Jim Horan began the ‘Face’ drawings in 1971 with Omaha Mayor Eugene Leahy as No. 1.

By Tom O’Connor
Communications Committee

For nearly 50 years, Jim Horan has been synonymous with the Omaha Press Club.

The Omaha artist has drawn 160 of the 163 “Faces on the Barroom Floor.” His caricatures adorn the Press Club’s walls and provide a visual and entertaining history of some of the key people who have left their mark on our city and state.

At age 80, Horan has decided it’s time to step down.

“We can’t thank Jim enough for his incredible work,” said OPC Executive Director Steve Villamonte. “Every time you set foot in the Press Club, you are reminded of just what Jim has meant to our club. His ‘Face’ caricatures are truly like the events of today, Horan said. “We would do them – usually over lunch,” he said. “They were very informal and not a lot of people were there. They would look at the ‘Face,’ say, ‘Ha, ha, ha,’ and go back to work.”

The “Face” events of today have evolved into a happening. The roast/toast format generates tons of laughs, and it’s rare when less than 100 people are in attendance. In 2014, the “Face” event for the father-son basketball duo of Greg and Doug McDermott brought in more than 600 people and had to be moved to another venue to accommodate the large crowd.

Horan’s caricatures have depicted some of the most iconic figures in Nebraska – from Warren Buffett to Bob Gibson –

After 160 ‘Faces,’ artist Jim Horan is calling it quits

Jim Horan. Photo by Roger Humphries

Omaha Press Club Annual Meeting will be Jan. 16

Mark your calendars for Thursday, Jan. 16, the date of the Omaha Press Club’s Annual Meeting.

A 5:30 p.m. social, featuring complimentary hors d’oeuvres, will precede the 6 o’clock call-to-order. The meeting will include reports from the outgoing president, Jeremy Maskel, and OPC’s executive director, Steve Villamonte, plus the annual reports from committee chairs.

Also on the agenda is the election of 2020 club officers, including:

Immediate Past President: Jeremy Maskel, Omaha Public Schools

Board Members:
- Allen Beermann, Nebraska Press Association
- Woody Bradford, Houghton Bradford Whittred
- Bridget (Weide) Brooks, Image Building Communications
- Roger Humphries, Roger Humphries Photography
- Jeremy Maskel, Omaha Public Schools
- Tom Shatel, Omaha World-Herald
- Gary Willis, NP Dodge Real Estate

For those who wish to vote but are unable to attend the meeting, a proxy ballot is on page 4. Please mail the ballot to the Press Club or email it to opcchristine@gmail.com.

New ‘Face’ artist brings diverse background

Like many creative types, Wayne Sealy is a bit of a free spirit.

Born in Dallas and raised in Los Angeles, Sealy brings a rich background to the drawing board, as he drew the first “Face on the Barroom Floor” caricature after Jim Horan stepped down as the longtime Face artist.

Encouraged to pursue art by an artistic aunt and a high school art instructor, Sealy started pursuing an art degree from Woodbury College in Pasadena, Calif., and eventually wound up getting his degree from
and covered the waterfront from politicians to entertainers, business leaders to journalists, sports stars to philanthropists.

A native of Carroll, Iowa, Horan had an artistic mother, Joanna, and a father, Frank, who dabbled in photography. The family eventually made its way to the Omaha area when Frank got a job at Offutt Air Force Base when Jim was in elementary school.

After graduating from Bellevue High School, Horan went to the University of Omaha for a year before his mother discovered the Omaha Art School and got Jim to enroll. After completing art school, Horan landed a job in Hastings, Neb., working in a box factory, making drawings on the outside of boxes.

After a couple years in Hastings, Horan landed a job in the promotions department at the Omaha World-Herald. He would later move to the art department. Over two stints at the World-Herald, Horan logged 25 years with the newspaper.

During the glory days of Nebraska football, Horan became famous for his Harry Husker cartoons with Harry predicting the score of each Husker game, typically on the front page of the newspaper.

In those days, losses were rare for the Huskers. At a World-Herald shareholders meeting, Publisher Harold Andersen once joked, “If Horan ever forecasts a defeat for Nebraska, he’s out of a job.”

Horan developed a unique style for his “Face” caricatures. He’d start by sketching out the elements of the illustration in pencil. Having an excellent photo of the honoree was critical. His hidden secret to success – he would put the sketch into a projector, allowing him to blow up the illustration and make sure all the details of the “Face” were correct.

The typical “Face” illustration took Horan between 20 to 25 hours. His wife, Judy, was instrumental in making sure he got it right. “She would say, ‘Don’t do that, if I was going to do something stupid.’”

Judy died in 2017, leaving Jim to fly solo on his last 10 “Face” caricatures. It was never the same.

“I think it’s time to quit,” he said.

“It has turned into a bit of a chore. It’s ceased being fun.”

Ironically, Jim Horan’s favorite among his 160 “Face” caricatures is one of the least recognized honorees – former Omaha City Councilman John Ritums (“Face” No. 5 in 1972).

“He was a caricaturist’s dream,” Horan said. “Flamboyant personality, interesting life and wonderfully distinguishable facial features.”

Ritums, who later moved to Chicago, built a successful career in real estate and construction. He was perhaps best known for his fast driving – the police once followed him to the Press Club to write a speeding ticket.

“They didn’t buy his story that he was just trying to clean out the engine so his car would run better,” Horan said.


The documentary gives you a sense of what officials and others were experiencing in real time as the floodwaters bore down on many residents of towns and farms across the state. And then came the heartbreak in the aftermath of the flood...

The OPC forum will run from noon until 1 p.m., with lunch service beginning at 1:30 a.m. The cost is $17. Non-OCP members are welcome.
OPC's newest ‘Faces’ receive universal approval

By Hunter Samuels
Communications Committee

It’s said that the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree, and on Nov. 22, the apple found itself on the barroom floor, right next to said tree. No fall required this time.

Jim and Todd Murphy were enshrined on the Omaha Press Club barroom floor, honored as the 163rd “Face” in the club’s history. The father-son pair has been running Universal Information Services, Inc. for almost 60 years now, but that kind of tenure did not prevent their closest friends from roasting the pair at the well-attended event.

The 121st “Face on the Barroom Floor,” Allen Beermann of the Nebraska Press Association, served as emcee, setting the stage for the evening with a litany of jabs at both honorees, noting that Jim “has a mind like a steel trap, but it rusted shut.” As Beermann turned his attention to Todd, he said, “Todd, despite his dad’s help, is a real self-made man, which means he has no one else to blame.”

The floor was then turned over to a host of roasters, including John Prescott of Prescott Communications & Consulting, Paul Cohen of the Omaha Douglas Public Building Commission, Rob Owen of the Bio Nebraska Life Sciences Association, Trace Ward of the Flagstaff Convention & Visitors Bureau, Mark Laughlin of Fraser Stryker, PC LLO, and Tom O’Connor of UNMC Public Relations (“Face” No. 148).

Prescott kicked things off with a nod of respect to one of the honorees, saying, “Jim Murphy is one of the nicest guys I’ve ever known. If you think I’m going to say anything bad about Jim Murphy, you’re nuts. I don’t care how funny it is. Now, Todd, on the other hand . . .”

“Like father, mock son,” if you will.

Todd certainly found himself at the receiving end of several lines throughout the evening, including those aimed at his taking over the family business. Cohen spoke of Todd getting started at Universal Information Services on the ground floor after college, and “through diligence, attentiveness, skill and nepotism, he worked his way up to CEO in a matter of hours.”

Laughlin called Todd, “Tommy Boy Murphy,” referring to the classic 1995 film. He later added “The only person that would hire him in the whole world was his father!”

Todd’s longtime friends, Owen and Ward, each shared stories from the honoree’s past, with Ward even creating a mock mayoral campaign poster with Todd sporting an impressive mullet and a tagline reading: “He’s all business upfront, party in the back.”

Jim didn’t escape unscathed, of course. Cohen noted that Jim went to the University of Maryland, “along with everyone else who applied.”

O’Connor had some jabs at Jim’s military career, noting, “He insists on ‘Hail to the Chief’ being played throughout the office” every day when he walks in, and that “Casual Fridays” are instead “Camo Wednesdays.”

The night had more than just jokes, however. Beermann summed up the room’s thoughts on the Murphys by saying “These are great and gracious people because they are genuine, have a warm heart, a real smile, a helping hand and a sense of appreciation.”

He also added, “They never do work for recognition; rather, they always do work worthy of recognition.”

Jim thanked his friends and colleagues for their support before Todd took the podium to do the same, prior to pulling out an envelope containing a donation from both honorees to be given to the OPC Foundation’s scholarship fund in memory of the late Susan Eustice, proving once again their dedication to supporting the future of journalism.
OPC MEMBER PROXY BALLOT

Members not attending the annual meeting on Jan. 16, may vote by returning the proxy ballot below to reach the Omaha Press Club by 4 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 15. See instructions below.

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<th>OFFICERS</th>
<th>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</th>
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<td><strong>President</strong></td>
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<td>Tom Shatel</td>
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<td>Roger Humphries</td>
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<td>Dale Ervin</td>
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<td><strong>Secretary</strong></td>
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Officers and board members assume office on Feb. 1, 2020

Fax this completed ballot to 402-345-0114 or mail to the Omaha Press Club, 1620 Dodge St., 22nd Floor, Omaha, NE 68102-1561. Absentee ballots MUST be received by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 15.

**NOTE:** If you plan to attend the annual meeting, do not return this proxy ballot.

OPC to offer new view of New Year’s Eve show

By Todd Andrews
Communications Committee

**Turn your head 45 degrees to the left of where you’re used to looking.**

That’s about all Press Club patrons will have to do on New Year’s Eve to enjoy the newly relocated Holiday Lights Festival fireworks display.

The Dec. 31 festival is set to move its staple event north across I-480 this year; instead of being staged in Heartland of America Park as in the past, the fireworks will be set off in MECA Lot D north of the CHI Health Center.

The move comes amid the ongoing renovation project at the now-closed Gene Leahy mall.

The Holiday Lights Festival states that ground-level showgoers can park for free in MECA Lot B west of the CHI Health Center and gather there for the big show.

Meantime, 22 floors up the First National Center on New Year’s Eve, members and guests inside the Press Club will look down on their favorite fireworks, just like always — but this time the north windows will offer “the best view in town.”

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**PHONE 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS**

**Santa Brunch**

Sunday, Dec. 15

Two Seatings: 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Price: Adults $24

Children (3-10) $14

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

**Buffet**

Steamship Round of Beef

Baked Ham with Maple Whiskey Sauce

Chicken Crepes Supreme

Baked Tilapia in Lemon Butter

Garlic Whipped Potatoes & Gravy

Seasonal Vegetables

Build-Your-Own-Omelet a la Carte

Multi-Topping Pancake Bar

Salad Display, including Thunderbird Salad, Salmon Chaud Froid & Fresh Fruit, Sticky Buns, Blueberry Muffins, Banana Bread, Pumpkin and Cherry Pie & Cheesecake, Chocolate Driscoll Strawberries, Deep Dish Apple Strudel with French Vanilla Ice Cream

Spiked French Vanilla Eggnog

All children 10 and under receive a special holiday gift with reservation

---

**OPC New Year’s Eve**

Tuesday, Dec. 31

6 p.m.

$65 per Person, Tax and Gratuity Included

**Hors d’oeuvres**

Continental Cheese & Fruit Display

**Buffet**

OPC Famous Thunderbird Salad with Sauté Toppings

Peruvian Clam Chowder

Prime Rib of Beef au Jus & Chantilly

Chicken Marsala, Sautéed in Sweet Marsala Wine with Mushrooms and Bordelaise, Blackened Tilapia Topped with a Black Bean & Corn Salsa and Lemon Buere Blanc

Dauphine Potatoes & Asparagus Citron

**Dessert Choices**

Cherries Jubilee, Brownie a la Mode, Blackstone Cheesecake

**Live Music by Soldiers of Soul**
Allen Beermann to retire after 56 years of public service to state and press

By Cindy Workman
Communications Committee

After 56 years of wearing suits, Allen Beermann has decided to hang up his coat and tie so he can enjoy his first grandchild and perhaps take his lovely bride of 48 years on a cruise to a foreign country.

Notable goals for a man who served 30 years at the State Capitol in the Secretary of State’s Office, and 25 years (20 years longer than he promised to stay!) with the Nebraska Press Association/Nebraska Press Advertising Service (NPA/NPAS) as executive director.

A longtime member of the Omaha Press Club and the 121st “Face on the Barroom Floor,” Beermann figures maybe it’s time to retire as he’ll be turning 80 in January.

In assessing whether it is time, Beermann reflected on his tenure in the State Capitol, where for 24 of his 30 years he served as secretary of state.

“I promised the voters, each time I took the oath of office, that I would faithfully uphold the Constitution and laws of the state of Nebraska to the best of my ability,” Beermann said.

During his 25 years at the NPA/NPAS, he promised that he would defend the First Amendment and protect the open meetings and open records laws of Nebraska to the best of his ability.

Members of the NPA/NPAS lauded Beermann for being a dedicated advocate for the state’s newspapers, open government and Nebraskans’ right to know.

In 2018, he was inducted into the Nebraska Journalism Hall of Fame, and in 2005, the University of Nebraska presented Beermann the Outstanding Service to Journalism Award.

“I am comfortable in my assessment that I have met my promises, and therefore, I feel comfortable in my decision to retire,” he said.

Born and raised on a farm in Dakota County, Nebraska, Beermann is a graduate of Midland Lutheran College and the Creighton University School of Law. A member of the Midland Lutheran College Journalism Hall of Fame, Beermann received an honorary doctorate from Midland in 1995.

In 1965, he began his career as legal counsel and administrative assistant to the secretary of state, and he was elevated to deputy secretary of state in 1967. In 1971, at the age of 31, he was sworn into office as the secretary of state where he served four six-year terms. He then became the executive director of NPA/NPAS in 1995.

Beermann has served on numerous boards, including the NEBRASKAland Foundation, Lincoln Foundation and the Cornhusker Boy Scouts of America. A retired commissioned officer for the U.S. Army Reserve and the Nebraska National Guard, he retired as a judge advocate general.

In 2001, the Republic of China presented Beermann with its Foreign Service Medallion. He was the first civilian recipient in Nebraska of the Homeland Defense Ribbon.

In 2006, he received the Ike Friedman Community Leadership Award from the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben, and, in 2007, he was named Nebraskan of the Year by the combined Rotary Clubs of Nebraska.

Other awards include the Exceptional Service Award from the Selective Service System and the Federal Voting Assistance Award from U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry.

He and his wife, Linda – a former KOLN/KGIN-TV weathercaster in Lincoln – have two sons and now a grandson.

So yes, Mr. Beermann, you have earned your retirement many times over.

Toasts and Remembrances

Friendships were refreshed and tales of their presidencies were traded at the annual OPC Past Presidents Dinner on Nov 7. Everyone was treated to a delicious surf and turf meal that was cooked to perfection. Patricia Leuschen, widow of Jim Leuschen, OPC president in 1981, represented him in spirit at the celebration.

Some of the highlights of the evening included why a real Band-Aid was placed on the Spiro Agnew “Face on the Barroom Floor.” When Vice President Agnew, “Face” No. 4, came to the club on June 11, 1972, he had a Band-Aid on his nose, so “Face” artist Jim Horan placed it on the artwork to match.

Next was the remembrance of Howard Silber’s first date with his wife, Sissy. Silber, an Omaha World-Herald reporter and OPC president in 1973, had planned a date with her, but it was interrupted with a call from the newspaper that he was to cover Vice President Agnew’s visit to Omaha. Instead of cancelling the date, Howard took Sissy with him and she was notably impressed that he was taking her to see the vice president.

And so the evening went – filled with memories and capped by the past presidents’ traditional champagne toast.

Allen Beermann. Photo by Kurt Keeler.

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Committee Chairs

Communications  Gary Willis, Cindy Workman
Education  Bob Meyers
Executive Committee  Jeremy Maskel, Tom Shatel, Bridget (Weide) Brooks & D.C. "Woody" Bradford
“Face on the Barroom Floor”  Tom O’Connor
Hall of Fame  Marcia Cady
Marketing / Membership  Bridget (Weide) Brooks, Kathleen Al-Marhoon

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Elaine Allen
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Mike Holmes
Willie Garrett  Treasurer
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Peggy Ruprecht
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Omaha Public Schools

Tom Shatel  President-elect
Omaha World-Herald

Dale Ervin  Treasurer
First National Bank

Bridget (Weide) Brooks  Secretary
Image Building Communications

D.C. "Woody" Bradford  Immediate past president
Houghton Bradford Whitted

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

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Allen Beermann  Nebraska Press Association
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Gary Willis  NP Dodge Real Estate
Cindy Workman  Creighton University
Liz Hruska  Nebraska Legislative Fiscal Office

(2019-2021)
Chris Allen  UNO
Kristy Engdahl  MECU
Melissa Hoeman  Nebraska Medicine
Mike McKnight  WOWT
Erin Johnson

Communications Committee

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Gary Willis • Chris Allen • Jennifer Bull
Karen Way • Tom O’Connor • Anne Walsh
Sandra Tursi • Hunter Samuels
Lauren Robinson • Todd Andrews

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

Wednesday, Dec. 25
Christmas Day
Club closed

Thursday, Dec. 26
Club closed

Sunday, Dec. 15
Santa Brunch
Two seatings -- 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m.
$22 and $12 (children 3-10)

Wednesday, Jan. 1
New Year’s Day
Club closed

Thursday, Jan. 16
Annual Board Meeting
5:30 p.m. social, 6 p.m. meeting
7 p.m. hors d’oeuvres

Thursday, Jan. 23
Bill Kelly, NET News
Flooding Documentary
Noon to 1 p.m.
Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m.
Open to the public -- cost $17

Friday, Feb. 14
Valentine’s Day Dinner

Friday, March 6
Quarterly Wine Dinner
6 p.m. hors d’oeuvres
6:30 p.m. multicourse dinner
$55 OPC members, $65 non-members

Friday, March 13
“Dinner with an Irish Poet”
6 p.m. meet and greet
6:30 p.m. dinner, $35 inclusive

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

OMAHA PRESS CLUB STAFF

Executive Director
Steve Villamonte  ………… opcdirector@gmail.com

Restaurant and Events Manager
Christine Villamonte  ………… opcchristine@gmail.com

Office  402-345-8587
Restaurant  402-345-8008
Website  omahapressclub.com

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Sandra Tursi  ………… Graphics Editor
Tom O’Connor  ………… Proofreader
Don Summerside  ………… Copy Editor

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