Nine roasters ‘run’ Ashford through full-court press

By Tom O’Connor
Communications Committee

Running is important to Brad Ashford – whether it’s navigating the streets of downtown Omaha during a lunch-hour jog or tossing his hat into the ring for public office. It’s what he does.

But it was hardly a walk in the park for the native Omahan when he was trampled on by a slew of nine roasters on his way to becoming the Omaha Press Club’s 153rd “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

The May 17 roast was attended by more than a dozen elected officials, nine past Faces, and more than 100 others who came to pay their respects to the man who has been a political icon and community leader in Nebraska for more than 30 years.

The night began with a stirring invocation from Frank Barrett, a Face honoree in 1999. Emcee Jim Quinley then proceeded to talk about the perils of running with Ashford.

A pharmacist at Kubat Pharmacy, Quinley has been a running partner of Ashford for 22 years. He recounted how once a “gaggle of pro-lifers” were chasing after Ashford and Quinley. They had to hide in a Planned Parenthood office.

To make sure people would know who was who, Quinley created two T-shirts – one read, “I’m Brad Ashford” and had a target on the back; the other read, “I’m not” and had an arrow pointing to the target.

Quinley noted that during Ashford’s two-year stint in Congress he was asked to fly on Air Force One with President Obama. The untold part of the story, Quinley said, “He had to take the bus back.”

Ashford’s bouncing between political parties was an ongoing theme of the roast.

Play ball at OPC’s fireworks buffets

Batter up at the buffet line!

Two of OPC’s most popular events will again highlight the summer season. Two hearty buffets – capped by fireworks viewing from the 22nd floor -- will hit it out of the park in June and July.

First at bat will be a Friday night feast marking the June 16 opening ceremonies for the college baseball championship series. Dad – and the entire family – can get a two-day jump on Father’s Day with a buffet featuring prime rib, fried chicken, baby back ribs and hot dogs. A bird’s-eye view of the baseball fireworks will climax the evening.

Independence Day fireworks will get an early start with another baseball park show on Saturday, July 1. College baseball’s Home Run Derby precedes the fireworks. Prime rib is again the star of the OPC buffet. Also on the menu: Kansas City barbecue, pulled pork sandwiches, roast chicken and beer brats.

Check out the menus and buffet hours on Page 4, then phone 402-345-8008 for reservations.

Gouuttierre to assess Trump foreign policy

Noon Forum June 15

SIS, Russia, North Korea, Climate Change, NAFTA, Turkey, China, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Israel.

From terrorism to trade policy, the 45th president of the United States has inherited a number of daunting foreign policy challenges spanning the globe from the Middle East through Asia.

Is President Trump up to the challenge? Will his advisors have sufficient influence? How did his first trip abroad turn out?

Leading the OPC’s Noon Education Forum on June 15 is Thomas E. Gouttierre. He is the dean emeritus for International Studies & Programs and the director emeritus of the Center for Afghanistan Studies at the University Nebraska at Omaha.

Gouuttierre is widely regarded as one of the Western Hemisphere’s leading experts on Afghanistan and U.S.-Afghan relations. He has had roles in two wars: the Cold War and the War on Terror.

He lived and worked for nearly 10 years in Afghanistan, serving as a Peace Corps volunteer, a Fulbright fellow and executive director of the Fulbright Foundation.

The OPC Forum will run from noon to 1 p.m. on Thursday, June 15. The charge of $17 per person includes lunch, with table service beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Call 402-345-8008 for reservations or e-mail Jeanie at jeaniec@opc.omhcoxmail.com. Non-Press Club members are welcome. Reservations must be accompanied by an OPC number or credit card.
ASHFORD, continued from page 1

His son, John, who is a public defender in Douglas County, said, “He’s been in more parties than Kanye (West) after the Emmys.”

He added if an Omaha street is ever named after his father, it would be the Northwest Radial Highway because it zigzags so much that “nobody knows what the hell direction you’re going.”

Ashford’s wife, Ann, focused on the romantic side of her husband of 24 years, noting that it “revolves around the legislative process.” She told about a birthday card from Brad that read, “Happy birthday buddy.” It was signed, “Brad Ashford.”

On their 20th anniversary at Fleming’s, Ann presented Brad with a three-page love letter before dinner, where they were joined by Hal and Mary Daub. In the course of the dinner, Brad shared the love letter with the Daubs. “You can’t make this stuff up,” Ann said.

One of Ashford’s colleagues in the Legislature, Chris Abboud, said, “To a lot of people, it seems like he doesn’t know what he’s doing. He’s kind of cosmic in his thinking, but he thinks outside the box.”

Woody Bradford, a Face honoree in 2016 and a fellow lawyer with Ashford, recalled Brad’s time as a law clerk in his office. “Brad would run and never come back,” Bradford said. “The question was always, ‘Where is Brad?’”

Bradford said Ashford had a bad habit of leaving the car door open, only to come back to the car and find the door gone. The classic Ashford-ism was when he left the car running, locked it, and it ran out of gas.

“‘If it wasn’t awkward, it wouldn’t be Brad,’” said Chris Burbach, a reporter for the Omaha World-Herald and one of Ashford’s running partners. After more than 25 years of running, Burbach said Ashford might have logged “up to three miles by now.”

Erin Grace, a World-Herald columnist, told how Ashford couldn’t make up his mind on having her as a roaster. Going through her text message exchange with Ashford, first, she was in, then he texted her, “I got someone else (frown emoji).” Then, next text, “U think u can do it?” “Brad’s philosophy is if you’re not part of the solution, just run for office,” said Jim Rose, radio personality on KFAB-AM. “Brad really doesn’t have enemies, but his friends don’t really like him that much.”

Rose added, “Brad holds a record at Happy Hollow for the most times hitting another guy’s golf ball and for talking in someone’s back swing.”

Ashford, who recently stepped down as executive director of Midtown 2050, received encouragement from Rex Fisher, director of corporate relations at HDR, Inc., who said, “We’re all confident you’ll find another job.” Fisher fondly remembered an Ashford interview on “Meet the Press” in which Brad “finished the interview arguing with himself.”

Congratulations letters were received from two prominent Democrats – Nancy Pelosi of California, the House of Representatives minority leader, and Steny Hoyer, a Congressman from Maryland.

Ashford personally acknowledged each of the political colleagues who turned out for the roast and recognized the press by saying, “They made me who I am today.”

He expressed his pride in being bipartisan – “That’s how we do things in Nebraska” – and how excited he was that the Omaha VA will soon have a new state-of-the-art medical center – “We owe our 20 million veterans our tremendous thanks.”

He concluded by saying, “It’s been a great journey.”

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As a member of the club, you are getting the information first as you read your newsletter. You’ll also get the best table by calling in your reservation early. This is a first-come, first-served event that traditionally sells out. It’s a great time to be at the club, with the College World Series in town and our view overlooking the park.

And we will have baseball on the club TVs if a game is being played during the dinner.

Because the club has been reserved for a wedding reception on June 17, the traditional Saturday night Father’s Day Grill this year will be a day earlier, June 16, and combined with the annual Baseball Buffet marking the Friday night opening ceremonies for the college baseball championships. The good news is we have ramped up the buffet to include prime rib. See all the menu details on Page 4 of this issue. Another great night to make plans to visit the club is July 1 for our Home Run Derby Fireworks Buffet.

The annual summer closing date for the club this year is July 24, opening again Aug. 15. This restaurant will see mostly just a deep clean, with well-deserved vacation time for the staff. We also have a few repairs to do in the kitchen.

With lots of reasons to enjoy the club this summer, we look forward to seeing you all for lunch, dinner or a special event.

And do you know a soon-to-be bride or groom? If so, send them to our new bridal link on our website. http://omahapressclub.com/wedding-receptions/

Thank you all and see you at the club,

- Steve Villamonte CEC, BS Executive Director Omaha Press Club

Mark your calendars for June 22. About two weeks before that date, I will be announcing on KFAB the special guest for our annual June wine dinner, which is open to the public.
At the OPC Scholarship Banquet in late April, I had the honor of presenting certificates to this year’s award recipients. I can personally attest to the long-term value of these awards, having received an OPC scholarship in 1982.

But don’t take it just from me. Here’s what Matt Smolsky, who received a scholarship the same year I did, recently had to say: “The OPC Scholarship undoubtedly helped me land my first full-time job, both as a great item on my resume and as a confidence-builder when applying. It was attention-getting, as it came from a respected organization representing a profession that doesn’t offer praise without merit. To have professional journalists recognize your achievements, well now, that’s something.”

Every year, OPC Foundation trustees hear similar things from past scholars. We also hear from forward-looking new OPC scholars who understand that scholarships and other Foundation awards are a vote of confidence from their schools and professional journalists. Such scholars include Tierra M.A. Yah, a University of Nebraska at Omaha student who received the 2017 Mark O. Gautier Jr. Intern Award and sent the Foundation a note.

“This is a huge honor, especially as a first-generation college student,” she wrote. “Several others whom I admire have earned this honor before me, so I am excited to see what’s in store for my future. Thank you!”

As the Foundation’s Development and Events Committees continue to craft and refine plans for special events and other fundraising activities, I hope you’ll give full consideration to supporting them with your time by volunteering, with your attendance, and through individual and corporate sponsorship.

This is the 60th year of our scholarship program. With your help, it will be the best ever.

If you have questions or would like to support our efforts, please contact me at howardkmarcus@gmail.com.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDATION

By Howard K. Marcus
OPC Foundation President

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This is the 60th year of our scholarship program. With your help, it will be the best ever.

If you have questions or would like to support our efforts, please contact me at howardkmarcus@gmail.com.

OPC Foundation awards scholarships

Photos by Kurt Keeler

The Omaha Press Club Foundation presented scholarships to students at Creighton University, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska at Omaha at a banquet April 28. The Foundation also presented the Career Achievement Award to John Prescott and the Journalism Educator Award to David C. Ogden. Students pictured are front row: Kerrigan Flynn, UNO, Paul N. Williams Scholarship.

Second row: Rachel O’Neal, Creighton, Jim Denney “Good News” Scholarship; Tierra M.A. Yah, UNO, Mark Gautier Intern Award; Amy Nielsen, UNO, Panko-Roberts/President’s Memorial Scholarship. Third row: Lizzie Erftmier, Creighton, Panko-Roberts Scholarship; A.J. Olnes, Creighton, John Savage Visual Communication Award. Fourth row: Charlotte Reilly, UNO, and Bailey Schulz, UNL, Howard Silber Scholarships. Fifth row: Samuel Baue, UNL, Stan Bond Scholarship; Ben Buchnat, UNL, Nebraska Broadcasters Association Scholarship. Sixth row: Isaac Wahlmeier, UNL, Williams Scholarship; Brandon McDermott, UNO, Floyd Kalber Scholarship. Not pictured: Megan Simonsen, UNL, Panko-Roberts Scholarship; Connor Cahill, Creighton, Williams Scholarship; Catherine Morehouse, Creighton, Robert McMorris Scholarship.
As we move into the summer months, many of us are planning to take some time off. Travel to see extended family, visit a national park or a beach somewhere. We curl up with a good book, a cold drink and spend some “unassigned time.” Unfortunately, many of us don’t take the vacation we’re given. Expectations have changed, too; with a cellphone, we are literally still working. When we do take time off, we’re still checking email and making speaking, but I can’t do it all day long. I can’t process it all, and after a while I just get numb.

Don’t get me wrong; the transparency is a good. There are a great many things going on in our city, our state and the nation that we should be paying attention to. But every 20 minutes?

We still need perspective and context in communication: How did the situation come about (context)? What observations have you made (perspective)?

So, to provide you with some context for this column -- we have trouble disconnecting and reporters are working hard to feed us the information we are demanding.

Now, my perspective. Time off should mean disconnecting and God bless the reporters who are 24 years old, working 24 hours a day and getting paid $24,000 a year.

Please come and take a break at the Press Club; we’d love to have you.

- Marcia Cady, OPC President

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**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Marcia Cady

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**Friday Night Feast: Everything Dad Loves**
**Family, Food & Fireworks**
Prime Rib Buffet for the College Baseball Championship
Opening Ceremony with Fireworks to Follow

Friday, June 16
6 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

**Buffet Menu**
Thunderbird Salad, Deviled Eggs, Coleslaw, Baked Beans, Buttered Corn, Potato Salad, Whipped Potatoes & Gravy
Prime Rib au Jus, Southern Fried Chicken
BBQ Baby Back Ribs, Vienna Hot Dogs

**Desserts**
Brownie, Cheesecake, Strawberry Shortcake

**Please notify the club with your special dietary needs.**

**Price:** Adults $28
Children under 10 $16
*Gratuity at Member Discretion

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**Omaha Press Club Gourmet Club Wine Dinner**
Hosted by KFAB’s Scott Voorhees
Thursday, June 22, 6 p.m.

**Quaff**
Smoked Salmon Chaud Froid
Local Garden-Fresh Cucumber & Asparagus Croustade Remoulade
Pastrami Reuben Croustade
WINE: Clos Pegase Chardonnay

**Appetizer**
Stuffed Shrimp on Avocado Risotto with a Spicy Sauce Choron
WINE: Nobilo New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc

**Sorbet**
Kumquat & Lemon

**Salad**
Villamonte’s Thunderbird Salad with a Parmesan Crust
WINE: Rutherford Two Range Red

**Dual Entrée**
Charbroiled Beef Medallion with Maitre de Hotel & Nebraska Blackberry Jus, with a Spring Chicken Sausage Mousse with Morels, Brandied Parsnips & Carrots
Summer Squash Risotto
WINE: Clayhouse Cabernet

**Signature Dessert**
Tempered Chocolate Torte
Raspberry Coulis
WINE: Mondoro Moscato d’Asti

**Price (inclusive):** $60
Chef de Cuisine: Steve Villamonte BA, CEC
(Certified Executive Chef)

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**Home Run Derby & Independence Day Buffet**
Saturday, July 1
6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Featuring Fireworks

**Buffet Menu**
Tossed Salad, Coleslaw, Buttered Corn, Deviled Eggs, Campfire Baked Beans, American Potato Salad, Cheddar Cheese Gratin Potatoes, Prime Rib of Beef au Jus, Roasted Chicken, Kansas City Style BBQ, Pulled Pork Sandwiches, Beer Brats with a Spicy Slaw, Fresh Watermelon

**Dessert**
Apple Crisp, Cherry Pie

**Please notify the club with your special dietary needs.**

**Price:** adults $28, children under 10 $16
*Gratuity at Member Discretion

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**Reservations** can be made by calling the Omaha Press Club at 402-345-8008
Judy Horan gets a fond Press Club farewell

A motherly mentor and a tireless volunteer who “talked us into doing things we didn’t want to do.” But most of all, “a friend to all of us.” Those were some of the words that poured forth May 18 at a Press Club celebration of Judy Horan’s life. Judy, who died March 1, contributed decades of service to the club and also left her mark in many other areas of the community.

Tributes from friends who gathered at the OPC included:

Susan Eustice: “Thanks to Jim for sharing Judy with all of us. She was a brilliant writer and mentored so many of us here tonight.”

Steve Villamonte: “She had a mothering personality. She mentored and edited my first attempts at ever writing a column. It took me two years before what I actually wrote appeared in the newsletter!”

Christine Jones Villamonte: “She was my best friend. She kept it real and kept us honest. An amazing woman.”

Gary Kerr, recalling her work as promotion director at WOWT: “When you sat down and talked with her, it was all about you -- not about her. A pretty special person.”

Daisy Hutzell-Rodman: “She was the long-est continuous freelancer at Omaha magazine. I cherished my many lunches with her, and I’m eternally grateful for being a part of her journalism garden.”

Kay Kriss: “She surrounded me with the best and brightest people during my time as president of the club. Our OPC and my life were better because she was in it.”

Rose Ann Shannon: “The true bond that joins us all together is the Judy Horan that talked us into doing things we didn’t want to do. Judy was selfless -- she made everyone else look good.”

Todd Murphy: “Judy recruited me to help her with the Hall of Fame. She was a boss and a sister and got me to do things my parents couldn’t get me to do.”

Carol Schrader: “She had a way of engaging a person -- she could take any person and look them in the eye -- she was present all the time. You could trust her.”

Joanne Bemis: “She helped look at the big picture, with the vision and skill to interview our (Salvation Army) clients. She had that twinkle in her eye when she wanted to know something.”

Tom O’Connor: “I’ve been the chair of the Face Committee since 2002. Jim Horan and I have done 67 faces together. But Judy was really the chair of the Face Committee. She had a way of zinging you without zinging you!”

Lee Simmons, a 50-year neighbor of the Horans: “Judy and Jim were always tolerant of the bears, orangs -- all kinds of things in our backyard. When talking politics with Judy, we were gasoline and a lit match!”

Gary Willis: “I can’t imagine an event without her on the board. She was one in a million.”

Congressman delivers 100-day report card
Health care was on the minds of many at Rep. Don Bacon’s forum

By Cindy Workman
Communications Committee

Nebraska’s 2nd District Congressman Don Bacon provided an overview of some of what he has accomplished in his first 100 days in office during the Press Club’s Noon Forum on May 15.

Bacon spoke about the REINS Act that he co-sponsored and was passed by the House during his first week in office, noting that cumbersome regulations hurt businesses. The REINS (Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny) Act requires Congress to vote on any major rule or regulation coming from the Executive Branch that is estimated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to impact the economy by $100 million or more. The REINS Act now awaits action in the Senate.

Bacon also said that he voted for the omnibus spending bill out of necessity. “It was a distasteful vote,” Bacon said, “but it restored money to the military and the NIH (National Institutes of Health) until September.” The $1.1 trillion bill keeps the entire government funded through September.

Many of the questions submitted by those in attendance were about health care and the AHCA (the American Health Care Act of 2017). Bacon said he is confident the new bill, passed by the House and awaiting Senate action, will keep people with pre-existing conditions from being denied coverage while keeping costs down. He said he is not a proponent of nationalized health care.

Also, in response to questions about Offutt Air Force Base and the local Veterans Health Administration hospital, Bacon noted that the new U.S. Strategic Command headquarters building will keep Offutt secured for the near future, and that the VA hospital is good for the area. A public-private financing plan has been approved for a new clinic on the VA hospital grounds.
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Tom Shatel  
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### CANCELLATION POLICY: All reservations must be cancelled 48 HOURS in advance.