June 14 Noon Forum at OPC to discuss county jail problems

We've been hearing for a number of years about the problems and challenges facing the Nebraska state prison system. Now comes word of those same challenges facing officials at the Douglas County level. The people in charge of the county jail complain of a potentially toxic mix of too many inmates and too few staff members to deal with them.

The director of the Douglas County Department of Corrections, Mark Foxall, says the problems have created mandatory overtime and staff burnout. Of particular concern, he says, is dealing with a growing population of the mentally ill that wind up in county jail facilities.

Foxall began his law enforcement career as a po-

Summertime -- and the dining is delightful

Mark your calendar for a trio of special dining events as the summer season gets into full swing at the Omaha Press Club.

Batting first will be the annual Friday night Baseball Fireworks Buffet that offers a bird’s-eye view of the fireworks climaxing the June 15 ceremonies that open the college baseball championships.

One night later, June 16, is the always-popular Father’s Day Steak Grill offering a choice of steaks or prime rib.

And then on July 12, don’t miss a special Winemaker’s Dinner hosted by Tom Becka. The longtime TV-radio personality, who appears nightly with “Becka’s Beat” on Fox 42’s “News at Nine,” said: "I can hardly wait to be a part of this great event. Steve Villamonte and the Press Club staff always put out a great meal, and the wine pairings will really add to the enjoyment. I don’t know that much about wine (I’m more of a single malt scotch guy), so I’m ready to learn more.

“The wine, the food and the incredible views of downtown Omaha from the 22nd floor will make this a night you’ll remember for a long time. I hope you’ll join me for this incredible evening.”

For a look at the menus and times for the three events – the Baseball Fireworks Buffet, Father’s Day Steak Grill and Becka Wine Dinner -- turn to Page 4.
By Emily Kerr  
Communications Committee

May 15, 7:55 p.m. – It is a beautiful evening in Omaha, five minutes before the polls close, and the Douglas County Election Commission headquarters is abuzz with excitement. Chairs are being dismantled and replaced with counting tables, and at the stroke of 8, a volunteer calls out, “Hear ye, the polls are closed!” As a first-time stringer for the Associated Press, it is an exciting yet intimidating experience for me, to say the least.

8:30 p.m. – After recording the initial tallies, I call into the Associated Press to report the counts. Voter turnout has been low, according to volunteers, and while some races show little or no competition, others are separated by only hundreds and sometimes tens of votes. Thank goodness for the help of dedicated volunteers as well as Pack 5, a troop of Boy Scouts dedicated to running the ballots from cars into election headquarters for counting. At 8:45, the next set of results are expected in.

8:45 p.m. – A slight lull descends upon the volunteers until the next carts filled with ballots roll in. Boy Scouts continue to boost morale, skipping and running with ballots safely tucked in their arms. They, unlike the haggard volunteers who have been working since 7 a.m., are tireless in their energy and high spirits.

9:30 p.m. – Almost every race I have assigned to follow has been decided, with the exception of the Democratic congressional contest between Brad Ashford and Kara Eastman. At this hour, Eastman leads Ashford by a mere 11 votes and it appears to be anyone’s race.

10 p.m. – Most volunteers have gone home. Those that remain work feverishly to organize voter registration forms and booklets. They collate every single one into numerical order to ensure each has been accounted for.

11:40 p.m. -- All that remain at election headquarters are the bare bones of the staff, the election commissioner himself – and this solitary Associated Press stringer in the lobby awaiting final results.

11:55 p.m. -- After a long but educational evening of tallying and phoning, I conclude my final call with the Associated Press and head home, followed by the remaining skeleton crew of the Election Commission staff.

Now I eagerly await the November general election and hope to be selected as a stringer once again for the “main event.”

Senate candidates face off

Photo By Gary Willis

The League of Women Voters and the Omaha Press Club hosted a primary election debate for Democrats seeking the U.S. Senate seat held by Republican Deb Fischer. Seated, from left, are Chris Janicek, Larry Marvin, Frank Svoboda and debate moderator Geri Simon. Jane Raybould, who won the May 15 primary nomination, was invited but had a scheduling conflict. Raybould and Fischer will meet in the November general election.
The homecoming of Cathy Hughes came to a ceremonial end on the barroom floor. To be precise, the chairwoman of Urban One -- the nation’s largest distributor of radio, TV and digital programming for black audiences -- wound up a series of honors bestowed in her native Omaha by becoming the Press Club’s 157th “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

Earlier, the Johnny Rodgers Youth Foundation and the City of Omaha honored her with a street-naming ceremony. A community reception followed. Hughes also headlined a conference in Omaha conducted by the Empowerment Network.

And then the second-wealthiest black woman in America (Oprah Winfrey is No. 1) was saluted at the Press Club on May 18.

Hughes’ roasters included lifelong friend Theresa Glass Union, mother of actress Gabrielle; football legend Johnny Rodgers; Elmer Crumbley, retired Skinner Magnet School principal; Dr. Blandina Rose Williams, president of Humanistic Solutions; and Al Goodwin, retired development director for the Omaha Economic Development Corp. Emcee for the roast was national radio-TV personality Dyana Williams.

As for the secret of Hughes’ success, whose net worth has been estimated at $450 million, roaster and childhood buddy Theresa Glass Union offered one explanation: “I’m a first-born in my family. Cathy was born second. Second-born children always try harder.”

The “Face on the Floor,” drawn by artist Jim Horan, depicts Hughes surrounded by the symbols of her media success. Included are transmission towers and the call letters of KOWH in Omaha, where she began her radio career; WHUR at Howard University, where she was a lecturer in the communication school and general sales manager of the radio station; and WOL in Washington, D.C., the first station that she purchased. Urban One now operates 55 stations in Radio One, the TV One television network and the Interactive One digital company.

Also pictured in the “Face” caricature is Cathy’s son and business partner, Alfred Liggins III. He is CEO of Urban One.

As for the honoree, Cathy told the Omaha World-Herald’s Michael Kelly before her homecoming: “Omaha is my village. Everyone wants to come home, and I’m thrilled to be coming back.”
A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steve Villamonte

Our Mother’s Day Brunch was a busy one with good attendance. Our scheduled live music was missing due to a last-minute illness. We will be sure to provide live music for future brunches.

We have lots going on this summer, so check out the story on Page 1 as well as the Events listing on Page 6 and schedule a day at the club.

My favorite annual event is the Father’s Day Steak Grill. We provide a picnic-style buffet, and you choose a steak cooked to order: filet of beef, club steak, prime rib or New York strip, all top-quality meats. We also have championship baseball events coming up and a number of other opportunities to visit the club.

Those who attended our May Wine-maker’s dinner enjoyed a bountiful feast with a great selection of wines. I can’t remember a dinner where I received so many compliments. Our next wine dinner will be hosted by Tom Becka on July 12. See the story on Page 1 and the menu on Page 4 for details.

The club will be closed for its annual cleaning and renovation beginning July 22 and will reopen Aug. 14. This year the club will be replacing the refrigeration units, which include two large walk-in refrigerators and one freezer. The current walk-ins are original from 1971 and in need of too many repairs to continue to use. Also, some new cooking equipment is planned to help improve the timeliness and quality of meal preparation. I will go into more detail in my next column.

Meanwhile, with all the events going on at the club, check out the home page of the OPC website frequently. And do you know a soon-to-be bride or groom? If so, send them to our new bridal link: http://omahapressclub.com/wedding-receptions/.

-Steve Villamonte  CEC, BS  Executive Director  Omaha Press Club

PHONE 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS

Baseball Fireworks Buffet  In conjunction with opening ceremonies for college baseball championship

Friday, June 15  6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.  Adults: $25 • Children: $14 (plus tax and gratuity)

Buffet Menu
Thunderbird Salad,  Deviled Eggs  OPC Signature Baked Beans  Cucumber Salad  Build-Your-Own Nachos  Prime Rib of Beef Au Jus  BBQ Beef Brisket  Southern Fried Chicken  BBQ Baby Back Ribs  Brats with Red Pepper Relish

Dessert  Chocolate Caramel Sundaes

Father’s Day Steak Grill

Saturday, June 16  5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.  Adults: $25 • Children: $14 (plus tax and gratuity)

Choice of:  Prime Rib of Beef • Filet of Beef  New York Strip • Club Steak

À la Carte Salads
Potato Salad • Pasta Salad • Coleslaw  House Salad • Deviled Eggs

Buffet Side Dishes  Lyonnaise Potatoes • Baked Beans  Corn-on-the-Cob • Vienna Hot Dogs

Desserts  Strawberry Shortcake  Assorted Brownies

Quarterly Wine Dinner  Hosted by Tom Becka

Thursday, July 12  6 p.m.  $60 Inclusive

Quaff  Smoked Salmon Chaud Froid  Absolutely Fresh Oysters  Wine Pairing

Appetizer  Marinated Baby Artichokes Antipasto  Wine Pairing

Sorbet  Fresh Strawberry

Salad  Villamonte’s Thunderbird Salad with a Parmesan Crust  Wine Pairing

Dual Entrée  Villamonte’s Paella & Tuscan Beef Tenderloin  Wine pairing

Signature Dessert  French Chocolate Mousse & OPC Truffle  Raspberry Coulis  Wine Pairing
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

T here is an old saying I adopted a long time ago that does not fit a club like ours but might work for its president’s message: “No news is good news.” In our present culture, bad news is reported first and gets the most attention. Since my news about our club is good, I am tempted to say so and conclude my remarks. However, I would like the opportunity to give thanks to those who really make things work around here.

For some time the club has successfully managed its financial affairs, which has not always been an easy task. I have been a member since its inception, and I can say that the good news is that the club has never been in better shape financially or administratively than it is now. Thanks, Steve, Christine and Jeanie.

We have a goodly number of volunteers who give their time and talents to committees that make the club a great place to be. One of those committees is responsible for communications, which encompasses putting together our “OPC News” that comes out 11 months a year. The Communications Committee includes its chair, Jennifer Bull, Susan Eustice, Henry Cordes, Cindy Workman, Howard K. Marcus, Don Summerside, Gary Willis, Chris Allen, Karen Way, Tom O’Connor, Sandra Tursi and Hunter Samuels.

In carrying forward its task, touches Woody Bradford on every activity of the club.

The Communications Committee also makes sure that the activities of the club get as much exposure as possible, including the “Face on the Barroom Floor,” the Tom Shatel Sports Lunch Series, the Hall of Fame awards and dinner, foundation scholarship activities and changes in the menu.

Also, look for a survey soon to ask you whether you prefer the newsletter mailed or emailed to you. It would also help if you emailed Jeanie Campbell at jeaniec@opc.omhcoxmail.com to register your email for future communications between you and the club.

I also want to thank Past President Marcia Cady for cool, calm leadership this past year and for her continued service on our Strategic Planning Committee.

- D. C. “Woody” Bradford, OPC President

OPC welcomes hairy faces

O PC members receive up to two hours of free parking in the Central City Garage, directly west of the club at 122 N. 17th St., during the workday and free parking in the evenings from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. with validation.

Members can still receive up to two hours of validated parking in the DoubleTree Hotel garage from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. No validated parking is available in the DoubleTree garage after 5 p.m. However, you may still park in that garage in the evenings if you wish to self-pay.

In the Central City Garage, members may park free in any space on the rooftop level at lunchtime, and in any space from #142 on up after 5 p.m. To reach the OPC, take the garage elevator to the basement level (marked B on the elevator). Follow the signs east and proceed through the tunnel into the First National Bank and just a few steps more to the elevators.

Important: Bring your parking ticket to the club for validation.

Parking Reminder
2017-2018 Officers

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President
Houghton Bradford Whitted

Jeremy Masket
President-Elect
Ralston Public Schools

J.J. Bartlett
Treasurer
First National Bank

Bridget (Weide) Brooks
Secretary
Image Building Communications

Marcia Cady
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Communications
Jennifer Bull

Education
Gary Kerr

Executive Committee
D.C. “Woody” Bradford,
Jeremy Masket, Bridget (Weide) Brooks & Marcia Cady

“Face on the Barroom Floor”
Tom O’Connor

Hall of Fame
Todd Murphy

Marketing / Membership
Bridget (Weide) Brooks, Kathleen Al-Marhoon

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Karen Way • Tom O’Connor
Sandra Tursi • Hunter Samuels

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

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

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Tom O’Connor ..................... Proofreader
Don Summerside ............ Copy Editor

Submissions for the July issue are due on or before June 20.