



NEWS & VIEWS

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Spring 2022

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News & Views is published in March, June, September & December. Comments, facts and opinions expressed herein are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not express agreement of the members. If you would like to contribute information for upcoming newsletters, please mail to the ORA - 4270 N. 139th Street, 68164, or CALL (402) 493-4739.



- Avoli Osteria & Darios Brasserie
- Big Freds Pizza
- Brewsky's Food & Spirits
- Cascio's Steakhouse
- Gather In Omaha
- LuLu B's Breakfast Lunch & Beer
- QuikServe Solutions
- Report In Pub
- Smithfield Culinary
- Stories Coffee Company
- Tiburon Golf Club
- Via Farina

OMAHA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

2022 ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

STONECREEK GOLF COURSE

Monday, August 15th
9:00 am Check-in



From Your President

Hello Everyone,

It was great to see many of you at the Annual Dinner and appreciate the positivity as I am happy to be your new President.

The start of every year is great to see the fresh ideas come to light from inducted board members. The energy is ecstatic and I want to keep that momentum! We began rebuilding membership, have completed scholarship interviews and are looking forward to Top Golf.

You get what you want out of this organization based on how involved you want to be. Spring is here, come enjoy the weather and meet the new members of ORA at Industry Night Out on June 5th!

Dine Out Often,

Your President, Jessica Keith



16th Annual
Membership Drive

INDUSTRY
NIGHT OUT
SUNDAY, JUNE 5TH, 2022
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Raffle Prizes | Friends & Fun | Wine & Charcuterie

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL
NETWORKING EVENT HOSTED BY

**CORKSCREW
WINE & CHEESE**
39th & Farnam

\$25 TICKETS

NEW MEMBERS RECEIVE **6 FREE** TICKETS!

TO ORDER YOURS;

Email: Jennie Warren at majwarren@dineoutoften.com
Online: <https://dineoutomaha.com/industry-night-out/>

OMAHA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION 78TH ANNUAL DINNER

HAT'S OFF TO THE CHEFS



2022 OMAHA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FRONT ROW: From Left - Jessica Keith, Jeremey Medved, Nick Saldi, Roland Day, MJ Potter, Natalie Hankins, Maura Carolan, Jake Biel, Joel Priest, Matt Brown
 BACK ROW: From Left - Bryon Zechmann, Ron Metz, Dickie Greiner, Gavin Pino, Jerry Smith, Jared Clarke, Dan Watts, John DiGiorgio, Craig Ulrich, Larissa Codr
 NOT PICTURED: Shawn Phifer, Benn Sieff, Vicki Jenkins & Lauren Willett

Omaha Restaurant Association's 78th Annual Dinner meeting held this year at the lovely Magnolia Hotel began with great excitement! Members and guests seeing faces again, giving handshakes and hugs, finally after two trying years, a non-masked event.

ORA's themed "Hats Off to the Chefs" cocktail hour featured a most amazing charcuterie spread. Beautifully prepared and arranged by Chef Carlos Contreras from Corkscrew Wine and Cheese. Thanks to US Foods, Performance Food Group and H Olafsson International Specialty Foods, the selections of olives, fresh and hard cheeses, cured and preserved meats, salty crackers, and sweet and spicy condiments was nearly endless. The bar was fully stocked for the evening with cocktails, beers and wines provided by Brickway Brewery & Distillery, Chesterman Coca-Cola, Premier Midwest, Quality Brands of Omaha, Johnson Bros. of NE, and Republic National Distributing Company. Thank you to the Food and Beverage Manager Dan Kouba for ensuring that all ran smoothly for the most fun happy hour. And the fun had only just begun.

Thanks to a generous donation from our good friends at Tri-Mark Hockenbergs, Association Director, Jennie Warren was able to create and assemble rose bud centerpieces for each of the guest tables in the dining area. Unable to be in attendance

that evening, they wanted to be there in spirit. How thoughtful!

As the meeting was called to order by President Matt Brown, the guests were greeted by the delightful course prepared by V Mertz's chef, Amanda Sheeler. Grilled Broccolini and Romanesco salads, pretty and perfectly dressed for the occasion, every bite was savored. The ballroom started to fill with "oohs" and "aahs" as the wait staff carefully paraded in with the soup course, silver trays high atop their heads. A chilled Bloody Mary Soup prepared by Magnolia's Executive Chef Michael Staton was carefully set before each guest. Murmurs of "should we drink this or eat it with a spoon" came from the tables as they sipped or used a spoon for this splendid course. A shout out of thank you to Performance Food Group for donations making this course possible. Meanwhile, back in Hotel Magnolia's kitchen, Sysco Lincoln's Chef Dan Watts was preparing the Entrée for the evening. Soon the dinner guests would be served a perfectly prepared, fork-tender CAB Manhattan Cut Strip Steak. Thank you to Sysco Lincoln for this course and for helping with the other courses as well. Like clockwork, thanks to Director of Catering, Dana Schnieber, heated plates were set in perfect timing before the guests. The ballroom was again filled with sighs of delight from each table as they enjoyed each tender bite.

Table wine, provided Quail Distributing, was being poured and enjoyed by the guests as outgoing President Brown passed the mike to the incoming President, Jessica Keith. She introduced the new ORA board members for the calendar year 2022. These members were called forward and sworn in by Brown. (2022 Board Members pictured above) Each outgoing board member was called out by name and thanked for the work they had done, not for just one year, but for taking on a second year during the pandemic to keep the organization going. A special thank you and appreciation plaque was sent out to Chef Glenn Wheeler for his nine years of service to the ORA Board. The event's chefs were then introduced, thanks again to; Carlos Contreras, Corkscrew Wine and Cheese, Amanda Sheeler, V Mertz, Michael Staton, Magnolia Hotel, Dan Wheeler, US Foods, and Cathy Curtis, the Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College. Cheers went out to all for the most amazing dinner! (Did you notice dessert has not even been served yet?)

Brown continued the meeting and announced despite a pandemic the ORA was able to distribute nearly \$40,000 to the association's supported charities: 30 % went to Metro Community College Foundation, 30 % to Hospitality Education Foundation, 20 % to Food Bank for the Heartland, 10% to No More Empty Pots, 10% to

Saving Grace Perishable Food Rescue, and lastly, we earmarked \$3000 dollars to assist in ServSafe Management Training certification.

The time had finally arrived for the Presentation of Awards, chairs rotated, and guests settled in seats. The 2020 winners were given their permanent plaques: Mitch Tempus, Fernandos Café and Cantina, the Restaurateur of the Year, the Schrack Family and Team, TriMark Hockenbergs, the Purveyor of the Year, and Zac Triemert, Brickway Brewery & Distillery, the Harold Norman Excellence Award given to unsung heroes in the restaurant industry.

Excitement was building as Brown read the inspiring bio and introduction of the 2021 Restaurateur of the Year sponsored by Heartland Payment Systems. And the winners are... Bob and Amy Freshman of Phoenix Food and Spirits. Jennie Warren presented the couple with the traveling trophy as they stood before peers for well-deserved cheers. The next bio was read for the 2021 Purveyor of the Year Award. And the winner is... 5th generation, family-owned, local business started in 1872, celebrating its 150th Anniversary, Chesterman Coca Cola. Ron Metz came forward as Chesterman's representative and was presented with the traveling trophy by Warren. Of all the awards given for each year the Harold Norman Excellence Award is the most beloved. This year's 2021 winner's inspiring bio was read by Brown. And this year's winner is... Danny Dominquez, Quail Distributing's Warehouse Team Manager. Craig Ulrich of Quail received the traveling trophy for Dominquez. He had a family commitment that evening and had no idea his name would be read and his service to others honored. Humility at its finest.

During the Award Ceremony, Chef and Instructor Cathy Curtis and her team of ICA students were busy setting up dessert bar like no other. Multiple platters of filled, frosted, dipped, and Brûléed cake bites and delicate sweet treats were being prepared for guests as they left the ballroom to finish the evening. The musicians of Sailing for Soup were set and ready to play for the guests. President Brown closed the meeting, his finale for the ORA. Thank you, Mr. Matt Brown!

Additional thanks go out to Di Tendenza Food Styling & Photography, Loffredo Fresh Foods, Rotellas Bakery, Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, and Spin Linen.

One last thank you to the Magnolia Hotel for its generous hospitality and to General Manager Tim Darby for ensuring every detail was indeed excellent! Cheers and Hats Off to the Chefs!

Board Member Bio

BENN SIEFF
Hotel Deco / Monarch



I began serving individuals through my work as Co-Director of Centering Corporation, a non-profit grief resource center. I developed and illustrated books and pamphlets, and presented workshops to help grieving people heal from loss. I co-founded Ted E. Bear Hollow, a support center for grieving families. I also served on the board of The Compassionate Friends, a national support group for those who

have lost a loved one. Through these experiences, I realized helping others was a rewarding and impactful profession.

After receiving my Bachelor's Degree in Human Social Service Administration, I sought out other ways to impact and be impacted by others. I recognized that my fondness for culinary arts, combined with hospitality would lead me to working as a server, bartender and restaurant manager.

When not in the restaurant, I enjoy performing on stage with my band, Bennie and the Gents, alongside my amazing wife, Erika. Last Fall, we both performed together in The Rocky Horror Show as Frank N Furter and Magenta.

Service to me, is something you are, not something you do. I feel lucky to have the opportunity to be a server every day, whether on stage or in the dining room at Monarch. I hope 2022 finds new achievements and opportunities for all of us.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

In January 2022 the Omaha Restaurant Association was able to generously donate \$11,000 to the Hospitality Educational Foundation Scholarship Fund. This year the committee had more money than budgeted and were able to disburse funds to many deserving applicants!

Scholarships were awarded to the following:

High School Students Starting a Hospitality Degree Program in 2022-2023 School Year:

- Logan Hershberger of Milford, attending Southeast Community College, \$1500
- Katie Witkowski of Millard West, attending the Institute for Culinary Arts at MCC, \$1500

Current College Hospitality Students:

- James Doyle at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, \$1500
- Eva Richter at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, \$1500
- Juliana Rosentrater at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, \$1500
- Emily Stevenson at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, \$1500

A new Professional Development category was added this year. This money is to be used by those already in the hospitality industry to further advance their skills.

- Lauren Balak of MCC Institute of the Culinary Arts was awarded \$3000 to pursue her Master's in Wine and Beverage Management at the Culinary Institute of America in St Helena, California.

Applications for next year's Degree Program and Career Development Scholarships will be available in December 2022 with a submission deadline of March 1, 2023.



Omaha
RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

78th Annual
DINNER MEETING
SUNDAY, JANUARY 23rd, 2022

5:00 Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres
6:00 Dinner, Awards and Inductions
7:30 Dessert, After Dinner Drinks,
Celebration of Award Winners

MAGNOLIA HOTEL
1615 Howard Street
A block of rooms has been reserved under
Omaha Restaurant Association for \$99/room.
To Reserve: <https://book.passkey.com/e/50268410>

2021 Restaurateur of the Year
2021 Purveyor of the Year
2021 Harold Norman Excellence Award

The following 5 chefs will each be preparing a course

- Carlos Contreras, Corkscrew Wine and Cheese •
- Amanda Sheeler, V Mertz • Michael Stanton, Magnolia Hotel •
- Dan Watts, Sysco Lincoln, Inc. • Cathy Curtis, ICA •

\$85.00 PER PERSON
\$55 is tax deductible, tax is included
(\$85 per person or \$680 for a table of eight)

For reservations and payment
call 402.690.9706, visit www.dineoutomaha.com
or mail check to 4270 N. 139th Street | Omaha, NE 68164

















EVENTS CALENDAR

*Any ORA member is welcome to share in any meeting at any time. If you would like to speak at a meeting, please call Jennie Warren at 402-493-4739 and schedule a time.

APRIL 4th	TOP GOLF EVENT NOON -Top Golf Omaha 908 N 102nd Street
APRIL 12th	Monthly Board Meeting 2:00 p.m. -Stokes Old Market 12th & Howard
MAY 10th	Monthly Board Meeting 2:00 p.m. -DJs Dugout 777 N 114th Street
JUNE 5th	INDUSTRY NIGHT OUT 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. - Corkscrew 3908 Farnam Street
AUGUST 15th	ANNUAL GOLF OUTING 9:00 a.m. CHECK-IN 10:00 SHOTGUN START Stonecreek 6220 N 60th Ave

SERVSAFE COURSES

MANAGER TRAINING CLASSES

May 2nd & 3rd OR Sept. 12th & 13th

- Offered two different times, both two day classes ending with test at end of 2nd day, **IN-PERSON**
- We pay for everything but the course book which can be purchased on Amazon (ServSafe 7th Edition without the test sheet)
- To register you need to email or call Cindy Brison at cbrison1@unl.edu or 402-444-7872. You will need: Your name, email address, phone number and the restaurant you are with.

Due to the limited seating and the cost with this, you do need to be current with your membership dues

MONTHLY FOOD HANDLERS COURSE

- VIRTUAL CLASS from 6pm-8pm
- Do not need a book
- Will receive certificate upon completion (certificate will be mailed)
- Will receive a Zoom invitation after registration
- No class limit!
- To register you need to email or call Cindy Brison at cbrison1@unl.edu or 402-444-7872. You will need: Your name, email address, phone number and the restaurant you are with.

Omaha Restaurant Association Board of Directors

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>RESTAURANT DIRECTORS</u>	<u>PURVEYOR DIRECTORS</u>
JESSICA KEITH <i>Corkscrew Wine & Cheese</i>	NATALIE HANKINS <i>DJ's Dugout</i>	RON METZ <i>Chesterman Coca-Cola</i>
<u>VICE PRESIDENT</u>	MJ POTTER <i>Embassy Suites-Downtown</i>	VICKI JENKINS <i>Johnson Bros.</i>
JARED CLARK <i>Railcar/Timber Wood Fire Bistro/ Pasta Amore</i>	ROLAND DAY <i>J Gilberts</i>	JERRY SMITH <i>Loffredo Fresh Produce</i>
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<u>TREASURER</u>	JAKE BIEL <i>Mantra</i>	CRAIG ULRICH <i>Quail Distributing</i>
JOEL PRIEST <i>Hospitality Management Systems</i>	BENN SIEFF <i>Monarch/Hotel Deco</i>	JOHN DiGIORGIO <i>Republic National Distributing Co.</i>
<u>IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT</u>	GAVIN PINO <i>Restaurants Inc, Stokes-Old Market</i>	DICKIE GREINER <i>Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits</i>
MATT BROWN <i>V Mertz</i>	SHAWN PHIFER <i>Star Top Catering</i>	DAN WATTS <i>Sysco Lincoln Inc.</i>
<u>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</u>		JEREMY MEDVED <i>US Foods</i>
JENNIE WARREN		
<u>EX-OFFICIO DIRECTORS</u>	<u>LIAISONS</u>	
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LARISSA CODR <i>Heartland Payment Systems</i>	ZOE OLSON <i>Nebraska Hospitality Association</i>	
	BRIAN O'MALLEY <i>Institute for the Culinary Arts @ MCC</i>	
	SHERI POTTER <i>DiTendenza Food Photography and Design</i>	

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Video



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UNIVERSAL
Group, LTD.

CODY ROACH - ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

2625 S 140th St.
Omaha, NE 68144

Phone: 402.399.8721 x. 119 Fax:
402.399.9714

EMAIL:

croach@universalinsgroup.com

LINKEDIN:

LinkedIn - Cody Roach

WEBSITE:

www.universalinsgroup.com/#CodyR