

Abdalkreem

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AUGUST 2004

Abdalkreem's mother, Mayasa Abass — a teacher who spoke fluent English — had proven herself to be a valuable translator for coalition forces in her native Iraq.

She helped forces translate documents and conduct conversations, but such work made her — and many other translators — targets of violence.

And that's what happened on the afternoon of Aug. 30, 2004.

As Abass was on her way to work at a U.S. military compound, a black car pulled in front of her vehicle and demanded she get out. When she refused, a gunman opened fire and pumped six rounds through the passenger window, hitting Abass.

She was taken to the Anconda Hospital, where she stayed for two months. Abdalkreem had no idea what was going on. He was only 7 then, and he admits now he probably wouldn't have fully realized the magnitude of the event.

"The day it happened, I didn't know what was going on, but I caught bits and pieces later," he said. "I figured it out later."

Even as time passed and Iraq became increasingly more volatile, Abdalkreem's family avoided the violence for nearly two years.

One day, however, one his sister had an eerie premonition.

"My sister was looking at a picture of all three of them, and she told me this later on, 'I just know that someone's going to die today,'" he said. "That's what her gut told her."

NOVEMBER 2006

It was around 9 p.m. on a Friday night in November. Abdalkreem was sleeping in his sister's room and his mother was getting ready for bed.

Then, a noise at the front door downstairs startled her.

It was more gunmen.

After Abass had been shot two years earlier, the family had purchased an AK-47 assault rifle for protection. "We never really knew how to shoot it," Abdalkreem said.

As word began to spread throughout the house that there were terrorists at the door, a sense of panic developed.

"My mom told my dad, and he said to gather the kids upstairs," Abdalkreem said.

Minutes later, the family upstairs heard gunfire, which they later found out was Amen, the oldest child, being shot at close range. Their father was bound and thrown into a vehicle. As it turns out, that was the last time anyone saw their father alive — he was later presumed dead.

Abdalkreem, his mother and two sisters jumped out a second-floor window, landed on top of a chicken house and escaped to a neighbor's house. There was no word of Amen's condition until a couple days later when a family friend phoned to say Amen had died.

Days later, the family had received a ransom demand for their father. The debate became, should they pay the equivalent of \$10,000 U.S.?

"My mom thought, if we didn't pay, she would be blamed," Abdalkreem said. "And if we do pay, we have to get him back. "We had to have faith."

Eventually, the family paid the money, but their husband and father was never brought back.



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Bashir Abdalkreem has found his place on the Yankton football team. "I remember last year, I was looking at the depth chart and I was the smallest player on the team," he said. "Even if you might be underestimated for your height, as long as you have something there, you can do anything."

In an effort to escape the turmoil — the gunmen were reportedly looking for Abass and her children — what was left of the family moved to Syria, where they spent the next 10 months.

Through help from Lyle LaCroix of Yankton, a former reservist with the Special Operations Command Headquarters at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the family was able to move to the United States. That was their goal all along, Abdalkreem said.

"After those 10 months, we figured out we would go to America to start a new life," he said. "That was my mom's dream, when she started with the Americans."

A NEW LIFE

When Abdalkreem arrived in Yankton in 2007, he couldn't speak English, aside from a few words and phrases he had picked up from his mother, a translator.

There was an understandable acclimation period for him — not only because of the whole new culture, but also because of the violent past he and his family had left behind.

"He's made himself a better person because of it all, and he keeps on going," Likness said. "He stays on the positive side, and he uses his energy for the good."

And when you stand 5-foot-8 and weigh 145 pounds, you need all the extra intensity you can generate, especially on the football field.

"I remember last year, I was looking at the depth chart and I was the smallest player on the team," Abdalkreem said. "Even if you might be underestimated for your height, as long as you have some-

thing there, you can do anything."

In his case, speed has always been there.

During last year's championship season for the Bucks, Abdalkreem — who played primarily at the junior varsity level — rushed the ball nine times, caught one pass, returned six punts and two kickoffs, and made eight tackles on defense.

His versatility has made him an invaluable piece to the program's recent success, said Likness, whose Bucks (2-1) host Aberdeen Central for homecoming on Friday night.

"What he brings is energy to the team, and that's something you can't just manufacture," Likness said. "When you get a guy like that, you have to use it."

During a recent interview at YHS, Abdalkreem was asked how his life's experience has molded into the person he is now. He paused, then pointed out he no longer takes anything for granted. It may not be there the next day, he said.

"I've learned you have to earn things in life; it's not easy," Abdalkreem said. "I know what to expect. I work hard for everything. Nothing is easy; nothing is handed to you."

Life has certainly changed for the soon-to-be 18-year-old. It wasn't that long ago, he pointed out, that he and his family weren't even sure if they would be able to relocate to the United States.

"We started off with four big suitcases, now we live in a house," he said, smiling.

Follow @jhoeck on Twitter.

West City Limits Road Work Today

The City of Yankton will be doing an asphalt top coat surface on West City Limits Road from south of W. Eighth Street to the city-county line. This street will close at 8 a.m. today (Wednesday) and will re-open that afternoon by 4 p.m. No one will be allowed to drive on the above street during the times listed.

If you have any questions, call 668-5211.

Wagner Pink Ladies Cancer Benefit

WAGNER — Wagner's Pink Ladies are hosting a cancer benefit Friday, Sept. 18, at 8 p.m. at Dogger's Dive in Wagner. There will be a \$10 donation at the door. All proceeds will be donated to the fundraiser.

Main attraction for the Cancer Benefit will be country music singer Jeremiah Sundown of Nashville and local favorite, John Otte.

Jeremiah Sundown is enjoying a new wave of popularity; due to his performances on the "Midwest Country" television show that is on RFD-TV. The show is filmed at the historic Midwest Country Theater in Sandstone, Minnesota. At his concert, you will hear songs written by Sundown as well as songs by Johnny Cash, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan and a host of other artists.

For ticket information, call (605) 491-4821.

Crofton

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financial data and doing its best to assess the lost funds and needed action in the short and long term.

"We are building the budget on the best estimates. The budget will need to be amended over time," Hendrix said. "We are focusing on the foundational pieces this year. You're not going to see a lot of fancy bells and whistles (in the budget). But once the foundation dries, the rest of the house will go up very quickly."

Crofton is fortunate in that it has the tools for community and economic growth that will help raise additional revenue, Hendrix said. The city has also benefited from grants and donations which have eased the burden on municipal finances, she added.

At Tuesday's meeting, city officials provided the audience with an update on the investigation, including interviews with Foxhoven and other former and current city officials.

Foxhoven had served 26 years as city clerk. She retired earlier this year shortly after city officials approached her about irregularities in the handling and reporting of city funds.

In a letter submitted to the *Crofton Journal* weekly newspaper, Foxhoven later admitted she had misappropriated funds to meet personal needs.

"While my personal problems were the cause, this is absolutely no excuse for my transgressions," she wrote. "The City trusted me. The City placed responsibility in me. I failed the City and its citizens."

An investigative team was formed in response to the irregularities. The team mem-

bers, who asked to remain anonymous, came from a variety of backgrounds.

The council met during an Aug. 31 special meeting with Jason Porter, an associate professor of accounting and a member of the special investigative committee. He spoke on the pattern of fraud on organizations and the impact that can expect to be seen on the budget and finances.

During Tuesday night's meeting, Councilman Steve Kuehler read the committee recommendations. The report included an overview of the process.

"It is always a challenge for an investigative committee to achieve balance," he said. "It has been said that 'There is a fine line between an inquisition and an investigation.' This committee has attempted to be thorough in its investigation while not becoming so zealous that it becomes an inquisition.

"Likewise, the committee has endeavored to be bold and honest in its recommendation, while not violating the rules of executive privilege. Included in these rules is a protection against needless damage to an individual's reputation. The committee findings attempt to strike this balance."

The reforms should lead to stronger city government and financial accountability, Kuehler said.

"The findings presented today are not complete. The committee anticipates further findings in upcoming months," he said. "These findings may be uncomfortable for some. They may lead others to assign blame.

"We suggest that the focus now be shifted toward the future with an eye towards the past as a guide."

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OBITUARIES

Loretta List

Loretta List, age 87, of Yankton, South Dakota, died Friday, September 4, 2015 at Avera Sacred Heart Hospice in Yankton.

Memorial services are 2:00 p.m. on September 19, 2015 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Yankton with Reverend Steve Weispfennig officiating. Inurnment will be in the Garden of Memories Cemetery in Yankton.

The family will receive friends one hour prior to the



List

Yankton.

Honorary pallbearers are grandchildren: Jason Harris, Jacki Harris, Emilie Menard, Jake Stanage, Kati Stanage,

memorial service at the church. Arrangements are under the direction of the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home and Cremation Service in

Philip List and Sam Stanage.

Loretta was born August 10, 1928 near Lesterville, South Dakota to Edward and Emma (Permann) Auch. She grew up on a farm near Lesterville and was baptized in Gettersburg Church and later confirmed in Scotland by Rev. R. Ruger. Loretta married Lothar List in 1952 and to this union three children were born: Ramona, Randy and Rita. Loretta worked at numerous places in Yankton before attending cosmetology school in Sioux Falls. She

then worked as a beautician for 48 years in Yankton. She was active in the community as a 4-H Leader, Extension Club Member and Cosmetology Club Association in Yankton for many years. Loretta was also active in her church, especially with the funeral committee, at St. John's Lutheran. She loved to garden, can produce and bake. Above all, she loved her children and grandchildren.

Loretta is survived by her children: Ramona Harris of Yankton and Randy (Kath-

leen) List of Marshall, MO; son-in-law, Craig Stanage of Yankton; seven grandchildren and their spouses; two step grandchildren; ten great grandchildren; sister, Doris Gall of Yankton; brother, Jerald (Donna) Auch of Fort Worth, Texas; and many nieces and nephews.

Loretta was preceded in death by her parents; daughter, Rita Stanage, and two brothers, Marvin and Donald Auch.

To send an online message to the family, please visit

www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
September 16, 2015



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Online condolences at:
 www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com

Blanche Bremer

Blanche Bremer, 101, of Vermillion, SD passed away Monday, September 14, 2015 at the Sanford Vermillion Care Center in Vermillion.

Blanche was born June 21, 1914 in Beresford, SD to Frank and Selma (Westling) Dubrall. Blanche was born into a family of eight children and her mother, Selma, also lived to be 100 years old. Blanche attended Beresford area schools. She married Howard Bremer on September 19, 1948 at the First United Methodist Church in Vermillion, SD. Howard and Blanche lived and farmed in the Vermillion area all their lives. Blanche was a homemaker, active in extension club, a 4-H leader and was active in the women's group at the Methodist Church for most of her life.

She is survived by her daughter Janice Bremer of Yankton, SD, four grandchildren, four great grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, siblings, husband Howard, a son, Brian and a daughter, Carol Robinson.

Funeral services will be 10:00 a.m. Thursday, September 17 at the First United Methodist Church in Vermillion with visitation one hour prior to the service at the church. Burial will follow in the Bluffview

Cemetery in Vermillion. Online condolences can be left at HansenFuneralHome.com.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
September 16, 2015

Mary Loecker

Mary Ann Loecker, 93, of Yankton passed away early Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2015, at Avera Sister James Care Center, Yankton.

Mass of Christian Burial will be 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 19, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Yankton, with the Rev. Larry Regynski officiating. Burial will be in the Sacred Heart Cemetery, Yankton.

Visitations will begin at 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 18, at the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton, with a

rosary at 7 p.m. followed by a Scripture service at 7:30 p.m. Visitations will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

Online condolence may sent at: www.opsahl-kostelfuneralhome.com.

Marcia Bails

Marcia Bails, 69, went to be with Jesus on September 11,

2015.

Services by Memorial Park Funeral Home will be held on Sept. 19 at 1 p.m. at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Memphis.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Christ the King Stephen Ministry.

Survivors include her two daughters and nine grandchildren. Marcia's parents, June and Lloyd Davidson, were longtime residents of Yankton.

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