



OMAHA RUNNING CLUB NEWSLETTER

*For the members of the Omaha Running Club * Vol. 50* Fall 2021*

Heartland a big hit with runners



Runners are sent out by a member of the U.S. Army for the start of the 2021 Heartland Marathon. More than 500 finished the three races, which were conducted under ideal conditions. “We had beautiful weather,” said race director and ORC president Tom Whitaker. (Courtesy of Justin Barnes Photography.)

Finally, the Heartland Marathon was blessed with ideal starting weather. And the more than 500 who finished the three races — the full marathon (and marathon relay), half and 10K — couldn’t have been more delighted. Race organizers couldn’t have been more pleased.

“We had beautiful weather,” race director and Omaha Running Club president Tom Whitaker said as the morning was winding down. “It’s going really well, so far.”

A full parking lot meant the turnout was somewhat larger than a year ago, Whitaker said.

“Of course, the pandemic hurt us last year,” he said. “Everybody seems to be doing well. So far, so good.”

There were 517 official finishers (127 for the full, 270 for the half, 110 for the 10K

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High grade from a teacher — **Page 2**

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and 10 teams for the marathon relay). Runners came from 30 states, as far away as New Mexico and Florida.

The marathon champion was Kory Cool of Manhattan, Kan. The 34-year-old high school track coach was clocked in at 2:37:24. The female winner was Kristin Kahn, 36, of Newton, Iowa (3:14:32).

Coming home first in the half was 25-year-old Blake Ziegler, from Omaha, in 1:22:19. First female finisher (14th overall) was Claire Orcutt, 20, of Mankato Minnesota (1:34:57).

The 10K winner was a familiar face: ORC member Craig Halverson. The 41-year-

old Omahan was clocked in 35:33. First female — and second overall — was Emalie Clement, 32, of Omaha in 39:34.

First of the 10 relay teams was the Capitol Hill Eagles in 3:30:31. Back again was the Minimum Age 70 team — comprised of ORC members, including Lorraine Whitaker (Tom’s wife) — which finished in 5:39:55.

Tom Whitaker was pleased with another excellent turnout from the volunteers, which led to high praise from many runners.

“A guy from Lincoln who I know very well said the course was great, the weather was great and the volunteer support was tremendous,” he said. “I’m really happy about that.”

Summarizing his thoughts on the friendly conditions, he added: “Mother Nature owes us after the last couple years.”

Marathon winner gives race an A+

The 2021 Heartland Marathon champion teaches high school and coaches track in Manhattan, Kan. Kory Cool gave the event high marks after coming in first in 2:37:24 on a sunny and pleasant Sept. 26 morning near the Missouri River.

"I was tracking the weather for about the past two weeks and saw it kind of ramping up in the mornings," Cool said. "It was all right until the sun came up."



Cool

Cool, 34, came in more than 8 minutes ahead of runner-up Todd Leutzinger, 26, of Omaha (2:45:56). The winner's time was about 10 minutes shy of his personal best. It was his 46th marathon.

He found the flat course to his liking.

"When it's like that, it's easy," he said. "You're not going to get lost. There's not going to be cars in the way. The lead bike was phenomenal, probably the best lead bike I've ever had."



Kory Cool breaks the tape after running a 2:37:24 to win the Heartland Marathon. "It was awesome," Cool said. He had high praise for how well the race was managed. (Justin Barnes Photography.)

He added: "You could just lock into your pace and zone everything out. You don't have to focus on where you're going or missing a turn. You just get in a rhythm and go."

Cool discovered the Heartland Marathon on the ORC's website and jumped at the chance to register.

"I was just itching to go," he said. "I might jump in and do another one in a couple weeks or so. I wanted to see where I was at first. I ran a little bit faster than I thought I was capable of. That's good, I guess."

Making his latest marathon enjoyable was how the race was directed.

"It was awesome," Cool said. "The aid stations and the families on the course were great. There are a lot more isolated marathons than this. From a course management standpoint, if I was a race director this would be a dream for me."

Cool ran the Boston Marathon nine years ago. It wasn't pleasant, he said.

"It was 90 degrees," he recalled. "I don't do well in the heat. It actually was my second-slowest marathon. I don't plan on going back. I love these events."

Female champ wins her first marathon

Kristin Kahn set the bar quite high when she became the first woman to cross the Heartland Marathon finish line. It was the first marathon for the 36-year-old resident of Newton, Iowa. She was pleased after running a 3:14:32.



Kahn

"I had my second daughter almost a year ago," Kahn said, "and I thought I wanted to run a little longer in my off time."

Her time was just under 7 minutes faster than the second female finisher, Carie Maguire of Omaha. They were two of 49 women who completed the flat and fast 26.2-mile course.

Kahn was greeted shortly after finishing by her two daughters. She said she picked the Heartland Marathon as her first because of her area connections. She graduated from Wayne State College and has family in Omaha.

"Omaha is an easy place to come visit," she said. "We hit the zoo (Saturday) and visited my roommate from college at her fire station."

Like others who were interviewed at the finish-line area, Kahn praised the management of the event.



Kristin Kahn looks fresh at the finish after arriving as the female winner of the full marathon. (Justin Barnes Photography.)

"The course was awesome," she said. "It was nice and flat. The course staff was awesome. Everyone was super friendly."

She added: "The weather was perfect. I love the warm weather."

10K champ eyes Boston

It was a busy Sept. 25-26 weekend for Craig Halverson, who completed it with a first-place finish in the Heartland Marathon's 10K race. The 41-year-old resident of Omaha was clocked in at 35:33. He ran the Market to Market Relay the day before.



Halverson

"I'm so obsessed with running right now," Halverson said after posting his personal-best 10K time. "You've got to go while you're feeling good, I guess."

A frequent high finisher in nearly every race, Halverson said conditions were ideal for the Heartland.

"Today was great," he said. "I love run-

ning in the morning. It was fun running with the half marathon people. It kept me wanting to go faster. Today was one of my fastest times after doing Market to Market."

He added: "It was motivating seeing the other runners on the way back. They were waving and cheering me on."

The day before, Halverson was a member of Living Ultra, the overall relay champion. The last runner arrived in Lincoln in 7 hours, 43 minutes. His girlfriend, Sarah Neubert, ran on a team that finished 36th out of 574 teams.

"It was definitely an exciting race weekend," he wrote on his Facebook page.

So what's next? He and Sarah qualified for the Boston Marathon that was rescheduled for Oct. 11.



Keith Baumert nears the finish line of the full marathon, his 100th. (Courtesy of Justin Barnes Photography.)

Omahan's 100th marathon finish is Knicely done

The man who placed 55th in the Heartland Marathon had quite the cheering section — and for good reason. Keith Baumert completed his 100th marathon with family and friends hooting it up as he crossed the finish line.

WOWT's John Knicely chronicled Baumert's feat in a feature that was aired later in the week. It's part of the veteran newscaster's "Knicely Done" reports.

The 66-year-old Omaha resident began his 40 years of marathon running with the 1981 Lincoln Marathon.

"I always say I hope to finish standing up and feeling good," he told Knicely before the race. "But about a 10-minute pace probably four hours and 20 minutes is my plan."

His plan worked out pretty well. He finished 16 seconds ahead of his goal.



Volunteers of the Year feted at Heartland

The ORC's Volunteers of the Year selectees were announced at this summer's picnic, but their awards were handed out Sept. 25, the day before the Heartland Marathon. Pictured from left are Tom Stagon, Bob Bogar, Edward Lenz and volunteer coordinator John Hall. (Photo by Kim Kanellis.)

Florida runner shines at Heartland

Of the 30 states represented at this year's Heartland Marathon one of the half marathoners came from Florida. Nicole Paciorek of North Bay Village said she had so much fun at last year's Heartland she had to return.

Paciorek was happier to see better weather the second time.

"It was raining, and there was lightning last year," she said. "I ran anyway. I ran with the lightning. It was wet and wild. So I decided I was going to come back."

So why did she choose to enter last year's event?

"Last year with COVID, it was the only race that wasn't canceled," Paciorek said. "I trained all summer in Florida in the heat, and I was really in great shape to



Nicole Paciorek shows off her female master award. Despite last year's miserable weather, she decided to return for 2021.

like running. I'm from Cleveland originally. I thought I would run a race, eat a good steak and it would be fun."

A year ago, Paciorek placed 30th overall and was top female master after running a 1:46:10. She celebrated with a steak meal, and the experience convinced her to return.

This year, she improved her time to 1:44:34 and repeated as No. 1 female master.

Impressed with her first visit to Omaha, she was happy to be back.

"I love Omaha," she said. "People are friendly, and downtown is cute. I feel safe. It reminds me of being in Ohio. It's not like south Florida, where people are rude and run you over."

run a race somewhere cooler."

She continued: "On the airplane people were asking me why I was going to Omaha. They asked, 'Do you know someone there?' I said, 'No, I'm going to run a race.' I'd never been there. I like steak, I

RRCA state marathon champions crowned

Seven runners are recognized as best in their age groups

The 2021 Heartland Marathon also served as the Road Runners Club of America Nebraska State Marathon state championship.



Kahn

Seven medals were awarded — three to women and four to men. The female open champion was Kristin Kahn of Newton, Iowa. The 36-year-old's time was 3:14:34. Carie Maguire, 44, of Omaha was female master (40-49 age group). Her time was 3:21:04.

The female grand master (50-99) was Jennifer Bell, 55, of Dalton, Mass. Her time was 4:20:09.

In the male open division, Kory Cool of Manhattan, Kan., was tops. The 34-year-



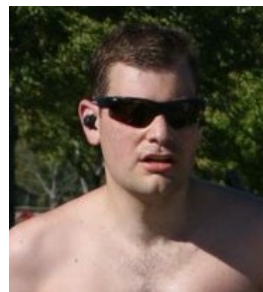
Baumert



Bell



Cool



Hill



Maguire



Smith

old's time was 2:37:24. Timothy Hill, 45, of Lincoln was male master (40-99) in 3:26:33.

Atticus Smith, 50, of Rio Rancho, N.M.,

was male grand master (50-99) in 3:28:18

Keith Baumert, 66, of Omaha was male senior grand master in 4:19:44.

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Follow the Club on Facebook,
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President's Message

It is just a couple days since the conclusion of the Omaha's Heartland Marathon for 2021, and I hardly know where to start to comment on the success of this year's event. My first thought is I am so happy for the great weather and that we were able to return to some sense of normalcy — even if normalcy still seems a long way off due to the resurgence of COVID-19.

Secondly, I will continue with what I consider the most important factor and express deep appreciation and gratitude for our tremendous volunteer effort that 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. I am deeply grateful for all the hard work and dedication everyone so freely gave to the cause. Thank you, one and all. You have provided continuing elevation of 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 and Board 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. I would like to take the liberty of quoting below a few we received:

"Enjoyed running the race yesterday. Fun course and always enjoy my time in Omaha/Council Bluffs. Thought the race was well-organized and planned. I will try to fit it into my schedule next year, for sure."

"I wanted to tell you what a great event the Heartland was. It was well organized, and I enjoyed the pacers who did a great job keeping the group on track and steady in our pace."

"What a great experience! The race was

well-supported by so many wonderful volunteers! Absolutely fabulous and fun finish line, great post-party, super swag . . . in a town we'd never visited but LOVED!!"

I want to send out a very special thank you to our sponsors who have demonstrated their belief in us by providing financial aid.



Tom Whitaker

Thank you to our **Platinum Sponsor:** Aetna.

Our **Silver Sponsors:** Bright Health Care, the United States Army, Precision Race Results.

Our **Bronze Sponsors:** Scheels, Hiland Dairy, Barnes Photography, the Dam Grill & Bar, Le Petit Paris French Bakery, Brushi Bistro & Bar, Gatorade Endurance Formula, Peak Performance — the Running Store.

I also say thank you for the support provided by these fine groups: Think Whole Person Healthcare (Dr. Bill Weeks and staff for medical support), Root Cos Marketing Group, Rotella's Italian Bakery and Healthspan Chiropractic.

And where would we be without runners? Thank you to all who supported our events and trusted us to put on races they could enjoy, particularly those who came from 30 states to be with us.

We believe we are, indeed, successful because we are 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 the above comments support our position.

We are already at work planning next year's races on Sept. 25, 2022. Stay tuned for further details.

In the meantime, registration is open for our Halloween-themed The Bones Run at Standing Bear Lake Oct. 29 at 7 p.m. This is always a fun event that is followed by a great after party and awards ceremony. Sign up today!

Heartland Marathon finally is blessed

By John Fey

At long last, Mother Nature gave the Heartland Marathon organizers a break. After so many weather issues and Missouri River flooding, the 2021 event was about as good as it gets. Yes, the pandemic was still hanging on, but the ORC was able to adjust on the fly to put on a quality event.

My first indication that participation was up from 2020 came when looking for a parking spot. The lot was nearly full.



What a first-class event it was. As runners finished, they were handed their medals as a reward for completing their respective races. The public address announcer, Todd Fitzgerald, greeted many of the runners as they hit the finish line.

During my years at the Omaha World-Herald, I covered many Lincoln and Omaha Marathons. Interviewing winners always amazed me — still does with the Heartland — when it comes to asking the champions to let me know when they've recovered enough to talk. Most often,



The Minimum Age 70 relay team members are, from left, Lorraine Whitaker, Mariana Phipps, Anne Medeiros and Roger Curry. Not pictured Greg Crisman. (Justin Barnes Photography.)

they aren't breathing as hard as you might expect and are ready to go within a minute or two.

Everyone I spoke with — from 10K champion Craig Halverson to full marathon winner Kory Cool — marveled at the support on the course and finish line. The awards ceremonies were impressive as well.

I'm always ultra-impressed by the volunteer turnout at ORC events — especially

the Heartland Marathon. Participants don't realize the effort it takes to put on a race, especially a marathon. John Hall, the Club's volunteer coordinator, continues to pull rabbits out of his hat when it comes to lining up volunteers.

I also must tip my editor's cap to Alan Higley, who makes my job so much easier when it comes to reporting the results. This year's Heartland was even better with the Precision Race Results app he recommended I download on my phone.

Alan has been serving as the Club's official event timer for more than two decades. He makes my job so much easier.

I was glad to learn that the "veteran" marathon relay team, Minimum Age 70, returned this year. Yes, they might have placed ninth among the 10 relay teams, but when you consider their ages, it was a phenomenal accomplishment. I'm not yet 70 (until next year), and I know I couldn't have been a contributor.

Here's hoping that by next September we'll be well over the pandemic that has affected so many lives — including runners — has run its course and we return to a more normal existence. The Heartland Marathon will only continue to get better with the outstanding effort by the Club's race organizing group.

Go Girl Run caps another training summer



It was a sunny Labor Day morning on Sept. 6 when 79 females of all ages lined up for the Go Girl Run. The start and finish, as always, took place near the Peak Performance store at 78th and Cass Streets.

Emily Anson, 41, of Elkhorn won the 5K race in 24:13. Not far behind was Taia Green, 12, of Omaha in 25:10.

In the left photo, runners are encouraged to "eat mor chikin." Above right, runners prepare to take off. Below right, Marisa McClintock, left, and Kennedy Cameron finish. (Photos courtesy of Jill Banaszak.)



Coach Nott conquers nasty Badwater

Todd Nott is one cross country coach who can lead by example. The ORC Hall of Famer showed that in August by completing one of the most difficult races in America — the Badwater 135. It's named that because it's a 135-mile race through California's Death Valley.

The 57-year-old Plattsmouth High coach qualified for the 2020 Badwater off the Western States 100 and Angeles Crest 100. But Badwater was canceled 14 days before the start due to COVID-19. No big deal, he just decided to keep in shape by running a 100-mile race in Colorado.

"It's much more fun for me to go to a race and race myself into shape than go out and train," he said in a World-Herald story about his Badwater experience.

Badwater participants usually have a team of four pacers who keep him hydrated on a day when temperatures soar to the point where ankles can become extremely swollen.

"I'm not saying it wasn't an oven out there," he told the World-Herald, "but I never felt like I was going to collapse because of the heat."

His goal was to finish the race in under 30 hours, and he came close. He came in 14th in 33 hours.



Todd Nott completed the 2021 Badwater 135 in July after the 2020 race was canceled by the pandemic. He trained for it with 100-mile races, something he prefers. "It's much more fun for me to go to a race and race myself into shape than go out and train," he said. His wife, Angee, later set a masters world record in the women's 400-meter dash in Ames, Iowa.

Nott isn't the only runner in the family. His wife of just over six years is the former Angee Henry, a three-time conference champion and a 10-time All-American at Nebraska.

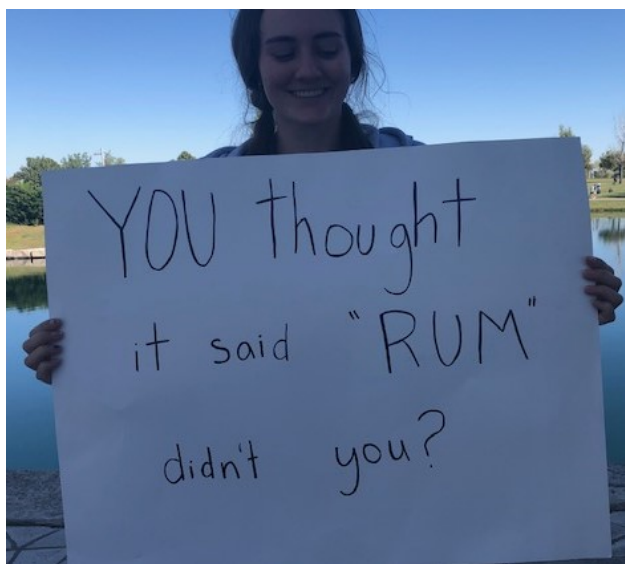
Following her husband's Badwater feat, Angee set a masters world record in the women's 400-meter dash in late July at the Masters Outdoor Championships in Ames Iowa. Her time was 56.14.

Angee, 45, teaches at Boys Town and coaches the volleyball, basketball and track teams.

The husband-wife coaches say they try to set an example for their young athletes.

"We always want to be a model for them," Angee said. "Not just telling them, but showing them what they can do now and later on in life."

2021 Heartland Marathon photographs



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