Husker broadcast legend Kent Pavelka to be next ‘Face on Barroom Floor’

By Tom O’Connor
Communications Committee

As a longtime broadcast voice for the Nebraska Cornhuskers during a career spanning more than four decades, Kent Pavelka has thrilled generations of fans with his exciting calls of basketball and football games.

Now, it’s his turn to be entertained.

Pavelka will be honored Sept. 13 as the Omaha Press Club’s next “Face on the Barroom Floor” when he will be skewered by an illustrious group of roasters that could set a record for the most laughs ever at a Press Club event. The roasters include two past Faces (Larry the Cable Guy and Gary Sadlemyer), Nebraska Basketball Coach Tim Miles, and Matt Davison, the Husker who made the “Miracle at Missouri” catch on a pass from Scott Frost in 1997.

“I’m certainly aware of the great honor that comes with being a Face on the Barroom Floor,” Pavelka said. “I am truly humbled that the Press Club has decided to include me on this stellar list. I’m just afraid that I’ve given the roasters too much good material over the years. It could be brutal.”

The event is already a sellout. It will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a reception. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. with the roast starting around 8 p.m.

A native of Lincoln, Pavelka will be the 158th Face on the Barroom Floor, a Press Club tradition that began in 1971 when then Omaha Mayor Gene Leahy was the inaugural Face honoree.

Pavelka graduated from Lincoln Northeast High School in 1967 and

Press Club launches lunch takeout/delivery service

The Omaha Press Club is launching a new takeout/delivery service the first week of September. The program will allow First National Bank employees and tenants in both the original First National Bank building and the First National Bank Tower to order lunch from the club or delivery to either building.

The service is available between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Friday by calling the club at 402-345-8008.

The takeout/delivery service menu includes soups, salads, sandwiches, hamburgers, and OPC’s signature chocolate chip cookies, available in cookie pairs or by the dozen. The menu is available on the Omaha Press Club website, www.omahapressclub.com.

The new takeout/delivery service is just one of the changes that occurred during the club’s annual summer closing. The entry hallway received a makeover, with removal of the wall coverings and a fresh coat of paint. The spiral staircase between the 21st and 22nd floors received new carpeting. And a new walk-in refrigerator and freezer were installed in the club’s kitchen.

OPC to hear new OPS superintendent

By Jeremy Maskel
Education Committee

Though she only officially started in July, Dr. Cheryl Logan has been hard at work for months preparing to lead Omaha Public Schools by building connections, preparing her 90-day entry plan, and executing much of that work over the summer.

After serving in the School District of Philadelphia since 2013, Logan’s initial goals in Omaha Public Schools include a foundation of positive relationships with the OPS Board of Education, establishing public trust and confidence, reviewing programs and initiatives within the district, and a check of OPS’ financial health.

Be among the first to hear from Logan about her work already underway in Omaha and the next steps for the school district serving more than 50,000 students which just passed its second construction and renovation bond measure in May.

The OPC Noon Forum with Logan will be on Thursday, Sept. 20, from noon to 1 p.m. A $17 charge includes lunch, which is served beginning at 11:30 a.m. Non-OPC members are welcome.

CALL 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS OR EMAIL JEANIE@OPC.OMH-COXMAIL.COM. RESERVATIONS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN OPC MEMBER NUMBER OR CREDIT CARD. FREE PARKING FOR MEMBERS IS AVAILABLE ON THE ROOFTOP OF THE CENTRAL CITY GARAGE. BRING YOUR PARKING TICKET TO THE CLUB FOR VALIDATION.
Pavelka is a six-time winner of the Nebraska Sportscaster of the Year Award, a Special Merit Award recipient of the Nebraska Basketball Hall of Fame, a Hall of Fame member for the Nebraska Radio Personalities and KFAB Radio, and a recipient of the Communication Achievement Award from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

A past president of the Omaha Sportscasters Association, Pavelka has been a studio host on the St. Louis Rams Radio Network and a sideline reporter for Fox Sports Midwest and the CBS Radio Network.

All-star cast of roasters

The roasters lined up for the Sept. 13 “Face on the Barroom Floor” event for Kent Pavelka could possibly be the most celebrated slate in the history of the Omaha Press Club.

The roasters will include:
• Larry the Cable Guy (aka Dan Whitnery), comedian/actor – Face No. 113, 2007;
• Tim Miles, Nebraska men’s basketball coach;
• Matt Davison, Nebraska associate athletic director-football, Husker football radio analyst, former football and basketball player for Nebraska, and longtime basketball broadcast partner of Kent; and
• Emcee – Gary Sadlemyer, KFAB-AM (1110) morning show host and long time KFAB partner with Kent -- Face No. 115, 2008.

“Kent is a great choice,” said Woody Bradford, president of the Omaha Press Club. “He’s a household name for any Nebraska sports fan. The roast should be terrific – people pay big money to see Larry the Cable Guy perform – and the other three roasters are fantastic in their own right. I have no doubt it will be a night to remember at the Press Club. I can’t wait.”

BY THE NUMBERS

Kent Pavelka has spent his illustrious career behind the microphone painting pictures of what is transpiring on the court and field. His name is synonymous with the Nebraska Cornhuskers. Over the past 44 years, he has broadcast:
• 992 Nebraska basketball games over 31 seasons (1974-75 – 2017-18 with 13 seasons off);
• 257 Nebraska football games over 22 seasons (1974-1995);
• A combined total of 1,249 Nebraska games and will surpass 1,000 Husker basketball games in the upcoming 2018-19 season;
• More than 1,000 total games for Midland College, Fremont High School, Fremont Bergan High School and Omaha high schools at the beginning of his broadcast career.

Lincoln’s Officer of the Year

Congratulations to Joe Villamonte, the Lincoln Police Department’s Officer of the Year. Joe, son of OPC Executive Director Steve Villamonte, is pictured with his wife, Brandy, who was honored for her work as a dispatcher. Both Joe, a six-year LPD veteran who has been promoted to detective, and Brandy were members of the Press Club staff before moving on to law enforcement careers.
Top 4 reasons to book an event at the OPC

By Nicole Lindquist
OPC member

I’ve been a member of the Omaha Press Club for 10 years. In that time, I have served as a board member for six years and chair of the Excellence in Journalism awards for two, laughed out loud during many “Face on the Barroom Floor” roasts, and dined in every area of the restaurant.

Yet I’d never hosted an event at the club. My parents’ 25th wedding anniversary was just the excuse I needed to throw a party with the best view in the metro. As many of you may know, if you are a member of the club, rental is FREE!

Here are my top reasons to take advantage of your member perk:

The Christine factor
As the manager of the club, Christine Villamonte is the one you call to book an event. She helped me with food selection, table decorations, wine offerings, room setup and so much more. She was the MVP of my event planning team.

The staff
On the day of the event, the staff stepped up to fulfill last-minute requests, including tech support and a cart to carry supplies from the car to the club. They were courteous and kind, and kept the tables clear and the drinks full.

The spread
With an expected guest list of 75-ish, we went with an array of hors d’oeuvres for food. The variety included fresh fruit, seasonal veggies (my favorite), meatballs, chicken tenders, and a variety of chips and dips (a crowd favorite).

The view
So many of our guests commented on the breathtaking view of the riverfront and downtown Omaha. For many of them who don’t often come to the club, it was a chance to see the city from up above and it did not disappoint! Who knows, maybe it will even entice them to become members!

To summarize, it was a first-class event and my parents and I could not have been happier with how everything turned out.

So go ahead and check your calendar and then call Christine. There’s always an excuse to party!

Shannon looks back on 45 years of TV news

By Cindy Workman
Communications Committee

Recently retired KETV News Director Rose Ann Shannon saw a lot of changes in the television industry during her 45-year career in broadcast news in the Omaha market. Her career spanned from film to the current digital technology.

“When I started my internship in 1973, I was hired to cut film for the evening broadcast. I said I knew how, but didn’t, and had to learn quickly,” Shannon said at an OPC Noon Forum.

There have been many changes since that day her internship began at KMTV. Film led to tape and satellite and microwave trucks and the advent of digital news and social media and how people want to get their news.

“Public expectation of news changed when the 24/7 news cycle of the likes of CNN began,” said Shannon. “The audience is no longer willing to wait until the 10 p.m. newscast or for the newspaper to land in their driveway; they want to see it now.”

That means reporters today have a never-ending deadline. While getting it first is good, Shannon said, it is more important to be accurate and trusted.

The reach of local news has changed as well. In 1989, after she received word that a DC-10 airliner was going to attempt a crash landing in Sioux City, Shannon mobilized satellite trucks from other ABC affiliates to make sure the event was covered. The Oklahoma City bombing and numerous tornadoes within the region were all covered by local affiliates.

Television news has changed and is facing greater challenges than ever before, but Shannon said TV news will always be there, perhaps in a different form. She said consolidation is a possibility along with more partnerships between news organizations.

Shannon said one thing that won’t change is the connection local journalists have with their community.

“Journalists have the power to report the news, tell the stories, and they need to make sure they are accurate and fair,” Shannon said.

“I am a rarity in television news,” she said. “I started my career in this market and was news director in the same market. That doesn’t happen in television news.”

Of her 45-year career, Shannon said with a smile, “I had a blast.”
It’s great to be back from the summer break and back on the task of running a private club restaurant. Christine and I had a good vacation, heading north for cooler weather and some fishing with family and extended family.

Before the annual break, we held our quarterly wine dinner, which was hosted by Tom Becka. The event was a delicious success with great food, wine and entertainment. Tom delighted guests by touring the tables and sharing news and opinions.

Each year during the annual closing, we try to do some deep cleaning, renovations and needed repairs. Prior to the break this year, we planned for major and overdue kitchen improvements. The Press Club walk-in refrigeration system was years past its typical life and in need of complete replacement, a costly one at the $36,000 lowest bid. The replacement could only be done during an extended closing and finally is complete.

Our next purchase -- a new grill and six-burner stove -- is planned soon along with a few other pieces of equipment. The equipment purchases should help the chefs expedite meal preparation, improve food quality and speed up the delivery.

The Marketing/Membership Committee led by Bridget Weide Brooks has been working on several projects that are coming to fruition. One is a delivery/takeout express menu created for tenants of the two downtown First National Bank buildings. The menu is being rolled out this month (See Page 1 for details).

Another project of the Marketing Committee is an OPC daytime membership for all FNB employees and tenants of the same bank buildings. This membership will be offered in conjunction with the delivery menu.

We have a busy slate of events at the club this fall, so keep an eye on the schedule and be sure to make your reservations early as many events sell out.

And finally, 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/

-- Steve Villamonte
OPC Executive Director

Octoberfest

Featuring a presentation on a Midwest hops farm

Friday, Oct. 12, 6 p.m.
Members $50, Non-Members $60

Each course will be paired with a beer or wine choice

Hors d’oeuvres
Baked Camembert with Red Currant Sauce Mini Onion Tarts

Appetizers
Liver Dumplings

Salad
Thunderbird Salad with Bavarian Blue Cheese

Sorbet
Triple Berry

Entrée
Wiener Schnitzel & Stoysich Bratwurst Spaetzle, Bohemian Cafe Sweet & Sour Cabbage

Dessert
German Poppy Seed Cake

http://omahapressclub.com/

’Face on the Barroom Floor’

Kent Pavelka

Thursday, Sept 13
5:30 p.m. No-Host Cocktails,
6:30 p.m. Dinner
Members $50, Non-Members $60

This event is a sellout.

Passed Hors D’Oeuvres
Assorted Bacon Wraps
Spinach Artichoke Dip Stuffed Puff Pastry

Salad
Omaha Press Club Thunderbird Salad

Entrée
Cracked Pepper Rubbed Filet of Beef with an Enoki au Poivre Sauce
Loaded Piped Potato & Bacon Wrapped Asparagus

OPC Signature Dessert
Omaha Press Club’s Blackstone Cheesecake Framboise

PHONE 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS
Bacon, Eastman set for Oct. 18 OPC debate

By Gary Willis
Communications Committee

Second District Republican Congressman Don Bacon and Democratic nominee Kara Eastman will debate the issues Oct. 18 at the Press Club. Eastman defeated former Congressman Brad Ashford in the May 15 primary.

Bacon retired in 2015 from the U.S. Air Force as a brigadier general and is seeking his second term in the House of Representatives. He serves on the Agriculture Committee, the Committee on Homeland Security, and the Armed Services Committee. During his nearly 30 years in the Air Force, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, two Legion of Merits, and two Bronze Stars.

Kara Eastman came to Omaha in 2006 and started the Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance, a nonprofit organization that aims to protect children from lead poisoning and other environmental hazards. It has grown from a small, start-up to a nationally recognized, award-winning nonprofit that has raised more than $13 million to support green, safe and healthy housing in Omaha. She is also a member of the board of Metropolitan Community College.

The luncheon debate is sponsored by the Press Club and League of Women Voters. WOWT is partnering in the debate and will record it for rebroadcast on Channel 6.

WOWT’s Brian Mastre will serve as moderator.

Lunch, at $17 per person, will be served beginning at 11:30 a.m. The debate will begin promptly at noon and conclude at 1 p.m.

Parking Reminder

OPC 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.
D.C. “Woody” Bradford
President
Houghton Bradford Whitted

Jeremy Maskel
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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“Face on the Barroom Floor”
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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 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 OMHAPRESSCLUB.COM

Thursday, Sept. 13
“Face on the Barroom Floor”
Kent Pavelka
Reception 5:30 p.m.
Dinner 6:30 p.m., roast 8 p.m.
$50 members, $60 non-members
This event is a sellout.

Thursday, Sept. 20
Noon Education Forum
Dr. Cheryl Logan
OPS superintendent
Noon to 1 p.m.
Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m.
Open to the public – cost $17

Thursday, Oct. 12
Oktoberfest Wine & Beer Dinner
Featuring a presentation on a hops farm
6 p.m., members $50, non-members $60

Thursday, Oct. 18
Noon Education Forum
Don Bacon-Kara Eastman
Congressional debate
Noon to 1 p.m
Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m.
Open to the public – cost $17

Thursday, Nov. 8
Past Presidents Dinner
5:30 p.m. social, 6 p.m. dinner, $28

Friday, Oct. 5

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.