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2014 KAISER PERMANENTE NAPA VALLEY MARATHON: ENTRANT PROFILE STORIES

Compassion and Resolve Underscore Participation in 36th Annual Race

NOTE TO EDITORS: Short profile stories are included in this release about the following Napa Valley Marathon entrants. We will gladly provide you with additional information about these entrants or other entrants. [Frank Pilotte](#) (Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.), [Terri Seales](#) (Austin, Texas), [Jody Rice](#) (Houston, Texas), [Valentine "Ski" Pisarski](#) (Reno, Nev.), [Fabrienne Pariera](#) (Fairfield, Calif.), [Susannah McCormick](#) (Concord, Calif.), [Katie Ginda](#) (Washington, D.C.), [George Olveda, Jr.](#) (Folsom, Calif.), [Joshua Wendt](#) (Angwin, Calif.), [Scott Wendt](#) (Modesto, Calif.), [Mark Wendt](#) (Beaverton, Ore.), [Isaac J.B. Adam](#) (Mexico City, Mexico), [Meghan Easley](#) (Azusa, Calif.) and [Mary Easley](#) (Apollo, Pa.), [Maria Poranski](#) (Virginia Beach, Va.), [Tim McLean](#) (Guildford, Australia), [Ken Skea](#) (Calgary, Canada), [Jim Miller](#) (Orlando, Fla.), [Peter Clune](#) (Leawood, Kan.), [Willem Pennings](#) (Redlands, Calif.), [Tami Barrick](#) (Forestville, Calif.).

NAPA, Calif. — February 12, 2014 — A sold-out field of 2,700 entrants from 14 countries, 48 U.S. states, and Washington, D.C. will gather in California's Napa Valley for the 36th Annual Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon on Sunday, March 2, 2014. The Napa Valley Marathon (NVM) asks each entrant to describe on their entry form their reasons for entering the race. Among the varied responses each year, many illustrate how the challenges of a 26.2-mile race spurs marathoners to undertake charitable deeds that assist others who face adversity, or to overcome personal adversities themselves. A high percentage of respondents also cited the reputation of NVM as one of the best organized marathons in the U.S., and the allure of the picturesque Napa Valley wine growing region, as primary reasons for entering the race.

Every Napa Valley Marathon participant assists important local causes. All proceeds from the Napa Valley Marathon (a non-profit organization) are donated to local charities and schools in the Napa Valley region. Numerous NVM participants, however, choose to go beyond NVM's annual philanthropy by dedicating their race to others, often raising donations that fund the charities of their choice.

This year, *Forbes Travel Guide* once again rated NVM among the top ten marathons in the world "worth traveling for." *Runner's World* magazine selected NVM as one of the top ten U.S. marathons for first-time marathon participants in its January, 2011 issue. American Express' *Departures* magazine declared NVM as #7 in their "ten travel-worthy races that make for truly memorable journeys on the run."

NVM ENTRANT PROFILE STORIES

Selected NVM entrants' stories appear below.

In 2010, **Frank Pilotte** (61, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.) was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer that develops in plasma cells that can cause bone pain in the back and ribs and broken bones, usually in the spine. Pilotte had completed five marathons before he was diagnosed with the illness after breaking four bones in his back. He began chemotherapy—treatments that he still receives today—but was undeterred from his running pursuits.

“I realized that to stay healthy and deal with the disease I needed to get focused,” said Pilotte. “Running helps me do that. One needs goals to work for.”

In 2011, Pilotte completed the Boston Marathon while raising over \$26,000 for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, a Boston-based cancer care and research organization. NVM will be his seventh marathon. Pilotte has friends in the Napa Valley area and has visited the region periodically for over 30 years.

Terri Seales (53, Austin, Texas) traveled an arduous route on her way to the 2014 NVM, which will be her eleventh marathon and her first in Napa. Seales was born with hip dysplasia, a deformation or misalignment of the hip joint. When she was an infant, Seales’ parents opted for what Seales describes as “experimental surgery” (at the time) to have her condition repaired. After the surgery, she had to wear a cast, and then braces and special shoes until she was five, but she made progress, even if she disliked running in her PE classes because she was the slowest student.

“As a result, I always thought of myself as physically limited, even as an adult,” Seales said.

As a student at Wellesley College (which is located on the route of the Boston Marathon) Seales’ perception began to change. Her best friend was a runner and the friend’s father ran the Boston Marathon regularly. The friend persuaded Seales to start running with her. Soon Seales started to dream about running a marathon, completed her first one in 2001, and since then has finished 10 more with a personal best of 4:25.

“I run, in part, for my parents who had the courage to let their baby undergo experimental surgery,” related Seales, who has an older cousin with the same issue but was unable to have the surgery and wears a full brace as an adult. “My surgery was a small price to pay for the privilege of running. I think the running, and specifically running marathons, restored my sense of being an athlete. So, I’m so grateful.”

Jody Rice (48, Houston, Texas) has a favorite message taped to her computer that she pulled from a fortune cookie: *Endurance and Persistence will be rewarded.*

“That’s the mantra that I plan on repeating through 26.2 miles on March 2, 2014 in Napa Valley,” Rice said.

Indeed, Rice, a veteran of nine marathons, has endured and persisted. She is a breast cancer survivor who was diagnosed with the disease when she was 34. Rice’s mother died from breast cancer at the age of 31.

“Marathons are a celebration of life to me,” Rice said. “I really enjoy feeling every fiber of my being during the run. When I was diagnosed I was already somewhat aware of how precious and unpredictable life can be. Now, I feel very fortunate to be on the other side of that. Although I wouldn’t wish that experience on anyone, I truly think it changed me for good. Since then, I have worked hard to play hard and get the most out of every day.”

A recent study performed by the U.S. Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory suggests that running may be more effective than walking in reducing breast cancer mortality rates (see reference at bottom of this release).¹

Reno, Nev.-based Northern Sierra Endurance Training—a non-profit running group for runners and walkers that supports community programs, projects, and families in need—will have approximately 40 participants in this year’s NVM. Many of the group’s participants are running the race to support their head running coach, **Valentine “Ski” Pisarski** (69, Reno, Nev.). Pisarski is hoping to complete his 25th NVM, and 115th marathon overall, despite battling four different types of cancer over the past year and a half. He has undergone chemotherapy for stomach and bone cancer, surgery for skin cancer, and, most recently, radiation treatments for prostate cancer. Pisarski has coached marathon runners since 1986 and currently serves on NVM’s Course Presentation Committee. He hopes to finish this year’s NVM—with the encouragement of his running group’s cohorts—under the race’s cutoff time (6 hours). His marathon personal best is 3:01.

“I conquered the 18 weeks of chemo treatment like running a marathon, focusing past the pain and visualizing the finish,” said Pisarski. “I had great support, just like the aid stations and crowd cheering along a marathon route. It was a team effort, and I had thousands of backers rooting me on. How could I not come out a winner? As I have always told my protégés, *think positive and keep smiling!*”

NVM entrant **Fabrienne Pariera** (35, Fairfield, Calif.) and three of her co-workers at the City of Fairfield Police Department find motivation for their running by raising awareness and funding to combat Batten Disease. The

disease is an inherited disorder of the nervous system that typically begins in childhood. Eventually, children with Batten Disease become blind, bedridden, and unable to communicate. Presently, it is always fatal. Fabrienne, an Office Specialist, co-leads the Fairfield PD's Catie and Annie's Cops team. The team honors and memorializes Catie and Annie Allio, daughters of Fairfield Police Captain Joe Allio. Catie passed away a year and a half ago from this rare degenerative disease at age 22. Annie 14, continues the daily battle with the disorder, and is blind. Catie and Annie's Cops team is raising money for the Batten Disease Support and Research Association.

"Catie and Annie are my motivation and strength to finish races," said Pariera, a runner for 10 years who is tackling her first marathon at NVM. Every time my legs feel heavy and I'm ready to give up, knowing how hard these two girls have fought each day motivates me to keep going. They are truly my heroes and have now become my motivation to run."

Susannah McCormick (29, Concord, Calif.) will be participating in her ninth marathon, but her first NVM, with fond memories of her father firmly in mind and "sole." McCormick's father, Douglas McCormick (now deceased), was a runner for as long as his daughter can remember—even after he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease.

"Even after my dad couldn't do any more road races, let alone log any more PRs, he kept running," McCormick recalled. "Even as a 9-year-old kid, I had no trouble keeping up with him because his jog had become so slow. We'd shuffle around the track together in the hot summer months, and he'd chuckle good-naturedly every time a power-walker flew past us.

"For him, running was personal. It was about overcoming physical and psychological challenges. In the end, victory was defined by simply enduring the best he could, no matter what the clock said. Having absorbed this philosophy, this is why I love endurance running so much and can't picture ever getting burned out."

After McCormick's father passed on in 2006, her mother made a quilt from his many race T-shirts and presented it to her daughter as a tribute.

Katie Ginda (26, Washington, D.C.) works as a Team Coordinator for Run for Autism, a charity running group established by the Organization for Autism Research. Ginda manages Run for Autism's "teams" which raise donations at the charity's partner events which include major marathons around the U.S. Individual program participants can also pick the running event of their choice and set their own fundraising goals. Ginda, a self-described "recreational runner" who competed in track and cross country in high school, periodically participates in road races, but has never attempted a marathon.

"Last fall, I watched over 100 of our (Run for Autism) team members race at the Chicago (Marathon), and another ten in New York City (Marathon), and I was hooked," Ginda commented. "I had made really strong personal connections with a lot of our runners—mostly parents of children with autism—and was totally inspired. I knew I had to do a marathon, too."

So, Ginda convinced her sister, **Ellen Coyle**, 25, and her brother-in-law, **Christopher "Tucker" Coyle**, 25—both Sacramento, Calif. residents and first-time marathoners—to sign up with her for this year's NVM.

Coyle and **George Olveda, Jr.** (30, Folsom, Calif.) are among several NVM entrants who work as wildland firefighters for the U.S. Forest Service firefighting team that serves the Eldorado National Forest in California's Sierra Nevada mountain range, and beyond. Olveda's "Eldorado Hotshots" crew of 20 firefighters often hikes into remote areas over steep and rugged terrain to access fires.

"It's a very physically demanding job and running has helped me and others on the crew stay in shape during the winter months," Olveda explained. "Also, during the summer, we run to keep in shape when we're not at a fire."

Olveda will run NVM, his second marathon, along with his father, George Olveda, Sr. (57, Folsom, Calif.) and sister Liz Olveda (24, San Francisco).

"Of course, we're all concerned about California's drought this year," Olveda, Jr. continued. "It has made me want to train hard to be ready for a potentially bad fire season."

Joshua Wendt (22, Angwin, Calif.), a Senior studying biochemistry at Pacific Union College in Angwin, will attempt his first marathon at NVM. He hopes to finish alongside his dad, **Scott Wendt** (51, Modesto, Calif.) who debuted at the marathon distance at last year's NVM. The father-son team hopes to break 4:00 hours in the race

(9:09 per mile pace). In addition, Joshua's uncle, **Mark Wendt** (53, Beaverton, Ore.) will round out the threesome, after qualifying for the Boston Marathon last fall. Plus, Joshua has invited his 75-year-old grandfather, Lester Fuller, to watch his first marathon finish. Fuller ran NVM when he was 49 in 1988.

"My dad, especially, inspired me to run this marathon," Joshua Wendt said. "Back when he was in high school, he was a fast and avid runner and could run a 4:30 mile, but had never run a marathon. He just got back into running a few years ago while preparing for the 2012 NVM. I thought that if my dad can run a marathon at 49, then surely I can do it at 22."

Isaac J.B. Adam (40, Mexico City, Mexico) works 12-hour days as the manager for El Jardín Restaurante in a major Mexico City hotel, but he finds time to pursue his three passions: running, traveling, and visiting wineries. He has competed in marathon and half marathon races, and visited wine growing regions, in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, and the U.S. His marathon personal best is 3:36:10.

"I've always wanted to get to know the Napa region, its marathon, and wineries since I started working in the hospitality business 15 years ago," Adam explained. "But my demanding job only allows me eight or ten vacation days a year, and you can't do everything. Now I'll be able to visit the famous Napa Valley and its marathon. I have read that it has the most amazing landscape, beautiful course, excellent organization, great medals, and incredible vineyards."

Despite living almost 2,500 miles apart, **Meghan Easley** (22, Azusa, Calif.) and her mother, **Mary Easley** (54, Apollo, Pa.), are exploring a way to stay intimately connected—through marathon running. Every year they plan to travel to, and run, a marathon together, in different states around the U.S. for as long as they can. They chose this year's NVM to embark upon this ambitious journey. Meghan is in her final semester of study at California's Azusa Pacific University finishing a double major in Biblical Studies and Youth Ministry. Then, she will pursue a Master of Divinity degree. Although mother and daughter are only occasional marathoners, they now plan to ramp up their commitment to the distance, and to each other.

"The U.S. has some incredible marathons in beautiful locations, so it's our excuse to see the country and stay in shape," Meghan Easley said. "I find that keeping up with my mom is much more intentional as we train 2,000 miles away from each other. We've spent the six months leading up to Napa calling and comparing mileage, sore muscles, and new gear we find for running. It's wonderful and such a great way to make new memories together. It's our yearly destination marathon reunion, and we plan to do it every year for quite a while. We sure aren't the fastest, but find that laughing while we talk and run makes the miles fly by."

The Easleys hope to finish NVM in the 4-1/2 hour range.

Maria Poranski (48, Virginia Beach, Va.) is a member of the 50 States Marathon Club, a group of runners who share a common goal of finishing marathons in all 50 states. And, she has found a way to reach out to children to share the benefits of her running lifestyle.

If all goes as planned, NVM will be Poranski's final marathon on her 50 states marathon quest, having finished 26.2-mile races in 49 states. Poranski will be joined at NVM by her marathon-journey friends, Paige Kurtz (47, Hampton, Va.), a vet of 65 marathons, and Sue Parks (49, Virginia Beach, Va., 38 previous marathons).

"We've always touted the antioxidant benefits of wine after our races and look for local wine options in the stores and restaurants when we've traveled," Poranski said. "We've made a point of trying to get to a winery at every marathon, and we've been to wineries in 17 states. Napa is the perfect setting to conclude my 50 states marathon journey since it will incorporate our wine interests in wine heaven, and is close to where many of my relatives live."

Poranski is a certified personal trainer and running coach, and has worked part time in both fields. In 2009 she started a running club, the Pacers Club, for students at Pembroke Meadows Elementary School in Virginia Beach, where she teaches full time.

Tim McLean (29, Guildford, Australia) works for Air New Zealand as a business development manager. His job takes him on marathon journeys around the world for business and pleasure, but he never has run a marathon race. Three years ago, while trekking in Nepal, McLean wrote down a list of things he wanted to do before he turned 30. His goals included proposing to, and marrying, his girlfriend, buying an investment property, becoming involved in charity work, embarking on a fitness program and getting in shape (he was about 30 pounds above his ideal weight), continuing to travel, and running a marathon. He married, and about two years ago got involved with Big Brothers

Big Sisters, a charity mentoring organization for disadvantaged children. He is currently mentoring a 9-year-old boy who has no father and no extended family in Australia. After six months of dedicated training, McLean will now tackle the only goal on his list that he hasn't yet achieved: He will toe the NVM starting line two months before he turns 30.

"Running the marathon will certainly be the biggest physical challenge, and the biggest mental challenge," McLean said. "The other goals have been challenging, but were more about giving myself some direction. This one takes a lot of mental toughness."

Ken Skea (59, Calgary, Canada) turns 60 years old six days after this year's NVM, his 59th marathon. He will celebrate "60" seven weeks later at the Boston Marathon, his fifth time running the renowned race. He has run marathons, which include seven "ultra" marathons of 50 kilometers or more, in 13 countries. His races include the Great Wall of China Marathon and Great Tibetan Marathon at 12,000 feet. Skea's personal best at the marathon distance is 2:59:02. Two of Skea's running buddies will run with him at NVM to celebrate his upcoming birthday: Bhasker Desai (61, Mumbai, India) and John Duerksen (55, Cochrane, Canada).

"I will be treating NVM as a training run for Boston and hope to have fun with many smiles along the way," Skea said.

Jim Miller (61, Orlando, Fla.) has an ambitious spring race schedule that will culminate with NVM, his 99th marathon, followed by his 100th at Boston. Although Miller has never competed at NVM, he boasts 12 Boston Marathons on his resume. He ran his first Boston in 2000, dedicating the race to his father who died from liver cancer, and ran it as a fundraiser for the American Liver Foundation. Miller has since raised over \$11,000 for the foundation through its Liver Life Challenge, an endurance training and fundraising program. His goal is to raise \$100,000 for the organization via the program.

"I've always loved Napa," said Miller who has previously visited the Napa Valley on business as a consultant for the hotels and hospitality industry. "So, I feel that (running NVM) is an appropriate reward for marathon number 99, and to just enjoy the beauty of the destination, the challenge of the run, and the relaxation of the area. Marathons have become a theme of my life, making me aware of pace, balance, health, challenging myself, and reminding me to look up and enjoy the view more often."

NVM entrant **Peter Clune** (42, Leawood, KS) has lasting memories of the terrorist bombings at the 2013 Boston Marathon. Clune's wife, three daughters, his brother and sister-in-law, and several friends watched him finish the race before the bombs went off and were entering their hotel when they heard the blasts. Clune's disappointment that his 3:19 finishing time didn't qualify him for this year's Boston faded into the shadows as news of the catastrophe emerged.

"But I never really had the chance to digest what happened," Clune recounted. "I went back to Boston a few months later for work, went on a run and went to the finish line. At the finish line, I broke down and cried and felt like what happened sank in for the first time. I was sad for the victims, mad at the people responsible for it, and also realized how lucky I was that all of my loved ones weren't hurt. At that moment I knew I needed to run Boston again."

Clune will have an opportunity to qualify for the Beantown fixture at this year's NVM, his first. He needs a finishing time of 3:15:00 or faster. Seven of Clune's high school and college friends have decided to run NVM with him.

"I researched Napa and read all of the articles that say what a great race it is," said Clune. "Our group loved the location, the size, the reviews, the time of year, and we all signed up. I also really love the course. It looks like one that gives me a great shot at being able to qualify for Boston."

Willem Pennings (47, Redlands, Calif.) is an avid trail ultrarunner who will be racing his first road marathon at NVM. A recovered alcoholic, Pennings has pursued sobriety via his long runs which have taken him through finish lines at the Western States 100-Mile Endurance Run in California's Sierra Nevada mountains, 250 kilometer stage race through the Sahara Desert, and elsewhere. After he conquered his alcohol addiction, Pennings was still a pack-a-day smoker. He recalls that in 1998 or '99 he cheered on several of his friends who were running NVM.

"I thought they were crazy for running 26.2 miles," Pennings said. "But I started to run a bit and found the smoking had to go. I'd found something that complimented my recovery. Many people comment that ultrarunning is just

another form of addiction. I have a different view. Addiction is all about extremes and pushing beyond your control. Running has taught me about balance.

“Last summer, I lost my older sister to the disease of addiction. Later in the summer, I ran a 250K through Iceland as a celebration of my recovery. My life and my sobriety have benefited beyond my dreams from running.”

Tami Barrick (47, Forestville, Calif.), a Senior Staff Assistant at Kaiser Permanente’s Santa Rosa/Fountain Grove Medical Center, took up running two years ago with a group of co-workers who were introduced to the Galloway training method, a unique run/walk style of training designed by Olympian and long-time marathoner Jeff Galloway. Galloway produces the Atlanta-based Kaiser Permanente Corporate Run/Walk & Fitness Program which attracts approximately 16,000 participants from more than 400 Atlanta companies and hundreds of individual participants. Now, Barrick has entered her first marathon—the 2014 Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon.

“I’m fortunate to have a few wonderful running partners who stick by me through the peaks and valleys of training,” Barrick said. “With their love and support, along with the love and support of others, it’s easy for me to follow my dreams of completing my first marathon.”

References

¹ Williams PT., *International Journal of Cancer*, January 27, 2014

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For more information about the Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon, please visit the marathon’s web site at www.napavalley-marathon.org.

The Napa Valley Marathon appreciates generous sponsor support from Kaiser Permanente/Thrive, Gatorade, ASICS, Silverado Trail Wineries Association, *Marathon & Beyond*, Visit Napa Valley, Road Runners Club of America, USA Track & Field, MarathonFoto, Napa Valley Marriott Hotel & Spa, GU, KPIX5 and KBCW, XFINITY, Napa Valley Register, KVYN/99.3 The Vine, KVON 1440 AM, Napa Running Company, KCBS AM and FM Radio, Arrowhead Water, Wallaby Organic, Running USA, Peet’s Coffee & Tea, Napa Valley Wine Train, Southgate Mini Storage, Napa Smith Brewery.

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