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Feb. 19 event will recognize Omaha's version of Tom Selleck TV character

## Police Chief Schmaderer to be next Face on Barroom Floor

By Tom O'Connor  
Communications Committee

With his Hollywood looks and macho personality, Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer gives our city an impressive flair in the law enforcement world. It wouldn't be a huge stretch to compare his character to the role of Frank Reagan, the New York City police commissioner played by Tom Selleck in the popular TV show "Blue Bloods."

Schmaderer joined the Omaha Police Department in 1996 and has served as chief since 2012, making him the longest-serving police chief among all major cities. Earlier this year, he signed an agreement with the City of Omaha to extend his term as chief another five years.

His longevity is evident by the fact that he



Police Chief Todd Schmaderer

has served as police chief under three mayors – Democrats Jim Suttle and John Ewing Jr. and Republican Jean Stothert. He jokes, "Nobody knows what political party I am."

On Thursday, Feb. 19, Schmaderer has agreed to place himself under "house arrest" when he comes to the Omaha Press Club to be honored as the 185th Face on the Barroom Floor. It promises be a memorable night, as the OPC recognizes him as the first active police chief ever to become a Face on the Barroom Floor.

(NOTE: Tom Warren had been retired as police chief for 11 years and was serving as president and CEO of the Urban League of Omaha when he and his wife, Aileen, were honored as Face No. 160 in 2019.)

Being a Face means a lot to Schmaderer. "This is the Heisman Trophy of awards in Omaha," he said. "As chief of police, it's the kind of award you don't expect to receive. It's certainly a tremendous honor."

Police work runs in the Schmaderer family. Todd's father, Rich, is a retired police sergeant in the Omaha Police Department, while his younger brother, Brian, serves as an

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## Annual Meeting will be Jan. 8

By Gary Willis  
Communications Committee

Mark your calendars for Thursday, Jan. 8, the date of the Omaha Press Club 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, Mike McKnight, and the OPC's executive director, Steve Villamonte, plus the annual reports from committee chairs.

Also on the agenda is the election of 2026 club officers, including:

**President:** Joshua Gear, Lozier Corporation  
**President-Elect:** Keith Station, Mayor's Office

**Treasurer:** Hunter Samuels, Ronald McDonald House

**Secretary:** Jeremy Maskel, Omaha Public Schools

**Immediate Past President:** Mike McKnight, WOWT

Board members up for election:

Allen Beermann  
Woody Bradford  
Bridget Weide Brooks  
Todd Lemke

Board members continuing their terms are Todd Andrews, Angella Arndt, Rod Howe, Liz Hruska, Roger Humphries, and Dr. Robert Meyers,

For those who wish to vote but are unable to attend the meeting, a proxy ballot is on page 5. Please mail the ballot to the Press Club or email it to [opcchristine@gmail.com](mailto:opcchristine@gmail.com).

## Sadlemeyer says goodbye to KFAB morning show

By Anne Walsh  
Communications Committee

Gary Sadlemeyer's legendary ability to connect with audiences extends from vast numbers of radio listeners and devoted Husker fans to Omaha Press Club members – and all are thrilled to know they've not heard the last from him.

His final show at NewsRadio 1110 KFAB was Friday, Dec. 12, 2025, one day shy of his 49th anniversary working at the station and 53 years in radio overall. Sadlemeyer was hired at the iHeartMedia Omaha news/talk outlet in December 1976 after beginning his career at KRGJ Grand Island in 1973.

According to a KFAB news release, Sadlemeyer hosted the station's first live, daily talk show, anchoring "KFAB's Morning News" for more than three decades and serving several years as the station's program director. His voice is beloved by a generation of Husker fans stemming from his time on the Nebraska football broadcasts from 1980-1995.

It was around 1995 that he joined the OPC. At the behest of longtime member and former club president Tom O'Connor, Sadlemeyer became a Face on the Barroom Floor Committee member, a role he still serves today.

As the emcee of numerous Face events, he says, "It's my favorite thing to do. I'd rather be the emcee than a roaster, because you can roast everyone who comes to speak at the podium!" Fondly recalling Sen. Pete Ricketts' Face event, he said of the senator's father, "I even got Joe to laugh – but don't call him Joe. You call him 'Mr. Ricketts'!"

That experience was exceeded by his own honor as the 115th Face in February 2008.

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**OPC WILL BE CLOSED JAN. 13-17**

active lieutenant in the OPD. He also has a nephew who is an OPD rookie police officer.

Being behind a microphone and podium is nothing new for Schmaderer, who is known for being in complete control when dealing with media. He's done nearly 100 news conferences in his 13-plus years as Omaha's police chief. He has been featured in national media outlets such as Dateline NBC, CNN, Fox News and Washington Post Live.

"When Todd does a news conference, he runs the room. It's because of his respect and accomplishments, his genuine professionalism and transparency – the media have to be nice and play fair with him," said his fiancée, Carla Liberty, who is business development director for YASH Technologies, a global IT consultant firm. Carla will be one of Schmaderer's roasters at the OPC event.

Schmaderer, who is the 32nd chief in OPD history, has had a distinguished and impactful career in law enforcement. He leads a department of 1,200 employees, including 906 sworn officers.

In addition to pioneering OPD's media strategy, he has navigated the department through a variety of critical incidents, from citywide civil unrest involving the National Guard, police corruption scandals, the arrests of two separate serial killers, officers killed in the line of duty, community-shattering child murders, and high-profile deaths involving in-custody prisoners.

Under Schmaderer's leadership, Omaha has witnessed significant advancements in public safety and police-community relations. His tenure has seen a remarkable reduction in gun violence, with homicides reaching a 40-year low, while achieving a 100% clearance rate for homicides for the last three years, an unheard-of statistic for a major city.

The department also has experienced a notable decrease in complaints against officers, a substantial increase in diversity reflective of the community, and a reduction in officer-involved shootings to their lowest level. Most notably, Omaha recorded no homicides for 120 days in 2019, none the first 133 days of 2023, and achieved a city/national record low of homicides in 2024.

An Omaha native, Schmaderer attended St. Pius X Catholic School and Roncalli Catholic High School, where he was a multi-sport athlete. He received a full-ride scholarship to play football at Wayne State College, in Wayne, Nebraska. He spent one year

playing at Wayne State as a running back/receiver/kick returner, while pursuing a degree in business.

After his first year at WSC, Schmaderer decided to follow in his father's footsteps and pursue law enforcement. He returned to Omaha and earned his bachelor of science degree in criminal justice from the University of Nebraska Omaha. In 2007, at the age of 36, Schmaderer received his master's degree in criminal justice from the University of Cincinnati, one of the leading criminal justice programs in the country. Further augmenting his expertise, Schmaderer is a



*Police work runs in the family. From left: Todd's father, Rich, a retired OPD sergeant; younger brother Brian, an OPD lieutenant; and Chief Schmaderer.*

graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Executive Institute.

Business and the stock market have always been a significant interest of Schmaderer. He and his father discuss market trends and their day trading every morning on his drive to work.

Schmaderer's numerous awards include: Alumni Award for Excellence (2013 and 2017) and Lifetime Achievement Award (2024), all from UNO; Special Achievement Award (2022), Metropolitan Chiefs Association; Distinguished Service Award (2022), Omaha Police Foundation; Omahan of the Year Award (2023), Suburban Rotary of Omaha; and Law Enforcement Champion Award (2024), Special Olympics.

He is affiliated with several professional associations, including Major Cities Chiefs Association, International Chiefs of Police Association, and the Omaha Metropolitan Chiefs Association. He also serves on the board of directors of the Boys and Girls Club of the Midlands. In 2016, Schmaderer – along with Mayor Ewing – participated in Omaha's Dancing with the Stars fundraiser for children battling cancer. He won first place in the event and set a record for funds raised.

In 2024, after 2½ years of writing, Schmaderer authored and self-published his first textbook – "Synergy of Influence: Lead-

ership, Law Enforcement & the Media" – a book shaped by 10 years of reflection on his career as police chief. The book has currently been launched as a textbook resource in multiple curriculums within the UNO collegiate system.

Schmaderer lives in the Elkhorn area with Carla, a New Orleans native, and her 13-year-old daughter, Mina Merwick. Together, they share a blended family that includes three other grown children, who are college graduates with promising careers in Nebraska – Ashlynn Schmaderer, 26, Garret Schmaderer, 22, and Derek Merwick, 22.

The couple first met when Carla came to Schmaderer's office in 2018 as a government sales representative for USCellular to discuss Nebraska's first priority network for public safety. They were engaged on July 6, 2025 on a Gulf Coast trip to celebrate Carla's 45th birthday at one of their favorite beaches in Orange Beach, Alabama.

In their spare time, Schmaderer and Carla enjoy spending time with family, golfing, boating, exploring local dining and new culinary experiences, traveling throughout the United States and abroad – ideally near the ocean – attending sporting events, and relaxing at home or at the family farm in southeast Nebraska.

## **Roasters for Schmaderer Face event**

The preliminary list of roasters includes: Emcee – **Brian Mastre**, news anchor for WOWT (Ch. 6); **Matt Kuhse**, city attorney, City of Omaha; **Mike Dowd**, attorney, Dowd & Corrigan, LLC and Omaha Police Officers Association; **Scott Voorhees**, morning show host, KFAB-AM (1110); **Jim Suttle/Jean Stothert/John Ewing Jr.**, the three mayors Todd has worked under; and **Carla Liberty**, business development director, YASH Technologies, a global IT consultant firm, and Todd's fiancée.

## **FACE ON BARROOM FLOOR – TODD SCHMADERER**

**WHEN: THURSDAY, FEB. 19:  
5:30 P.M. – RECEPTION;  
6:30 P.M. – DINNER, 8 P.M. – ROAST  
COST: \$90 FOR OPC MEMBERS;  
\$100 FOR NON-MEMBERS**

**RSVP: THE EVENT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. CALL THE OPC AT 402-345-8008. MEMBERS CAN CHARGE TO THEIR OPC ACCOUNT. NON-MEMBERS NEED TO PROVIDE THEIR CREDIT CARD INFORMATION. DRESS IS BUSINESS CASUAL.**

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Four Seasons had a hit song, "Oh, What a Night." For the Omaha Press Club, that tune has been, "Oh, What a Year."

The Face on the Barroom Floor events brought great crowds to the OPC including more than 200 attendees for the Rev. Tom Fangman. An Education Committee exclusive with the chief justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court, Jeff Funke, drew a wide range of attorneys, prosecutors, judges and members to the Press Club for an informative hour and a half.

I should mention that my son's wedding



Christine Villamonte

rehearsal dinner was an OPC highlight for me in 2025. Rave reviews from family and friends for Steve and Christine and the service staff.

The year also created curiosity for the future of the building atop which the Omaha Press Club sits. The latest word on closing for the new ownership is sometime in January. The OPC board has set up a transition committee to offer incentives for NuStyle renters that will benefit both the Omaha Press Club and the apartment developers.

So that exciting growth lies ahead in 2026 for new President Josh Gear. He's highly motivated and has the perfect skills to guide the Omaha Press Club forward. It's been an honor to lead the board this past year.

– Mike McKnight

### Sadlemeyer story; continued from Page 1

"I was NOT involved in my own selection," he laughed, "and it was such a fun time. My family came in from Minnesota, my kids were there, and the roasters included Sens. Chuck Hagel and Ben Nelson, and Tom Osborne."

Earlier in that decade, Sadlemeyer followed longtime Omaha World-Herald columnist Michael Kelly as emcee of the fun-filled, satirical Omaha Press Club Show. His five-year stint began when the show was performed at The Rose Theater and then at the Mid-America Center.

"Jim Fogarty and John Prescott (long-time OPC members) and I would go to the Dundee Dell to write jokes for the monologues" Sadlemeyer said. "Fog would throw out a germ of an idea, then Prescott would add the punch line. We laughed our asses off."

A member of the Nebraska Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame, where he was enshrined in 2011, Sadlemeyer learned upon his retirement that NewsRadio 1110 KFAB named the station's broadcast studio in his honor.

Per the news release, midmorning talk host and current KFAB Program Director Scott Voorhees has moved into morning drive as Sadlemeyer's replacement. He joins Sadlemeyer's on-air early morning partners for the past quarter-century, Jim Rose and Lucy Chapman, and KFAB News morning anchor Craig Evans. The show provides news, weather, traffic, sports updates, business news and conversation/opinion on topics ranging from important community issues to pop culture, politics, sports and, as Sadlemeyer says, "Lord knows what."

But KFAB listeners haven't heard the last from Sadlemeyer. He'll still provide personalized content for station advertisers and periodically hang out or be a fill-in host on the morning show. And with his continued involvement on the OPC Face committee, members are sure to enjoy his wit at future events.

Sadlemeyer is looking forward to spending more time with his children and grandchildren, while grateful for his decades-long career.

"The day-to-day work becomes routine," he said. "But then, when you look back on your career and realize you're rich in friends and family, you can say you've had a very good life."

## Omaha Press Club Hall of Fame call For nominations

Nominations are now open for the selection of inductees for the 2026 Omaha Press Club Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame.

Nominees may be living or deceased and must have made notable Contributions to broadcast, print, or news media journalism.

They must have shown exceptional leadership, courage or contributions to the news industry.

They will have worked in the Omaha area during their careers, or they may have had reasonable careers in the area before going elsewhere.

**Your name:**

---

**Phone number:**

---

**Nomination (name)**

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Check here if the journalist is being nominated posthumously.

Tell us why the person should be inducted into the OPC Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame. Use a separate sheet.

Please submit by Feb. 27, 2026, to the Omaha Press Club Hall of Fame Committee, 1620 Dodge St. 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omaha, NE 68102



## A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

Happy New Year! For all of you who have made new year's resolutions ... positivity is my choice. I always think of great things to do in my new year.



Christine Villamonte

This year is no different: Work out with weights, live life to its very fullest every day (never know when the clock is up), enjoy the small things, less rush, more eyes open to the wonderful sunrises/sunsets (your club has great sunsets!) and of course, spend time with the family and close friends.

Looking back at the club and 2025, we had some great events. Here are some of the special days and nights I am looking forward to in 2026: a whiskey tasting (Jan. 30), our quarterly wine dinners (the first on Feb. 7) with pairings, the three bountiful brunches on Easter (April 5), Mother's Day (May 10) and Santa Brunch (Dec. 13) – all with live music and inviting varieties of food.

Do not forget about our informative forums and debates, plus the scholarship

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

### Bourbon Tasting

Friday, Jan. 30, 2026  
5 p.m.-7 p.m.  
\$55

Charcuterie  
Cheese Smoke Gouda  
Antipasto  
Assorted Dried Fruits  
Crackers & Croustades  
Chocolate Petit Fours,  
Nut Brittle



brunch. Our Hall of Fame is always full of fun with laughs/happy crying/reminiscing and stories from our local best of the best, their friends and families.

Hope to see you at your club soon!

**-Christine Villamonte**  
Restaurant and Events Manager



Santa's helpers contributing to the Dec. 14 Santa Brunch success included, front and from left, with hands on knees: Gabe, Bill, Ron and Jolee. Behind them flanking Santa are, from left: Justine, Michael, Steve, Emerald and Chloe. Photo by Christine Villamonte.

### Valentine's Day Dinner

Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026  
6 p.m.  
\$100 (tax included)

*Appetizer*  
Brie Pear & Apricot

*Amuse*  
Clam Chowder

*Salad*  
OPC Thunderbird

*Sorbet*  
Strawberry

*Beef*  
Filet Mignon Maître d'Hôtel  
& Madeira  
*or*  
Prime Rib au Jus Chantilly  
Garlic Duchess Potato

*Seafood*  
Alaskan King Salmon  
Beurre Blanc, Risotto

*Poultry*  
Chicken Piccata  
Roasted Rosemary New Potato  
Chef's Vegetable on All

*Dessert*  
Peanut Butter Chocolate  
Ice Cream Tort Framboise  
*or*  
Cheesecake & Driscoll Strawberry

## Brunch with Santa? Oh, Baby!

Santa paid his annual visit to the Omaha Press Club on Dec. 14.

Members and guests were treated to a wonderful buffet loaded with food pleasing to both adults and children. Saxophonist Steve Thornburg added great ambiance and was a kid-fan favorite second only to Santa Claus himself. And then there was the view. Children enjoyed the 22nd-floor panoramas, including views of the nearby Mutual of Omaha tower construction and the frozen river and airport in the distance.



Some babies melted down, others chilled out when they met Santa. The "screamer" is 1-year-old Catherine Walsh, and the "super chill" is 4-month-old Liam Hanley.



Photos by Anne Walsh

# OPC MEMBER PROXY BALLOT

Members not attending the annual meeting Jan. 8 may vote by returning the ballot below to reach the Omaha Press Club by 4 p.m., Wednesday Jan. 7. See instructions below.

## OFFICERS

### President

Joshua Gear      For      Against

Allen Beermann

For      Against

### President-Elect

Woody Bradford

For      Against

Keith Station      For      Against

Bridget Weide Brooks

For      Against

### Treasurer

Todd Lemke

For      Against

Hunter Samuels      For      Against

### Secretary

Jeremy Maskel      For      Against

### Immediate Past President

Mike McKnight

**Board members continuing their terms:** Todd Andrews, Angella Arndt, Rod Howe, Liz Hruska, Roger Humphries, Dr. Robert Meyers

Fax this completed ballot to (402) 345-0114 or mail to the Omaha Press Club, 1620 Dodge St. 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omaha, NE. 68102-1561. Absentee ballots **MUST** be received by 4 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 7.

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

## 2025 - 2026 Officers

### Mike McKnight

President  
WOWT

### Joshua Gear

President-Elect  
Lozier Corporation

### Hunter Samuels

Treasurer  
Ronald McDonald House

### Jeremy Maskel

Secretary  
Omaha Public Schools

### Dr. Robert Meyers

Past President  
Retired

## Board of Directors

(2024-2026)

Allen Beermann  
Woody Bradford  
Todd Lemke  
Bridget (Weide) Brooks

Retired  
Houghton Bradford Whitted  
Omaha Publications  
Image Building Communications

(2025-2027)

Liz Hruska  
Joshua Gear  
Angella Arndt  
Rod Howe  
Roger Humphries

Catalyst Public Affairs Analyst  
Lozier Corporation  
Freelance Content Contributor  
Retired  
Roger Humphries Photography

## 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

Dr. Robert Meyers, Jeremy Maskel,  
Mike McKnight, and Hunter Samuels

### "Face on the Barroom Floor"

Roger Humphries

### Hall of Fame

Dr. Robert Meyers

### Marketing / Membership

Bridget (Weide) Brooks

## OPC Foundation

### TRUSTEES

Henry Cordes  
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](http://OMAHAPRESSCLUB.COM)**



### Every Thursday

Prime Rib Night  
5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

### Thursday, Jan. 8

OPC Annual Meeting  
5:30 p.m. social, 6 p.m. meeting  
No-host bar

### Week of Jan. 13-17

Annual winter closing

### Friday, Jan. 30

Bourbon Smoking/Tasting  
5 p.m.-7 p.m.  
\$55

### Friday, Feb. 7

Winemaker's Dinner  
\$90 OPC members, \$100 non-members

### Saturday Feb. 14

Valentine's Dinner  
\$100 per person inclusive

### Thursday, Feb. 19

Face on the Barroom Floor  
Police Chief Todd Schmaderer  
5:30 p.m. reception,  
6:30 p.m. dinner, 8 p.m. roast  
\$90 OPC members, \$100 non-members

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.

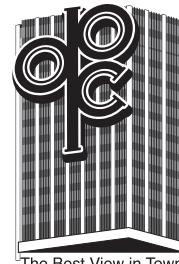
**CANCELLATION POLICY:** All reservations must be cancelled **48 HOURS** in advance.

## 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

### Executive Director

**Steve Villamonte** ..... [opcdirector@gmail.com](mailto:opcdirector@gmail.com)

### Restaurant and Events Manager

**Christine Villamonte** ..... [opcchristine@gmail.com](mailto:opcchristine@gmail.com)

Office ..... 402-345-8587

Restaurant ..... 402-345-8008

Website ..... [omahapressclub.com](http://omahapressclub.com)

## NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Sandra Tursi ..... Graphics Editor

Tom O'Connor ..... Proofreader

Don Summerside ..... Copy Editor

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

