KETV’s Cornell, Randby to be next ‘Face on Barroom Floor’
Nov. 17 event will feature five roasters with KETV connections

By Tom O’Connor
Committee Chair

For many of us, Bill Randby and Julie Cornell have become a part of the family – the last people we see before we turn off the lights and go to sleep.

The husband-wife duo has become a fixture on KETV newscasts for the past 25 years, with Bill doing the weather and Julie delivering the news.

On Nov. 17, the tables will be turned, as Randby and Cornell will find themselves on the receiving end, as six roasters – all with a KETV connection – will deliver their best barbs as the couple is honored as the next “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

Rob McCartney, longtime anchor at KETV and the 128th “Face on the Barroom Floor” in March 2011, will emcee the roast. He will be joined by three KETV colleagues – Rose Ann Shannon, news director; Vonn Jones, assistant news director; and Melissa Fry, anchor – as well as Paul Tranisi, former creative services director at KETV and KMBC in Kansas City.

Rounding out the roasting slate will be the three children of Cornell and Randby – Will, 16, a student at Creighton Prep, and Maddie and JoJo, 14-year-old twins at Marian High School. The trio will deliver – very appropriately – a video roast of their parents.

In a business where changing jobs is a way of life, Cornell and Randby have found their home in Omaha.

A native of Milwaukee, Cornell earned her journalism degree from Marquette University, then held reporting positions in Milwaukee, Terra Haute, Ind., Green Bay, Wis., and Jacksonville, Fla.

A Chicago native, Randby earned his degree in meteorological science at Florida State University before doing stints in Minneapolis and Jacksonville.

They first met in Jacksonville, where they worked at the same station. They were married in Milwaukee in January 1992, and five months later, Bill landed his job at KETV. They headed to Omaha with Julie having never laid eyes on the city.

In 1992, just a few TV stations had a Doppler radar and even the National Weather Service did not have it. Today, weather technology is the name of the game. KETV has Super Doppler 7 Radar with Dual Pol technology, Storm Tracker, Super Doppler 7 Storm Warn

Two World-Herald writers to speak at Shatel Lunch Series on Dec. 5

Two Omaha World-Herald sports writers – Lee Barfknecht and Jon Nyatawa – will speak at the next Tom Shatel Lunch Series on Tuesday, Dec. 5.

“Lee is a beat writer for Nebraska basketball and Big Ten athletics, while Jon is a beat writer for Creighton,” Shatel said. “We’ll be talking about Nebraska and Creighton hoops, the new Cornhusker athletic director and we’ll dig into the Nebraska football season. It’s going to be fun. It wouldn’t surprise me if the conversation extends past 1 p.m.”

Lunch will be served beginning at 11:30 a.m. with the program starting around noon. Lunch will include fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy and a dessert. Cost is $17. The event is open to the public. Call 402-345-8088 to make your reservation.

A Forecast for Frost

Tom Shatel predicts a Scott Frost in the Huskers’ future. See the report on the October Shatel Lunch on Page 2
Shatel forecasts Frost likely in Husker football program

By Tom O’Connor
Committee Chair

W
ith speculation rampant with the Nebraska football program, Tom Shatel told his Shatel Lunch Series audience on Oct. 3 that he believes the next Husker coach will be Scott Frost.

Frost, who quarterbacked Nebraska’s national championship team in 1997, is currently coaching the University of Central Florida.

“I’d put money on Scott Frost being the guy,” said Shatel, noting that his football career has allowed him to learn from some of the coaching elite – Bill Parcells, Bill Belichick, Jon Gruden, Bill Walsh, Bill Snyder, Chip Kelly, and Tom Osborne.

It’s the close connection to Osborne that makes Shatel think that Frost would return to his home state. “It’s the old expression – when momma calls you come,” he said. “In this case, it’s when daddy (Tom Osborne) calls, you come.

“He’s always wanted this job. If you have a chance to go to Tennessee or Nebraska, where would you go?”

He likened the situation to Dean Smith convincing Roy Williams to leave Kansas to come back and finish his college basketball coaching career at North Carolina.

“This job may not be as good as we think it is,” Shatel said. “Coaches are not lined up to come to Nebraska.” Past searches for a new football coach have not resulted in big name coaches wanting to apply, he said.

With the firing of Athletic Director Shawn Eichorst and the tenuous position of Football Coach Mike Riley, Shatel said, “Nebraska is in a weird place. Nebraska needs to get out of this place as soon as possible.

“They have to find someone to bring the old Nebraska way back – someone who will talk to people and take care of business. An athletic director these days has to be a good – if not great – communicator.” Shatel said that did not describe Eichorst. “He was always the awkward AD,” he said. “The coaches never saw him. That’s not good. He didn’t have a lot of friends. He was in his office all the time.”

Shatel cited Wisconsin’s solid program as one that Nebraska would love to emulate. “We’d take Wisconsin’s record every year,” he said. “They knew what they’re doing when they hired Paul Chryst (as football coach).

“Nebraska needs to calm down and stop firing people. It needs to stick with an AD and a coach for seven years and give them time to grow.”

Whoever the Nebraska football coach is next year, Shatel said they will inherit a challenging schedule with road games at Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio State, Iowa and Northwestern, and Michigan State coming to Lincoln.

EDITOR’S NOTE: A few days after the Shatel Lunch in October, Nebraska hired Bill Moos, the athletic

FACE ON BARROOM, continued from Page 1

instant warning system, and Street Level Mapping to show you weather in your own backyard.

KETV also has Storm Scan to help estimate the severity of a storm. It can even tell you what size hail a storm is producing.

“Omaha weather is very interesting,” Randby said. “We get everything. You get to see it all. Contrary to what you hear, most winters are not that bad here.”

A longtime member of the American Meteorological Society, Randby earned his AMS Seal of Approval in 1985.

Cornell joined KETV in 1992 as a reporter and then served on the station’s main anchor team for more than a dozen

WHAT:
155th “Face on the Barroom Floor” – Julie Cornell and Bill Randby

WHEN:
Friday, Nov. 17; Reception – 5:30 p.m.; Dinner – 6:30 p.m.; Roast – 7:45 p.m.

COST:
$50 for members, $60 for non-members

RSVP:
The event is open to the public. Call Omaha Press Club at 402-345-8008. You must give your member number or credit card information when you make your reservation.

years. With young children at home, she then spent eight years as a part-time feature reporter.

In this role, she created several award-winning documentaries, including a 2013 feature on a medical mission team from Omaha traveling to South Sudan, Africa.

Her on-air work has earned her numerous journalism awards, including an Edward R. Murrow Award and three Emmy Awards. The Omaha Press Club honored Cornell’s documentaries with first-place awards in 2012 and 2013. She also received the 2013 Andy Award for best international journalism from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

In 2016, Cornell returned to the KETV set full time as part of the main anchor team.
Honor thy parents? Not at the Williams ‘Face’ roast

By Don Summerside
Communications Committee

The roasters’ menu was a relatively mild blend of barbs and compliments for much of the Sept. 28 event saluting Bill and Evonne Williams as the 154th “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

Then came the Spice Boys. The Williams’ sons – Tom, Sam and Max – turned up the heat on their parents with a salty and hilarious 1-2-3 salvo to climax the evening.

Bill and Evonne were being honored for their extraordinary accomplishments in organizing the Honor Flights that have transported more than 3,300 Nebraska veterans to the war memorials in Washington, D.C.

The four Williams sons (Ben was unable to attend because of the birth of his third child) are all veterans – two Army and two Marines. And while joining the rest of the roasters and audience in saluting the patriotism of their parents, the sons were not bashful about needling their elders.

Tom led off the brotherly barrage, addressing his father as “William Williams, a name as creative as his hair style. And he has the face of a saint – Bernard.”

Tom added: “He wasn’t the greatest student while growing up. They say that what you don’t know won’t hurt you. That pretty much makes Dad invincible. And of course, it only makes sense that he became an educator.”

And more from Tom: “Dad has been giving blood to the Red Cross for nearly 30 years. No one has the heart to tell him that being a Republican can’t be transmitted intravenously.

“Mom has joined him with the blood donations. But she drinks so much that her blood can only be used for sterilizing the instruments.”

As was noted several times during the roast, Bill was a young teacher at Byron (Neb.) High School and Evonne was a student when the two met. Sam told his mother, “Mom, your biggest mistake was dating Bill. But I understand. You were just a child at the time. And you had to take Dad’s class to graduate.”

Son Max also hit on his father’s thick hair (“It looks like he got stuck upside down in a cotton candy machine’) and on his parents’ teacher-student relationship: “If Dad pulled that stunt nowadays, he’d be doing 30 years upstate. I just wonder what the statute of limitations is on that.”

Emcee for the roast was “Face on the Floor” No 23, N.U. Regent Hal Daub. The other roasters were Honor Flight volunteers Bob Scudder and Rick Lienemann, and KFAB morning host Gary Sadlemyer.

Scudder said he and Bill have been friends for 44 years, beginning when they were young teachers on small salaries. “Bill hasn’t always been the generous benefactor that you’re honoring tonight,” Scudder said. “I don’t want to say he was a little tight. But when he went for a prostate exam, they couldn’t get in.”

Lienemann recalled that not all of Bill’s projects were as well thought out as those of the Williamses’ Patriot Productions. “Way back when, did you know that young Bill owned ostriches and rode them at the county fair?” Lienemann asked. “And I lost my shirt!” Bill interjected.

Sadlemyer said he first met Evonne when she was the executive director of the Nebraska Make-a-Wish Foundation. “I asked her: ‘How did you come to be with Make-A-Wish?’ And Evonne replied: ‘All those years of sleeping with Bill, it just seemed like a natural thing.’”

Artist Jim Horan said an Honor Flights illustration gave him an idea for the “Face on the Floor” caricature. The photo showed a veteran seated in a plane next to a window.

“The reflection in the window was that of a young soldier in a helmet – he looked like a soldier would appear during wartime,” Horan said. “I decided to show a line of veterans boarding an Honor Flight. Beside each vet is a ghostly figure who looks like the vet in his combat gear.”

Also shown in the Horan illustration is the Williamses’ current project – the Re-membering Our Fallen Memorial, a traveling exhibit of Tribute Towers displaying the photos of more than 4,500 servicemen and women who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan and related missions since Sept. 11, 2001.

The guests of honor, saluted by emcee Daub as “this very special, very patriotic couple,” were gentle in their responses to most of their roasters, saving their sharpest retorts for their children.

Evonne said family members from six states were attending the dinner and roast and were “happy to hear the insults.”

The happy group included the Williams’ sons, Bill said, “who used to be in the will.”

Bill recalled that the sons were ornery children. “We left them on the steps at Boys Town several times, but they always found their way home.

“They were the only kids in the grade school yearbook with two photos each – one straight ahead and one profile.”

Bill wrapped up his remarks by quoting the nightly signoff from the late Omaha newscaster Merrill Workhoven: “My time is up. Thank you for yours. Thank you everybody for coming.”
As we enter the colder months, the club enters a busier season. With outdoor activities giving way to indoor events, you might be noticing more volume (and fewer window tables available) in the restaurant and private rooms. So a friendly reminder as the holiday season approaches: The early bird gets the worm, and the early reservations get the best window views.

The month of October saw our annual Oktoberfest dinner with its multicourse menu, wine pairings and some requests for beer, mostly Hefeweizen’s. As I tried to stick with German beers, the task was not as easy as it seemed. German beers by law only allow a maximum of four ingredients: water, barley/wheat (in German “weizen”), hops and yeast (in German “hefe”).

The American twist on beers adds other flavors such as fruit. For German brews, the bartenders add flavors after the beers are poured just like a coffee shop does to coffee … clever. We only bought American beer to meet the pairings of blueberry Hefeweizen with our apple strudel.

The OPC Oktoberfest menu tries to include a shock value of one course, whether it be food or alcohol. Our dinner this year met the shock standard with a palate cleanser, an aronia berry sorbet course. The “super” berry grows indigenous to our own area (mostly wild) with extremely nutritious values and antioxidants offering amazing health benefits.

This berry is also known as the chokecherry. In my family, we made chokecherry wine (ask me sometime to share the story). The chokecherries look just like blueberries but have an extremely chalky aftertaste. Our chefs, after much alteration, created a quite delicious sorbet. Great work!

Don’t forget our new parking options. We now validate at the Central City Parking Garage, 17th to 18th Street between Dodge and Capitol. Park on the rooftop at lunchtime and in any space from #142 on up after 5 p.m. The DoubleTree garage remains a daytime option. Bring your parking ticket to the club for validation.

-Christine Jones Villamonte, B.S. Nutrition, Restaurant Manager/Events Coordinator

Central High honors Cordes

Henry Cordes, Omaha World-Herald reporter and longtime OPC member, was inducted into the Omaha Central High School Class Hall of Fame on Oct. 5. Pictured with Cordes is Alec Rome, a student ambassador at Central who introduced Henry and acknowledged his accomplishments during more than three decades as a journalist. Cordes is a member of the Central Class of 1981, and his and wife Susan’s daughters, Thelma and Lucy, are 2017 Central graduates.

Past Presidents Dinner

Nov. 16
5:30 p.m. Cocktails, 6 p.m. Dinner
Price: $30 (all inclusive)

Soup
Lobster Bisque

Salad
OPC Thunderbird Salad with Parmesan Crisp

Sorbet
Mango

Entrée
Surf & Turf
Loaded Twice-Baked Potato
Asparagus

Dessert
Chocolate Soufflé

155th "Face on the Barroom Floor"
Julie Cornell & Bill Randby
Thursday, Nov. 17
5:30 p.m. Reception, 6:30 p.m. Dinner
7:45 p.m. Roast

Price (inclusive): Members $50, Non-Members $60

Hors d’oeuvres
Passed Canapes
Cucumber Shrimp * Carpaccio * Tapenade

Salad
Signature Thunderbird Salad

Entrees
Filet of Beef Maitre d’hôtel or Fresh Atlantic Salmon Piccata
Vegetable Mélange & Loaded New Potato

Dessert
Chocolate Hazelnut Swan

*Please notify the club with your special dietary needs

Santa Brunch

Sunday, Dec. 10
Two Seatings: 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.
Price: Adults $24 • Children $12

Bring a new, unwrapped toy to donate to the Salvation Army

Buffet
Steamship Round of Beef
Baked Ham with Maple Whiskey Sauce
Chicken Crêpes Supreme
Baked Tilapia with Lemon Butter
Garlic Whipped Potatoes & Gravy
Seasonal Vegetables
Build-Your-Own Omelet à la Carte
Multi-Topping Pancake Bar
Salad Display, including Thunderbird Salad
Salmon Chaud-Froid & Fresh Fruit Fresh-Baked Pastries, Tortes & Cheesecakes

Desserts
Chocolate Driscoll Strawberries
Deep Dish Apple Strudel with Brandied French Vanilla Ice Cream
Spiked French Vanilla Eggnog

All children 10 and under receive a special holiday gift
Change is a constant today; it seems to be the only thing that is guaranteed. Like it or not, the attitude is: Embrace change or get left behind.

When it comes to the Omaha Press Club, we are going through change just like any other organization. This year in particular, we’ve felt the loss of longtime volunteers and supporting members. As result of those challenges and the need to give future board members more opportunities to grow the club, the current board has started to envision what the club will look like three to five years from now. A Strategic Planning Committee has been formed and has gathered input. The committee will be making recommendations to the board shortly.

I think this is an excellent step in providing the board, our staff and members with a clear view into what the club priorities are and how all of us can help achieve them.

But first we need to understand why change must occur. Before there’s buy-in of any kind, people need to know what is going on. What kind of problems are we facing? It’s clear that membership needs to be replenished, that our volunteer base is shrinking and that we have an ongoing struggle with staying relevant.

The club has done a good job of executing our signature events, but there’s concern that the decline in volunteers will begin to endanger those events. Without good volunteers it’s hard to provide the welcoming environment that is the Press Club.

Staying relevant is and will be our toughest challenge. Our purpose as a club is to be a social space as well as a forum for the demonstration of freedom of speech and the press. Connecting that to today’s communication tools and changing media is only going to take more time and effort.

There is and will be objection to any change. It’s human nature. But if you understand what is happening and it’s communicated, there can be support that will lead to more involvement. If you have questions, reach out to me or any board member.

-Marcia Cady, OPC President

Library future will be Noon Forum topic

By Chris Allen
Education Committee

Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert has suggested it might be time for the main Omaha Library to move from its iconic place at the head of the Eugene Leahy Mall to a new location, perhaps the former site of the Civic Auditorium, which has been razed.

The Omaha library system has been called one of the best in the nation, and some think the downtown W. Dale Clark Library is just where it needs to be.

That’s one of the issues Emily Getzschman, marketing manager for the library, will address at the next Noon Education Forum on Nov. 16.

Library management has had a rocky relationship with the mayor over composition of its board and funding, but in recent years that relationship has seemed to ease.

Now opportunities for a modern building to replace the 40-year-old downtown library to meet the needs of Omaha in the 21st century may be appearing.

Libraries once housed books. Today books are only one part of a vast set of resources that libraries provide. Online resources now take a large part of a library’s resources, and librarians must be trained in helping patrons access data- bases, articles, maps and subscriptions.

Many of those online resources don’t come free and add to the cost of running a system like Omaha’s.

Besides the downtown library, the Omaha Library operates a network of branches serving all parts of Omaha. As the city grows and buildings need updating, the library constantly needs funding to keep the facilities modern and to provide librarians to help patrons.

The library relies on city funds for its operation as well as other funding sources. This external funding becomes even more important as the role of the library evolves.

Getzschman will talk about these and other issues at the Noon Forum at the Omaha Press Club. The cost is $17. Anyone may attend – membership in the OPC is not a requirement to attend Noon Forum events.

Call 402-345-8008 for reservations or email Jeanie at jeaniec@opc.omhcoxmail.com. Reservations must be accompanied by an OPC number or credit card.
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CANCELLATION POLICY: All reservations must be cancelled 48 HOURS in advance.

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Thursday, Nov. 16
Noon Education Forum
“The Future of the Omaha Library”
Emily Getzschman, library marketing manager
Lunch at 11:30 a.m., program at noon

Thursday, Nov. 16
Past Presidents Dinner
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 17
“Face on the Barroom Floor”
Julie Cornell and Bill Randby
Reception at 5:30 p.m.,
dinner 6:30 p.m., roast 7:45 p.m.

Are you looking for a perfect party setting? A lunch surrounded by brilliance? A dinner your guests will always remember? Keep the OPC in mind.

Thursday and Friday, Nov. 23-24
Closed for observance of Thanksgiving

Tuesday, Dec. 5
Shatel Lunch Series
Omaha World-Herald sports writers
Lee Barkknecht and Jon Nyatawa
Lunch at 11:30 a.m., program at noon

Sunday, Dec. 10
Santa Brunch
Seatings at 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 25
Closed for Christmas

Sunday, Dec. 31
New Year’s Eve Buffet
6 p.m., Music by Soldiers of Soul

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

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Submissions for the December issue are
due on or before November 20.