



# OMAHA RUNNING CLUB NEWSLETTER

*For the members of the Omaha Running Club \* Vol. 48\* Spring 2019*

## Nielsen, Sutton Moss join HOF

**T**he 10-week wait was certainly worth it. That's about how long it was from the normal November announcement of the ORC Hall of Fame inductees to the re-scheduled event that took place following the Feb. 3 Chiller Challenge.

Alan Higley, who took over as coordinator of the HOF, delivered the news at the NP Dodge Park pavilion on a relatively balmy Super Bowl Sunday. The newest inductees were Christy Nielsen and Nancy Sutton Moss.

Nancy was recognized for her 40-plus years with the Lincoln Marathon, 34 as race director. As noted by Higley, the Lincoln Marathon under her watch has grown to more than 13,500 participants.

She's a highly active race director as you'll spot her cheering on runners as they cross the finish line. And, most impressive, is the fact she has never accepted a dime as the Lincoln Marathon race director.

Lincoln hosts one of the top marathons in the Midwest, rivaling those in Minneapolis, Chicago and Kansas City. Runners get the thrill of finishing on the 50-yard-line of Memorial Stadium.

Nancy and her husband, Glen, winter in Arizona, so she was unable to attend the announcement ceremony. Nielsen, the top female finisher in the 8K Chiller Challenge, was thrilled to accept her plaque.

Higley, in introducing her, noted that Christy is one of the most decorated and accomplished female runners of all time from this area. Most notably, she qualified for the women's Olympic Marathon Trials in 2000, 2004 and 2008. She has



**Christy Nielsen holds the plaque handed to her by ORC president Tom Whitaker. (Photo by Joe Drugmand.)**

### Newest HOF inductees share their running stories. **Page 3.**

more than 50 marathons under her belt, including three Lincoln Marathon titles.

In 2010, Christy added Ultra Marathons (50 miles) to her resume. In 2012, she was first female finisher at the Lean Horse 50 Mile in Custer, S.D. She also was ninth overall and second female that same year at the Market to Market 50K that finished in Lincoln.

Her 50K personal best (3:36:02) took place in 2013 at the Caumsett 50K in Lloyd Harbor, N.Y., where she took seventh overall and second among females.

A standout four-sport athlete at Treynor High School, Christy also starred at Creighton University while working toward her undergraduate degrees in Exercise Science and Psychology.

She works full-time as a physical therapist, but she found time to serve as a volunteer assistant cross country coach at Omaha Skutt. And you'll often find her byline in the Omaha World-Herald's Live Well Nebraska publication.

Taking the microphone, she said, "Aw, shoot, you give me a microphone and we talk about running, we could be here for days." She then reflected on the ups and downs of her running career.

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# 1st McMahon Scholarships awarded

The inaugural Jim McMahon Memorial Scholarships were awarded in February at a surprise ceremony at Fremont High School.

The recipients were Fremont senior runners Ross McMahon and Avery Decker. The two were awarded \$250 scholarships to continue running track and cross country at their respective colleges.

The scholarships are funded from the Omaha Running Club's open track meet held each June, both named after the longtime Midland University Cross Country and Track coach. McMahon was inducted into the Midland Lutheran Hall of Fame, as well as the NAIA Cross Country Hall of Fame. He also was one of the founding members of what would become the Omaha Running Club in the 1970s.

Ross McMahon, Jim's grandson, is a multiple state qualifier in the high jump as well as a member of Fremont's standout cross country team. He plans on competing at, no surprise, Midland Lutheran University in the fall.

"Being raised in a family of coaches and runners, track is in his (Ross') blood and is a part of who he is," Fremont assistant track coach Alexander Way said. "Track is more than just glory and winning medals for Ross."

Decker began running just two years ago and immediately won teammates over with her work ethic.



**Derek Fey, center, awards the Jim McMahon Scholarship to Fremont High School athletes Avery Decker, left, and Ross McMahon. The announcement came at a surprise ceremony.**

"I can say without a doubt that she was the most selfless student-athlete I have coached yet," Fremont head girls cross country coach Jacob Smrcina said. "She

***"I can say without a doubt that she was the most selfless student-athlete I have coached yet."***

***— Fremont cross country coach Jacob Smrcina on Avery Decker***

was always one of the first ones to practice — if she wasn't giving rides to several others — and was the last one to leave because she was going the extra mile to encourage a new girl or help clean up."

The Jim McMahon Open Track meet is scheduled for Sunday, June 9, starting at 8 a.m. The event is open to all runners of all ages, which is precisely the way McMahon would want it to be.

"Coach McMahon encouraged so many people to continue running, even if they didn't attend Midland University," race director Derek Fey said. "He would yell splits at me during races when I ran for Dana College. He didn't care who you ran for."

Runners registered by May 30 for the track meet will receive a T-shirt and a car towel. To register, either go to [omaha-run.org](https://www.omaha-run.org) and search the calendar for June 9 or go to:

<https://www.cognitofirms.com/OmahaRunningClub1/JimMcMahonOpenTrackMeet>.

## HOF: Chiller Challenge blessed with warm weather

***Continued from Page 1***

"I've been doing this for a long time," she said. "Anybody who knows me, I've lost a lot of family in my lifetime. And this (pointing to the gathering) has become my family. I wish all you guys were around 25 years ago when I was running, because it was lonely back then."

"This is amazing. The number of people who showed up for me today is why I've done what I've done."

She closed by saying, "Thank you very much. Hopefully, I will still be out there for many years to come — not as fast as I used to — hopefully still inspiring everybody and fixing people and coaching people."

Christy "warmed up" for the HOF announcement that Sunday by finishing 10th overall and first among the women in the Chiller Challenge 8K. Her time of 32:53 equaled a 6:37 pace.

She was one of 143 participants in the 8K race that was blessed with unusually warm weather. Henry Stagel of Omaha won the featured race in 29:53. The 16-year-old beat Scott Haug, 39, of Omaha by a mere 11 seconds.

The 2-mile race was captured by 8-year-old Isaac Ulrich, who was clocked in 14:38. Runner-up was Calvin Tomcak, 11, in 15:42. The first female finisher, third overall, was Ava Johnson, 12, in 16:07.

# Moss leads marathon to another level

The Lincoln Track Club was founded in 1975. Three years later, Nancy Sutton Moss wanted to get involved with the new club. Wow, did she get involved. She has spent more than four decades with the Lincoln Marathon — and a year ago finished her 34th year as race director.

She and co-race director Gary Bredehoft have watched Nebraska's largest marathon grow to more than 13,500 entries. She's seen the event grow from hundreds to one that has sold out every year for the past decade.

When she received word in January that she was selected to join Christy Nielsen as one of the newest Omaha Running Club Hall of Fame inductees, she was more than taken aback.

"I was just shocked," she said, "because it's Omaha and we're Lincoln. I realize that Lincoln gives a lot of Omaha awards to runners, but I was very surprised."

What she's not surprised at is the growth of Lincoln's — indeed, Nebraska's — premiere event. More than 7,600 finished the half marathon last year, and nearly 1,000 completed the full marathon.

Turn the clock back to the early 1980s, and you'll find there were less than 1,000 entries for the full marathon. But a course change that took place in 1986 eliminated



**Nancy Sutton Moss with her co-race director Gary Bredehoft. Her association with the Lincoln Marathon dates more than four decades.**

runners from traversing around the Lincoln airport.

"The reason we changed that," Nancy said, "there really weren't any places for (spectators) to be. And one year, it was so windy the porta potties blew over. And that's when the city said, 'We'll look at maybe moving it to a city-wide course.'"

Mother Nature apparently didn't care for the decision to change the course.

"It rained," Nancy said. "Oh my gosh, it was the worst race ever. It rained from start to finish. It rained hard."

The marathon added a 13.1-mile race that same year. Jon Eggers was the inaugural half winner in 1:06:34. The first full marathon took place in 1978, when Cliff Karthauser won in 2:19:43.

One of Nancy's tasks starting in 1979 was handing out medals to the finishers.

"That's the greatest job in the world," she said. "People are so excited when they finish. It used to be a medal that you put in somebody's hand. You didn't have a ribbon. I am still a proponent of putting that medal around their neck. Do not hand it to them, unless they say, 'Just give it to me.' It's such a thrill to finish."

Adding the half marathon, Nancy said, was the spark that caused the event's participation rate to skyrocket over the decades.

"That really took things to another level," she said. "When we did that, it (the ratio of women to men) was 60-40 for the half. In a 13.1 (distance) women think they can run that."

The development of training groups also helped increase participation, she said.

**See Moss, Page 4**

# Nielsen leans on friends to help in healing

Like any elite runner, Christy Nielsen has had more than her share of painful injuries. But none can compare to the emotional heartache of losing a loved one. The latest tragedy to strike her came in November 2015 when her nephew, Tristan White, was struck by a car and killed while running with two wrestling teammates on a gravel road south of Treynor, Iowa.



**Christy**

Christy, who writes occasional columns for the World-Herald's Live Well Nebras-

ka blog, shared her grief with her readers shortly after losing Tristan. She wrote about her frantic drive to the hospital, where she was told he didn't make it.

"And what was he doing in his final moments?" she wrote. "Running. He was doing what I loved to do every day of my life. I just couldn't wrap my mind around this."

"Late that night my training partner texted me and asked me what I needed. I needed to run. So the next day, on little sleep, I met two of my friends for a run. It was still my outlet."

That's the mindset to this day for the 43-

year-old physical therapist. Running is her therapy. Running, especially with the friends she's made over the past 20 years, helps her get over life's rough patches.

After cruising to first among the women at the Feb. 3 Chiller Challenge, she accepted her plaque heralding her as the newest ORC Hall of Fame inductee to a standing ovation of more than 100 witnesses at the NP Dodge Park pavilion.

Interviewed before the ceremony, Christy said she was thrilled to join the exclusive club of outstanding runners and volun-

**See Nielsen, Page 4**



# Moss: Volunteer effort is the key to Lincoln's success

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Taking on the role as race director in the mid-1980s presented a whole new challenge for Nancy. She credits one person for helping her tackle the task.

"Jim Lewis was my mentor," she said. "Without Jim, I would never have had the confidence to do this. I still call Jim and run things by him."

"He instilled in us that everything should be measured accurately. We start on time."

Another idea that was adopted was finishing inside Memorial Stadium rather than on the outdoor track.

"The 50-yard-line at Memorial Stadium, I think, is something that people really like," Nancy said. "For some people, that's the only time they get on that field."

Many marathons around the nation offer shorter-distance races (10K and 5K), but not Lincoln's. And that's by design, Nancy said.

"We decided some time ago to leave it a pure long-distance running event," she said. "If you add another distance, there goes your volunteers."

She did admit a kids' run was added as part of the Lincoln Track Club's desire to promote running among the youngsters.

"The track club is very good about investing in our youth," she said. "We have given a lot of money to a variety of schools in Lincoln to finish out their funding for a track at their schools. We figured these kids are future runners."

The key to any marathon's success is the volunteer effort. And, as Alan Higley stated in his remarks about Nancy during the Hall of Fame ceremony, "When Nancy puts out a call for a volunteer, no one can say no to her."

Rounding up volunteers is not nearly as easy as it sounds, she said.

"You pull in a lot of favors sometimes to get those volunteers," she said. "Sometimes they come in one and two at

a time. And you're thrilled when you get a volunteer — especially a new volunteer."

Of course, Nancy has many, many stories to share from marathons past. One, in particular, stood out.

"We were getting ready to tear down the finish line," she said, "and this girl comes up and says, 'My mom is still out there. Would you guys wait? She's running for my sister who has cancer.'"

"A group of National Guard guys went out and found her and ran in with her. We took all the extra flowers from what we had been giving to the women, and we wrapped those up with a ribbon and gave them to her. She walked right over and gave them to her daughter who had cancer. Everybody was crying."

Nancy knows her years as the marathon's race director are numbered. But moments like that make all the work worthwhile.

"It's just little stories like that that warm your heart," she said, "and you go home and say, 'That's why I do this.' Obviously, we don't do it for the T-shirt."

# Nielsen: Marathon Trials was top thrill as a runner

*Continued from Page 3*

teers now in the HOF.

"It's one of those things when you're running really well, you think of (the HOF)," she said. "Now I'm kind of on the downside, whatever. But, yeah, I'm super excited about it."

A standout four-sport athlete at Treynor and cross country star at Creighton University, Christy can't believe it's been 11 years since she last qualified for the women's Olympic Marathon Trials.

"It freaks me out when I sit there and think about my last Olympic Trials was 11 years ago," she said. "It seems like yesterday. All the years I've been running, it's gone so fast. It's so hard to believe it's been that long."

She didn't hesitate when answering that the Olympic Trials was the pinnacle of her running career.



**Christy Nielsen credits social media for adding to her long list of friends she has made during her long running career.**

"Absolutely, 100 percent," she said. "Just being with those other ladies, by far, is something I will never forget. Standing by Joan Benoit, and how great of athletes those people are."

Christy was totally amped up for those major events. Sleep the night before was not going to happen.

"There was no sleeping the night before," she said. "It's was just excitement, especially with the trials. You're standing on the (start) line with the best females in the United States of America."

In those early days, there was no social media platform on which to update friends regarding races and other personal happenings. That's totally changed today.

"I have more running family (now) than family," she said. "I wish I would have had this back then, but nobody was around like they are now."

She used Facebook to let her friends know that she copes with difficult times the only way she knows. She wrote the week of Tristan's death: "My post on Facebook that morning was this: If I am not with my family and you need to get ahold of me, I will be doing the only thing I know how to do when I don't know what else to do — I will be running."

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omaharun.org

Follow the Club on Facebook, Twitter  
& Instagram!

# President's Message

Just returned from the annual Road Runners Club of America convention held in New Orleans this year. It was pleasant for the morning fun runs and cool and drizzly for the Run Through History 5K Sunday morning. The Run was interesting as it wound through one of the old New Orleans cemeteries with the huge, fancy stone vaults, since the water table is too high to bury underground.

The RRCA convention is always a great opportunity to keep up with what is new in the world of running and walking and to interface with fellow state representatives and club officials from other parts of the country who are constantly developing some interesting new running programs and races. The most satisfying point for me was that, even with the new ideas I observed, I am very proud of the many running opportunities and training programs our Club has to offer.

We have had a bad winter by anyone's standards that included devastating flooding that impacted a number of our local runners. Hopefully, all of us not directly affected by the flooding will continue to support relief efforts with contributions of effort and resources in any way possible.

We need some good weather as spring arrives to promote a great offering of Club events for the upcoming months. I would like to especially mention one of our upcoming races. We urge everyone to turn out for our first big event, the NE<sup>5</sup> on April 27 at Pint 9 in La Vista. It's a perfect new venue for the race, and everyone will have a great time. In lieu of another shirt to pack away somewhere, race director Kim Kanellis has a surprise that you won't want to miss.

Plus, ORC will be offering great refreshments following the race. Please sign up and help us make this one of the premier races in the state. And the NE<sup>5</sup> this year is

the Road Runners Club of America Nebraska State 5-mile Championship!

I am particularly looking forward to our volunteer appreciation dinner in June to say a special thank you to the many people who really make our Club and events possible. We would not be able to accomplish all the things we do were it not for the many dedicated volunteers who give countless hours to support us, and we want to acknowledge our appreciation for that effort. Check out our website for more information.



**Tom Whitaker**

Among a great lineup of programs and events this summer are the Distance Training Clinic led by Derek Fey and the women's training program led by Jeremy Kaliff that provide great opportunities to enjoy some dedicated and talented guidance and coaching for a variety of participants. Our program directors will once again be working their special brands of magic in supporting and training all levels of ability. And the many races and Club fun runs throughout the summer give great chances to apply lessons learned, enjoy the company of other runners and perhaps go home with a little hardware as well.

As this year's racing season kicks off, I would like to say a few words about supporting local events, particularly Omaha's Heartland Marathon, Marathon Relay, Half Marathon and 10K. Here are just some of the activities your local Running Club provides during a given year to support the running community:

» We put on eight holiday-themed fun runs per year. These are free to members and the general public alike; just show up and participate. Our fun run coordinator, Daren Konda, always has door prizes and often refreshments for everyone who attends, adding to the fun.

**See Message, Page 6**

# Hall of Fame was icing to Chiller cake

I'll keep it short and to the point for this issue. There was a lot to cover here as we



all tried to survive one of the toughest winters I can remember. Amazingly, our warmest day of February was the day of the Chiller Challenge.

And what a day it was, being blessed with 50+ weather for the event. The

highlight, for me at least, was the announcement of the 2019 inductees into the Omaha Running Club Hall of Fame. Past HOF members vote on the nominees, and the Board approves it. Nancy Sutton Moss and Christy Nielsen were two outstanding choices.

I got to know both during my years at the World-Herald while covering the area running beat — including a few Lincoln Marathons. Nancy was incredibly cooperative while helping me report on the marathon, and Christy was truly a

delightful interview. I had great catch-up interviews with Christy that Sunday and by phone with Nancy a day later.

What a nice turnout for the HOF ceremony. Many of Christy's friends were there to show their support. As noted in the story on her, she has relied on those new and long-time friends for support.

The HOF is a great way to recognize the many standout runners and volunteers in our area. And hats off to Alan Higley for taking over as the man who coordinates it all.

## Message: Club's mission is to support the community

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» We put on 10 Club races per year that are fee-supported and timed with T-shirts and awards for overall and age-group winners. Any proceeds left over after contributions to charities are used to support the activities of the Club. All Club officers and race officials are uncompensated volunteers; we all do this because we want to carry out our Club mission and support our local runners.

» We maintain a website that provides a free event calendar where any organization putting on a race can post its event without charge.

» We provide valuable information on our website for organizing and putting on events that is available free of charge.

» We provide equipment rental services that makes time clocks and finish-line equipment available to events at a reasonable rental rate. Although we may make some money doing this, there is a substantial investment involved. Finish line clocks and tripods alone cost close to \$2,500 each.

» We provide race result services as well for a reasonable price.

» We publish a quality newsletter that

has won the Road Runners Club of America national award for large club newsletters.

» We sponsor the Step into Running program, a beginning training program for women that has gotten hundreds of ladies over the years off the couch and into a healthy lifestyle. For more information, visit [www.gogirlrun.weebly.com](http://www.gogirlrun.weebly.com) and click "training."

» We provide a Distance Training Program that provides professional coaching, educational speakers and encouragement for anyone interested in training for a marathon or half marathon. This program is a little more expensive at \$65, but provides 20 weeks of training, a training schedule, log book, ORC singlet, post marathon party, finisher T-shirt and more encouragement than you can possibly imagine. Did I mention a one-year Club membership and a 25 percent discount on any Heartland Marathon event are included as well?

As you know, the Omaha Running Club is a volunteer organization with a mission to support the Omaha running and walking community. We do our best to support that mission to the extent that everyone's available personal resources permit. There are a number of national events these days that serve a purpose by putting

on challenging and unique events that are not necessarily staged locally. But I would urge everyone to keep in mind that although these may be worthy events, they come to town, utilize local resources and leave town with the proceeds. Other than providing an event in which to participate, they do little to support our local community. Please keep our local events in mind as you plan your racing season.

We hope you will join us for one of Omaha's Heartland Marathon events. You can sign up at [heartlandmarathon.org](http://heartlandmarathon.org). Not ready for a marathon or the half? Then get a team together and do the relay or sign up for the 10K. Not ready to run at all? You can still be a valuable part of this event by volunteering.

We are going to need A LOT of volunteers to make this a success. We will have volunteer opportunities listed soon, so check out [omaharun.org/volunteering](http://omaharun.org/volunteering) and sign up. You will be providing a very important service to our local running community.

My point with the foregoing is to emphasize that your support for your Club by running or volunteering for local events is important. Remember, any money raised stays here in Omaha to support you, the local runner, the very reason for our existence.



# 2019 Step Into Running Program begins June 11

By Jeremy Kaliff

We have some exciting changes planned for the 2019 program, which kicks off June 11. The program is for those just beginning their running journey, those returning to running after time away or those looking for motivation and support.

Group runs are held Tuesday evenings at 6. The program wraps up with the Go Girl 5K on Labor Day.

Help spread the word by directing family and friends to [www.gogirlrun.weebly.com](http://www.gogirlrun.weebly.com) for details or to get registered. Once there, just click the “training” tab.

New this year: four guest speakers on a variety of wellness-related topics and those who attend 9 of the 11 training sessions earn a special award.

Help us make this program grow!



## Go Girl Run Details:

Early bird registration for the Go Girl Run will open May 4 and run through May 11. During this registration period you can register for just \$20 (our lowest price) and be entered to win prizes. So mark your calendar so you don't miss out.

## Go Girl Run Early Bird Registration sponsored by:

Michael C. Danahay, DDS, P.C.



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

### APRIL

- \*15 — ORC Duty Free Fun Run
- 20 — UNO Maverick Run
- 20 — Strides for Seniors
- \*20 — ORC Spring Trail Clean-Up
- 26 — Race Against Extinction Trail Run
- 27 — Valley 7 Lakes Marathon
- 27 — SVDP Parish 5K/Fun Run
- 27 — D-Day Memorial Run
- 27 — Race Against the Odds
- \*27 — NE5 Fabulous Miles (RTM)

### MAY

- 1 — Ladies of the Evening Group Run
- \*4 — Little Warrior Track Meet (Westside High School)
- 4 — St. James/Seton Catholic School super Eagle 5K
- 4 — 6K For Water
- 4 — Steps for Stem 5K Run/Walk
- 4 — Brunch 5K
- 5 — Lincoln Marathon and Half Marathon
- \*7 — ORC Taco Tuesday Fun Run
- 11 — Keep Kids Alive Drive 25 “Live Forward” 5K Walk & Run
- 11 — Wear Yellow Ride, Run & Walk
- 18 — Grief's Journey 5K/10K and Remembrance Walk
- 19 — Papillion Half Marathon, 10K and 5K
- 27 — Boys Town Hospital Memorial Day Run

### JUNE

- 5 — Ladies of the Evening Group Run

- 9 — Blazing Trails for Brain Injury 5K/1 Mile Walk, Run Roll
- 9 — Anytime Fitness — Elkhorn Days 5K
- \*9 — ORC Jim McMahon Open Track Meet (RTM)
- \*11 — Step Into Running Program — evening session
- \*12 — ORC Home Run Fun Run
- 15 — 2019 Cornfield Cornfield
- 15 — Storm the Fort 5K Run
- \*18 — Step Into Running Training Program — evening session
- 23 — The Road to Omaha Run
- \*25 — Step Into Running Training Program — evening session

### JULY

- \*2 — Step Into Running Training Program — evening session
- 4 — Murray Freedom Festival 5K Run
- 9 — Step Into Running Training Program — evening session
- 10 — Ladies of the evening Group Run
- \* Indicates ORC-sponsored event. (RTM) indicates Run the Magnet event.

## Upcoming Run the Magnet Events

- \*Aug. 4 — Lake Wehrspann Run 10K/2M/1K Kids' Run
  - \*Aug. 11 — Boxer 500 5K/1M Walk/Kids' Runs
  - \*Aug 31 — Peak to Peak 10 Miles
  - \*Sept. 2 — Go Girl Run 5K/1M/Kids' Runs
  - \*Sept. 22 — Heartland Marathon
- The goal: Accumulate a total of 20 points — 10 points must be from ORC events with respect to the events on “The Magnet.”

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# OMAHA RUNNING CLUB

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**The ORC is a proud  
member of the RRCA!**

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## ORC Membership Discounts

SUPPORT THESE BUSINESSES AND **SAVE!**

- Peak Performance** 10% off regular-priced shoes & clothing  
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- Push Pedal Pull** 10% off regular-priced merchandise  
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- Rockbrook  
Women's Gym** 10% off any gym membership  
10820 Prairie Hills Dr.
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17660 Wright Plaza
-