

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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## OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

# U.S. Should Stay In Afghanistan

**CHICAGO TRIBUNE (July 13):** President Hamid Karzai's erratic behavior has President Barack Obama considering a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan after 2014.

The frustration with Karzai is understandable.

Last month, peace talks between the U.S. and the Taliban collapsed before they even started. Karzai accused the U.S. of trying to negotiate a separate peace with the Taliban and their enablers in Pakistan, leaving his government vulnerable to its foes. In retaliation, Karzai cut off negotiations with the U.S. over a security agreement that will govern American military forces after 2014.

And so, the White House signaled through a *New York Times* story this week, the so-called "zero option" is gaining traction.

The U.S. recently turned over complete security control to Afghanistan forces and has a timetable for withdrawal of troops by the end of 2014. The expectation is that the U.S. would keep a modest force of 3,000 to 9,000 troops after that, focused on anti-terror operations and support for Afghan security forces. Afghanistan will need international assistance to keep the Taliban at bay and deny a safe haven to al-Qaida.

But the U.S. won't be willing to risk an extended presence if it doesn't have an agreement with Afghanistan that legally protects U.S. soldiers. Without that agreement, the U.S. military will have to leave the country.

That's what happened in Iraq in 2011. ...

After so many years of fighting, it's easy to lose sight of just how much life has improved in Afghanistan. ...

The U.S. and its allies have pledged to spend billions of dollars after 2014 to continue building Afghanistan's security forces. In a 2012 NATO summit in Chicago, world leaders declared that "Afghanistan will not stand alone" after 2014.

More precisely, Afghanistan will not stand if it is alone.

## SPEAK UP!

■ Share your thoughts with us. Write to the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** on a topic of the day or in response to an editorial or story. Write us at: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to [views@yankton.net](mailto:views@yankton.net).

## ON THIS DATE

### By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, July 18, the 199th day of 2013. There are 166 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On July 18, 1863, during the Civil War, Union troops spearheaded by the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, made up of black soldiers, charged Confederate-held Fort Wagner on Morris Island, S.C. The Confederates were able to repel the Northerners, who suffered heavy losses; the 54th's commander, Col. Robert Gould Shaw, was among those who were killed.

**On this date:** In A.D. 64, the Great Fire of Rome began.

In 1536, the English Parliament passed an act declaring the authority of the pope void in England.

In 1792, American naval hero John Paul Jones died in Paris at age 45.

In 1872, Britain enacted voting by secret ballot.

In 1913, comedian Red Skelton was born in Vincennes, Ind.

In 1932, the United States and Canada signed a treaty to develop the St. Lawrence Seaway.

In 1940, the Democratic National Convention at Chicago Stadium nominated President Franklin D. Roosevelt for an unprecedented third term in office.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed a Presidential Succession Act, which placed the speaker of the House and the Senate president pro tempore next in the line of succession after the vice president.

In 1969, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., left a party on Chappaquiddick Island near Martha's Vineyard with Mary Jo Kopechne, 28; some time later, Kennedy's car went off a bridge into the water. (Kennedy was able to escape, but Kopechne drowned.)

In 1976, at the Montreal Olympics, Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci received the first-ever perfect score of 10 with her routine on uneven parallel bars. (Comaneci would go on to receive six more 10s at Montreal.)

In 1984, gunman James Huberty opened fire at a McDonald's fast food restaurant in San Ysidro, Calif., killing 21 people before being shot dead by police. Walter F. Mondale won the Democratic presidential nomination in San Francisco.

In 1988, Texas Treasurer Ann Richards, delivering the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, skewered presumed Republican nominee George H.W. Bush as having been "born with a silver foot in his mouth."

**Ten years ago:** Basketball star Kobe Bryant was charged with sexually assaulting a 19-year-old woman at a Colorado spa; Bryant denied the charge, saying he was guilty only of

adultery. (Prosecutors later dropped the case.) The body of British scientist David Kelly, a weapons expert at the center of a storm over British intelligence on Iraq, was found a day after he'd committed suicide.

**Five years ago:** One of the world's largest mobile cranes collapsed at a refinery in southeast Houston, killing four people and injuring seven others. Two French humanitarian aid workers were kidnapped in Afghanistan's Day Kundi province. (They were released about two weeks later.) The epic Batman sequel "The Dark Knight," starring Christian Bale as the caped crusader and Heath Ledger as the Joker, premiered.

**One year ago:** Rebels penetrated the heart of Syria's power elite, detonating a bomb inside a high-level crisis meeting in Damascus that killed three leaders of the regime, including President Bashar Assad's brother-in-law and the defense minister. A bus bombing at the Burgas airport in Bulgaria killed five Israeli tourists, the bus driver and the alleged perpetrator.

**Today's Birthdays:** Former South African President Nelson Mandela is 95. Former Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, is 92. Conductor Kurt Masur is 86. Skating champion and commentator Dick Button is 84. Movie director Paul Verhoeven is 75. Musician Brian Auger is 74. Singer Dion DiMucci is 74. Actor James Brolin is 73. Baseball executive Joe Torre is 73. Singer Martha Reeves is 72. Blues guitarist Lonnie Mack is 72. Pop-rock musician Wally Bryson (The Raspberries) is 64. Country-rock singer Craig Fuller (Pure Prairie League) is 64. Actress Margo Martindale is 62. Singer Ricky Skaggs is 59. Actress Audrey Landers is 57. Golfer Nick Faldo is 56. Rock musician Nigel Twist (The Alarm) is 55. Actress Anne-Marie Johnson is 53. Actress Elizabeth McGovern is 52. Rock musician John Hermann (Widespread Panic) is 51. Rock musician Jack Irons is 51. Actor Vin Diesel is 46. Actor Grant Bowler is 45. Retired NBA All-Star Penny Hardaway is 42. Alt-country singer Elizabeth Cook is 41. Actor Eddie Matos is 41. MLB All-Star Torii Hunter is 38. Dance music singer-songwriter M.I.A. is 38. Rock musician Daron Malakian (System of a Down; Scars on Broadway) is 38. Rock musician Tony Fagenson (Eve 6) is 35. Movie director Jared Hess is 34. Actor Jason Weaver is 34. Actress Kristen Bell is 33. Rock singer Ryan Cabrera is 31. Christian-rock musician Aaron Gillespie (Underoath) is 30. Actor Chace Crawford is 28. Bluegrass musician Joe Dean Jr. (Dailley & Vincent) is 24.

**Thought for Today:** "I'm nuts and I know it. But so long as I make 'em laugh, they ain't going to lock me up." — Red Skelton (1913-1997).

## FROM THE BIBLE

*But the fruit of the Spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23.* Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

## YOUR LETTERS

### Sack Pack Support

**Sack Pack Program Board of Directors**

The Sack Pack Program would like to thank the Upper Deck for hosting their second Annual Poker Run to help raise funds for the Yankton Sack Pack Program.

A huge thank you goes out to the people that participated in the poker run as well and the live auction.

We would also like to thank the local businesses for their generous donation for the auc-

tion. Words cannot express the gratitude we feel toward Mark and Kenneth Hausmann of the Upper Deck, JJ Benji, Gerard Auction, Karen and Dave Abbott, Matt and Barb Hanson, Doyle Sage and Jeff Sage for their hard work toward this fundraising event.

Through this event and the support of the people of our community, the Sack Pack Program will be able to continue our mission of being able to provide meals to children at risk of hunger on the week-ends.



## Writer's Block

# Hunger? In Yankton Co.?

BY WILLIAM KERR

For the Press & Dakotan

On Wednesday, June 26, there was a front page article in the *Press & Dakotan* stating that a Feeding America study found that there were 2,450 people in Yankton County who were in the category of "food insecure." That is defined as "consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money or other resources at times throughout the year." In other words they don't always know where their next meal is coming from. And, using the state figures, about 35 percent of them are children, who can hardly fend for themselves.

I don't know how that hit you, but as a financial supporter of Feeding America and Feeding South Dakota I was startled. I had assumed that hunger was being pretty much taken care of by those two organizations. It surely doesn't look like that.

It looks like we need to consider starting a Feeding Yankton County movement, or organization, if we are to help those thousands in our own county who face hunger regularly. During the past few days I have twice seen people holding up signs saying "need help" on Highway 81, and they needed food and gas. I helped, but it was sad. It was some very obvious evidence of hunger in Yankton County. It also brought back memories of the Great Depression. I remember when I was just a child that with some regularity someone would come in our back door and ask if there was some work they could do for us to earn a meal or a sandwich. My mother always managed to provide some food. That was so sad to me even then. I never thought about it since, but last night it came to me that those who asked for sandwiches might have been wanting food to take to their children.

I assume that the majority, if not the vast majority, of us citizens in Yankton County are Christians. We do have 24 organized Christian Congregations listed in the Yellow Pages just in Yankton, with several in smaller towns in the county. I don't know if all of my brother and sister Christians are aware that this segment of scripture below is Jesus' definition of a Christian to be used on Judgment Day (Mt. 25:30-46) in which the very first item is feeding the hungry: (34) "Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, oh blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me.' ... (41) Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, and in prison and you did not visit me.'

If we take those words seriously it sounds like we have a real opportunity here to act as true Christians (according to Jesus). And, we are not without resources.

One resource is the Banquet at United Church of Christ which has been serving hot nutritious meals free of charge to those in need for some years. Lately they have been serving an average of 250 people on each Thursday and 150 on two Tuesdays per month. The Banquet staff has the experience needed to help the rest of us know how to ob-

tain the food, prepare and serve it in the most efficient and helpful way, if we choose to do so in our other churches.

Another resource is the Contact Center in the County Courthouse which provides food for an average of 500 families (about 2,000 people) per month (plus offer food driver included) to prepare for themselves.

We also have Meals on Wheels at The (senior) Center which provides 1,236 meals on average, per month delivered to the homes of house bound seniors.

That makes a total of 4,536 meals served to people at risk of missing meals with some regularity. Sounds like a lot already doesn't it? On the other hand divided by the 2,450 persons regularly at risk of going without meals, that's just about 2 meals per month per person at risk. Looking at it that way 4,536 meals doesn't look like enough to get the job done. But, it is a good start. And we haven't begun to apply our numbers and our congregations to the task have we?

If we could bring that number up to two meals per week per person, instead of two meals per month, (that would be eight meals per month per person) it might save most of those now in need from the more dire consequences of malnutrition. That would mean doing four times what we are now doing. But, we do have more than 20 more congregations and thousands of us fellow Christians yet to tap. As one of our early patriots once said, "We have not yet begun to fight!"

If some additional congregations decide to do this, each congregation which gets involved could consider giving a double whammy to the problem by offering both meals at a church and a "meals on wheels" type delivery to those who don't have or can't afford transportation (gas). Church volunteers could seek out those in need and inform them of time and place. (Bringing the needy to the church and returning them home is two round trips while taking meals to them is only one.)

If any additional congregations decide to go with this idea they could coordinate with the Church of Christ and each other so as to offer meals on different days and share helpful experiences and etc. The ultimate goal could be to provide a hot, nutritious evening meal for every fourth day of the month for those who have the need. What a golden opportunity for the rest of us to fulfill the first item of Jesus' definition of a Christian.

We could easily get the *P&D* to provide up to date information on times and places where the meals will be available. They could also provide information for those individuals, businesses and other organizations who might want to provide financial assistance for such an effort.

Well, fellow Yanktonians (city and county) what do you think? Do we have the will to do something substantial here? It won't be easy but, if we are willing to "gird up our loins" and say to ourselves "by God (and we will have his support) we're going to do this". I am sure that we can make at least a big reduction in the number of hungry people in our county and thereby set an example for other areas to build on.

Or, we could just sit back and say to ourselves, "Isn't that a shame?" And let the thousands now routinely going hungry all around us in Yankton County to continue routinely missing meals and going hungry. I can't believe we will do that. One of the four things that moved us to come and live in Yankton 19 years ago was the way we saw people here treat each other during several research trips.

Come on fellow Yanktonians, we can do something substantial about this! A World War II song comes to mind here: "We did it before (every year for United Way) and we can do it again (for our hungry brethren)."

Christianity, like Democracy, isn't really free is it! We do have to work at it!

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