Everyone voted for Tom O’Connor to be next “Face on Barroom Floor” – except Tom O’Connor

By Judy Horan
*Face Committee*

When the Face on the Barroom Floor Committee met to discuss who should be honored next, the name of Tom O’Connor, the committee’s chairman since 2002, was brought forward.

The vote to honor O’Connor would have been unanimous if not for the one dissenting vote – from Tom O’Connor. But the modest honoree was outvoted and the party begins Friday, Feb. 5, with dinner followed by a roast and toast that promises to be entertaining.

Among those taking the microphone will be the roast welcomers: Sean McGuire, OPC president, and Todd Murphy, immediate past president.

Mike Kelly, Omaha World-Herald columnist (and Face No. 107 in 2006), will emcee the main event for the 148th “Face.”

Scheduled to roast:

Nicole Lindquist, director of communications, Iowa West Foundation.

John Murphy, president, J. Michael Murphy & Associates.

Bill O’Neil, director, public relations, University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Rick Ruggles, health reporter, Omaha World-Herald.

Jim Cavanaugh, Douglas County commissioner.

Steve Villamonte, executive director, Omaha Press Club.

This is O’Connor’s 15th year leading the Omaha Press Club’s “Face” committee, which honors area newsmakers. He has been involved in the last 62 – that’s right, 62 – “Face” events.

He also is a member of the OPC Membership and Marketing Committee and is a frequent contributor to the club’s monthly newsletter, OPC News. In 2001, he reigned as Omaha Press Club president.

For the past 28 years, O’Connor has worked in public relations at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

A 1972 journalism graduate of Creighton University, O’Connor was sports editor of the Shenandoah, Iowa, Evening Sentinel (1972-1974) before working for Mutual of Omaha for 13 years, including 11 years in media relations.

He served as president of the Nebraska Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 1995, after being named the PRSA Professional of the Year in 1994.

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING**

**Thursday, Jan. 14, 2016.**

5:30 p.m. social. 6 p.m. annual meeting. 6:30 p.m. hors d’oeuvres.

Members will meet and vote on the board of directors slate and by-laws amendments.

**148TH “FACE ON THE BARROOM FLOOR”**

**TOM O’CONNOR**

**Friday, Feb. 5, 2016**

5:30 p.m., no-host bar • 6:30 p.m., dinner

7:15 p.m., roast/toast and unveiling of “Face” by artist Jim Hora

$40 for members & $50 for nonmembers

RSVP 402-345-8008

**Coming up: The Omaha Press Club’s Education Series examines GLOBAL WARMING: THE IMPACT**

How will we be affected in Nebraska and the Midwest over the next 20 or 50 or 100 years?

At the Noon Forum on Jan. 21, hear from a foremost authority on climate change, Dr. Don Wilhite, a professor of applied climate science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His work has included involvement in the university’s first-ever analysis of global warming’s likely impact on Nebraska.

Dr. Wilhite’s research and outreach activities have focused on drought issues and the use of climate information in decision-making. He has worked with many United Nations organizations and foreign countries on a wide range of drought and climate issues. Get Dr. Wilhite’s perspective on global warming.

**THURSDAY, JAN. 21 • 5:15 per person includes lunch, which begins at 11:30**

Forum begins immediately at noon. The speaker will take written questions from the audience.

Or you may email your question earlier to pressclubforum@gmail.com

CALL 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS • Or email Jeanie at jeaniec@opc.omhcoxmail.com

NON-PRESS CLUB MEMBERS WELCOME
Hall of Fame inductee, Trev Alberts, to speak at Jan. 19 Shatel lunch

Husker football legend has transformed UNO athletic program

By Tom O’Connor
OPC Committee Co-Chair

Trev Alberts, a Nebraska football legend who has transformed athletics at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, will be the guest speaker at the Shatel Lunch Series on Jan 19.

A linebacker with the Nebraska Cornhuskers from 1991 to 1994, Alberts was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame on Dec. 8, becoming the 17th Nebraska player to be inducted along with six former Cornhusker coaches.

Alberts was named director of athletics at UNO in 2009 and elevated to vice chancellor, athletics in 2014. Some of his accomplishments at UNO include:

• Bringing 14 Maverick teams up to Division I status (when he started, only hockey was Division I).

• Making UNO a member of the prestigious National Collegiate Hockey Conference in hockey and a member of the Summit League in all other sports.

• Securing community support and funding to build the new Baxter Arena at 67th and Center streets, part of UNO’s south campus.

• Renovating UNO’s football stadium into an all-weather soccer pitch for the men’s and women’s soccer programs.

• Rebranding UNO athletics with a distinctive “O” logo.

“Trev has accomplished much in a relatively short period of time,” said Tom Shatel, Omaha World-Herald sports columnist who hosts the Shatel Lunch Series. “This is a whole different UNO athletic program than when he started.”

Alberts had an outstanding football career, which included:

• Becoming the Huskers’ first Butkus Award winner.

• Being named a first-team All-American by every major publication.

• Being selected National Defensive Player of the Year by Football News.

• Having his No. 34 jersey retired.

When his college career was over, Alberts was the fifth overall pick by the Indianapolis Colts and played for the Colts until 1996. After that, he served as an analyst on college and professional football games for several major national networks.

The Shatel Sports Series lunch costs $15 and is open to the public. It is held on the third Tuesday of every month. To RSVP, call 402-345-8008.

Going to the OPC Show?
Save the Date and Make It So!

The Omaha Press Club Show boldly goes where no one has gone before with its 59th production, “The Wrath of Khan-Agra.”

Beam onboard Friday, April 1, as the OPC Starfleet maneuvers through a galactic quadrant of local headline stories, including ConAgra’s tactical move from Omaha to Chicago, via time travel, transporter systems and other send-ups of the show’s “Star Trek” theme.

Manning the creative bridge are artistic director Bridget Robbins, music director Travis Walker, and Star Trek junkie and lead writer Jeff Shields. Monty Eich of The Weisenheimers comedy troupe - another Trek fan - lends his talent on the video side. Chris Christen produces.

“Don’t worry if you don’t speak fluent Klingon,” Christen says. “You’ll still get the punchline - no translation required!”

The annual lampoon features cocktails at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. and the show at 8 p.m. in the Scott Recital Hall at the Holland Performing Arts Center.

Defense attorney James Martin Davis and his wife, Polo, are honorary chairs.

Table prices are $5,000, $2,500 and $1,500. Single tickets are $150 each for general audiences; $125 for patrons ages 35 and younger. Proceeds support scholarships for communications students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Creighton University.

Every “Face on the Barroom Floor”
—from the first one in 1971 of Mayor Gene Leahy to the most recent of ESPN’s Kyle Peterson—is archived on the website omahapressclub.com/Face.

(artwork by Jim Horan)
At Shatel Lunch, Murtaugh expressed optimism that Coach Riley will lead Huskers back to prominence

Difficult schedule next year could slow progress

By Tom O’Connor
OPC Committee Co-Chair

O, how difficult was this year’s 5-7 record for Husker football fans to stomach?

“There was no great talent on either side of the ball,” said Jerry Murtaugh, a legendary linebacker on Nebraska’s 1970 national championship team who spoke at the Shatel Lunch Series on Dec. 15. “The one good thing – they never quit.”

Amazingly, despite their losing record, the Huskers are playing UCLA in the Foster Farms Bowl on Dec. 26 at Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif.

“I’ve never covered a 5-7 bowl team before,” said Tom Shatel, Omaha World-Herald sports columnist and host of the lunch series. “This is new territory for me. They shouldn’t have gotten a bid, but they absolutely had to go.”

Looking ahead to next season, Shatel said, “Nebraska has to find an offensive line, a running back and a quarterback who doesn’t turn it over.”

He said next season will be difficult with road games at Ohio State, Wisconsin, Iowa and Indiana, and a home encounter with Oregon.

Murtaugh expressed optimism that Husker Coach Mike Riley is the right man to lead Nebraska back to football prominence.

He noted that Charlie McBride, longtime defensive coordinator for Nebraska during its dynasty years, and Barry Alvarez, Wisconsin athletic director, both believe strongly in Riley.

“He just needs a little time,” Murtaugh said.

Murtaugh brought along signed copies of “If These Walls Could Talk,” a book he co-authored providing an inside look at Husker football when Murtaugh was playing.

In describing the book, he said, “If (Bob) Devaney was alive, he’d be suing me.”

Obituaries

The Press Club remembers:

Harold W. Andersen, 92

Harold “Andy” Andersen, publisher of the Omaha World-Herald from 1966-89, died Dec. 17. In addition to a newspaper career that took him from reporter to national and international leadership positions in journalism, the Omaha native was a longtime force in Midlands civic and cultural affairs. Anderson was inducted into the OPC Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame in 2009 and was honored as a “Face on the Barroom Floor” in 1984. He is survived by wife Marian, son David, daughter Nancy and six grandchildren.

Vernon H. Wood Jr., 73

The Omaha Press Club extends sympathy to Joni Baillon Wood on the Nov. 25 death of her husband, Vern Wood. Joni was president of the OPC in 1982 and has been a loyal supporter of the club. Vern was a teacher at Omaha North High School for many years and also worked in engineering and production at WOW-TV, KMTV and the UNO radio and TV stations.

Companies looking for an employee perk can take advantage of Omaha Press Club corporate memberships

Employees receive full access to OPC member benefits, which include personal dining privileges, reduced member rates for OPC events, free rental of the Omaha Press Club for events, reciprocal dining status at clubs around the nation and internationally and more. The membership is especially advantageous for downtown employers, as the Press Club offers delicious lunches, great facilities for employee or client meetings and parties, and the bar at the club is a perfect after-work hangout.

Memberships can be structured so employees pay their own membership dues, or the company can pay the dues for its employees. If you work for a company that may be interested in offering OPC membership, please contact Bridget Brooks at 402-393-4600 or by email at bw@buildimage.com
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are now open for the selection of inductees for the 2016 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 a separate sheet.

Please submit by March 6, 2016, to the Omaha Press Club Hall of Fame Committee

1620 Dodge St., 22nd Floor, Omaha, NE 68102.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

An all-star panel will gather for a special Professional Development Seminar on Jan. 28: “Social Media and Advertising in the Iowa Caucuses.” Come to the Press Club and learn how to make sense of political reporting in the digital age.

The Iowa Caucuses will take place the following Monday, Feb. 1.

Here’s who is showing up to discuss a timely topic:

• **Moderator:** Chris Allen, UNO School of Communication professor, Fulbright Scholar 2011-2012.
• **Dr. Jody Neathery-Castro**, associate professor and chair of UNO’s Political Science Department. Her current research examines the role of gender, culture and identity in politics.
• **Andy Curran**, founder and president, We Vote Project.
• **Robynn Tysver**, political reporter, *Omaha World-Herald*.
• **Linda Lovgren**, president and owner, Lovgren Marketing Group.

SOCIAL MEDIA & ADVERTISING IN THE IOWA CAUCUSES

In collaboration with PRSA Nebraska

THURSDAY, JAN 28, 2016

cost is $15

Starting at 5 p.m. with a half-hour for hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar

RSVP to 402-345-8008

or to jeaniec@opc.omhcoxiom.com

OPC MEMBER PROXY BALLOT

Members not attending the annual meeting on Jan. 14, 2016, may vote by returning the proxy ballot below to reach the Omaha Press Club by 4 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 13. See instructions below.

OFFICERS

President
Presidential Sean McGuire assumes the position of president.

President-elect Tom Becka  □ For □ Against

Treasurer J.J. Bartlett  □ For □ Against

Secretary Marcia Cady  □ For □ Against

Immediate Past President Todd Murphy assumes the position of immediate past president.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Woody Bradford  □ For □ Against

Claudia Bohn  □ For □ Against

Kathleen Al-Marhoon  □ For □ Against

Chris Sehring  □ For □ Against

Officers and board members assume office on Feb. 1, 2016.

Fax this completed ballot to 402-345-0114 or mail to the Omaha Press Club, 1620 Dodge Street, 22nd Floor, Omaha, NE 68102-1561.

Absentee ballots MUST be received by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 13.

**NOTE:** If you plan to attend the annual meeting, do not return this proxy ballot.
I support for his selection. gracefully yielded to the overwhelming a different opinion, however, and Tom committee and the Press Club board had the nomination of the chairman! The casual to iconic. dedication, the event has grown from Because of Tom’s untiring efforts and “Face” committee for most of that time. Tom has been the chairman of the Club “Barroom Floor” events, and now on my 16th year at the helm, I have been a part of almost 70 Press Club “Barroom Floor” events, and Tom has been the chairman of the “Face” committee for most of that time. Because of Tom’s untiring efforts and dedication, the event has grown from casual to iconic.

The final word on each “Face” selection comes down to the chairman, and in this case the chairman said “no” to the nomination of the chairman! The committee and the Press Club board had a different opinion, however, and Tom gracefully yielded to the overwhelming support for his selection.

On Friday, Feb. 5, Tom O’Connor will become the 148th “Face on the Barroom Floor.” The “Face” event has deep roots in the Press Club, and in my opinion Tom’s induction will be one of most popular events in club history. Make sure you have a table. Call Christine and make your reservation now at 402-345-8008.

A year in reflection and a look ahead:

- We had four “Face on The Barroom Floor” events in 2015: David Brown, Terence “Bud” Crawford, Dave Heineman, Sally Ganem & Kyle Peterson.
- The Shatel Lunch Series has become a popular monthly event.
- The club had a visit and roundtable question-and-answer session with possibly the world’s most high-profile person right now, Donald Trump!
- OPC continues its quarterly wine dinners, and has now introduced a craft beer happy hour.
- The club is in the beginning stages of a corporate membership campaign.
- For 2016 the management and staff will continue to work hard to meet and exceed our members expectations.

Cutting to the chase now, nobody really enjoys an article where someone outlines their accomplishments in a melodramatic swan song from the past 12 months, least of all me. Therefore, I will spare you all, as well as myself, that discomfort. However, I want to leave you with these brief thoughts.

First, Christine and Steve Villamonte are amazing people . . . period, end of story. I learned their goals for the club, how they manage events, and how they manage the money. If I were to grade these professionals, they would earn an A+. We are extremely fortunate to have managers of such character running our restaurant and events. And truthfully, the staff they work with is quite an amazing team. I now count each of them as friends of mine.

Next, I need to call out Judy Horan. If I could choose a partner, second only to my wife, it would be this year’s board secretary, Judy. Now I’m not looking to pick a fight with her husband Jim, so I’ll leave that comment there. Nonetheless, her ability to stay organized, timely and help me meet my obligations was uncanny. I suggest you all consider taking her to Las Vegas with you on your next visit.

Finally, I’m very eager for our new president, Sean McGuire, to take over the OPC board. Sean is a smart, fascinating, young, and charismatic guy. Although his hair doesn’t quite rival that of my finely coiffed head, he has some great ideas for the coming year. I’m quite confident he will be writing to you all with some great accomplishments in the months to come. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

- Todd Murphy, OPC President
WE’re ONLINE! READ YOUR OPC NEWSLETTER AT WWW.OMAHAPRESSCLUB.COM

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"Face on the Barroom Floor"
Tom O’Connor
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OPC EVENTS

Thursday, Jan. 14
OPC Annual Meeting
5:30 p.m. social, 6 p.m. meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 19
Shatel Sports Series.
Guest: Trev Albert,
UNO Athletic Director
Lunch at 11:30, program at noon

Thursday, Jan. 21
Noon Education Forum
Guest: Don Willhite on climate change.
Lunch at 11:30, program at noon

Friday, Jan. 22
Beer Tasting - 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 28
Professional Development Seminar
“Social Media and the Iowa Caucuses”
5 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 29
Winemaker’s Dinner
6 p.m. social followed by dinner

Friday, Feb. 5
Face on the Barroom Floor
Tom O’Connor
5:30 p.m. social, 6:30 dinner, 7:15 roast

Sunday, Feb. 14
Valentine’s Day Brunch
Seatings at 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 25
Noon Education Forum
Guest: the Rev. Daniel Hendrickson
President, Creighton University

Friday, April 1
OPC Show. Watch for details.

Friday, April 29
OPC Foundation Scholarship Awards 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

OMAHA PRESS CLUB STAFF

Executive Director
Steve Villamonte...opcdirector@gmail.com

Restaurants and Events Manager
Christine Villamonte...opcdirector@gmail.com

Administrative Manager
Jeanie Campbell...jeaniec@opc.ommcoxmail.com

OFFICE.............................402-345-8587
Restaurant..........................402-345-8008
Website............................www.omahapressclub.com

NEWSLETTER
Eric Stoakes..................Graphics Editor
Don Summerside ............Copy Editor
Judy Horan....................Coordinating Editor

Submissions for February issue are due
on or before January 20.

CLUB CLOSING DATES

January 1
New Year’s Day

January 18
Martin Luther King Day

February 15
Presidents Day

May 30
Memorial Day

CANCELLATION POLICY:

All reservations must be cancelled
48 HOURS in advance.