgement and celebration of that achievement and the comfort of knowing that in the Spartan space, we are definitely 'counted in'.

VALE KEVIN BROWNE S0243

Kevin passed away after a long illness on April 5, 2024 at 87 years of age. Kevin's spirit will live on with his children Sally and Tim, his grandchildren Ashleigh, Liam and Brandon and his great granddaughter April.

He was truly the "MOST" loved personality in Melbourne's Veteran Running and Marathon World. He loved his peers and they absolutely adored him!



Everyone that came into Kevin's orbit will attest that they loved him as a person – he was respected by all runners that knew him. He had a great love for running and his running mates – male and female. In fact, Kevin had a great female following as friends, fellow passionate runners and informal coach to many. He had a great understanding on how a runner could get the most out of himself and he had an innate ability to predict one's marathon time. For many years, Kevin's Sunday morning Training Group comprised predominately a female contingent relying on Kevin's motivation and wisdom.

Some of Kevin's great mates who will miss him terribly are: George Wilson, David Jones, Judy Wines, Jim Yatomi-Clarke, Brian Parr, Roger Weinstein, Shondra Hill (who will ever forget Kevin's 60th at Shondra's home),

Jane Sturzaker, Peter Battrick, John Zeleznikow. We know we have left out a lot of names – please forgive us.

We must also mention Kenny Hill (now deceased) who for many years walked with Kevin most mornings. Also, for a long while Kevin and George (Wilson) were dining companions a few nights per week at their favourite restaurants.

Other than his family, Kevin lived for running. He had run over 90 marathons – in the 1970's, 80's and 90's he was quite ubiquitous – you could bet that when you fronted any marathon in Victoria and Canberra he was at the starting line – usually with his great mate David Jones. He also dipped his toe into ultra marathons, World Masters Athletic Championships and the New York Marathon.

Kevin was the handicapper at Caulfield Vets for over 20 years. The late Jack Clarke (champion Essendon Captain) always used to complain in jest to Kevin that he had handicapped him too severely. Kevin was also on the Committee of VRR for many years and provided the coveted Ajax Trophy.

In recent years Kevin moved to Dromana, But as I mentioned, such was his love for his running mates, that he came in every Tuesday night for Vets and every Saturday morning to the Lake (or VRR at the Tan) and breakfast at the Old Paper Shop Deli.

Kevin after his successful years as co-owner of Ajax Blinds, cherished his retirement years. He always used to say that when he woke up every morning, he told himself that "every day is a holiday".

Kevin was a systems man – he had a system for every occasion – a system for Tattslotto, Trifectas on Saturday Races (for many years he used to go to the races every Saturday afternoon) and trying to pick the winner at the Annual King Island Handicap Running Race.

He was a champion schoolboy footballer (we have seen the cherished articles on his exploits) and indeed played for North Melbourne Seconds.

Kevin was a humble athlete and a humble man – a "real class act."

Kevin had a quick temper when he was tired or frustrated. One year at the 30km of the Ballarat Marathon, he was already having a go at a bike rider from 200 metres away to get his bike off the course. On another occasion, he was trying to get access to Powerhouse to park his car, when it was blocked off some days prior to the Grand Prix, and an official forbade him entry to Kevin's disgust only for Jim Yatomi-Clarke to front up some minutes later with a similar request, expressed cordially, and was able to gain access – Jim recalls this incident with affection.

He always took an interest in his friends' lives and was able to have a conversation on numerous topics. He was extremely well versed in current affairs and always had a very balanced and informed opinion.

Kevin was the first "Griffin" (runners who have run ten Canberra Marathons) from Victoria. He excelled in his age Groups in Veteran Marathon Races for many years.

He was a very proud Melbourne Marathon Spartan having run an extremely impressive twenty-one of them.

In closing we would like to say that more than anything, Kevin was a very special father, grandfather, great grandfather and a "hell of a good bloke."

Long may his memory live on with his family and many close running friends!

This article was prepared by Roger Weinstein S81 with help from Jim Yatomi-Clarke S530, George Wilson S936, John Zeleznikow S682 and Peter Battrick S5.

SPARTAN MERCHANDISE

Merchandise can now be ordered online through [this link](#).



Showerproof jackets from Sub4 are the newest addition to our clothing options. See [here](#) on the website for more details.



T-Shirt Models Candida Baskcomb SF0106, Mandy Skipper SF0066, Vilim Podreka S1052, Jay Fleming S1012, Lorraine Allen SF0011, Anthony Egan S1158 above are wearing different milestone T-shirts. [Check out all the options](#) available, including a generic training shirt which can come with long-sleeves.

There are also still copies of ["The Wall"](#) available at the bargain price of \$10.



We have clips that can be used to secure race numbers to race tops. They have been adopted by many clubs here and overseas, and look as if they were designed for our logo. The selling price is \$5 plus postage.

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We have a new shipment of buffs.

They are a very versatile item, excellent for winter training.

\$16



Lapel pins, a new item, only \$5.



Fridge magnets are essential in every home, and these are precisely what you need.

Only \$2, buy several!



Caps and visors are available in black or white, priced at \$25.



Anyone seeking a jacket or vest will be pleased to know that we now have a [Melbourne based supplier](#).

We have some copies of Doug Wilson's book "Kundalini Running" available for \$20. Contact Jay Fleming at flemi230727@myyahoo.com.

Our buffs, caps, lapel pins, fridge magnets and stickers are described on the website [here](#).

SPARTANS' CLUB STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To advance the sport of marathon running to athletes of all ages and abilities and to encourage and assist all runners to achieve Melbourne Marathon Spartan status.

To provide a platform and environment for runners to receive and to build upon their achievements enabling progression through the various Spartan milestone singlet colours.

Assist in the promotion and publicity of the Melbourne Marathon and the charities it supports.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOW DUE FOR 2023-2024

The Spartan financial year is 1 July to 30 June, so fees for 2023-2024 are now being accepted. Can't remember if you have paid for 2023-2024? Look up your name via this link: <http://melbournemarathonspartans.com/financial-spartans/>.

\$20 via EFT: Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club BSB: 633-000 Account No: 139201743 Please include name and/or Spartan Number	Cheque for \$20 via Post: "Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club" PO Box 162 Rosanna Vic 3084 Please include name and/or Spartan Number
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You can also now [pay online](#).

The membership fee for the 2024-2025 financial year will be \$45.

If you are a current member, you do not need to fill in a Membership Form* but please advise of any changes to your contact details via spartans.team@hotmail.com. OR*: download the [membership form](#) and email or post it in.

BENEFITS OF BEING A SPARTAN

The Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club is a club consisting of marathon runners from all walks of life, ages and abilities that have achieved Spartan status by having completed ten Melbourne Marathons.

The benefits of membership include [regular newsletters](#), being presented with a Spartan singlet after ten years and subsequent milestone Spartan singlets each five years, and the opportunity to attend our AGM to hear a top-line guest speaker.

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Our [monthly Sunday runs](#) enable members to do a lap or two of the Tan at their own pace and enjoy a social coffee afterwards.

We have a stand at the pre-marathon expo to meet with members, exhibit some of our memorabilia and sell merchandise.

On marathon day we have a tent where bags can be stored securely. After run refreshments and free massages are provided as well as the opportunity to rest and chat. In 2021 we began photographing Spartans just past the finish line to create a [gallery of finishers](#).

[WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER?](#) David Foskey

Do you have a story about your path to becoming a Spartan, or would you like to pay a tribute? We prefer articles in the range of 200 to 2000 words, but that's a guide only. Contact us to discuss at djfoskey@ozemail.com.au If you have missed a deadline, don't worry, there is always the next issue!

If you have some photographs that you would like to add to our [photographs collection](#), please send them in.

Life Members

Paul Basile, Peter Battrick, Rod Bayley, John Dean, John Dobson, Peter Feldman, Jay Fleming, David Foskey, Jack Fredrickson, Christine Hodges, Ken Matchett (Dec'd), Conor McNeice, John Raskas, Peter Ryan, Colin Silcock-Delaney, Maureen Wilson, Ron Young (Dec'd), Shirley Young (Dec'd)

COMMITTEE		
President	Jay Fleming	0418 374 783 flemi230727@myyahoo.com
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Treasurer	Rod Bayley	9077 7192
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Committee	Vicky Chung	
Committee	Kai Ooi	
Committee	John Zeleznikow	
Webmaster	David Foskey	0432 146 747
Committee	John Dobson	0412 688 287
Committee	Candida Baskcomb	
Committee	Peter Seal	

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

If you would like to be added to our mailing list or if you know someone who might like to join, [please use this link](#)

We have lost contact with many of our older members. If you know a Spartan who doesn't receive our emails and is on email, please encourage them to use the above link. We deliberately limit the number of emails we send, and all have an unsubscribe link.