Chamber CEO David Brown to be next ‘Face’ March 25

If it has something to do with Metro Omaha business, David Brown is most likely involved. The president and CEO of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce for 12 years is an enthusiastic spokesman for the business community.

Brown will be toasted and roasted as the next Face on the Barroom Floor on Wednesday, March 25. Roasters scheduled at this time are: Bob Turner, vice president, Union Pacific; Gary Gant, CEO, OPPD; Steve Seline, president, Walnut Private Equity Partners, and former Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey.

Under Brown’s leadership, the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership has added 563 projects, representing 27,571 jobs and more than $5.2 billion in capital investment since 2004.

With 30 years of experience in economic development and chamber administration, Brown works on behalf of more than 3,100 member businesses, encouraging their success and a more prosperous Greater Omaha, and recruiting new businesses.

Brown’s career in organizational leadership began in Michigan in 1983 as president of the Monroe County Industrial Development Corporation and director of the Port of Monroe. He served 10 years in Indiana at the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce. His next assignment was as president and CEO of the Greater Greenville Chamber of Commerce.

The Dartmouth College graduate takes his newsmaking skills into the community as a volunteer for service organizations such as: Ak-Sar-Ben Future Trust, Boy Scouts of America, Building Bright Futures, College World Series of Omaha, Greater Omaha Alliance for Business Ethics, Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben, Nebraska Military Support Coalition, Nebraska P-16 Education Committee, Omaha Sports Commission, United Way of the Midlands and the U.S. Strategic Command Consultation Committee.

He is a member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100 and serves on the American Chamber of Commerce Board.

**Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

Nominations are now open for the selection of inductees for the 2015 Hall of Fame. Nominees may be living or deceased and must have made notable contributions to broadcast, print or new media journalism. They must have shown exceptional leadership, courage or contributions to the news industry. They will have worked in the Omaha area during their career, or they may have had a reasonable career in the area before going elsewhere.

**Your Name _______________________________ Phone Number _______________________________**

I nominate (name) _______________________________ □ Check here if the journalist is being nominated posthumously.

Tell us why the person should be inducted into the OPC Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame. Use separate sheet

Pleased submit by March 6, 2015, to the Omaha Press Club Hall of Fame Committee, 1620 Dodge St., 22nd Floor, Omaha, NE 68102
Annual meeting recaps upbeat OPC year

By Judy Horan
OPC Committee Chair

A balanced budget, growing membership, remodeled Agnew Room, redesigned website and more created an upbeat mood at OPC’s annual meeting on Jan. 15.

President Daisy Hutzell-Rodman noted that her two goals for the year were met: “We held a professional development seminar in September on social media and plan version 2.0 of the social media seminar next September. We also increased membership.”

Hutzell-Rodman pointed to more accomplishments in 2014: “We renovated the Agnew Room into a beautiful special occasion room and at the same time redesigned the OPC website. Our online presence looks modern and shows the best of the Omaha Press Club to potential and current members.”

Other highlights of 2014:

Professional Development. Chris Allen, chairman, said that strong attendance at the Saturday morning workshop on social media uses and measurement has led to consideration of making it an annual event. “The three sessions over the morning included two solo presentations and a panel discussion in which the audience participated vigorously.”

Finance. “Despite a very challenging year on a number of fronts, the club ended up in the black for 2014,” reported J.J. Bartlett, OPC treasurer.

Executive Director Steve Villamonte explained the steps he took to ensure the club was financially stable at the end of the year despite an increase in food costs and costs of renovating the Spiro Agnew Room, which he oversaw.

Membership/marketing. Bridget (Weide) Brooks, chairman, said the year’s membership increase from 881 to 1,150 exceeded the goal of 1,000 for 2014. The committee’s major accomplishment in marketing was an increase in email marketing with almost 1,000 emails in Constant Contact. Committee members welcome guests to OPC events. Brooks said the committee also has taken on responsibility for social media.

Communications Committee. The committee met monthly to plan the newsletter and lend support to the Hall of Fame and Excellence in Journalism committees. Committee goals met in 2014 were: 1. shorter stories 2. forming a “bank” of filler material 3. And redesign of the back page. Mailing the newsletters with billings is saving money and guaranteeing mailing by the first of the month. Committee co-chairs are Susan Eustice and Judy Horan.

Face on the Barroom Floor. April brought the largest Face on the Barroom Floor event in its 44-year history, saluting Creighton University’s Greg and Doug McDermott. To hold the more than 600 attendees, the event was moved to a larger venue. Also held in 2014 were roasts of “Faces” John Knicely in February, Sen. Mike Johanns in September and Connie Spellman in November, reported committee chair Tom O’Connor. He directed members to the new OPC website’s page featuring past recipients.

Excellence in Journalism Awards. On June 8, a combined Excellence in Journalism Awards and Hall of Fame induction dinner was held with more than 200 people attending.

The awards contest was run through Better BNC, a subscription-based contest site. Judges were from the Press Club of Cleveland. A student division recognized entries from high schools and colleges and a Best of Show award was given to the best in each of four main categories. The 2014 chair was Willie Garrett.

OPC Hall of Fame. Inducted in 2014 were: Bob Dorr, retired, Omaha World-Herald; Carl W. Keith, posthumous, Omaha World-Herald; Joe T. McCartney, WOW Radio & TV, UNO, Union Pacific; Rob McCartney, KETV. Their names joined others on a plaque in the OPC Hall of History. Co-chairs for the event were Judy Horan and Todd Murphy. Emcee was Tom Becka. Two people have accepted induction into the 2015 Hall of Fame to be held June 6: Steve Jordon, Omaha World-Herald, and Fr. Don Doll, S.J., Creighton University. Other honorees will be announced in April.

Education Committee. Eleven noon forums were held, including forums with Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer and Dennis Pate from the Henry Doorly Zoo. The largest attendance was for the Lee Terry/Brad Ashford congressional debate. (Political debates at the OPC are co-sponsored with the League of Women Voters). Committee chairman is Gary Kerr.

OPC Foundation. Henry Cordes reported on the activities of the OPC Foundation, which operates the OPC-founded scholarship programs. Recent fund drives have helped the foundation increase scholarship amounts, create a new scholarship and build the foundation assets to assure future scholarship awards. Cordes also reminded attendees that the 2015 Press Club Show is set to launch, with the one-night performance set for April Fool’s Day at the Holland Center.

Elections. New board members elected at the annual meeting were Marcia Cady, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska; Tom Shatel, Omaha World-Herald, and Heather Tweedy, Mutual of Omaha. Past President Bridget (Weide) Brooks also was elected for a two-year term.

New officers elected for the 2015 year are: president, Todd Murphy, Universal Information Services; president elect, Sean McGuire; E.D. Bellis Healthcare Consultants; and secretary, Judy Horan. Horan Communications. J.J. Bartlett of First National Bank of Omaha continues as treasurer. Daisy Hutzell-Rodman is now immediate past president.
OPC Show cooking up a don’t-miss delight

Curious minds want to know:
What goes into the making of the Omaha Press Club Show?

Executive Producer Chris Christen shares the recipe:
First, you pull together a team of fun-loving creative types who are in tune with what’s happening in our city and state.

Next, you toss a million ideas into a large stock pot, add a few bottles of wine and-or coffee, and season with hot snippets and snappy punch lines. Let simmer for four weeks, stirring frequently until the best material bubbles to the top.

Stand back as Artistic Director Bridget Robbins and Music Director Ric Swanson add their own special ingredients, coupled with the contributions of an experienced technical staff and a dedicated team of volunteers.

The result: a deliciously entertaining medley of songs, skits and banter.

This year, former Omaha Mayor and U.S. Congressman Hal Daub and his wife, Mary, help dish up the fun as honorary chairs of “Fools Rush In,” the 58th Omaha Press Club Show.

“Our audience is in for a treat. Hal doesn’t just show up; he prepares,” says Christen. “With his connections, this may be one for the ages.”

Tickets go on sale in mid-February for the April 1 roast of headline stories and the newsmakers behind them.

Tables for the event at the Holland Performing Arts Center are $1,500, $2,500 and $5,000. Capacity is limited and reservations are being accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

To make your early-bird table reservation (a perk for Press Club members), email opcshow@hotmail.com.

The show is produced and managed by the Omaha Press Club Foundation, a 501(c) (3) organization. Proceeds support OPC scholarships for aspiring journalists at UNO, UNL and Creighton University.

Last year, the OPC Foundation awarded $36,500 to 18 students. This year’s scholarship event will be Friday, April 24. Career achievement awards will be presented to KETV’s Rose Ann Shannon and UNL’s Dr. Larry Walklin.

I n my January column I reported the possibility of not finishing 2014 in the black. Good news. We did.

Food cost has gone up. Our goal is to do our best to create value for our members while dealing with increased costs. When I go to a restaurant, I usually have a certain expectation. If it’s upscale fine dining, I am not real worried about the cost. Other times I want just a burger or a sandwich and expect the value of a good meal for the right price. If I don’t get that feeling of value, then I usually will not go back to that restaurant.

As the director of the club, I feel it is my job to create and maintain the dining ambiance. For the Press Club, I strive to be an upscale restaurant with an affordable price. I also want to make sure we have the ability to provide high-end fine dining with flair, or meat and potatoes and home-style cooking when called for. My goal is to always do this while creating the feeling of value for you as the member.

Managing today’s food costs has become a full-time job and one that we are very conscientious about. Thus I can report to you that we had good cost control during December to finish the year in the black for the 12th time during my tenure of the past 14 years.

The fiscal challenge has become more difficult, but we did it!

Looking forward: I am excited about 2015 and the prospect for a good year at the club. With gas prices being at their lowest in years, disposable income should increase in each household and the economy can only look up. Food prices should drop with lower transport costs, and that should help restaurants also.

This year my focus is going to be on the club’s first impression. I want to make sure we have the china and buffet equipment to make a great first impression. That includes quality food, service and serving ware.

Favorite recipe: Chicken Marsala is one of my favorite old-school chicken dishes, one that is quick and easy:
• Pound out six to eight 3-oz. boneless chicken breasts and press in seasoned flour (salt & pepper).
• Sauté in a mixture of sesame seed and olive oil at a medium high heat.
• Throw in sliced medium mushrooms (artichoke hearts optional) at about the same time you turn the chicken breast over to cook the other side.
• Finish with a demi-glace (brown gravy) and one cup of Marsala wine and let it reduce for a few minutes to deglaze the pan and finish cooking the chicken.
• Garnish with chopped parsley or scallions and serve

Thank you all and I look forward to serving you for another year at the club,

Steve Villamonte CEC, BS
Executive Director
Omaha Press Club

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S NOTE

Executive Producer Chris Christen shares the recipe for “Fools Rush In,” the 58th Omaha Press Club Show.

Director Bridget Robbins, Music Director Ric Swanson (left) and Lord of the Puns and Keeper of the Secret Script Jeff Shields, at a recent Saturday morning creative session for “Fools Rush In,” April 1 at The Holland. Photo by Kurt A. Keeler

Mary and Hal Daub, longtime members of the OPC and faithful show attendees, are honorary chairs for “Fools Rush In.”
EXCELLENCE IN MEDIA CONTEST SUSPENDED FOR THE YEAR

The Omaha Press Club has suspended its Excellence in Media contest for 2015.

Contest chairman Chris Allen said the contest suffered from financial problems that carried over from last year.

“It is difficult to raise sponsorship funds for the contest,” Allen said, “and it’s late enough into 2015 that getting contest entries would be difficult.”

There is not enough time to get sponsorships, open the contest to entries, get the entries judged and have it all done in time for the June 6 awards ceremonies held in conjunction with the Hall of Fame ceremony.

“Organizationally, the time frame has shrunk to the point where it would be nearly impossible to accomplish,” he said.

The Hall of Fame ceremony will be held on June 6 as scheduled, with the focus entirely on the inductees. The OPC board of directors will discuss the future of the contest at its coming meetings.

THE OMAHA PRESS CLUB NOON EDUCATIONAL FORUM SERIES PRESENTS

COMMON CORE – THE PROS AND CONS

THURSDAY, FEB. 19 • NOON TO 1 P.M.

Common Core, or the Common Core State Standards Initiative, is an American education initiative that outlines quantifiable benchmarks in English-language arts and mathematics at each grade level from kindergarten through high school.

These benchmarks were developed by a working group assembled by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers from 2008 through 2009. Since then, the Common Core standards have drawn attention among groups concerned about several different elements included in the reforms, such as the impact of standardized testing on academic achievement.

A total of 43 states have approved Common Core standards as of July 15, 2014. Alaska, Nebraska, Texas and Virginia have not adopted them. Indiana, Oklahoma and South Carolina adopted the standards but repealed them in 2014. Minnesota has adopted only the English-language arts requirements from the Common Core standards. In most states the standards are adopted by the State Board of Education or the equivalent.

Two educational professionals are joining us to discuss the pros and cons of this issue. Dr. John Crook, who received his doctorate in education from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, is a retired principal of Omaha Westside High School. He has been an educator for 37 years as a teacher, assistant principal and principal at both the junior high and high school levels, and he is presently working with the National Assessment of Educational Progress administering student testing for the Nation’s Report Card.

Dr. Cherie Larson has worked as director of instructional Service at the Plattsmouth Community School District since 2006. She has taught all subject areas in grades one through eight and at the college level. Dr. Larson, who has a bachelor’s degree in education from the University of Northern Iowa and a master’s and Ph.D. in education from the University of South Carolina, has worked in Africa, Singapore, South Carolina, Iowa and Nebraska, so she is able to see education issues from multiple perspectives.

Valentine’s Day Dinner for Two
Feb. 13 – 14, 2015
5:30pm
$100 Inclusive

Appetizer
Seafood Portabella Mushroom Soup
or
Bacon-Wrapped Jumbo Shrimp served with a Sauce Veronique

Salad
OPC Famous Thunderbird Salad Served in a Parmesan Crisp

Entrée
Slowly-Roasted Tenderloin with a Maytag Bleu & Demi-Glace
Old-School Chicken Cordon Bleu with Béarnaise
Crab-Stuffed Tilapia with a Citrus Buerre Blanc
Pan-Roasted Duck with a Vidalia Onion & Sweet Cherry Comfit
Penne Pasta with Sun-Dried Tomato Sauce & Kalamata Olives

Dessert
French Chocolate Mousse Martini-Style with OPC Signature Truffle
Blackstone Cheesecake with Italian Strawberries

To RSVP, call 402-345-8008
**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Well, we had quite a fun time at the Omaha Press Club’s annual meeting on Jan. 15. I hope you’ve had the chance to read Judy Horan’s list of highlights from that meeting in this newsletter. One small point you may have easily missed is that I am now serving as president of the board of directors.

Now, before those who know me rush to initiate a recall, I would encourage you to first try me in this position for a few months. The good news is that all of the real work is done by the committees, and the committees are run by some of the best people I’ve ever met in Omaha.

We have an incredible Face on the Bar-room Floor event coming up (thanks, Tom O’Connor), and I’m not just talking about Allen Beermann’s usual position at club closing time. We have many other key events already planned.

Judy Horan will once again help honor the worthiest media types with a well-run Hall of Fame dinner.

We have events and new plans for the growing attendance at our Professional Development and Education events.

Shatel lunch on Feb. 17 to feature Henry Cordes

**By TOM O’CONNOR**  
**OPC Committee Chair**

The Shatel Lunch Series returns on Feb. 17 with Henry Cordes, veteran Omaha World-Herald reporter, sharing the microphone with series host Tom Shatel. Cordes will talk about the two Husker football books he authored – “Unbeatable” and “Devaney: Birth of a Dynasty.” Each book sells for $29.95 and is being sold through the World-Herald as well as area book stores.

Cordes plans to bring some books to purchase and also will be available to sign any of his books.

“Most people think they know the story behind Nebraska’s championship eras under Tom Osborne and Bob Devaney, but they really don’t,” Cordes said. “Even Tom Osborne told me he learned things from my books he didn’t know. Both eras produce amazing stories and fascinating characters.”

Shatel, a World-Herald sports column-ist and new board member for the Omaha Press Club, underwent knee replacement surgery on Jan. 19 and initially didn’t think he would have a Press Club lunch in February.

“When Henry mentioned that he would like to speak at one of our lunches, I thought it was an opportunity we couldn’t pass up,” Shatel said. “Hopefully, we can continue the momentum that we’ve seen at the past couple lunches and get a strong turnout. It’s always fun to see a full house.”

He encouraged regular attendees to let their friends know about the lunch series. He also noted that last month several people from First National Bank attended.

“We would love to get more bank employees to attend,” he said. “It’s a perfect fit for them – they can be back at their desks in an hour, while still having time for an excellent lunch and getting their sports fix.”

Those I didn’t mention here, I will mention in coming months. The point of my first letter to our members is simple. You are in good hands! There is little for me to break because of the awesome people we have working on Omaha Press Club committees, as well as the board members who have joined the team.

I am very interested in hearing from our members regarding their experiences at our club. Please feel free to email me (tmurphy@universal-info.com) with comments, praise or criticism of any kind.

Do me one favor. Keep the Omaha Press Club in mind when considering special events and dinners downtown. Whether planning a wedding reception, anniversary party or dinner before the theater, the Omaha Press Club represents a singular experience for Omaha and an outstanding value.

See you soon,  
**Todd Murphy**  
**OPC President**

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**OPC Committee Chair**

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“We would love to get more bank employees to attend,” he said. “It’s a perfect fit for them – they can be back at their desks in an hour, while still having time for an excellent lunch and getting their sports fix.”

The Shatel 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.

If you wish to be added to the Press Club’s blast email list for the Shatel Lunch Series, please email Jeannie Campbell at opcjeanie@gmail.com.

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**January Noon Education Forum**

Virginia Maynes, (R) staff attorney for Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON), and Charles Ellison, (L) legal director and one of the regional attorneys for JFON, gave a brief history of the most recent immigration changes in the executive order handed down by President Obama.

Photo by Gary Willis
Committee Chairs

Communications Co-Chairs
Susan Eustice, Judy Horan

Education
Gary Kerr

Excellence in Media Awards
Chris Allen

Executive Committee
Todd Murphy, J.J. Bartlett, Sean McGuire, Judy Horan, Daisy Hutzell-Rodman

“Face on the Barroom Floor”
Tom O’Connor

Hall of Fame
Judy Horan, Todd Murphy

Marketing / Membership
Bridget (Weide) Brooks

Professional Development
Chris Allen

OPC Foundation

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Al Alman
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Molly Alexander
Director, Development

Susan Eustice
Executive Director

Opinion Editor

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