

Marathon flame visits State House

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The MetroWest Daily News

Posted Apr 17, 2008 @ 11:50 PM

Last update Apr 17, 2008 @ 11:54 PM

BOSTON — Resting between plates of baklava and sugar-dusted cookies, the first Marathon flame took a coffee break.

After traveling thousands of miles from Marathon, Greece, the small golden lantern arrived at the State House yesterday accompanied by Mayor Spyros Zagaris, and other Greek officials and runners in honor of the 112th Boston Marathon.

"This (State House) symbolizes peace, love, friendship, and the same things like this flame brought here from Marathon," Zagaris said, speaking through a translator.

The Boston Marathon is the first race to receive the flame, which was lit last fall in a campaign to carry messages of peace and sportsmanship to more than 100 major marathons around the world.

"The ideals that the flame represents and that we're trying to spread around the world with the mayor are even more important in today's world," said Dimitri Kyriakides, whose father Stylianos Kyriakides used his 1946 Boston Marathon win as a platform to help rebuild Greece after World War II.

Kyriakides said he joined the international tour to continue his father's legacy and promote marathon running, which he believes is one of the purest amateur sports remaining.

"Anybody can do it, you don't need drugs," he said. "It's the best sport you can do and this is why the mayor and I believe in running and we try to promote it more and more."

The relationship between Marathon and sister city Hopkinton, where the Boston race begins, is something that will put MetroWest on the map, said state Sen. Karen Spilka during a reception in her State House office.

"It's a real privilege and honor, particularly since I know them personally," said Spilka, who was also on hand to receive the flame in Hopkinton earlier in the morning.

Hopkinton Athletic Association member Fred Treseler is the volunteer keeper of the flame until Monday, when he'll have to hand it off in time to start his own Marathon run.

"It's been great, it's just completely taken my mind off running," said Treseler, who hopes to finish the 26-mile race on his 26th birthday in less than four hours.

"It probably won't even hit me until I get my bib number this weekend."

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