



OMAHA RUNNING CLUB NEWSLETTER

*For the members of the Omaha Running Club * Vol. 53* Winter 2023-24*

Chiller opens 2024 ORC events

With winter fully underway, those of us who prefer warmer weather look forward to Feb. 2, which is Groundhog Day. That's when we'll find out (supposedly) whether we'll face six more weeks of winter or the joy of an early spring. Here, in the middle of America, we've seen both extremes over the years.

Regardless of the groundhog's forecast, the Omaha Running Club's first event, the Chiller Challenge, comes two days after Groundhog Day. Veteran participants of Chiller know all too well you never know what kind of weather to expect. A perfect example came in 2021, when the scheduled races were scrapped in favor of a fun run for those crazy enough to take on the bitter cold and wind.

ORC Chiller Challenge

Date: Sunday, Feb. 4

Time: Races begin 10:55 a.m.

Meal: Starts at noon, followed by the annual meeting and announcement of the new Hall of Fame inductees.

Register/information at: getmeregistered.com (search for Chiller Challenge)

This year's Chiller returns to Papillion Landing on Lincoln Street, just south of the Papillion Creek. The event moved from NP Dodge Park in 2020 and has turned into an ideal location. There's a kids' fun run, a 2-mile race and an 8K run. The gun goes off at 10:55 for the first race.

There's much more to the Chiller than races. Lunch will be served starting at noon, followed by the announcement of ORC officers and the Board of Directors. The highlight comes with the Hall of Fame induction announcement and race awards. The afternoon is capped by raffle prizes.

At the 2023 Chiller, 73 men, women and children competed in the 8K run, which was won by Blake Ziegler of Omaha. His winning time of 29:42 was just under four minutes ahead of runner-up Todd Nott, former cross country coach at Plattsmouth High School.

If you're an ORC member, the Chiller is a free event, but you



must register. That's easily done by going to: getmeregistered.com/chillerchallenge.

Also available that day: ORC apparel for those who have accumulated volunteer points or for purchase.

If you plan to run, register today. (Please note: A late fee will be added to all registrations on day of the event.) If you're not a runner, we hope to see you at the meeting!



Runners and other ORC meeting attendees line up for lunch at the 2023 Chiller Challenge. The event returns to Papillion Landing.

Member gets, gives lifts from running

After taking up running as she neared 60, Joy Mann has made many friends from the sport. **Page 2.**

Quick return to normal for lake?

Users of the Standing Bear Lake recreation opportunities eager to see improvements get finished. **Page 4.**

ORC runner enjoys her friends

If there was an award given by the Omaha Running Club for Most Uplifting Member, Joy Mann would be the obvious choice. Proof comes with her many positive Facebook posts, which parallels her upbeat attitude on both running and life itself. She credits that outlook in part to the friendships she's made as a Club member for the past 15 years.

While some ORC members kept running after their high school and/or college years, Joy didn't take up running until her 60th birthday was approaching. A self-described "tomboy," the only girls organized sport available when she attended Council Bluffs Thomas Jefferson High School was basketball. She didn't go out for the team, but she did meet her future husband, Frank, there.

Joy was well into her 23-year career at Physicians Mutual when she started running — all due to her future daughter-in-law, Courtney, who was engaged to her son Cody. Courtney ran for

Nebraska Wesleyan under Ann Ringlein, a 2020 ORC Hall-of-Fame inductee.

"Courtney did quite well at Wesleyan," Joy said. "I wanted to have something in common with her. I was 59, going on 60."

She learned of a program called, "Step Into Running," and joined the group.

"I had tried doing the Corporate Cup and different things, but I never really got the hang of it," Joy said.

"I liked (Step Into



Joy Mann was inspired to run by her future daughter-in-law.

Running), and I thought that gave me something to talk over with Courtney."

Joining that group, Joy immediately gained new friends both younger and even older. They remain close to this day.

"I fell in love with the ladies," she said. "Bea Sides was wonderful as were all the ones I met. They didn't put you down for your age or your size. Everything was always positive. That's what makes me love the running community."

Joy continued: "I wish the world was that way, where we cared about one another."

Having grown up in what she admits was "a very dysfunctional home," Joy has found running to be a refreshing makeover



Joy and Frank Mann have been married for 53 years. They met as students at Council Bluffs Thomas Jefferson High School. Since joining the Omaha Running Club, Joy has added to her list of friends.

from the life she knew growing up.

"It just changed my world," she said.

Joy has run 55 half-marathons, mostly in the Omaha area. But one she remembers fondly took place in 2015 at the Las Vegas Rock 'n' Roll Marathon, where at 65 she placed third in her age group. She ran it with some others from Omaha.

"I was shocked about that, because there were so many women from all over the world at that event," she said. "There were ladies from Ireland and some from Scotland. I have a plaque from that race that I'll never get rid of."

She hasn't run a full marathon but did complete a 50K (31 miles).

"Courtney (Joy's daughter-in-law) once told me, 'Joy, there's so much training that goes into a full marathon. If you really want to enjoy it, do half-marathons.' She said, 'You'll have more fun, and you'll get that same feeling crossing the finish line.'"

Joy has run half-marathons in Des Moines and Lincoln and, of course, the Club's Heartland Marathon.



Joy's plaque from the Las Vegas Rock 'n' Roll Marathon.

See Mann, Page 3

Mann: Friendships grew after joining the ORC

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“I’ve done (Heartland) since the first one,” she said. “This was the first year I didn’t place (in her age group), because I got leg cramps. But I did get fourth.”

Joy’s usual running partner for the Heartland is Mary Duros, a fellow Club member. They crossed the finish line of last year’s half in 2:48:53.

“If we ever were to quit other races,” Joy said, “we both agreed that we want to do the Heartland every year. We want to support the Omaha Running Club.”

Joy and Mary became acquainted as co-workers at Physicians Mutual.

“I joined a running group,” Mary said, “and Joy used to be in the same group. I got to know her better outside of work through the running group.”

Joy had been a member of the ORC before her. They became good friends over the years.

“Joy is very positive,” Mary said. “That’s one thing I admire about her. She is so determined. She will never let anything get her down, even if you’re down.”

Mary remembers, for example, one race where she wasn’t feeling that confident before the start.

Recalled Mary: “I said, ‘Joy, I don’t know. This is a half-marathon, and I’m not prepared.’ She said, ‘We’ll do it together, we’ll walk if we have to.’ And I said, ‘OK.’ She’s one of a kind.”

Joy said the feeling is

mutual.

“Mary has been an amazing friend,” she said. “She’s always supported me. What more can you do for a friend like that?”

Joy and Mary plan to run the Chiller Challenge on Feb. 4 and the Leprechaun Chase on March 2.

“We run that one every year,” Mary said of the Leprechaun Chase. “We love it.”

Joy clearly remembers how she joined the ORC.



Mary Duros, left, and Joy Mann approach the finish line of the 2023 Heartland Marathon. (Photo by Barnes Photography.)

“I had stopped at Peak Performance and heard people talking about (the Club),” she said. “Thank god I got into that, because that same year my job at Physicians Mutual was eliminated. And also that same year, my mother died. Thank god for the running community.”

She continued: “The support I got, the friendships I’ve made mean so much to me. I’ve made a ton of friends. I love them all.”

Joy hasn’t suffered any serious injuries from running but a year ago underwent spinal lumbar surgery.

“I told the doctors I never want to quit running,” she said. “The doctor told me to walk more and when I run to do an easy pace. He told me, ‘I wish more patients were in your shape and had your attitude.’ I thanked him, and I said, ‘Why can’t we enjoy each day and never give up and just do what we can? Because it all counts.’”

Today, Joy and Frank enjoy spending time with their nine grandchildren.

“They all like each other,” Joy said. “When we’re together, they joke around, and we play games. I’m just lucky. I have three amazing daughters-in-law. I tell people my sons all married their best friends. They’re giving their kids a life that I never knew growing up.”

As a self-proclaimed “late bloomer,” Joy is glad to provide advice to anyone contemplating a leap into running.

“Just remember, you’ll feel better after you run,” she said. “Whatever you do counts, and never be down on yourself. You’re out there trying, and that means a lot.”



Joy with one of the many medals she’s won over the years.

Standing Bear Lake users eye finish

Users of Standing Bear Lake's recreation opportunities surely can't wait until things return to normal after a couple of years of work on the popular running spot for Club members and others. A news story that ran toward the end of last year noted that the water level has been slow to return to normal due to the drought, which means runners and walkers can't use the floating trail connector.

Still, those responding to the newsletter's request for comment say they're looking forward to a return to its past state.

Malisa Rozell Radke wrote: "I think once finished it is going to be amazing. They have redone the black top on that side by the playground, and the fishing docks they put in over there look good. I can't wait for them to finally clear and open the floating bridge again. That still looks like a mess, but hopefully it will look as good as new once the water is all the way in."



The floating bridge.

Stacy Lawson added: "I am very excited about the renovations and impatiently awaiting the reopening of the full loop. In my perfect running path world they would add working 'real' restrooms, working water fountains and a blue emergency phone. A running girl can dream!"

Basics of Running Clinic at Peak

ORC members are encouraged to attend the Basics of Running Clinic on Jan. 21, starting at 1:30 p.m., at the 78th and Cass Peak Performance store. Hosted by Pam Car, the one-hour clinic is designed for new runners and walkers or those getting back into running.

Topics planned include form breathing and foot strike. An optional group run will follow. The event is free to ORC members, and you can register by email: stepin2running@gmail.com.

Indoor track workouts held at CSM

Those looking to get in some speed workouts can have at it each Tuesday night at the College of Saint Mary's indoor track facility. Held from 5:30 to 6:30, the cost is \$5.

A 10- to 16-minute warm-up will be followed by 12, 400-meter runs with a 10- to 16-minute cool down. Runners will have private use of the track for the hour until the general public takes over.

2 winter running series are back

The BTC/ORC Lake Manawa Racing Series returned Dec. 9. Directed by ORC Hall-of-Famer Mick Freeman, the event takes place the first and third Saturdays of January, February and March. The 10K and 2-mile runs begin at 10 a.m. at the Lake Manawa north shore entry. Entry fee is \$5.

The Brooks No Frills Racing Series began its three-month run on Jan. 13 at the La Platte Community Church, 16412 Main Street in Bellevue (just north of Catfish Lake at the Lodge). The 5-mile races are run the second and fourth Saturdays of the month, starting at 10 a.m. Entry fee of \$5 includes a pair of No Frills gloves. The course is out and back on La Platte Road and is age-graded.

Short jobs: Heartland registration open

Registration has begun for the 2024 Heartland Marathon, set for Sept. 22 at Miller's Landing. Go to heartlandmarathon.com. . . . Looking for a race in March? Try the March 2 Leprechaun Chase. Details on the ORC site. . . . Here's a reminder if you'd like to volunteer for an ORC-managed race, contact volunteer coordinator Marty Ertz at: martyrunsforfun@gmail.com.

Alan Higley earns award from NSAA

Alan Higley, the Omaha Running Club's official race timer, for years has timed the state cross country meet, which is held each fall in Kearney. He recently was recognized by the Nebraska School Activities Association with the Outstanding Service for Cross Country Award during last fall's state meet.

"It was a total surprise," Alan said.

He leads a team that last year was part of last October's Chicago Marathon timing group that recorded a



world record in the men's marathon. Precision Race Results equipment was used at the first five splits on the course. Alan praised the work of Dave Hattan and Laurie Schlitt for their efforts in Chicago. Dave and Alan next will be timing the Jan. 14 Houston Marathon.

"We have timed a couple of American records there in the past, and if the weather holds, I would think we may get at least one this year."

He added that his company is always looking for folks who would like to join the timing team.

2023 ORC Board Officers and Board Members

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For more on the ORC, go to: omaharun.org
Follow the Club on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

President's Message

It has been unusually nice outdoors so far this fall and early winter, weather conducive to thinking about running races. The Lake Manawa and No Frills winter series races are open and posted on the ORC calendar. And we have also been planning other events for the coming year. I am particularly excited as the New Year approaches to be able to say that Omaha's Heartland Marathon, marathon relay, half marathon and 10K races, Omaha's only Fall marathon, will once again be held in 2024 on Sept. 22.

At this point we will be returning to our start and finish location at Miller's Landing and will utilize the same courses, although we will be investigating the potential for changing the courses. I sincerely hope that you will mark your calendars and plan to support your local Club and what we are doing to help our local running community.

If you are not ready for 26+ miles, that is fine; sign up for the 10K or half marathon, or get five friends together and form a relay team. The relay legs will be various distances, so there will be a right distance for everyone. And, if you are not interested in running at all, we will need many volunteers to make this a success so we urge you to sign up as a volunteer. We will be extremely grateful for your help!

So please spread the word, not only here in Omaha, but as far and wide as you can. Do you have a running relative or friend in another state? Invite them to come join us and help continue making our event a success for the Omaha running community.

With the end of another year, it's time to look back on the many accomplishments of the Omaha Running Club. I am grateful for and extend a special thank you to each member of the ORC Board and our great advisors for their time and hard work to help our Club fulfill its mission of support-

ing the Omaha running and walking community. But most of all, I am extremely grateful to all the volunteers who give their time and effort so freely all year, as they are the ones who really keep us going. We could not do anything without you. This was particularly true with our Heartland Marathon

this year as our volunteers received many positive comments from participants.

Marty Ertz, our volunteer coordinator, has established an outstanding record of managing our volunteer function. I am grateful as well for all the runners who turned out to support our events and gave us their mark of approval by their participation.

My sincere best wishes to our members for a healthy and successful 2024.

Thank you for supporting our Club. I look forward to seeing you at the Lake Manawa and No Frills winter series runs, and at the Chiller Challenge and Annual Meeting of Members that is scheduled for Feb. 4. Check the ORC website for updates.

Registration is open and, as mentioned above, we are moving forward with plans to hold our premier event, Omaha's Heartland Marathon, on Sept. 22. It is not too early to begin planning your fall event. If you are interested in accurately measured and clearly marked courses, prompt and accurate results during the race, photo tagging and runner tracking, and race officials and volunteers who really care about your race experience, then we are the race for you. Check us out at: heartlandmarathon.org. And the best part? The proceeds stay right here in Omaha to facilitate the ORC's year-round mission to support the local running community.

Run safely, and Happy New Year everyone!



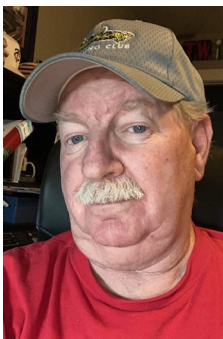
Tom Whitaker

**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO
OUR ORC MEMBERS!**

Heartland was 2023's highlight

Another year has quickly sped by, leaving me to wonder, "What's going on?" It seems like just yesterday that I was putting together the 2022-23 winter issue of this newsletter. I guess the combination of growing older and being retired has something to do with it.

First off, I want to join our Club's president, Tom Whitaker, in wishing all our members a Happy New Year. I'm not big on resolutions, but Jan. 1 of each year is always a good time to at least think about what I should do to better my health. Of course, thinking about and doing it are often two different actions.



It was another fun-filled 2023 for the Club and its members. The highlight, of course, was the Heartland Marathon, which continues to get better each year. Runners were blessed with ideal weather, and the reviews again proved how well-managed the event continues to be staged. Here's hoping Mother Nature cooperates for the 10th (yes, 10th) edition of this great event come Sept. 22.

The ORC stages numerous events during the year, starting with the Chiller Challenge on Feb. 4. Staged two days after Groundhog Day, it's a good chance to get out of the house and hook up with folks you may not have seen in weeks or months. It also serves as the unveiling of the newest inductees into the ORC's Hall of Fame. Alan Higley, HOF coordinator, has fielded some quality nominees who are voted on by current HOF members.

The Step Into Running program continues to grow. Now under the direction of Pam Car, the training program for females of all ages is designed to inject enthusiasm into new runners. It's geared to prepare participants for the Go Girl 5K that takes place on Labor Day, which this year falls on Sept. 2. For complete information, go to omaharun.org and click on the training tab on top.

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Winter doesn't mean you have to hibernate (tempting as it might be). For me, I almost prefer the cold versus the hot summer weather. It's just a matter of layering up and making sure you have gloves or, on really cold days, mittens. Of course, you need proper headgear as well. Hot summer days seem to zap me at the end of my walks.

There are three main issues you deal with during winter months: 1) Cold temperatures; 2) icy streets, sidewalks or paths; and 3) wind (which I really don't care for). Any of the three can make for uncomfortable runs/walks, although I always fear slick surfaces the most for obvious reasons. I have taken a tumble a few times but, fortunately, was never injured.



The Heartland Marathon returns to the riverfront on Sept. 22. (Photo by Barnes Photography.)

When we moved to Plattsmouth's Buccaneer Bay 6½ years ago, among the first things we discovered was the lack of sidewalks. That has never bothered me, but every year it seems to cause discussions on our neighborhood Facebook site. There are some who venture out in the dark and don't do a good job of wearing reflective clothing or other means to be seen, and that's dangerous regardless of whether you live in a small community or the big city.

Buccaneer Boulevard is the main road that runs through our subdivision. Our street runs a block parallel to the south, so walking on the boulevard is unavoidable. The street is wide enough for two vehicles from opposite directions to leave plenty of room for walkers/runners. It's only dangerous when drivers clearly aren't paying attention — as in looking at their phones.

Most of the folks here are good about walking/running toward traffic. And the majority of drivers stay close to the 25 mph speed limit. I know I'm being seen when vehicles move over.

I felt much more nervous about running and walking while living near the Crossroads. I had to be extra mindful when crossing streets on my way to the Keystone Trail. I had collisions with a couple of vehicles over the years, but, thankfully, it was nothing serious.

Here's hoping all of our members have a safe 2024. And keep supporting the ORC!

Hilary Catron honored by RRCA for directing clinic



Hilary Catron, left, with Pam Car after receiving her award.

The end-of-year Omaha Running Club Distance Clinic Banquet served as a farewell to Hilary Catron, the program's director.

"After several years of coordinating the Distance Clinic," she said in a Facebook post, "I am 'voluntiring.'"

She was honored with an RRCA National Volunteer Award for devoting more than 2,000 hours of service and a lifetime membership in the Omaha Running Club.

Hilary said she was humbled by the recognition.



"Thank you to Pam Car and Marty Ertz for their support of the clinic this year," she said. "Also, thanks goes to Tom Whitaker and the ORC Board for creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all levels of runners."

A fun Holiday Lights Run



A hearty group turned out for the ORC's final fun run of 2023, which took place Dec. 3 and gave runners a close look at downtown Omaha's spectacular light display.



Clothing drive deemed a success

Pam Car had a reason to smile after spearheading the annual ORC clothing drive held in December. Donations filled four boxes and three large bags of various winter clothing items and accessories. The estimated total of 150 items included shoes, gloves, sweaters and outerwear. "One runner donated an entire bag full of men's winter items," Pam said. "Omaha Running Club members support each other and the community! I am proud that so many ORC members participated."

Upcoming January/February events

- Jan. 13:** No Frills Racing Series
- Jan. 20:** BTC/ORC Lake Manawa Winter Series
- Jan. 21:** Running Basics Clinic
- Jan. 27:** No Frills Racing Series
- Feb. 3:** BTC/ORC Lake Manawa Winter Series
- Feb. 4:** Chiller Challenge and Annual Meeting
- Feb. 10:** No Frills Racing Series
- Feb. 17:** BTC/ORC Lake Manawa Winter Series
- Feb. 18:** Building a Training Plan Clinic
- Feb. 24:** No Frills Racing Series

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