Campbell retirement reception set for June 18

By Tom O’Connor
Communications Committee

For the past 22 years, Jeanie Campbell has been a key fixture at the Omaha Press Club, serving as the club’s accountant and handling the monthly billing statements that go to members.

Campbell will retire this month, and the club will recognize her with a reception from 4 to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, June 18. The event is open to the public. Hors d’oeuvres and punch will be provided.

“Jeanie has been an unsung hero at the Press Club,” said Steve Villamonte, executive director. “She has quietly gone about her business and has never sought the limelight. But we could have never survived without her.

“She has done an outstanding job in handling our finances. She leaves behind some big shoes to fill, and there will no doubt be a steep learning curve as we try to move forward. We want to wish her and her husband, Floyd, all the best in retirement. We can’t thank her enough for all her hard work over the years. She will be missed.”

In 1997, three days after she started at the Press Club, there was an abrupt change made in the club’s executive director position, and Campbell was forced to serve as interim director of the club for a few months until a full-time director could be found.

“I guess you would call that baptism by fire,” said Campbell, who earned her associate degree from Metropolitan Community College.

During her 22 years as the OPC’s accountant, it’s estimated that Campbell sent out more than 130,000 monthly billing statements to OPC members.

“It’s time-consuming and difficult work,” said Villamonte, who took over as OPC executive director in 2000, “but it’s absolutely vital to the financial wellbeing of the club.

Campbell looks back on her work career with satisfaction. Prior to coming to the Press Club, she held a similar accountant

Corps of Engineers again confronts flood challenges

The Army Corps of Engineers maintains six dams on the upper reaches of the Missouri River and a system of levees below. Flood protection is one of several mandates from Congress to the corps.

Again this year, flooding downstream caused millions of dollars in damage, destroying property and inundating agricultural land.

On Thursday, June 20, at the Omaha Press Club, Noon Forum attendees will hear from John Remus, chief of the Missouri River Basin Water Management Office. Remus has more than 30 years of experience with water resource engineering in the Missouri River Basin.

The forum will run from noon to 1 p.m. The $17 charge includes lunch, with service beginning at 11:30 a.m. Non-Press Club members are welcome. RSVP opcchristine@gmail.com or phone 402-345-8008.

OPC remembers Susan Eustice

The Omaha Press Club lost a friend and longtime volunteer with the death of Susan Eustice. See story on Page 2.
Susan Eustice was voice of Salvation Army

By Gary Willis
Communications Committee

Susan Eustice, the longtime voice and spokeswoman for the Salvation Army’s Western Division, died on May 11 at age 65 after a brief illness. She was director of public relations and communications for the Salvation Army for 21 years.

Susan will be dearly missed by her Omaha Press Club family, and it would take a sizable book to list the number of people Susan has had an impact on in Omaha. The thousands of metro residents who needed fans to keep them cool in the summer and a place to stay warm in the winter; the children and families who hoped for a Merry Christmas but were never quite sure; those in our community who lost everything in floods. These were just some of the people whom Susan knew and worked tirelessly to help.

She was a longtime fixture at the Omaha Press Club, serving as co-chair of the OPC Communications Committee for 17 years with her mentor and friend, Judy Horan, who passed away in 2017. Susan was OPC president in 2012 and also served on the Face on the Barroom Floor Committee.

Eustice was named Professional of the Year by the Public Relations Society of America in 2004 and 2014 and received the Special Achievement in Public Relations Award in 2010. Susan taught many public relations professionals — both young and old — a lot about writing well, writing responsibly and serving their clients with passion and compassion.

In addition to all her professional and civic duties, the one "job" she never missed was being the number one fan for her husband Bill’s band, The Firm, whenever and wherever it played.

Eustice is survived by her husband of 42 years; two daughters, Kyle and Ellen; a son, Sean; and her dear beagle, Buddy.

The Eustice family will host a celebration of life on Thursday, June 13, from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Founders One • Nine, 1915 Jackson St. All are welcome.

Villamonte inducted into Benson High School Hall of Fame

By Tom O’Connor
Communications Committee

Being inducted into a Hall of Fame is perhaps the ultimate endorsement that someone has led a successful career.

With his recent induction into the Omaha Benson High School Hall of Fame, Steve Villamonte, executive director of Omaha Press Club, now has two Hall of Fames on his resume. In 2014, he was enshrined in the Omaha Restaurant Hospitality Hall of Fame.

“This is truly a great honor for Steve,” said Jeremy Maskel, president of the OPC. “It acknowledges the great work he has done at the Press Club for the past two decades. It should make our entire club proud, as it is a reflection on our club just as much as it is on Steve.”

Villamonte, who is a 1980 graduate of Benson High School, was one of eight people inducted into this year’s Hall of Fame class.

“I was blown away, as I only went to Benson my senior year,” Villamonte said. “It was a night I will never forget. One of the people honored was a computer engineer who contributed to the national defense with his work on Top Secret projects. Another was Andre Woolridge who is the all-time leading scorer in Nebraska Class A basketball. It’s pretty humbling to be included with people like this.”

One of the other inductees was Ingrid Jordon-Thaden from the Class of 1993. Jordon-Thaden, who is director of the Botany Garden and Greenhouses at the University of Wisconsin, is the daughter of Steve and Helen Jordon, two longtime anchors of the Press Club.

Villamonte spent his first three years of high school at Chatham High School near Springfield, Ill. His parents were divorced when he was at Chatham, and his mother decided to move back to Omaha. That’s how Steve wound up at Benson.

“My dad was a hot-tempered Peruvian chef who moved from club to club with the same general manager,” Villamonte said. “Our family only had one car, so in the summer my father would bring me and my two brothers to work and drop us off at the pool. When the pool closed, my dad would be starting his second shift, so he would put his boys to work in the kitchen. I’ve been working in kitchens since I was five years old.”

A graduate of Bellevue University, Villamonte was one of only two certified executive chefs in Nebraska when he was certified in 1984. While going to college, he worked as a cook at Happy Hollow Club, then served as executive chef at Lakeshore Country Club in Council Bluffs. From 1991-1999, he was executive chef and operations director at the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s food service. In 2000, he started his own catering operation — Villamonte’s Cuisine — a company that is still in operation today.

Villamonte was named executive director of the OPC in 2000. When he took the job, the Press Club was struggling. After nearly 30 years of budgets in the red, the club was considering closing. It was being subsidized in large part by First National Bank of Omaha. With Villamonte at the helm — and his wife, Christine, as the restaurant and events manager — the club has operated in the black for nearly all of the past 20 years.
Shatel gets a ‘Face’ – and an earful to go with it

By Don Summerside
Communications Committee

“Never argue with a man who buys ink by the barrel.”

The old saying about the power of the newspaper industry couldn’t protect Tom Shatel when his roasters took over the microphone at the Omaha Press Club. But the longtime sports columnist for the Omaha World-Herald took a grin-and-bear-it stance on May 16 when he became the 161st “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

Emcee and KETV Sports Director Andy Kendeigh (“If I stink, remember my name is spelled R-o-s-s J-e-r-n-s-t-r-o-m”) said Husker Football Coach Scott Frost was a late scratch from the list of roasters because of a recruiting trip. That still left a formidable foursome – retired NU coach and athletic director Tom Osborne, UNO Basketball Coach Derrin Hansen, radio host and former Husker Damon Benning and retired World-Herald sportswriter Lee Barfknecht – to needle the guest of honor in front of a sellout crowd.

Some of the zingers:

**Kendeigh:** “Tom Shatel and I both have three lovely daughters. The difference is that when Tom brought his girls to school, the teacher said: ‘Sir, Grandparents Day is later this year.’ ”

**Barfknecht:** “One of the things that I admire about Tom is his ability to get people thinking by arguing one position on one day and then three or four days later argue the other way: ‘Frank should stay . . . Frank should go.’ ‘Bo can do it . . . Bo can’t do it.’ ”

**Hansen:** “Tom arrived here in 1991 and he brags that his pants are still the same size. But Tom when you got here you were a 32-38; now you’re a 38-32. The material is the same amount, but gravity is taking over.”

**Benning:** “When I walked in here tonight and saw the big crowd, I told Tom: ‘Oh my gosh, I can’t believe your wife has this many friends!’ ”

**Osborne:** “In the late ’90s I noticed a change in Tom, kind of a metamorphosis. His columns were showing a little humility. And in the last few years he has actually admitted to having been wrong. I wondered what in the world had happened to Tom. This wasn’t the same guy that I knew coming out of Kansas City. I finally figured it out: Tom got married.”

“So I want to give official thanks to Jennifer.”

The Jim Horan caricature for the “Face on the Barroom Floor” pictures Shatel holding a list of columns to write in one hand and a notepad in the other. Alongside Tom are two of the notable coaches that he covered for many years: Osborne (Face No. 16 in 1979) and Dana Altman (Face No. 90 in 2003).

And the last words of the evening from the man of many words during his nearly 30 years of writing World-Herald columns?

“I’m incredibly honored by this,” Shatel said, “and somewhat humbled. My goal was to be up on the wall here someday, but I didn’t think I would be here that long.”

“Thank you so much for sharing this night with me and my family.”
The Omaha Press Club Foundation awarded scholarships to 14 students at Creighton University, the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at a dinner on April 26. The foundation also presented the OPC Career Achievement Award to Steve Jordon, who retired from the Omaha World-Herald last year after a half-century of reporting, and the Journalism Educator Award to John R. Bender, a UNL professor in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications.

The students pictured are, left column, from front to back: Alli Davis, UNL; Odochi Akwani, UNL; Okina Tran, UNO; Allie Snow, UNL; Grayce McCormick, CU; Harrison Popp, UNO; Amanda Minckler, CU; Matthew Bryan, CU.

Center column, from front: Amanda Acevedo, UNL; Anna Rodriguez, UNO; Grace Gorenflo, UNL; Kamrin Baker, UNO; Emily McKenna, CU.

At right, from front: Briana Frisbie, UNL; Steve Jordon, OWH retired; John Bender, UNL. Photo by Kurt A. Keeler.

Baseball Fireworks Buffet
In conjunction with opening ceremonies for the college baseball championship
Friday, June 14
6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Adult $25 • Children $14 (age 3-10)

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 15
5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Adults $25 • Children $14 (age 3-10)

Choice of:
Prime Rib of Beef
Ribeye
New York Strip
Club Steak

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
Assorted Brownies
Strawberry Shortcake

Gourmet Club Wine Dinner
Hosted by KFAB's Scott Voorhees
Friday, June 21, 6 p.m.
Price: $60

Quaff
Prime Rib Carpaccio
Brie en Croute & Mango
Marmalade Croustade

Appetizer
Cajun Salmon Provencal with Bearnaise topped with Capelin Caviar

Sorbert
Blood Orange

Salad
Villamonte’s Thunderbird Salad
with a Parmesan Crust

Entrée
Nebraska Filet
with Maitre d’Hotel Butter
Apple & Pear Sauté Risotto Pilaf

Signature Dessert
Hazelnut Dark Chocolate Mousse
in a Belgian Chocolate Cup
Raspberry Coulis
I’m especially grateful for the community cultivated by membership to the Omaha Press Club.

On May 16, we were thrilled to celebrate Tom Shatel as the 161st “Face on the Barroom Floor.” Tom’s nearly three decades of excellent work at the Omaha World-Herald has made him a household name for Nebraska sports fans across the country — but we’re also proud to have him on our board of directors as the president-elect. Through meetings and events, I’ve learned what so many said at his celebration — that Tom is as kind as he is talented.

It was just a few days before the Face event when we learned that Susan Eustice, a prior board leader and longtime supporter of the Omaha Press Club, had passed away after a brief illness. Susan’s work as a spokesperson for the Salvation Army made her smile and voice instantly recognizable to many across our area. I am forever grateful I had the opportunity to meet Susan and work together — both in my time as a reporter and in public relations. When Omaha loses someone so special, so suddenly, there is comfort in a community that respected and admired her so deeply.

There are many new colleagues and friends I’ve been lucky to meet in my time as a member of the Omaha Press Club. I hope you feel the same way. If you’re looking to connect with fellow members, we would welcome you on one of our committees. The time invested is rewarding. I’ve already heard from a friend who plans to volunteer more in honor of Susan’s commitment to the club. I cannot think of a better compliment to Susan, or the OPC.

**Education standards can be a sticky subject**

By Anne Walsh
Communications Committee

If only it was easy as ABC.

Defining education standards in a political environment and increasing diversity faculty members are among challenges faced by the Nebraska State Board of Education. During a recent Noon Forum, attendees heard from a panel that included Dr. Matthew Blomstedt, commissioner of education; John Witzel, state board president, and Lisa Fricke, state board member.

The board’s rulemaking authority drives what Nebraska’s K-12 schools offer, defining standards for content in math, English, science, fine arts, American history and civics (a hot topic in the Legislature), and other subjects. Nebraska’s standards are independent from, but include elements of, “Common Core,” a 2010 nationwide educational initiative that seeks to ensure students have the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college and careers.

Increasingly, the education board is developing partnerships with communities and businesses statewide to evolve curriculum.

“For example, the banking industry was not happy with the priority for financial literacy,” Blomstedt said. “So we’re working with the Nebraska Bankers Association to improve that.”

The alliance effort extends to local agencies that can assist with behavior and mental health issues, which can differ in metro and rural areas.

Likewise, as the state becomes more diverse, students and their parents expect educators to be culturally aware and prepared to teach minority populations.

The board is working with the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs for what’s needed in its communities, for example, and also is trying to establish a pipeline for a diverse teacher workforce. “We have to get African American teachers in our schools,” said Witzel.

Fricke said the scoring system for Praxis core tests, taken by individuals wanting to enter the teaching profession, is being reviewed, as well as additional ways to recruit minority candidates.

The panel said high-quality early childhood development programs are foundational to students’ success, particularly for children in poverty and lower-income households. Few programs are available in rural areas and many are grass-roots initiatives, but that’s changing as the value is understood and demand increases.

A newly received preschool development grant will fund the state’s largest-ever needs assessment. The results will be used to make decisions, standards and investments throughout Nebraska.
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Submissions for the July issue are due on or before June 20.

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.

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

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

\[\text{Hours of Operation}\]

\[\text{LUNCH}\]
Monday - Friday
11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

\[\text{BAR}\]
Tuesday - Saturday
4:30 p.m. to close

\[\text{DINNER}\]
Thursday - Saturday
5:30 p.m. to close

Saturday, June 1
Hall of Fame Awards Dinner
5:30 p.m. non-host social
6 p.m. dinner and awards
$50 OPC members, $60 non-members

Friday, June 14
College Baseball Championship Opening Ceremonies Fireworks Buffet
6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Adults $22 and children $12 (age 3-10)

Saturday, June 28
Home Run Derby Fireworks Buffet
6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Adults $22 and children $12 (age 3-10)

Thursday, July 4
Closed for Independence Day

Sunday, July 21 – Monday, Aug. 12
Annual club closing

Tuesday, Aug. 13
Club reopens

Thursday, June 20
Noon Education Forum
“Missouri River Flooding”
Noon – 1 p.m., $17
Lunch starts at 11:30 a.m.

Friday, June 21
KFAB and OPC Wine Dinner
Scott Voorhees host
6 p.m. hors d’oeuvres, 6:30 p.m. dinner

Saturday, June 15
Father’s Day Steak Grill
5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Adults $25 and children $14 (age 3-10)

Tuesday, June 18
Jeanie Campbell Retirement Reception
4 p.m. – 6 p.m.