



OMAHA RUNNING CLUB NEWSLETTER

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

Heartland Marathon sets record



Runners, including pacers, take off as the gun signaled the start of the eighth annual Heartland Marathon. A record 695 finished the full marathon, half-marathon and 10K races. An additional 10 relay teams completed the 26.2-mile course run on a perfect Sept. 25 morning. “We are grateful for the great weather, all the volunteers and increased participation this year,” said Tom Whitaker, race director and ORC president. (Photo courtesy of Barnes Photography.)

Marathon winner improves his time from 2021 race

For a second straight year, the eighth annual Heartland Marathon was blessed with ideal running conditions. And Omahan Joey Mayberger took full advantage of it by cruising to an easy victory. The 21-year-old crossed the finish line in 2:43:45, nearly 8 minutes ahead of runner-up Todd Leutzinger of Omaha.

In all, 695 runners completed the full marathon, half-marathon or 10K. An additional 48 runners on the 10 relay teams finished the 26.2-mile course.

The event appeared to go off without a hitch, leaving race director and Omaha Running Club president Tom Whitaker pleased that Sept. 25 morning.

‘Joggler’ finishes in 3:47:48

Trevor McQuay of Wausau, Neb., juggles three balls the entire 26.2 miles. **Page 2.**

“We are grateful for the great weather, all the volunteers and increased participation this year,” he said. Whitaker noted race officials may have to consider changing courses if the event continues to grow.

The inaugural Heartland in 2015 ended with 459 runners completing the three races. A year ago, finishers totaled 507.

See Heartland, Page 2

Volunteer coordinator jumps into action

Marty Ertz hits the ground running as the Club’s new volunteer coordinator. **Page 6.**

Newcomer’s first 5K comes at Go Girl

Candace McCoy trained all summer for her first 5K, and it came on Labor Day at the Go Girl Run. **Page 7.**

Heartland: Marathon champ placed 3rd in 2021

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Marathon champ Mayberger, 21, placed third a year ago at Heartland in 2:52:21. He was happy with his time and the favorable weather.

“The conditions were beautiful,” he said. “I felt good. The pace went pretty well. The guy who was going to get second was with me for a lot of the race.”

Mayberger said he made his move around the 19-mile mark.

“I kind of dug in at that point,” he said. “There was a gap after that.”

The Heartland was his fourth marathon. He completed the Boston Marathon before turning 21 and was clocked in 2:57.

“I got hurt about three weeks before,” Mayberger said. “I wasn’t able to run the time I wanted to.”

The first female finisher was Carie Maguire. The 45-year-old from Omaha came in at 3:20:44. She quickly caught her breath and shared her thoughts on winning.

“I felt pretty good,” she said. “It was a little windy on the back 13 miles, but I can’t complain. The weather was pretty nice.”

Like Mayberger, Maguire improved on her time of 3:21:04 at last year’s Heartland, where she was female runner-up.

“The course is great,” Maguire said. “The bridge will get you both ways, but other than that, it was perfect.”

After completing her 11th marathon, she believed her time was a personal best. She, too, has run the Boston Marathon.

Asked what her next marathon might be, Maguire said, “I don’t know yet. I’ll take a week break before thinking about it.”

The 10K winner, Jonah Bradley of Lincoln, competed in his first Heartland Marathon. He finished in 37:39, just 11 seconds ahead of runner-up Ben Reisinger.

“The course was fun,” Bradley said after picking up his award. “Taking off right at sunrise and going over the (Bob Kerrey) Pedestrian Bridge was beautiful. Obviously, the views of downtown Omaha make it fun. I liked that we were passing the half-marathon traffic with lots of people on the course. It was a great morning for a run.”

Bradley has run other half-marathons and full marathons, including Grandma’s Marathon in Minnesota.

“The weather today was perfect,” he said. “You show up to the start line and feeling chilly and then sweating at the first half mile.”



Three members of the Marine Corps Reserves helped hand out medals to finishers. (Photo courtesy of Barnes Photography.)

‘Joggler’ places 49th

There was another first at this year’s Heartland Marathon. Trevor McQuay completed the full marathon while juggling — yes, juggling three balls. The 26-year-old from Wausa, Neb., placed 49th overall in 3:57:48.

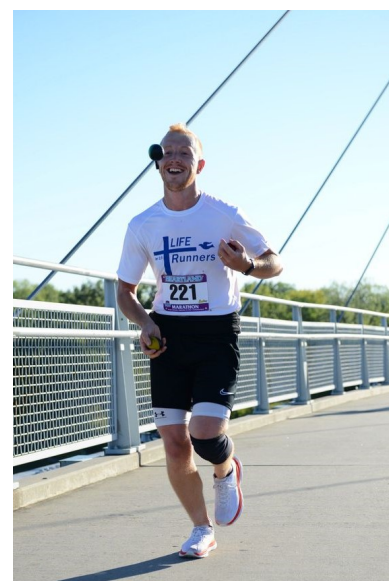
He said he came up with the idea to run a marathon while juggling “kind of on a whim.”

“I knew I could juggle and run, so I just tried it,” McQuay said. “There’s a small group of people who do it.”

McQuay had plenty of practice before tackling Heartland. On each of his early-morning training runs, he took his three balls with him. He often took off before sunrise, then headed to work.

He admits it took him several training sessions to get the juggling part down pat.

This year, McQuay became the first “joggler” in the Heartland’s eight-year history.



Trevor McQuay crosses the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge while juggling three balls. (Photo courtesy of Barnes Photography.)

See McQuay, Page 3

McQuay: Juggling across bridge was a challenge

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The relatively flat course, McQuay said, made his task a bit easier.

“I think it was very helpful,” he said. “It was a great course. That hill at the end by the bridge was kind of a killer. That just hits you hard.”

He admitted being worried about dropping a ball on the bridge and losing it in the Missouri River.

“I’d never been on that bridge before,” McQuay said. “But it

went well, really well.”

Heartland was his second marathon but first while juggling. His time topped his first one by about 26 minutes. He said it was a perfect day for a good race.

“I loved it,” he said. “They did a great job with it. I’d do it again. I’ll see if my schedule works out. It was a beautiful race and a beautiful day.”

If he returns to Omaha next year, he’ll shoot for the world juggling record of 2:50:12 set in 2007 by Michal Kapral of Canada set at the Toronto Waterfront Marathon.

Heartland Marathon photographs



Joey Mayberger of Omaha won the Heartland. His time of 2:43:45 was nearly 8 minutes faster than runner-up Todd Leutzinger, 27, of Omaha. The first female finisher was Carie Maguire. The 45-year-old from Omaha came in at 3:20:44. (Photos courtesy of Barnes Photography.)

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President's Message

I am writing this just a couple days after the conclusion of Omaha's Heartland Marathon for 2022, and I hardly know where to start to comment on this year's event. I am grateful for the beautiful weather and the increase in participation we experienced this year. But what I consider to be a very important factor, and the one for which I express deep appreciation and gratitude, is our tremendous volunteers 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 huge thank you and our sincere appreciation are also in order for the effort that Detachment 1, Maintenance Company, of the United States Marine Corps provided that Sept. 25 weekend in setting up and taking down the start/finish area for the marathon. The strength, enthusiasm and cooperation the members of this great unit contributed saved us many hours in accomplishing all that needed to be done to make our event a success.

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, so I would like to take the liberty of quoting below a few we received:

"Thanks for all of your work putting on a great Heartland Marathon event this morning! It was a lot of fun."

"Thank you so much for hosting a wonder-

ful event!"

"Thank you for organizing the Heartland Marathon. I enjoyed it a lot."

"It was an awesome race from beginning to end . . . including the post-race food and drinks."

"You all run a terrific race! Kudos to all involved."

Special recognition and appreciation are due for our sponsors who have demonstrated their belief in us by providing financial support. Our supporting sponsors:

- » Precision Race Results
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- Our race day partners:
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 - » Rotella's Bakery

We also say thank you for the support provided by these fine groups:

- » Think Whole Person Healthcare (Dr. Bill Weeks and staff at the medical tent)

- » RootCos Marketing Group

And the following individuals:

- » Omaha Running Club's own Bean Team led by Diane Garza, handling finish line



Tom Whitaker

Hail to another successful Heartland

What a wonderful day it was for the Sept. 25 Heartland Marathon. After so many years of facing the ire of Mother Nature, race officials were breathing a sigh of relief for back-to-back years of ideal weather. And the participants of this year's top Omaha Running Club event were equally happy.

First off, congratulations to all who finished either the full marathon, half-marathon, 10K or the marathon relay. But extra-special kudos go to the Road Runners Club of America Nebraska State Half Marathon Championship Awards.



Female Awards:

» **Female Open:** Marguerite Hendrickson, Omaha, 22, 1:31:46

» **Female Master** (age 40-99): Heather Suhr, Omaha, 41, 1:32:00

» **Female Grand Master** (age 50-99): Caryn Crocfer, Council Bluffs, 50, 1:45:45

» **Female Senior Grand Master** (age 60-99): Pam Mortenson, Bennington, 60, 2:03:04

Male Awards:

» **Male Open:** Leviticus Cross, Elkhorn, 22, 1:18:26

» **Male Master** (age 40-99): Joe Warner, Minden, Neb., 43, 1:25:04

» **Male Grand Master** (age 50-99): Ty Marion, Omaha, 57, 1:36:05

» **Male Senior Grand Master** (age 60-99): Brian Bergt, Amherst, Neb., 62, 1:41:05



Portions of the trail at Zorinsky Lake and Recreation Area have been closed on weekdays for work being done on 168th Street. The project is expected to end at the end of October. Also, more tree removal is taking place.

* * *

Switching gears a bit, you probably have heard — or discovered on your last visit — part of the popular Zorinsky Lake and Recreation Area trail closed due to work related to the project on 168th Street. The closing, expected to take the rest of this month, is in effect Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the 168th link between the upper and lower sections.

South 168th is going to be widened to four lanes, and a new bridge is to be built over the lake. More tree removal is in the works, a point of contention among many of the property owners and wildlife advocates. But there have been other homeowners who favor thinning out the clutter.

President: Heartland runners came from 34 other states

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food service.

» Boy Scouts Troop 331 presenting the Color Guard, and finish-line medal and water handouts.

» Jimmy Brown and the Runner Church group handling aid stations A-1 and A-2.

» Paul Nielsen and Omaha Central High School Athletes at aid stations B-1, B-2, C-1 and C-2.

» Heather Lammers-Nelson, our pacer coordinator and our pacers.

» Our National Anthem singer Andy Vasquez.

» Bike support group led by Derek Schuler.

» Justin Barnes, Barnes Photography.

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 34 states other than Nebraska and Iowa 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 No. 1 priority is putting on a good event to support our local and out-of-town running guests, and we believe comments such as those above support our position.

We are already at work planning next year's races on Sept. 24, 2023. Stay tuned for further details.

In the meantime, registration is open for our Bones Run at Standing Bear Lake on Oct. 28 at 7 p.m. This is always a fun event followed by a great after-party and awards ceremony. Sign up today!

Volunteer coordinator takes baton

Knowing he had big shoes to fill, new volunteer coordinator Marty Ertz hit the ground running. Replacing his retired predecessor, John Hall, the Nebraska native took center stage at the Aug. 13 Volunteer Appreciation Picnic held at Millard's Walnut Grove Park.

After the meal, he presented the Volunteer of the Year awards to Bob Bogar and Ed Lenz. Before that, he served as grill master, cooking burgers and brats.

Ertz is a graduate of Omaha Creighton Prep and UNO. Asked if he was a runner in high school, he said, "No, not at all. I have two younger brothers, and they were the athletes. I was the exact opposite of that. I played video games. I didn't start running until I was 26 or 27."

He picked up running for a couple of reasons.

"I was very out of shape," he said. "And my dad had heart surgery when he was 58. I didn't want to be like that when I hit that age. I was around 260 when I started running, and I dropped a lot of weight. I've enjoyed the benefits of that ever since then."

While working for Physicians Mutual, he prepared for his first road race with some colleagues around 2010.

"We did our first 5K around Zorinsky Lake," Ertz said. "I can remember dry heaving in the parking lot after my 32-minute finish time. I was just dying."

He remembers running two Corporate Cup events when it was staged near the Civic Auditorium. He later was coaxed by friends to increase his mileage to where he was able to compete in half-marathons, a full and even one 100-miler in Wisconsin.



Marty Ertz was the grill master at the Aug. 13 Volunteer Appreciation Picnic held at Walnut Grove Park.

"I'll never do that (100 miles) again," Ertz said. "That was a one and done. I really like the half-marathon and marathon. They're my favorite events."

Ertz joined the ORC around 2015 and became a Board member just before COVID-19 hit in 2019. He took over as volunteer coordinator after Hall announced his retirement in January.

"John did a lot," he said in an August phone interview. "I'm starting to realize that. I wanted to do more than just volunteer."

Ertz noted that the Lincoln Running Club seemed to have more involved members.

"I was really envious of my friends in Lincoln," he said. "The races are bigger than ours, and it seems like the city is more involved behind them."

He continued: "My ambition is how can we get Omaha to be the same as Lincoln?"

He also noted that Lincoln city leaders seem to embrace its marathon and that Omaha would benefit by doing the same.

"You would think the city would want that, to bring more money in," Ertz said. "These things translate into tourism dollars and whatnot. That's above my pay grade to worry about that."



Marty Ertz presents the Volunteer of the Year awards to Bob Bogar, left photo, and Ed Lenz.

Go Girl 5K is start for newcomer

Candace McCoy couldn't have picked a better first 5K than the Go Girl Run on Labor Day. It was also fitting that she ran it on the holiday honoring workers. She works at the Omaha Veterans Hospital and sometimes will put in six straight days on the job.

McCoy, 26, served five years in the Air Force and moved to Papillion a year ago. She joined the Step Into Running program after reading a post on Facebook.

"I had decided with a friend way back to do a half-marathon in October," she said. "But then she moved out of country for military work. So I was training on my own and was looking for a group to get involved with. I had never run. It was a good group to get hooked up with."

She had several reasons to take up running, among them was the effects of post traumatic stress disorder that she shared with the friend who moved.

"Joining the group was a challenge," McCoy said. "It was something to focus on."

She set out at the beginning with a simple goal when she joined Step Into Running.

"Running to me is finishing well," she said. "It's not about being the fastest. Somewhere along the way I got hooked on it."

McCoy was one of 74 who participated in the Go Girl 5K. She said she wasn't nervous before the starting gun was fired.

"I knew all my girls would be out here from the program," she said. "Not knowing what to expect, it was fun. I saw all my teammates waiting (at the finish line)."



Candace McCoy shows off her medal from the Go Girl 5K. It was her first race. She's planning to run a half-marathon this month. "You have to start somewhere," she said.

She was a stranger when she joined the running group, but since has bonded with them. And now she's ready to take the next step — a half-marathon in October.

"Whether I finish or not," she said, "I'm going to show up and start, because I've done the training. You have to start somewhere."



The Step Into Running members trained for the Go Girl 5K that took place on Labor Day.

OMAHA RUNNING CLUB

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