

## 2022 Emerging from the COVID 19 cocoon.



### Marathon Globetrotters Annual Meeting Moved Online

Once again our annual meeting was forced online. Although some countries would allow us to run a marathon there, many of our members could not leave their countries.



Many of the countries we were able to travel to had ongoing covid restrictions with limits on indoor activities, mandatory mask wearing, proof of vaccination and a negative covid test. Races were smaller with no gathering at the start or finish and simplified aid stations to limit contact.

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## **2020 Annual Meeting**

There were 6 candidates who ran for election.

President: Kevin Brosi

Membership: Eddy Angkawibawa

Publicity: Cheri Pompeo

Awards: Lara Gonzalez

Finance: Seth Kramer

Electronic Media: Don Bierer

**All 6 were elected.**

### **List of Ambassadors**

Scandinavia (Sweden/Norway): Anders Forselius (Sweden)

Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Greenland: Vagn Kirkelund (Denmark)

North Central Europe: Zdeněk Chmel (Czech Republic)

DACH: (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein): Frank Fuessl (Germany)

North East Europe (Baltic): Wojtek Machnik (Poland)

South East Europe (Balkans and ex-Yu): Srećko Mičić (Serbia)

Southeast Asia: Revi Fayola Sitompul (Indonesia)

China: Sam Chong (Singapore, Taiwan)

Oceania: Jane Sturzaker (Australia, PNG )

South America: Camila Urdaneta Santa (Colombia)

Caribbean: John Lum Young (Trinidad and Tobago)

Africa: Dayo Akinbode (Nigeria)

Social Media: Lara Michelle (USA)

### **Two new Ambassadors**

Fran Libasci (East USA)

Lynne Langlois (West USA)

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# Marathon Reunion

**Video conference meeting was held on December 18, 2021**

## ARTICLE III — MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

**Section 3 -- Displaced meetings:** If, for any reason, the selected location and date of the annual meeting becomes infeasible, the President can propose an alternative location and date and alter the meeting to that place. At a minimum, the President would obtain a majority of the board members votes for the new meeting's specifics, and if there is sufficient time, instead conduct an e-mail vote of the full members to confirm that a majority of votes received support the proposed new location/date.

**Donald Bierer has graciously volunteered to take over our website operations! We still need funds for web hosting and consultant help.**

This club has never had dues or registration fees but due to the growth of the club, we find we can no longer cover the financial cost of our operation with the proceeds from the merchandise sales, current level of donations and Amazon Smile income.

Our membership has grown to the point of exceeding the capabilities of our current website configuration. Steven Lee did an amazing job of setting up and maintaining our current website. He volunteered much time to this task. Thank you Steven!

To set up and maintain a more robust website that can handle continued growth we will need to pay website hosting fees and hire a consultant to do the work.

- We will accept donations. There is a donate button on our website.
- We may be creating our own races with the income after expenses coming to the club.
- Make Marathon Globetrotters your charity of choice for Amazon Smile.

Another option suggested by members is donating funds directly from an IRA when a required minimum distribution (RMD) occurs. This is discussed in more detail on page 6.

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## Financial Report from Seth Kramer:

Not much in the way of sales, but contributions from the virtual race and donations were a large part of our finances this year:

### Finance Report

Jan 1 Balance: 5426.57

Current Balance 8605.01 (3178.44 Increase)

### Income

3853.85 Run signup (virtual race)\*

32.15 Amazon Smile

566.43 Paypal\*

180 Checks

### Expenses

830.68 Postal expenses

158 Cost of Goods

440 Medals/Molds

25.31 Shipping Supplies

\*Collected sums do not include provider's fees below

131.40 Run Signup

14.56 Paypal

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## Membership Update from Eddy Angkawibawa

Following is a short summary of Marathon Globetrotters' Membership Data as of 15 December 2021:

1. Total Members 633 (from 51 countries)
2. Countries with more than 20 Members: US 173, England 68, Denmark 50, Sweden 41, France 35, Indonesia 29, Brazil 28, Germany 25.
3. Members who have run in 50 countries or more = 31 Members
4. 8 Members have run in 100 countries or more (listed on Achievement page)

### New Business:

#### Website help and dues

As previously mentioned, we need funds to create and maintain a website that can accommodate all of our members and offer more functionality. One way to have this income would be to charge dues. You may be hearing various options for this in the future.

#### Kevin sent this email to all members:

After hiring a website and database developer in November we have been patiently waiting for the work to begin. Work began last week and we are anxiously waiting to review the work. We cannot promise when the work will be complete and active, but at least we finally rose to the top of the queue to begin the development. Please continue to be patient as we work with the developers.

Meanwhile, you can add races as you complete them with existing tools. Also new members may join online. Unfortunately our display of member accomplishments and the main webpage are the most impacted and most used features.

#### Progress:

At this time the account on the new host has been activated and work is in progress.

(More details in the Letter from the President p. 24.

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## Charitable donations

For our US members of a certain age who do not need all of the money in their required distribution, there is an option to donate your RMD directly to charity thus avoiding paying tax on the income. The following information is from the IRS website.

The Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act of 2019 (SECURE Act) became law on December 20, 2019. The Secure Act made major changes to the RMD rules. If you reached the age of 70½ in 2019 the prior rule applies, and you must take your first RMD by April 1, 2020. If you reach age 70 ½ in 2020 or later you must take your first RMD by April 1 of the year after you reach 72.

For defined contribution plan participants, or Individual Retirement Account (IRA) owners, who die after December 31, 2019, (with a delayed effective date for certain collectively bargained plans), the SECURE Act requires the entire balance of the participant's account be distributed within ten years. There is an exception for a surviving spouse, a child who has not reached the age of majority, a disabled or chronically ill person or a person not more than ten years younger than the employee or IRA account owner. The new 10-year rule applies regardless of whether the participant dies before, on, or after, the required beginning date, now age 72.

Your required minimum distribution is the minimum amount you must withdraw from your account each year. You generally have to start taking withdrawals from your IRA, SEP IRA, SIMPLE IRA, or retirement plan account when you reach age 72 (70 ½ if you reach 70 ½ before January 1, 2020). Roth IRAs do not require withdrawals until after the death of the owner.

- You can withdraw more than the minimum required amount. Your withdrawals will be included in your taxable income except for any part that was taxed before (your basis) or that can be received tax-free (such as qualified distributions from designated Roth accounts).

From Charity navigator website:

If you have an RMD on your own account or an inherited account and you do not need the funds, donating to charity is a great option. Your required withdrawal will be included in your taxable income and cannot be rolled into other tax-deferred accounts. However, donating your RMD is a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) and will not be taxed up to \$100,000. Tax benefits aside, earmarking this income for charity is a great way to begin or expand your giving portfolio to support the causes you care about.

In an earlier newsletter several members discussed running with replacement joints. Here's another story with a positive outcome.

## New running with new knee—

**DISJOINTED?** by Rich Holmes

[Disclaimer: I have a doctorate in Health Services Administration and Policy (UNC), but am not a physician. You should discuss with your physician whether joint replacement is appropriate for you, as well as any alterations in your activities before, after, or in lieu of a joint replacement.]

**Indisputable Fact:** Endurance runners age, and so do their bodies. (Sorry!)

**Popular Myth 1:** Endurance running wears out your joints, particularly knees and hips.

**Popular Myth 2:** Joint replacements prevent continued endurance running.

### ...a Confession

Yes, I am an addicted endurance runner, and have been for 45 years, almost 800 marathons, and over 110,000 miles of running. Yes, I had a total knee replacement (TKR), assiduously did all the therapy and behaviors dictated by my orthopedic team, and am again running marathons, ultras, trail and road races, and 300-mile months, only now I have no pain!

### ...and Now for the Details

Runners frequently have joint pain, and the most common joints to get replaced for them are hips and knees. Imaging (x-rays are most common, but other imaging can be used) is used by the orthopedist to assess the degree of damage the joint has sustained, and whether more conservative treatments could work. Some doctors may say “give up running” as an easy fix to running pain, or the joint injury may be only a temporary ailment like a bone bruise or a sprain that will heal, or arthroscopic meniscus (cartilage) repair may suffice. More conservative treatments than replacements include medications for osteoarthritis taken orally, or topically in creams, or injected into the space between the bones. For some with knee joint problems, an external brace can correct or change alignment and reduce pain while adding stability. But joint replacement may be needed when the joint itself is the big problem – badly damaged or missing cartilage that is needed to buffer and protect the ends of bones, or even damage to the bone itself (such as cysts) that result from the loss of the cartilage buffering.

Replacements allow continued lifestyle and activity when conservative treatments are ultimately inadequate, especially when the space between bones has narrowed to “bone-on-bone”, not even allowing a needle insertion to put cortico-steroids into the gap. *The proximal cause of the joint problem is not endurance running!* Most joint replacements were preceded by a joint injury, and the injury damage worsened over time until the joint needed replacement. [I snapped my ACL playing tackle football – but still got another 700 marathons during 28 years before that knee reached the bone-on-bone state for replacement. My wife says the real problem was my head – if it was working correctly, I would not as a forty-something lightweight male have joined a bunch of beefy 20-year-olds in a tackle football game.]

## New running with new knee cont'd

“Your leg bone connected to your knee bone, Your knee bone connected to your thigh bone, Your thigh bone connected to your hip bone” [lyrics from Dem Bones]

Hip and knee replacements are done for the same reasons (to restore functionality and reduce pain), but because the knee is a much more complex joint (hinged and needing lateral stability, versus the hip's ball-and-socket), it requires a longer surgery, a longer and more painful recovery, and for some, does not work out as well (but for the great majority of patients, these do work out well!).



The knee has three “compartments” which may be damaged – the inside (next to the other leg), outside, or front (between the kneecap and thighbone). If damage only in one compartment, a *Partial Knee Replacement* (unicompartmental replacement) may be done which is simpler, less painful, recovers faster, and feels more natural (but does not protect against later needing more surgery). [I had a TKR since all three compartments had failed, but I have friends who had the partial and were able to regain endurance running status more quickly.] The image shows how after a TKR, the ends of the bones have been removed and replaced (usually with slippery surfaced titanium rods cemented into the leg bones above and below.

When, what, where, how?

**Pre-OP:** You and the doc decide on replacement. *Get assurance from your insurer that this is covered, which may require the physician to submit images and document the failure of conservative treatments. Paying full charges may cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000, while insurance (such as Medicare) with a gap policy (such as a Medigap or military TRICARE) may cost the patient nothing at all out-of-pocket!*

**Surgery:** This is inpatient surgery likely done with a spinal block but may also be under general anesthesia. Most people will not remember anything from the surgery. [I also remembered nothing from the post-operative briefing the orthoped gave me, and didn't know it happened until I asked him much later!]

**Post-op Hospitalization:** Three days in hospital is fairly normal for a TKR, but of course can vary from patient to patient and is often shorter for partial knees or hips, but can be longer if difficulties arise. Most patients/docs have you back standing on your feet on the same day the surgery was performed! [I walked, with assistance, to the nursing station that day.] A hospital therapist assists and begins the therapy exercises which will continue daily for months. Icing also begins right away and will likely continue for months, especially after therapy sessions. [My insurance paid for a machine that had a reservoir pumping ice water through a web of hosing that wrapped completely around the knee, for easy and effective icing.]



## New running with new knee—

**Goin' Home!** For a couple of weeks, a home therapist service will likely be used both to check out the home for safety and to work with the patient on the therapies. The primary therapies are for range-of-motion – to help the joint both achieve absolute straightness and maximum bending. For knees, these are 0 degrees (straight) and about 120 degrees for successful recovery of bending. [Even today, 8 months after surgery, I still do range-of-motion therapy sets twice per week.] Pain maxes out about the second or third week, when many feel like they made a mistake and want out. (Too late!) But it gets better! Much, much better! Once the home therapist is convinced you can manage at home, you do your own home therapy, and. . .

**PT Clinics:** For roughly two more months, a visit to the clinic is needed two or three times per week for a professional to manage your suite of therapies, which will eventually include balance, muscle strengthening, and gait as well as the continuing range of motion repetitions. Around the 120 degrees mark, the patient graduates and is on his/her own. By this time, pain is radically diminished and occurs mostly at the range-of-motion limits.

**And then? . . .**The orthopod will assess the joint to determine if the need for clinic therapy is over, and what guidance to give to the patient. [It was at this meeting, about 9 weeks after my surgery, I “negotiated” that I could begin running again, provided I had *zero float time*. (That is, one foot would always be on the ground instead of me bounding into the air. This increase in speed let me go up from 3-mile walks to ever greater number of daily miles for the same investment of time.)]

### Pure Anecdotal Evidence

Here is the rest of my personal experience – I don't claim that others would parallel me (using surgery date as a starting point for durations): By 2½ months, I was walking up to 15 miles and averaging 9 miles/day. By three months, my pace had dropped under 15-minute miles. I ran my first marathon (virtual in training) 10 days before 5 months, and my first actual marathon race 10 days after 5 months. I covered 34 miles in an ultramarathon exactly 6 months after surgery, my first marathon under 6 hours came two weeks later, and in a 12-hour race, I covered 46 miles a week after that. Since then, I'm running road marathons and ultras faster than in years, even including a more difficult trail ultramarathon, and including 10 marathons and 4 ultramarathons in the first year after surgery. But in none of these events have I had any knee pain at all!!!! □

*It is my hope that this is useful information and provides some of you benefit!*

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## 2021 COVID RUNS

**Aruba 06/06/2021**

**Brent Weigner**

**Jim Diego**

**Joe Church**

**Parvaneh Moayedi**

**Sidy Diallo**

I really love seeing new places and immersing myself in different cultures but when asked what I liked best about the places I've been this year, I had to say it was the time I spent with the people who have become traveling and running friends through the years.



Turn around Aruba Marathon.



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**Antigua 09/05/2021**

**Sidy Diallo**

**Jim Diego**

**Cheri Pompeo**

**Brent Weigner**

**Yen Nguyen**

**Klaus Westphal**

**Joe Church**

**Giuseppe Raguso**

**Peter Bennet**



Sunset From our lodging in Antigua

Due to the Covid curfew law, we were escorted the whole way by the police, which was a good thing because Yen and I went a considerable way straight when we should have turned. The police came out to get us then stayed even closer so we wouldn't get lost again. The course is hilly and goes through a different part of the country than you would normally see.

### Curacao 11/28/31

Cheri Pompeo

Joe Church

Parvaneh Moayedi

Lovely place with the colorful Dutch houses and beautiful ocean but the course is tough going over the highest bridge twice!



### Belize 12/05/2021

Cheri Pompeo

Deborah Lazerson

Wojciech Machnik

Flat course, great support and very hot! Placencia is a lovely town.

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## Milestones and accomplishments

Kevin Brosi 800 marathons

Liz Gmerek 600 marathons, 100 marathons per year for 3 years

Brent finished the 13 Caribbean countries.

**The Following 8 members have run marathons or ultras in 100 countries or more:**

Brent Weigner (US) 187 Countries

Klaus Westphal (Germany) 138 countries

Rich Holmes (US) 129 Countries

Dieter Max Elster (Germany) 115 countries

Dan Micola (England) 112 countries

Wojciech Machnik (Poland) 110 countries

Vagn Kirkelund (Netherlands) 109 Countries

Philippe Waroux (France) 102 countries

Editors note: These people never stop! I'm sure these statistics will be outdated by the time this newsletter is published.



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## Running in Quarantine— 7 Continent Marathon

“Let’s start a virtual 7 continent marathon challenge to raise funds for our club”, suggested Donald Bierer. Our web master was gone and our club had outgrown the existing database. We had to hire help and we had to pay to have our website hosted, imported and improved to allow users to do more.

Don’s idea became reality. Don calculated the distances and routes to cross each continent , making sure that the race route passed through every country per continent. Dayo Akinbode offered to help with the design of the medals. I offered to find out how much it would be to use one of the major registration services. We chose RunSignUp and went live.



### 7 Continents Marathon Challenge - sponsored by Marathon Globetrotters

Europe started the first of Seven virtual race events- one for each continent. The race started at the Bosphorus strait in Turkey and ended at the 1896 Olympic Stadium in Athens. The race ran through parts of every country in Europe - 56 countries in all. The route in each country contained a minimum distance of 42.2 km. With the exception of Turkey, which was being used as the doorway into Europe, the race used the Definition of European countries used by Marathon Globetrotters. The structure and rules of the event can be found at the end of the article.

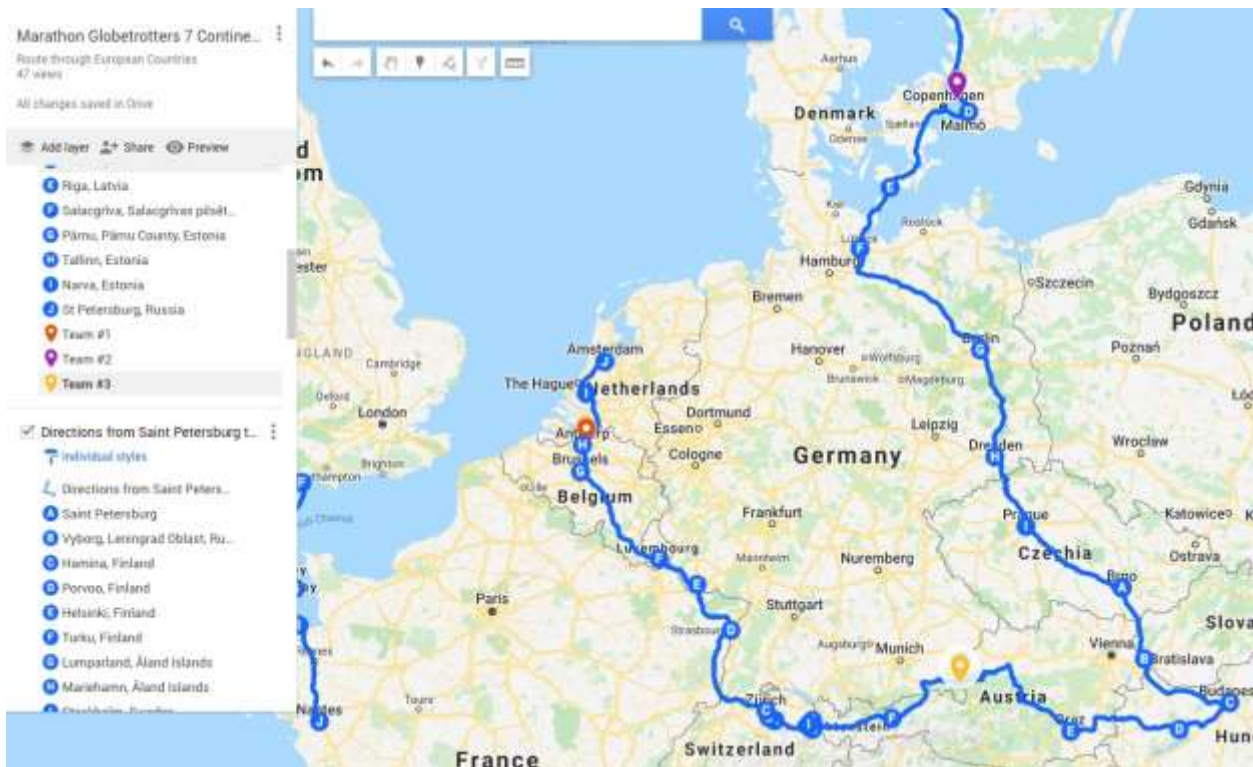
Enough members signed up for the Europe segment so that we could have teams. The teams virtually raced through the countries of Europe and across the continents. Don produced maps with our progress. Through messenger, we were able to cheer on our teams.

A Facebook page was created where Don regularly posted our progress as below:

**Team #1** is in Antwerp, Belgium at 7940 km. When they reach Amsterdam, they will take a flight to the Faroe Islands, and then to Iceland

**Team #2** is nearing Copenhagen with 4857 km completed. When they reach Copenhagen, they will take a flight to Svalbard.

**Team #3** is in Salzburg with 6652 km completed, and is about to cross into Germany briefly, before continuing into Austria and then into Liechtenstein.



Don painstakingly collected the miles we put in each day by following us in Strava, looking at the data on RunSignUp and by requesting data via email and messenger.

He noted any run of Marathon distance and awarded a certificate noting which country the team was passing through at the time of the marathon.

As of the end of 2021, the runners were nearing completion of South America, having only the last continent, North America, left to finish.



Don created these lovely certificates made special by having the flag of the country where the marathon was virtually run.

33 Runners participated in the virtual challenge. Worth noting is that among these 33 runners were 8 non-members. John Lum Young recruited 7 of the non-members, and 1 came from the virtual running group of Kati Jaeger in Rostock, Germany (Easter World Run, Great Race Around the Baltic).

In the absence of other races this race became a social outlet. We posted and followed posts on our Facebook page and formed a group on messenger that has now provided a support group for the in person races that have started happening in a few places around the world.

After Europe we headed to Africa then Asia, Oceania, Antarctica, South America and finally North America.

For some countries, member John Lum Young created travelogues with photos and history of the area. We were all in.

As of January 1, 2022 we had raised \$3853.85 from our race.

Here is the start of our route through Africa. Many more countries and checkpoints were added to subsequent maps.

Don continued to create routes and progress maps for the remaining continents as we made our way through the virtual world while some members were limited to routes not exceeding 2KM from their homes.



## Seven Continents Virtual Marathon participants.

Louis EMRINGER  
 Diane Casselberry  
 Didier Cazala  
 Suzy Seeley  
 Jack Lee  
 Rich Holmes  
 Avinash Madhav  
 Twan (Johannes) Belgers  
 Jane Sturzaker  
 Zdenek Chmel  
 Curtis Forbes  
 Brian Caesar  
 Michele Wheldon  
 Brent Weigner  
 Dayo Oyebade Akinbode  
 Anders Forselius  
 Susannah Joefield  
 Lone Friis  
 Ricky Batman Andersen  
 Joy Ryan  
 Dennison Charles  
 Gillian Cupidore  
 Verne Edwards  
 John Lum Young  
 Melinda Langlois  
 Elizabeth Gmerek  
 Kevin Brosi  
 Cheri Pompeo  
 Gregg Walchli  
 Revi Fyola Sitompul  
 Sandy Gage  
 Fran Libasci  
 Thomas Brand  
 Donald Bierer

The runners in the 7 Virtual Marathon Challenge finished all 7 continents when they reached Central Park, NYC on March 25, 2022. They ran a distance of 80,633.80 km, and ran virtually through 254 countries. It took 541 days to complete the challenge. The team averaged 149 km/day.

### 19 runners completed all 7 Continents:

Cheri Pompeo  
 Gregg Walchii  
 Zdenek Chmel  
 Ricky Batman Andersen  
 Lone Friis  
 Fran Libasci  
 Suzy Seeley  
 Revi Fayola  
 Rich Holmes  
 Melinda Langlois  
 Sandy Gage  
 Diane Casselberry  
 Kevin Brosi  
 Liz Gmerek  
 Twan (Johannes) Belgers  
 Jane Sturzaker  
 Avi Madhav  
 Didier Cazala  
 Donald Bierer

### The top virtual marathon country runners (completed a marathon) were:

Kevin Brosi - 137 countries  
 Lone Friis - 130 countries  
 Liz Gmerek - 127 countries

The officers want to thank everyone who participated in the Marathon Globetrotters 7 Continents Marathon Challenge, helping to make this virtual fundraiser a success.



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## Running in Quarantine - 7 Continent Marathon

### The rules as established before the start of the event

The first race is for Europe. One can enter either the team event or the individual event. The team event will consist of 10-20 runners per team, and the race course (with a few exceptions e.g flights and ferry crossings) will be run as one continuous course. The distance is 14839 km. The second event is an individual event. Each runner is required to run a distance of 42.2 km per country. The order of running the countries is the same, starting in Turkey and ending in Greece. The distance for this event is 2363.2 km. One can enter both the team event and individual events simultaneously, and the same "run" can count simultaneously for both, as long as the "run" is at least 42.2 km or longer.

1. The race is open to all runners, hand cyclists, and wheelchair runners. One does not need to be a member of Marathon Globetrotters to participate in this race series.
2. The goal of the race series is to collect virtual continents and to collect virtual countries. **It also is to make training more fun!**
3. A "run" for the purpose of this race can be accomplished by a run, walk, hike, treadmill, or snowshoe. For the team event, a "run" can be of any distance, since this is a cumulative distance event. All "runs" for both events should be tracked using a GPS device (Garmin, Apple Watch, etc).
4. For a runner to claim the continent, either the team event or the individual event must be completed. For a runner to claim a virtual country, a "run" of 42.2 km or greater must be completed in one continuous "run". The results must be sent to the race director as a photo or screenshot for the virtual country to count. Either a "run" in the team event or the individual event of 42.2 km or greater can be used to claim a virtual country.
5. The order of countries for the Seven Continents Europe Race is: Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Poland, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Finland, Aland Islands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Svalbard and Jan Mayen, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Netherlands, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Isle of Man, England, Wales, Jersey, Guernsey, Andorra, Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar, Malta, Italy, Vatican City, San Marino, Monaco, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Greece.
6. The continents will be run in the following order: Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania, Antarctica, South America, and North America.
7. For the team event, Team Captains are responsible for monitoring and reporting the progress of their team.
8. A runner must complete a continent before beginning the next one. If one completes the team event for a continent, they may begin the next continent as a team event. Likewise, if one completes a continent as the individual event, they may begin the next continent.
9. "Double-dipping is permitted. "Runs" from other virtual events or real events may count for this event, provided they meet the rules described above.

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## Merchandise

**There have been no changes since the last newsletter**



Please remember that the sale of gear is the means by which our club generates some income to help defray the expenses we incur to operate. The current web site has reached it's limit and some of the available items can not be displayed and must be ordered by contacting me directly at [merchandise@marathonglobetrotters.org](mailto:merchandise@marathonglobetrotters.org).

**Patch:** The 7 Continents patch can be added to the back of the singlet and T-shirts to go with the Countries patch. It can be ordered with numbers **2 – 7**

Shown below are production proofs of a T-shirt and singlet that were ordered with and without the patch .



## Merchandise

**ON SALE White T-shirts:** These are Sport-Tek brand T-shirts that may be ordered fully customized or not. The women's version has a v-neck. Examples of both are shown.



**ON SALE 7 – Continents T-shirt:** These are Sport-Tek brand T-shirts that come fully customized and for those who have finished the continents more than once, it can reflect the number (2X, 3X, etc.)

## Merchandise

Some new items in our Merchandise Department.



The 7 continents patch, normally \$5, temporarily FREE on new orders.

### Basic facts:

1. Shirts are labeled: Sport-Tek
2. Womens (v-neck) Mens (round neck)
3. Short and Long-sleeve
4. non-custom and customized

## Merchandise



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## Unusual races in interesting places

### Footprints from the Past

By Rich Holmes

#### ING Night Marathon (Luxembourg)

Hello, fellow Globetrotters! I hope to give you ideas by telling you of unusual races (primarily paved roads) in interesting places I have run. My hope is to focus on races that are still offered, in countries most of you don't have but could get to, and not to bore you with how I did or felt in the race (although I am always slow!). There are, of course, other Globetrotters who have run more marathons, and in more countries, than I have, so I am privileged and humbled by getting the chance to tell you of my past.

Six years ago, I ran the marathon that starts at dusk in Luxembourg. Luxembourg (or Luxemburg in the German spelling) is a tiny country (about 30 km by 50 km, or 18 miles by 30 miles) occupying the corner where Belgium, Germany, and France meet. This gives it a unique culture, and although German and French are both used for official purposes and widely spoken, the official language is Luxembourgish (although with 50% of its population of other nationalities, virtually everyone also speaks English).

About one-fifth of the 640,000 citizens live in the capital called Luxembourg City, which is also one of the four official capital cities of the European Union, and the location of the entire marathon route. The city's and country's history date back over 1,000 years, with numerous switching of hands between various empires and warring states, not becoming the current constitutional monarchy until 1815, nor the current area until 1839 when the French-speaking portion was ceded to Belgium in a London conference where the larger powers decided the fate of Luxembourg. This turmoil over the centuries left its mark in the UNESCO-recognized preserved fortifications, walls, protective moat-like rivers, and blended cuisines and customs. Because it has such impressive terrain and fortifications, it eventually became one of Europe's smallest countries because it was difficult to conquer. It is a great place to play tourist, and enjoys being one of the wealthiest countries in Europe on a per capita basis.

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The marathon (and half-marathon) is held annually in early summer (22 May this year), and has been sponsored by the international bank ING for several years ([www.ing-night-marathon.lu](http://www.ing-night-marathon.lu)). The bank and race organizers knock themselves out to make this a memorable race, although with a world class field and a start near dusk, there is a time limit (typically 6 hours) that discourages the very slow. It is possible to register, travel and handle the logistics individually, but it is also a popular race that for-profit organizations offer complete arrangements for a runner as a package.

For those who run this, the race is incredibly memorable. Colorful lights and lit vistas occur throughout the route, although my favorite is the unique portion that comes when the course drops down into the deep river valley far below the city lights. Running along this road long after it got fully dark creates a difficult-to-describe other-worldly experience. Think of descending through complete darkness guided only by minimal LED lights on the sides of the road, and after leveling out along the river, having the darkness broken at about 30 meter intervals (100 feet) by lit grinning lion's faces (the ING logo), hung like floating balloons perhaps four meters in the air above the race route. The light from these does not reach the ground (which is smooth new pavement, so no worrying about trip hazards), because dry ice is being used to continually waft waist-level mist across the running surface from the adjacent river, and indirect blue mercury lights causes the mist to glow blue as the runners run through it under the smiling cats. This is not a one-point experience, but continues for a while as the route winds along the valley, saturating the visual senses during the race! It is unlikely you will ever experience something similar in any other race! And the entire course with its light spectacles distracts you so that you forget about getting tired and can just be absorbed into the adventure!



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## Letter from the president



Hi All Globetrotters,

You are all probably wondering what is going on with the website and database. We have been supplying data and feedback to the contractor, but progress has been very slow and we have not yet reviewed their work. The good news is; I received 2 emails from the contractors today asking more questions and clarifying our requirements. I am hopeful we will soon have mockups to review. When we have them, we will pull in Ambassadors and members to test with us. I can't promise a date when it will go active, but you can still add races using our existing tools. And new members can apply for membership. Bear with us as we slowly transition to the new system.

Meanwhile, I am encouraged by the marathons that are occurring around the world. I saw many familiar names participating in Rome and Paris in the past week. Personally I am planning on Reykjavik, Loch Ness and Medoc this year and looking for more. If you are planning to attend an event let us all know via Facebook post. And in the future we will be re-creating the calendar so you can post and then see other Globetrotters that plan to participate, if we all use the tool.

I also want to thank the team that put together the recently completed MG virtual marathon in all 254 countries we have in our database. That team included Don Bierer (who also took on the big data management details) and Cheri Pompeo, Robert Bishton and Dayo Akinbode. Thanks for your efforts and the funding it raised, which will go toward our website fees.

Feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any questions,

KB



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