



OMAHA RUNNING CLUB NEWSLETTER

*For the members of the Omaha Running Club * Vol. 52 * Spring 2023*

ORC Hall adds Fisher and Kucera

For a second straight year, Mother Nature gave us a break for the Feb. 5 Chiller Challenge and annual meeting. The temperature in Papillion that morning when the 8K and shorter races began was in the low 40s, nearly 10 degrees above normal.

Following the run, attendees gathered at the gym inside Papillion Landing to enjoy the chili lunch served by the Bean Team volunteers. The afternoon event was highlighted by the announcement of the two newest ORC Hall of Fame inductees, Anna Fisher and Shari Kucera. (More on that later.)

Before the program began, Club president Tom Whitaker was asked to assess the health of our running club and race participation.

"We've grown some," he said. "Because of COVID, although it's still with us, we've seen some increases — not a lot — in our races. Our marathon was up about 100 to 150 people last September."

Whitaker continued: "Membership is staying pretty steady. We're still around the 500 mark. We're kind of holding our own. We haven't grown a lot, but we haven't shrunk either in membership or our races."

After setbacks due to weather and course changes, the Club's signature event, the Heartland Marathon, continues to grow. And that's gratifying to Whitaker, particularly in the fact that there has been enough net funding to contribute to charitable causes.

"We've been able to get enough participation and enough support that we were able to have a small profit that we could give some money back to some organizations," he said. "We're very, very happy about that. We're in it to put on a good race. We're not a for-profit organization. We're in it to put on good events and take good care of our runners."

He added that marathon fees are needed to cover the high



The assembled crowd at Papillion Landing awaits the start of the program that included the announcement of the newest HOF inductees, Anna Fisher and Shari Kucera.

costs of putting on an event of that size, including equipment used in the timing of the race.

"A finish-line clock alone costs \$2,500," he said. "When you have to mail it in to get it fixed is another expense. We break even or make some money on our events, so we're happy."

Planning for the next marathon begins shortly after the one completed. Registration for 2023 opened a week after the previous one.

Whitaker sees the Heartland growing after the Club purchased the Omaha Marathon a year ago. The Heartland is now the lone full marathon in the area when the Nebraska Marathon moved from September to April.

"With no further competition with the Omaha Marathon in the fall from other marathons, we hope we'll grow more," he

See Chiller, Page 2

Distance Training Clinic set to start

A full slate of guest speakers has been lined up for the ORC's Distance Training Clinic, which begins this month. **Page 6.**

ORC donates to its favorite charity

The Omaha Running Club once again was happy to contribute a check in support of the Council Bluffs Police. **Page 6.**

Chiller: The late Dick Burrows is remembered

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said. “We think we will. We’re really going to try to beef up our marketing plan. Marketing is the key to it, but marketing costs money. That’s something we always have to worry about, whether we can afford the kind of promotion that we need.”

After the brief announcement of the election of the Club’s Board of Directors, the program quickly shifted to the announcement of the new HOF inductees.

“This is my favorite part of the year,” said Alan Higley, coordinator of the HOF Selection Committee. “I get the privilege of recognizing the previous inductees, and then we get to induct our two newest members.”

Higley then read the list of past HOF members and noted with sadness the passing of 2007 Hall-of-Famer Dick Burrows, who left us last year. He and a few other ORC members attended his service.

“Dick left a lasting impression on a lot of individuals,” he said. “He was just a super individual, and he’ll be missed.”

He then switched to the announcement of the new inductees.

“I don’t know how we didn’t get you two in sooner,” Higley said. “It’s a shame, but you’re here now.”

Anna Fisher was the first introduced. She was recognized for her years of directing Plattsmouth’s Harvest Run (formally known as the King Carnival Run) and for volunteering for runs in Cass and Sarpy Counties, including the Bellevue Runway Run.

“She was the go-to source for everybody in the Plattsmouth village,” Higley said. “She did a lot of administrative grunt work, particularly on the day of the race. She often recruited her mom, husband, daughter, son, granddaughter, grandson and son-in-law to help. They were a full-service crew.”

He added: “Anna was also one of the top female finishers at many of the local road races in the 1980s and 1990s.”

Taking the microphone, Anna introduced her family present before saying, “Thank you. This is a privilege and honor. Thank you, all.”

Higley then introduced Shari Kucera, who was a standout runner for Peru State College and a 2013 Hall of Fame inductee at her alma mater. She set school records in the indoor 500-meter run (1:23.61), the indoor 800 (2:19.63) and the outdoor 3,200 relay.

She was a four-time NAIA national indoor qualifier in the 800. In 1984, the Bobcats placed seventh in the national indoor two-mile relay with a 9:52.39 clocking.

She didn’t quit running after college. Competing in the USA Masters Track and Field competition, her 5,000-meter time at

Weather sparks good turnout as runners warm up for lunch

With above-normal temperatures blessing this year’s Chiller Challenge, you couldn’t have asked for a better February day. After all, you never know what you’re going to get weather-wise the first week of the month.

Just short of 100 men, women and youngsters participated in the three pre-meeting runs: the 8K, 2-mile and kids’ run. Most chose the longer distance.

Overall champion in the 8K was Blake Ziegler of Omaha. The 26-year-old was clocked in 29:42. The runner-up was 2006 Hall-of-Fame inductee Todd Nott of Plattsmouth with a time of 33:28. The first female finisher was Taia Green. Just 13, the Omaha teen finished fourth overall in 35:53. On the other end of the age bracket was 59-year-old Sarah Fredrickson, the female runner-up in 39:10.

In the 2-mile run, La Vista resident Robert Gregg came in first. Gregg, 40, was clocked in 17:40 — 45 seconds ahead of runner-up Sam Carney, 13, of Omaha. There were just two entered in the kids’ run. Jonah Cutler, 8, won in 2:32, followed by Vera Griffith, 1, in 3:40.



ORC Hall-of-Famer Todd Nott finished second in the 8K.

the end of 2009 was No. 1 in the country for her age division.

She also won the Columbus 2.1-mile race for 10 straight years and was often the top runner among all genders in various road races.

“I just want to say thank you for this honor,” Shari said in her brief remarks. “Alan told me I didn’t have to give a speech, so I’m going to go with that. This honestly is a lifetime privilege for me.”

She closed by noting her friendship with Anna, her fellow inductee.

“We pretty much grew up together,” she said. “To be recognized by this group of people who are so talented and so dedicated is truly an honor.”

Newest inductees thrilled to join

The two members of the 2022 ORC Hall of Fame class have impressive resumes as both competitors and organizers. On top of that, Sheri Kucera and Anna Fisher are good friends, which made that Feb. 5 afternoon extra special.

Fisher is a pioneer of sorts, having served as race director for the then-named Plattsmouth King Korn Karnival Run when it started in 1989. She also found time to enter local road races in the 1980s and '90s. In fact, she was a Chiller Challenge first-place finisher. Following the induction ceremony, Fisher said she was humbled by the recognition.

"It was a most glorious, pleasant surprise, yes it was," she said. "But it came with such a devotion. This doesn't just happen. It takes the support of everyone involved. This was on behalf of everyone. I'm just so honored."

Asked to think back on the time-consuming task of directing Plattsmouth's annual festival race, which in its heyday drew up to 125 participants, she smiled.

"It was a labor of love," Fisher said. "My goal was not how many people I could get to attend or to participate. My goal was to make sure everybody went home with a trophy if possible. I'm so into having people recognized for their efforts. I think that's important."

Kucera was a standout runner in high school and, later, Peru State College. In 2013, she was inducted into the Peru State College Hall of Fame. She's still running, a seed that was planted in high school.



Sheri Kucera, left, and Anna Fisher are more than runners. They are good friends.

"I did all the sports in high school," she said. "I was decent, probably the best in track. In high school it was the 800, but since then the 5K would probably be my fun zone. I like the speed races."

Kucera likes to get her runs in first thing in the morning.

"I got up this morning and ran 8 miles," she said. "I'm usually up by 3."

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 Meyer	2008	Harvey Kunz	2017
Jill Garlock	2004	Bea Sides	2009	Tony Jones	2017
John Petersen	2004	Cliff Karthaus	2009	Nancy Sutton Moss	2018
John Thomas	2004	Lou Soukup	2009	Christy Nielsen	2018
Karlene (Erickson) Herrell	2004	John Hawkins	2010	Tom Cody	2019
Mick Freeman	2004	Stan Shirk	2010	Jon Eggers	2019
Nancy McCormick	2004	Greg Carlberg	2011	Glen Moss	2019
Bob Garcia	2005	Jimmy Hall	2011	Anne Medeiros	2020
Chuck Cooper	2005	Ronn Baker	2012	Ann Ringlein	2020
Craig Christians	2005	Erin Sullivan	2012	The Bean Team	2020
Mike Ewoldt	2006	Gary Wasserman	2013	John Hall	2021
Tim Hendricks	2006	Jim McMahon	2013	John Fey	2021
Todd Nott	2006	Ron Olsen	2014	Derek Fey	2021
Dick Burrows	2007	Roxi Erickson	2014	Sheri Kucera	2022
Gary Julin	2007	Daren Konda	2015	Anna Fisher	2022
Leonard Vavra	2007	Tom Whitaker	2015		
Alan Higley	2008	Jose Badillo	2016		

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President's Message

As we approach what is normally the prime season for races, we can only hope that life and road races are starting to return to "normal." We do seem to be seeing more and more events coming back, along with new and renewed interest in endurance sport-related activities. With everyone's well-being still 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 are pleased to announce that among a great lineup of programs and events this summer, our Distance Clinic, which again will be led by Hilary Catron, will return this year beginning on April 12 at Peak Performance on Cass Street. The clinic will focus on the Heartland Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K or relay event. Hilary has done an outstanding job keeping the Clinic going the past couple years despite the impact of the pandemic.

We are taking steps to rejuvenate the program this year to provide an excellent training experience for participants. Clinic sessions will be Wednesdays at 6 p.m. and Sundays at 8 a.m. and will continue into August. The first three Wednesday sessions each month, beginning at 6 p.m., will include a speaker who will discuss a marathon/half marathon related topic, followed by an optional group run. The fourth Wednesday will be a mix-up run of various distances at various locations to become familiar with different trails in Omaha.

The speaker portion of each session lasts about 45 minutes and is then followed by a run. Speakers recognized as experts in their fields will cover topics to include: nutrition; PT-injury prevention and care; Strength training for runners; yoga for runners; CORE; Q&A with local running experts; massage therapy; and sports psychology.

The Wednesday runs start about 7 p.m. with distances varying between 5 and 10 miles.

The Sunday session is a long run, under the coordination of ORC Board member Marty Ertz, initially beginning at Chalco at 8 a.m.

Distances will vary between 4 and 20 miles. As the clinic progresses, Sunday session meeting times and locations will vary.

Pam Car, ORC Board member and an RRCA certified running coach, will provide specific training and feedback. An end of season banquet sponsored by the ORC is also planned to share and celebrate the running season. The Clinic is free to ORC members but will require non-members to join the ORC (\$20 Young Professional or \$25

Individual membership). You will be getting a lot of training, encouragement and fellowship for your money.

Also, the Step Into Running women's training program led by Jeremy Kaliff will begin at Peak in June. These programs 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.

* * *

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. 24. 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 Oma-

See message, Page 5

Spring has sprung and it's good

This is my favorite time of the year, for several reasons. Chief among them, of course, is the arrival of warmer weather, which allows me to dust off the golf clubs for another season of frustration chasing the little white ball around our course here in



Buccaneer Bay. The end of bone-chilling cold temps also means more favorable conditions for runners and walkers.

For more than a decade now, I've been relegated to the slower pace of walking, which doesn't bother me. But I still miss the "glory days" when I could cover twice the miles running versus walking. My mind often harkens back to the 1980s — my peak years of running.

I often tell the story — and I'm sure I've done it here in the past — about my first marathon. I was working at Kutak Rock, the law firm housed in the historic Omaha Building. On the top floor of the building was a workout facility, which included a racquetball court, locker room and showers. Socks, shorts and T-shirts were supplied, so all you needed was a pair of sneakers.

In 1979, my first year there, I was invited to join some of the lawyers (I was an "associated professional," not an attorney) for a noon-hour run. Before saying yes, I first purchased a cheap pair of shoes at a K-mart store — and I mean cheap.

When the guys I ran with glanced at them, one of them asked, "Where did you get those?" I answered K-mart, which caused a snicker from the guys.

"You need to get a pair of running shoes," I was told, having no idea what they were talking about.

So I checked out the specialty store at the Crossroads near our home and paid, as I recall, more than \$20 for a pair of running shoes. You have to remember this was more than 40 years ago!

(I should back up and say how much my knees killed me after running in the K-mart shoes. That was solved with the more expensive ones.)

Next thing I knew, I was hooked. My job was pretty stressful, and I found my lunchtime runs helped me reduce that stress. From there, I was talked into running the 1983 Lincoln Marathon. When I've spoken at the Club's distance training clinics, I always share my story of that first marathon. You don't have any idea what to expect, how you're going to feel that day or, especially, what the weather will be like.

My goal, like any participant, was to just finish. Painful as it was, I did complete my first marathon, but I wasn't satisfied. My time wasn't bad (3:29), but it could have been much better had I not walked while battling cramps all over my body.

Determined to improve, I ran Lincoln again the next year and carved 2 minutes off my previous finish. Again, I had to walk more than I wanted.

The pinnacle of my running days came that same year when I completed the 1984 Omaha Marathon. My personal best (3:19) came without slowing down to walk (except for water stations).

Fast-forward to 2002 as I was approaching my 50th birthday. Our son in Baltimore encouraged me to run that city's marathon in October. It was his first — and my last — but it was a special moment in my life.

Knee surgery followed two years later, but I returned to Baltimore in 2012 for the Baltimore Half-Marathon, again with son Gerry. So I'm content after four full marathons and one half.

Message: Volunteers help make events a success

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ha'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.

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.

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.

Distance Training Clinic revving up

The ORC Distance Clinic kicks off April 12. Sessions are Wednesdays 6 to 6:50 p.m. with a run to follow. We also head out for some post-run socializing/food/drinks. Sessions are held at Peak Performance, 78th and Cass Streets. The clinic is free to ORC members, but non-members must join the Club.

Sessions to include: nutrition, strength training, injury prevention and care, yoga, massage, gear, speed training, etc. We will post the speaker calendar monthly on FB.

Thank you to Marty Ertz who will be coordinating Sunday long runs. Pam Car will be offering training plans/coaching (\$10 for members).

Runners of all levels are invited. We are setting our sites on the Heartland Marathon this fall. With 26.2, 13.1, 10k and relay options, there is an event for everyone. Here are the details:

Location: Peak Performance, 78th and Cass Streets

Clinic: 6 to 6:50 p.m., followed by a run at 7.

Eats/drinks post-run.

Last Wednesday of each month is run only at 6 p.m. There will be different locations to mix it up.

The lineup:

April

April 12: Kick-off night with Tom Whitaker and Pam Car

April 19: Mike Ewoldt speaking on picking the correct shoe, blister prevention and gear basics.

April 26: Run only at 6 p.m. Location TBA.

May

May 3: Berkshire week. No formal run/clinic

May 10: Elias Jones LMT: Massage therapy and corrective exercises for athletes.

May 17: Pam Car, Level 2 RRCA coach. She'll address training basics, building a base, increasing distance and tempo runs.

May 24: Hilary Catron speaking on CORE strength, essential for runners, and guided exercises for core strength and stability.

May 31: Run only at 6 p.m. TBD.

June

June 7: Niki Kubiak, RD CSSD, addressing nutrition for training and performance.

June 14: Christy Nielsen, DPT and 3-time Olympic Marathon Trials Qualifier. Topic: Injury prevention and care.

June 21: Brad Diestbier, M.A Exercise Science. Topic: strength training for runners.

June 28: Run only at 6 p.m. TBA.

July

July 5: Run only at 6 p.m. Red, White and Blue Run. (There may be "Grandma Cookies.")

July 12: TBA.

July 19: Chaeli Souvannasoth speaking on yoga for runners. Bring your mat as we are guided through exercises for maintaining range of motion, mobility and flexibility.

July 26: Run only, TBA.

August

We transition to run only at 6 p.m. for August and September. Updates will be posted on RUN 402 and ORC FB pages. Sunday run schedule is coming soon. PM Hilary Catron with any questions. Happy Running!

— Hilary Catron



ORC donates to police

ORC vice president Daren Konda, right, and ORC president Tom Whitaker present a check for \$500 to Sgt. Cory Woodward and Sgt. Josh Hughes of the Council Bluffs Police Department in recognition of the outstanding support the Department provides for ORC's Heartland Marathon. (Photo courtesy of Lt. Darren Budd.)

No Frills racing series turns 30



Runners prepare for takeoff at the No Frills Racing Series wrap-up event last month. The hearty group took off from the LaPlatte Community Church for an out-and-back run covering 5 miles. Following the final race, awards were presented to the top 3-point scorers throughout the series. All proceeds from the series benefitted the distance running programs at Bellevue University. Race director Craig Christians thanks all who participated.

Here's a blast from the past: 4 ORC legends



Recognize any of these guys? It's a photo from long, long ago. Pictured from left are Chuck Cooper, Mike Manna, Tony Jones and Harvey Kunz.

OMAHA RUNNING CLUB

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