NEWS & VIEWS

Volume 45 • Issue 2 • Summer 2026

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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 up coming newsletters, please mail to the ORA - 4270 N. 139th Street, 68164, or CALL (402) 493-4739.

Welcome NEW MEMBERS

- DRAKE-WILLIAMS STEEL
- STORIES
- THE LINDEN HOUSE
- WARHORSE CASINO
- SANDHILLS ELIXIR
- STABER MEATS
- WAVLI AND WAITING IN HOTEL DECO

SAVE THE DATE

August 30th, 2026 3-5pm

20th Annual Membership Drive

INDUSTRY NIGHT OUT

Cham Pang Lanes & Ghost Donkey
910 Harney Street

From Your President

I can't say enough good things about our last two major events. Too Many Cooks in the Kitchen was a tremendous success and went as smoothly as we could have hoped, especially considering the move to a new location. Our annual Golf Tournament once again exceeded expectations and became one of the most talked-about events of the season, thanks to the incredible volunteers, generous sponsors, prize donors, and the outstanding staff at Tiburon Golf Club.

We also have a lot to look forward to in the months ahead. Recently, I had the opportunity to help host a meet-and-greet with our Hall of Fame honorees. It was inspiring to hear their stories and celebrate the impact they have had on Omaha's hospitality industry. I look forward to honoring this year's inductees at the Hall of Fame celebration on October 19.

Industry Night Out returns on August 30 and will feature an exciting new venue! The Flagship Restaurant Group has graciously opened the doors to Châm Pang Lanes and Ghost Donkey for what promises to be a can't-miss evening of networking, fun, and industry camaraderie.

We're also excited to introduce a brand-new event on September 21. The Omaha Restaurant Association has partnered with the Nebraska Hospitality Association to present the 2026 Hospitality Expo—built by operators and powered by suppliers. This event will bring together hospitality professionals to connect, learn, and strengthen our industry. We are thrilled to launch what we believe will become a premier annual gathering.

As we move into the second half of the year, I want to sincerely thank all of our members, sponsors, volunteers, and partners for helping make the first half of 2026 such a success. Your participation, support, and dedication to our industry are what make this organization so special.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events.

Cheers and Dine Out Often,
Nick Saldi
President, Omaha Restaurant Association





TOO MANY COOKS IN THE KITCHEN

BACK ROW: Tim Maides: Dolomiti, Ohla Bevza: Le Voltaire, Nick Hennessy: Spencer's, Joel Hassanali: Pivot Prime & Salted Edge, John Engler: Avoli, Jack MacLennan: Ooh de Lally, Collin Werner: Au Courant, Tim Nicholson: Boiler Room, Wilson Calixte: Le Voltaire, Jared Clarke: Railcar, John Benton: Beacon Hills, Don Doty: Cibo Vino, Aron Mackevicius: Talus, Tim Galligher: US Foods
FRONT ROW: Shawn LaHood: Marrow, DJamil Bah-Traore: Mola Yido & House of Bah, Ben Keeler: Sage Bistro, Oscar Hernandez: Corner Kitchen, Chino Guzman: Pitch, Talia Lopez: Le Voltaire

Too Many Cooks in the Kitchen was in a new home, on April 12th, at Marriott Regency. The space was a little snug but it's great for the camaraderie amongst the chefs and they get to see what everyone else is doing.

For those of you who have never been to this event, there are 20+ chefs under one roof, each preparing food for a table of 10 guests. During the cocktail hour, each table of 10 selects a representative to come up and select their chef. They don't actually get to "select" their chef, however. This year, each chef prepared an Amuse Bouche on a clear spoon that had the name of the chef and the business they represent on the underside of it. All the spoons were on one tray and each representative chose a spoon, ate the Amuse Bouche and turned the spoon over to find out which chef would be wining and dining them for the rest of the evening!

Each chef, along with their sous chef, student helper from the ICA @ MCC, and their servers serve 5-6 courses to their tables while staying on schedule with 20+ other chefs. When desserts are set, the live auction begins. Some chefs generously donate to the silent auction that occurs during the cocktail hour, while others participate in the live auction. The chefs offer dinners in your home or at their restaurant. Sometimes they collaborate with other chefs and some offer entire Pig Roasts for groups! This year, the highlight was auctioning off a dinner in the kitchen, to be used next year, to see it all unfold from beginning to end!!

The hosts from the Marriott were outstanding! From the beginning of the planning stages to the wrap up meeting, we couldn't have been happier. General Manager, Michael Kolsalka, Director of Catering, Alex White, Executive Chef, Geoffrey Wendland and F & B Director, Mallory Mueller, thank you for making this process so much fun and easy to plan.

Our committee worked tirelessly all year long and I would do it again with all of them, year after year! Thank you to Michael Rhoades, John Benton, Emma Helwig, Spencer Hestwood, Matt Hunter, Mara Taylor-Mejstrik, Amy Freshman, Trevor Albert, Kai Larsen, Gary Zoucha, Cory Rush and Trevor Ivanich. Thank you to Brian O'Malley for being the emcee and sharing your student chefs with us, as well as instructors and for participating in the event!

Thank you to Loffredo's for supplying the chefs a variety of microgreens. Last, but definitely not least, thank you to all of our food, beverage, paper and linen sponsors and to our chef gift sponsor! Please see the attached list!






















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Sysco

Nebraska Textile & Supply Company

US. Foods Keeping Kitchens Cooking.





TOO MANY COOKS IN THE KITCHEN











OMAHA HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME - OCT. 18,





































OMAHA HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME - OCT. 18































OMAHA HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME - OCT. 18












OMAHA HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME - OCT. 18, 2026 Omahahospitalityhalloffame.com for details.













OMAHA HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME - OCT. 18,






TALUS



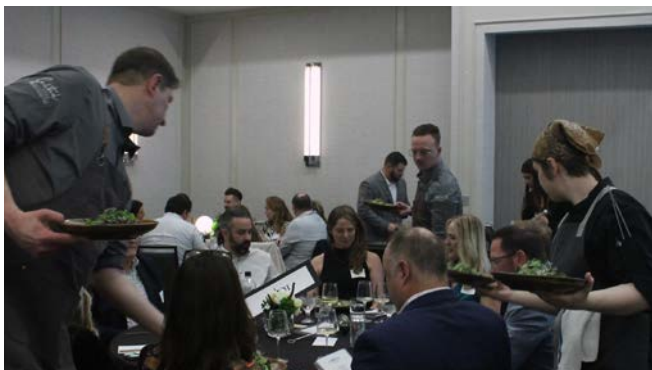



TALUS

























OMAHA HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME - OCT. 18,




















CIBO
VINO













OMAHA HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME - OCT. 18,





















Board Member Bio

WENDY BECKER

50% owner of Cibo Vino



Hello! My name is Wendy Becker. I am a 50% owner of Cibo Vino. What a dream come true.

I started in the restaurant business at 16. I loved the people and the fun atmosphere.

I continued in the business through my college years and found it so much better than the career plan I had chosen.

I have worked on the corporate side and the independent side, taking bits and pieces from each. There is so much to learn from both sides, finding the best parts and making them work for you is the key!

I had a boss tell me once that working the floor in his restaurant was like hosting a large dinner party. That has never left me.

In the short 3 years Cibo Vino has been open, I have learned more about business and people than I ever thought possible. I have made great friends, and I truly enjoy being at the restaurant. It has been challenging to say the least, but worth it?? 100%

I have the pleasure of working with my 2 grown children, Emily and Sam. Emily is my right hand, although she may tell you I am hers. Sam is a wonderful server and takes such great care of our guests!

I cannot say enough about my staff, they are all such great people, and I am extremely blessed to have each and every one of them! Surround yourself with great people, you will go far.

I have been married to Dwight for 30 years this coming November. We have created a great life for ourselves and our family. Beyond working with my kids, I really love to see them outside of the restaurant. Dwight and I love to travel, he gets to go a bit more than I do, he is retired and has lots of friends all over the country. He also somehow finds time for about 180 rounds of golf a year. One day I will get to join him, but right now the priority is Cibo Vino!

One of the greatest joys in my life is our Grandson Henry. He is a 3-year-old ball of fun and energy. I get to spend lots of time with him. There is not much better than a Hot Wheels date with snacks!

Omaha Hospitality Hall of Fame

SAVE THE DATE

SUNDAY OCTOBER 18TH, 2026 - 5:00 P.M.

~ Join Us In Celebrating the 2026 Honorees ~

Wendy Becker | Alfie Cascio | Vince Fletcher | Ron Ganer
Mary Hansen | Anthony Zeltner

HOSPITALITY EXPO 2026

BUILT FOR OPERATORS. POWERED BY SUPPLIERS.

September 21, 2026
Monday, 3 pm – 5 pm

A Venue on the Ridge

20033 Elkhorn Ridge Dr
Elkhorn, NE 68022

PRESENTED BY

Omaha Restaurant Association

Nebraska Hospitality Association

GOLF SCRAMBLE



3RD PLACE – Sysco

2ND PLACE – TriMark

1ST PLACE – Porky Butts BBQ



OMAHA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION GOLF SCRAMBLE 2026

TIRBURON GOLF CLUB: "ABOVE PAR"

General Manager, Becky Dickerson, Golf Pro, Matt Wollum and Executive Chef, Taylor McNutt did not disappoint, the second year in a row. Everything was very well executed and resulted in a day of golf, fun, sun, networking and great food and beverages!

Having the refrigerated Coors Light Semi from Friday-Tuesday makes planning this event so much more efficient. Thank you, Curt Winters and **Premier Midwest Beer & Beverage**! We had the A team working on that project all weekend: Maura Carolan, Gary Zoucha, Will Stock and Steve Godfroy. Natalie Hankins and family provided us with their school bus to transport the almost 200 prizes donated this year, which was a huge time saver, not to mention a fun little adventure! Thank you also to Nick Saldi, Mara Taylor Mejstrik and Matt Warren. Those prizes are donated by so many of our members and collected from all of our board members. Thank you to everyone, especially during such a busy time of the year. Your support makes a gigantic difference.

The beverages for the ENTIRE event are made possible by the following companies that take a ton of time in preparing the ordering and distribution of the products: **Chesterman Coca Cola, Johnson Brothers, Premier Midwest, Quality Brands and Southern Glazers**. THANK YOU!

Glenn Valley Foods supplied the Gary's Quick Steak to Chef Taylor to prepare our lunch and the following companies helped to support the rest of lunch and the dinner: **Cash-Wa, Institute for the Culinary Arts, Loffredo Fresh Foods, Performance Foodservice, Rotella's, Sysco and US Foods. Larsen Supply** donated ALL paper products for the meals and on the course and **Nebraska Textile & Supply** donated all the linens. THANK YOU!

We would like to thank **Quality Brands** for printing our sponsor signs again this year! I hope you all were proud to see your name out on the course supporting Culinary, Hospitality and Sommelier Scholarships as well as feeding the hungry through the Food Bank for the Heartland, No More Empty Pots and Saving Grace.

Nelligan Creative employees, Bev Nelligan and Emily Miloni captured some great photos again this year. You can soon find them on our website as well. Thank you!

We were able to collect $710 from extra games played on the course with the most popular on this year being the soccer game provided by **Quality Brands** for 2 tickets to The World Cup in Kansas City! Thank you to **Chesterman Coca-Cola** and **Johnson Brothers** on your support as well!

Lucky Winner, Sunni Renner, was the recipient of the $1200 set of irons donated by **Tiburon Golf Club**!

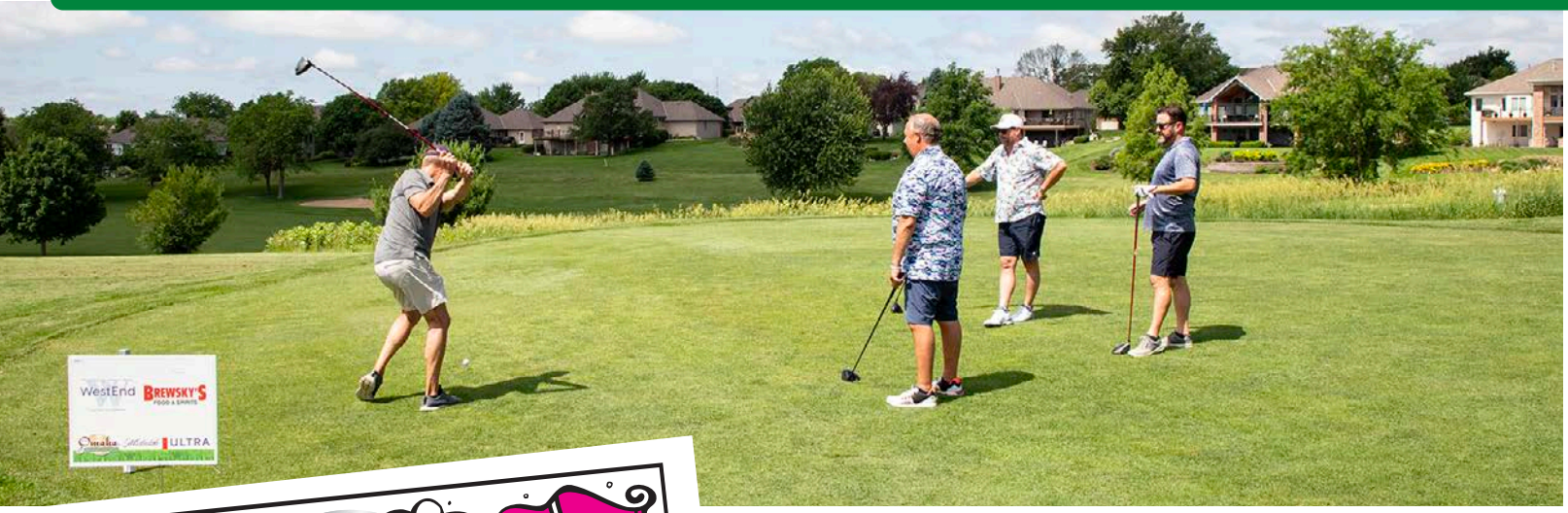
Shout out to Trevor Albert and **Tap-Pay Solutions** for training the workers at the check-in table to sell the raffle and mulligan tickets and cigars and for the staff at **Project Harmony** coming out for prize redemption. We could not do this with all of the help from them, family and friends at the beginning and end of this event! THANK YOU!

Sysco was able to pull off the win for **3rd Place** between them, Loffredo Fresh Foods and Cascio's Steak House. They received $50 gift cards to V. Mertz! **TriMark** took **2nd Place** and received $100 gift cards to J. Gilbert's and **1st Place** went to **Porky Butts BBQ** where Blane Hunter and team will enjoy a 4-some at Champions Run!

We hope to see you back next year on June 7th.

We would like to thank the following companies who donated food, beverages or prizes today to fight hunger and raise scholarship funds for hospitality and culinary education in NE

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BROTHER SEBASTIAN'S
CADDY SHACK
CASCIO'S STEAK HOUSE
CASH-WA
CEDAR BAR
CHAMPION'S RUN
CHARIOTS 4 HOPE
CHARLESTON'S
CHARLIE'S ON THE LAKE
CHESTERMAN COCA-COLA
CIBO VINO
CLANCY'S
CON AMOR
COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT
DARLING INGREDIENTS
DJ'S DUGOUT
DOUBLE ZERO PIZZERIA
EGAN SUPPLY CO.
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FLEMING'S STEAKHOUSE
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HELGET GAS
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HILL OF BEANS
HILTON GARDEN INN
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HUSKER HOUNDS
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LAZLO'S
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US FOODS
VESTIS
VIKING FIRE PROTECTION GROUP
V MERTZ
WESTEND COCKTAILS & APPS
WILLIAMSBURG PIZZA
72 TABLE & TAP



Omaha
RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

GOLF SCRAMBLE

Monday, June 8th, 2026

Tiburon Golf Club | 10302 South 168th Street

Proceeds go towards culinary scholarships and education, as well as feeding the hungry

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

10:00AM: Check-In, Driving Range & Gary's Quick Steak Phillies for Lunch

11:00 AM: Shotgun Start/ Texas Scramble

Immediately Following: Cocktails, BBQ Buffet & Prizes

EVENT COSTS

$350 Sponsorship Only: Company and Product Recognition, Golf not included.

$890 Includes: Sponsorship, Lunch, BBQ Buffet and Libations, Four-some w/2 Carts and a whole lot of fun!

Number of golfers is limited to 216 so sign up
Deadline is May 29th




































































taco john's
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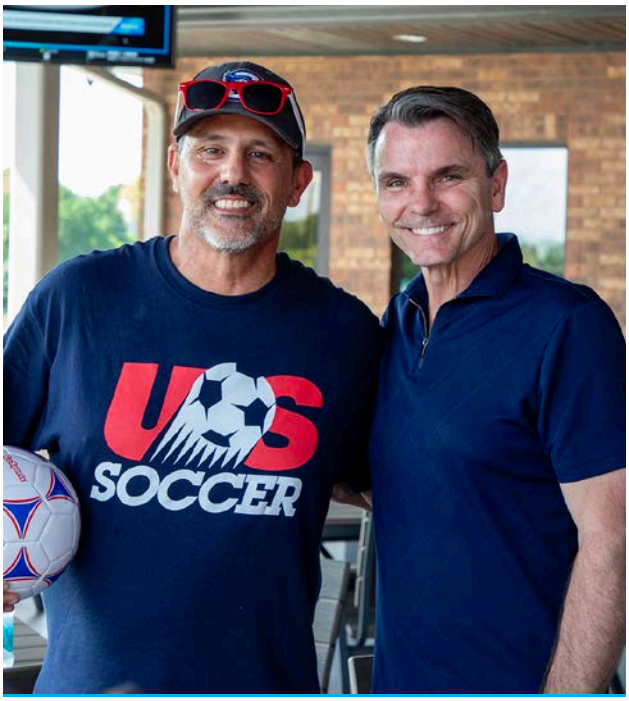





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- Low processing rates

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.

AUGUST 30th — **Industry Night Out**
Cham Pang Lanes & Ghost Donkey: 3 - 5 pm
910 Harney Street

SEPTEMBER 8th — **Monthly Board Meeting**
Ooh de Lally - 8:30 am
4916 Underwood Ave

SEPTEMBER 21st — **Hospitality Expo 2026**
A Venue on the Ridge: 3 - 5 pm
20033 Elkhorn Ridge Dr

OCTOBER 13th — **Monthly Board Meeting**
Blue Sushi: 3 pm
416 South 12th Street

OCTOBER 18th — **Omaha Hospitality Hall of Fame**
Institute for the Culinary Arts at MCC: 5 pm
32nd & Sorensen Pkwy

Photos in this issue were graciously provided by Beverly Nelligan at NELLIGAN CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY AND DESIGN.
EMAIL: NelliganCreative@gmail.com

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IMPORTANT NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERSHIP:
Please Read!

ServSafe MANAGEMENT TRAINING

ServSafe
National Restaurant Association

The Omaha Restaurant believes in educating their members and elevating the safety in our member's restaurants. We are offering five slots in the July 13th & 14th and August 19th & 11th classes at the UNL Extension office to our members on a first come first serve basis.

We will pay the $125 for the class and test, you just need to buy the 8th Edition ServSafe Management book!

Classes are from 9am-4:30 pm at 8015 West Center Road.

Due to the demand this year we are only able to offer you one paid class for you or your manager.
Each business is required to have a manager certified this coming year.

E-mail Jennie at **jwarren@dineoutoften.com** with the name, email and cell number of the person you hope to get certified and if there are spots available we will confirm with you.