



# OMAHA RUNNING CLUB NEWSLETTER

*For the members of the Omaha Running Club \* Vol. 47\* Fall 2018*

## Another marathon in the books



**Runners bolt out of the gate for the 7 a.m. start of the Heartland Marathon. More than 450 finished the marathon, half and 10K. The unusually high Missouri River caused a concern to race officials. (Photo by Justin Barnes.)**

## Strong volunteer turnout helps for successful event

**E**ach year seems to pose new challenges for organizers of the Omaha Running Club's Heartland Marathon. The course for the inaugural event four years ago had to be changed at the 11th hour, and unseasonably warm weather that September day stressed runners, volunteers and fans. But the three races — full marathon, half and 10K — went on with little glitches.

The only cause for major concern this year was road construction near the course and the Missouri River, which crept up to the trail on the Iowa side near one of the casino garages. Regardless, just under 500 runners crossed the finish line graced by nearly perfect weather.

Club president Tom Whitaker noted registration numbers for the three races was nearly equal to 2017, which left him up-

### Jane Serues makes her first Omaha visit, Page 2.

beat while watching runners cross the finish line near the Lewis & Clark Landing.

"You know, a lot of races are showing downtrends," he said, "so to be even with last year, I'm very happy with that. We hoped to grow, but not going down (in numbers) is a good thing, too."

While those running the full marathon were moving toward the finish, the half marathon leaders completed their 13.1 miles. Omahan Max Lawlor, 23, was first in 1:23:20, and the first female finisher was Anna Weignandt, 27, of Lincoln in 1:45:47.

The first official finisher in the full was Miguel Carreon. The 51-year-old Oma-

han was clocked in 3:07:38. He topped 31-year-old Jon Tanner of Lincoln by just 10 seconds.

The female champion was Jennifer Freeman, who was third overall. The 37-year-old Omahan recorded a 3:10:33 time.

The 10K overall winner was Daren Konda, 42, of Omaha in 41:33. If that name sounds familiar, it's because he's the Club's vice president in charge of marketing. The female champion was Jessica Bauer, 42, of Omaha in 51:24.

There were 24 relay teams that finished, led by Grab my Baton in 3:22:10. Back for another go was the "veteran" team named Minimum Age 70. The team of Lorraine Whitaker, Mike Manna, Greg Crisman, Jose Badillo and Mariana Phipps placed 17th in 4:34:44.

**See Marathon, Page 2**

# 1984 Olympic Trials a thrill for Omaha visitor

When first-time visitors arrive in Omaha, they often are impressed with the size and scope of the city. Count Jane Serues, the Heartland Marathon's guest speaker — and half-marathon participant — among that group.

"It's amazingly commercial," said Serues, project manager at Runner's World Magazine. "There's a lot of businesses here. It just goes and goes and goes. It's an attractive city, certainly, being on the river. The people are delightful, just very, very nice."

Serues competed in the first Olympic Marathon Trials for women in 1984. Joan Benoit won that race and went on to Olympic fame.

"To be able to run in the first ever women's Olympic Trials, because of the work that was done by what I considered the pioneers was just amazing," Serues said. "I had no opportunities to compete (before that). It was extremely exciting."

Joining her in Omaha for a second straight year was Bart Yasso, who also worked for Runner's World. He placed fourth in his 60-64 age group in the half (2:15:45), and Serues won her 70-over age group (2:02:34).

Serues, who has a 2:46 marathon person-



**Jane Serues, left, and Bart Yasso flank Club president and race director Tom Whitaker. Both sport their finisher medals for the half.**

al best, ran five Boston Marathons. Later, she founded Making Strides and First Strides training workshops for women.

Asked about the future of running, Serues has her concerns.

"My understanding is that the numbers are slipping, except in those huge races that you have to sign up for a year ahead of time," she said. "I worry about it. I think we're on a slope down."

## Marathon: Planning for 2019 Heartland begins soon

*Continued from Page 1*

The Heartland Marathon also served as the RRCA Nebraska State Marathon Championship. Carreon and Freeman were the Open Division winners.

As you would expect for a massive undertaking like a full marathon, the event's success is largely dependent upon a strong volunteer effort. And, once again, race officials, led by volunteer coordinator John Hall, pulled it off.

"We have almost 300 volunteers," Hall said on race day. "Our toughest (jobs to fill) are course monitoring. We've got enough volunteers to cover all the stations except for one. But we were able to get that one covered this morning."

When it comes to "putting the bite" on volunteers, for Hall it's a matter of putting out the word — early and often.

"You've got to start out early to recruit the volunteers," he said. "And then some people have other obligations at the last minute, and you have to find more volunteers. It's a constant recruitment effort, right up to the last minute of the race."

The Club's president and race director continues to marvel at those who help out with the marathon.

"We have fantastic volunteers," Whitaker said. "We have a fantastic board of directors. All of our directors were very actively involved in this (event). They worked very, very hard. The volunteers that

showed up and turned out to help us and support us, we certainly couldn't do it without any of them. So we're deeply appreciative of all those people, and we thank them over and over again."

Whitaker and the other race officials were able to enjoy the good feeling of another successful marathon for about 24 hours. Planning for 2019 starts almost immediately.

"We've got to sit down with the marathon committee and look at some things that maybe we want to do different next year," he said. "We'll look at a date for next year and try to get that posted as soon as we can, maybe have an early-bird special."

Thanks to the runners and volunteers!



# Go Girl raises record funds for 2 causes



Two happy siblings who ran in the sister category.

The 21st annual Go Girl 5k was a great success despite the misting rain. The race sold out and included several new additions like early-bird registration, a sister team category and medals for the kids' run participants just to name a few.

The race and raffle raised a record \$4,000 to be distributed between the Hope Center for Kids and Fit Girl, Inc. Following the age-group awards, a special presentation was made to Bea Sides for more than 20 years of dedication to women's running.

Congrats to all of this year's runners. We look forward to seeing all of you again next year. View photos and results at: [www.gogirlrun.weebly.com](http://www.gogirlrun.weebly.com).

— Jeremy Kaliff



Bea Sides, left, was honored for her 20 years of dedication to women's running.

Photos by Joe Drugmand.



First-place mother and daughter, Melissa and Emma O'Neill.



A dapper Tom Whitaker awards flowers to winner Laurel Johnson.



Averie and Stephannie Maca are all smiles before the race.



Left photo, they're off and running in the kids' race. Right photo, girls from The Hope Center strike a happy pose before tackling the 5k.





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For more about the ORC, go to:  
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Follow the Club on Facebook!

# President's Message

**A**s I prepared my message, it was just a couple days since the conclusion of the Omaha's Heartland Marathon for 2018, and I hardly know where to start to comment on the success of this year's event. I will begin, though, with what I consider the most important factor and express deep appreciation and gratitude for our tremendous volunteers who I believe everyone will agree are the single most important contributors to the success we experienced.

We received many compliments from our participants on the enthusiasm and support everyone provided. Our special guests, U.S. Women's Olympic Trials marathoner Jane Serues and Runner's World's Bart Yasso, who has been to just about every race there is all over the world, were very impressed with volunteer support. I am deeply grateful for all the hard work and dedication everyone so freely gave to the cause. We continually stress the importance of volunteers and cannot say enough about the support everyone provided this year. Thank you one and all. You have elevated our reputation to a level that will surely help our local event grow and prosper in the future.

A special thank you must also go to our race committee for the leadership and just plain hard work that went into presenting our event. We are convinced that we did a good job, but the real proof of how we did is in the feedback from our participants. We received many compliments on all phases of the event, and I would like to take the liberty of presenting below some of the quotes we received:

*"Thank you so much for a great race! It was my husband's first half marathon and my first one in 28 years, and it was awesome, everyone was so polite, great course and food afterwards. I'm so impressed by the two 1:55 young pacer men, outstand-*

*ing and very encouraging. They helped me reach my goal. We definitely will be back!"*

*"I just wanted to thank you for a wonderfully organized and supported race. I took part in a local 10k last weekend sponsored by a different company and the difference between the two races are too numerous to mention. Your attention to detail, volunteers, route support, everything was far superior. Just so grateful! Happy to have chosen this race as my first full marathon and will definitely run with you again. Thanks!"*

*"A big thank you to all the volunteers and organizers! Job well done!"*

*"A big thank you to the Heartland Marathon and the Omaha Running Club. This was my 37th marathon, and I will say you put on a fabulous event. The course, volunteers, water stations, support and finish were top notch. I cannot say enough about what a great marathon it was. Finishing with a run over the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge was a highlight. Great job! Thank you!"*

*"Another wonderful Heartland Marathon weekend! Thanks to everyone involved in organizing and volunteering! We appreciate all your hard work!"*

*"Perfect morning for 13.1 at the Heartland Marathon. A great local event with awesome volunteers! Omaha Running Club should be proud."*

We believe we are, indeed, an event put on by runners, for runners. Our local presence year-round provides familiarity with the local running community. Our top priority is putting on a good event to support our local and out-of-town running guests, and we believe comments such as those above support our position.



**Tom Whitaker**

**See Message, Page 5**

# 2018 Heartland Marathon was monster hit



Photos by Justin Barnes



## Message: Celebrity guests enjoyed Omaha hospitality

*Continued from Page 4*

And I am grateful to Jane and Bart for lending their support to our event. Both proved their warm, friendly reputations as they graciously spent time and many photo ops with runners and families at our expo and on race day as well. I received the following message from Bart the next day:

"Departing the Heartland, big thanks to @OmahaRunClub race crew, amazing

volunteers and congrats to all the runners.

#FunWeekendinOmaha #medalmon-day"

We left Bart with no doubt that Runner's World's recent ranking of Omaha as No. 9 among the top 50 running cities in the USA was justified!

We are already at work planning next year's races with a tentative date of Sept. 22, 2019. Stay tuned for further details.



**Pacers prepare to line up for the start of the marathon.**



*From the editor's point of view*

# Hats off to the Heartland Marathon helpers

The Heartland Marathon just keeps getting better. Yes, the numbers weren't nearly as high as the race committee would have liked, but runners appeared to have enjoyed themselves (as much as



one can after running anywhere from 6.2 miles to 26.2 miles). For proof, read the comments found in Club president Tom Whitaker's message.

Tom was right when he told me during the race that the

total turnout was satisfying in light of the competition out there. With the Club's marathon sandwiched between two other marathons in the area, runners are forced to choose one of the three events.

Only those who organize a full marathon know the massive planning and race-day preparation required to make it safe for the runners and fun for all. On race day comes the one thing planners and participants have absolutely no control over: the weather. The inaugural Heartland Marathon four years ago was victimized by unseasonably warm temperatures. On top of that, city officials forced a very late — and drastic — course change.

This year's weather cooperated, although runners probably would have preferred cooler temps. Race officials worried that road construction near the full and half marathon course could cause problems, but that turned out to be a non-issue. Bigger concerns that Sept. 23 morning was the high level of the Missouri River. Water crept into the garage of one of the Council Bluffs casinos, but runners were able to negotiate that.

So all things considered — and thanks to another amazing volunteer turnout — the Club's signature event clearly was a success. Congrats to those who finished, and thanks to the hundreds who volun-



**Jeremy Kaliff, left, presents a check from the Go Girl Run to Cheri Dickmeyer, executive director of Fit Girl, Inc.**

teered to make it an enjoyable day for the runners.

\* \* \*

Switching gears a bit: The weather didn't exactly cooperate at the 21st annual Go Girl Run on Labor Day. A misty morning didn't dampen the spirits of the participants, and it left new race director Jeremy Kaliff more than pleased. And why shouldn't she be happy? The event raised

around \$4,000 for two great causes — a record for the event. More than 160 crossed the finish line for the 5K race on the Keystone Trail. (See the story and photos on Page 3 and also on Page 7.)

Jeremy took over the Step Into Running program with big shoes to fill after the retirement of Bea Sides, who directed it for 20 years. Congrats on a successful event!



# More Go Girl Run photos by Joe Drugmand



## Upcoming Area Race Dates (For Complete Details, Go to [omaharun.org](http://omaharun.org))

### OCTOBER

- \*10 — ORC Octoberfest Fun Run
- 13 — Nebraska Furniture Mart Halloween 5K Walk/Run
- 13 — Women Race Nebraska Fall Running Retreat
- 13 — Heals to the Pavement for Pregnancy & Infant Loss
- 14 — Legacy Charity Run
- 20 — Be Brave 5K for Special Olympics Nebraska
- 20 — Sumtur Twilight Dash (RTM)
- 20 — Spooky Forest Fun Run
- 21 — G.O.A.T.Z Trail Run (RTM)
- \*26 — ORC The Bones Run 5K (RTM)
- 27 — Skyline Ranches Cross Country Run
- 27 — Charleston's Costume Classic
- 28 — AFCEA GOC Stem 5K Run

### NOVEMBER

- 7 — Ladies of the Evening Group Run
- 10 — Beer & Bagel Half-Ish (RTM)
- 11 — Beer & Bagel 4-Ish (RTM)
- \*18 — ORC Annual Meeting and Fun Run (RTM)
- 22 — Feast and Feathers Trail Races (RTM)
- \*22 — ORC Thanksgiving Fun Run
- 22 — Omaha Turkey Trot 5K Run/Walk

### DECEMBER

- 5 — Ladies of the Evening Group Run
- 8 — Arthritis Foundation Nebraska Jingle Bell Run
- \*9 — ORC Holiday Lights Fun Run
- \* Indicates ORC-sponsored event. (RTM) indicates Run the Magnet event.

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# OMAHA RUNNING CLUB

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