

THE SPARTAN

CLUB PATRON - Robert de Castella

December 2018

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CHRISTMAS EDITION

FROM THE PRESIDENT Jay Fleming (S1012)

A beautiful December hello Spartans! Another year nearly over and it's the month for reflecting on what 2018 has personally brought. Over the last couple of decades of living in Upper Ferntree Gully, I have spent a lot of time on our front deck in the company of birds, looking down at the sheer slope of the distant valley below and the regular passing of the miniscule little toy trains echoing click-clack back and forth on the Belgrave line. It is a scene we will most probably be leaving next year as my wife's ever-decreasing health has seen her continuing to struggle with the steep gradients, levels and staircases that are the very reason we have such spectacular views up here. I have loved observing and being involved with our true neighbours up here including a family of Crows whose patriarch has a pronounced limp, a very trusting family of Kookaburras with two nimble youngsters, a sly mangy elder statesman Fox who is nowhere near as dapper as Peter Rabbit's Mr Todd, a resident echidna who has made his long-term home in an embankment under a shrub in the back yard near our compost and is an absolute joy to watch, the neighbour's cat who visits often and the other neighbour's dog who always says g'day from their upstairs deck. Almost daily I enjoy running the 3-7 km down to the shops, depending on which variation I take, and lugging the groceries back up the hill as it's great incidental and functional exercise. I also enjoy saying g'day to the locals including running through the smoke cloud of the nurses and patients on smoko as I pass the Angliss. For me, when I'm asked where I live, I obviously give my address, but I'm also acutely aware that it's possible to live somewhere without actually living there. It's always been really important for me to actually live in my community rather than live out of it, using it as merely a base to return to from work in the dark to sleep, shower, cook and leave for work in the dark the next morning. Even though there are stages in life where it can't be avoided, there is a huge difference between actually experiencing life somewhere as opposed to being based out of somewhere purely for postcode bragging rights. It's fair to say The Dandenongs, like South Gippsland previously, will forever be a part of me.

I've never really understood the term 'training for an event' as it implies that ramped-up training occurs during short bursts leading up to the event/s. There is no greater or more profound event than life itself. Life is the event! The best gift we can give ourselves and our loved ones is a good base level of health and fitness for 365 days of the year, dependent on prevailing conditions. We've been grandparents for over a decade now and this year I've really enjoyed the increasing commitments of footy, cricket, swimming and music duties along with several sleepovers and backyard games of cricket and racquetball. To participate in all of this and to enjoy it pain-free has involved the most precious thing any of us enjoy, and that is good

health and fitness. It is my firm belief that anyone who gets to Spartan status places a high value on having and maintaining good health and fitness, and I would dearly love the Spartan brand to be more closely aligned with the health and fitness mantra, not in some annoying evangelical way but rather just ensuring that our achievements are quietly noticed in the background. I have noticed this year there was talk of resurrecting good old 'Norm' from the 1970s 'Life be in it' campaign, Brian Dixon's hugely successful initiative that has long since been sold to private interests. I fully intend to seek out similar entities in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, to make representations of a unique organisation like ours and any visible role that it may serve. Good health and fitness as a part of life going forward, is not about participating in the elite masters sporting events (although we've certainly been inspired by them) but rather enjoying life's mundane everyday moments without the constant or nagging background pain that has become the new 'normal' for so many. It's also about our bodies simply being able to do what we want them to do and being able to have some decent range of motion and flexibility without wincing in pain at the slightest exertion. I've been doing a lot of renovating, landscaping and painting at our place and it's been great being able to do all the same jobs I did 30 years ago building our first house in South Gippsland. Incidentally, painting intricate corners while standing on a ladder in confined spaces is akin to holding the most exacting of yoga poses ☺

Valuing good health and fitness and focusing on maintaining it, shows a clear respect for life and the human body. Unfortunately, good health is rarely valued while we have it but is super-valued when we look back on it retrospectively after having lost it, when we start talking of all the stuff we used to be able to do back in Springsteen's 'Glory Days'. I feel our glory days are right now, and right now is the youngest we will be for the rest of our lives, so let's practise some mindfulness and gratitude by marvelling at how well our bodies are doing what we need them to do right now, and valuing however-many pain-free moments we have, because for all of us there will come a time when this will no longer be the case.

I am very excited about some of the new developments at Spartans in 2019, most notably additions to our range of garments that identify us to fellow runners and to members of the general public as members of the Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club. Spartan Candida Baskcomb has put in a power of work into getting the 'buffs' off the ground. Now, in Upper Ferntree Gully we don't see all that many buffs, so if the term or concept of buffs is foreign to you like it was to me, click onto the Spartans website and have a squiz (*Ed. or see page 8 of this newsletter*). I've gone from my initial hesitation of "where and how do you wear this thing?" to now loving it. The Spartan buff is now a familiar sight around the hills and on my daily runs to Maxi supermarket, café and library ... and I haven't been discouraged by my elder daughter's feedback that I look like I've just stepped off the set of 'Survivor'. Another Spartans item of clothing has been initiated by Spartan Pamela Young in the form of a very handsome Spartan jacket available for order in a couple of options so check this out on the website too! Additional to the buffs and jackets is the upcoming release of the terrific range of Spartans running shirts (same front and back design and colours as the Spartan milestone singlets), initiated and currently being organised by incoming Committee member Spartan Matt Callaghan with some constructive input from the rest of us. There will also be a generic Spartan green training shirt with a very small Spartan logo only on the upper left chest area as an option for everyday casual wear ... for those occasions when we would perhaps prefer to make a more understated Spartan statement. All garments are in the lightest breathable featherweight fabric that really feels like you're wearing nothing.

While we're talking of increasing our visibility and presence, be sure to get a Spartans car sticker so you can communicate your Spartan status to the captive audience stuck in traffic behind you! Over the course of 2019, I hope to see many other fresh input and ideas from any of our incoming Spartans as this is where the Club's next generation of leaders will come from. Just to repeat what was mentioned at the AGM, going forward we plan to make available the invitation for any incoming Spartan (9-year runner) to attend any Committee meeting of their choice (all 6 if they so wish) in the year leading up to their tenth Melbourne Marathon, to see if serving on Committee is something they would consider post their tenth MM. This would harness the initial excitement of runners who are about to become Spartans as they will have become familiar enough with the Melbourne Marathon over their 9 years to offer fresh constructive input into improving runners' experience of the event as well as perhaps creatively expanding on existing initiatives.

On the charitable contribution front, I had the great pleasure of attending the CPEC end-of year function on November 29 at the Mulgrave Country Club. On behalf of all Spartans I donated a cheque for \$200 which was very graciously received by Robyne Somerville who has done a great job at the helm during some very

trying financial times particularly since the introduction of the NDIS. I also rubbed shoulders with CPEC Spartans Tyler Parfuss and Brenton Ponza (Tate Kemp was absent), as CPEC slowly builds its own Spartan numbers and writes its own chapters of history and tradition.

Incidentally, you may have noticed (or not 😊) that my contributions are fairly 'slice-of-life' and include personal observations and feelings. This is not because I totally relish talking about myself but rather, to simply share my mundane experiences and to encourage Spartans to write in with yours. Every one of you who has read this far (without nodding off 😊) has your own seemingly mundane and everyday thoughts and experiences on health, fitness and running to share. Running is a very sensory experience and, unlike 'Groundhog Day' every single run is processed differently by the 5 senses. While few of these may be deemed to be earth-shattering, many would be deemed notable enough to share with someone over a coffee post-run, so it is these moments that we are seeking to capture with your input. Unfortunately, we tend to think that it is only the spectacular moments and achievements that are share-worthy enough to be written about in spaces such as this. As we receive more 'slice-of-life' submissions, we intend to re-jig the newsletter and augment the website to accommodate them. As the vast majority of our life is made up of seemingly unspectacular moments, developing an awareness and appreciation for the unspectacular has an uncanny knack of making the unspectacular spectacular.

I would like to wish all Spartans and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a glorious 2019!

"There's no such thing as information overload. There's only filter failure" - Clay Shirky

Personalised Race Bibs David Foskey (S0025)

In 2018 many Spartans were unhappy that they did not receive personalised bibs. The entry form for 2019 makes the requirements clear with the following message: *"Please note, you will only receive a personalised bib if you choose to get your race bib posted to you. If you choose to collect your race bib from the MCG you will receive a generic race bib with only a race number. We do not post race bibs overseas. All international participants will have to collect a race bib from the MCG."*

Correspondence with IMG adds the following: *"Personalised/Spartan numbers printed bibs will not be available after early bird closes. If you wish to collect a generic bib at the MCG during race week please let the friendly staff know you are a Spartan and they will be happy to give you a yellow Spartan bib instead of a red marathon bib. Please note this will just have a race number on it and you will have to write your Spartan number on it. How it works with international participants, if they do elect postage but have an international address, their bib will still be printed with their personal details on it, however it will be popped aside for them to collect at the MCG."*

Summary

If you want a personalised bib, enter early bird, and pay for postage.

Can't Enter Early Bird or Don't Have a Useable Postal Address?

If you can enter early bird, consider using the address of someone you can trust.

Otherwise, the committee is investigating the production of labels containing name and Spartan number which can be stuck on the bib. We are confident that we will be able to provide a satisfactory solution.

Challenging Yourself Anne Ziogos (SF45)

My running started more than two decades ago when I admired other people running for 60 minutes non-stop! It was then I decided to start on the trend myself. First it was the shorter events that gradually built up to longer distances and the crowning glory "THE MARATHON". After 20 Melbourne Marathons and various others, where to next? Once again listening to others about their experiences and reading articles in running magazines, I discovered a new challenge. Ultra Marathons and from there I found another challenge in "Extreme Ultras" and so the story goes on. The more you challenge yourself the more challenges you find.

After competing in the following events: Coburg 24 hrs and 6 hrs, Comrades, Two Oceans, MDS, Big Red Run, Larapinta trail, Lantau, Cambodia, Greenland and various mountain races in Victoria, Queensland and Perth. Distance varying from 30 -160 kms. I found a new challenge The Grand to Grand event over in the Grand Canyon in the USA.

This race did not disappoint. It was full of exhilarating challenges. From altitude, heat, sand and climbing. The course was tough but the natural beauty breathtaking. A 274.4 km event plus onbacks, over 6 stages. As well as running, climbing and descending on ropes you had to be self supported. The event organisers supplied a tent and water, the rest was up to the runner. There are compulsory items that are required for your survival, otherwise you can not compete. Enough calories for each day, appropriate clothing and sleeping items, medications and of course 'the obligatory blister kit'. Pain becomes your friend and managing it your challenge. The best part of these stage races is the friendships and support you make during the race and from then on. Not to mention you have the great privilege of seeing mother nature's best art work.

When you are out there on your own, there are vast plains and serenity. Just YOU and this beautiful place that once may have been the bottom of the sea or a raging river. You need to remember to take it all in as you are only one of a few people who is doing this on foot and witnessing the most amazing show on this planet we call home. I must admit, I feel very selfish to be out there and witnessing such amazing beauty!

There are cities that are renown for their beauty. After a while one city is as similar to the last one. You can admire the human workmanship but looking at the workmanship that nature has constructed, there is no comparison.

After a fortnight out in the wilderness without modern gadgets where it's just you, wilderness and the stars, I found it very hard to adjust back to city life.

I should have enjoyed my visit to New York City, but I didn't. It was just another city with buildings and lots of people rushing about. Maybe it was the battered feet that didn't want to move but rest instead. I am sure if I ever go back there I will view the City with fresh eyes and less battered feet.

Never stop looking ahead, regardless of your age. I find there is always something new to discover. Now that the dust has settled and the feet are almost back to normal, it's time to find another adventure.



Teganuma Eco-Marathon 28 October Anne Ziogos (SF45) and Michelle Tham (SF87)

After an uneventful flight, we arrived at Narita Airport early on Friday 26th October, where we were met by our hosts, Junko and Hajime. From the airport we were introduced to a traditional Japanese onsen, which is a hot springs bath, before being taken to a soba noodle lunch where we watched the buckwheat noodles being made by hand. From there, we were shown the half-marathon course, a figure 8, around Teganuma Lake. The paths along which we were to be running, were surrounded by farms and natural lake beauty.

On Saturday, we had the opportunity to walk part of the course before meeting our interpreter who would be on stage with us after Sunday's event. After a vegan Japanese dinner, it was time to get organised for the run, before heading off to bed. Both of us were a bit anxious as Anne had run 274.4 km only three weeks before and Michelle had just completed the Melbourne Marathon.

On Sunday morning, after our breakfast of rice and bananas (our choice, as we didn't fancy pickles for our pre-event breakfast), we caught the train with our host, Junko, to the start. With 10,000 competitors, plus spectators, there was lots to see along the way, including beach and camping tents for people to relax. Soon enough, classical music piped over the loudspeakers and everyone started their warm-up exercises. We joined in, of course. Junko was concerned that we wouldn't get to our 'elite' starting point in time, so we allowed half an hour to walk there, feeling quite conspicuous in our Spartans' 'Uniform' and our yellow Melbourne Marathon banners.

After our wait for the starting gun to fire at 10am, we were off! Buoyed by the enthusiasm of the Japanese crowds and their encouragement, we were both thrilled to run good times and earn medals for our respective age groups (Michelle, 1.32 and Anne, 1.46). Best of all, our hosts were very excited with our results and proud to see us on stage collecting our gifts for the exchange with the Melbourne Marathon Spartans. The event concluded with us being interviewed by the local cable TV channel, which was quite amusing as no-one could understand anyone else!

After the event, we both felt so relieved and we were more able to enjoy the Japanese hospitality without worrying about tummy upsets or our performance. We were totally spoilt by our hosts who took us touring around Tokyo, to see some of the best tourist sites. We also spent a night in the hills of Nikko, enjoying the spectacular autumn colours from our room, and eating local delicacies, dressed in traditional Japanese clothing.

This really was a once in a lifetime experience and one that we will never forget. We would urge other Spartans to consider putting themselves forward when the opportunity arises again in 2020. We are exceedingly grateful and thankful to our hosts and Melbourne Marathon IMG for giving us this opportunity.



YES I RUN, BUT I DON'T - Phill Grant (S118)

How many Spartans are there who still think of themselves as a “runner”, but in fact haven’t slipped on their running shoes for some time? How many, upon reading a Spartan Newsletter, suddenly remember they intended to start jogging again to train for this year’s Melbourne Marathon? It’s an odd feeling isn’t it, when you would still describe yourself as a “runner”, but your jogging shoes are still clean and your spouse or partner suggests you “stop dreaming dear, you are too old”.



To be honest, I should have inserted the words “like me” into each of the above sentences. A real question is, “why do I still have the innate belief that I am a runner?” The rot set in years ago when work demands infringed on jogging time to the point where it seemed pointless donning running gear. I am now retired. For exercise, great enjoyment is experienced when spending the day on a bike of some sort.

Actually, I suspect I’m just one of many Spartans in that situation. I think I do know the reason that being a runner is still an essential part of the persona of such Spartans. Jogging would have become an integral part of life. Life without a jog would have been unthinkable and unimaginable. A natural consequence of that would have been a first Melbourne Marathon, then, of course, ten or twenty, or more, Melbourne Marathons. Once the annual Melbourne event became a part of life, it’s likely that some knowledge of the history and science of marathons was absorbed, and an appreciation of the camaraderie of marathon

Ed Note: Phill ran the last of his 22 Melbournes in 2002 according to our database.

Hooray for Volunteers

As runners, we all recognise that we could not indulge ourselves on the second Sunday in October were it not for the volunteers who hand out drinks, the police who control intersections and the St Johns folk who bandage our wounds. 400 volunteers are provided by CPEC, the [Cerebral Palsy Education Centre](#).



There are also families and groups that line the streets offering snakes, water, ice and a cheery smile. Slower runners especially appreciate these Samaritans.

The photo shows David Craik (S0884) accepting a snake from Erin Satherley at the start of St Kilda Road. Erin said: "I was happy and joyful that I was able to help the runners. The runners seemed very thankful for the lollies and ice I was giving them and it made them be able to keep going on their run because it was very hot. Even though they were tired most of them were smiling when they saw me helping. I would definitely like

to be a supporter again next time and for the years after."

David said "It is inspiring that these kids and adult supporters are willing and kind enough to stick around to support the tail-enders."

Thanks to Mark Falkingham (S1334) whose Facebook post alerted us to this picture, and to Erin's dad Grant who was the photographer and provided Erin's comments. Brian Glover (S0989) is the 23 year Spartan up the road.

Delicious and Cool Recipe For a Hot Summer's Day Anne Ziogos (SF45)

Holidays are upon us and so is the time to be with our loved ones, eating, drinking and having a great time. At times missing a run or just having a well earned rest. You can have all that and still stay fit and healthy. Try and go for daily walks with your family and friends. Take a picnic lunch and enjoy the best of everything. Time with the family, exercise and a delicious lunch with mother nature. Organise games with friends and family and enjoy exercising while you are having fun. Have some family and friends races. Walk to the local shops and carry your shopping back, whilst enjoying your natural environment by looking at the flora and fauna. Enjoy the gorgeous and colourful summer fruit. Find a pick your own

farm, enjoy picking your own fruit and cooking with it, all the while enjoying incidental exercise.

Here is a cool recipe for those warm summer days and the fruit you may have picked.
Happy Cooking



Ingredients:

One cup of frozen fruit per person (I use raspberries or bananas)

A teaspoon of honey or maple syrup to sweeten, only if you would like your ice cream sweetened

Method:

Using a blender add ingredients and blend

Serve immediately with fresh fruit. Enjoy!

SPARTAN MERCHANDISE FOR SALE



“The Wall” \$10
Race singlets \$45
Caps \$20
Mugs \$15
Tattoos \$2
Car Stickers \$2



Spartan buffs are now available and have already conquered Japan! Jon Holmes (S203) is pictured with friends. The buffs will sell for \$15, plus \$2.00 for postage. Buffs can be worn as scarfs, headbands, face masks, and at least ten other ways!

Our thanks go to Candida Baskcomb (SF106), who organised their production.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER?

Do you have a favourite run you would like to share with us? Perhaps a recipe? If so, please email us at spartans.team@hotmail.com and we'll include it in the next Newsletter. The story from Phill Grant above is an example. **And here is another contribution** <https://melbournemarathonspartans.com/russell-forrestal/>

The Spartans would like thank all the Spartan Members for their support during 2018 and we wish everyone a happy and safe holiday period and look forward to another eventful year in 2019.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOW DUE FOR 2018/2019

The Spartan financial year is 1 July to 30 June, so fees for 2018/19 are now due. Can't remember if you have paid? Look up your name via this link: <http://melbournemarathonspartans.com/financial-spartans/> If you are not there you haven't paid so here's how:

\$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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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 https://melbournemarathonspartans.com/files/Spartans_Membership_Form.pdf and email or post it in.

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.

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 run ten Melbourne Marathons.

The benefits of membership include regular newsletters, organised training runs, being presented with a Spartan singlet after ten years and subsequent milestone Spartan singlets each five years, the opportunity to attend our AGM and hear a top-line guest speaker, being able to avail of refreshments and free massage after finishing the marathon, receive benefits and discounts from companies that advertise on our website.

Contact Information

Email: spartans.team@hotmail.com

Website: www.melbournemarathonspartans.com

Postal: P.O. Box 162., Rosanna Vic 3084

Life Members

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

COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE		
President	Jay Fleming	0418 374 783
Vice President	Paul Basile	0439 718 281
Treasurer	Rod Bayley	9077 7192
Secretary	Anne Ziogos	9592 4481
Webmaster	David Foskey	0432 146 747
Immediate Past President	John Dean	9337 7179
Committee	John Dobson	0412 688 287
Committee	John Kaparelis	0447 447 448
Committee	Colin Silcock Delaney	5598 6090
Committee	Felicity Doolan	
Committee	Matt Callaghan	
Seconded	Vicky Chung	

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If you would like to be added to our mailing list or if you know someone who might like to join, please use <https://melbournemarathonspartans.us3.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=1d11105d27e7d4a57d982d728&id=513a0543c3>