



OMAHA RUNNING CLUB NEWSLETTER

*For the members of the Omaha Running Club * Vol. 49 * Spring 2020*

Inductees saluted at new venue

Weeks before the words coronavirus, social distancing and Zoom were added to our vocabulary, the Omaha Running Club's Annual Meeting and Chiller Challenge took place on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 2. Little did those attending know how much the nation — and the world — would be rocked by a new disease.

But on that unseasonably mild day, the annual Chiller Challenge drew just over 200 excited participants and served as the kickoff to the New Year of ORC and many other running events. A venue change was needed after the permanent closing of NP Dodge Park due to the re-occurring Missouri River flooding. After searching various alternatives, ORC officials chose the spacious Papillion Landing Community Recreation Center.

It wasn't the first site switch. Previous flooding moved the Chiller Challenge to the Firefighter's Hall at 60th and Grover Streets. It was in the running to be the new location for 2020.

"We thought of a couple of other places," ORC president Tom Whitaker said. "We have a very close relationship with the City of Papillion. And they have this brand, new facility that just opened (Papillion Landing). It was decided, in discussions with the City of Papillion, that we could use this for our first event of the year."

Following the Chiller Challenge, which was blessed by ideal weather, participants and others gathered in one of the rec center's large gyms for the meal and announcement of officers and the 2020 Hall of Fame induction class.

"It's a beautiful place," Whitaker said, "and we're really happy to be here. It was



Two of the three 2019 Omaha Running Club HOF inductees were present at the annual meeting — Tom Cody, left, and Glen Moss. Their plaques were presented by Club president Tom Whitaker.

a great turnout. Of course, the weather helped out a lot."

A year earlier, it was decided to move the annual meeting and HOF induction ceremony to coincide with the Chiller Challenge rather than hold it Thanksgiving week, where the turnouts at Chalco Hills Recreation Area were relatively sparse.

"November really wasn't working out all that well," the Club president said. "It just kind of made sense (to move it). This is a membership meeting to reward members. That's why we changed it."

First up was the result of voting for the 2020 board, followed by the award winners of the Run the Magnet program.

They were Maria Beckers, Michael Beckers, Hollis Buffkins, Cheryl Clayton, April Langford and Joy Mann.

The highlight, of course, was the revealing of the 2019 HOF inductees — Tom Cody, Jon Eggers and Glen Moss.

Eggers, who lives in Colorado, was unable to attend, but Cody and Moss were there to receive their plaques. The three increased the ORC's Hall to 42 members.

Alan Higley, who took over the lead for coordinating the election of new HOF members, recognized past honorees who were in attendance.

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Hall of Fame: Lou Soukup paved the way for the ORC Hall

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Before introducing the 2019 inductees, Higley acknowledged Lou Soukup, who for years spearheaded the effort to recognize the outstanding competitors, race organizers and volunteers since its inception in 2004. Today, Soukup lives in the Villages near Orlando, Fla.

"The Hall of Fame was his idea, a great idea," Higley said. "Those of you who know Lou, know that he liked to run races, and he would cherry-pick (races). He would look around, find out which races had five-year age groups, and find out who was entered in those races. If there was a lot of competition, he would go somewhere else."

Higley explained that he received an email from Soukup ahead of the annual meeting.

Said Higley: "His email to me the other day read, 'By the way, I won the 100th race of my career. It was a cross country 5K at Sumter County Fairgrounds down in Florida. It wasn't a big race by any stretch, maybe 40 people. All the big guns were at a major race in Ocala.

'I ran a 27-minute 5K. We used to run faster than that in our cool-downs, actually much faster. But, hey, most of the 99 previous victories were under the same situation — small crowd, no big guns.'"



The 2019 Run the Magnet award winners were announced at the Feb. 2 annual meeting. They are, from left, Maria Beckers, Michael Beckers, Hollis Buffkins, Cheryl Clayton, April Langford and Joy Mann.

Soukup continued, saying he was on pace to run 50 races again in 2020 — a streak that dates to 1985. He was inducted into the HOF in 2009.

Turning to the 2019 class, Higley said the choices were difficult. The ORC chose to induct the top three vote-getters. Their introductions follow.

TOM CODY, VOLUNTEER

Here's what Higley said after Cody stepped up front to accept his award:

"Tom Cody has been a long-time sup-

porter of the Omaha Running Club and has made numerous contributions over many years, having served as a race director, newsletter editor and volunteer, and still volunteers often for current events. Tom has also been a worthy competitor, having run the Lincoln Marathon a number of times, as well as other marathons and local races. He has been a steady behind-the-scenes contributor who deserves recognition for nearly a lifetime of work for the ORC. He embod-

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Omaha Running Club Hall of Fame Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>
Frank Perrone	2004	Gary Juhlin	2007	Jim McMahon	2013
Jill Garlock	2004	Leonard Vavra	2007	Ron Olsen	2014
John Petersen	2004	Alan Higley	2008	Roxi Erickson	2014
John Thomas	2004	Gary Meyer	2008	Daren Konda	2015
Karlene (Erickson) Herrell	2004	Bea Sides	2009	Tom Whitaker	2015
Mick Freeman	2004	Cliff Karthaus	2009	Jose Badillo	2016
Nancy McCormick	2004	Lou Soukup	2009	Tim Dooling	2016
Bob Garcia	2005	John Hawkins	2010	Harvey Kunz	2017
Chuck Cooper	2005	Stan Shirk	2010	Tony Jones	2017
Craig Christians	2005	Greg Carlberg	2011	Nancy Sutton Moss	2018
Mike Ewoldt	2006	Jimmy Hall	2011	Christy Nielsen	2018
Tim Hendricks	2006	Ronn Baker	2012	Tom Cody	2019
Todd Nott	2006	Erin Sullivan	2012	Jon Eggers	2019
Dick Burrows	2007	Gary Wasserman	2013	Glen Moss	2019

Hall of Fame: Higley, Eggers ran for Nebraska Wesleyan

Continued from Page 2

ies the true spirit of giving to an organization without thought of reward for his efforts.”

JON EGGERS, COMPETITOR

Higley announced that Eggers was sad he couldn't attend. The two were teammates at Nebraska Wesleyan, and Higley shared a couple stories about their days running for the Plainsmen (as they were nicknamed until 2001).



Jon Eggers

“Jon was just an outstanding runner,” said Higley. “He graduated from

Nebraska Wesleyan in 1978. He lettered in both cross country and track as a freshman, sophomore, junior and senior. He was a two-time NCAA Division III national cross country qualifier.”

Higley also noted that as a senior, Eggers won the 1977 NIAC cross country individual title, leading Wesleyan to the conference team title.

He was an all-American after finishing sixth at the D-III national meet, where the Plainsmen finished 19th.

“Someone — I don't know who it was,” Higley said with a sly smile, “decided it would be a good idea to remove everything out of his dorm room and fill it full of newspapers.”

In 1978, Eggers set the NWU record in the outdoor mile in 4:12.3, a time that still ranking among the school's fastest all-time performances.

Higley continued reading: “After college, Eggers was frequently one of top finishers (and often the winner) at local area road races. He also competed on the national level. He finished seventh at the 1979 Chicago Marathon with a time of 2:39:22 in one of his first marathons.

“He had personal bests of 24:20.4 in the 5 mile; 29:35.00 in the 10K; 37:25.8 in the 12K; 46:44 in the 15K; 49:34 in the 10 mile and 2:18:07 in the marathon. On April 20, 1981, he finished 52nd at the Boston Marathon with a time of 2:18:55. In 1983 he finished 20th at the United States Cross Country Trials and was 38th in 1984 U.S. Olympic Trials Marathon in Buffalo, N.Y., with a time of 2:21:09. Jon accomplished all of these feats while working full time as a graphic artist.”

Higley concluded his remarks on Eggers by remembering one of the more popular Lincoln races, the Statehood Day Run.

“The race was not an easy course,” Higley said. “It went out toward the airport, so you had the wind in both directions. It often was 20 or 25 degrees with 15 or 20 mph winds. Jon's five-year average was around 53:40 for 10 miles. If you take out his two slow years, he averaged around 51:40.”

Eggers was disappointed that he couldn't attend the ceremony, emailing: “It was a very hard call to make, and I'll probably regret it. I'm extremely honored to be given this award. It's unusual to have such strong running communities like Omaha and Lincoln so close to each other that have remained so active and progressive over the years.

“I've made so many friends from road racing, and I will always remember the great people and running events in Omaha.”

GLEN MOSS, RACE ORGANIZER/VOLUNTEER

Higley finished by inviting Glen Moss to accept his award. If he had a bit of a shocked look on his face, it was by design. Glen's wife, Nancy Sutton Moss, (HOF Class of 2018) fooled him into attending. He totally was unaware he was following her into the ORC's Hall.

“You really didn't think we just wanted Nancy to come, did you?” Moss was asked when he arrived up front.

Higley then introduced the last honoree

this way:

“Glen Moss has been actively involved in the Lincoln and Omaha running communities for over four decades. He has been a member of the Lincoln Track Club Board of Directors since 1995 serving in many capacities to include Technical Advisor, Equipment Manager, Financial Advisor and President since 2013. Under his leadership, the LTC has established and maintained long-term working relationships and partnerships with the City of Lincoln, University of Nebraska, Nebraska National Guard, Lincoln Public Schools, The Great Plains Trails Network and several corporate sponsors. He has brought structure to the LTC Board of Directors by getting the by-laws updated, instituting a regular schedule of board meetings and providing opportunities for the LTC to give back to the community, both financially and otherwise.

“Glen works closely with the City of Lincoln to ensure safety for all of the runners and volunteers during the events. Glen is often the first to arrive at an event and the last to leave. He typically tows one of the trailers to the event, helps set up the start/finish area, ensures there is power to the trailer and that the audio equipment is in working order. He picks up the trash and makes sure the venue is cleaner than when we arrived. Glen helped establish the LTC ‘Games Committee’ in accordance with the USA Track & Field Rules of Competition to ensure that the LTC is in compliance with all USATF Rules and Regulations at LTC Events. Glen is willing to do anything to ensure the event is successful.”

After the applause ended, Moss said: “This truly is a surprise. I had no idea.” He added that he was proud of the partnership between the Lincoln and Omaha running clubs.

“I thank the Omaha Running Club and the Hall of Fame for this recognition,” he said in closing.

For more on the 2019 HOF inductees, see Page 4.

ORC Hall inductees started as runners

The three newest members of the Omaha Running Club Hall of Fame had at least one thing in common: They all were runners — one, of course, much swifter than the others. Jon Eggers ranks among the very best to ever compete in Nebraska. Tom Cody still enters occasional races when he's not volunteering. And Glen Moss jumped right into his role with the Lincoln Marathon planning committee after his running days ended.

Eggers was a standout both during and after his four-year career at Nebraska Wesleyan. He now lives in Colorado and works as curriculum coordinator at Front Range Community College's Boulder campus. Unable to attend the Feb. 2 HOF induction ceremony, Eggers was glad to participate in an email interview.

Eggers well-remembers his highly decorated cross country and track seasons at Wesleyan, which ended in 1978. That senior year, he became an NCAA Division III all-American.

"Out of 425 runners, I finished in sixth place," he said. "It was at Case Western University in Cleveland, and we ran in 2- to 3-inches of snow with sloppy, muddy conditions. I was lucky to get out with the leaders because I knew the footing would deteriorate quickly if I got boxed in towards the back.

"After the race, I was told I was a few seconds out of second place, and the top two places got to automatically advance to the Division I nationals. My second highlight was breaking the NWU school record in the mile. I ran a 4:12.3 my senior year just breaking the previous record by Ron Greeno, whom I respect greatly. In fact, after the race, he was the first person to congratulate me, something I will never forget."

With that performance, Eggers earned a spot at the D-III outdoor nationals in Grand Rapids, Mich. He placed 10th in the finals.

Eggers kept on running after college. His personal-best 2:18:07 at Grandma's



Tom Cody at the 2009 Peak 2 Peak 10-miler that started in Bellevue and finished at 78th and Cass on the Keystone Trail. (Photo by David Hedman).

Marathon in Duluth, Minn., qualified him for the 1984 Olympic Trials in Buffalo, N.Y.

"I was seeded 135th out of the 200 qualifiers, and I placed 38th overall," he said. "It wasn't my best time, but back then they started the race at noon so ABC Wide World of Sports could cover the race. Because of the late start on Memorial Day weekend, the temperature rose quickly into the 80s and the humidity was in the 80 to 90 percent range."

While he enjoyed running the Boston Marathon, local races were favorites of Eggers, and he usually was first or close to it in most. He calls Pioneers Park in Lincoln one of his favorite all-time local courses.

"I also remember competing against the likes of Bill Rodgers and Frank Shorter a number of times," he said. "And I remember standing next to Joan Benoit at the Boston Marathon starting line wishing each other good luck."

Being inducted into the ORC Hall, Eggers said, was special.

"It's been many years since I've raced in the region," he said, "and to be remembered by the Omaha running community in this manner really means a lot to me. I'm honored to be in the same Hall of

Fame as runners that I have always admired and respected."

Lincoln resident Moss was planning to run the 1987 Lincoln Marathon, but an injury canceled those plans. He opted to volunteer, but he didn't know how to do that. That was the year he first met Nancy Sutton.

"I didn't know who she was," he said. "I tracked her down, and I said, 'I can't run. I'd like to volunteer.' She put me in charge of an aid station, because I had access to a pickup truck."

After his duty there was done, Moss was asked to help out at the finish line.

"Our relationship was begun," he said. "I got involved, and the rest is history. We got married three years later."

The wife-husband duo witnessed firsthand the incredible growth of Lincoln's premiere annual event. Moss can't quite explain how it happened.

"It's crazy," he said. "It's not that popular now, but we still have a large contingent of entrants."

Cody, the lone Omahan among the three new HOF inductees, chronicled the ORC as its newsletter editor. He, like the current editor, preferred filling the newsletter with pictures.

He "retired" from that duty in 2008, but he never called it quits from volunteering. He's seen the ORC grow over the years.

"Membership is up quite a bit," he said, "because it used to be more of just an elite club with the top runners. Any more, we have people of all sizes and shapes. Everybody's out there. I think it's tremendous."

Cody will always cherish the friendships he's made as a Club member.

He said: "I've really enjoyed the last 25 or 30 years with all the different people that I've met, worked with and run with."

Due to the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus, 2020 races may be affected.

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For more about the ORC, go to:
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President's Message

This is a difficult time for organized running for the Omaha Running Club in the face of cancellations and decisions on what to do as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unorganized running? Easy, just head out the door and get in some miles, relieving stress and getting healthy exercise yet besides. The trails at Lake Zorinsky are bearing proof of this and in the end, this may be a good thing for running. In the meantime, I would like to discuss what your Club is going through at the present time and the results of decisions we have made and may have to continue to make going forward.

Our first events to be cancelled are the Hobo Run and our first two fun runs of the year. We began alternative planning for the Hobo Run as soon as it became apparent that cancellation might be an option, but continued to hope that this would not be required. However, it wasn't long before COVID-19 cases increased locally and nationally and we cancelled in accordance with assembly guidelines provided by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Douglas County and the City of Omaha to try to stop the spread of infection. It seems possible that more events will have to be cancelled. Most runners understand that circumstances can change the viability of an event. However, there are some who express opinions such as the following:

"It appears you do not plan on refunding runners? If that is the case that's a totally unacceptable solution. Running a virtual race where no money is spent by the organizers is not an acceptable solution and looks like a money grab. I expect a refund."

Race directors experience this situation from time to time, and most I know can present comments such as the above pointed in the direction of a race director attempting to make the best of a bad situa-

tion. What I would like to do is try to explain the finances and questions that many people are or will be asking over the next few months.

Why No Refunds?

There are many expenses that are incurred well in advance of an event. Items that are ordered and paid for can include T-shirts, medals, awards, permits, advertising, websites, insurance, bibs, timing tags and other race swag. Those costs are not recoverable, and if the shirts, medals, awards and bibs have dates on them, they cannot be used next year. Many of these items had already been ordered by the time it was necessary to cancel the Hobo Run.

Some events are moving to a virtual format, and we have done that with the Hobo Run. The biggest misconception when cancelling a race and moving from an in-person to a virtual event is that there are no costs putting on a virtual event. That just couldn't be further from the truth. A good deal of volunteer effort and time is required to create the media for a virtual event, and to process results and pay for mailing out t-shirts and other items to virtual participants.

Just Postpone to a Later Date?

Postponing involves a lot of flexibility, mainly involving timing and site availability. There are a lot of events scheduled for late summer and fall in our area, and trying to find an available slot to schedule a race postponed from spring could be close to impossible. Specific to the Hobo Run, the 180th Street construction project will close a majority of the course with a temporary construction crossing and construction staging. Crowding into an already packed schedule would only serve to dilute partici-



Tom Whitaker

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Photos from 2020 Chiller Challenge



With Mother Nature providing ideal weather, 164 runners and walkers completed the Chiller Challenge 8K that was held on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 2, at Papillion's Landing Recreation Area. Another 39 finished the 2-mile race, and 13 took part in the kids' run.

Men's 8K champion was Craig Halverson of Council Bluffs in 29:38 (top right). Female champion was Christy Nielsen of Omaha in 33:59 (below right).

PHOTOS BY DAVID HEDMAN



Message: Race deferrals pose administrative challenge

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pation and would not serve the needs of our running community.

Give Me a Deferral?

First, if an event has a capacity and sells out, deferred entries take up spots in both this year's and next year's registration totals. It's the same as issuing refunds but on next year's revenues. Second, most races like to start off each season with a clean set of books. Deferrals create an unfulfilled obligation to the race, meaning the race starts the year with a negative balance for registration revenues. Finally, deferrals present an administra-

tive challenge. They need to be recorded and validated from one season to the next, forcing the organizers to create yet another tracking system. As harmless as they may seem, deferrals can present a major challenge to some race organizers.

Chargebacks?

Chargebacks are the industry-term for when you file a disputed charge with your credit card company. Once you file a chargeback, the fee — plus possibly a service charge — are taken from our merchant account. Thankfully, in the case of our registration partner, Get Me Registered, they will automatically handle this chargeback for us. But it's a manual pro-

cess; an individual at GMR has to pull up the transaction information, as well as our stated refund policy, in order to be able to dispute the chargeback for us.

At the end of the day, many race directors here and around the country are dealing with the same logistical nightmares. A little kindness and grace go a long way. Most runners have been great and understand that cancellation is the last thing we want after all the work the Club, the volunteers and the runners invest in an event.

We're all in this disappointment together, and hopefully, we'll all be seeing each other on the roads later on this year.

Making due in this topsy-turvy world

By John Fey

Putting together my thoughts for this newsletter isn't always that easy — especially at certain times of the year. The day after the Feb. 2 Chiller Challenge/Annual Meeting/Hall of Fame ceremony left me thinking, "Filling the spring issue should be a piece of cake."

It's always fun for me to get to know the new HOF inductees better (or, in some cases, meeting them for the first time) at the end of the event. Still, there was that page devoted to my column, and over the next few weeks I put it on the back burner.

My oh my, how things changed since Super Bowl Sunday.

My first hint of what was coming — although I didn't pay much attention to it — came while in Las Vegas with two high school chums. It was the weekend following the Chiller, and the strip was crowded just as I always remembered it.

But this trip was different. I spotted more than one or two people walking around with masks on. Most, as I recall, were Asian, so maybe they already knew something we didn't.

The next couple of weeks should have been a bigger preview of what was coming. But even then who could possibly have predicted where we're at today, both in America and around the world?

The coronavirus (I prefer that to the COVID-19, because coronavirus reminds me of the beer) has affected all of us. No longer can you head to your favorite watering hole and pull up a bar stool.

Everybody needs to eat, but going to the grocery store is anything but normal now. You can't help but look at somebody and wonder, "Is that person carrying the virus?"



Ryan and Jennifer Andrews treated their two children to a March cruise, during which extreme protective measures were taken.

Birthday parties? Probably not a good idea. High school graduation? May not happen. Taking in a movie? Nope.

There has to be *something* we can do.

As our Club president noted in his column on Page 5, there is: Go out for a walk or a run — although you might want to avoid doing that with a large group of people. With the weather fairly ideal lately, I'm trying to get back into my daily walking routine.

For our Club members who enjoy competing in road races, that's on hold. For how long is anybody's guess. The news from the doctors and our government leaders changes by the day, if not by the hour.

Fortunately, the Chiller was able to take place before things took a swift downturn. Other races scheduled for March weren't nearly as fortunate. Peak Performance's Blarney Stone run, scheduled for St. Patrick's Day, was rescheduled for June 17, but even that date is in jeopardy and may have to be postponed again.

This pandemic has put the hurt on many businesses, including Peak Performance. Owner Mike Ewoldt, an ORC Hall of Famer, first cut the store hours and then began offering curbside pickup of shoes and merchandise along with free deliv-

ery.

In a story published last month in the World-Herald, Ewoldt said the new normal shouldn't keep people from exercising.

"You may not be able to run or walk at a gym or fitness facility, but that doesn't mean you should just stop," he said. "It's to your benefit to exercise. You'll still be going through shoes."

* * *

Not many Club members ventured from Nebraska in March, but Ryan Andrews and wife Jennifer left March 6 for Miami, where they and their two children boarded a Norwegian Cruise Line trip that ended March 15. Ryan said precautions were taken before the ship left Miami.

"At embarkation, all roughly 4,000 passengers had their temperatures taken via infrared forehead test," he said. "I think if you registered 100.4 or over, you were denied boarding the ship. In addition, we had extra health forms to fill out regarding our recent health histories."

This was anything but a normal cruise, he said, as extra efforts were made to keep things as sanitary as possible. All staff members wore protective gloves, and there were daily notifications on the ship's sanitation levels.

"The most notable thing was that we couldn't dock at two of our four stops which were in Belize and Cozumel, Mexico. We had to use tender boats to get to shore, and the process to get to and from shore took a couple hours each way and limited our time onshore. A big reason for this was the crew sanitizing the boats after each transit to shore."

Glad to be home, Ryan said it was still a fun trip.

"Other than the knowledge of what was going on in the U.S. and the world," he said, "the cruise itself was a blast. We had a great time and will do it again once the situation gets stabilized."

OMAHA RUNNING CLUB

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