



# YANKTON DAILY PRESS & DAKOTAN



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## A Rolling Show Of Respect



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Local members of the Patriot Guard Riders are shown standing guard during a visitation last month at Yankton's Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home. They are part of a national group formed in 2005 originally to shield mourners of fallen soldiers from protesters. It has now expanded to offer vigils of respect for veterans, law enforcement officers, first responders and firefighters.

## Patriot Riders Stand By Heroes

BY DEREK BARTOS

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Seven and a half years ago, Kevin Opsahl stood at the funeral for Sgt. 1st Class Rich Schild of Yankton, a soldier who had been killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq.

As owner and funeral director of Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home in Yankton, Opsahl had attended similar services before, but something different that day caught his eye.

"There was this group that stood and made a flag line so that the protesters from Westboro Baptist Church (which protests at military funerals) would have less of an impact on the family," Opsahl said. "I thought it was pretty cool and that their efforts were wonderful, so I thought I'd join them."

The group was the Patriot Guard Riders (PGR), a national nonprofit organization that had formed that year to not only shield family members from protesters at funerals, but also to show sincere respect for the nation's fallen heroes, their families and their communities.

"It really does make a family feel better about their loved one's service in the military," Opsahl said. "I think that's the biggest thing."

Since its start in 2005, the PGR has grown to 289,000 members nationwide, including



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

more than 800 members in South Dakota. While it was founded by motorcyclists, members include both riders and non-riders.

In addition to attending funerals at the request of family members, PGR members also are involved with volunteer work, deployment ceremonies and welcome-home celebrations.

"The group in Sioux Falls is great about getting to military flights coming back," Opsahl said. "It doesn't matter if it's one person on that plane or 20, they will make an effort to greet military people back to South Dakota."

The PGR's mission has also expanded to

include funerals for first responders, such as law enforcement officers and firefighters.

"They're our heroes, too," said Dale Thomsen, assistant state captain for the South Dakota PGR.

Thomsen added that while the PGR is loosely grouped by state, many members will cross state lines for an event if they are able to participate. Email notifications are typically sent out to inform the members of when and where a group will be gathering.

"There are no borders," he said. "If we see

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## Congress Returns To Busy Agenda

Immigration, Student Loans Top Congressional List

BY DONNA CASSATA

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans and Democrats will put good will to the test when Congress returns this week to potentially incendiary fights over nominations, unresolved disputes over student loans and the farm bill, and the uncertainty of whether lawmakers have the political will to rewrite the nation's immigration laws.

The cooperation evident in the Senate last month with passage of a bipartisan immigration bill could be wiped out immediately if Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., frustrated with GOP delaying tactics on judges and nominations, tries to change the Senate rules by scrapping the current three-fifths majority for a simple majority.

Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has indicated it's a decision Reid could regret if the GOP seizes Senate control in next year's elections.

"Once the Senate definitively breaks the rules to change the rules, the pressure to respond in kind will be irresistible to future majorities," McConnell said last month, looking ahead to 2014 when Democrats have to defend 21 seats to the GOP's 14.

McConnell envisioned a long list of reversals from the Democratic agenda, from repealing President Barack Obama's health care law to shipping radioactive nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain in Reid's home state of Nevada.

Recently elected Democrats have clamored for changes in Senate rules as Obama has faced Republican resistance to his nominations.

Two Cabinet-rank choices — Tom Perez as labor secretary and Gina McCarthy to head the Environmental Protection Agency — could be approved by the Senate this month after a loud debate over administration policies.



Reid

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## Bush: Congress Making Progress On Immigration

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President George W. Bush says it looks like an immigration overhaul has a chance to pass Congress and he says it's important to fix "a broken system."

The Senate has passed legislation that combines the promise of citizenship for those living in the United States unlawfully with increased border security. But that approach seems to be a nonstarter in the GOP-led House.

Still, Bush tells ABC's "This Week" that it looks like lawmakers are making "some progress."

Bush was unable to get an overhaul passed when he was president.

Asked whether the GOP would suffer if immigration legislation died, Bush said the reason to pass it isn't to bolster the Republican Party but to fix the system.

He said, "Good policy yields good politics as far as I'm concerned."

## Yankton Native Learns A Lot At Pageant

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE

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After taking a break to attend college and graduate with a medical assistant degree, Yankton native Kara Schanche is representing South Dakota in the U.S. International beauty pageant.

Schanche recently finished competing in the pageant last week in Orlando, Fla. She placed in the top 15 and is now considering more competitions as she completes an internship for her degree in Sioux Falls.

Schanche began competing in pageants when she was a sophomore in high school, competing for Miss Teen South Dakota. After taking a break to attend school, Schanche was looking to become involved once again in August when she said she came across the U.S. International organization.

U.S. International is one of the four largest international beauty pageants, which focuses on tenderness, benevolence, friendship, beauty, intelligence, the ability to take action and international sensibility.



COURTESY PHOTO

Yankton native Kara Schanche recently placed among the top 15 in the U.S. International beauty pageant in Orlando, Fla.

"I was selected to represent South Dakota, and in October I started my preparation for the national pageant," Schanche said. "I kind of knew what I was getting myself into from previous pageants that I had competed in, but this was a lot bigger."

Schanche began the application process,

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## Kerry's Wife Taken To Boston Hospital

BOSTON (AP) — Teresa Heinz Kerry, the wife of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and heir to a ketchup company fortune, was hospitalized in critical condition Sunday while on Massachusetts' Nantucket Island.

Heinz Kerry was flown to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston on Sunday night after doctors at Nantucket Cottage Hospital stabilized her, a spokesman for Kerry said. The secretary of state was with his 74-year-old wife as an ambulance first transported her to the island hospital, and also during her transfer to the Boston facility.

A hospital spokesman for the Nantucket hospital said Heinz Kerry arrived in critical condition, although doctors were able to stabilize her. But neither the family nor hospital officials had released any more details about her medical emergency or her condition Sunday night.

"The family is grateful for the outpouring of support it has received and aware of the interest in her condition, but they ask for privacy at this time," the Kerry spokesman said.

Shortly after 3:30 p.m. Sunday, emergency officials on Nantucket got a call requesting medical aid at a home on Hulbert Avenue and dispatched an ambulance there, Nantucket Police Lt. Jerry Adams said. Online records show the property is connected to Heinz Kerry's family.

Heinz Kerry is the widow of former U.S. Senator John Heinz, and heir to the Heinz ketchup fortune. Heinz died in April 1991 when a helicopter collided with a plane over a schoolyard in Merion, Pa. The senator was among seven people, including two children, who perished in the accident.

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**TOMORROW:** Yankton School Board Reorganizes For 2013-14 School Year

YANKTON RECYCLING THIS WEEK:  
**NORTH**  
OF 15TH STREET