‘Fools Rush In’ April 1 OPC lampoon promises to pack a punch with heady list of guest stars

Organizers of the 58th Omaha Press Club Show have assembled a heady roster of guest stars, with Nebraska’s newly elected governor, Pete Ricketts, sitting at the top.

Also committing to a night of spoofing the year’s top headline stories are Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert and Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer.

Rounding out the lineup: Former Omaha mayors Jim Suttle, Mike Fahey, Mike Boyle and Hal Daub; UNO Athletic Director Trev Alberts, and Boys Town’s executive director, the Rev. Steven Boes.

The show, titled “Fools Rush In,” will be held Wednesday, April 1, in Scott Recital Hall at the Holland Performing Arts Center. KFAB’s Scott Voorhees and Chris Baker will be co-hosts for the 90-minute production.

Bridget Robbins, a veteran performer and director in Omaha’s community theaters, debuts as artistic director of the 30-member cast. Ric Swanson is music director and arranger.

The April Fools’ Day event, which includes cocktails at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 7 and the show at 8:15, has been a source of fun and funds for journalism education since 1957.

Proceeds support OPC Foundation scholarships and intern awards to students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Creighton University.

Honorary chairs for the show are Mary and Hal Daub.

Daub, a former Omaha mayor and U.S. Congressman, is a longtime member of the Omaha Press Club and one of the show’s longest-running attendees. He currently is a partner with Husch Blackwell LLP law firm and a member of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

Mary Daub, like her husband, has a long history of community service and an extensive list of civic and charitable activities.

“We are honored to have the Daubs as our honorary chairs,” said executive producer Chris Christen. “In addition to being terrific connectors, they are supporters of our event. As a result, this show has taken on a life of its own.”

Table reservations are $5,000, $2,500 and $1,500. Individual tickets are $150 and $250. A portion of each reservation is tax-deductible. Capacity is limited, with reservations being taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information and a downloadable reservation form, visit opcshow.org. Questions may be directed to opcshow@hotmail.com or reservations chair Julie Prescott Burgess at 402-551-8526.

Chamber CEO to be next ‘Face’ March 25

David Brown has been a significant newsmaker during his 12 years as president and CEO of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce. He has earned his spot in the lineup of newsmakers saluted by the OPC since 1971 with a Face on the Barroom Floor caricature-illustration.

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

The Dartmouth College graduate takes his skills into the community as a volunteer for numerous service organizations. Brown is a member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100 and serves on the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.
Discussion on Husker books attracts star-studded turnout

Henry Cordes shares insights on golden years of Nebraska football

More than 40 people – including several historic Nebraska sports figures – attended the Shatel Lunch Series on Feb. 17 to hear Henry Cordes, veteran Omaha World-Herald reporter, talk about two books he has written on Nebraska football’s golden years. Among attendees were three past Face on the Barroom Floor honorees – Ron Stander, the boxer who fought Joe Frazier in 1972 for the heavyweight championship; Johnny Rodgers, who won the Heisman Trophy in 1972 as a wingback for the Huskers; and Mike Kelly, former sports editor and now columnist for the World-Herald.

World-Herald sports columnist Tom Shatel, who hosts the lunch series, spoke optimistically about Nebraska football fortunes under new Head Coach Mike Riley. “He seems like a regular, genuine guy,” Shatel said. “This is not his first rodeo, but he hasn’t ridden a horse like this before. It’s fun to see someone smile and be happy to be in Nebraska. Oregon State (Riley’s previous coaching position) is a hard job. It’s not Nebraska. It’s like Iowa State, Indiana or Vanderbilt. They have a plan, a philosophy.”

Shatel is impressed that the new coaching staff is “dreaming big” by going after top recruits around the country. At the same time, the staffers are reminiscent of the Bob Devaney/Tom Osborne eras, by allowing Nebraska kids to walk on.

Riley will employ a pro-style offense, Shatel said, and tight ends will again become part of the Husker offense.

Cordes talked about the two Husker football books he authored – “Devaney: Birth of a Dynasty” and “Unbeatable” – which detail the Devaney and Osborne periods as Husker head coach when Nebraska won five national titles.

He talked about the daunting task of writing. “You have to break it into chapters, then write one chapter at a time,” he said. “Each chapter has a focus.” Cordes said each book contains new information on Nebraska football. He shared these nuggets: Osborne continues to correspond with Lawrence Phillips, even though the former Husker running back has struggled and gone to jail since leaving Nebraska. “It shows Osborne never gives up on his people – ever,” Cordes said. A key to Devaney’s success was making two young assistant coaches, Osborne and Monte Kiffin, as the offensive and defensive coordinators respectively, while passing over other veteran assistant coaches.

Osborne maintains it was Rodgers who was most responsible for turning Nebraska into a national contender.

Cordes’ favorite character in the Devaney book was Van Brownson, who shared quarterback duties with Jerry Tagge. “Brownson partied his way out of contention for the quarterback job,” Cordes said. “His senior year he was living out of his car.”

Cordes noted that Brownson is “a super guy,” now living in Omaha who even showed up for one of Henry’s book signings. “Devaney was color blind. He helped transform Nebraska sports with black athletes.” Devaney’s son, Mike, told Cordes: “My dad worked hard. He played hard. He loved life.”

Following the presentation, Cordes sold and signed books. Each book is available through the World-Herald as well as area book stores for $29.95 each.
How has social media changed your life? What impact has it had on your business? How has it changed how you do your job? What the heck is social media?

Ten years ago, there was no Facebook nor Twitter. Fifteen years ago, we looked forward to the phrase, “you’ve got mail.” Today we can reach out and make a difference to someone anywhere in the world in 144 characters. But what does it mean? Why should we care? Is it just a way to see photos of your friends, children or grandchildren on the Internet, or is it a means to make social change?

Two individuals who spend a good deal of their waking hours online will serve as our Noon Educational Forum speakers on March 26:

Jeremy Harris Lipschultz, Isaacson Professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, served for a decade as director of the award-winning School of Communication. Lipschultz is the author of “Social Media Communication: Concepts, Practices, Data, Law and Ethics,” published by Routledge (2014).

The Noon Forum will be hosted by Mike’l Severe. Mike’l Severe began his career as a New Orleans-based sports producer before anchoring a morning show in Monroe, La., and reporting for the ABC affiliate in Albuquerque, N.M. Severe moved to Omaha in 2002 to join KETV, then two years later became a co-host on radio 1620’s “Unsportsmanlike Conduct.” In 2014 Severe began hosting the Omaha World-Herald’s “Bottom Line” talk show online.

Now with spring just around the corner, we look forward to the springtime events at the club. Coming up on March 25 is the Face on the Barroom Floor saluting one of my favorite Omaha leaders, David Brown. Also on the schedule are a wine dinner, St. Pat’s and much more. OPC Chef Barry is running a fresh-catch seafood special each Friday until April 3 in connection with Lent.

And plan to spend some time in our Spiro Agnew Oak Room to enjoy “March Madness.” We will be tuned in to basketball tournament games on our two 70-inch high-definition TVs. Tourney time also will feature a 20 percent discount on hors d’oeuvres and happy-hour drink pricing.

Also of note:
The DoubleTree parking garage, where OPC members get validated parking, has been under renovation for the past few months with completion scheduled in May. Our house salad, the Thunderbird, is popular well beyond the club and will be served to 55 U.S. senators at a Washington luncheon next month thanks to Villamonte’s Cuisine.

Thank you all and I look forward to serving you for another year at the club,
TOM BECKA LIVE!
LUNCHEON
APRIL 15
Join Tom Becka for a live version of his radio show. It’s an interactive experience where the audience comments instead of taking phone calls. He’ll have an interesting guest who will join him to discuss the hot issues of the day with honesty, integrity, and a sense of humor.
$15 includes lunch

February Noon Forum
February 19th

Dr. John Crook (R) and Dr. Cherie Larson, (L) address the Education Forum Series of the pros and cons of the Common Core State Standard Initiative. The initiative outlines quantifiable benchmarks in English-language arts and mathematics at each grade level from kindergarten through high school. Dr. Crook is a retired principal at Westside High School and Dr. Larson has worked as director of instructional service at the Plattsmouth Community School District.
- photo by Gary Willis

March 17, 2015
11:30 AM to 8 PM
Members $10

Slow Roasted Corned Beef
Boiled Cabbage
Irish Potatoes

Dessert
Signature Brownie

WINE DINNER
MARCH 20, 2015

Hors D’Oeuvres
Trout Mousse & Arugula Canapés,
Shrimp & Rosemary Crostini, Smoked Salmon with
Fromage Blanc, Chives and Pickled Celery Crustade

Soup
Ribollita
Tuscan Vegetable Stew Bread Bowl

Salad
Thunderbird Salad
Parmesan Wafer & Grape Tomato

Entrée
Filet with Cabernet Cremini
Loaded Duchess Potato
Asparagus

Dessert
Apple Frangipane Tart
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Once again March Madness is upon us, and things are really cooking at the Omaha Press Club. If you haven’t visited your club recently, make it a point to stop in for lunch or dinner.

As President of the OPC board of directors, I’m frequently at the club for lunch. I also have been making it a point to enjoy all the great events the club offers. I enjoyed a delightful Valentine’s Day dinner with my wife, Stephanie, and two other couples. Ron, our server, once again made the experience great. Between the soup, beef tenderloin and the chicken cordon bleu, my guests were extremely impressed with the food and service. Bill did not disappoint with the drinks he sent from the bar.

Watch this newsletter for upcoming events. We work very hard to keep our membership informed.

My father, Gen. Jim Murphy, and I took in the tag-team noon luncheon with the World-Herald’s Henry Cordes and Tom Shatel. These one-hour lunches are a unique opportunity to get the inside story on local and regional sports. Be sure you put them on your schedule. They are both fun and informative.

Finally, get your reservations in now for the next Face on the Barroom Floor event on March 25. With David Brown, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce CEO, ready to assume his proper place on the floor, the night will certainly be special. David has a great sense of humor and with so many topics that are ripe for roasting, I look forward to hearing how his friends “honor” him that night. Don’t wait; these events often sell out. March is a busy month at the club.

And 2015 is going to be another great year. I just met with Steve and Christine Villamonte, our executive director and directors, I’m frequently at the club for lunch or dinner.

Beth Gaynes inspired decades of OPC dancers

By Howard Swain Jr.

As the artistic and production staff along with the talented cast of the 2015 Omaha Press Club Show prepares for this year’s event, the final curtain has come down for the show’s longtime volunteer choreographer. For more than 30 years, Press Club Show casts benefited from the skills and talents of Beth Gaynes Ginsberg, who died Feb. 5.

This Des Moines native began dancing at age 7 and never stopped. Dance took Beth from coast to coast where she trained with many of the top instructors in jazz, tap, modern and ballet.

Marriage to her beloved husband, Joseph Ginsberg, and motherhood to her son, J. Alvin, prompted Beth to settle in Omaha where this savvy businesswoman opened the Beth Gaynes Dance Studio in 1957 at the then-new Center Mall at 42nd and Center streets. Her studio flourished for decades and produced local and nationally known dance instructors as well as professional dancers on Broadway and even a Radio City Rockette. “My girls,” as she called her students, kept in touch and made sure she knew they credited their success to her.

Beth was also one of two principal founders of Dance Masters of America, a professional guild of dance instructors and dancers that continues to flourish.

She served as the principal choreographer for the Omaha Press Club Show under the following artistic directors: David Wallace, Kate Schrader and Howard T. Swain, Jr. Comments were so positive from the show’s 15-year musical director, Jerry Gray, and the 13-year stage manager, Jane. “She was wonderful to work with,” and “She was able to get non-dancers to perform with precision and confidence, which was no small achievement.”

As an OPC Show cast member for 15 years and artistic director for 14 additional years, I always respected Beth for the breadth of knowledge she brought to our show. She was patient and calm during rehearsals, even when there were problems. I could always count on her keen eye to help me make visually appealing “stage pictures” for our audiences to enjoy.

Although she will be missed by all who knew her, she would say what she always said to OPC Show cast members: SMILE!
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WE’RE ONLINE! READ YOUR OPC NEWSLETTER AT WWW.OMAHAPRESSCLUB.COM

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CANCELLATION POLICY:
All reservations must be cancelled 48 HOURS in advance.

CLUB CLOSING DATES FOR 2015

May 25  Memorial Day
June 21  Father’s Day
July 4  Independence Day
July 26 through August 17  Re-open August 18
September 7  Labor Day
October 11  Columbus Day
November 11  Veterans Day
November 26  Thanksgiving Day
December 25  Christmas Day

Events

March 17
St Pat’s Corned Beef Buffet

March 20
OPC Wine Dinner

March 24
Shatel Series

March 25
Face on the Barroom Floor
dinner/roast David Brown

March 26
Noon Education Forum
Social Media

April 1
OPC Show “Fools Rush In”

April 8 Noon Forum
Congressman Brad Ashford will speak.

April 24
OPC Foundation Scholarship Dinner

June 6
Journalists of Excellence
Hall of Fame dinner

Hours of Operation

LUNCH
Monday - Friday
11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

BAR
Tuesday - Saturday
4:30 p.m. to Close

DINNER
Thursday - Saturday
5:30 p.m. to close