

The Groton Independent

Vol. 143 No. 45 ♦ Groton, SD ♦ Wednesday, July 22, 2026 ♦ Established in 1889

Columbia Fest car show continues to grow in third year

COLUMBIA, S.D. — What began as an idea to add another attraction to Columbia Fest has quickly become one of the celebration's fastest-growing events.

Kaden Kampa, who is organizing the Columbia Fest Car Show for the third consecutive year, said participation has steadily increased since the inaugural show.

"This will be my third year putting on the car show," Kampa said. "Two years ago we had 76 cars, and last year we had 102 cars. So we're growing."

The idea came after Kampa attended Columbia Fest several years ago and believed a car show would draw more visitors while giving festival-goers another attraction to enjoy.

"I figured this could probably use a car show," he said. "It would bring a lot more people in and give people something to do and walk around and look at."

After presenting the idea to the Columbia Fest board, Kampa was given the opportunity to organize the event himself.

Although launching the show required plenty of trial and error, Kampa credited organizers of the Andover Car Show for helping him learn the process.

"They kind of walked me through how they do everything, and then we tweaked it to what we thought would work better," he said.

The biggest challenge during the first year was simply spreading the word.

"Advertisement is a huge thing," Kampa said. "How much effort you put into it is going to affect your outcome."

Now entering its third year, the event has built a following, with many exhibitors planning to return annually.

As of this week, nearly 50 vehicles had already been pre-registered for this year's show, putting organizers on pace for another strong turnout if the weather cooperates.

The 2026 show will feature 10 judged classes with first- and second-place awards in each class, along with People's Choice and Best of Show honors.

Kampa said exhibitors also appreciate the addition of numerous door prizes, giving participants an opportunity to take home something even if they don't earn a trophy.

This year's event also introduces two new categories — motorcycles and big rigs.

"We've had a bunch of motorcycles show up the last few years," Kampa said. "This year we decided to give them their own class."

Organizing the event requires more than just one person. Kampa said volunteers handle registration, direct vehicles into parking areas and assist throughout the day. His girl friend, Taylor Thorstenson, has helped a lot. "Taylor helps me a lot with the car show," Kampa said.

"You definitely need quite a few people to make it work," he said.

Parking has not been a problem in previous years thanks to the City of Columbia closing several streets around the park, although organizers are discussing the best locations for the larger semi-trucks expected to participate this year.

Preparation for the one-day event actually begins months in advance. Kampa said planning for this year's trophies started in January, while securing sponsors and donations takes several months.

Nearly 20 businesses are supporting this year's show through sponsorships, gift cards and door prizes.

"The amount of people that are at Columbia Fest, it's a pretty good chance to get your name out there," Kampa said.

The Columbia Fest Car Show will be held Saturday, July 25, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration will take place from 8 to 10 a.m., public voting runs from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and awards are scheduled for approximately 2 p.m.

The awards will be presented under the big tent in the bar parking lot during Columbia Fest. While pre-registration has closed, participants may still register the morning of the show for \$10.



Taylor Thorstenson and Kaden Kampa have been planning the third annual car show at the Columbia Fest this year. (Courtesy photo)



This is one of the awards that will be presented at the Columbia Fest Car Show. (Courtesy photo)

Groton City Council discusses park saferoom project, opens bids for surplus bucket truck

By Elizabeth Varin

During a brief meeting Tuesday evening, the Groton City Council addressed items such as the next steps for the city's park saferoom project, opening bids for a surplus bucket truck and the process required to vacate portions of land on the west side of town.

City Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich updated the council on upcoming steps to build a new city park bathroom and tornado shelter.

"Everything has been signed. We're good to go with that," he said. "I had the kick off meeting today."

Though the architect who the city has been working with mentioned a possible project completion date in early 2027, that won't be feasible, Heinrich said. Because FEMA funding will be used, the city will have to go through a request for qualification process for architectural plans, which will take at least a couple of weeks because of publication requirements.

After the architectural bid process is completed, the city will have to have another company do a peer review of the architectural plans, he said.

Because FEMA funding is involved, the city will have to have clear documentation about how bids are chosen, as FEMA requires they accept bidders not only based on cost, but by what is the best value for the city.

The saferoom update was informational only, but other items, like the bids for a surplus vehicle, needed a vote.

The city received two bids for a surplus 2007 Ford F550 bucket truck.

Continues on Page 7



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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

Every NFL offseason brings optimism. Every fanbase convinces itself the rookies will hit, the free agents will work out, and this is finally the year everything comes together. But before the season starts and hope takes over, it’s worth taking a hard look at the roster as it actually exists today.

Over the next ten weeks, we’ll break down every position group on the Vikings’ roster and rank them from the group I have the most confidence in to the one I trust the least entering the 2026 season. We’ll look at the projected starters, depth pieces, offseason additions, and biggest questions each group faces.

Coming in at number 4: cornerback
Confidence level: 52%
Current projected starters: Byron Murphy Jr., Isaiah Rodgers, James Pierre
Current depth: Dwight McGlothern, Charles Demmings

Competing for a roster or practice squad spot: Zemaiah Vaughn, Marcus Allen, Da’Veawn Armstead, Tyreek Chappell

Why I’m confident: Byron Murphy Jr. is one year removed from being named to the Pro Bowl, and since joining the Vikings in 2023, he’s only missed three games. Isaiah Rodgers played in all 17 games last season, started 15 of them, and had one of the greatest games by a CB I’ve ever seen (week 3 against Cincinnati, when he had an 87-yard pick-six and two forced fumbles, one of which he returned 66 yards for a touchdown). James Pierre was one of only a few free agents the Vikings signed this offseason, and although he’s never been a full-time starter in the league, Brian Flores liked him enough to bring him in to compete.

The biggest reason for confidence in the CB position, however, is Flores. In a league that puts a premium on cornerbacks, Flores has

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designed a scheme that allows players to slide in and play well. So as crazy as it sounds, cornerback isn’t nearly as important in Brian Flores’ defense as it is for most NFL teams.

Cause for concern: While I like Murphy, Rodgers, and Pierre, I feel like they are all playing one step above where they should. Ideally, Murphy would be the team’s CB2, Rodgers would play in the slot as CB3, and Pierre would be the first one off the bench while also playing in dime formations when the team has four CBs on the field at the same time.

One of the reasons Flores was able to get away with not asking too much from his cornerbacks is because the team relied heavily on their safeties. However, with Harrison Smith retiring, that position is a huge question mark heading into the 2026 season. How will Flores adjust? Will more be asked of the cornerbacks, and will the Vikings’ CBs be able to rise to the challenge, or will they reveal a weakness opposing offenses can exploit?

Another cause for concern is the depth. The primary backups are Dwight McGlothern and rookie Charles Demmings. McGlothern has only played 50 total snaps on defense over the past two seasons, and Demmings is a rookie who played college ball at Stephen F. Austin State. Neither player instills much confidence if they’re forced to play extended snaps.

Potential upgrades: If the Vikings want to bring in a player or two to beef up the cornerback room, which I highly recommend they do, there are a few names available who could come in and make a difference. Marshon Lattimore (four-time Pro Bowler) and Trevon Diggs (two-time Pro Bowler) are two players who could immediately challenge for a starting role, while players like Kenny Moore, Tre’Davious White, and Adoree’ Jackson would all be solid depth pieces.

Ultimately, this group comes down to one person: Brian Flores. If anyone can get quality play out of an average cornerback room, it’s him. That’s the biggest reason this position avoided the bottom of the list.

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Efron of "Parkland"

4 "For — the Bell Tolls"

8 Maui's — Highway

12 Rock's Brian

13 Continental coin

14 Petri dish gel

15 Scrape (out)

16 Shakable paperweight

18 Egypt's Anwar

20 Quibble

21 Composer Bartok

24 Informative

28 Hall & Oates ballad of 1976

32 Scarce

33 Galley item

34 Must, casually

36 Plant seeds

37 Radar dot

39 "Gems" found on a beach

41 "Bye!"

43 Poetry contest

44 Vat

46 Foolish

50 Scott Evil actor in the Austin Powers films

55 Blue bird

56 Saab model

57 Nest egg choices

58 Broad st.

59 Wee songbird

60 Lacking slack

61 Wine choice

DOWN

1 Dazzling duo?

2 "Diana" singer

3 Not single-sex

4 Locale in "The Great Gatsby"

5 Attila, e.g.

6 Acapulco gold

7 Cut, as a lawn

8 Summer top

9 Previously

10 Collar

11 Common verb

17 Tonic's mixer

19 Six-pack muscles

22 Novelist Anita

23 Poker pot starters

25 "That — close one!"

26 "No seats" signs

27 Evergreens

28 Weeps

29 Robust

30 Buffalo's lake

31 List-ending abbr.

35 Not for

38 Large constrictor

40 Run after K

42 Summer mo.

45 Telly watcher

47 Slightly open

48 Cathedral area

49 Kept tabs on

50 Cutting tool

51 Chariot trailer

52 Three, in Rome

53 Notable time

54 Vichy water

Groton School District New Business Manager



Madi Neiber

Madi Neiber has been hired as the new Groton Area School District Business Manager. She had been previously employed for two years as the business manager for the Britton Hecla School District. Due to their future plans, Madi and her husband Hunter felt that a position in Groton would be a better fit for their family and long-term goals.

Neiber graduated from Langford Area High School in 2019 followed by her 2023 college graduation from the University of Sioux Falls, where she received a double major in Business Administration and Accounting with an MBA in Business Innovation and Marketing. She has been married for two years. and they have a 4 year old chocolate lab.

“My position in Britton provided me with a strong foundation about school finance. I’m familiar with many computer systems and the software being used here in Groton, so the transition has been very manageable. It also provides a good opportunity for me to build on my experience and continue to grow professionally,” she said.

“Obviously there are differences between the two schools, but I’m looking forward to the challenge,” Neiber admitted. “Even with the same software being used, every district has its own processes, and I am excited to learn how things are done here.”

“Probably the hardest part has been figuring out the location and the purpose of each file,” she smiled. “I’m a fast learner so it shouldn’t take me long to get everything straight. Any questions I do have can be answered by Superintendent Schwan or the former business manager.”

“In addition to getting acquainted with the finances and the organization of everything here, I also have to learn the names and faces of all of the staff members,” Neiber stated. “That is probably one of the most rewarding parts of this job!”

“Getting this job is a new start in my life, and I’m really looking forward to meeting all of the staff members,” she said. “It is a great place for me to learn, grow, and build relationships with students, staff, and the community!”




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Community Calendar

Thursday, July 23

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken breast, mashed potatoes with gravy, winter blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Senior Legion Region at Milbank

Story Time at Wage Memorial Library, 10 a.m.

Tiger Skills Workouts, GHS Arena, 7:30 a.m.

Friday, July 24

Senior Menu: Hot pork sandwich, baked potato, California blend, fruit.

State B Legion 14U at Vermillion

10U Baseball State at Hartford/Beresford

Saturday, July 25

Sunday, July 26

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., at Zion, 11 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, July 27

Senior Menu: Hot turkey sandwich, creamy noodles, peas and carrots, fruit.

Senior citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck at noon.

United Methodist Vacation Bible school, 5 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

Elementary Volleyball Camp, 8 a.m. to noon, GHS Gym and Arena

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Junior Legion Regional Tournament at Sis-seton: 5 p.m.: Groton vs. Big Stone City; 30 minutes after first game: Claremont vs. Sis-seton.

Tuesday, July 28

Senior Menu: Lasagna bake, mixed vegetables, fruit, whole wheat bread.

United Methodist Vacation Bible school, 5 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

Elementary Volleyball Camp, 8 a.m. to noon, GHS Gym and Arena

Junior Legion Regional Tournament at Sis-

seton: Winners play at 2 p.m., losers play at 5 p.m., third game 30 minutes after the 5 p.m. game.

Wednesday, July 29

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, fruit, whole wheat bread.

GHS Golf Fundraiser Lunch

Emmanuel Lutheran: Women's Guest Night Meal and speaker, 6 p.m.

Junior Legion Regional Tournament at Sis-seton: Championship game at 2 p.m. If second game is needed, it will be played 30 minutes after the first game.

Thursday, July 30

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, corn, fruit, whole wheat bread.

1st-3rd Grade BB Camp, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., GHS Arena

Friday, July 31

Senior Menu: Baked fish, oven roasted potatoes, peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.

1st-3rd Grade BB Camp, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., GHS Arena

State B Legion Tournament in Madison through August 4th.

Enrich Groton's school supply drive equips nearly five dozen students for new school year

GROTON, S.D. — Nearly five dozen students will head back to class this fall with new school supplies thanks to the success of Enrich Groton SoDak Inc.'s fourth annual School Supply Drive.

The annual event provided free school supplies to students in the Groton Area School District, helping families reduce back-to-school expenses while ensuring children have the materials they need for a successful start to the school year.

The drive was made possible through support from Thrivent Action Teams, along with additional monetary donations that allowed organizers to purchase and distribute supplies.

The school supply drive is one of the organization's community outreach efforts and reflects Enrich Groton SoDak Inc.'s mission of supporting families and enriching the Groton community.

Volunteers assisted with organizing and distributing supplies during the event. Event Coordinator and Board Secretary April Abeln, along with Board President Topper Tastad, also played key roles in coordinating this year's drive.



Dorene Nelson and Ruby Larson
(Courtesy Photo April Abeln)



Mary Ann Martin
(Courtesy Photo April Abeln)



Karla Davidson from Dacotah Bank.
(Courtesy Photo April Abeln)



Kristie Gibbs
(Courtesy Photo April Abeln)



April Abeln
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Sue Stevenson
(Courtesy Photo April Abeln)



Heidi Locke from Dacotah Bank.
(Courtesy Photo April Abeln)

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— **King Crossword** —
Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

Z	A	C		W	H	O	M		H	A	N	A
E	N	O		E	U	R	O		A	G	A	R
E	K	E		S	N	O	W		G	L	O	B
S	A	D	A	T		N	I	T				
				B	E	L	A		N	E	W	S
S	H	E	S	G	O	N	E		R	A	R	E
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B	L	I	P		S	E	A	G	L	A	S	S
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				T	U	B			I	N	A	N
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A	E	R	O		I	R	A	S		A	V	E
W	R	E	N		T	A	U	T		R	E	D

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A portrait of a man with a receding hairline, wearing dark aviator sunglasses, a white collared shirt, a blue and white striped tie, and a grey textured suit jacket. He is looking directly at the camera against a dark blue background.

Jerald Biffert, 94, of Groton passed away July 14, 2026 at Avantara Groton. Private family graveside services will be held at a later date in Union Cemetery, Groton.

Jerald Dean Biffert was born on June 1, 1932 in Eureka, SD to Jacob and Caroline (Krein) Biffert. He attended and graduated from Eureka High School. He taught rural school in Western McPherson County for 10 years. Jerry continued his education at Northern State, where he earned his degree. On September 10, 1960 he was united in marriage with Sylvia (Meyers) Barrie in Groton. He was graciously welcomed into the family by his brother-in-laws, Edward Imsland and Lloyd Lyren. Jerry was employed at the Department of Transportation for 38 years, where he worked as an engineer and later in maintenance.

Jerry and Sylvia loved to travel and had visited all major cities in the Western U.S. Some favorites included Salt Lake City, Cape Canaveral and Nashville. They also enjoyed camping and spending 30 winters in Apache Junction, Arizona. Jerry dedicated 35 years to PAF genealogy and was able to trace and document his ancestors back to 1472. Throughout his lifetime, he developed many lasting friendships.

Celebrating his life are his children, Robert (LuAnn) Barrie of Arlington, TX, Scott Biffert of Grapevine, TX, Wendy (Glenn) Cooper of Groton, one brother, Tom (Linda) Biffert of Omaha, NE, four grandchildren: Mike Barrie, Chad Barrie, Bonnie Cooper, Charles Cooper, and very special friend, Cecelia Percy.

Preceding him in death were his parents, his wife in 2001, his sister, Maxine and several brother and sister-in-laws.

Weekly SUDOKU								
Answer								
3	4	2	6	9	1	7	5	8
1	9	6	5	8	7	3	4	2
7	8	5	3	2	4	6	1	9
9	5	1	7	4	8	2	6	3
2	6	8	9	5	3	1	7	4
4	7	3	1	6	2	8	9	5
5	2	9	8	7	6	4	3	1
6	3	4	2	1	9	5	8	7
8	1	7	4	3	5	9	2	6



Friday night is fun night at the Groton Swimming Pool. Swimmers bring inflatables to the fun. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

July 28, 2026	South Dakota	Brown County
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Published July 22, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$195.00 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com. 27026		

Groton Post 39 claims U14 regional championship, advances to state tournament

GROTON — Groton Post 39 turned a dominant week-end into a regional championship, winning all three of its games at the South Dakota U14 American Legion Regional Tournament at Locke-Karst Field to earn a berth in the South Dakota American Legion State 14U Tournament July 24-26 in Vermillion.

Post 39 opened tournament play Thursday with an 11-9 victory over Redfield before routing Clark Area 16-1 in five innings to advance to Friday night's championship game. Groton then completed its unbeaten run with a convincing 15-1 win over Clark Area to capture the regional title.

Groton had to survive a late rally in its tournament opener against Redfield after building a seven-run lead.

Redfield scored first in the opening inning, but Groton answered in the second when Asher Zimmerman singled to left to even the score. Post 39 took control in the third, scoring four runs as Mason Locke delivered a two-run single, an error plated another run and Zimmerman added an RBI single for a 5-1 advantage.

Redfield scored five runs in the sixth inning to pull within striking distance, but Groton held on for the 11-9 victory.

Tucker Leicht earned the win, allowing four hits and six runs — only three earned — over five innings while striking out six and walking five. Trayce Schelle recorded the save, and Kyson Kucker worked in relief.

Zimmerman went 2-for-3 with two RBIs, while Locke finished 3-for-5 to lead Groton's seven-hit attack. Schelle added two hits, Leicht drew three walks, and Groton stole seven bases, with Schelle and Zimmerman each swiping multiple bags.

The momentum carried into Thursday's second game as Groton overwhelmed Clark Area 16-1 in five innings.

After taking an early lead on an error in the first inning, Groton saw Clark Area briefly tie the game before erupting for six runs in the third. Zimmerman highlighted the inning with a two-run single.

Post 39 then broke the game open with a nine-run fourth inning. Easton Larson and Locke each delivered RBI singles, Hank Hill blasted a two-run double, Zimmerman added another RBI single, Schelle followed with a two-run single, and two Clark Area errors brought home two more runs.

Schelle earned the win on the mound, allowing one run on three hits over 4 2/3 innings while striking out six and walking four. Bentley Ehresmann finished the game in relief.

Groton pounded out 11 hits, led by three-hit performances from Schelle and Zimmerman. Keegan Kucker, Schelle, Zimmerman, Larson, Hill and Locke each drove in two runs. Kyson Kucker drew three walks as Post 39 collected 10 free passes, while Zimmerman stole two bases. Defensively, Groton turned a double play, committed no errors and was anchored by Keegan Kucker's seven putouts.

The championship game followed a similar script Friday as Groton overwhelmed Clark Area 15-1 to secure the regional title.

Post 39 scored twice in the first inning on an RBI single by Larson and a bases-loaded walk by Leicht before Larson added another RBI on a fielder's choice in the second to make it 3-0.

Groton then put the championship out of reach with an 11-run third inning. Hill started the rally with an RBI single before Keegan Kucker, Trayce Schelle and Kyson Kucker each forced in runs with bases-loaded walks. Larson added another RBI single, Hill was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, Bentley Ehresmann drew another run-scoring walk, an error plated another run, and Schelle capped the inning with a two-run single as Groton built a commanding 14-0 lead.

Zimmerman pitched all five innings to earn the championship-game victory, allowing six hits and one unearned run while striking out two and walking three.

Schelle and Larson each collected two hits and drove in three runs to pace the offense. Kyson Kucker reached base throughout the game, drawing four walks as Groton finished with 17 walks. Kyson Kucker and Hill each stole multiple bases, and the defense turned two double plays.

By sweeping the regional tournament with three consecutive victories, Groton Post 39 earned the opportunity to compete for a state championship when it travels to Vermillion for the South Dakota American Legion State 14U Tournament July 24-26.



The Groton American Legion U14 team celebrates their winning the region championship while punching their ticket to the U14 State Tournament. (Photo by Katie Kesterson)

Groton Jr. Legion goes 2-1 during busy week; Locke Electric falls to Aberdeen Circus Baseball

Groton Post 39 Junior Legion put together a strong week by winning two of three games, while Groton Locke Electric dropped a home contest to Aberdeen Circus Baseball in amateur baseball action.

The Junior Legion squad opened Friday with a dramatic 6-5 victory over Smittys B, rallying for the winning run in the top of the seventh inning. With the game tied at 5-5, Braden Fliehs drew a bases-loaded walk to force home the go-ahead run.

Groton erased a 2-0 deficit with four runs in the fifth inning. Jordan Schwan delivered a two-run single to center field before Fliehs followed with a two-run single down the left-field line. Smittys B answered with a run in the sixth to even the score before Groton responded in its final at-bat.

Schwan earned the win after allowing two runs, one earned, on four hits over four innings while striking out three. Wesley Borg picked up the save. Fliehs and Schwan each drove in two runs, while T.C. Schuster, Ryder Schelle and Borg added hits. Groton also turned a double play defensively.

The second game of Friday's doubleheader belonged entirely to Groton, which rolled to a 13-2 victory over Smittys B.

Jordan Schwan led the offense by going 3-for-3 with two triples and a single, while T.C. Schuster had a huge day at the plate, finishing 4-for-5. Groton jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first inning on RBI hits by Schwan and Schuster along with a run scoring on a fielder's choice by Ryder Schelle.

The Junior Legion squad broke the game open with a seven-run sixth inning. Alex Abeln capped the outburst with a three-run single, while Braden Fliehs, Xavier Ellenbecker, Lincoln Shilhanek and John Bisbee each drove in runs during the inning.

Schelle earned the pitching victory, allowing one run over three innings, and Bisbee recorded the save.

Groton nearly completed a perfect weekend Sunday before falling 6-5 to Post 23 Junior Legion in Clark.

The Junior Legion team raced to a 4-0 first-inning lead as T.C. Schuster doubled home two runs, Lincoln Shilhanek added an RBI single and another run scored on an error.

Post 23 battled back to tie the game before Groton regained a 5-4 advantage in the fifth on Schuster's RBI single. The visitors answered with a run in the sixth to even the score before pushing across the winning run in the seventh after drawing a bases-loaded walk.

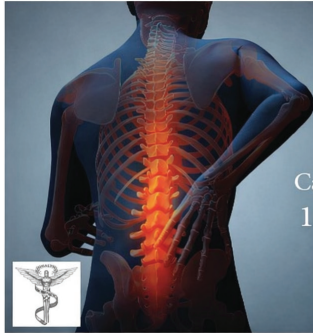
Schuster finished 2-for-4 with three RBIs to pace the Groton offense. Kason Oswald struck out nine over 5 2/3 innings before Zach Fliehs suffered the tough-luck loss in relief.

Meanwhile, Groton Locke Electric ran into a hot Aberdeen Circus Baseball club Monday, falling 13-4 in Groton.

Aberdeen broke the game open with a six-run fifth inning after already holding a 2-0 lead. Jesse Babcock led the visitors by driving in three runs, while Kelly Coates added two RBIs as Aberdeen collected 11 hits and drew 12 walks.

Wyatt Locke started for Groton, allowing one run over two innings before Nick Morris took the loss in relief.

Bradin Althoff, Brian Hansen and Ben Althoff accounted for Groton's three hits. Bradin Althoff drove in three of the team's four runs, while Groton showed patience at the plate by drawing 11 walks. Ryan Groeblichhoff, Hansen and Brevin Fliehs each walked twice.



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Historic Jail Open House

by Dorene Nelson

Alfred “Topper” Tastad hosted an open house on the site of the currently restored Groton historical city jail. The event was held on Sunday, July 12, 2026, with light refreshments being available, provided by Tastad.

The purpose of the open house was to celebrate the ongoing work of restoration of the jail as well as offer Groton citizens the opportunity to join in the effort to continue with the process of restoration and preservation of the historic building.

Following a fire in 1912 that burned the original jail, the current jail had been built. It contains four separate cells and a pot belly stove as its only source of heat. In order to restore the jail as much as possible, the original brick and plaster walls had been scraped, the electrical system was updated, and the entire building was cleaned, making it resemble the original jail as much as possible. An appropriate item found in the restored building is a plaque that lists every known

Elda Stange, a 102 year old Groton citizen, was willingly “arrested” by Groton Police Chief Mayou and put in one of the restored jail cells. Her immediate release was provided by former police chief Mike Nehls who paid her \$2 “delinquent birthday tax bill.”

Tastad has plans for more improvements in the structure to continue the preservation of this landmark.



Groton Police Chief Stacy Mayou put 102-year-old Elda Stange in jail for failure to pay her “birthday tax.” Former Groton Police Chief Michael Nehls bailed her out with the \$2 payment. (Photo by Dorene Nelson)



Steve and Sandy Dresbach were “not happy” about being put in jail on Sunday. The jail open house was held and it was an opportunity for photo opps. (Photo by Dorene Nelson)



The open house for the 1913 Groton Jail was held Sunday. A good turnout was held for the event. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

City Council Continued from front

- Pharis Transportation submitted a bid for \$17,500.
- City of Hecla submitted a bid for \$14,001.

The council approved accepting the Pharis Transportation bid.

Following up on action taken a couple of years ago, the council discussed requirements to vacate portions of West Seventh Avenue and North Lincoln Street. The council had previously approved vacating that area, but paperwork had not been filed to do so.

Heinrich told the council what needs to be done to vacate that area, including getting written consent from adjoining property owners and publishing a public notice for two weeks.

After more than an hour of executive session discussion, the council also approved accepting applications for a full-time public works laborer position.

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A plaque has been established that lists the former Groton Police Chiefs in Groton, sponsored by the Eddy Nehls family. Pictured are Virginia Nehls, former Groton Police Chief Michael Nehls, and Nancy Radke. Virginia and Nancy were city dispatcher for the Groton Police Department for many years while their husbands were working for the police force. Both of their husbands were police chiefs - Eddy Nehls and Butch Radke. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Ready to go down the tracks
When the new publisher first came to town over 10 years ago, he was greeted the first night by the Chief of Police, Eddy Nehls. Nehls informed the new publisher that he would be railroaded out of town. That was quite a greeting! At Eddy's retirement party, Paul Kosel presented Nehls with his own pack on a stick to go down the railroad tracks! (Photo #2233 by Paul Kosel)

The left photo was taken during Eddy's retirement party.

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Two big units (refrigerator/freezer) have been moved into the Groton Community Center for the senior meals to be provided there. Barb Pohlkamp takes a look at the registration information for the new equipment. (Photo by Dorene Nelson)



Trayce Schelle on the plate in U14 Region Tournament held Thursday in Groton. Groton defeated Red-field. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Outfielders Zach Fliehs and Xavier Ellenbacher. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Groton U14 pitching is Kyson Kucker with Easton Larson at first base. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

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“The Critical Need for More Nurses in the State of South Dakota”

As a registered nurse (RN) in South Dakota for the past 35 years, I can honestly say that it has been one of the greatest blessings in my life and yet is a profession in dire need of more, especially in our rural areas. According to Klinski (2025), South Dakota is projected to have the third-worst nursing shortage in the United States by 2030, needing an additional 1,900 registered nurses (a 14% deficit). The state faces an estimated 1,000 nursing job openings annually as rural healthcare systems struggle with an aging workforce and geographic challenges.

I have had the honor of working as an RN in South Dakota in a multitude of areas, all with similar, yet different, benefits. I have worked in home health nursing, critical care, progressive care, the emergency department at Monument Health, a small rural critical access hospital, and currently, as a nurse educator at the University of South Dakota. I have been involved in the birth of a newborn baby, the peaceful death of a terminal client dying at home, the tragic deaths of children in the emergency department, the joy of discharging a patient who received life-saving treatments, the sense of pride when my nursing students have graduated and everything in between. Don't get me wrong- it's not all good. There are days that are incredibly sad, days that are exhausting, patients that are challenging and days I have left in tears. Fortunately, those days are far and few between compared to the days that are filled with joy and a great sense of accomplishment.

With nursing being such a rewarding career with so many different areas to work in, and with the extreme nursing shortage, it is important to share how peo-

**By Dawn R. Warren
Ed.D., MSN, BSN, RN, University of
South Dakota Department of Nursing**

ple can become a nurse. South Dakota is fortunate to have multiple nursing programs available. People can become a licensed practical nurse (LPN) in approximately one year, with multiple vocational schools in South Dakota offering the degree. A second option is to become a registered nurse (RN) with an associate degree, taking approximately two years to complete, and offered at a number of vocational schools and universities. The third option is to become an RN with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. The BSN degree takes approximately four years to complete, often times opens the doors to more leadership positions, and is offered at many universities in South Dakota.

Living in South Dakota has many benefits and challenges all at the same time. We are blessed to live in beautiful wide open spaces, but with that comes the challenges of sparse healthcare resources and a lack of nurses to staff them. It is not uncommon for a farmer in South Dakota to have to drive two hours one way to get basic healthcare, and further

Tucker Leicht pitching. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

to get advanced care. Despite this challenge, for those who choose to practice as a nurse in rural underserved facilities, it can be extremely rewarding. While working at Dell Rapids hospital, I had the honor of caring for women in labor, pediatrics, medical surgical patients, trauma victims in our ER, patients with mental health needs and more, all while enjoying the culture of a small rural town where everyone truly cared about each other.

It is my overall hope that more people in South Dakota will look into the many benefits of being a nurse, especially rural South Dakota, and that they will choose to get educated at one of the many excellent nursing programs our state offers.

Dawn has had the honor and privilege of being a registered nurse for 35 years. She earned her BSN in 1991, her Master of Science in Nursing Education in 2000, and her Doctor of Education in 2016. Dawn's areas of expertise as an RN are critical care nursing, emergency nursing and in nurse education at the University of South Dakota. Dawn and her husband have two sons, both of whom are in college studying to become nurses. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik Tok. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB, YouTube and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB, Sundays at 6am and 1pm).

Groton American Legion Post 39 provided the color honor guard prior to the first game of the U14 Groton American Legion Tournament. L-R Groton Legion members Bruce Babcock and Steve Dresbach. (Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)

Groton U14 infielders: Tucker Leicht at third base, Trayce Schelle at short stop and Mason Locke at second base. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

8 ♦ Groton Independent ♦ Wed., July 22, 2026



By David Adler

Citizen Alert: What is America, Where Is It and How Shall It Live?

Since Socrates first asked, some 2,500 years ago, the searching question, "how shall I live?," philosophers and others exploring the great ethical choices we humans must make across the years, those advocating self-awareness have encouraged consideration of our values and beliefs to determine the essential, defining answers to profound questions including "who am I" and, more broadly, "where am I," those that keep college coffee shops open into the wee hours of the morning as students engage in deep dive conversations that begin to shape their lives.

These wonderfully absorbing questions, contemplated, initially, by over-caffeinated, agile young minds, but certainly worthy of life-long exploration, are also ones that the citizenry should be asking of America. Because the premise and promise of republican self-governance, beautifully summed up in Thomas Paine's history-making pamphlet, "Common Sense," in a memorable phrase, "We have the power to begin the world over again," We the People should ask, similarly, "what is America," "where is America," and "how shall America live?"

The power of citizenship-- the right of citizenship-- is an invitation, indeed, to state it more strongly, the duty, to raise these defining questions about our nation, knowing that the right answers about the nature, state and future of America, must involve a democratically engaged citizenry eager to preserve that which is worth preserving about America, taking stock of where America stands at this juncture in our nation's history--its strengths and weaknesses, merits and demerits--and asking the most nation-defining question, how shall America live?

These are questions, questions for all seasons, central to Benjamin Franklin's declaration that delegates to the Constitutional Convention had given us "a republic" if we the people "can keep it." Let us briefly consider these categories of questions, with full acknowledgment that this effort is but a sketch in an evolving sketchbook.

To ask, what is America? is to examine the core beliefs and values of our nation, beginning with our foundational documents-- the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Declaration of Independence set forth the majestic principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and trumpeted the doctrines of natural rights and popular sovereignty. These values defined America at the beginning. They stated to the world who we are, what we stand for and, as Lincoln explained, what we aspire to become. In important ways, the Constitution, over time, has fulfilled some of the premises, that is, the aspirations, of the Declaration and, through various mechanisms such as voting

rights and inclusion of women, Black Americans and Native Americans, embodied the values, beliefs and principles that have made America more democratic that it was at the beginning.

The fact that America has evolved since the founding period invites consideration and scrutiny of the question, where is America, now? This solemn question invites reflection on the state of our union and must address matters such as compliance with constitutional commands and limitations, the health of the doctrines of separation of powers and checks and balances, the rule of law and judicial independence. An appraisal of the nation requires candid consideration of the relative success and failure of policies, laws, programs and practices that govern the lives of Americans. Critical examination must encompass evaluation of our elected representatives, including their motivations, ambitions, virtues and integrity, as well as an exercise in measuring their devotion to their constituents and, perhaps, their self-serving behavior. This honest, to-the-bone assessment of the nation includes policies, foreign and domestic. Create an extensive scorecard and examine and grade such policies as tariffs, trade agreements and war-making, and those that affect affordability, energy and food prices, as well as health care. Does America seem committed to the grand principles of the Declaration of Independence? Are we a nation the lives up to the principle of equal justice for all or do we have a two-tiered justice system, one for ordinary citizens and another for the rich and powerful?

In the end, the question of how America should live invites consideration of the question of the values, beliefs and principles that should govern the life of the nation. The 250th anniversary of the founding of our country represents an opportunity for an ongoing conversation of what America stands for, at home and abroad. Fundamentally, let's ask ourselves if we continue to believe in government of, by and for the people?

David Adler is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality and civic education. This column is made possible with the support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota NewsMedia Association and this newspaper.

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DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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With three straight victories, Groton now needs one more win Thursday to capture the Region 6B championship and advance to the state tournament.

Casketbearers will be his grandchildren.

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