

THE OLYMPIAN

The newsletter of
Ohio Senior Olympics
Spring 2008

OHIO SENIOR OLYMPICS

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.

This issue of The Olympian focuses on the 15 individuals inducted to the inaugural class of the Ohio Senior Olympics Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame is virtual- it doesn't exist in a physical location, it exists on the OSO web site. Read more about the inductees starting on the next page and congratulations to all of them.

I get many calls from competitors around the state about the cost to compete in Senior Olympics. I realize that for many the cost to compete can add up pretty quickly, especially if you are competing in local games and the state games over the course of the year. As a Board we continue to address the issue of funding Senior Olympics and to look for opportunities to bring revenue sources to the state and local games. We have, for many years now, had support from the Ohio Department of Aging. That money primarily supports the state games and helps meet the obligations Ohio Senior Olympics has as a member organization of the National Senior Games.

It is the policy of Ohio Senior Olympics to give complete control of local games to the organization that hosts those games. That means that the local games determine what events are offered, which venues to use and the registration costs for those games. In exchange for that control, the local games have the responsibility to make their games financially solvent within whatever structure they have. The games secure sponsors to help cover their costs, engage in fundraising activities as they are able and rely on participants to help cover those costs as well. Whenever funding opportunities arise on the national level, we first consider how we might channel money to local games, both for expansion purposes and to help keep the costs for participants at a reasonable level.

As I've told you before, you can help Ohio Senior Olympics by advocating for the games with your state representatives and senators. Take the time to thank them for the support Ohio currently provides to the games. Share your stories about why the games are important to you. As Senior Olympics becomes more well known among the legislature, the opportunities for increased funding improve.

Don't forget to mark the dates for the 2008 Ohio Senior Olympics state games on your calendar... July 8- August 24. This is your chance to qualify in Ohio to participate in the 2009 National Senior Games in San Francisco!

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:
937-333-6492

Lima:
419-991-8811

Toledo:
800-472-7277

Youngstown:
330-746-2938

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

State Games Return to Southwest Ohio

The 2008 Ohio Senior Olympics State Games will once again be hosted by the Southwest Ohio Sports Zone. The Sports Zone is a group of five convention and visitor's bureaus in southwest Ohio that have teamed up to bring major sporting events to the area.

The state games begin with cycling July 8 and 9 and continue the next two weekends, then kick-off July 24 with the Opening Banquet and Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Events continue until August 10th, then the final event is the triathlon on August 24 at Buck Creek State Park. You can see the complete schedule for the games on the Ohio Senior Olympics web site.

Registration forms for the state games will be available in May. Once the form is ready, it will also be available for download from the Ohio Senior Olympics web site, www.ohioseniorolympics.org. The state games are your chance in Ohio to qualify for the 2009 National Senior Games.

National Games Coming to Ohio in 2013!

Big News! If you haven't heard, the National Senior Games will be coming to Ohio in 2013! Cleveland has been selected as host city for the games, with the Cleveland Sports Commission as the lead organization. The NSGA expects that by the 2013 games, more than 13,000 athletes will be competing in the games. More information will be coming, so stay tuned!

Ohio Senior Olympics Hall of Fame Inductees

In 2008, Ohio Senior Olympics inducted the first class of its Hall of Fame at the banquet during the State Games in July. It was a terrific event that truly celebrated the spirit of Senior Olympics and the athletes who compete. Those athletes are highlighted in this edition of *The Olympian*. The 2008 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will again be held at the State Games Banquet, scheduled for July 24 at the Nutter Center in Dayton. If you're going to be in town for the games, join us for this year's event. It's sure to be a winner!

2007 Hall of Fame Inductees

Barry Baumgardner was nominated for his distinguished performance in golf events at the local, state, regional and national level. Barry competes in numerous regional/ local Senior Olympic tournaments in Ohio. He brought home a gold medal from the 1999 games in Orlando, and silver medals from both Virginia Beach and Pittsburgh. A native of Springfield Ohio, Barry resides in Dayton with his wife Jane. They have two adult children.

Millie Bolton was nominated to the Hall of Fame for her accomplishments as a track and field athlete in Senior Olympics. Millie began running when she was in her 40s. Millie's first state Senior Olympics competition was in 1985 in Akron. She has competed at the national level since 1987. Most recently, Millie won gold medals in the 400M and 800M runs at the 2007 National Senior Games in Louisville, Kentucky.

Mary Bowermaster's story is one of courage and determination. After a breast cancer diagnosis at age 63, Mary found participating in Senior Olympics to be therapy, both psychologically and physically. Her first competition was in 1980. She competes in both Senior Olympics and Masters track and field events and has won accolades and awards for her performance at the local, state, regional, national and international level. Mary describes what Senior Olympics means to her this way: "Senior Olympics is about helping people to believe that one can overcome a difficult situation or that one can accomplish something even though they might think otherwise. It's about saying "I can" or "I will," instead of "I can't" or "I won't."

Rudy Bredenbeck was nominated to the Hall of Fame for his success as an athlete in track and field. Rudy has consistently placed first or second in state Senior Olympics competitions since 1986. His events are shot put, discus and javelin. In 2006, he achieved a new high at the state Senior Olympics- first place in all three events. That result was even more spectacular considering that he had been battling cancer.

Affectionately referred to as the "Father of Senior Olympics" in Ohio, **Bob Gandee** enters the Hall of

Fame in recognition of his Meritorious Service to the Senior Olympics movement in Ohio. A passionate advocate for health and fitness regardless of age, Bob recognized the positive effects that an organized program of competition could have for Ohio's aging population. In 1980, Bob organized the first state Senior Olympics competition in Akron, where the state games were held for many years.

Fred Hirsimaki started his athletic career at an early age, and has received awards and medals for his track and field performance at the local, state, national and international level. He has competed in the World Masters Games, the National Senior Olympics, and many heptathlon and decathlon competitions across the country.

In her late 50s, **Vadine Koenig** was getting restless, so she decided to go out and run a few wind sprints for something to do. She didn't get far, but she got hooked. Vadine has competed in local, state and national competitions in running events ever since. Her commitment to a healthy lifestyle has inspired neighbors, friends and family to get more active in their own lives.

Tom Labbe has been an athlete his entire life. A former high school football official and Akron firefighter/medic, Tom believes the way to stay healthy in retirement is through competition. His competition of choice is the Akron Silver League Softball and Senior Olympics. Most mornings you'll find Tom running, on an all-weather track or indoors depending on the season. Tom has competed in five National Senior Games: The Senior Olympics competitions as well as numerous biathlons. Tom is an avid runner and promotes running for people of all ages. He was inducted into the Summit County Hall of Fame in 2003.

Ruth Layfield- Faux served Ohio Senior Olympics with distinction during its formative years and played a critical role in the organization's developmental stability. Ruth was one of the founders of Ohio Senior Olympics in 1980. She brought excellent people and organizational skills to OSO in its early years.

Ruth is now retired and lives with her daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter in Tucson, Arizona.

Dr. Mary Leonard is a passionate advocate for competition opportunities for people as they age. Dr. Leonard was one of the founders of Senior Olympics in Ohio and a founding member of the Board of Ohio Senior Olympics and the Dayton/Miami Valley Senior Olympics. Dr. Leonard served as president of the Ohio Senior Olympics board from 1993-1997 and served on the Board of the National Senior Games Association (formerly USNSO) from 1993-1999. In addition to her role as coordinator of games in the Dayton area, Dr. Leonard is also an athlete, competing in badminton, tennis, swimming and horseshoes.

Mickey Lockman's early days in athletics came before organized sports for women, so she played with the boys in her neighborhood. A love of those "backyard sports" led her to a career in health and physical education as a teacher and coach. Mickey's first regional Senior Olympics was 1985 at the University of Dayton, where she competed in tennis and table tennis. The number of events in which she competed grew dramatically next year and set the stage for her Senior Olympics competitions for years to come at the local, state and national level.

Bob Lyons is a talented multi-sport athlete, who has received over 100 medals since 1998. With his basketball teams, the Hamilton Eagles, Bob has been gold medalist at the Ohio Senior Olympic state games five times. The team competed in the National Senior Games: The Senior Olympics in Orlando Florida in 1999 and brought home bronze medals for their effort.

Simply put, **Jim Neal** loves basketball. He loves to play and he loves to coach. His years on the basketball court (more than 60 of them) have brought him much success and taught lessons that he has shared with others as a coach. As a player and coach, Jim has over 200 medals to show from his years as a competitor in Senior Olympics in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. The teams he plays on and coaches are regular medalists in state competition.

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George Riser is a husband, a father, a World War II veteran, an educator and an athlete. A retired high school football and track and field coach, George has long been accustomed to the world of competition. He started competing as a senior athlete at the age of 68 and continues to find success on the field- at local games throughout northeast Ohio, at the state games each year and as the reigning gold medalist in shot and discus at the last five National Senior Games. George also competes in running events. George is noted not only for his excellence in competition, but also for his humility as a competitor and his willingness to coach and share his knowledge with others.



Dick Soller has participated in Senior Olympics since 1982 and has the medals to show for it. Dick competes in the Southwest Ohio Senior Olympics, other regional competitions, the Ohio Senior Olympics state games, state games in other states and at the National Senior Games: The Senior Olympics. His efforts have brought him many medals (285 of them in all) and friends from around the country. Dick also competes in Masters competitions and has traveled extensively to participate in world Masters meets. When he's not competing himself, you'll see Dick and his wife Jean talking to and cheering for the other competitors.

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