

# The Press Dakotan

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**OPINION**

## Being Thankful And Giving Thanks

Giving thanks and being thankful are, arguably, two different things. The former is often just a gesture of good will or manners; the latter is something that fires up from deep inside you and is often as sincere as a summer day is long.

On this day before Thanksgiving, perhaps it's important to understand the difference and to realize that, for many Americans, being thankful for what we have is more difficult than we realize.

We are a nation that has reaped great benefits. While we are engaged in wars, we are relatively safe compared to what we see in other parts of the world, especially in the last couple weeks. While we do have issues with hunger in our country, we are generally well-fed. We enjoy access to good medical care. Our standard of living is quite high, as the Black Friday sales frenzy is about to demonstrate yet again. We can vote. We can worship as we choose. We can own guns. We can voice our opinions. We have a free press. We have a powerful military to protect us. We have laws that protect us, too.

Americans have plenty for which to be thankful. But we often take this for granted because we've never faced the alternatives. Many Americans say they are thankful for freedom, for instance, but few of us know what it is to live without it. We have never lived under a suppressive regime. We have never feared that a slip of the tongue could make you or a loved one disappear.

We don't know what life in parts of Latin America must be like — a reality that compels many people to come to this country looking for fresh opportunity.

We don't appreciate what the refugees from Syria have endured, what they have lost and what they have left. Some of us don't want to know.

We don't know what Palestinians must feel to see what they view as their homeland being occupied.

We don't know what Israelis must feel to be surrounded on all sides by potential enemies.

We don't know what it is to wake up with fear in your head and nothing in your stomach, with disease and poverty lurking all around you.

We don't know what it is to be reduced to hating so blindly and desperately that we become fanatical, murderous automatons. Our ignorance is our bliss, you might say.

This is not a perfect land, by any means. There is still a fair share of strife within these borders. There is anger. There is distrust. There are social and economic inequities. There is fear. And there are those who play on these things for political or economic gain — so we are also burdened with these characters.

But America is a place that is all about possibility. It's what brings people here. It's what keeps people here. It's what makes this nation a brightest constellation and a beacon for those desperate for some glimmer of hope.

And for that, we should be thankful — on Thanksgiving Day and every day.

kmh

**IN HISTORY**

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Wednesday, Nov. 25, the 329th day of 2015. There are 36 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Nov. 25, 1915, a new version of the Ku Klux Klan, targeting blacks, Jews, Catholics and immigrants, was founded by William Joseph Simmons, who proclaimed himself the Imperial Wizard of the group as he staged a cross-burning on Stone Mountain outside Atlanta.

**On this date:** In 1783, the British evacuated New York, their last military position in the United States during the Revolutionary War.

In 1864, during the Civil War, Confederate agents set a series of arson fires in New York; the blazes were quickly extinguished.

In 1908, the first issue of The Christian Science Monitor was published.

In 1920, radio station WTAW of College Station, Texas, broadcast the first play-by-play description of a football game, between Texas University and the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. (Texas won, 7-3.)

In 1940, the cartoon character Woody Woodpecker made his debut in the animated short "Knock Knock" produced by Walter Lantz.

In 1947, movie studio executives meeting in New York agreed to blacklist the "Hollywood Ten" who'd been cited for contempt of Congress the day before.

In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower suffered a slight stroke.

In 1963, the body of President John F. Kennedy was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery; his widow, Jacqueline, lighted an "eternal flame" at the gravesite.

In 1974, former U.N. Secretary-General U Thant died in New York at age 65.

In 1986, the Iran-Contra affair erupted as President Ronald Reagan and Attorney General Edwin Meese revealed that profits from secret arms sales to Iran had been diverted to Nicaraguan rebels.

In 1999, 5-year-old Elian Gonzalez was rescued by a pair of sport fishermen off the coast of Florida, setting off an international custody battle.

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed legislation creating the Department of Homeland Security, and appointed Tom Ridge to be its head.

**Ten years ago:** Palestinians took control of a border for the first time with the festive opening of the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, a milestone on their rocky path to independence. Susanne Osthoif, a German aid worker and archaeologist, was kidnapped in Iraq; she was released more than three weeks later. Nine inmates escaped from the Yakima County Jail in Washington state; all were recaptured, although one was at large

for three weeks. George Best, one of the most dazzling players in soccer history, died at a London hospital at age 59.

**Five years ago:** Incumbent Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki cemented his grip on power, bringing an end to nearly nine months of political deadlock after he was asked to form the next government. South Korea's defense minister, Kim Tae-young, resigned amid intense criticism two days after a North Korean artillery attack killed four people on a small island near the Koreas' disputed frontier.

**One year ago:** Attorneys for Michael Brown's family vowed to push for federal charges against the Ferguson, Missouri, police officer who killed the unarmed 18-year-old, a day after a grand jury declined to indict Darren Wilson, who insisted in an interview with ABC News that he could not have done anything differently in the confrontation with Brown. (The Justice Department later declined to prosecute Wilson.) President Barack Obama sharply rebuked protesters for racially charged violence in Ferguson, saying there was no excuse for burning buildings, torching cars and destroying other property.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Noel Neill is 95. Playwright Murray Schisgal is 89. Actress Kathryn Murray is 82. Actor Christopher Riordan is 78. Pro Football Hall of Fame coach Joe Gibbs is 75. Singer Bob Lind is 73. Author, actor and economist Ben Stein is 71. Actor John Larroquette is 68. Actor Tracey Walter is 68. Movie director Jonathan Kaplan is 68. Author Charlaiane Harris is 64. Retired MLB All-Star Bucky Dent is 64. Dance judge Bruno Tonioli (TV: "Dancing with the Stars") is 60. Singer Amy Grant is 55. Former NFL quarterback Bernie Kosar is 52. Rock musician Eric Grossman (K's Choice) is 51. Rock singer Mark Lanegan is 51. Rock singer-musician Tim Armstrong is 50. Actor Steve Harris is 50. Actor Billy Burke is 49. Singer Stacy Lattisaw is 49. Rock musician Rodney Sheppard (Sugar Ray) is 49. Rapper-producer Erick Sermon is 47. Actress Jill Hennessy is 46. Actress Christina Applegate is 44. Actor Eddie Steeples is 42. Actress Kristian Nairn is 40. Former NFL quarterback Donovan McNabb is 39. Actress Jill Flint is 38. Actor Jerry Ferrara is 36. Actor Joel Kinnaman is 36. Actress Valerie Azlynn is 35. Former first daughter Barbara Pierce Bush is 34. Former first daughter Jenna Bush Hager is 34. Actress Katie Cassidy is 29. Neo-soul musician Ben Griner (St. Paul & the Broken Bones) is 25. Contemporary Christian singer Jamie Grace is 24.

**Thought for Today:** "There's no one so intolerant or less tolerated in society than someone who's intolerant." — Giacomo Leopardi, Italian author and poet (1798-1837).

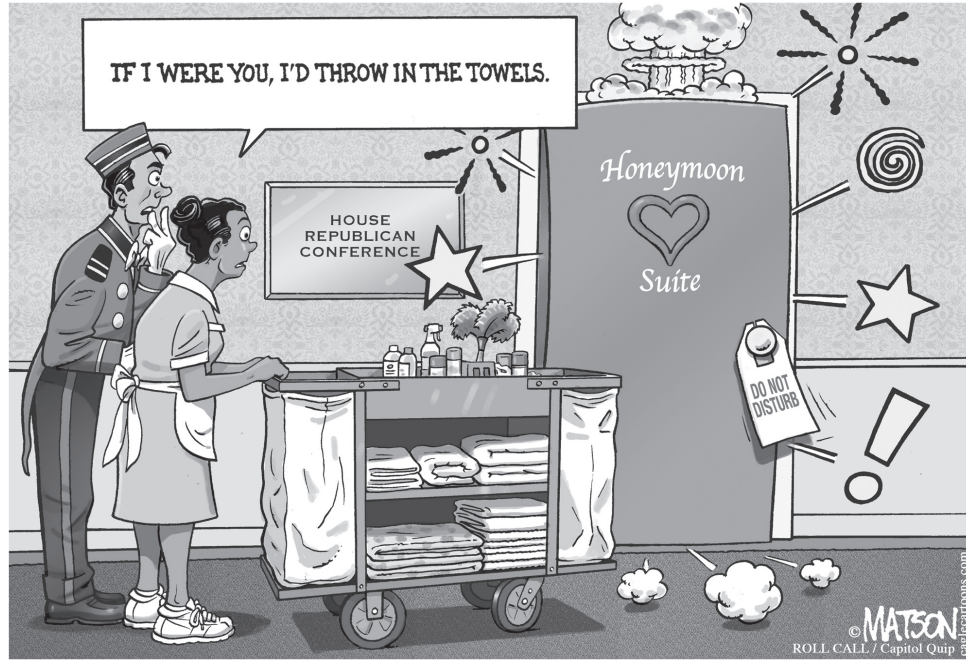
**FROM THE BIBLE**

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10.* Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Great Showings!**

**John Sternquist, Yankton**  
On Nov. 13, as we watched the Bucks win the AA football title, we were treated to many great performances. The Bucks had an inspiring year regrouping after key injuries and trying players at different positions to find the winning combination. Congratulations to them and coach Likness and his staff. As great as their performance was the Yankton High School acappella choir's rendition of our national anthem was spectacular. I felt it to be one of the finest performances I have heard. Kudos to both teams, football and choral.



**Thanksgiving 2015**

## A Post-War Blessing

Much of this year has been spent looking back on the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and honoring those soldiers — perhaps one last time — for the tremendous victory that was won and their terrible cost many of them paid.

Each year, the *Press & Dakotan* digs through the archive of presidential proclamations at PilgrimHall.org to publish a past proclamation on Thanksgiving eve. A few are significant in the history of the American Thanksgiving; most are merely footnotes that are quickly forgotten but usually offer a snapshot of that moment in time.

Today, we go back 70 years to Harry Truman's 1945 proclamation. It was issued after World War II finally ended, and it dutifully reflects the blessings and humility that these proclamations almost always include. It also makes note of the passing of Franklin Roosevelt, who served as president for 12 years before dying suddenly in April 1945, just short of seeing a great quest for victory realized.

We wish you all a peaceful and joyful Thanksgiving.

**THANKSGIVING DAY, 1945**

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A PROCLAMATION**

In this year of our victory, absolute and final, over German fascism and Japanese militarism; in this time of peace so long awaited, which we are determined with all the United Nations to make permanent; on this day of our abundance, strength, and achievement; let us give thanks to Almighty Providence for these exceeding blessings.

We have won them with the courage and the blood of our soldiers, sailors, and airmen. We have won them by the sweat and ingenuity of our workers, farmers, engineers, and industrialists. We have won them with the devotion of our women and children. We have bought them with the treasure of our rich land. But above all we have won them because we cherish freedom



Truman

beyond riches and even more than life itself.

We give thanks with the humility of free men, each knowing it was the might of no one arm but of all together by which we were saved. Liberty knows no race, creed, or class in our country or in the world. In unity we found our first weapon, for without it, both here and abroad, we were doomed.

None have known this better than our very gallant dead, none better than our comrade, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Our thanksgiving has the humility of our deep mourning for them, our vast gratitude to them.

Triumph over the enemy has not dispelled every difficulty. Many vital and far-reaching decisions await us as we strive for a just and enduring peace. We will not fail if we preserve, in our own land and throughout the world, that same devotion to the essential freedoms and rights of mankind which sustained us throughout the war and brought us final victory.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, HARRY S. TRUMAN, President of the United States of America, in consonance with the joint resolution of Congress approved December 26, 1941, do hereby proclaim Thursday November 22, 1945, as a day of national thanksgiving. May we on that day, in our homes and in our places of worship, individually and as groups, express our humble thanks to Almighty God for the abundance of our blessings and may we on that occasion rededicate ourselves to those high principles of citizenship for which so many splendid Americans have recently given all.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed. DONE at the City of Washington 12th day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred forty-five and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and seventieth.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

**Writer's Block**

## Do You Want To Fight Terror? Embrace Those Who Reject It

BY ROB NIELSEN

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There's a scene from "The West Wing" I've been thinking about a lot the last couple of days.

For those unfamiliar, "The West Wing" was a show that followed the daily operations, crises, trials, pitfalls and successes of a fictitious presidential administration. In the pilot episode, one of the situations the senior staff is dealing with is hundreds of Cuban refugees departing Cuba in "what would charitably be described as rafts" through a storm bound for Florida to seek asylum. At the very end, President Josiah Bartlet reads a report from the Navy — 700 turned back, 350 were missing and presumed dead and 137 had made it to a detention center in Miami and were seeking asylum. And then, the president used a line that would set up the next seven seasons while acknowledging the great sacrifices so many of them had just made in a simple, yet compelling way.

"With the clothes on their back, they came through a storm," Bartlet said. "And the ones that didn't die want a better life, and they want it here. Talk about impressive."

Refugees are in the news again, this time in the real world — but facing much more hostility than the Cubans under Bartlet. A number of governors from both parties are vowing to block 10,000 Syrian refugees while the Republican candidates for president are working to drum up fear and suspicion of these refugees. For whatever motive, all these officials are doing is playing right into the whims of the madmen that make up ISIS. I'd say ISIS owes all of them a fruit basket to thank them, but with the holidays coming up, I think a meat-and-cheese basket would be more appropriate.

But what those giving into fear may be missing is the fact that bringing these refugees would be a greater asset to our fight against terrorism than a promotion of terrorism.

Ever since 9/11, I've kept hearing calls that Muslims as a whole aren't doing enough to denounce or stand up to terrorism. For a time, I believed that, too.

Then I look at the Syrian conflict. The 10 million of that country have been through more than we could ever imagine. They essentially have a couple choices in order to live there: Assad says, "Join us, kill your countrymen or we and a country eager to prove it's still a super power (Russia) may wantonly bomb your city out of existence." ISIS gives them a much simpler set of choices, "Join us, pay us or die." More than 4 million people have said, "We will do neither. Instead, we will uproot ourselves from this land we've



Rob NIELSEN

called home for generations. We will risk our lives, the lives of our loved ones, pay smugglers that leave us penniless, cross seas in overcrowded boats, trek hundreds of miles across land and do all that to reach countries that greet us with anything from silent suspicion to open, unadulterated disdain. We will settle in those countries and try to rebuild our lives from nothing — and we will endure that because it is preferable to joining your ranks."

Talk about impressive. These 10,000 Syrians (and 100,000 by 2017) we're trying to take in have been vetted at refugee camps for nearly two years, as with all refugees, and put through dozens of checks. Nobody can act that well for that long, and if one of them can, their talents are being terribly misapplied if evil is their intent. Rather than shunning the refugees, we should be embracing them because they did everything I just described above and added a rigorous test to it.

The wave in question is 10,000 potential allies, 10,000 teachers that can spread the word on what's happening there. ISIS likes using social media to radicalize and lure young people, even Americans, into their ranks. If they notice someone in their own congregation going down that path, these are 10,000 people who can take that person aside and say "I just came from there. They're killing us. Once you go, there's no turning back with your life intact and you will die trying to fulfill a false prophecy." Now, imagine what 10,000 could do.

A large contingent of voices that has already stood up to terror and tyranny could be the most effective weapon in this War on Terror and it won't even require a shot to be fired. There's no doubt some of the solution will come to blows and every situation in the Middle East is different, but I think taking in these refugees is a way of standing up to the enemies of freedom. What better way to fight them by making thousands more free people in one fell swoop?

This is the kind of confidence I have in these refugees we've screened — if this city had the capacity to take on 10,000 people all at once right now, you could put all 10,000 refugees in Yankton and I would sleep just fine at night. I feel this way because I'm not afraid to stand against terror, tyranny and unadulterated stupidity as well as standing for the values this country proclaims it instills, and I wish the governors blocking these refugees and the people applauding their cowardly actions felt the same way.

Follow @RobNielsenPandD on Twitter.