

Lobbyists make it to the ‘Cover of the Journal Star’

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By JoAnne Young / Lincoln Journal Star, April 14, 2016



Doc Winger (middle left) and Tip O'Neill (middle right) who recently performed their song "On the Cover of the Journal Star," gather with fellow lobbyists on Wednesday in the Capitol Rotunda.

The 104th Nebraska unicameral Legislature, second session, is drawing to a close.

And although Day 60 -- the actual last day -- is not until next week, the partying and tributes have begun.

On Wednesday, senators delivered testimonials to their 11 colleagues who are departing at the end of the year because of term limits. Those leaving include Lincoln-area Sens. Kathy Campbell, Colby Coash and Ken Haar.

A Sine Die celebration for senators and their staffs, paid for by lobbyists, was held last week at the Pla Mor Ballroom. And the 47th Traditional Sine Die party was thrown Tuesday night by Mueller Robak and the Associated General Contractors as a thank you to lawmakers and their staffs.

At that party, a duo of lobbyists and singer/songwriters, Thomas "Tip" O'Neill and Dwight "Doc" Winger, pulled out seven of their parodies, including "Cover of the Journal Star."

The song is sung to the tune of "On the Cover of the Rolling Stone."

"We're like Pavarotti out there in the lobby, and we're loved everywhere we go,

For 20-some years we were featured, at the Sine Die annual show,

We've got all the friends that money can buy, we've got cash and a fancy car,

And we keep getting' richer but we can't get our picture,

ON THE COVER OF THE JOURNAL STAR."

It was first performed in 1999, Winger said, but with a better sound system at the Lincoln Country Club it was actually first heard Tuesday night.

O'Neill and Winger have written 140 legislative parodies for the Sine Die shows, and performed 120 of them, mostly along with their band The Usual Suspects.

Winger is also the voice of Nebraska basketball, the public address announcer since 2012.

When O'Neill and Winger started performing their songs 30 years ago, they were a couple of staffers making fun of lobbyists. Now both are lobbyists, Winger with Pinpoint Holdings and O'Neill with the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Nebraska.

Their first song was written in 1982 when Lincoln Journal columnist Don Pieper held a country song title contest.

The song: "An Hour With You is Like a Weekend in McCook."

Sung to the tune of "Cover of the Rolling Stone"

VERSE 1

We're like Pavarotti out there in the lobby, and we're loved everywhere we go,

For 20-some years we were featured, at the Sine Die annual show,

We've got all the friends that money can buy, we've got cash and a fancy car,

And we keep getting richer but we can't get our picture,

ON THE COVER OF THE JOURNAL STAR

CHORUS

Journal Star...Gonna get my picture on the cover,

Star...Gonna buy five copies for my Mother,

Star...Gonna see my smiling face,

ON THE COVER OF THE JOURNAL STAR.

VERSE 2

We've had some crazy old ladies like Lorraine and Katie,

Who we wrote about through the years,

And like them you like us better, when you've had a half a dozen beers,
All the senators have told us both forever, that some day we will be a star,
But it don't matter who's wit'cha if you can't get your picture,
ON THE COVER OF THE JOURNAL STAR.

CHORUS

VERSE 3

They've been running those goofy stories 'bout the newbies,
In the paper every Sunday,
And they call our buddy Bill Mueller, and write down everything he'll say,
Every single day, they take some nobody, and make them a media star,
But the very best feature is the one with our picture,
ON THE COVER OF THE JOURNAL STAR

CHORUS (Repeat twice)