



OMAHA RUNNING CLUB NEWSLETTER

For the members of the Omaha Running Club * Vol. 53* Spring 2024

ORC Chiller draws large turnout

Mother Nature blessed the Omaha Running Club's Chiller Challenge with above-average temperatures Feb. 4 for the three races — the 8K, 2-mile and kids' run. The runs drew 105 total runners and walkers ahead of the annual meeting and announcement of the newest ORC Hall of Fame inductees. For the fifth year, the event was held at Papillion Landing.

Craig Halverson of Omaha sped to a 27:24 winning time in the 8K. He edged the 2023 winner, Blake Ziegler of Elkhorn, by 38 seconds. The female champion was Kaci Lickteig of Omaha. The 37-year old was fifth overall in 32:04. In the 2-mile event, Kyle Griffith, 40, of Plattsmouth, was first in 19:30. Runner-up was Wyatt Cain, 15, of Council Bluffs in 20:26. His sister, Bella, came in next in 20:36. First in the kids' run was 8-year-old Jonah Cutler.

Runners and other attendees gathered for pizza and salad, compliments of Orsi's Italian Bakery & Pizzeria. Following the announcement of the voting for ORC officers and board members, two new inductees were enshrined into the Hall of Fame: Kaci Lickteig, one of the top current runners in the Omaha area, and Pat Lawlor, owner of Lawlor's Custom Sportswear.

The newest inductees accepted their plaques in front of an estimated 100 who gathered inside the Papillion Landing gymnasium.

"We had a good turnout this year," said ORC President Tom Whitaker. "The Hall of Fame choices were very good. I was very happy with that."

Lickteig hasn't slowed down a bit over the years, and she continues to take on challenging races all over the country.

"Kaci is so remarkable with all that she's done and been able to do," Whitaker said. "When you take a look at her and what she's accomplished, it's absolutely phenomenal."

Lawlor was recognized for his longstanding backing of the Club.

Said the ORC president: "When you take a look at Pat, he's really supported the Club a lot and supported running in general.



Craig Halverson cruises to the finish line as winner of the Chiller Challenge 8K run on Feb. 4. His time of 27:24 topped runner-up Blake Ziegler of Elkhorn (the 2023 winner) by 38 seconds. The race drew 82 runners from ages 14 to 74.

He's certainly a logical candidate. He seemed to be very happy and grateful to be recognized."

With the weather warming, the ORC's race calendar heats up as well. There are several Club-managed races on the schedule — topped, of course, by the 10th annual Heartland Marathon.

Asked to address the current state of the Club, Whitaker gave an upbeat reply.

"We are growing some," he said. "With the end of COVID-19, we started emphasizing some of our programs. In particular, last year we really got behind the distance clinic and pushed that a lot. This year, Step Into Running with Pam Car, a certified running coach, has been very eager to assist women with a lot of support there. We have new leaders for the distance clinic, Connie Garro and Kent Blobaum. They have some great ideas and are good runners. I think they're going to do a great job of putting on the distance clinic this year."

See Chiller, Page 2

'Pixie Ninja' is a top-flight runner

Kaci Lickteig picks up running early and turns into an accomplished marathoner and ultra runner. **Page 2.**

Lawlor makes time for morning runs

Pat Lawlor is busy with his apparel company, but he finds running keeps him sane. **Page 3.**

‘Pixie Ninja’ is one ultra runner

The old saying “good things come in small packages” certainly could apply to Kaci Lickteig. She’s known by many as the “Pixie Ninja” due to her petite stature. But don’t let that fool you. She can run past the tallest of runners, and her list of accomplishments is long and distinguished.

Lickteig began making a name for herself as a high-school junior from Dannebrog, Neb., and took off from there. She turned heads after college by qualifying for the 2012 Olympic Trials by turning in a 2:44:14 time at the 2011 California International Marathon. She also is accomplished in the world of ultra-running.

Those credentials more than made her a worthy 2024 ORC Hall of Fame inductee. She was taken aback by the honor.

“This is really an honor,” Lickteig said shortly after receiving her award.

She remembers her racing career’s humble beginning.

“When I was a junior in high school,” she said, “my best friend wanted to go out for cross country, and we didn’t have a full team. I was a volleyball player. She said, ‘If you go out for the team we’d have the full seven that we need.’ So a week before the season started, I decided to go out for cross country, and it kind of hooked me from then on.”

Lickteig took it to a new level a month after the 2012 Trials, by running her first ultra trail race in Kansas City (Kan.). At the Psycho WyCo 50K, she was the female-division champion — and eighth overall — in 4:46:19. At this year’s Psycho WyCo, she placed first among females and sixth overall in 4:57:26 (one spot behind 2006 ORC Hall of Famer Todd Nott).

She then raised the ante even higher by taking on the Western States 100-Mile trail race. She has finished it nine times, winning it in 2016 in 17:57:59, third-fastest time in the event’s 40-year history.

“I love the 100-mile distance,” Lickteig said.

She said training for ultra races is no different than regular marathons.

“I still do speed work, because it feels a lot easier,” she said. “I



ORC President Tom Whitaker looks on as Kaci Lickteig accepts her Hall of Fame plaque.

just make sure that I keep my fitness up.”

She rates the Western States event among her most enjoyable races but also has run in France, Switzerland and Italy.

“It’s the most beautiful landscapes I’ve ever seen,” she said.

At age 37, Lickteig feels she’s probably peaked as a runner, but that doesn’t mean she’s planning to hang up her shoes.

“I still want to do it for the passion of it,” she said. “If I’m not the fastest, I want to do it with heart. That’s the most important thing.”

Chiller: Club numbers growing after pandemic

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The Club membership has surpassed the 300 mark, which gratified the president.

“The Club is coming back and growing slowly,” Whitaker said. “All of running certainly was devastated with the COVID-19 situation. It’s growing because you’re seeing for-profit outfits coming to town with their races.”

He continued: “The big problem I see with running is the younger folks, 19 and under and 20 to 29. When you look at race results, the bulk of people are in their 30s and 40s. The next decade or two will really tell us where running is going to go. Maybe when they get into their 30s and start thinking about their health and longevity, maybe they’ll take up running more seriously.”

Lawlor humbled with induction

Pat Lawlor likely didn't know how large his business would become when he opened the doors of his store, Lawlor's Custom Sportswear, nearly 30 years ago. Today, his company is the major go-to place for Nebraska, Creighton and UNO outerwear at various arenas and Lawlor's store at 84th and J Streets. For years, Lawlor's has supplied T-shirts and other apparel for Omaha Running Club events, including the Club's Heartland Marathon.

As busy as he is overseeing his business, Lawlor somehow finds time to train for races. He placed second in his 8K age group at this year's Chiller Challenge and later was honored as the newest member of the ORC Hall of Fame.

Like Kaci Lickteig, Lawlor was taken aback to hear his name called into the Hall. But he did admit "something was up" when Alan Higley, HOF coordinator, told him he'd be "pleasantly surprised" if he stuck around for the post-race program.

"(Alan) knew I was entered in the race," Lawlor said, "but I was totally surprised."

Lawlor began running in the 1980s. He remembers competing in the 1983 and '84 Omaha Marathon. Later, he added out-of-state marathons, including the granddaddy of them all, the Boston Marathon.

"I had been kind of running throughout," he said, "but I really got back into it in 2014."



Pat Lawlor, right, said he suspected "something was up" when tipped off by Alan Higley that he'd be "pleasantly surprised" during the Chiller's post-race program. That's what happened when he was handed his HOF plaque by Club President Tom Whitaker.

That was the year son Max joined the Omaha Westside High School track and cross country teams. Max talked his dad into becoming his running partner.

"We ran the Los Angeles Marathon when Max was in college, and we started doing the Lincoln Marathon," Lawlor said.

See Lawlor, Page 4

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	Bea Sides	2009	Tony Jones	2017
Jill Garlock	2004	Cliff Karthaus	2009	Nancy Sutton Moss	2018
John Petersen	2004	Lou Soukup	2009	Christy Nielsen	2018
John Thomas	2004	John Hawkins	2010	Tom Cody	2019
Karlene (Erickson) Herrell	2004	Stan Shirk	2010	Jon Eggers	2019
Mick Freeman	2004	Greg Carlberg	2011	Glen Moss	2019
Nancy McCormick	2004	Jimmy Hall	2011	Anne Medeiros	2020
Bob Garcia	2005	Ronn Baker	2012	Ann Ringlein	2020
Chuck Cooper	2005	Erin Sullivan	2012	The Bean Team	2020
Craig Christians	2005	Gary Wasserman	2013	John Hall	2021
Mike Ewoldt	2006	Jim McMahan	2013	John Fey	2021
Tim Hendricks	2006	Ron Olsen	2014	Derek Fey	2021
Todd Nott	2006	Roxi Erickson	2014	Sheri Kucera	2022
Dick Burrows	2007	Daren Konda	2015	Anna Fisher	2022
Gary Julin	2007	Tom Whitaker	2015	Kaci Lickteig	2023
Leonard Vavra	2007	Jose Badillo	2016	Pat Lawlor	2023
Alan Higley	2008	Harvey Kunz	2017		
Gary Meyer	2008				

Step Into Running gears up for start

The popular — and growing — Step Into Running program is gearing up for its May 28 start. The 14-week program helps train and inform women and girls age 14 and older. It culminates with the Go Girl Run, which takes place Sept. 2 (Labor Day). All sessions will be held at the 78th and Cass Street Peak Performance store.

Step Into Running will be under new leadership with Pam Car taking over. Pam is an RRCA-certified youth performance running coach and brings new energy to the program. She also holds certification in coaching the Jeff Galloway Method of Running Training methods.

Sessions take place each Tuesday and Thursday (which are optional), starting at 6 p.m. and lasting to 7:15. The program consists of a combination of classroom instruction and run/walk and running intervals, the goal being able to run for the entire half-hour time allotted at the end of the program.

The program fee is just \$5 for Omaha Running Club members. Non-members' fee of \$30 includes a year's membership to the ORC. The first session on May 28 will be an overview of the program, followed by a one-mile time trial on the Keystone Trail.

For complete information and/or to register, click on this link: www.omaharun.org/step-into-running

Distance training clinic eyes start

The ORC distance training clinic begins April 24 with the goal of preparing runners for a fall marathon or half-marathon — especially the ORC-staged Heartland Marathon on Sept. 22. All sessions of the program lasting 20-plus weeks will be held at the 78th and Cass Peak Performance store.

Clinic sessions are held twice a week — Wednesdays at 6 p.m. and Sundays at 8 a.m. — and continue into August. There is no fee for ORC members and non-members are charged a \$20 or \$25 fee which includes a Young Professional or Individual Club membership.

Lawlor: Son beats father at '23 Boston Marathon

Continued from Page 3

He's run nearly 20 full marathons, including Boston (twice) and Los Angeles (twice). He's also completed several Twin Cities Marathons.

"Boston is unbelievable," Lawlor said. "I had my best time there last year. It's fun to be able to go. Max and I did it together. That was cool." (For the record, Max finished far ahead of his dad.)



Bluffs Winter Series turns 51

The BTC/ORC Lake Manawa Winter Series concluded its 51st year March 16 with 30 runners and walkers participating. Mick Freeman, former track coach at Council Bluffs Abraham Lincoln High, has been directing the popular event from the beginning.

The distance training clinic is under new leadership by Connie Garro and Kent Blobaum. An end-of-season banquet, sponsored by the ORC, will help participants celebrate completion of the program.

For all the information and contact emails, go to: www.omaharun.org and click on the training tab at the top.

Ritland adds Tokyo Marathon to list

ORC member John Ritland continues to pile up impressive marathon miles — despite running on a rebuilt knee. In March, he added The Tokyo Marathon to his accomplishments, and with it completed what is known as the “Abbott World Majors.”

The six marathons are: Boston, Chicago, New York, London, Berlin and Tokyo. Ritland ran his first Boston in 2007 (one of eight in all). He then added Chicago in 2019 and 2022, Berlin in 2021, New York City in 2022 and London last year.

Congrats, John!

He continued: “And I love the Twin Cities Marathon. That’s probably my favorite.”

Finding time to get runs in isn’t a problem for Lawlor.

“I don’t have any social life,” he said chuckling. “I just try to make running a priority. The only time I rest is when it’s slipperly out. It’s the only way I can stay sane running the business. It’s a good way to handle the stress. I want to do it as long as I can.”

2024 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

I am excited to announce the return of a great lineup of programs and events this summer. Our Distance Clinic, under new leaders Connie Garro and Kent Blobaum, will begin April 24 at Peak Performance on Cass Street. The Clinic will focus on the Heartland Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K or Relay event.

I want to acknowledge and thank Hilary Catron who has done an outstanding job keeping the Clinic going the past couple years despite the impact of the pandemic. Although new to the assignment, Connie and Kent are excellent runners and leaders and will do a great job despite having to fill the giant shoes Hilary left behind.

We have taken additional steps to rejuvenate the program this year to provide an excellent training experience for participants. Clinic sessions will be on 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 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.

The Step Into Running women's training program will be led by newcomer Pam Car this year and will begin at Peak on May 28. Pam replaces Jeremy Kalliff, who provided excellent

leadership of the program for many years. We are deeply grateful to Jeremy for the outstanding work she accomplished on behalf of the ORC. Pam is an RRCA certified running coach and is looking forward to carrying on the SIR goal to lead new and returning lady runners to a healthier lifestyle. 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. 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. And ORC members are eligible for discounts on most of our races that provide the opportunity to recoup your Club membership cost while enjoying some of the best events in Omaha.

I would like to say a few words about supporting local events, particularly Omaha's



Tom Whitaker

See Message, Page 6

Tables turned on ORC's editor

Pam Car, who last year jumped into her involvement with the Club with both feet, recently asked me if I ever was the interviewee rather than interviewer. I thought for a while and told her that, yes, back in the 1980s I remember being profiled in the UNO student newspaper for being a member of the stat crew of the Maverick athletic teams.

She seems to think people might want to know more about me. I rather doubt that, but I gladly agreed to answering her questions in this space. Here they are:

Q: What made you want to become a writer?

A: It dates to my Papillion High School years when I was an avid reader of the Omaha World-Herald. It was my dream to write for that paper, and in 1988 I began a 20-year career there.

Q: What impact do you think artificial intelligence (AI) will have on the writing industry?

A: My initial thought is probably not much — for now, at least. The way this world is changing so fast, who knows what will happen? But as long as I'm still breathing, the written word will always be something near and dear to me.

Q: What got you interested in running and what is your experience as a runner?

A: I was looking for a way to lose weight, but I didn't care for the thought of taking up running — until I basically forced myself into the sport in the late 1970s. In 1983, I took the plunge and ran my first marathon, the Lincoln Marathon. I literally cried at the finish line, because there was a point in the race

where I thought I wasn't going to complete it.

Q: What running distance do you prefer and why?

A: As my right knee continued to decline (I had surgery on it in 2004), I opted for the 10K, but I felt more accomplishment from my four marathons and two half-marathons.

Q: What one piece of advice would you give for a new half or full marathon runner?

A: Find a training program that would fit your goal — the first, obviously being to finish. If you have a training partner, it will make the process more enjoyable than running alone. And, most important, make sure you're properly hydrated before and during any race.

Q: What is the most memorable run you did and why?

A: My last marathon (Baltimore in 2002) was the best, because I ran it with our oldest son (and beat him by a couple of minutes).

Q: How does it feel to be the one being interviewed?

A: It's a lot easier answering than asking the questions!



Your newsletter editor and Pam Car.

Message: ORC's Heartland benefits community

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Heartland Marathon, Marathon Relay, Half Marathon and 10K on Sept. 22. 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.

The Omaha Running Club is a volunteer organization with a mission to support the Omaha running and walking communi-

ty. 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 message to our members is 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.

Heartland open for registration

Yes, Sept. 22 seems like a long way away, but it's not too early to register for the Omaha Running Club's signature event, the Heartland Marathon. Club President Tom Whitaker noted that this marks the 10th anniversary of the marathon, marathon relay, half-marathon and 10K races.

"Right now we're 10 or 12 registrations ahead of last year," Whitaker said the first week of April. "We're definitely known around the country, because we have 20 states registered now."

As has been the case the past few years, the staging area will be on the riverfront trail, just north of Gallup headquarters. The full marathon starts at 7 a.m., followed by the half-marathon at 7:15 and the 10K at 7:30. The course closes at 1 p.m.

Something else to keep in mind: The Heartland again will benefit the Omaha Police Department Foundation and the Council Bluffs Police Department.

As always, a strong volunteer effort will be needed to ensure the event is successful. And, fortunately, that's been the case over the years. If you're interested in participating as a volunteer or entering one of the races, just click on this link: <https://heartlandmarathon.org/volunteer>

Heartland Marathon

When: Sept. 22 (Sunday)

Where: Riverfront (near Gallup headquarters)

Time: 7 a.m.

Races: Marathon, marathon relay, half-marathon, 10K

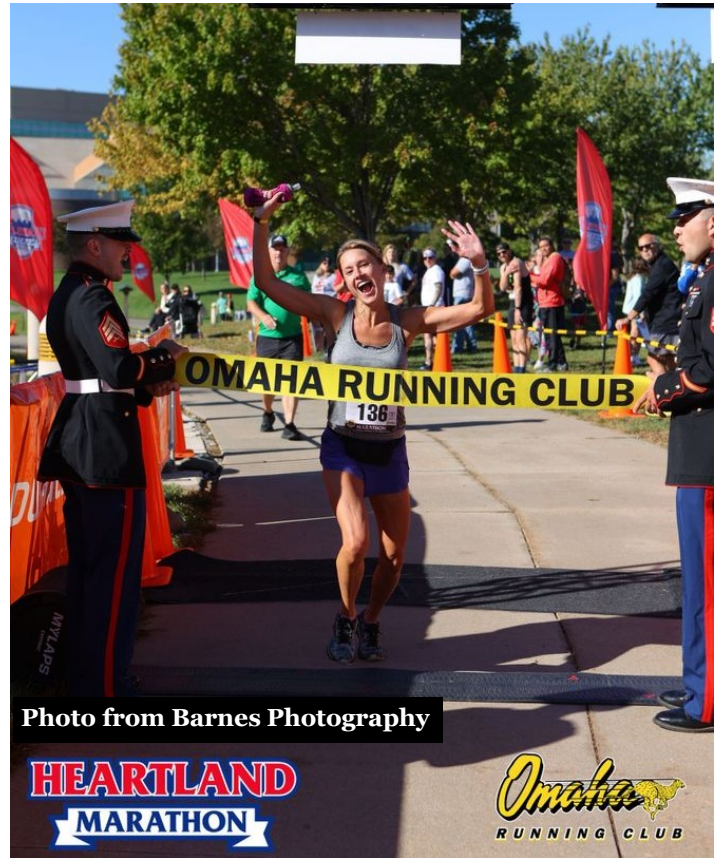


Photo from Barnes Photography



2 HOF inductees introduced



The Papillion Landing gymnasium was nearly full Feb. 4 when the ORC Hall of Fame grew to 51 members. Introduced that afternoon were Omaha residents Kaci Lickteig and Pat Lawlor. The program followed the Chiller Challenge races.



2024 Omaha Running Club Races:

- Chiller Challenge – 10k/2M/Kids' – February 4
- Rove the Grove – 5K Cross Country No. 1 – June 1
- Jim McMahon Open Track Meet – June 9
- Rove the Grove – 5K Cross Country No. 2 – June 22
- Rove the Grove – 5K Cross Country No. 3 – July 20
- Lake Wehrspann – 10k/2M/Kids' – August 4
- Go Girl Run – 5k/Kids' – September 2
- Peak 2 Peak – 10M – September 7
- Heartland Marathon/Relay/Half/10k – September 22
- The Bones Run – 5k – October 25

Fun Runs:

- Thanksgiving Fun Run – November 28 – 9:00am
Lake Zorinsky Boat Ramp, 156th & F
- Holiday Lights Fun Run – December 1 – 6:00pm
Downtown Omaha 10th & Harney

Check the Omaha Running Club calendar at www.omaharun.org for event updates.

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OMAHA RUNNING CLUB

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**The ORC is a proud
member of the RRCA!**

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ORC Membership Discounts



- Peak Performance** 10% off regular-priced shoes & clothing
78th & Cass (398-9807)
156th & Maple (398-0100)
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