Should ban on death penalty be repealed by voters?

By Gary Willis  
*Education Committee*

Nebraskans for the Death Penalty gathered 166,692 signatures to put the death penalty issue on the ballot in November. On the opposite side, the group Retain a Just Nebraska believes keeping the death penalty in our past is part of making Nebraska a better place for the future.

State Sen. Colby Coash, co-chair of Retain a Just Nebraska, and Robert Evnen, co-founder of Nebraskans for the Death Penalty, will present their groups’ views at the forum. Evnen is a Lincoln attorney in an unpaid role with Nebraskans for the Death Penalty.

He represents employers in labor and employment matters in Omaha, Lincoln and throughout the state. He was appointed to fill a vacancy on the State Board of Education by then-Gov. Dave Heineman in 2005 and was elected to a full term in 2008. Sen. Coash of Lincoln has been a member of the Legislature since 2009. Under his leadership, LB 268 passed, replacing the death penalty with life without parole in Nebraska. He has spoken to groups throughout Nebraska and around the country.

Cost for the Noon Education Forum luncheon is $17. Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m. The Education Forum starts at noon. RSVP 402-345-8008.

Pulitzer Prize-winning trio will speak at Press Club

“Taking the Lede: Pulitzer Prize-Winning Nebraska Journalists” will be held at the Omaha Press Club on Tuesday, Sept. 13. Doors open at 5 p.m. with a cash bar. The program will begin at 6 p.m. The special event presented by Humanities Nebraska is free and open to the public.

Bill Frakes, Doug Smith and Matt Waite are the three prize-winning panelists who will discuss the importance of accurate, honest reporting.

Joe Starita, author of “I am a Man: Chief Standing Bear’s Journey for Justice,” will moderate the panel. Starita is a journalism professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Frakes, a visiting professor in the journalism school at UNL, was a member of the Miami Herald staff that won the Pulitzer for coverage of Hurricane Andrew in 1993. He has worked in every state and 138 countries.

Smith was part of the five-person team at the Omaha Sun that won a Pulitzer in 1972 for investigative journalism in a series of articles on Boys Town. He is also founder of Ervin & Smith, a local marketing agency.

Waite was principal developer of PolitiFact, a website that fact-checks statements made by politicians. In 2009, PolitiFact became the first website to win a Pulitzer. Today, Waite is professor of practice in journalism & mass communications at UNL.

OPC members, call 402-345-8008 for reservations for the Humanities Nebraska-sponsored event.
Faces are ringing at the OPC. Friends and fans are rushing to call for reservations for the Ruth and Bill Scott “Face on the Barroom Floor” dinner/roast. The popular couple has stirred up quite a demand for the Thursday, Sept. 22 event. They will be the 150th “Face” since 1971 to be honored.

Based on the strong early response, a large crowd is expected for the event, so don’t delay calling the OPC at 402-345-8008 to make your reservation. A reception hosted by the Scotts begins at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner and unveiling of the “Face,” a caricature-illustration by artist Jim Horan. The generosity of the Omaha philanthropists is seen throughout the state. Their personal and foundation’s financial support has touched more than 150 local and statewide organizations.

Scheduled to roast the couple are:

Bruce Rasmussen, Creighton University athletic director (emcee);
Dr. Mike Sorrell, UNMC Distinguished Chair in Internal Medicine and a legendary liver specialist at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (the Scotts named a UNMC building in his honor);
Dr. Randy Ferlic, retired cardio-thoracic surgeon and former member of the NU Board of Regents and one of Bill Scott’s golf partners;
Judy Duffy, longtime family friend and former neighbor;
Terry Pettit, retired volleyball coach for the Nebraska Cornhuskers (1977-1999); and Nick Stergiou, Ph.D., Distinguished Community Research Chair in Biomechanics, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

The four University of Nebraska campuses -- UNMC, UNO, UNL and UNK – have been major recipients of the Scotts’ financial support. Others benefiting have been Creighton University, Metropolitan Community College, Bellevue University, College of Saint Mary, Omaha Public Schools and Children’s Scholarship Fund.

The Scotts’ generosity also has extended to Educare, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Visiting Nurse Association, Health Center Association of Nebraska, Project Harmony, The Salvation Army, Collective for Youth and all the major after-school local providers.

“We hope to have some concrete ideas to announce within the next couple months,” Shatel said. “I’m excited. I think this is an opportunity to do something bigger and better than our lunches.”

Shatel Lunch Series concludes, but other options being explored

By Tom O’Connor
Communications Committee

After a four-year run, Tom Shatel has decided that the Shatel Lunch Series has run its course.

“I thoroughly enjoyed the lunches, and I can’t express my thanks enough to all the people who attended,” the longtime Omaha World-Herald sports columnist said. “But, I think we can do better. I’m exploring several options that I think will be well received and bring more people to the Press Club.”

The first Shatel Lunch was held in September of 2012. Since that time, a wide variety of guests have spoken at the lunches. The guests included:

Coaches/athletic directors – John Cook, UNL volleyball; Trev Alberts, UNO athletic director; Mike Kemp, UNO assistant athletic director;
Sports announcers – Greg Sharpe, Kent Pavelka, Gary Sadlemyer, Matt Davison, Sean Callahan, Kyle Peterson and Damon Benning;
Sports writers/book writers – Lee Barfknecht, Sam McKewon, Dirk Chatelain, Henry Cordes and the late Steve Pivovar;
Husker football legend – Jerry Murtaugh.

A committee has been formed to investigate other options that will provide sports fans and others with a reason to come to the OPC.

Noon Education Forums are a service provided by the Omaha Press Club for the public. You do not need to be a member to attend. Many interesting speakers are found at the monthly lunches. Let your friends and colleagues know that they are invited.
This fall, one student photographer each from UNL, UNO and Creighton University will be awarded stipends to attend a national photography seminar, a new program that is part of the ongoing legacy of John Savage.

Savage, of course, is considered the founder of the Omaha Press Club, the award-winning photographer having spent nearly half a century at the Omaha World-Herald. But in addition to helping found the club, he also helped to start the Nebraska Press Photographers Association.

Upon John’s death, his son, Jack, made a generous contribution to the Press Club to fund continuing education for photographers.

For years, the Savage funds, awarded through the OPC Foundation, helped the Nebraska Press Photographers put on a regional photo seminar that was second to none.

But about five years ago, the press photographers decided not to put on the seminar, and the event never returned. And as a result, the Savage funds have been sitting dormant.

Wanting to see those dollars put to use to advance photography in Nebraska, the OPC Foundation a year ago initiated conversations with Jack Savage on how the funds could be repurposed.

It was decided the funds in the future will pay for three annual $1,000 awards to promising college photographers to help them seek advanced training at one of many available national photo conferences held each year.

Early this school year, each of the three institutions that OPC supports will choose their first winners of the John Savage Photography Education Award, with those students able to use the funds sometime during the 2016-17 school year. The winners also will be recognized in the spring during the foundation’s annual scholarship awards dinner.

Jack Savage is tickled that the funds will again help enhance both still and video photography education in Nebraska.

At the same time, we at the foundation are pleased to once again honor John Savage’s place in the history of both this club and in Nebraska photography. It’s only fitting.

P.S. The foundation will soon be making its annual appeal for donations to help us continue all our scholarship programs. Look for our annual letter in November and consider making your own contribution to journalism excellence in the coming year. Thanks in advance for your support!

Coming in October: Ashford, Bacon to debate at Press Club

Gary Kerr
Education Committee

A 2nd District congressional debate will be held Oct. 14 over the noon hour at the Omaha Press Club. The debate between the challenger, Republican Don Bacon, and the incumbent, Democratic Congressman Brad Ashford, will be sponsored by the Press Club and the League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha.

OCTOBER 14 DEBATE
Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m.
The debate moderated by retired newscaster Gary Kerr begins at noon. Call 402-345-8008 for reservations or email jeaniec@opc.omhcoxmail.com

At the July 21 Noon Education Forum, Leo Adam Biga talked about boxing champion Terrence “Bud” Crawford’s humanitarian trips to Africa. Biga accompanied Crawford and Jamie Nollette, Crawford’s fourth-grade teacher, on the second 12-day journey in June 2015. The world boxing champion was honored as an OPC “Face on the Barroom Floor” in May.
OPC’s Villamonte to be inducted into Omaha Hospitality Hall of Fame

By Tom O’Connor
Communications Committee

Being named to a Hall of Fame is indicative of true excellence in a profession. On Oct. 16, the Omaha Press Club’s very own executive director, Steve Villamonte, will receive this ultimate recognition when he is inducted into the Omaha Hospitality Hall of Fame along with six others.

The cost to attend the event at the Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College’s Fort Omaha Campus, 32nd Street and Sorenson Parkway, is $70 per person.

Executive director at the OPC since 2000, Villamonte is a certified executive chef from the American Culinary Association. He first worked at the age of 5 when his father brought him to Happy Hollow Club and assigned him to a kitchen employee.

Villamonte also is an adjunct faculty member of the Institute for the Culinary Arts. His company, Villamonte’s Cuisine, manufactures Thunderbird salad dressing and Blackstone Reuben dressing for commercial and retail sales, and it also caters weddings.

“The Omaha Press Club is truly blessed to have Steve Villamonte,” said Sean McGuire, OPC president. “Not only is he an amazing chef, but he’s also a great guy. His industry expertise is a huge benefit and makes him effective. Come up and find out for yourself.”

“Steve has the ability to combine a deep knowledge of exciting recipes, with the logistics of mass preparation, while never losing sight that every meal or event has a budget,” said Todd Murphy, past OPC president.

“For such a down-to-earth guy, watching Steve execute the food for an event dinner is a bit like observing a maestro, racing pit boss and gracious host all at once.”

Others who will be inducted on Oct. 16 include:
Linda Anania-Keating, Nebraska Distributing Company and Joslyn Art Museum;
Anthony Fucinaro Sr. (deceased) and Anthony Fucinaro Jr., Anthony’s Steakhouse;
Eddie Galas, Eddie’s Catering;
David Hayes, V. Mertz, four Egg and I’s;
Ron Popp, WheatFields Eatery & Bakery;
Chef Leo Fascianella, Pasta Amore.

The Hall of Fame is a collaborative endeavor of the Omaha Restaurant Association, the Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College, the National Association of Catering Executives (Omaha Chapter) and the American Culinary Federation (Heartlands Chapter).

Proceeds from the event provide scholarships for culinary arts students and fund scholarly academic work. Contact Jim Trebbien, 402-457-2510, for more information.

THE OMAHA PRESS CLUB
CELEBRATES ITS 150TH
FACE ON THE BARROOM FLOOR
RUTH AND BILL SCOTT

SEPTEMBER 22, 2016
5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
Cocktail Reception
6:30 p.m.
Dinner

HORS D’OEUVRES
Seafood Florentine Stuffed Portabella
Bake Brie Encroute

SALAD
OPC’s Signature Thunderbird

ENTRÉE
Filet of Beef au Poivre
Glazed Zucchini & Squash Fan
Anna Potatoes

DESSERT
Chocolate Mousse Terrine

7:30 p.m.
The Roast

To RSVP for dinner, call the Omaha Press Club at 402-345-8008 or email jeanielc@opc.omhcoxmll.com.
In my business, I try to get out to several networking events per week. Recently colleagues have been asking me about the Omaha Press Club. I kept wondering why until all of a sudden a light bulb went off.

For the last year or so, I have made a conscious effort whenever I am at the club to post at least one photo or video from inside the OPC on social media. Some of you have done this as well. We live in an era of technology affecting many things, including advertising and promotions. Applications like Facebook and Instagram are probably already on your phone and provide the opportunity to do two things for the Press Club:

First, they provide a free look to those in the community who may not be aware of the club. One of the biggest challenges we face is a lack of awareness. Many young professionals, for example, are looking for a place like this and do not even know it exists. This is a free way to reach them.

Second, utilizing social media while you are in the club improves the overall image and perception of the club because our view is one of our most attractive features. This is also an effective way to reach new members.

If you have a moment, please try to do the same the next time you are up on the 22nd floor.

One of the things you will notice or may have already noticed is the OPC Facebook page -- courtesy of KMTV creative -- that will help us in our marketing efforts. I think it is great.

Please take a moment to “Like” our page if you have not already done so and share the video with your network. This is one of the most effective ways to continue to build on the great things happening this year.

Fall is approaching quickly, so be sure to make reservations for some of the events listed in the newsletter.

We have some really fun ones lined up, offering an opportunity to socialize with some really neat people. I am looking forward to seeing you there.

- Sean McGuire, OPC President

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**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**SEPTEMBER 2016**

**MEMBER BENEFITS**

OPC members receive preferential treatment when holding a special event, with no charge for room usage. Wedding. Birthday. Retirement. Maybe just celebrating your team’s win.

We offer great food, a beautiful setting, an unequaled view, free room rental and an experienced event coordinator.

**Call our favorite party person, Christine Villamonte, at 402-345-8008, for information.**
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J.J. Bartlett, Tom Becka, Marcia Cady

“Face on the Barroom Floor”
Tom O’Connor

Hall of Fame
Judy Horan, Todd Murphy

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Judy Horan .................. Coordinating Editor

Submissions for October issue are due on or before September 20.

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

WE’RE ONLINE! READ YOUR OPC NEWSLETTER AT OMAHAPRESSCLUB.COM

Tuesday, Sept. 13
“Taking the Lede: Pulitzer Prize-winning Nebraska journalists”
Presented by Humanities Nebraska. Free and open to public
5 p.m., doors open with cash bar; 6 p.m. program begins

Thursday, Sept. 22
“Face on the Barroom Floor”
Ruth and Bill Scott
5:30 p.m. bar; 6:30 p.m. dinner
7:30 p.m. roast/toast and unveiling of “Face”

Friday, Oct. 14
2nd District Congressional Debate
Brad Ashford, Don Bacon
11:30 a.m. lunch; noon program

Friday, Nov. 4
Winemakers Dinner
6 p.m. social; 6:30 p.m. 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

The Beat View in Town