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## Step By Step



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

The shoes are literally on the other feet, as participants in the Yankton Women's and Children's Center "Walk A Mile In Her Shoes" event proceed — sometimes precariously — down Third Street during Saturday's activity. The annual activity, held during Rockin' RibFest in Historic Downtown Yankton, raises both funds and awareness in dealing with domestic violence and sexual assault.

## Walking A Mile Carries Point Home At RibFest Event

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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As a pastor, the Rev. Thomas Wordekemper tries to put his best foot forward.

On Saturday afternoon, he put forward both his feet — and he did it in red high heels.

Wordekemper joined the field of 70 men participating in the Yankton Women's and Children's Center (YWCC) annual "Walk A Mile In Her Shoes" event.

The event has become a highly-anticipated part of Rockin' RibFest in downtown Yankton. The men walk a mile in high heels, raising both funds and awareness to combat domestic violence and sexual assault.

Wordekemper raised about \$2,100, receiving the "Superman Award" for the most money. He has won the award each of his four years of participation.

"I always worry, if I don't give a good sermon, people won't give money," he said with a chuckle.

Wordekemper doesn't pastor a traditional flock. He serves as chaplain for Mount Marty College and Sacred Heart Monastery.

"(MMC) classes weren't in session yet

**"Unfortunately, (domestic violence and sexual assault) happens more than you realize around here. No family is immune from it. Anything we can do to raise awareness — hopefully, it will help eliminate the problem."**

THOMAS WORDEKEMPER

when we collected money," he said. "I hit up the faculty and staff at the school, and some of the students. They have been generous."

Wordekemper also appealed to those attending the Sunday morning Masses at Bishop Marty Chapel during a four-week period. He greeted worshippers afterwards with a handshake — and a bucket in the other hand for those who cared to donate, no pressure.

"I received permission from the Benedictine Sisters to collect at the back of the

chapel after Mass," he said, offering an unofficial disclaimer.

This year's "Walk A Mile" funds are still being tallied, but last year's event raised about \$10,000. The funds go toward food and shelter for victims, as well as 24-hour response services, support groups and legal advocacy.

The funds are important, but "Walk A Mile" also provides an important message, Wordekemper said.

"Unfortunately, (domestic violence and sexual assault) happens more than you realize around here," he said. "No family is immune from it. No community is immune

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Brandon Sprague tears into a guitar solo during the performance of the Brandon Sprague Blues Band Saturday night at the 2013 Rockin' RibFest in downtown Yankton. Crowd members endured a warm and humid day (and night) as they enjoyed live music and food served up from various vendors at the sixth annual event. To see or purchase images from this event, visit [spotted.yankton.net](http://spotted.yankton.net).

## Red Cross Aids Pine Ridge Storm Victims

SIoux FALLS (AP) — The American Red Cross has helped 21 people who were displaced by a possible tornado that hit the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in western South Dakota.

The organization's Black Hills Area Chapter reported that two homes were destroyed and four others were damaged in the Friday evening storm that also knocked down some power poles and left some homes without power.

In eastern South Dakota, a severe thunderstorm with lightning and large hail damaged some Sioux Falls businesses, some cars and other buildings Saturday night.

Lightning struck the Target store in the Empire East Mall, tearing a hole in the roof and breaking a couple of gas lines, according to the Sioux Falls Fire Department. The storm also damaged a loading dock at the J.C. Penney store across the street in the Empire Mall.

Hail also smashed the windows of cars in the area. Fire Capt. Nick Luther said one woman was injured when hail broke several windows in her vehicle, but her injuries were minor and she refused medical attention. No one was injured by the lightning strike at the store, he said.

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## Obama Focuses On Syria Backing

Many Lawmakers Skeptical About Need For Intervention

BY JIM KUHNHENN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama worked on Monday to persuade skeptical lawmakers to endorse a U.S. military intervention in civil war-racked Syria, winning conditional support from two leading Senate foreign policy hawks even as he encountered resistance from members of his own party after two days of a determined push to sell the plan.

Sens. John McCain of Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said Obama still needs to make a strong case for attacking the regime of President Bashar Assad, but they toned down past criticism that the president's plan was too weak to change the course of the fighting in Syria in favor of the opposition.

"We have to make it clear that a vote against this would be catastrophic in its consequences," now and in future international crises, McCain told reporters outside the White House following an hour-long private meeting that he and Graham had with Obama and White House national security adviser Susan Rice.

But the outcome of any vote remained in doubt amid continued skepticism in a war-weary Congress. Several Democrats in a conference call with administration officials pushed back against military action, questioning both the intelligence about a chemical attack last month outside Damascus and the value of an intervention to United States interests, according to aides on the call. Others demanded narrower authorization than that requested by the administration.

"The White House has put forward a proposed bill authorizing the use of force that, as drafted, is far too broad

also

French Report Ties Chemical Attacks To Assad Regime. PAGE 13

## SD Wildfire Head Worries About Fed Budget Cuts

RAPID CITY (AP) — The director of South Dakota's Wildland Fire Division says he's worried that federal budget cuts could hurt the state's efforts to prevent and fight fires in the Black Hills.

The Rapid City Journal reports that the U.S. Forest Service has spent \$967 million fighting wildfires this year and has only \$50 million left in suppression funds. The federal agency plans to divert \$600 million from timber, recreation and other areas to fill the firefighting gap.

Jay Esperance, director of the South Dakota Wildland Fire Division, says the state stands to lose federal money that helps prevent fires from starting or spreading. He says that also would mean losing actual firefighters.

Esperance says automatic federal budget cuts have already reduced the number of firefighters staffed by the federal government.

## It Was Party Time At Annual Wagner Parade



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D

It may be September, but it's Mardi Gras time for the Commercial State Bank float in the Wagner Labor Day parade. Monday's parade, with the theme "Party Time," consisted of about 100 entries and drew an estimated 10,000 spectators. The event provided one of the highlights for the three-day, 113-year-old celebration. To see or purchase images from this event, visit [spotted.yankton.net](http://spotted.yankton.net).

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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WAGNER — With a "Party Time" theme, the Wagner Labor Day parade attracted all sorts of entrants.

Even Elvis Presley made an appearance Monday, leaving the 10,000 spectators all shook up.

For area residents, "Elvis" is known in everyday life as Bryan Slaba, the CEO of Wagner Community Memorial Hospital-Avera (WCMH-A).

"I became Elvis because WCMH-A's Special Events Committee determined that it would be a great fit and that my eccentric personality and willingness to have fun were a perfect fit," Slaba told the Press & Dakotan.

"They handed me a picture one day of the old Elvis — obviously, I couldn't be the young one because I don't have the physique — and I said, 'We can do that.'"

Slaba visited a costume store and came away with the needed outfit — thank you, thank you very much.

He admits that Elvis fits one of his favorite eras.

"I love the '50s and '60s. My wife and I have the ability to jitterbug, and we love it," Slaba said. "That's how we met. She looked at me one night after I got off the dance floor with a friend of hers, and she said, 'I want to dance with you.' And we became star struck."

Slaba has gained a reputation for playing off-beat characters in the Labor Day parade.

"Last year, I played the late Payne Stewart, the golfer with the plaid knickers, beret and puffy shirt," he said. "I had an old golf club of mine. I was swinging at different things on the ground and fake missing. People were ducking and having a fun time."

"The year before, I was wrapped up like a mummy on an exam table. The 'staff' was asking, 'What can we do to Slaba?' It's just fun, and we have a real blast with it."

"Any more, people ask, 'What's

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