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OPC NEWS

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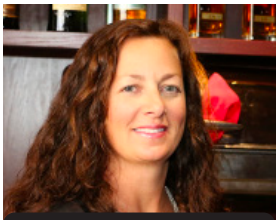
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A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

By Christine Villamonte
OPC Manager


Christine Villamonte

After one more dining pause to accommodate the building renovation, the autumn scene will be lively again at your Press Club. Coming up later this month are the Past Presidents Dinner on Nov. 19 and a Wine Maker's Dinner on Nov. 20.

And the holidays are approaching fast. Keep in mind the two-seating Santa Brunch on Dec. 13 or maybe a personal reservation for the family and friends. There is still room for smaller holiday parties. Check our events list and menu selections to see what appeals to you.

Another closing

The club will be closed for the first couple of weeks of November for the completion of the HVAC replacement. We will reopen on Tuesday, Nov. 17, for regular business hours. NuStyle is hustling to finish the first phase of the building's conversion to apartments.

During our second close, I again recommend that you visit reciprocal clubs. I personally was able to enjoy the social membership reciprocations. Social reciprocation is food and beverage only. Remember to pay the bill at the end of your visit. On our website, under membership, scroll down to the reciprocal list and select a club.

Downward move

For 50-plus years, the club had a storage room the size of a three-car garage across from the women's restroom. As part of the building remodeling, the club was asked to move to a new storage location on the first floor. The move will make room for five or six "micro" penthouse apartments on the west and north sides of the 22nd floor.


The storage room move was a two-day effort.

Board members assisted with the two-day process of sorting, moving, cleaning and donating. A huge thank-you to our volunteer movers.

Parking tickets

Please bring your parking ticket to the club. The DoubleTree garage (owned by

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OPC board OKs officer, director slate for 2027

The 2027 slate for the Omaha Press Club board of directors is complete and will be formally presented for approval at the OPC Annual Meeting on Jan. 7. The slate was recommended by the Executive Committee and approved by the full board on Oct. 22.

The 2027 ballot will appear in the December and January issues of the newsletter. The lineup:

President: Keith Station
President-Elect: Victoria Holley *
Secretary: Jeremy Maskel*
Treasurer: Hunter Samuels *
Past President: Joshua Gear (past president is ex-officio and will not require a vote)

* also up for election to the board itself in 2027

Board members up for election to a 2027-2029 term: Robert Meyers, Liz Hruska, Angella Arndt, Roger Humphries, Todd Andrews and Ruby Barnes.

Board members serving a 2026-2028 term and not up for election in January 2027: Keith Station, Allen Beermann, Woody Bradford, Bridget Weide Brooks and Todd Lemke.

Members are invited to invest in OPC's future

By Bridget (Weide) Brooks
Membership Chair

If you've been to the Omaha Press Club recently, you know that things have been a little different around the building.

The construction project at 1620 Dodge Street has brought some challenges for the club. It's affected our ability to operate as usual, and the financial impact has been significant.

But we're looking ahead to what the building's renovation could mean for the Omaha Press Club. New tenants will eventually bring more people into the building. That means potential new members, more



guests, and more opportunities to introduce people to the Press Club.

Of course, we need to get from here to there.

That's why we're introducing the Omaha Press Club Future Fund.

The Future Fund is a prepaid club credit program that allows members to support the club today while receiving credit to use next year.

For $250, you can purchase a Founder Credit worth $275 in Omaha Press Club credit. Beginning July 1, 2027, you can use that credit toward dining, events, and other club experiences.

You're essentially paying in advance for future visits to the club, with an extra $25 in credit as a thank-you for participating.

We're offering 300 Founder Credits, with a goal of selling all 300 by Dec. 31, 2026. That would generate $75,000 to help support club operations and prepare for the future.

And yes, you can purchase more than one!

Our First Milestone: $25,000

We've set an initial goal of $25,000 in Founder Credit purchases.

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Don Bacon takes the heat as OPC's 188th Face

An evening of sharp humor and personal tributes highlights the relationships behind a career in public service

By Katie L. Thomas
Communication Committee

U.S. Rep. Don Bacon's phone habits were fair game. So were his Facebook replies, his fondness for reporters and a last name that practically wrote the punchlines.

But as the Omaha Press Club honored Bacon as its 188th Face on the Barroom Floor on Oct. 15, the jokes repeatedly gave way to something more personal: stories of a colleague, commander and friend who made a lasting impression on the people around him.

The evening brought together political leaders, journalists, friends and family for a roast and toast celebrating the Nebraska congressman. With Bacon approaching the end of his congressional service, speakers reflected on his years in uniform and Washington, offering a portrait that extended well beyond his résumé.

Roger Humphries, chair of the Face on the Barroom Floor Committee, opened the program by thanking Bacon for being "tonight's entertainment." He also welcomed previous honorees, connecting the evening to the club's longstanding tradition of recognizing community newsmakers through caricature and commentary.

Emcee Mary Barrett, Bacon's friend and campaign finance director, quickly established that nobody would be entirely safe from the microphone.

Her stories traced an unlikely political friendship. Barrett recalled first meeting Bacon while she was working for his Democratic opponent, the late Brad Ashford. Memories of competing parade appearances, a marching band and a pig in a wagon illustrated the spirited rivalry that preceded her eventual place on Bacon's team.

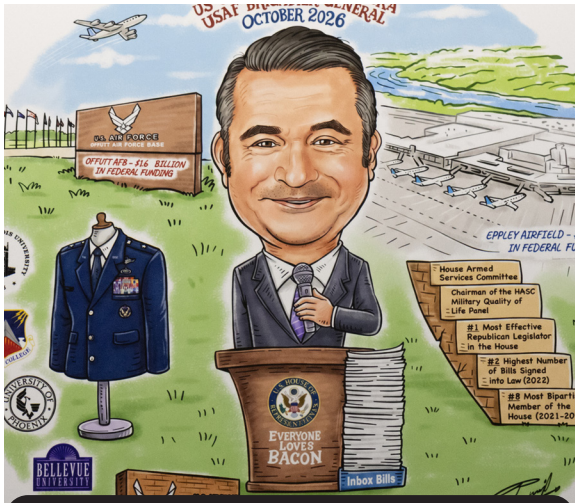
Barrett described her eventual fundraising role as being his "little mafia girl." She also recalled a post-fundraiser porch conversation about hopes and dreams, qualifying the story with an admission: "There was Jameson involved." Her aspiration was to become a runway model; Bacon's, she said, was to be Don Corleone.

Her affectionate refrain, "Delicious Don," became a running joke throughout the program.

Retired Air Force Col. Patrick Flood, Bacon's former national security adviser and now a principal at Cornerstone Government Affairs in Washington, drew on nearly two decades of shared experience.

First, however, he had to follow Barrett.

"I don't know how I possibly follow that," Flood said, before taking up her description of the honoree. "Delicious. Don, are you joking me?"



The 188th Face takes its place on the barroom floor.



The roasters and the honoree, from left: Deb Fischer, Mary Barrett, Mark Dreiling, Don Bacon, Patrick Flood, Jean Stothert, Kip Eidelberg and Aaron Sanderford.

Flood teased Bacon about everything from his fashion choices to his enthusiasm for interviews. He turned Bacon's electronic warfare background into a congressional punchline, suggesting that experience jamming communications was ideal preparation for Washington.

He also recast Bacon's military and political résumé as a lifelong effort to get people to listen to him and do what he wanted.

"I don't think it's working," Flood said.

Their shared assignments supplied further material. "Everywhere I went in the world for 10 years, there he was," Flood joked.

Later came another compliment with a catch: "Don, I want you to know you're a great man. And I know that because you told me so."

Then he set the jokes aside.

"You have always led with courage, with integrity, with honor," Flood told Bacon.

He also recognized Bacon's wife, Angie, describing her support as essential to the service and achievements being celebrated. That acknowledgment became a recurring theme as speakers recognized the demands public life places on families.

Former Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, a KFAB radio host and Face No. 159, began with a familiar political greeting: she was delighted to support Bacon's reelection campaign.

Then came the correction – "Wrong speech."

Stothert built her remarks around a butcher-shop countdown, using meat-themed wordplay to recognize Bacon's courage, work ethic and ability to work with others. Beneath the jokes was her praise for his willingness to disagree, including with members of his own party.

U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., focused on another familiar subject: Bacon's direct line to practically everyone.

She described a congressman who calls reporters himself, answers social media comments personally and sometimes leaves his communications staff discovering an interview along with the audience.

"Most members have some kind of communication strategy," Fischer said. "Don has a cell phone."

Retirement, she predicted, would only give him more time to respond. She imagined Bacon spending his walks "airdropping unsolicited responses to anybody who just

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Face on Barroom story; continued from Page 2

passes by."

Even her praise came with a punchline.

"He's been a good colleague. Not the best, let's be honest," Fischer said. As she continued describing his legislative work, she interrupted herself: "Who wrote this?"

His recognizable thumbs-up gesture and seemingly endless supply of bacon puns also received attention. Fischer's remarks captured the evening's central rhythm: tease the habits, then acknowledge the person behind them.

Aaron Sanderford, managing editor for news at the Omaha World-Herald, brought a journalist's perspective to that accessibility. He joked about late-night messages and the unpredictability of covering Bacon, but his most affecting remarks concerned Bacon's relationship with Ashford.



Bacon kneeling beside face. Keeler-Christen Photos.

The jokes also reached beyond the honoree. Recalling his reporting relationship with Stothert during her time as mayor, Sanderford said, "She was my last text at night and my first text in the morning."

Recalling conversations near the end of Ashford's life, Sanderford said the former congressman valued that Bacon saw him as a person first and a politician second.

The observation gave the gathering a moment of reflection. In a room accustomed to campaigns, competing priorities and public disagreement, it offered a reminder of the relationships that can survive those divisions.

Bacon's Washington chief of staff, Mark Dreiling, supplied stories from the earliest days of the congressional campaign, including an aging campaign van and the challenges of managing a boss deeply attached to social media.

One staff prank involved a fabricated certificate recognizing Bacon's prolific Facebook use. According to Dreiling, Bacon displayed it in the Nebraska office before learning it was a joke.

Dreiling's closing story carried a different weight. When he was seriously ill and needed a liver transplant, he recalled Bacon asking whether he could donate part of his own liver.

For Dreiling, the offer illustrated the character behind the public office.

The evening culminated in the unveiling of Bacon's caricature, with Humphries explaining its references to military service, legislative work, Offutt Air Force Base and Eppley Airfield. At its center stood Bacon at a podium bearing the message: "Everyone loves bacon."

Given his turn at the microphone, Bacon returned several jokes before offering thanks. He credited his family, staff, supporters and voters for the opportunities and accomplishments of his career.

"Everything we do is a team win here," he said.

His response also looked ahead. Bacon identified the national debt, immigration reform, health care costs and national security as issues requiring sustained cooperation. For the business community, his concerns about workforce needs and the cost of insurance offered a practical connection between the evening's reflections and the work still ahead.

He closed with gratitude for Angie, their family and the people who had supported him through military and congressional service.

"This is a team sport," Bacon said.

By the end of the evening, the caricature had become a fitting companion to the stories told around it: a public figure rendered with humor, surrounded by the people and experiences that shaped his career.

Manager story; continued from Page 1

FNBO) has changed to a new, more efficient system. Validation will be done by us on our 22nd floor with a scanner. Staff will ask for your parking ticket to scan for two hours ideally when you walk in the door. More details as they are presented to us.

See you at the club!

- Christine Villamonte
Restaurant and Events Manager

Future of OPC story; continued from Page 1

When we reach that milestone, we plan to move forward with an upgrade to the club's management software. This was originally scheduled for the third quarter of 2026, but we postponed it because of the construction.

The new system will allow members to make dining reservations online, check their account balances, pay club bills online, and access itemized digital receipts and billing history.

These are improvements that will make your membership more convenient.

How to Participate

You can purchase your Founder Credit online at:
https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/omaha-press-club-future-fund

You can pay online or select the option to pay by check.

We're using Zeffy because it doesn't charge transaction fees to the club. That means the entire $250 purchase price goes to the Omaha Press Club. Zeffy may ask if you'd like to make an additional contribution to support its platform, but that's entirely optional.

One important note: The Founder Credit is a prepaid club credit, not a charitable donation, so the purchase isn't tax-deductible.

Looking Ahead

The Omaha Press Club is more than a place to have lunch or dinner. It's a place to connect with people, celebrate special occasions, hear from interesting speakers, and be part of something that's uniquely Omaha.

If you're planning to enjoy the club in 2027, I hope you'll consider purchasing a Founder Credit now.

Thank you for being part of the Omaha Press Club and for helping us build its future!

Past Presidents Dinner

Nov. 19, 2026
5:30 p.m. social • 6 pm dinner
$50

Soup
Lobster Bisque

Amuse
Thunderbird Salad in Parmesan Cup

Sorbet
Mango

Entrée
Surf &Turf
Loaded Twice-Baked Potato
Asparagus

Dessert
Chocolate Souffle

How to enter, exit the OPC

A reminder to members on day and night access to the club:

If entering the club before 6 p.m., the hallway beneath the hotel is open from the DoubleTree garage to our building's hallway. After parking, press the OPC button in the garage elevator, then exit and follow the signs in the hallways to our building's elevators.

If entering the club after 6 p.m., exit the DoubleTree garage at level 2 and walk down the sidewalk to our building's revolving door on the northwest corner of 16th and Dodge streets.

When leaving the club day or night, you must exit through our building's revolving door.

OPC reciprocal list for 2026

Nebraska

Fremont Golf Club
2710 N. Somers Ave.
Fremont, NE 68026
Ph: 402-721-6641
fremontgolfclub.org

Lochland Country Club
601 W. Lochland Rd.
Hastings, NE 68901
Ph: 402-462-4151
lochlandcc.com

Oak Hills Country Club
12325 Golfing Green Drive
Omaha, NE 68137
Ph: 402-895-3636
oakhillscountryclub.org

PHONE 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS

Wine Maker's Dinner

Friday, Nov. 20, 2026 • 6 p.m.
$90 members • $100 non-members

Appetizer
Seared Scallop with Truffle Beurre Blanc
Wine

Amuse
Roasted Root Vegetable Spaghetti
and Butternut Squash
Wine

Salad
Classic Thunderbird
Parmesan Croustade
Wine

Sorbet
Blueberry

Entrée
Grilled New York au Poivre
Wine

Dessert
Flourless Chocolate Torte
Wine

Santa Brunch

Sunday, Dec. 13, 2026
Two Seatings: 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.
Price: Adults $35 • Children $17

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 with Lemon Butter
Lyonnaise Potatoes
Seasonal Vegetables
Build-Your-Own-Omelet
Multi-Topping Pancake Bar
Salad Display, including
Thunderbird Salad
Salmon Chaud Froid & Fresh Fruit
Fresh-Baked Pastries,
Tortes & Cheesecakes
Chocolate Driscoll Strawberries
Deep Dish Apple Crisp
Brandied French Vanilla Ice Cream
Spiked French Vanilla Eggnog

New Year's Buffet

Thursday, Dec. 31, 2026 • 6 p.m.
$100 per Person
Tax & Service Fee Included

Hors d'oeuvres
Continental Cheese & Salmon Chaud Froid

Salad, Soup
OPC Famous Thunderbird Salad
with Sauté Toppings
Peruvian Clam Chowder

Entrées
Prime Rib of Beef
Au Jus & Chantilly

Chicken Marsala
Sautéed in a Sweet Marsala Wine
with Mushrooms and Bordelaise

Blackened Tilapia
Topped with Black Bean and Corn Salsa
and Lemon Buerre Blanc

Anna Potato and Asparagus Citron

Dessert Choices
Cherries Jubilee, Brownie a la Mode,
Blackstone Cheesecake

Live Music!

2026 - 2027 Officers

Joshua Gear
President
Lozier Corporation

Keith Station
President-Elect
Mayor's Office

Hunter Samuels
Treasurer
Ronald McDonald House

Jeremy Maskel
Secretary
Omaha Public Schools

Mike McKnight
Past President
WOWT

Board of Directors

(2025-2027)

Todd Andrews	Salvation Army
Angella Arndt	Freelance Content Contributor
Roger Humphries	Roger Humphries Photography
Liz Hruska	Catalyst Public Affairs Analyst
Dr. Robert Meyers	Retired
Victoria Holley	KETV

(2026-2028)

Allen Beermann	Retired
Woody Bradford	Houghton Bradford Whitted
Bridget Weide Brooks	Image Building Communications
Todd Lemke	Omaha Publications

Communications Committee

Don Summerside • Gary Willis • Josh Gear
Roger Humphries • Tom O'Connor • John Fey
Bridget (Weide) Brooks • Hunter Samuels
Todd Andrews • Angella Arndt • Anne Walsh
Sandra Tursi • Elaine Allen • Katie Raine Thomas

Committee Chairs

Communications	Gary Willis, Angella Arndt
Education	Dr. Robert Meyers
Executive Committee	Joshua Gear, Jeremy Maskel, Mike McKnight and Hunter Samuels
"Face on the Barroom Floor"	Roger Humphries
Hall of Fame	Mike McKnight
Marketing / Membership	Bridget (Weide) Brooks

OPC Foundation

Melissa Matczak
President

Maria Marron
First Vice President

Tom Shaw
Treasurer

Lei Guo
Secretary

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Erin Grace
Aaron Hegarty
Mehrnaz Khanjani
Chris Machian
Tracie McPherson
Brian Norton
Aaron Sanderford
Danelle Schlegelmilch
Matt Wynn

TRUSTEES EMERITUS
Elaine Allen
Chris Christen
Steve Jordon
Howard K. Marcus

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

·EVENTS·
Omaha Press Club

Tuesday, Nov. 2 - Monday, Nov. 16
Club closed for HVAC replacement

Tuesday, Nov. 17
Club reopens

Thursday, Nov. 19
Past President's Dinner
5:30 p.m. social, 6 p.m. dinner
$50

Friday, Nov 20
Wine Dinner
6 p.m. social, 6:30 p.m. dinner
Members $90, non-members $100

Thursday & Friday, Nov. 26-27
Closed for Thanksgiving holiday

Sunday, Dec. 13
Santa Brunch
Two seatings: 10 a.m.-noon,
12:30 p.m.-2 p.m.
Adults $35, children 3-10 $17

Friday & Saturday, Dec. 25-26
Closed for Christmas holiday

Thursday, Dec. 31
New Year's Eve
Buffet and live music
5 p.m. -10 p.m.
$100 per person

Thursday, Jan. 7
Annual Meeting
5:30 p.m. social
6 p.m. -7:30 p.m. meeting

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

1620 Dodge St., Omaha NE 68102

LUNCH
Tuesday-Saturday
11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Closed Mondays

DINNER
Thursday-Saturday
5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.



OMAHA PRESS CLUB STAFF

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Steve Villamonte .....*opcdirector@gmail.com*

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

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Restaurant 402-345-8008
Website ..... *omahapressclub.com*

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Sandra Tursi ..... Graphics Editor
Tom O'Connor ..... Proofreader
Don Summerside ..... Copy Editor

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