

OPC NEWS



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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

... Your club will have lots to offer in 2021; all we need is you!

By Steve Villamonte
OPC Executive Director

With 2020 in the rearview mirror, and the pandemic diminishing, all signs point to a better future. Many in the hospitality industry have endured difficult financial times. The Omaha Press Club is no different and has operated at a minimum level, with lower member usage while we have done our best to keep the doors open.

One important note: While updating our bookkeeping, we discovered a minor glitch that was affecting a few of our members. At the end of each month, some members were getting an invoice and then, in the next few days, the same members were getting a statement. We discovered this is a feature in the software. The auto invoicing has been turned off, so if you were receiving both an invoice and a statement, you should now only receive a statement during the first week of the new month. The statement will include past due and current balances.

Now I have a request for you: Start using your club! The club needs your support more than ever, and it is time to make a reservation. We will continue to open for lunch Monday through Friday and offer our Thursday night Two-for-One Prime Rib dinner.

As demand increases, so will the hours we are open.

The board and management are planning many events for the upcoming year. Two big events include the First Amendment Night and the Omaha Press Club 50th Anniversary. We will be setting dates for both of those. Other upcoming events include our All-You-Can-Eat St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef & Cabbage, our Easter Brunch, and two "Face on the Barroom Floor" events that are currently being planned.

Our calendar is wide open right now. If you need event space — whether for daytime or evening — please contact Christine at opcchristine@gmail.com. The Press Club is unique in comparison to other facilities. We require reservations and can accommodate social distancing with ease due to the layout of the restaurant. This is a value for dining out with regards to your health and safety.

The Curbside Friday Family Meal is currently our most popular option to use the club. Christine and I would like to thank all the members who continue to order these meals, as well as the volunteers who help with the curbside pickup. Christine is especially thankful for gratuities.

Our Lunchtime Curbside meals can be picked up from the 10-minute parking area on Dodge Street (near the entrance of the DoubleTree Hotel), by selecting a time at the top of each hour: 11 a.m., noon, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. These meals must be ordered online from our website the day before.

For our Takeout, Delivery (within the First National Bank of Omaha buildings), or Curbside online ordering: <https://www.toasttab.com/omahapressclub/v3>

Or click on the "Order Online" link in the top left corner of our website: <https://omahapressclub.com/>

For dining in, the Press Club door is propped open during business hours for a "touchless" way to enter the club. Sanitizer stations are set up near each restroom.

FNBO is mandating that all employees wear face masks in common areas: lobbies, hallways, and elevators. This is also the rule for members coming to the Press Club while in common areas.

Our goal is precautions for all, as we operate the restaurant to serve our members, FNBO employees and building tenants. We look forward to seeing you!

To reach me during this time, email: opcdirector@gmail.com

Thank you! See you at the club.



Steve Villamonte

March Forum will preview parade of Omaha sports events

By Angella Arndt
Communications Committee

Josh Todd, president/executive director of the Omaha Sports Commission (OSC), will provide an overview about his organization and the future sports outlook in Omaha at the Noon Education Forum on Thursday, March 18.

The OSC is a not-for-profit organization developing and promoting Omaha as a premier sports community in the coun-

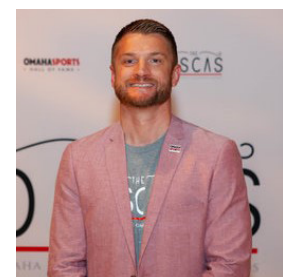
try. Notable past events have included the U.S. Olympic Trials for Swimming, NCAA Women's Volleyball Final Four, NCAA Division I and II Wrestling Championships, and U.S. Olympic Trials for Curling.

This year again features several premier events, including the U.S. Senior Golf Open (back for a second time), NCAA volleyball championships, NAIA men's and women's basketball tournaments, and the U.S. Olympic Swim Trials and Curling Trials.

Noon Forum lunch service begins at 11:30 a.m. for \$17 per person. The program

starts at noon and concludes at 1 p.m.

Call 402-345-8008 for reservations or email Christine Villamonte at opcchristine@gmail.com. Non-Press Club members are welcome.



Josh Todd. Photo courtesy of Omaha Sports Commission.

OPC survived 2020, aims to thrive in '21

By Gary Willis

Communications Committee

Officers were elected for 2021, club operations were reviewed for 2020 and plated hors d'oeuvres were enjoyed by those attending the Omaha Press Club's Annual Meeting on Jan. 21.

Following are summaries of the reports by OPC leaders and committee chairs:

Outgoing President
Tom Shatel

Tom described 2020 as a very rewarding year and a very frustrating year. COVID-19 destroyed most of the planned events, Tom had lots of meetings and conference calls with the goal of keeping the club open. A year ago, he had plans for a First Amendment Night that would celebrate newsmakers and news media. He also shared the idea of inviting journalism instructors from local high schools and colleges to meet with young people to get them interested in journalism. But none of this happened due to the pandemic. Tom hopes that some of these ideas can come to fruition in 2021.

Tom did have two positives that came out of his term as president. One was the passion and dedication that Steve and Christine showed behind the scenes holding the club together. Steve's taking on the duties of preparing meals in the kitchen and Christine's serving and delivering meals was just one example. Tom said they are just an inspiration to be around.

The other positive was the relationship with First National Bank. Tom felt that this became stronger than ever. Bank officials made it very clear that they did not want the club to go away and that they wanted to work with us

Executive Director
Steve Villamonte

Steve said 2020 was the toughest year of his tenure. Even before the pandemic arrived, 2020 promised to be challenging due to the 2019 retirement of the club's bookkeeper of more than 20 years and the need to update an antiquated bookkeeping system.

Then on March 17, employees were sent home by our landlord as a precautionary move against COVID-19. After a week passed and it became apparent that the club was not going to open anytime soon, the Villamonte family including Gabe and Justine spent a day clearing out all the perishables from the walk-in and reach-in coolers. Lots of products were delivered to the Stephen Center, and the rest was discarded.

The club closing allowed Steve and Christine time to audit all membership accounts and then install new bookkeeping software. This process took months, but the outcome eliminated the need for a new bookkeeper.

And last but certainly not least, Steven sent a big thank-you to FNB's Lauritzens for supporting the club and making clear their desire to keep it open. Another big thank-you went to FNB's Brenda Dooley for her open and honest communications and the support she gave to the OPC board and management.



Incoming President Roger Humphries delivers his report at the Annual Meeting. At right are outgoing President Tom Shatel and Executive Director Steve Villamonte. Photo by David Overholtzer.

Marketing & Membership
Bridget (Weide) Brooks

The committee met only in January and February, and those meetings were focused on providing support for what was going to be the signature event of 2020, the First Amendment Night. It was scheduled for April, but we all know what happened.

After the pandemic closed the club, committee support was directed to promoting the weekly curbside takeout events. Tons of emails were sent out, postings were made on Facebook frequently, and the Omaha Food Lovers Facebook group was joined to promote the Friday event. Our hospitality crew provided staffing for the Friday pickups.

Communications
Gary Willis

The committee would normally meet once a month to plan the OPC newsletter. The pandemic altered our meeting schedule as well as the production and size of the newsletter. We had a few in-person meetings, and some were on Zoom or postponed due to the lack of functions at the club.

The OPC board suggested transitioning the newsletter to online presence in July. The closing of the club due to the pandemic and the need to reduce expenses accelerated this move. The last hard copy was printed in March.

With little information about club events to report on, the newsletters for the last nine months of 2020 largely consisted of updates

from the executive director and OPC president. We welcomed new committee member Angella Arndt and webmaster Jack Buckingham.

Face on the Barroom Floor
Roger Humphries

Wayne Sealy, owner of The Mystery Manor Theatre, is the new caricature artist for the "Face" events. He's a great caricature artist and a wonderful Santa Clause during the holiday season. Since he came on board, he has completed two "Faces:" Tom Shatel (Omaha World-Herald) and Jim and Todd Murphy (Universal Information Services, Inc.).

Othello Meadows III, former president and CEO of 75 North Revitalization Corp., was scheduled for "Face" recognition in 2020, but the event was postponed until this year due to COVID-19. The committee will be working on potential faces during the upcoming year. Committee members hope to have a few longtime community faces and a few surprises. Music Director Thomas Wilkens is tentatively scheduled for May 7. A lot will depend on how soon restrictions will be lifted to allow larger events.

Education
Dr. Bob Meyers

The Education Committee is currently composed of 10 members who are scheduled to meet the first Thursday of every month to plan the Noon Forum programs. The forums are held on the third Thursday of the month.

The 2020 schedule was interrupted, but the committee strived to find events that folks would feel comfortable with and still meet the forum mission. Several programs took place covering a wide variety of topics and community interest. Forums included an introduction to the 100th anniversary of the Omaha Symphony, a debate between the 2nd Congressional District candidates, and a celebration of the life and photographs of Omaha World-Herald photographer Rudy Smith.

The committee was saddened by the passing of longtime committee member James Van Arsdall. We were pleased to add two new members: Angella Arndt and Connie Winkler. We welcome anyone who wishes to participate as a member of this committee for 2021 and beyond.

OPC Foundation

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Bridget (Weide) Brooks

The OPC Foundation has been awarding scholarships dating back to 1956, so if the math is correct, 2021 would represent the 65th year. One of the highlights for scholarship recipients is the annual scholarship banquet, traditionally held the last Friday in April. Of course, in 2020, that didn't happen, but the trustees wanted to make sure the students received recognition for their awards.

Trustee Brian Norton spearheaded the creation of a video that featured OPC past president and current OPC Foundation trustee Steve Jordon providing insight from his long and distinguished journalism career. Each student was individually recognized as well. The video program was masterfully emceed by OPC past president and current board member Chris Allen, and each school also designated a student representative to provide a short video as well. This can be viewed on the OPC Foundation website: <http://www.opcfscholarships.org>.

As of Jan. 14, the OPC Foundation had raised over \$9,000 from its 2020 capital campaign and about \$1,100 from last year's Omaha Give campaign. This puts us at just over \$21,000 raised towards our goal of \$35,000 to permanently endow a new scholarship in memory of longtime OPC member, volunteer and supporter Susan Eustice. This scholarship was awarded for the first time in 2020.

**Hall of Fame
Woody Bradford**

The OPC Hall of Fame for 2020 was scheduled for April but was canceled due to the pandemic.

**Incoming President
Roger Humphries**

Roger stressed how honored he was to serve as president of the club. Over the past year, he gained first-hand knowledge of the commitment of not only the board, but all the committees – and especially the work of Steve and Christine.

Roger stated that the club is here for you, our members, and we need your help. Are you – or someone you know – looking for that special place to hold that special event, such as a wedding, birthday, graduation, or retirement party? As Roger noted: "Offer the club that has a view that wows me even today."

Roger said this year will bring many challenges, but we will be able to meet these challenges and continue the great tradition with the support of the board and you, as members.

An intimate, delectable Valentine's Dinner

By Angella Arndt
Communications Committee

A socially-distanced, intimate crowd at the Valentine's Dinner on Saturday, February 13, enjoyed an exceptional four-course meal. The menu featured lobster bisque, Thunderbird salad, a selection of entrees, and a delectable dessert plate

Thank you to Steve, Christine and their team for hosting a romantic and delicious evening.



PHONE 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS

Annual St. Patrick's Day Buffet

Wednesday, March 17
11:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Members \$17

Menu

All-You-Can-Eat
Fresh Corned Beef

Boiled Cabbage

Irish New Potatoes

Dark Rye Bread & Butter

Dessert

Frosted Brownie

\$2 Green Beer



Easter Brunch

Sunday, April 4, 2021
Two seatings: 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.
Adults \$25 • Children \$12

Carving Station

Prime Rib of Beef
Whiskey Pepper-Glazed Ham

Entrées

Chicken Bourguignon
Lemon Pepper Butter Baked Tilapia
Eggs Benedict
Lyonnais New Potato
Biscuits & Sausage Gravy
Seasonal Vegetable
Build-Your-Own Omelet
Multi-Topping Buttermilk Pancakes

Salad Display

Thunderbird Salad, Chef Salad,
Broccoli Salad,
Creamy Dill Cucumber Salad,
Potato Salad, Deviled Eggs,
Smoked Salmon, Chaud-Froid,
Continental Fruit Display,
Continental Cheese Display

Desserts

Fresh-Baked Cream Puff Profiteroles,
Fresh-Made Danish,
Sticky Buns, Chocolate-Dipped Driscoll
Strawberries
& Homemade Coffee Cake

2021 - 2022 Officers

Roger Humphries
President
Roger Humphries Photography

Hunter Samuels
President-elect
Ronald McDonald House

Dale Ervin
Treasurer
First National Bank

Bridget (Weide) Brooks
Secretary
Image Building Communications

Tom Shatel
Past President
Omaha World-Herald

Board of Directors

(2020-2022)
Allen Beermann Retired
Woody Bradford Houghton Bradford Whitted
Bridget (Weide) Brooks Image Building Communications
Gary Willis NP Dodge Real Estate
Jeremy Maskel Omaha Public Schools

(2021-2023)
Angella Arndt Freelance Writer
Chris Allen UNO
Todd Andrews Salvation Army
Liz Hruska Legislative Fiscal Office
Mike McKnight WOWT
Dr. Robert Meyers Retired

Communications Committee

Cindy Workman • Don Summerside
Gary Willis • Jennifer Bull • Karen Way
Tom O'Connor • Anne Walsh • Sandra Tursi
Bridget (Weide) Brooks • Hunter Samuels
Lauren Robinson • Todd Andrews • Jon Brooks
Angella Arndt

Committee Chairs

Communications Gary Willis, Cindy Workman
Education Dr. Robert Meyers
Executive Committee Tom Shatel, Roger Humphries,
Bridget (Weide) Brooks and Jeremy Maskel
"Face on the Barroom Floor" Roger Humphries
Hall of Fame Woody Bradford
Marketing / Membership Bridget (Weide) Brooks

OPC Foundation

Bridget (Weide) Brooks <i>President</i>	TRUSTEES
Josh Bucy <i>Vice President</i>	Elaine Allen
Henry Cordes <i>2nd Vice President</i>	Chris Christen
Steve Jordon <i>Treasurer</i>	Wendy Townley
	Mike Holmes
	Howard K. Marcus
	Peggy Rupprecht
	Hugh Reilly
	Joseph Weber

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



Thursday, March 4
Prime Rib Night
5:30 p.m. to close

Thursday, March 11
Prime Rib Night
5:30 p.m. to close

Wednesday, March 17
St. Patrick's Day
Annual Buffet, members \$17
11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., 4:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Thursday, March 18
Noon Education Forum
Josh Todd, CEO of
Omaha Sports Commission
Noon to 1 p.m.
Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m.
Open to the public, \$17

Thursday, March 18
Prime Rib Night
5:30 p.m. to close

Thursday, March 25
Prime Rib Night
5:30 p.m. to close

Sunday, April 4
Easter Brunch
Two seatings: 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m.
Adults \$25, Children \$12

Thursday, April 22
Mayoral election debate

Thursday, May 20
Noon Education Forum
Jim Jones: "Restorative Justice"

Thursday, June 17
Noon Education Forum
David Brown, CEO of Greater
Omaha Chamber of Commerce

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.

Hours of Operation

LUNCH
Monday - Friday
11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

OMAHA PRESS CLUB STAFF

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Tom O'Connor Proofreader
Don Summerside Copy Editor

Submissions for the April issue are due on or before March 20.