The "Wrath of Khan-Agra" on Friday, April 1, boldly goes where 58 shows have gone before -- into the stratosphere of satire and comedy.

“It’s not the greatest day in the world when a Fortune 500 company like ConAgra leaves town,” says Chris Christen, executive producer. “Our Star Trek-themed storyline celebrates the resilience of Omaha in a year of unexpected blows. We ‘Khan-sider’ possibilities and #KerrieOn.”

In the paper-thin script, the OPC Starship is hovering over Omaha because Khan has escaped and stolen a time ship, threatening to interfere with local business in some way. Just when the Starship fleet appears to lock in, their transporter malfunctions and hilarity ensues.

Manning the bridge are Matt Tompkins as Captain Kirk, Jeff Shields as Mister Spock, Kurt Keeler as “Bones” McCoy, Scott Voorhees as Scotty, Howard K. Marcus as Chekov, Glenn Prettyman as Sulu, Chris Baker as Captain Picard and Bob Kropp as Khan.

Look also for stellar appearances by members of the elite gallery of “Faces on the Barroom Floor” Mary Maxwell, Harvey Perlman, Mike Kelly and honorary chair James Martin Davis, along with Trev Alberts and Tom Becka.

“And, of course, our Starship has a few surprises on deck, too,” Christen said.

Bridget Robbins is the show’s artistic director and Travis Walker is music director. Jeff Shields leads the writers committee.

The evening unfolds at 5:30 p.m. with a no-host cocktail reception in the ConAgra Lobby of the Holland Performing Arts Center. At 7 p.m., guests move into the Scott Recital Hall for dinner and the show.

Prior to the main event, patrons will have an opportunity to adopt Tribbles (those furry little creatures that multiply in an iconic episode of the original TV series) and, in the process, beam up 2016 scholarship winners with cash donations.

Single tickets are $150 ($125 for ages 35 and younger). Tables of eight are $5,000, $2,500 & $1,200. A downloadable reservation form is available at opcshow.org.

Have a question? Email the reservations team at opcshow@gmail.com or call 402-980-1625.

Proceeds support scholarships for communications students at Creighton University, the University of Nebraska at Omaha & the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In 2015, the OPC Foundation presented 18 scholarships with a total value of $40,500.
Tom O’Connor on ‘Barroom Floor’

A super turnout for a special ‘Face’

By Don Summerside
OPC News Copy Editor

The Omaha Press Club kicked off Super Bowl weekend by honoring one of the club’s longtime superstars. On Feb. 5, Tom O’Connor became the 148th “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

O’Connor said he worried that “20 years from now, I’ll be the answer to a trivia question: ‘I know the rest of these “Faces” (on the OPC walls), but who the hell is this Tom O’Connor guy?’

Not to worry. A club-record sellout crowd for the dinner and roast ensured that Face No. 148 will long be remembered and recognized.

The huge turnout for O’Connor reflected the friends and associations he has made in his 28-year public relations career at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, where he is senior associate director of communications. And it saluted O’Connor’s 38-year OPC membership, including his 15th year leading the Face committee. Tom also organizes the popular Shatel Sports Lunches. He was OPC president in 2001.

Emcee for the roast was World-Herald columnist Mike Kelly. In acknowledgment of O’Connor’s service as an altar boy, Kelly rang an altar bell -- with limited success -- to keep the roasters on schedule.

Some of the sharper darts from the roasters:

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Nicole Lindquist, director of communications for the Iowa West Foundation: “Tom struggled to find a picture for tonight’s program cover. He was really stressed about finding one with his new glasses, and now I can see why. They’re your best feature!”

John Murphy, president of J. Murphy & Associates: “Tom plays a lot of golf -- Monday at Johnny Goodman, Thursday at Elmwood, Saturday at Miracle Hill -- and tries to get in another round on Sunday. If only all of us could work for the government.”

Bill O’Neill, director of public relations for the University of Nebraska Medical Center: “It killed Tom when our internal newsletter limited its stories to 300 words. He complained: ‘I can’t tell a story without eight or nine fabricated quotes!’

Rick Ruggles, health reporter for the World-Herald, said O’Connor’s scathing food critique after a university trip to China (“What looks like a simple piece of meat can quickly turn into a huge mistake”) touched off an international incident. Ruggles said then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had to mend fences with the Chinese, telling them: “Don’t let it bother you. That’s just Tom O’Connor, a schmuck from Nebraska.”

Proclamations from Mayor Jean Stothert declaring Feb. 5 “Tom O’Connor Day” and from Gov. Pete Ricketts commissioning Tom an admiral in the Great Navy of the State of Nebraska capped the evening’s festivities.

Dr. Steve Hinrichs, “bioterrorism czar” and chairman of pathology and microbiology at the Medical Center, used football terminology to present O’Connor a “first and only Line Man of the Decade” award for Tom’s line-editing and other assistance with news releases about the Medical Center’s biocontainment unit and other public health issues.

Steve Villamonte, OPC executive director: “Tom, you know you’re a tightwad when your club keeps items on the menu just for you: grilled cheese and chili.”

Artist Jim Horan’s newest “Face on the Barroom Floor” places O’Connor, holding a golf club, in the middle of UNMC. He is flanked by some of his favorite “Faces” (Doug and Greg McDermott, Bob Gibson, Alexander Payne, Johnny Carson, Larry the Cable Guy, Mary Maxwell and Clayton Anderson).
The refugee process

This presentation -- moderated by Dr. Jim Van Arsdall, an Omaha Press Club Education Committee member and Metropolitan Community College faculty member, and presented by the Refugee Empowerment Center -- will explain refugees’ legal status, agency programs and local community impact. The presenters will also cover the realities for Nebraskans and how impacted communities have responded.

The featured speaker will be Ann Marie Kudlacz, executive director of Omaha’s Refugee Empowerment Center.

The center’s mission is to resettle and empower refugees to become self-sufficient through direct services and educational programs. Program participants establish a new life in Omaha, founded on the dignity of economic self-support and inclusion in opportunities, which Americans enjoy.

The agency is a catalyst in supporting welcoming communities by building relationships within, and a cross-cultural understanding between the Omaha and refugee communities. The purpose of the organization is to assist refugees to learn to work and live in their new culture in order to provide better lives for them and their families.

The Refugee Empowerment Center understands that newly arriving refugees require a great deal of assistance to adjust from primitive life in refugee camps to fast-paced America society. Thus, the center relies heavily on support from the Omaha community to successfully equip refugees with the necessary skills to be successful members of the community.

The forum begins at noon. The $15 price includes lunch, which will be served starting at 11:30 a.m.

Call 402-345-8008 for reservations or email Jeanie at jeaniec@opc.omhcoxmail.com.

Non-Press Club members are welcome.

A 48-hour cancellation policy applies.

Thank you, scholarship donors

Our sincere thanks go to the following donors who were so kind and generous to contribute to our 2015 Omaha Press Club Foundation Annual Fund Drive.

Through their donations, along with proceeds from The Omaha Press Club Show and direct scholarship contributions, we are able to help bright young people finance their educations. These students, who have a passion for news, PR, broadcasting and advertising, are the future of our profession, and we are gratified to be able to support them.

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By Claudia Bohn
OPC Committee Member

Fresh off the 2015 NCAA Volleyball Championship, won just a few blocks away in downtown Omaha, Nebraska volleyball coach John Cook was the featured speaker at the February Tom Shatel luncheon at the Omaha Press Club.

A full house was on hand on Tuesday, Feb. 23, as Coach Cook spoke about the 2015 squad and their title run.

“If you would have asked me at the start of the season if I thought this team would be in Omaha, I would have said no way,” Cook said. “To host the Final Four and get to Omaha – the pressure was mind-boggling. But this team embraced the journey. They played their best volleyball in the regional and then came to Omaha and manhandled Kansas and Texas. “

Cook said the team is working hard this winter and is preparing to make another run at the title in 2016.

“There’s no pressure,” Cook said with a smile. “I will tell you this team is working so hard. They want to make history. No Nebraska team has won back-to-back championships. This team wants to change that.”

Cook talked team personnel, but also about the move from the legendary Nebraska Coliseum to the Devaney Center.

“I’ll admit I was not in favor of going to the Devaney Center, but Coach Tom Osborne had a great vision for this program,” Coach Cook said. “The move allowed us to have a student section and more importantly, allow more fans to experience Nebraska volleyball. We have the longest waiting list of any Nebraska program for season tickets and we average more than 300 standing-room-only fans every match. We are building a whole new generation of fans and that’s pretty special.”
Spring is in the air, folks, and so is the planning for OPC’s spring and summer activities. Our marketing committee is working on two major tasks: a corporate membership drive and reception venue marketing.

With the wedding season and planning for other activities at hand, it’s important to remember that as a member you have special privileges for free venue rental for any event. Our menu prices are more than competitive, so having your reception or event at OPC is a value with a view.

Our next wine dinner, planned for April 8th, will feature a Peruvian theme. I thought I could create some nouveau presentations along with traditional Peruvian flavors. My family name is Peruvian, as my father was born in Lima, and I enjoyed traditional foods when I was a child. I am looking forward to working as the chef on this wine dinner.

Another way I am utilizing my membership is by conducting informational seminars for prospects and customers. It is one of the best perks I have found, and the responses have been positive. Office socials and parties are another way to go.

With the weather turning, your excuses are becoming limited. I hope to get the opportunity to meet you soon, and look forward to continuing the momentum we are building together.

- Sean McGuire, OPC President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S NOTE

Even though next year’s Valentine’s Day is on a Tuesday, we are planning a second annual Valentine’s Brunch for the prior Sunday.

Meanwhile, I invite you to spring into action and use your club! With all the events planned for the spring and summer, find the time to bring family and friends and enjoy the Omaha Press Club.

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