



YANKTON DAILY
PRESS & DAKOTAN



**Fifty Years After MLK's
'I Have A Dream' ■ 3**

Volume 139
Number 106

The Dakotas' Oldest Newspaper | **14 PAGES** | www.yankton.net

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**Neb. Couple
To Pay
\$440,000 In
Restitution
For Arson**

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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TYNDALL — A Niobrara, Neb., couple convicted of arson in June must repay nearly \$440,000 in damages for the October 2010 fire that destroyed their Springfield steakhouse and damaged neighboring structures.

First Circuit Judge Glen Eng ordered the restitution Wednesday during a hearing at the Bon Homme County courthouse in Tyndall.

A Bon Homme County jury returned guilty verdicts against the couple — 62-year-old Charles Johnson and 56-year-old Kimberly Johnson — on charges of second-degree arson and reckless burning, both Class 4 felonies.

The Johnsons were accused of setting fire to Libby's Steakhouse in order to collect insurance money. The fire also destroyed another downtown Springfield business and damaged a third. No one was injured in the blaze.

Earlier this month, Eng handed down identical sentences for the Johnsons. The judge sentenced both Johnsons to 10 years in prison — with nine years suspended — on each count. Each defendant will serve the arson and reckless burning sentences concurrently, or at the same time.

Both Johnsons faced up to 20 years in prison and \$40,000 in fines.

Charles Johnson will report for prison Sept. 15, while Kimberly Johnson will report Jan. 15, according to Bon Homme County Clerk of Courts Joanne Balvin. The Johnsons remain free on bond until beginning their sentences, the clerk said.

According to media reports, the Johnsons will each be eligible for parole after three months. The different sentencing dates will allow the couple to care for their grandchildren.

With the sentencing completed, Eng addressed restitution during Wednesday's hearing.

The final total came to \$439,328.48 for seven parties covered by the restitution order, according to Bon Homme County State's Attorney Lisa Rothschadl.

"(The Johnsons) will be on parole. Once they get out of prison, they stand to have to set up a payment plan," the state's attorney said.

Rothschadl released a breakdown of the restitution order:

ARSON | PAGE 13

A Job Well Done



Yankton Police Department officers (from left) Rob Buechler, Jeremy McNinch, Monty Rothenberger and Corporal Brad Parker received meritorious service certificates from Chief Brian Paulsen during the Yankton City Commission meeting this week. The four policemen rescued an unconscious woman from the Missouri River July 21.

**Yankton Police Officers
Honored For Saving Life**

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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Four Yankton police officers were honored this week for pulling an unconscious woman from the Missouri River in July.

"It is due to the meritorious action of these four officers that the victim — who is someone's daughter and a wife — was able to go on living her life," Lt. Mike Burgeson told the Yankton City Commission before meritorious service certificates were given to Corporal Brad Parker and officers Rob Buechler, Jeremy McNinch and Monty Rothenberger.

The four men rescued Diana Starbuck, 28, of Plattsmouth, Neb., within seconds of her drowning.

Parker told the *Press & Dakotan* he still has

vivid memories of the night.

McNinch had been flagged down just after 2 a.m. July 21 by a friend saying Starbuck, who had been drinking and got into an argument, had taken off toward the river.

"It was raining pretty hard that night, so we were concentrating on shelters, under the Meridian Bridge — any place she could have gone for shelter," Parker stated. "Officer Buechler took his flashlight to the river and scanned the water. He saw her face above the water. If Rob wouldn't have been there at that exact time and shined his flashlight on the water, it would have been a whole different mission. We would have had no idea where to look."

Buechler immediately offered to jump in the

HONOR | PAGE 9

**Caution
Needed In
Dealing
With Syria**

**USD Professor Warns
No One Knows Where
Conflict Is Leading**

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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VERMILLION — The United States needs to move cautiously in its actions involving Syria, according to a University of South Dakota professor familiar with the Middle East.

"No one knows where this conflict is going to lead," said political science professor Tim Schorn.

Schorn, a Mount Marty College and University of Notre Dame graduate, directs the USD international studies program. He has also witnessed Middle East events and tensions firsthand during his extensive studies and travels in the region.

He has watched with interest the quickly unfolding developments in Syria, an area that he hopes to visit in the future.

U.S. military strikes may not deter the Syrian government from stopping the alleged use of chemical weapons on its own people, Schorn advised. In fact, the Syrian leadership may step up the alleged chemical attacks in response to outside forces, he warned.

"If the highest levels of leadership in the Syrian government approved the use of chemical weapons, it shows they are willing to escalate," he said. "They are not concerned about consequences, and they will be willing to escalate even further."

The important actor in this scenario is Russia, Schorn pointed out.

"As long as (the Russians) give diplomatic cover to Syria, the international response is going to be less successful than it could be," he said.

The Russian actions further complicate any solutions, Schorn noted.

"Russia appears to be making this an



Schorn

SYRIA | PAGE 13

YHS Band Begins Their March To Chicago

**Band To Perform In McDonald's
Thanksgiving Day Parade**

BY DEREK BARTOS
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Woody Woodpecker, Garfield, Paddington Bear and ... the Yankton High School marching band?

When television viewers across the nation tune in to the McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade in Chicago this year, they not only will see the inflatable mainstays of the celebration, but they'll also catch a glimpse of 113 of YHS' finest musicians.

The YHS marching band has been invited to perform in the parade with approximately 23 other high school bands from around the country. The event also features celebrities, floats, balloons, equestrian units and special performance units.

Last year's parade drew 425,000 spectators and 3.68 million television viewers.

"We're proud to represent the high school and Yankton in Chicago," said YHS band director Todd Carr. "The kids are excited to march and be a part of it."

The band will perform its show entitled "The Far East," by Gary Gilroy.

Carr said the students will mix choreography to the

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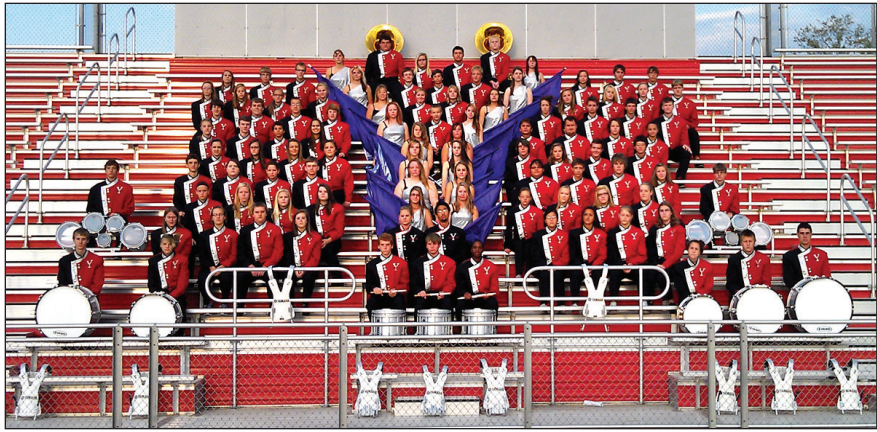
music, which has "an Eastern sound to it."

"You basically have to put together a moving show that keeps people interested as you're moving by, because we're not allowed to stop," he said. "That's the interesting part. That's the challenge."

The students have already begun to learn the music and work on their performance, Carr said, which is one of the largest projects they can encounter at a school of Yankton's size.

"We're trying to put together this show with all these students working together to do one thing," he said. "Everybody needs to know their job and prepare for it. There's a lot of steps along the way for

BAND | PAGE 13



Members of the Yankton High School marching band have been invited to perform as part of the 2013 McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade in Chicago, an event that draws more than 3 million television viewers nationally. To raise the necessary \$500 per student for the trip, the band will be holding three fundraisers within the next few months.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHARON KOLLER

Heat Takes Toll On Mount Marty Students

BY ROB NIELSEN
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A spike in temperatures coinciding with a return to classes has made living conditions difficult for students living on college campuses across the state. This includes a number of Mount Marty College students.

Bede Hall, which holds many offices, science labs and a floor of dorms, remains without air conditioning in many parts of the building.

One of those students living on the fourth floor is senior Ricardo Marro-

quin. He said students have resorted to sleeping in a lounge to escape the heat.

"We have a lounge on fourth floor in Bede where there's an air conditioner and that's where we sleep now because it's so hot," Marroquin said. "Last night there were about five of us in there."

Director of Residence Life and Campus Safety Sonja Olson said this was a new implementation as a way of helping students cope with late-summer heat typical of the first few weeks of school.

"I've walked around and talked to every resident that lives on the fourth floor of Bede encouraging them to spend time in that lounge and to pull their mattress in there," she said. "And I let them know that as soon as the heat breaks, it'll be more comfortable in their living spaces."

Olson said students living in the dorm are given \$100 off their room and board for the first few weeks of class due to the heat and that, despite the heat, the dorm remains popular.

HEAT | PAGE 9