



OMAHA RUNNING CLUB NEWSLETTER

For the members of the Omaha Running Club * Vol. 51* Spring 2022

Volunteer coordinator honored

John Hall steps down from his key spot with the running club

What a perfect way to go out. John Hall, who for 16 years served as the Omaha Running Club's volunteer coordinator, announced at the Feb. 6 Chiller Challenge he would be stepping down from that role. Club president Tom Whitaker sent him out in style by honoring him as the newest inductee into the ORC Hall of Fame.

An Oregon native, Hall has called Omaha home since 1997. He began working as the Club's volunteer coordinator in 2005. Thanks to his hard work, helpers were on hand to make ORC races a success. That especially applies to the Club's signature event, the Heartland Marathon.

ORC's first father-son combo enshrined into the Club's Hall of Fame. Page 2.

"It's been fun being the volunteer coordinator," he said after the award ceremony.

"I was glad to meet all the people over the years. I

enjoyed their company and help. They became my friends as well as volunteers."

He continued: "I'm very happy with how things went over the 16 years."

Modern technology, i.e. the Internet, made his job easier over the years.



John Hall, left, accepts his HOF plaque from Club president Tom Whitaker. "It's been fun being the volunteer coordinator," Hall said.

"The Internet was a great way of getting volunteers," Hall said. "It really helped when college and high school coaches began volunteering, especially with the Heartland Marathon and our longer races."

Also inducted that Sunday morning were the father-son duo of newsletter editor John Fey and his son Derek.

Following the Chiller Challenge's fun run of 8K and 2 miles, the annual meeting took place. The election results were announced, followed by the awards for the overall winners, master's champions and top three in each age group.

After the runners finished, they and others attending enjoyed the chili feed served by our volunteers.

ORC member ramps up his miles

Kevin Kathka, who ran a race the same morning of the Chiller, expects to run a marathon one day. **Page 3.**

Step into Running program gears up

Step into Running is a growing training program for women of all ages. Three participants share their stories. **Page 7.**

HOF first: Father and son inducted

A father-son combination added to the growing list of Omaha Running Club Hall of Famers at the Feb. 6 Chiller Challenge held at Papillion Landing. Derek Fey was introduced as the 46th member of the Hall, and moments later his father, John, accepted his plaque.

Derek Fey was recognized for being a two-time All-American in track and cross country at Dana College and a former ORC board member. He currently teaches at Omaha Westside and is the head cross country coach and assistant track coach at the College of Saint Mary. The 42-year-old won the 2013 Omaha Marathon and was 77th at the 2009 Boston Marathon in 2:23:29.

“I’m honored to be accepted into the Omaha Running Club Hall of Fame,” Derek said. “For as long as I can remember, I’ve been a talented runner. I don’t know where that talent came from. It certainly didn’t come from my parents.”

After the laughter from that comment subsided, he continued: “My talent couldn’t have been developed if it weren’t for my coach at Dana College, Jay Birmingham. I went from running 30 miles a week in high school to 90 to 100 miles a week in college.”

Derek credited Birmingham for turning the Dana College cross country team into a regional power, which was “pretty phenomenal for a school of just 500 students.” He said while at Dana he was taught the importance of giving back to the community.



Derek Fey, left, and his father, John, before their acceptance remarks. (Photo by Shirley Fey.)

“I was really blessed for what has happened to me in my life,” Derek said. “I tried to give back to the running community.”

He closed by thanking the leaders of the ORC by saying, “You’re the life blood of this organization. What you do is really important. It’s the reason the Omaha Running Club can put on these events.”

John Fey, a World-Herald sportswriter/copy editor from 1988 to 2008, has served as the club’s newsletter editor since 2008. In 2013, the publication was awarded the nation’s top online newsletter by the Road Runners Club of America. He completed four marathons, including the 1984 Omaha Marathon.

“To just say this is an honor would be the understatement of the year,” John said. “Apparently, the committee ran out of qualified people for the Hall of Fame, so I guess it was my turn. I’ve been in many Hall of Shames before but not a true Hall of Fame.”

The 69-year-old Fey said he took up running in the 1970s but got more serious about it in the early 1980s. Working at the World-Herald, he got to know some of the area’s top runners through the stories he did.

“One of the reasons I joined the Omaha Running Club was to meet more people,” he said. “And that’s the beauty of the Omaha Running Club. You get to meet new people, and they’re all good people.”

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	Alan Higley	2008	Tom Whitaker	2015
Jill Garlock	2004	Gary Meyer	2008	Jose Badillo	2016
John Petersen	2004	Bea Sides	2009	Harvey Kunz	2017
John Thomas	2004	Cliff Karthaus	2009	Tony Jones	2017
Karlene (Erickson) Herrell	2004	Lou Soukup	2009	Nancy Sutton Moss	2018
Mick Freeman	2004	John Hawkins	2010	Christy Nielsen	2018
Nancy McCormick	2004	Stan Shirk	2010	Tom Cody	2019
Bob Garcia	2005	Greg Carlberg	2011	Jon Eggers	2019
Chuck Cooper	2005	Jimmy Hall	2011	Glen Moss	2019
Craig Christians	2005	Ronn Baker	2012	Anne Medeiros	2020
Mike Ewoldt	2006	Erin Sullivan	2012	Ann Ringlein	2020
Tim Hendricks	2006	Gary Wasserman	2013	The Bean Team	2020
Todd Nott	2006	Jim McMahan	2013	John Hall	2021
Dick Burrows	2007	Ron Olsen	2014	John Fey	2021
Gary Julin	2007	Roxi Erickson	2014	Derek Fey	2021
Leonard Vavra	2007	Daren Konda	2015		

ORC newcomer ramping his miles

Kevin Kathka grew up in Broken Bow, Neb., and eventually moved to Omaha. He graduated from Omaha Central High School. A sprinter in high school, he then realized the runners at Central were much faster, so he switched to longer distances.

“I used to run occasionally, here and there,” he said. “When I was in junior high, I took the bus, and if I missed it, I would run home and see if I could get there before the next bus came.”

Kathka joined the World-Herald as a part-timer in the sports department in 1992 and stayed until 1996.

“It was a great experience,” he said, adding that he was allowed to write stories for the paper.

“I remember one of the stories I got to write was when Frank Shorter was in town,” he said. “That was kind of cool.”

During those years, he ran an occasional 10K but didn't increase his mileage until a few years ago.

“I started getting more serious about it, doing more races,” he said. “I really enjoyed it. I did my first half-marathon last fall. It



Kevin Kathka ran his first half-marathon last fall and hopes to run his first full marathon, perhaps this fall, maybe the Heartland Marathon.

was easier than I thought it would be. I didn't know what to expect.”

He finished that race in less than two hours.

“I was really happy with that,” he said.

Kathka is ready to take the next step — the full marathon.

“There were a couple I was looking at for this fall,” he said. “The Heartland was one I was looking at.”

Kathka joined the Omaha Running Club just before last year's Chiller. He remembers the brutally cold weather that February day.

“I was amongst the five people who were crazy enough to run in the snow and negative wind chill,” he said. “It was kind of fun.”

He's seen familiar faces, including ORC member John Ritland, at many of his races, and he's

looking forward to meeting more Club members.

If you happen to see him at any of the ORC races, introduce yourself.

Distance training clinic set to begin this month

The Omaha Running Club's distance training clinic returns this month to prepare runners for a fall marathon or half marathon such as the ORC's Heartland Marathon. The clinic will begin April 6 and continue into the fall. Our goal is to help you have a successful race!

The distance clinic is held at Peak Performance on 78th and Cass on the first, second and third Wednesday of the month. Registration and start date is April 6. Each session will begin with speakers from 6 to 6:45 p.m. with a run to follow. The last Wednesday of the month will be a “mix-up” run starting at 6 p.m. (no speaker).

Explore different areas of Omaha for runs with social time and meal afterward. Suggestions for distances and locations for long Saturday or Sunday runs will be presented at each Wednesday session.

The clinic is free for ORC members. For non-members, the fee is \$25 fee, which includes a one-year individual membership in the Omaha Running Club.

Speaker topics to include:

- » Shoe and equipment selection
- » Injury prevention
- » Cross training/strength training
- » Core strength
- » Yoga for runners
- » Physiology of training (tempo runs, aerobic runs and speed training)
- » Nutrition for performance
- » Mental motivation

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For more on the ORC, go
to: omaharun.org

Follow the Club on
Facebook, Twitter and
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President's Message

I am starting this column with a special thank you to long-time volunteer Tom Hansen who recently passed away. Tom and special friend Jean Proulx showed up at most of our events for many years and performed any task they were assigned. Tom is an example of the tremendous support our volunteers provide that allows us to put on events. The ORC and our participants owe Tom a huge debt of gratitude for his volunteer efforts. Rest in peace, Tom, and thank you for all you did to support the ORC and the Omaha running community.

As we approach what is normally the prime season for races, we can only hope that COVID-19 and its seemingly unending variants is winding down so that normal racing schedules can return. With everyone's wellbeing of utmost importance, the ORC is busy planning to do our best to continue providing live events while meeting the safety recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and other experts in the field.

We have had a pretty good winter and hope that good weather continues as spring arrives to promote a great offering of Club events for the upcoming months. I would like to especially mention one of our scheduled events, the Jim McMahon Open Track Meet set for June 12. Derek Fey has done an outstanding job putting on this event in years past, and we are looking forward to its continuation this year.

I am pleased to announce that among a great lineup of programs and events this summer, our Distance Training Clinic, which will be led by Hilary Catron, will return this year beginning April 6 at Peak Performance on Cass Street. Also, the Step into Running women's training program, led by Jeremy Kaliff, will begin at Peak June 7. These programs provide great opportunities to enjoy some dedicated and talented guidance and coaching for a varie-

ty 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.

We recently implemented a modest increase in membership dues to cover rapidly increasing costs for such things as equipment and repairs, T-shirts, race timing material and the many other requirements to put on events. We have not raised dues for many years but find it necessary to do so to help make ends meet. We have also created a new dues category, Young Professional, defined as

those 30 years of age and under. Our new dues structure is Young Professional, \$20; Individual, \$25; Family, \$35; and Gold Member, \$60. We are also implementing a discount on all ORC events except Go Girl Run that, when totaled, will approximate the cost of membership. So you can run great events and belong to the ORC for free.

I would like to say a few words about supporting local events, particularly Omaha's Heartland Marathon, Marathon Relay, Half Marathon and 10K on Sept. 25. Here are just some of the activities your local running club provides during a given year to support the running community:

- We will be putting on five holiday-themed fun runs this year, beginning with the Early Riser Fun Run at Lake Flanagan May 11. 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 all who attend.

- We will hold six Club races of various



Tom Whitaker

See President, Page 5



ORC presents check to Police Foundation

The Omaha Police Foundation is exclusively dedicated to the support of the Omaha Police Department and its efforts to keep the citizens of Omaha safe. It is a non-profit corporation with an all-volunteer board. Through its efforts, and with the support of its corporate and citizen sponsors, it has been responsible for equipping the Omaha Police Department with the latest and best equipment available to aid its officers and employees, individually and collectively, to carry out their respective duties.

At left, Omaha Running Club president Tom Whitaker and vice president Daren Konda present a check for \$500 to Woody Bradford, president of the OPF. Officer Jamie Madson joins in the presentation.

President: Keep local events in mind when making plans

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distances that are fee-supported and timed with T-shirts and awards for overall and age-group winners. Any proceeds left over after expenses and 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 in the Omaha area putting on a race can post their event without charge.
- We provide valuable information on our website — free of charge — for organizing and putting on events.
- We provide equipment rental services that make 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 and must be maintained and repaired when necessary.
- 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 a beginning-training program for women called Step into Running. The program has helped hundreds of women accomplish their goal of running a 5K or just adding daily physical activity to their lifestyle.
- We provide a Distance Training Clinic currently led by Hilary Catron that provides professional coaching, educational speakers and encouragement for anyone interested in training for a marathon or half marathon.

The Omaha Running Club is a volunteer organization with a mission to support the Omaha running and walking community. We do our best to try 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, but they are not owned locally.

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 especially hope you will go to heartlandmarathon.org as soon as you can after you read this message and sign up for one of Omaha's Heartland Marathon events. 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 always need A LOT of volunteers to make this a success. We will have volunteer opportunities listed soon, so check out 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 right here in Omaha to support you, the local runner, the very reason for our existence.

Joining the Hall of Fame is humbling

By John Fey

This is a first in my many years of putting this newsletter together: I get to talk about being inducted into the Omaha Running Club's Hall of Fame. I'd like to say it came as a total surprise, but, as I told Alan Higley (HOF coordinator), I had an inkling that it was going to happen. Here's the story:

Wife Shirley and I were visiting Florida a year ago in March, and among our stops was the Villages, near Orlando. Former Omaha resident (and ORC Hall-of-Famer) Lou Soukup has lived there for more than a decade, and I wanted to hook up with him. (Lou was the ORC's Hall of Fame coordinator until passing the torch to Alan Higley.)



Toward the end of our visit that night, Lou mentioned he was going to nominate son Derek and me for the Hall of Fame. My first thought was, "He's got to be kidding." I didn't give it much thought the rest of 2021.

Sometime in January, I received a message from Alan with questions about Derek. At first, I wondered why, and then he asked a couple more questions about me. It then dawned on me that,

indeed, we were being considered as the next inductees into the ORC Hall.

Derek is the head cross country coach and assistant indoor/outdoor track coach. When I told him we might be joining the Hall, he said he might not be able to attend the ceremony as CSM was hosting a high school indoor meet that Sunday.

I suspected Alan was planning this to be a surprise announcement, so I messaged him to say if, indeed, this was going to happen, Derek might not be able to attend. Alan confirmed my suspicion, saying "the cat's out of the bag." When I told Derek, he said he'd be able to pop in at the Chiller event to accept his award and then return to the meet. (CSM just opened its new indoor facility, and it's Omaha's hidden gem.)

That Sunday afternoon in February was one I'll long remember. To be included among some of the biggest names in the history of Omaha running is more than humbling. To be inducted with my son made it extra-special.

During his remarks, Derek noted that he likely didn't get his distance-running skills from either of his parents. It reminded me of one of the Corporate Cup runs I entered while working at the Omaha World-Herald. Waiting for the race to start, a colleague asked, "So, John, did Derek get his running ability from you?" I quickly answered, "No."

There was one surprise that day: John Hall, our outstanding volunteer coordinator, was introduced after my acceptance

remarks. John's importance to the overall success of the Club can't be overstated. Without volunteer support, ORC races — especially the Heartland Marathon — wouldn't be successful.

I was a bit taken aback by the announcement that John was retiring from his position. I'll always cherish seeing his smiling face at the events I attended. I won't be surprised if he decides to be a volunteer himself at future ORC races. I join Club president Tom Whitaker in thanking John for all his hard work over 16 years.



Hall-of-Famers race in Florida

Omaha Running Club Hall-of-Famer Bob Garcia (pictured on the right) escaped the cold Nebraska winter for Florida last January. He entered a race in Orlando and spotted a familiar face, fellow HOF member Lou Soukup. The two were all smiles after competing that day, and who could blame them? The temperature in Nebraska was around 32 degrees.

Step into Running gaining ground

The Step into Running program for women of all ages is growing in popularity. Under the direction of Jeremy Kaliff, the training sessions are set to begin June 7. Three women who completed the program last year — Tobi Andrews, Jamie Cooper and Morgana Osborn — shared their experiences about the program and their newfound friendships.

Tobi Andrews

Omaha resident Tobi Andrews, 46, signed up for the program after reading about it in an email from another running club she belongs to, Black Girls Run.

“I had previously tried running on my own but never met my initial goal of running one mile without stopping,” she said. “This was my first time participating with SIR.”

Tobi credits the program with teaching her to get more out of running.

“I learned I *love* to run, and I love running outdoors,” she said. “I learned how to pace myself and that running is not all about speed, but for me it is about accomplishing the goal I set for myself. I increased my perseverance. I’ve learned about running gear and basics to have as a runner.”

She continued: “I relearned what it feels like to commit to something new and see it through. I continue to learn about the many local running clubs and running events. I learned that women of all ages, shapes, sizes and abilities can run.”

The Go Girl Run serves as a “graduation” for Step into Running. It was Tobi’s first race, and she plans to register for more.

Jamie Cooper

Jamie Cooper, a 38-year-old Lincoln resident, participated in SIR for a second time.

“I did Step into Running in 2018 and really got into running after that,” she said. “I stopped running during the pandemic and wanted to get back to it. Initially, I signed up because I wanted to get back to my pre-pandemic weight.”

Jamie said the training sessions taught her to be more patient as a runner.

“My body has changed since I last did the program,” she said. “Given the state of the world, I found that running became a mental health release. I learned to push myself for myself and to not focus on pace times or distance, just to run and feel good.”

She added SIR helped her gain new friends.

“I met two women during the program who ran in the same run pace group,” she said. “We agreed to run together under one condition — we would not talk during our runs. That rule lasted only a week or two. Each week we would spend a little more time talking during our run, catching up on the week before. By

Step into Running

What: Beginning training program lasting 12 weeks for women of all ages

When: Orientation is June 7, 6 p.m., at Peak Performance, 78th and Cass

To request more information, email:
stepintorunning@hotmail.com

the end of the program, we were those women — those who ran at a talking pace and talked the entire time. I would have never thought it!”

Continued Jamie: “We also began running once or twice a week outside of the sessions. By the end of the 12 weeks, we were close friends. In the 12 weeks, we celebrated a wedding, job promotions, new jobs and a new house! We met up on the weekends for coffee and yoga, and an occasional happy hour. We ran the Go Girl Run together and continue to run together to this day.”

She believes the program helped put joy back into her runs.

“I had not run consistently over the last two years, so the program helped me get back into it,” Jamie said. “The program has given me the boost to sign up for more 5K runs!”

Morgana Osborn

Morgana Osborn moved to Nebraska from Davenport, Iowa, in November 2020. The 21-year-old signed up for SIR during the April registration period last year.

“I wanted to start running again after a sports injury,” she said, “so I thought it would be a good way for me to meet people as well. I was not involved before and found the program while searching for running groups.”

Morgana said she liked the variety of folks who participated in the program.

“Some people there were active runners, some prior runners, and some had never run before,” she said. “But the community was positive and uplifting, without overdoing it. The speakers who came talked about nutrition, running form and were open to questions. I learned valuable information from them about breathing while running. Finally, I learned a lot about how I can push myself, while listening to my body and what it needs. Some days were slower than others!”

SIR helped Morgana get back into competitive running.

“This is the first time in my life I would consider myself a runner as I continue to regularly run and enjoy it now,” she said. “I ran Go Girl with Tobi and Jamie. It went really well, and we ran together until the last stretch and then met again at the end.”

OMAHA RUNNING CLUB

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