

# THE OLYMPIAN

The newsletter of  
Ohio Senior Olympics  
Winter 2009

## OHIO SENIOR OLYMPICS



[www.ohioseniorolympics.org](http://www.ohioseniorolympics.org)

### Member Games:

Akron:  
330-972-7243

Cincinnati:  
513-421-5222

Cleveland (Lake County):  
440-585-3045

Columbus:  
614-645-3320

Dayton/ Miami Valley:  
937-401-2335

Lima:  
419-991-8811

Toledo:  
800-472-7277

Youngstown:  
330-746-2938

Ohio Senior  
Olympics is  
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From the desk of Joe Rossi  
President, Ohio Senior Olympics

Greetings Senior Olympians and friends around the state. I hope the New Year finds you and those you care about in good health.

As you are aware, Ohio is experiencing a severe economic crisis, and we expect to see an impact on Senior Olympics. Tight economic times make budgets tight for local and state games, sponsors and athletes. Over the past several years, Ohio Senior Olympics has received an annual grant from the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA). While not large by ODA or the state's standards, the grant provides funding for the annual state games and for some operating expenses. We are enormously grateful for the on-going commitment ODA has shown in keeping that line item in their budget and protecting it to the best of their ability.

We don't know what the future will hold in terms of our grant from the state. Budget deficits in the state are projected at record levels and all line items in the next biennium budget (beginning July 1, 2009) will be scrutinized for cost savings. In order to be prepared for a possible reduction (or even elimination) of this grant, Ohio Senior Olympics is taking steps now to find efficiencies and reduce its costs.

The most immediate step we are taking is to eliminate the print publication of this newsletter, so this edition will be the last print version you'll receive. Instead, Ohio Senior Olympics is moving to an electronic newsletter, distributed via e-mail and also available on the Ohio Senior Olympics web site, [www.ohioseniorolympics.org](http://www.ohioseniorolympics.org). Moving to an electronic publishing system will reduce our newsletter costs by about 75% while providing more opportunities to communicate at lower cost. You can sign up for the electronic newsletter by going to the Ohio Senior Olympics web site and clicking on the "Sign up for our newsletter" link on the home page. Sign up for the newsletter so we can stay in touch with you.

Please know that the board of Ohio Senior Olympics and the local games coordinators are doing everything in their power to keep the movement alive in Ohio. In the next pages, you'll see information about local games and the 2008 class of inductees to the Ohio Senior Olympics Hall of Fame and other information about Senior Olympics in Ohio, so read on!

To all our athletes headed to San Francisco for the National Senior Games this summer, we wish you all the best in your competition. And to all our athletes competing around the state- Good health and good competition in 2009!

*Promoting healthy lifestyles for seniors through education, fitness and sports.*

## Local Games Information

In 2009, we'll see the return of the Hall of Fame Senior Games in Canton. Thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers, the games in Canton will be returning under new leadership. Check in with the Ohio Senior Olympics web site, [www.ohioseniorolympics.org](http://www.ohioseniorolympics.org), for updates as the games become fully functional.

While we are happy to see the Canton games return to the schedule, we are sad to announce that the Columbus games are on hiatus for the year. The city of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department (the folks responsible for the Columbus games) have had a massive budget cut due to the city's financial woes and decided to cancel the games for this year and lay off staff associated with the games. We will keep you posted on the status of the Columbus games as we know more.

## Ohio Senior Olympics Hall of Fame Inductees

In 2008, Ohio Senior Olympics welcomed the second class of inductees to the Hall of Fame. The class was inducted during a banquet at the state games held in July in Dayton. You can read more about the inductees in this newsletter and visit our virtual Hall of Fame on the Ohio Senior Olympics web site, [www.ohioseniorolympics.org](http://www.ohioseniorolympics.org). The virtual Hall of Fame includes pictures of each class and the individuals in that class, along with some information about each inductee.

In 2009, Ohio Senior Olympics will induct the third class of its Hall of Fame at a banquet to be held during the state games over the summer. To nominate someone for the 2009 class, read the instructions and download the nomination form from the Ohio Senior Olympics web site, [www.ohioseniorolympics.org](http://www.ohioseniorolympics.org).

Nomination forms must be postmarked by March 1 each year. Forms are accepted in two categories: Olympic athlete and meritorious service (to recognize those who make the games possible).

Won't you nominate a worthy athlete in 2009?

## Class of 2008 Hall of Fame Inductees

**Pete Augsburger** of Cincinnati was a collegiate athlete at the University of Maryland, lettering in football and track. He threw the shot put in the 1951 Olympic trials in Madison Square Gardens, then put it aside for 40 years. Pete's career as a senior athlete began in 1990 and he won fifteen gold medals between 1990 and 2005. On the national stage, Pete won the silver medal for shot in 2001 and a gold medal in 2005.

**Bob Cole** of Middletown was a successful basketball player in high school in Middletown and at Western Kentucky University before he hung up his shoes for 26 years to focus on his career. As a senior athlete, Bob's teams have twelve medals at the state Senior Olympics, in addition to his individual medals in foul and spot shooting. Bob's teams have qualified for every national competition since 1995, winning silver in 1997 at Tucson and bronze at the 2001 games in Baton Rouge.

**Woodie Davis** of Dayton was inducted into the Hall of Fame both for his accomplishments in Senior Olympics and for his positive attitude about aging. Woodie began participating in Senior Olympics in 1983 at the local games in Dayton. The consummate athlete, Woodie never lets his age (90+) get the best of him, and takes every competition seriously. Known for his performance in track and field at Senior Olympics, Woodie also plays softball in a 70+ league. For his Senior Olympic career, Woodie has more than 270 medals and ribbons.

**Eleanor Diers** of Cincinnati has participated in Senior Olympics at the local, state and national level for 23 years, winning 180 medals. While she has competed in as many as 16 different events, her first loves are bowling and tennis. The Greater Cincinnati and northern Kentucky Women's Sports Association named her the Senior Sportswoman of the Year in 2001.

**Byron Fike**, formerly of Tallmadge, was one of the competitors at the first Senior Olympics in Ohio in 1980, running a six minute, 40 second mile at age 70. From that point on, no one questioned the ability of senior athletes. Byron began his running career as a senior athlete at age 68, after retiring from car sales. During his racing career, he won

more than 1300 medals and developed a national reputation. Byron won five gold medals at the first National Senior Olympics competition in 1987, in the age 75-79 age group! He continued running well into his 80s and continued winning throughout his career. Byron was inducted posthumously.

**Margaret Fox** of Williamsburg is a table tennis player who has competed in local, state and national competitions in her sport of choice. With over 200 medals and ribbons, Margaret is a formidable opponent at the table. Margaret won gold medals at the 2001 and 2003 National Senior Games competitions and silver medals in 1991, 1997 and 1999. She also competes in doubles.

**Mary Halfacre** of Youngstown is one of the founding members of Ohio Senior Olympics. As an employee at the Area Agency on Aging, Mary realized the value of athletic competition for older adults and convinced the Agency to become involved in the early days of Senior Olympics. Mary represented the Youngstown games on the Ohio Senior Olympics board and helped encourage games development around the state. Mary continues to be a faithful volunteer and a steady presence at the annual competition.

**Wayne Mishler** of Canton of is a “Johnny come lately” to the athletic experience. In high school, Wayne did not participate in any sports. That lack of prior experience didn’t stop him when he decided to teach himself the basics of track and field at age 57. Wayne’s winning career includes top ten placements in high jump and long jump at the National Senior Games in 1993, 2001, 2005 and 2007. His medals include gold in the high jump in 2001, bronze in the high jump in 2007. Wayne is a regular medal winner in the state competition as well.

**Blanche Motts**, formerly of Canton, is also a founder of Ohio Senior Olympics, working with the games in the Canton area and serving on the board of Ohio Senior Olympics for many years. Blanche is credited with developing and guiding the games in Canton for many years. Blanche was inducted posthumously.

**Ottie Reno** began pitching horseshoes in 1956. He has won 726 trophies at National Horseshoe Pitchers Association sanctioned events and was inducted into the National Horseshoe Pitchers Hall of Fame in 1972. Ottie’s Senior Olympic competition spans a twenty-four year period, with

50 gold, 11 silver, 3 bronze and one ribbon across all levels of competition. He has competed in six National Senior Olympic competitions and sixteen state competitions.

**Mary Robinson** of Columbus has a lifelong passion for sports. Her first participation in organized sport was tennis in junior high. She played basketball and softball in high school, and added field hockey and track while at Miami University. Mary competed in the 1964 Olympic trials, but running had lost its thrill. In 1994, Mary returned to running at the USATF Masters Meets. Her first Senior Olympics competition was in 1996 and her first National Senior Olympics in 1997. Mary medalled in running events at the 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005 National Senior Olympics, becoming the woman to beat in her age group.

**Bob Shoemaker** from Newark is a teacher and coach to many. Bob began his career as a Senior Olympian in 1995 following his retirement. He has competed in 3-on-3 basketball, bocce, racquetball, softball, weight lifting, track and field events. Since 1995, Bob has won 287 medals: 162 gold, 93 silver and 32 bronze medals. Bob competes in local, state, and national competitions, primarily in running events.

**Denver Smith** established a winning mind set early in his athletic career, earning letters in three sports in high school before moving on to an equally stellar career in college, where he lettered in football, track, baseball and basketball. At age 57 he embraced track and field competition, capturing many titles. He won his first decathlon in 1986 and established a decathlon record for the 75-79 age group at the US National Masters Championships in 2002. Denver is well known among track and field athletes for his accomplishments at local, state and national meets around the country.

**Tom Taylor** of Milford has excelled in sports for most of his life. He was an outstanding slow pitch softball player in an early era and for 21 years, including a stint as a professional player with the Cincinnati Suds. Tom is also a sanctioned American Bowling Congress member for 50 years, with four sanctioned 300 games to his credit. While a worsening medical condition has now limited his table tennis participation, Tom played for nearly 50 years and was a sanctioned tournament player for twelve years.

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*Good luck to all Ohio athletes competing in the 2009 National Senior Games:  
The Senior Olympics in San Francisco this summer!*

## **Ohio Senior Olympics State Games 2009**

We had planned for the state games in 2009 to be hosted in central Ohio, but since the local games have been cancelled for this year, that's not possible. Instead, the games organizers in Akron and Youngstown have agreed to jointly host the games in the northeast Ohio region. Details about the events have not yet been worked out, but the tentative dates are July 4-18 (prior to the National Senior Games in August). Information will be shared when it is available through the electronic newsletter, so don't forget to sign up! You can also check the Ohio Senior Olympics web site for updates as they become available.



## **New Year's Resolutions**

1. Sign up for the Ohio Senior Olympics electronic newsletter so I can stay in touch with news and information about the games in Ohio.
2. Tell five friends about Senior Olympics and encourage their participation in the local games.
3. Continue participating in my local Senior Olympics so those games remain healthy and viable.
4. Say "thanks" to the coordinators and sponsors that make Senior Olympics possible for me.

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