When Connie Spellman was named Midlander of the Year by the Omaha World-Herald in 2007, the newspaper quoted UNO Chancellor Emeritus Del Weber as saying, “She’s the iron fist in the velvet glove.”

The founding director of Omaha by Design will be the next newsmaker to be saluted as an Omaha Press Club “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

Weber was head of the Omaha Community Foundation when he encouraged Spellman to take a leadership role in shaping a better-looking city in both public and business locales. She created Omaha by Design, an urban design and environmental nonprofit. Weber now serves as president of the group’s board of directors.

As the leader of Omaha by Design, Connie partnered with the City of Omaha to add two new sections to the city’s master plan – the Urban Design Element and the Environmental Element. She also managed a team of consultants, city officials, private developers and attorneys in overhauling Omaha’s zoning codes and drafting a comprehensive set of urban design standards, the first effort of its kind for a city of Omaha’s size.

From 1990 to 2000, Connie served as vice president for education, leadership and workforce development for the Greater Omaha Chamber. She played a key role in development of the Applied Information Management (AIM) Institute.

She also formed Omaha 2000, a program to improve K-12 education. The Spellman Child Development Center on the College of Saint Mary campus is named for Connie, who established the center as a model for quality early childhood development centers.

Prior to 1990, Connie served as the chamber’s manager of leadership development. She was director of Leadership Omaha, one of the nation’s oldest community leadership programs, and she also created and directed the Omaha Executive Institute.

Connie has been an active community volunteer. She helped launch the Omaha Job Clearinghouse, the Greater Omaha Women’s Fund, INROADS Nebraska, the Green Omaha Coalition and served on 30 different boards and community committees.

The former Ashland, Neb., teacher was inducted into the Ak-Sar-Ben Court of Honor in 2008. Ak-Sar-Ben also presented the Ike Friedman Community Leader Award to Connie in 2001.

In 2009, she was elected to honorary membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects, one of the highest honors the organization confers. She has received many other prestigious awards.

Connie holds a B.S. in secondary education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Wahoo, Neb., native and her husband, Rick Spellman, have three children and four grandchildren.

## Roast and Toast

Friday, Nov. 14

The roast and toast of Connie Spellman on Friday, Nov. 14, will be followed by the unveiling of a caricature-illustration of Connie by artist Jim Horan, the 143rd in the series of newsmaker “Faces” since 1971.

Friends scheduled to roast her following the dinner include: Kate Dodge, president, NEI Global Relocation; Del Weber, UNO chancellor emeritus and president of the Omaha by Design board of directors; Rick Jeffries (emcee), attorney, Cline Williams Wright, Johnson and Oldfather, Susan Ogborn, president and CEO, Food Bank for the Heartland; and B. J. Reed, senior vice chancellor, academic and student affairs, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Reservations: call 402-345-8008
Dinner: $60 for nonmembers and $50 for members
A 5:30 p.m. reception precedes the 6:30 p.m. dinner. The roast and unveiling begin after dinner.
The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as Obamacare, has been in existence for 4-1/2 years. How has this law impacted the health care industry and is it working?

Tom Gilsdorf and Sean McGuire will give an informative talk regarding these questions and many others.

Gilsdorf, director of individual health care solutions with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, has been instrumental in creating health care products for the ACA’s federal exchanges and the point man in educating Nebraskans on the health care law.

McGuire is the founder of E.D. Bellis Healthcare Consulting, an organization in Omaha that helps businesses and individuals prepare for requirements created by government policies. After leaving congressional staff work on Capitol Hill, McGuire served from 2009-2011 as the health reform consultant for the UNMC College of Medicine.
How the Agnew Room got its name

By Judy Horan
Board of Directors Member

Bill Ramsey was present with his camera the day Vice President Spiro Agnew stopped by the club in June 1972 to unveil his “Face on the Barroom Floor.” Agnew was in Omaha to campaign for re-election.

“We thought with his ongoing tiff with the media, it would be really neat to do the tongue-in-cheek honor,” Ramsey said. Agnew disliked reporters, calling them unflattering names including “the effete corps of impudent snobs.”

His press secretary saw a blowup of a cartoon by Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist Pat Oliphant that was hanging in what would later be named the Spiro Agnew Room; he asked for its removal so it would not offend the vice president.

The vice president heard about the Oliphant drawing and asked to see it. He smiled and wrote a note on the cartoon figure’s right arm: “Cronkite: Better watch the power of this bicep. Spiro Agnew.”

Bob McMorris reminisced in a 1972 World-Herald column: “Oliphant pictured Agnew as a heroic-proportioned figure with huge muscles. The cartoonist titled the USIA film, ‘Spiro Agnew Meets the Press,’ which supposedly would feature Walter Cronkite and Richard Nixon as the president.’”

In the Face on the Barroom Floor drawing by artist Jim Horan that brought Agnew to the club, the small bandage on his nose commemorates Agnew’s fall while exiting the Air Force Two vice-presidential airplane. Horan says that in his drawing, President Nixon is dodging a golf ball struck by his accident-prone vice president. The veep is part of the dial on an “Agnew” watch, which actually existed.

Not long after Agnew’s visit, the OPC board of directors took the dubious “honor” one step further. With tongue in cheek, they named the room he had visited for the embattled vice president. (Agnew resigned his position as vice president one year later after being convicted of tax evasion.)

One thing has not changed in the OPC’s newly renovated Spiro Agnew Room. It’s still named for the veep who would have preferred not to be found hanging around a press club.
Shatel lunch features KETV sports director

By Tom O’Connor
Committee Chair

From Husker football to Doug McDermott wearing a Northwestern jersey to the amazing Kansas City Royals in the World Series … those were just a smattering of the topics discussed at the Tom Shatel Lunch Series on Oct. 21.

Shatel, a sports columnist for the Omaha World-Herald, was joined by Andy Kendeigh, sports director for KETV (Ch. 7).

Both Shatel and Kendeigh expressed their optimism for the Husker football team this year.

“Nebraska football is in a very good place right now,” Shatel said. “It’s set up for them to have a good run. They should be favored in just about every game the rest of the year. It’s very possible that they could end up on indoor carpet under the roof (in Indianapolis in the Big 10 championship game), and there’s a good chance they could beat anybody (in the conference championship).”

A graduate of the University of Wisconsin who worked at TV stations in Milwaukee and Madison prior to coming to Omaha, Kendeigh said the Nov. 15 road game between Nebraska and Wisconsin might be the only remaining game that the Huskers won’t be favored in because of the difficult environment posed by playing in Madison.

“Wisconsin is not a good football team,” he said. “The Badger quarterback can’t do a thing.”

During Kendeigh’s college years, he said, the Badgers were hardly a powerhouse, winning a total of seven games in four years with Don Morton serving as coach the first three years and Barry Alvarez the last year.

Kendeigh praised Husker quarterback Tommy Armstrong for his competitiveness and called him a “natural leader.” He added that he anticipates that Armstrong, who worked out with former NFL quarterback Brett Favre in the offseason, will likely train with a quarterback coach after this season is over.

“Bo Pelini has changed a lot. We haven’t seen the wild man for a while. He’s a great guy to talk to if you can get him one-on-one on the side.”

And Kendeigh – “The Royals strike me as a team that enjoys themselves. (Royals Manager) Ned Yost has changed. When he was in Milwaukee, he was a control freak. Now, he lets the kids be kids and have fun.”

The next Tom Shatel Lunch Series will be held at noon on Tuesday Nov. 18. Guest speaker will be Matt Davison, former Husker football and basketball player. He is now a Husker sports announcer.

The Shatel Sports Series lunch costs $12 and is open to the public. To RSVP, call 402-345-8008 or email opcjeanie@gmail.com.

Reservations must be accompanied by an OPC member number or credit card for nonmembers. A 24-hour cancellation policy applies.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Daisy Hutzell-Rodman
OPC President

The holiday season is approaching – it seems strange, doesn’t it? I can barely believe we have two months left in 2014. Don’t forget about the OPC for any holiday parties you have. With seating for up to 250 and excellent catering, the club is an exceptional place to entertain.

There are a couple of events left in the year that I plan to attend. I’ve said it before, but I’ll say it again, the Ron Sailors Culinary Extravaganza is a well-hidden secret at the OPC. The food is amazing, the atmosphere festive and overall, it is a great night. Join us on Nov. 7 if you can. I also look forward to the Past Presidents Dinner in mid-November.

Santa Brunch is another of my favorite events at the club. Every year, I try to introduce new people to the OPC during Santa Brunch. The price is reasonable, the food is always tasty and it’s always fun to see the youngsters at this family-friendly event.

I keep pressing forward on my goals for this year, especially with Professional Development. We are pleased to announce a new Professional Development session, which will be held in late January. We’ll announce exact details in the next couple of months, but the program will be on diversity in the media. Former Boston Globe reporter Bobby Caina Calvan, currently a Ford Foundation grant recipient, will be a featured speaker at this Saturday-morning event. The committee is excited about this opportunity.
I have personally enjoyed our new Agnew Room now for a couple of small events, including the ribbon cutting. Members are finding out about the space and booking it for smaller groups. It’s well worth a visit for the ambiance and the food. We held our most recent Winemaker’s Dinner in the Agnew. Under the direction of Chef Have, the food was judged by the guests as nothing short of remarkable. If you have a passion for Scotch whisky and would like to try a few varieties, make a reservation for our Scotch tasting, with light hors d’oeuvres, on Friday, Nov. 21, at 6 p.m.

For all the new members: the holidays at OPC offer a variety of annual brunches, events and dinners. If you have not had the opportunity to enjoy one of these events, make your reservations now by calling 402-345-8008.

Soldiers of Soul has been our live entertainment for several years on New Year’s Eve and will return this year, starting at 7 p.m. The price for all the fun and food will be the same as the past few years. The all-you-can-eat Holiday Prime Rib Buffet includes hors d’oeuvres, an assortment of entrees, salads and a dessert bar. And at $40 per person, the price is right!

Last call for the annual Ron Sailors Culinary Extravaganza on Friday, Nov. 7, at 6 p.m. Don’t miss this gourmet event!

Recipe of the month: Chicken Picatta. I use a 3-to-4-oz. chicken breast pounded out slightly and evenly. Dust both sides in salt-and-pepper-seasoned flour. Heat olive oil in a sauté pan over a medium heat, and brown both sides. Add freshly squeezed lemon juice, a splash of white wine, capers and juice from capers, chopped parsley and finish with real soft butter. Pour the entire liquid over the finished product. Adjust the lemon to the desired tartness. Christine loves it when I cook this at home for her. She likes it with a real lemon juice and capers zest.

Thank you all and I look forward to seeing you at the club,

Steve Villamonte CEC, BS
Executive Director
Omaha Press Club
The Omaha Press Club was once again at the center of political debate in Omaha, hosting the third and final campaign faceoff between U.S. Rep. Lee Terry and his Democratic challenger, Brad Ashford.

The Press Club and the League of Women Voters have traditionally sponsored a debate in Omaha’s 2nd Congressional District. Longtime Omaha TV anchor Gary Kerr moderated the Oct. 16 event, part of the club’s Noon Educational Forum series.

The main topics of the debate would have been familiar to anyone who has watched the campaign. Terry consistently painted Ashford as soft on crime while Ashford portrayed Terry as a Republican who has become part of the Washington gridlock that has kept the country from addressing its most critical problems.

Terry criticized Ashford for not supporting changes to the state’s good time law and for other positions he’s taken in the Nebraska Legislature on issues of crime. “I don’t think that’s a record of public safety,” Terry said.

Ashford defended his record on crime, saying he sponsored a bill that increased penalties for gang and gun crimes. He repeatedly brought the debate back to Congress’ failure to even take up critical issues like immigration. “They don’t vote,” he said.

On an important issue regarding political speech and the public’s right to know, they differed over a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that has allowed groups and individuals to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence elections without having to disclose where the money comes from. Terry defended the thinking about First Amendment rights. Ashford said not disclosing where campaign dollars come from is bad for democracy.

The next Noon Forum will be Thursday, Nov. 20, and will deal with “The Affordable Care Act: 4-1/2 Years Later.”

Gary Kerr, chairman of the OPC education committee, was emcee for the Oct. 16 debate with Brad Ashford and Lee Terry. The debate held at the Omaha Press Club was co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters and Cox Communications.