

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION

MMC Football And Priorities

Well, a football fan can always dream. And for some local football fans, part of that dream has been to see Mount Marty College field a football program.

But that won't be happening, at least not anytime soon. A story in Tuesday's *Press & Dakotan* examined the issue, which has been the source of a lot of speculation and wishful thinking for literally decades.

In Tuesday's story, new Mount Marty College President Marc Long said starting a football program for the Yankton school is not in the plans, but admitted that it "certainly is not off the table."

The idea of starting a football program is not as far-fetched or impractical as some people may think.

Certainly, the arguments against it are clear. The sport is certainly expensive; based on other schools in the area, the cost of fielding a program would range anywhere from \$330,000-\$800,000 annual. By comparison, MMC's athletic budget this past year was a lean \$1.3 million.

But economics also present a compelling argument in favor of starting a gridiron program. Such a program could probably draw an additional 80-100 students to the school, which would obviously be a nice infusion of tuition money. And given the fans that the sport could draw — especially among relatives of the athletes — the investment suddenly begins to take on an air of practicality.

And no doubt, a football program would elevate the school's identity. Like it or not, football is a cultural staple of a typical college/university environment, which is why the number of college football programs across the country is currently at an all-time high. Schools see their football programs as putting a face on their institutions and attracting the passions (and donations) of alumni.

So, there are some compelling pluses to fielding a football program at Mount Marty.

However, it would be more practical for the school to first build up its other programs, some of which have long struggled to be competitive in the Great Plains Athletic Conference. While programs like basketball and baseball have fairly solid foundations under them, others have not fared nearly as well — and have done so on a consistent basis. As the aforementioned budgetary figure suggests, money for these programs has been very tight, and the last thing MMC needs is another program — and a big-ticket one — that is also gassing for investment or is siphoning funds from other sports.

As exciting as it would be to see an MMC football team take to the fields each autumn, the notion just doesn't seem feasible at this time. But it's encouraging that the idea is not summarily dismissed. Maybe someday, Lancer fans. Maybe someday.

kmh

P&D LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** invites its readers to write letters to the editor. We ask that a few simple guidelines be followed:

- Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

- In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

- Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

- Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email us at kelly.hertz@yankton.net/.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Wednesday, July 29, the 210th day of 2015. There are 155 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On July 29, 1890, artist Vincent van Gogh, 37, died of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound in Auvers-sur-Oise, France.

On this date: In 1588, the English attacked the Spanish Armada in the Battle of Gravelines, resulting in an English victory.

In 1900, Italian King Humbert I was assassinated by an anarchist; he was succeeded by his son, Victor Emmanuel III.

In 1914, transcontinental telephone service in the U.S. became operational with the first test conversation between New York and San Francisco. Massachusetts' Cape Cod Canal, offering a shortcut across the base of the peninsula, was officially opened to shipping traffic.

In 1921, Adolf Hitler became the leader ("Fuehrer") of the National Socialist German Workers Party.

In 1948, Britain's King George VI opened the Olympic Games in London.

In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the National Aeronautics and Space Act, creating NASA.

In 1965, The Beatles' second feature film, "Help!," had its world premiere in London.

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford became the first U.S. president to visit the site of the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz in Poland.

In 1981, Britain's Prince Charles married Lady Diana Spencer at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. (However, the couple divorced in 1996.)

In 1985, space shuttle Challenger began an 8-day mission that got off to a shaky start: the spacecraft achieved a safe orbit even though one of its main engines shut down prematurely after lift-off.

In 1994, abortion opponent Paul Hill shot and killed Dr. John Bayard Britton and Britton's bodyguard, James H. Barrett, outside the Ladies Center clinic in Pensacola, Florida. (Hill was executed in September 2003.)

In 2004, Sen. John Kerry accepted the Democratic presidential nomination at the party's convention in Boston with a military salute and the declaration: "I'm John Kerry and I'm reporting for duty."

Ten years ago: The U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a U.S.-sponsored resolution expanding U.N. sanctions against al-Qaida terrorists and Afghanistan's former Taliban rulers to affiliates and splinter groups. Cabaret singer Hildegard, whose career spanned

almost seven decades, died in New York at age 99.

Five years ago: Army Spc. Bradley (now Chelsea) Manning was flown from a detention facility in Kuwait to the Marine Corps brig in Quantico, Virginia, to await trial on charges of giving military secrets to WikiLeaks. The House rejected a bill that would have provided up to \$74 billion in aid to people sickened by World Trade Center dust; Rep. Anthony Weiner, D-N.Y., angrily denounced Republicans who'd voted against the measure, calling it "a shame, a shame." A House panel charged New York Democrat Charles Rangel with 13 counts of ethical misdeeds (he was later censured by the full House).

One year ago: Spurred to action by the downing of a Malaysian airliner over rebel-held eastern Ukraine, the European Union approved dramatically tougher economic sanctions against Russia, including an arms embargo and restrictions on state-owned banks; President Barack Obama swiftly followed with an expansion of U.S. penalties targeting key sectors of the Russian economy. Mississippi's effort to close its last abortion clinic was blocked by a federal appeals court.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian "Professor" Irwin Corey is 101. Actor Robert Horton is 91. Former Sen. Nancy Kassebaum-Baker is 83. Actor Robert Fuller is 82. Former Sen. Elizabeth H. Dole is 79. Actor David Warner is 74. Actress Roz Kelly is 73. Rock musician Neal Doughty (REO Speedwagon) is 69. Marilyn Tucker Quayle, wife of former Vice President Dan Quayle, is 66. Actor Mike Starr is 65. Documentary maker Ken Burns is 62. Style guru Tim Gunn (TV: "Project Runway") is 62. Rock singer-musician Geddy Lee (Rush) is 62. Rock singer Patti Scialfa (Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band) is 62. Olympic gold medal gymnast Nellie Kim is 58. Actor Kevin Chapman is 53. Actress Alexandra Paul is 52. Country singer Martina McBride is 49. Rock musician Chris Gorman is 48. Actor Rodney Allen Ripley is 47. Actor Tim Omundson is 46. Actor Ato Essandoh is 43. Actor Will Wheaton is 43. Rhythm-and-blues singer Wanya Morris (Boyz II Men) is 42. Country singer-songwriter James Otto is 42. Actor Stephen Dorff is 42. Actor Josh Radnor is 41. Hip-hop DJ/music producer Danger Mouse is 38. Actress Rachel Miner is 35. Actress Allison Mack is 33. Actress Kaitlyn Black (TV: "Hart of Dixie") is 32. Actor Matt Prokop is 25.

Thought for Today: "Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together." — Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890).

FROM THE BIBLE

The Lord is our righteousness. Jeremiah 33:16. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

THE COLUMBIAN DISPATCH
BY KATHY LARSON



Happy Birthday, Medicare

BY ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune Content Agency

Medicare turns 50 this week. It was signed into law July 30, 1965 — the crowning achievement of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. It's more popular than ever.

Yet Medicare continues to be blamed for America's present and future budget problems. That's baloney.

Last week, Jeb Bush even suggested phasing it out. Seniors already receiving benefits should continue to receive them, he said, but "we need to figure out a way to phase out this program for others and move to a new system that allows them to have something, because they're not going to have anything."

Bush praised Rep. Paul Ryan's erstwhile plan to give seniors vouchers instead. What Bush didn't say was that Ryan's vouchers wouldn't keep up with increases in medical costs, leaving seniors with less coverage.

The fact is, Medicare isn't a problem. It's the solution.

Its costs are being pushed upward by the rising costs of health care overall — which have slowed somewhat since the Affordable Care Act was introduced but are still rising faster than inflation.

Medicare costs are also rising because of the growing ranks of baby boomers becoming eligible for Medicare.

Medicare offers a way to reduce these underlying costs — if Washington would let it.

Let me explain. Americans spend more on health care per person than any other advanced nation and get less for our money. Yearly public and private health-care spending is almost two and a half times the average of other advanced nations.

Yet the typical American lives 78.8 years — less than the average 80.1 years in other advanced nations. And we have the highest rate of infant mortality of all advanced nations.

Medical costs continue to rise because doctors and hospitals still spend too much money on unnecessary tests, drugs and procedures.

Consider lower back pain, one of the most common ailments of our sedentary society. Almost 95 percent of it can be relieved through physical therapy, according to doctors.

But doctors and hospitals often do expensive MRIs and then refer patients to orthopedic surgeons for costly surgery. Why? Physical therapy doesn't generate much revenue.

Or say your diabetes, asthma or heart condition is acting up. If you seek treatment in a hospital, 20 percent of the time you're back within a month.

It would be far less costly — and less painful — if a nurse visited you at home to make sure



Robert B. REICH

you were taking your medications, a common practice in other advanced nations. But nurses don't do home visits to Americans with acute conditions because hospitals aren't paid for them.

America spends more than \$19 billion a year fixing medical errors — the worst rate among advanced countries. Such errors are the third leading cause of hospital deaths.

One big reason is patient records are kept on computers that can't share the data. That requires the records be continuously rewritten and then re-entered into different computers. Which leads to lots of mistakes.

Meanwhile, administrative costs account for 15 percent to 30 percent of all health care spending in the United States, twice the rate of most other advanced nations.

Most of this is to collect money: doctors collecting from hospitals and insurers, hospitals collecting from insurers, insurers collecting from companies or policy holders. A third of nursing hours are devoted to documenting what's done so that insurers have proof.

Cutting back Medicare won't affect any of this. It will just funnel more money into the hands of for-profit insurers while limiting the amount of care seniors receive.

The answer isn't to shrink Medicare. It's to grow it — allowing anyone at any age to join.

Medicare's administrative costs are in the range of 3 percent. That's well below the 5 percent to 10 percent costs borne by large companies that self-insure. It's below the 11 percent costs of private plans under Medicare Advantage, the current private-insurance option under Medicare. And it's way, way lower than the administrative costs of individual insurance (40 percent, including advertising and marketing).

Meanwhile, as for-profit insurance companies merge into giant behemoths that reduce consumer choice still further, it's doubly important to make Medicare available to all.

Medicare should also be allowed to use its huge bargaining leverage to negotiate lower rates with pharmaceutical companies — which Obamacare barred in order to get Big Insurance to go along with the legislation.

These moves would give more Americans quality health care, slow the increase in health-care costs, help reduce the federal budget deficit and keep Medicare going.

Let me say it again: Medicare isn't the problem. It's the solution.

Robert Reich is Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and Senior Fellow at the Blum Center for Developing Economies. His new film, "Inequality for All," is now out on Netflix, iTunes and Amazon.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Underneath The Words

Michael Slama, Ed. D. Yankton
In regards to the letter by Kim Dale ("A Response," *Press & Dakotan*, July 21):

I have been reading the discourse between you and Eric Leise. Underneath all that pomp is the typical Christian bigot. It's this "holier than thou" attitude and all-knowing person like Ms. Dale which reminds me of "shoving your sexuality in the face of other." How do gays shove their sexuality in your face? I want to know some specific instances when this shoving has occurred?

I have two of these Christian "know-it-alls" in my own family and they are the most bigoted people that I know. The sad thing is their thinking has made their children "in your face" second generation copies of their parents. There is no room for Christian love or a life that is more Jesus-like in their own little corrupted and narrow world view.

Ms. Dale rants on in her July 21 letter as if she is a church official and stands ready to be Catholic judge and jury. Obviously, she is neither and thank God people like her will never be the judge or jury. Her interpretation of Catholic teaching "pushes" people out of the Church. But we all have come short of the glory of God. Her representations would be better left to the local parish priest who does speak with authority.

I say to Ms. Dale, "If you can't say something good to a 'condemned' person and re-

spect them as a fellow human being, it's better to zip your lip and go about your business." Ms. Dale says, "I wish you well ..." It feels like a sharp, forked tongue to me!

Perhaps God will provide some very needed light and a sorely needed religious epiphany to all of us who have come short to the glory of God, including Ms. Dale.

Coverage Issues

Karen Harmelink, Yankton
Having attended the Yankton Area Arts (YAA) Meridian En Blanc, and tremendously enjoying the event, I was so disappointed in the coverage given on front page of the *Press & Dakotan* of July 20, 2015.

The Meridian Bridge was a unique venue for such an event and the evening was perfect. However, not only was the event poorly reported, but such blatant errors as "admiring the beauty of the lake" (who doesn't know the difference between the Missouri River and Lewis & Clark Lake?) and mentioning "formal dinner" (it was not formal nor a dinner.) If the reporter had been observant, she/he would have noted how creative and impressive the gourmet French Picnic was presented. The music by Bridge City Big Band, enjoyed by all, deserved more than merely mentioning the time they performed, as the band attracted those who passed to stop and also enjoy the music.

Other than improved reporting without errors, next year's event will be difficult to top this one.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." — **The FIRST AMENDMENT to the U.S. Constitution**

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