



The Show Choir, aka Prismatic Sensations, performed for the final time this year at the POPS Concert held Sunday. They performed "All That Jazz," "Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend," "Only in New York," "Roarin' Twenties," and "A Little Party Never Killed Nobody." More photos on Page 7. (Photos by Paul Kosel)



March Students of the Month

Back left: Colt Williamson (7th), Claire Heinrich (10th), Ethan Clark (11th), Axel Warrington (9th)

Front Left: Kyleigh Kroll (6th), Mia Crank (8th), Madeline Fliehs (12th)

(Courtesy Photo)

These students have been named the March Students of the Month.

Groton Area School works to ensure that all levels of academic instruction also include the necessary life skills teaching, practicing, and modeling that encourages essential personal life habits that are universally understood to facilitate helping our students become good human beings and citizens.

It is learning with our heads, hearts, and hands to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to effectively problem solve, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens, and to be empathetic and ethical individuals.

Students are selected based on individual student growth in the areas of: positive behavior, citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards.

The B 103 All Star game was held in Summit



The B103 All-Star game was played in Summit this past Saturday. Alyssa Thaler was named girls game MVP while Jaden Zak was the Boys 3-Point Shootout Champion. (Courtesy Photo)



The Groton Area girls participating were Alyssa Thaler and Allyssa Locke (Courtesy Photo)



The Groton Area boys participating were Kaden Kurtz and Jayden Zak (Courtesy Photo)

Weekly Vikings Roundup

First round draft options

By Duane & Jack Kolsrud

For many years the Mike Zimmer and Rick Spielman regime had an affinity for drafting defensive backs while avoiding the immediate need for an offensive lineman, it seems a bit ironic that all indications are pointing to O'Connell and company using their first draft pick on a cornerback.

Having secured three veteran offensive linemen in the free agency market, the Vikings are now looking to secure a top corner to play opposite future Hall of Famer Patrick Peterson, who the Vikings just re-signed this past week for another season. Peterson's veteran leadership will be a stabilizing force for a young defensive backfield.

So who do the draft experts think the Vikings will take with the 12th pick in the 2022 draft. At this point, it is coming down to three players.

The highest rated player on the list is Ahmad Gardner of Cincinnati. Gardner is a tall 6'3" lockdown defender that would appear to be a perfect fit to play on the opposite side of Peterson and learn the professional ropes from one of the best. The only problem is as the highest ranked cornerback, will he still be available when the Vikings are on the clock.

More realistically is a toss-up between Trent McDuffie of Washington and Derek Stingley, Jr. of LSU. The biggest knock on both players is they are much shorter than Gardner- coming in around 6 feet tall and 195 pounds. McDuffie is considered the more physical of the two and a really good tackler, possibly reminding Viking fans of the days of Antoine Winfield. Stingley is touted as having more potential and would benefit from playing under the guide of Peterson.

Whoever the Vikings decide to pick, they are going to get a very skilled player. Being this is the first draft for Kwesi Odofo-Mensah and Kevin O'Connell, it would seem unlikely they would trade down out of this spot, something Spielman was known for doing to acquire more picks in the later rounds.

As mentioned earlier, the Vikings can move in this direction due to the acquisition of three veteran offensive linemen. Jesse Davis was with the Miami Dolphins the past 4 years and a very versatile lineman, playing both guard and tackle, playing on the right side for most of his career. Chris Reed, who played in 14 games for the Indianapolis Colts in 2021, is coming back home. Originally from Omaha, Reed played at Minnesota State-Mankato during the Adam Thielen days. He is excited to get back to Minnesota and play in purple & gold once again. The final addition was Adam Schlottman from the Denver Broncos.

These three along with second year Viking, Wyatt Davis, will all be battling for the starting right guard spot on the Vikings offensive line- a position that has been the achilles heal for the Vikings for many seasons.

Unless something drastically happens in the coming weeks, a late free agent pickup or trade at the cornerback position, it appears this will be the direction of the 2022 Minnesota Vikings. There's a new buzz around the Twin Cities and this Viking squad.

Potpourri

At least no one got punched out

Well, they held the Grammys last weekend and by most measures, it was a success. At least no one punched anyone out. Americans are still scratching their heads over Will Smith, who once portrayed Muhammad Ali, whacking comedian Chris Rock onstage for disrespecting Jada Pinkett Smith at the Oscars. Rock gives up four inches and 40 pounds to Smith who at first laughed at Rock's bald joke but then decided to smack Rock a good one in defense of his wife's honor. I suppose you could call it a teachable moment because until that moment, I'd wager that few people knew what alopecia was. It was also kind of weird in that Smith may be the biggest cuckold in Hollywood. In their open marriage, Jada gets more action than the Fast & Furious franchise, and who's to judge, but it seems to me that honor, like Elvis, left the building long ago.



That's Life

by Tony Bender

Suddenly, people are interested in women's swimming

Until a couple of weeks ago, most Americans couldn't have named a woman swimmer, but that all changed when Lia Thomas, a transgender athlete, won a national title in the 500-yard freestyle. I'm not going to pretend to know all the answers as to what's fair or whether being born a biological male gives Thomas an insurmountable advantage despite undergoing hormone replacement therapy. We should note that her time in the race was nine seconds off the record. Nine seconds. It does seem mean-spirited and disingenuous, though, for otherwise disinterested Americans to suddenly have expert opinions on the matter. After all, it's sports. Is it that important? I say live and let live.

Ashley, ND, man remains imprisoned in Ukraine

Friends and family of Kurt Groszhans of Ashley, ND, continue to hold their collective breath as Russia's relentless invasion of Ukraine continues. Groszhans remains behind bars and is accused of being involved in a conspiracy to kill Ag Minister Roman Leshchenko, a former business partner who Groszhans claims stole money from him. Leshchenko recently resigned. While I don't know Kurt more than in passing, I do know his family, and I have to say the charges, emerging from a country where corruption is rampant, strains credulity. Despite the efforts of North Dakota senators John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer, Groszhans remains trapped in a country under siege. One hopes Groszhans can be removed to a safe, neutral country where the charges against him can be sorted out. The circumstances are both harrowing and bizarre.

Hope springs eternal

While professional football has arguably eclipsed baseball as America's game, the pastoral elegance of baseball still tugs at the romantic within us. This season marks the 75th since Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier. It took until 1956 for the U.S. Supreme Court to declare bus segregation unconstitutional. More than any game, baseball has been tied to American society's freedoms and shortcomings. It took until 1975 for Major League Baseball to hire its first black manager—Frank Robinson. One wonders what records Josh Gibson and Satchel Page, who barnstormed around North Dakota, might have set had they been allowed to play. Meanwhile, in this neck of the woods, Minnesota Twins fans abound, and if you've been following the offseason trades and minor league shuffling, the team should be a contender. In baseball, hope springs eternal.

He's the boss of me

Theoretically, we own our pets, but anyone with a cat knows we are at best indentured servants terrorized by 10 pounds of fur and

attitude. The running gag at my house is that I lost the custody battle and had to keep the cat—Squirrel, the World's Grumpiest Cat. Until spring decides exactly what it's going to do, cat owners are relegated to doorman duty. Our job is to hold the door open while the cat sniffs and contemplates actually going outside. This isn't likely to happen until June, but you're required to stand at the door while the inside temperature falls five degrees just in case today is the day. Ah well, Squirrel is 18-years-old. Age has its privileges.

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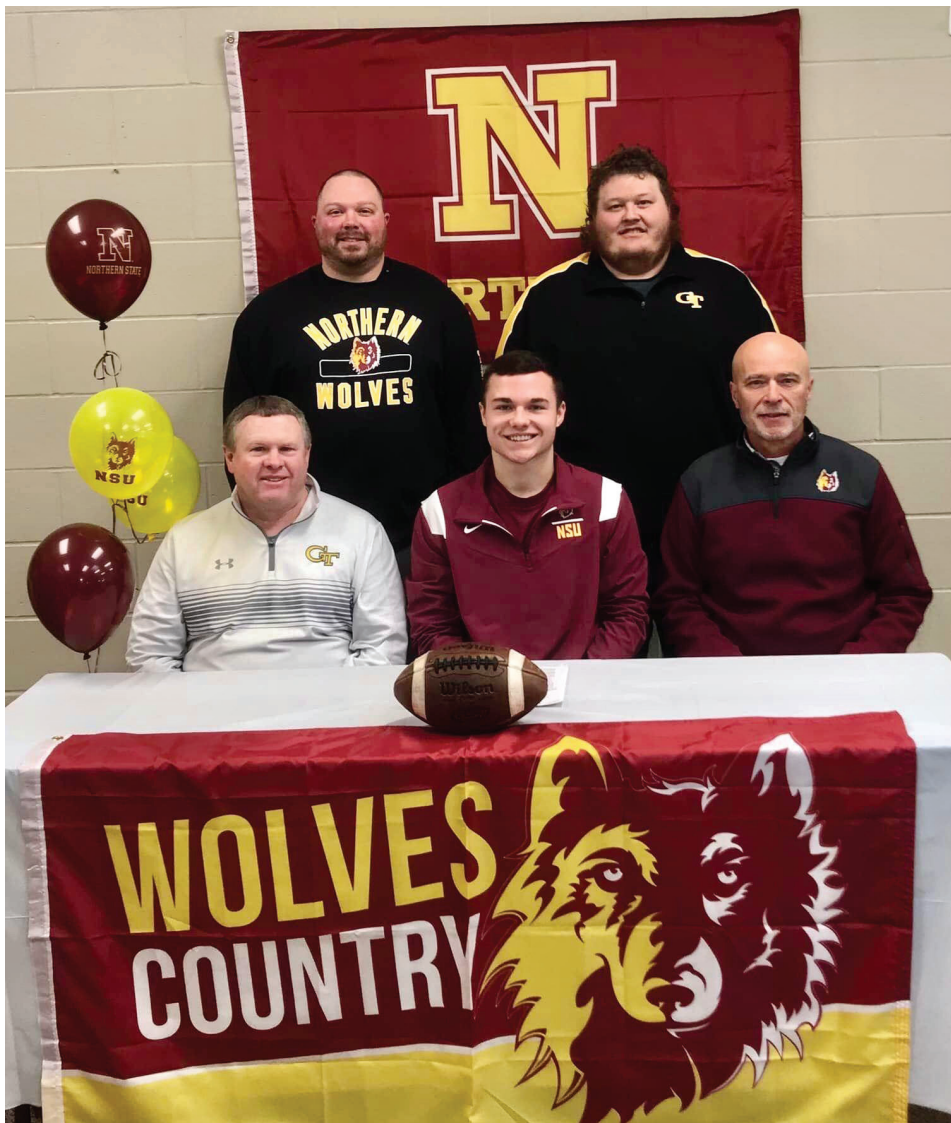
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Kurtz, Zak to continue playing college sports

Two Groton Area athletes have signed up to play sports on the college level. On the left, there was a signing ceremony with Kaden Kurtz with football at Northern State University, Aberdeen. In that photo are Groton Area Assistant Football Coaches Seth Erickson and Dalton Locke in back, and in front are Travis Kurth, Kaden Kurtz and Groton Area Head Coach Shaun Wanner.

In the bottom photo, Jayden Zak is featured where he will be playing basketball at Dakota State University in Madison. (Courtesy Photos)

C&MA Church to host Easter Cantata

Groton Christian and Missionary Alliance Church will be hosting our Easter Cantata on Sunday, April 10 at 6pm. Please join us for "Jesus The Undefeated One" created by Lee Black & Jason Block and arranged by Daniel Semsen. Afterwards, please stay for a time of fellowship with desserts and refreshments. We have not performed an Easter Cantata since 2019, so we are excited to see all you again and we celebrate our victorious Redeemer!

Way of the Cross

The portrayal of Christ's journey to the cross done by the Groton SEAS High School students will be held Wednesday, April 13, starting at 7 p.m. It is the annual "Way of the Cross".

The portrayal is not appropriate for small children, parental discretion advised.

American News to drop Monday print edition

Beginning Monday, April 25, you will no longer receive a print edition of the Aberdeen American News. At that time, the Monday edition will be available only on-line.

Construction to Begin on U.S. Highway 12 from Aberdeen to Ipswich

ABERDEEN, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) will begin construction on U.S. Highway 12 from Aberdeen to Ipswich on Monday, April 11, 2022. The project consists of modifying intersections, constructing passing lanes, bridge end approach slabs and pavement, lighting, and guardrail. The construction operations will reduce traffic to one lane with a 12-foot width restriction. Traffic will be controlled with flaggers and pilot car at earthwork locations and with a traffic signal for the bridge work.

Motorists should be prepared for suddenly slowing and stopped traffic and be aware of construction equipment and workers adjacent to the roadway.

The contractor on this \$13.2 project is Bituminous Paving, Inc. of Ortonville, Minnesota. The completion date for this construction project on Highway 12 is Oct. 29, 2022.

About SDDOT:

The mission of the South Dakota Department of Transportation is to efficiently provide a safe and effective public transportation system.

For the latest on road and weather conditions, road closures, construction work zones, commercial vehicle restrictions, and traffic incidents, please visit <https://sd511.org> or dial 511.

Read more about the innovative work of the SDDOT at <https://dot.sd.gov>.

The Groton Independent

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Groton Robotic Teams Earn Spot at National Competition April 7-9

Congratulations to G-Force-(Travis Townsend, Jace Kroll) and Gear Heads (Jack Dinger, Ethan Clark and Axel Warrington) for earning their way to the Us Open in Council Bluffs, Iowa! In order to earn an invitation they have to either receive an award OR win a tournament.

The main national VEX robotics competition filled up fast this year and, unfortunately, by the time our two teams received their invitation to the event it was filled as they only invite 110 teams across the nation. To put this in perspective, South Dakota alone has roughly 32 Vex Robotic teams.

Our next option was to compete in the US Open Create. Teams from across the world are invited to this unique event that spans all ages with four different games/challenges played in six distinct tournaments, including drones and other robotic versions of creativity. Slightly different, but our teams will still get to compete with their robots in the same game they have been participating in all year.

Please visit-- <https://www.create-found.org/RoboticChampionship.php> for more information about the event we are attending and to explore the other areas of robotic creativity across the nation!

A heartfelt THANK YOU to all that have supported Groton Robotics by donating or being a part of our fund-raising events! We are so appreciative as our program is mostly funded by donations and fundraising events.

For more information check out the Vex VRC robotics website, download the VEX via app and follow Groton Tiger Robotics on Facebook. STAY TUNED for further updates from the US OPEN in Council Bluffs, Iowa!

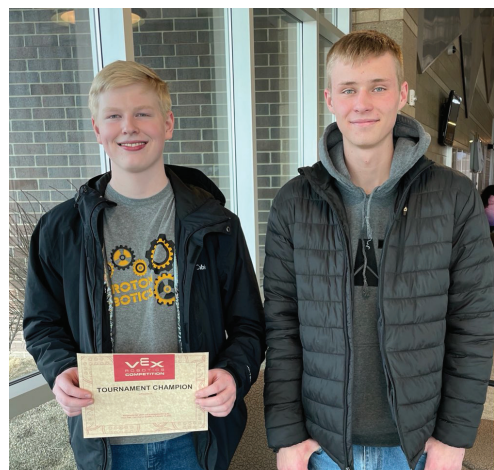
Submitted by Groton Robotics



Marty Weismantel
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Tournament champions in Sioux Falls Saturday, February 12th! G-Force (Seniors Travis Townsend and Jace Kroll) (Courtesy Photo)



Tournament champions in Valley City, ND Saturday, January 29th! Gear Heads (Axel Warrington, Jack Dinger and Ethan Clark) (Courtesy Photo)

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

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Golf Awards

The awards for the boys 2021 golf season have been presented. Carter Simon was awarded the most improved and Brevin Flihs as the top medalist. (Courtesy Photo)

Heavy Snow

You thought the snow was heavy from the last snow fall. There's a good reason. It had lots of moisture in it. After melting the four inches of snow that we had, I measured .71 of moisture content. That brings the March precipitation to 0.82 with the monthly average at 0.89. For the year, the total moisture has been 1.80 with the average being 2.06.

CLASSIFIEDS

AUCTIONS

INTERSTATE AUCTION CENTER April 23 10:00am Consignment Sale 3 miles East of Sioux Falls exit 402 Brandon, SD. Building construction materials, tractors, trucks, trailers, livestock, and farm equipment. 605.331.4550 website – auctionzip.com.

BIDS

STANEK CONSTRUCTORS IS SOLICITING BIDS from SBE, MBE, WBE Subcontractors & Suppliers for: Brandon, SD WTP Expansion. Bid Date: 4/11/22-2:00PM Email: estimating@staneconstructors.com for more info.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

FOR SALE: 8-lane bowling center in Wagner with synthetic lanes, automatic scoring, restaurant, 30x40' bar, pool tables, dart boards. Owner had passed away. 2-bedroom apartment attached. Under \$200,000 make an offer. Call Marion (605) 491-0806.

EMPLOYMENT

Truss Pros in Britton is looking to hire a CDL driver to deliver trusses in the tri-state area. Home every night. Competitive wage! Full benefit package! To apply call 605-277-4937 or go to www.uslbm.com/careers and search for jobs in Britton, SD.



ABERDEEN VACANCIES

The USDA Farm Service Agency has 2 Program Technician vacancies in the Brown County Office located in Aberdeen, SD. Opening date is April 1, 2022, and the closing date is April 14, 2022. To view this vacancy announcement and apply for this vacancy please visit www.usajobs.gov, keyword: Program Technician Location: Aberdeen, SD. USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

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THE HOT SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT has an opening beginning the 2022-2023 school year for an English Teacher. This position is a 1.0 FTE, Monday–Thursday with benefits and paid leave included. Various endorsements will be considered, classes will be determined based on qualifications. Applicant will be joining a talented team with a variety of skills and experience. Applicants need to apply online at hssd.k12.sd.us. Any questions can be directed to Troy Lurz at troy.lurz@k12.sd.us. Position open until filled.

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Wed.-Fri., April 27-29 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM	Sat., April 30 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
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THE DAYS AND HOURS INDIVIDUAL SALES ARE OPEN WILL VARY. A LISTING OF PARTICIPATING SALES WILL BE AVAILABLE AT www.kingswoodrummage.com/listings AVAILABLE ON APRIL 22.

Kingswood Boundaries: SW Sioux Falls, between I-29 on the East and the Tea-Ellis Road on the West, 12th Street on North and 57th Street on South

EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS WANTED
Northwest Area Schools Multi-District/Education Cooperative in Isabel, SD is seeking applications for the 2022-2023 school year for an instructor for one (1) of the following CTE Clusters: open until filled

Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications • Health Science
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics • Architecture & Construction

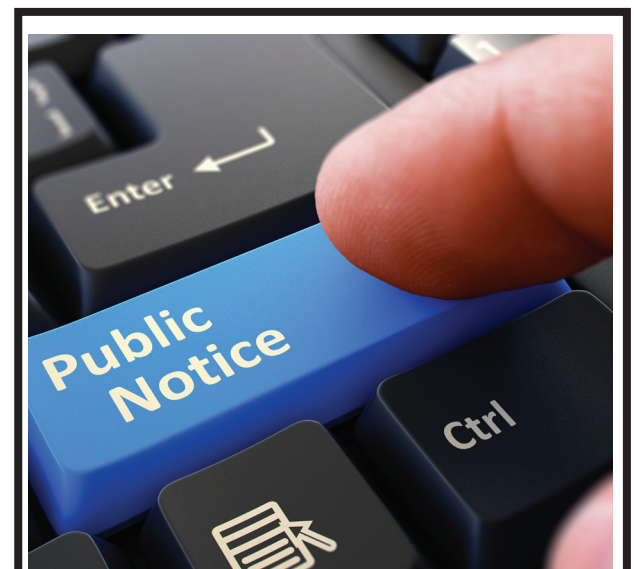
South Dakota licensure is required and work-related experience may count toward certification. NAWAS offers competitive salary, benefits, transportation and SD Retirement. Contact Quinn Lenk, Director, at 605-466-2206, or email quinn.lenk@k12.sd.us

Northwest Area Schools Multi-District/Education Cooperative does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

POSITION OPENING
The Milbank School District is looking for a **School Psychologist**

Must have a master's or specialist degree from an accredited program of psychology, current, valid psychologist certification in South Dakota and two years of experience as a psychologist, preferably in a school system or other pediatric setting.

Applications can be found at www.milbankschooldistrict.com-Employment or <https://milbank.tedk12.com/hire>. For questions, contact Justin Downes, superintendent, at 605-432-5579 or justin.downes@k12.sd.us.



All of the public notices now appearing in the Groton Independent are posted on-line at **sdpublicnotices.com** There are a number of search options available To see the notices published in the Groton Independent, select **THE GROTON INDEPENDENT** and then search

POPS Concert held Sunday



Julianna Kosel sang, "I Will Always Remember You." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The annual POPS Concert was held Sunday with two performances. The Flex Band performed several selections: "Superstition," "Bohemian Rhapsody," "Respect," "Disco Lives" and "YMCA." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Kamryn Flihs and Jaeger Kampa were the masters of ceremony. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Cadance Tullis sang, "Never Enough." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Trinity Smith sang, "Like My Father." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Anna Bisbee sang, "Good Morning Baltimore." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Ashtyn Bahr sang, "Reflection." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Shaylee Peterson sang, "Make You Feel My Love." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Camryn Kurtz sang, "Imagine." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Kianna Sander sang, "Bored." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

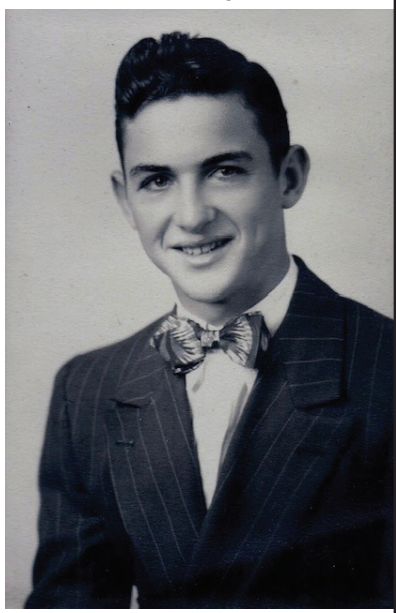


Sarah Jacobs sang, "Dancing Queen." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Carter Barse sang, "Vienna." He was accompanied by Elliana Weismantel (Photo by Paul Kosel)

90th Birthday



It took Les Dohman 90 years to look this good. Card party for his birthday on April 16, 2022-send card to Les Dohman PO Box 517 Groton SD 57445

Billions of Birds!

Hey, who's that? I'll watch him like a hawk...er...eagle.

Proud as a Peacock!

Where did I leave my eggs? I can be a bit of a birdbrain.

Flamingo's Fun Facts

- gentoo penguin
- ostrich
- hummingbird
- albatross
- maggie
- vultures
- burrowing owls
- peregrine falcon
- chickens
- parakeets

1. eats like a bird
2. dead as a dodo
3. free as a bird
4. as graceful as a swan
5. bird's-eye view

A. can do whatever you choose
B. view of something from high above
C. no longer exists
D. eats very little
E. moves smoothly

1. for the birds
2. lovely weather for ducks
3. a little bird told me
4. ruffle someone's feathers
5. wild goose chase

A. very rainy
B. someone shared a good secret
C. not interesting or worth your time
D. an errand that can't be finished
E. upset or annoy someone

Crossword:

Across: 1. VERTEBRATES, 2. BONNE, 3. TOES, 4. WINTER, 5. BEAKS

Down: 1. FLOCK, 2. BONE, 3. WINTER, 4. WINTER, 5. BEAKS

Groton City Zimmerman

Variance Notice

NOTICE OF VARIANCE HEARING
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT The Groton Planning & Zoning Commission will be holding a public hearing on April 25,

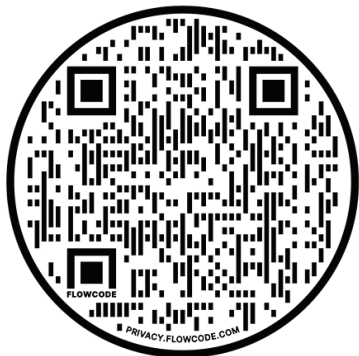
2022 at 6:00pm CDT at City Hall, 120 N Main St., Groton, SD for a variance of Chapter 9, Section 9.0106 of the Groton Zoning Ordinance. This application was made by Jarett and Amanda Zimmerman for a garage within 2 feet of the west lot line in a Residential (R-1) District at 302 N 4th Street, Groton, SD, legally described as Lt 5-6 Bk 1 Original

Any person wishing to present testimony for or against this special exception may appear in person or by representative at the above time and place.
Doug Heinrich
Zoning Administrator
Published once at the total approximate cost of \$9.20. 21099.



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#10 - \$5



#11 - \$5



#12 - \$5



#13 - \$8 35"



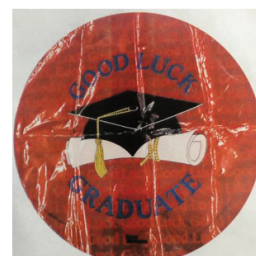
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We watch and study birds...

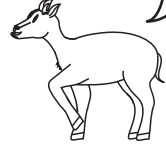


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Hey, who's that? I'll watch him like a hawk...er...eagle.

Read the clues to fill in the puzzle about birds!

Billions of birds live on our planet - in the forests, jungles, deserts, grasslands, near water and even in snowy areas. Millions of people like to watch or photograph birds simply because birds are so beautiful! It is fun to watch birds move and fly, and listen to how they communicate. Some people study birds' habits and life cycles. You can join in the fun and watch birds in your yard or at a park near you. Think about starting a notebook in which to draw, color and write what you learn about birds as you watch them!

- Birds are warm-blooded and have backbones. They are _____.
- Flying birds have hollow _____ that make their bodies lighter, and powerful wings covered with feathers that help to lift them into the air. Only birds have feathers!
- Most bird feet have four _____, three in front and one in back, to help them perch.
- Ducks, geese and other water birds have _____ feet that help them swim.
- Birds have _____, but no teeth. The shape of a bird's beak is suited to its diet.
- Birds may eat fruit, seeds, _____, fish, flower nectar and, in some cases, meat.
- Female birds lay eggs, sometimes on the ground, but mostly in _____ they build.
- When their _____ hatch, many mother birds will chew food, then feed it to them.
- Birds _____ with each other using chirps and tweets. Some birds, such as parrots, can mimic human speech.
- Birds live almost _____: forests, deserts, jungles, grasslands and on mountains.
- Birds may fly south before the _____ to warmer areas where it's easier to live.
- Some birds, like eagles, live in pairs while others, like geese, stay together in a _____.

Where did I leave my eggs? I can be a bit of a *birdbrain*.

webbed 9

12

vertebrates

babies

flock

4

2

nests

6

communicate

winter

toes

8

beaks

1

insects

bones

7

everywhere

11

3

5

1

hmm... that's a nice house.

I wonder if it comes with a birdbath?

I have the fastest wingbeat of any bird. I am a h _ m m _ n g b _ r d

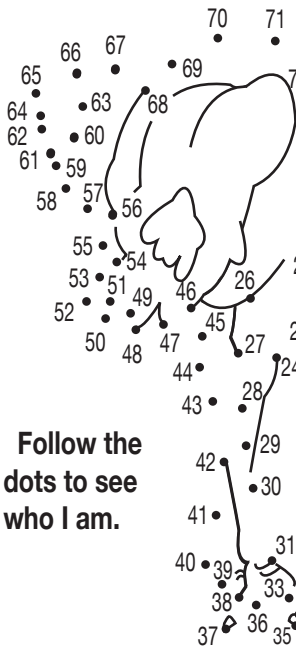
Tweet! Sweet!

My strong feet have only two toes, but I can run quickly - up to 45 miles per hour!

I just "eat up" fun facts.

Did you know that flamingos are born with gray feathers? Our pink color comes from eating algae and crustaceans (animals, like shrimp, whose bodies are protected by a hard shell). When the coloring from these foods goes through our livers, the extra coloring travels into our feathers and we look pink.

Flamingo's Fun Facts



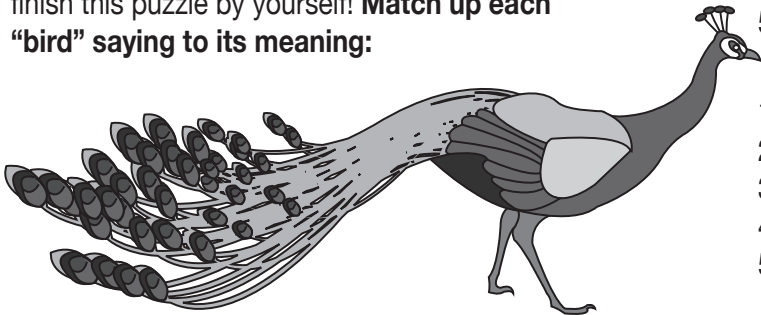
- The fastest swimming bird is the **gentoo pe _ _ _ u _ _**, which can swim up to about 22 miles per hour.
- The largest bird is the **_ str _ ch**. It cannot fly. It lays the biggest egg!
- The smallest bird is the **hu _ _ _ _ _ b _ rd**. It has the fastest wingbeat of all birds, flapping its wings up to 50-60 times in one second.
- The **_ l b _ tr _ ss** has the largest wingspan of any flying bird, up to 11 feet.
- A **_ _ _ _ p _ e** will steal shiny items and put them in its nest.
- Vu _ tures** are sometimes called buzzards. They eat dead animals.
- Burrowing _ w _ s** in the Americas live underground in holes dug by prairie dogs. Unlike most owls, they are active during the day.
- The **peregrine _ _ _ _ c _ _** is one of the fastest flying birds, and may go as fast as 200 miles per hour in a dive.
- Ch _ cke _ _ s** are the most common birds in the world.
- About ten million birds, like **p _ r _ keets**, are kept as pets in the U.S.

Fill in the birds' names in each fun fact by using the letters in the word **FLAMINGO**. Cross off each letter as you use it.

n a i m
o f i o
a g a o
a n o
m g l o
i i l n
n a l i m
n g i m

Proud as a Peacock!

You can be "as proud as a peacock" if you finish this puzzle by yourself! Match up each "bird" saying to its meaning:



- eats like a bird
- dead as a dodo
- free as a bird
- as graceful as a swan
- bird's-eye view
- can do whatever you choose
- view of something from high above
- no longer exists
- eats very little
- moves smoothly
- for the birds
- lovely weather for ducks
- a little bird told me
- ruffle someone's feathers
- wild goose chase
- very rainy
- someone shared a good secret
- not interesting or worth your time
- an errand that can't be finished
- upset or annoy someone

School counselors in S.D. playing larger role amid student mental health crisis

Stu Whitney
South Dakota News Watch

Sara Holmberg's job as a counselor at Dell Rapids Middle School has never been more challenging.

As fallout from the pandemic creates what the U.S. Surgeon General calls a "youth mental health crisis," school counselors like Holmberg find themselves providing not just academic and vocational guidance, but emotional support to students and families. Forging that many personal connections is difficult, so schools are exploring ways to supplement traditional counseling with professional partnerships to make sure teens get the attention they need.

Holmberg, 38, is one of three counselors in the Dell Rapids School District, which has 985 students. Now in her fourth year at the school, she is the only counselor serving the middle school, with an enrollment of about 300. She knows there is no way she can provide effective one-on-one guidance for every child, especially as more students and families continue to struggle with academic and financial setbacks from COVID-19.

According to the South Dakota Department of Education, nearly 90 percent of accredited schools in the state held in-person classes during the 2020-21 school year, alleviating some of the loss of structure from when schools went to remote learning for nearly three months starting in March 2020, when coronavirus first hit the state.

And yet, many students continue to suffer emotional problems. Nationally, 37 percent of high school students reported they experienced poor mental health during the pandemic, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey released March 31, while 44 percent reported they felt sad or hopeless during the past year.

This continues a trend seen before the pandemic, when a CDC data summary from 2009-19 found that more than one in three high school students said they had experienced such persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the past year that they couldn't participate in their regular activities, a 40 percent increase from the previous report.

In South Dakota, suicide was the 10th-leading cause of death overall among all state residents in 2020, but was the leading cause of death among ages 10 to 19, according to the Helpline Center, a statewide suicide prevention agency. The crisis is particularly staggering for Native American youth, whose suicide rate is estimated by the South Dakota Department of Health to be 2.5 times higher than the white population, with social isolation during the pandemic increasing the emotional toll.

"The pandemic put mental health more on the radar and accelerated everyone's concerns," Holmberg said after meeting with a group of eighth-graders in her office on a recent school day. "Instead of it being part of background conversation, it brought those concerns to the forefront and became in many ways our main focus."

Getting students involved

Leah DeHaan, a junior at Platte-Geddes High School, recalled her reaction when the school



Sara Holmberg, a counselor in the Dell Rapids School District, meets with a group of middle schoolers in her office on Friday, April 1. Holmberg is utilizing new strategies such as a YouTube animated series to encourage more conversation about mental health issues. Photo: Stu Whitney, South Dakota News Watch

started a student-led "Hope Squad" to tackle suicide prevention and encourage communication about topics such as depression, anxiety, bullying and abuse.

"I was skeptical," said DeHaan. "As a teen who has suffered from mental health issues myself, I was concerned that it was just shifting responsibility off the adults and onto the students, like they were using students as makeshift therapists."



Leah DeHaan

The national program was created by former Utah high school principal Greg Hudnall, who said he reached a breaking point in 1997 after getting a phone call that one of his students had killed himself in a public park – one in a string of tragedies in the school district.

"That's when I told myself, 'I'm done. I can't take any more of this,'" Hudnall told People Magazine in 2019. "I vowed that I would do everything I could to prevent it from ever happening again."

Hope Squad programs operate in 35 U.S. states and Canada, with Platte-Geddes and Flandreau building teams in South Dakota. Students are asked to name three peers they would turn to if they were struggling emotionally. Those lists help educators choose team members, who are trained on how to recognize signs of suicide contemplation and depression.

"Studies show that teens who (die by suicide) typically tell a friend that they're planning to do it, but that peer doesn't always go to an adult or find a resource to help," said Platte-Geddes superintendent Joel Bailey, adding that the phenomenon can be more pronounced in smaller communities.

Regardless of population, though, state data points to the need for new strategies. South Dakota's 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System revealed that 23 percent of high school students said they considered suicide, while 12 percent said they attempted suicide.

DeHaan, who plans to major in history in

college and possibly work as a museum archivist, said she struggled with depression and anxiety in middle school and the beginning of high school. Her breakthrough came when talking candidly to Hanson, the school counselor, about what she was going through.

"Slowly we broke it down, and it became easier to discuss," DeHaan said, "Now you see more kids around here willing to talk about their own struggles, the medications they need to take, and how they plan to move forward."

Seeking a team effort

At last count, there were just under 25,000 students in the Sioux Falls School District and 66 school counselors, which equates to a ratio of 364 students to every counselor. That's right on the state average for South Dakota and on

par with ratios in neighboring states Iowa (370:1), Nebraska (369:1) and North Dakota (297:1). The American School Counselor Association recommends a lower ratio of 250:1.

"Building the new high school (Sioux Falls Jefferson) helped with the ratios, but we could always use more support," said Travis Sieber, who heads the counseling department at Washington High, which has six counselors for 1,870 students. "Sometimes the mental health related duties become so top heavy that there aren't enough hours in the day to address other aspects of the job, like academic support and post-high school planning."

Sieber, in his 14th year at Washington, saw slippage in student performance following the spring of 2020, when classes went online. That loss of structure and in-person interaction fostered bad habits that were hard to break, he said, not to mention pandemic-related hardships faced by many families.

"For the first time in any of our generations, adults didn't have all the answers when it came to safety and housing and a sense that everything would be OK," said Seiber. "That created a sense of heightened anxiety that was passed down to students."

This year, Washington's counseling department set up a weekly programming series called the "Warrior 24," an effort to address 24 mental health topics over 24 weeks for 24 minutes every Thursday. The group surveyed students to find out their top concerns, which ranged from "burnout or pressure from activities" to "sleep issues and time management" and "stress and anxiety management."

Help is also available outside the school, with medical providers such as Avera Behavioral Health, Southeastern Behavioral Health and the Lutheran Social Services PATH program partnering with the school district and taking on referrals. The Helpline Center offers a Text4Hope program that provides crisis texting support for all high school students in the state.

For most students, though, it helps to have a guiding hand and familiar face in the school hallways to enhance the educational experience. Sioux Falls used federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds to add seven more school counselors for 2021-

Continues on next page



Washington High School seniors Micah Moran (left) and Matthew Agyeman speak to freshmen about high school success during an outreach series known as the Warrior 24. Photo: Courtesy

Sioux Falls School District

Continued from previous page

22, encouraging them to actively engage with students rather than waiting to be consulted. "It's important to get counselors into the classrooms not only for academic support, but social/emotional support and the college/career aspect," said Patti Lake-Torbert, coordinator of counseling services for the state's largest school district. "That is where the hope comes from, because we all need to know what our 'why' is, such as 'why am I in school?' We want to make sure students know that we believe in them and their ability to make decisions about what they want their future to look like, and we're here to help."

Putting families in focus

In Dell Rapids, Sara Holmberg and her fellow counselors know that encouraging mental health conversations when appropriate is a team effort that stretches into households, where real solutions await.

"Even if I could meet with every kid, I don't know their family dynamics," Holmberg said.

mental health support and exploring ways to fund it. But it's heightened when families are dealing with repercussions of COVID-19 – losing family members, losing income or jobs, kids at home, rising inflation. These issues are not diminishing as things begin to become more normal. And when one person is suffering, the whole family suffers."

In partnership with the Utah-based Cook Center for Human Connection, Dell Rapids offers "virtual mental health nights" with online support for families from trained professionals. That program will be expanded using ESSER funds to provide a family coaching component, where parents have 24/7 access to consultants who can help with everything from behavioral issues to making a household schedule.

The school district is also utilizing an animated series called "My Life is Worth Living" created by Terry Thoren, who helped produce the "Rugrats" television show on Nickelodeon in the 1990s. The character-driven YouTube videos focus on topics such bullying, suicidal ideation, sexual orientation and abuse.

"The series does a really good job of modeling for parents," said Holmberg. "It gives them

"Everything might be fine one day and there could be a family crisis soon after."

Dell Rapids Superintendent Summer Schultz started looking for ways to expand the school district's outreach after seeing mental health concerns bubble to the surface during the height of the pandemic.

"The wheels had been turning for a while," said Schultz, president-elect of the South Dakota School Superintendents Association. "We had all been searching for

"One thing that the pandemic and other social events have done is bring mental health to the forefront," said Seiber. "The stigma is slowly going away as young people are more willing to ask for help. I think we're headed in the right direction."

HOW TO GET MENTAL HEALTH HELP AND WATCH VIDEO SERIES

Resources to get help for yourself or someone else who may be considering suicide:

The Helpline Center: Callers across the state can obtain county-specific resource information and be connected to a suicide hotline.

Call: 211 or 1-800-273-8255

Text: Text your zip code to 898211

Front Porch Coalition: 605-348-6692

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline/Indian Health Service hotline: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

Crisis Text Line: Text CONNECT to 741741

Animated Series: mylifeisworthliving.org

ABOUT STU WHITNEY



Stu Whitney is an investigative reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A resident of Sioux Falls, Whitney is an award-winning reporter, editor and novelist with more than 30 years of experience in journalism.

Avantara Ipswich Announces Closure of its Skilled Nursing Facility

After significant discussions amid ongoing assessment, Avantara Ipswich has made the difficult decision to move forward with the closure of its skilled nursing facility, located in Ipswich, South Dakota.

"It is always a difficult decision to close a skilled nursing facility, but the challenges related to staffing and the continued impact of COVID-19, have created an environment where we can no longer keep the doors of Avantara Ipswich open," said Connie Ortega on behalf of Avantara Ipswich. We were fortunate enough to serve a great community, who in return provided incredible support to both our residents and staff, during a global pandemic. "The staff at Avantara Ipswich are incredibly hardworking and dedicated to the care of our residents and community. They deserve to be recognized for their commitment, especially over the last two years. They are true heroes in the community, and we will be working closely with both our residents and staff to help them through the closure of Avantara Ipswich."

Each resident, in conjunction with their physician and loved ones, will have individual plans developed to ensure that their health and well-being are the highest priority during this period of relocation. Additionally, Avantara Ipswich will do its best to assist its staff and help them explore alternate employment opportunities.

Since day one, Avantara Ipswich has been committed to investing in the physical needs of the facility, as well as being committed to personnel, community, and state relations, in order to improve the facility and continue its operations. After a significant investment into the facility, an exhaustion of both internal and external resources, and engagement with officials from the state of South Dakota, it is apparent that the facility's continued operational viability is no longer possible.

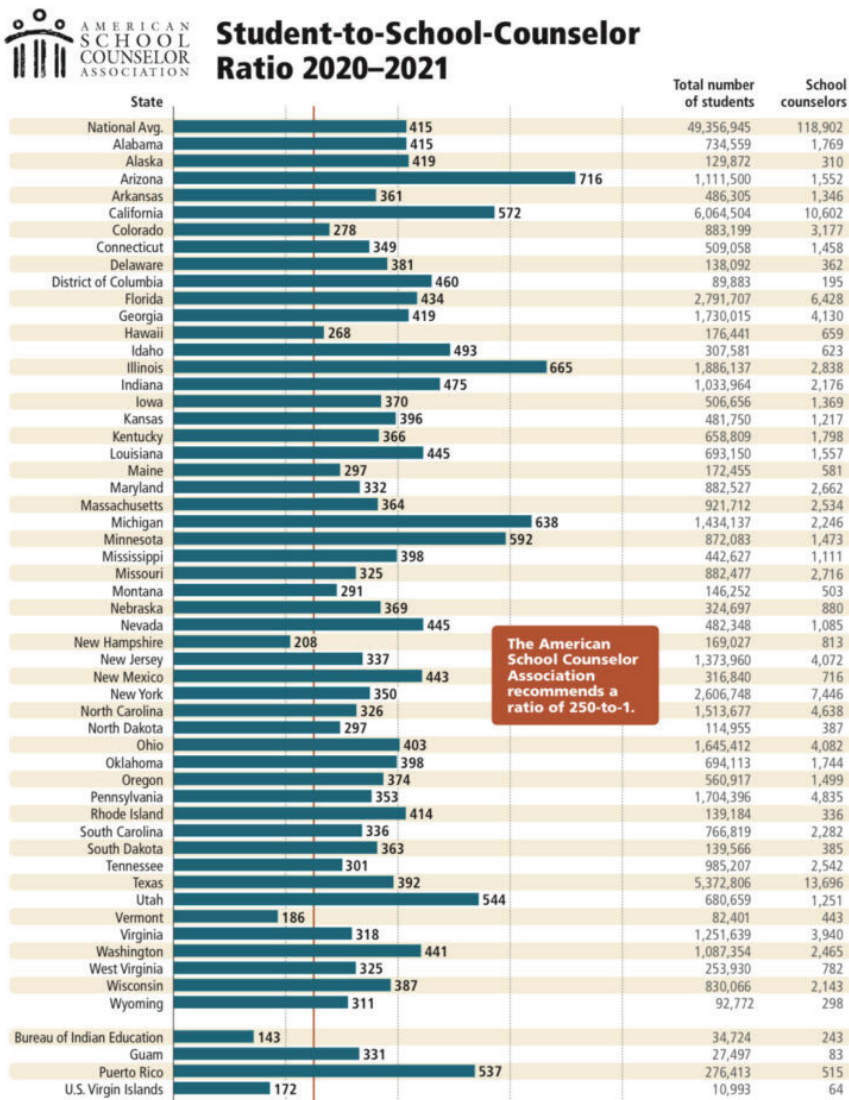
Avantara Ipswich has provided a formal written "Notice of Closure" to the South Dakota Office of Licensure and Certification, in addition to providing written notice to each resident and their designated point of contact. Avantara Ipswich's last day of operation will be May 31, 2022.

the language to talk about these things. Sometimes parents don't want to push too much, so this serves as an icebreaker."

She recommended the video series to a student who was struggling with anxiety and depression. "After watching it, they had the language to talk to me about it," she said. "They said, 'I feel anxious and can't catch my breath. I don't see anyone else struggling with this.'"

Holmberg responded by saying that in the video, there were trusted people to speak with – and encouraged the student to consider peers or adults to share experiences with. "It helped them not be so tunnel-visioned on their own crisis," she said. "It opened up a lot of possibilities."

The hope among educators is that those possibilities will increase as new strategies and awareness emerge, protecting and inspiring students at a time when they need it most.



South Dakota has a ratio of one school counselor for about 363 students in the public school system, well below the ratio of one counselor to 250 students as recommended by the American School Counseling Association. Most states, including neighbors of South Dakota, also are not meeting the recommended ration.

City continues garbage pickup with Heartland Waste

There was a 40 minute discussion on the garbage pickup contract. Three-year bids were submitted by A-1 Sanitation of Aberdeen and Heartland Waste Management of Mobridge.

The issue came up whereas Heartland has been doing the garbage pickup for 15 years and has provided curbside pickup. Their bid was \$15.95 per household. A-1 Sanitation would provide 95 gallon totes which would be picked up with an arm from the truck. They also offer 65 gallon totes for the elderly if they want a smaller one. The totes would have to be placed by the curbside with the lid facing a certain way. After the discussion, the council deferred further discussion to executive session. After the executive session, the council voted to go with no totes and to accept the bid from Heartland Waste Management for a three-year contract.

Two bids were submitted for the seal coat project for this summer. Top Coat out of Yankton submitted a bid of \$2.461. Bituminous Paving of Ortonville, Minn., for \$3.45 per square feet. The council accepted the bid from Top Coat. The original 75,000 square feet project will have to be reduced. The price last year was \$1.66 and Terry Herron had estimated a price this year of \$1.75.

There was discussion of expanding the airport by installing electrical, water and hangers. It would cost around \$60,000 to \$80,000 and there is a chance the state would pay for half of the cost. There would be a chance to rent out the hangers which would generate some revenue. Councilman David Blackmun said the city should budget it for a couple of years before pursuing the project. No action was taken.

Councilman David Blackmun talked about the the proposed new bathroom/concession stand project for the baseball field. There was discussion of putting up a storm shelter to coincide with the project, but that would put the cost over a million dollars with FEMA contributing about 83 percent of the cost of the storm shelter. There is also discussion of putting up a storm shelter and bathroom facility at the park.

The city-wide spring-cleanup date has been set for Groton for April 30 through May 6.

A special event alcoholic beverage license was approved for the Groton Firemen's Fun Night set for April 23.

Malt Beverage License Renewals for 2022-23 were approved for Ken's Food Fair, MJ's Sinclair and Dollar General. Olde Bank N' Cafe opted not to renew their license this year.

The council approved the donation of four season baseball passes and a family pool pass for the Dueling Duo silent auction set for April 9.

Councilman Karyn Babcock talked about The Pantry. Tentative hours are Mondays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Tuesdays from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. A representative from Feeding South Dakota coming to Groton to visit the site on April 14th around 1 p.m. A form will need to be filled out for people coming to get food - all it asks is how many in the households and the age of each member. The Groton Lions Club is sponsoring the 503C3 tax exempt status for The Pantry. Babcock said, "It's super exciting news." The Pantry is located in the northwest room at the Groton Community Center.

Jason Wambach will be the new replacement for Kristi Flihs on the city council. He will be appointed at the first meeting in May.

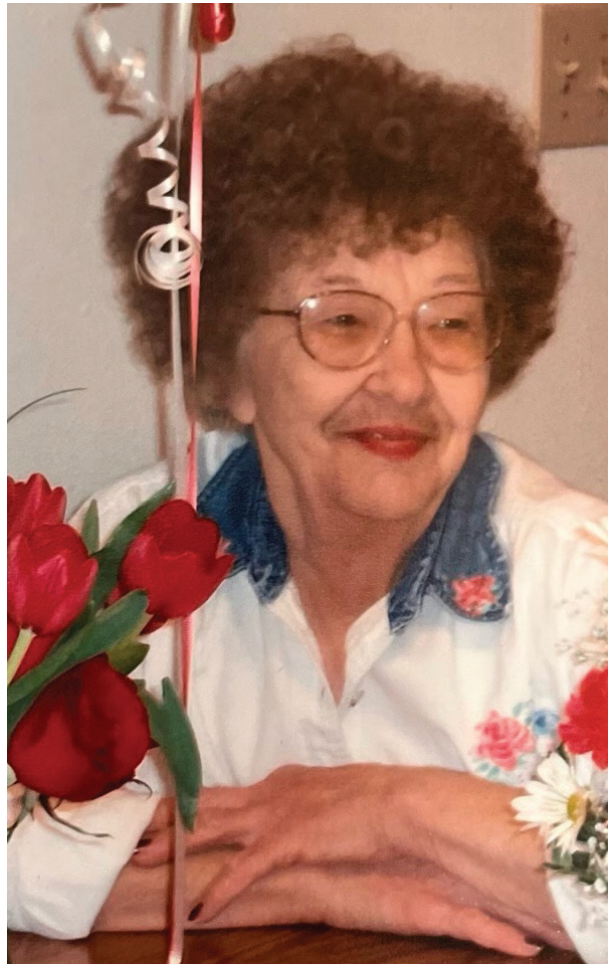
The baseball crew was hired after an executive session. They are: Matt Locke, softball/baseball coordinator and Legion coach; Seth Erickson, assistant Legion coach; Dalton Locke, junior Legion coach; Aaron Severson, junior Teener or junior Legion coach; Susan Fjeldheim, U12 girls softball coach; Kenzie McInerney, U8 girls softball coach; Anne Hinkelman, Brenna Imrie and Jerica Locke, gatekeeping; Bradin Althoff, Kaleb Hoover, Tate Larson, Cole Simon and Alyssa Thaler, groundskeepers.

Thomas Strickland was hired as a new police officer. He is currently a police officer in Mobridge.

Aaron Grant came before the council during the public input part and he apologized for his actions he had done at the Brown County Courthouse. He had smashed an old computer at the county auditor's office after the last election.

- Paul Kosel

The Life of Joyce Krueger



Private family services for Joyce Darlene Krueger, 94, of Groton, was held Friday, April 1, 2022 at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Rev. Larry Johnson and Rev. Craig Grams officiated. Burial followed in St. Paul's Lutheran Cemetery, Ferney under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel.

Joyce passed away on Sunday, March 27, 2022 at Sun Dial Manor, Bristol.

Joyce was born on February 14, 1928 to August and Ida (Schmidt) Pigors in East Hanson Township of Brown County. She came from a family of 8 children, her being

the youngest. Joyce was baptized and confirmed in St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Ferney. She attended country school and graduated from Groton High School.

Joyce married Paul "Lefty" Krueger on November 20, 1946 in Day County. They lived on a farm south of Groton all of their lives, where they raised 8 children.

Joyce very much enjoyed farm life, raising her children, gardening, growing flowers and loved old fashioned country music. She was an amazing cook and baker. Her sense of humor was full of one liners that would catch you so off guard and would make you laugh for hours. Joyce had a heart of gold and would put others before herself. After the kids were grown, she worked at the Groton Nursing Home for several years in the kitchen. Once retired, she returned back to her love of cooking, baking, gardening and spending time with her family and many grandchildren.

Grateful for having shared her life are her children: Roger Krueger, David (Cheryl) Krueger, Sheila (Chuck) Johnson, Paula (Craig) West, Doug (Heidi) Krueger, Dan Krueger and Kevin Krueger. Joyce is also survived by her grandchildren: Shonna, Darin, Angela, Amy, Kayla, Jeff, Jamie, Savanna and great-grandchildren: Aubray, Trevor, Amanda, Ben, Jessie, Avery and Bridger.

Preceding her in death were her parents, her husband, 6 brothers, one sister and eldest daughter, Edith (Krueger) Knapp.

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Lana's Annals- a report from Pierre

Greetings once again. We had a couple of weeks' break from the Legislature before Veto Day occurred on March 28th. We convened to either sustain or to override vetoes on HB1281, HB1223, and SB151. HB1281 dealt with spending authority. The bill stated that the departments had the ongoing authority to fund their programs as long as no new programs were created. Somehow that idea got lost in translation and whereas the bill heartily passed during session, many people changed their votes on the 28th, thus upholding the veto. HB1223 would have given a pregnant minor decision making ability on a health problem if the parents could not be contacted or were abusive. The entire bill, in my opinion, seemed unnecessary. The simple fix would be to have a parental medical release signed ahead of time in case of an emergency like this. I am somewhat certain that schools have these consent forms in place in case a student experiences a health related problem and a parent or guardian cannot be contacted. This bill needed to be vetoed as its passage could have opened the future door for a minor to be making added medical decisions without parental knowledge or consent.

SB151 was a bill that would have erased past Class 1 marijuana convictions from one's record. The House did not vote on this bill as it started in the Senate, and those members voted to sustain that veto. In addition to the aforementioned bills meeting their demise, rules were suspended to vote on SB213, which gave additional money to long term care. That idea was readily embraced and flew through the Senate and the House. We also had House members ask to suspend the rules on two different topics: one was to exempt people from our state gas/diesel tax for 2 months this year, possibly August and September. No debate took place, however, as it took 2/3 of the members elect to suspend and the vote fell short. The second ask was to suspend the rules to get vaccination language in bill form into place. That vote to suspend failed miserably. The popular thought process is not to introduce new legislation on Veto Day.

As a former teacher, I will surprise the readers when I say that I received an "F" on a cannabis score card today. I cannot ever remember getting that type of grade during my school years, so this was new to me. Score cards are put out by various groups. They are highly subjective and based on group thought processes. Some of the groups who use these are Citizens for Liberty (Rapid City), Americans for Prosperity, NRA, Family Heritage Alliance, and now the newly formed marijuana group. Basically, the scores are recorded on a wall of shame to draw out how the legislators from each district voted on certain bill numbers. Anyway, 8 of us House members drew the ire of the marijuana backers, and we each got an "F.!" I am proud of that grade in this instance because in my search of the voting results on the state website, the majority of my voters did NOT endorse having marijuana freely marketed.

Last, I want to thank all of you constituents who have supported me through these past 8 years. As your representative, I am grateful for your messages and prayers. I do not wish to run for Senate at this time, and I am term limited in the House so I will not be campaigning this fall. I have enjoyed the friendships made and the education received which spans far beyond any textbook!! I plan to stay informed as to what it happening at our capitol during the upcoming sessions. Perhaps at some point I will run again. We shall see. With that, have a great week.

Rep. Lana Greenfield



Webster Area held its junior-senior prom Friday night. On the left, Seth Johnson escorting Calli Bearman. The right photo features Julianna Kosel being escorted by Isaac Hubsch.



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Dear EarthTalk: Is encouraging dairy farmers and cattle ranchers to capture methane gas from their livestock's manure good or bad for the planet?
 Phil Onorato, Pittsburgh, PA

EARTHTALK™

One benefit of generating natural gas this way is that the resource is renewable, as long as cows and pigs keep defecating. Another is that methane capture accommodates existing technologies. Methane capture fuel and traditional natural gas use the same infrastructure.

Methane capture, the process of using the decomposition of livestock byproducts like cow and hog manure to generate electricity, is a promising technology. It helps to resolve existing, and for the time being, necessary evils such as climate-warming methane emissions from cattle and pigs. It works by exposing the livestock waste to bacteria and enzymes that break down the embedded methane into usable natural gas that can be pumped right into generators.

Large farms and livestock operations that employ this now widely available technology can turn their cattle and pigs from a climate scourge—methane is a much more potent greenhouse gas than even carbon dioxide—into at least a producer of renewable energy (even if it is a fossil fuel).

The downside of methane capture, at least as far as environmentalists are concerned, is that it perpetuates the fossil-fuel-oriented status quo and further incentivizes the factory farm business model instead of a shift to true zero-emission renewables like solar, wind and geothermal. The factory farm business model has wreaked havoc on the environment from coast to coast, from pig waste overflows in North Carolina to poisoned waterways in the Midwest from runoff contaminated by livestock waste to California drought from cattle ranches claiming more than their fair share of water to quench cattle thirst.

But proponents of using methane emissions to offset methane production by livestock argue that their way of producing energy is just as "zero emission" as solar or wind. Yet we wouldn't even need the process of methane capture to begin with without the livestock trade. Carbon offsets also do not reduce methane emissions, they simply compensate for them. In a sense, they are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Policy pushes abound on both sides of the issue. These include the California state government walking a fine line between supporting its farm-based economy, while leaning toward a greener future through incentivizing methane capture. Their opponents, including advocacy groups like Food and Water Watch, the Sierra Club, the Southern Environmental Law Center and the Natural Resources Defense Council, are coordinating on crafting legal solutions to manure-related pollution issues.

Methane capture may be a controversial technology, but it is worth investigating. Solutions that can work right now have some benefits over solutions that are only possible in the distant future. But future planning will require more ambitious solutions than temporary replacements.

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Newer technology that has farmers and ranchers capturing methane from their livestock waste is better for the planet than not having it. Credit: Mark Stebnicki, Pexels.

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Anything from Acne to Zika

I enjoy visiting with my colleagues who are medical specialists. We dive in and explore the depths of a particular condition. However, there is something to say about the breadth of knowledge that a family medicine physician is expected to have. Your family doctor can run through the alphabet of conditions from acne to the zika virus.

A 2004 study in the Annals of Family Medicine found that a family medicine physician managed an average of 3.05 problems per clinic visit. For patients over 65 years of age, that number went up to 3.88 problems and patients with diabetes had an average of 4.60 problems addressed at each visit. A specialist physician will generally focus on one problem at each visit.

However, patients are not made up of individual problems. The body functions as a unit and issues in one area can affect another unrelated organ system. We know that chronic pain can lead to depression and vice versa. Stooped posture due to compression fractures from osteoporosis can lead to lung issues as the ribs cannot open up as fully as they normally do. We continue to learn more on how the micro biome of the bacteria in the body affect things from a person's weight to immune system function.

This is why it is so important to have a primary care physician and to make sure they have access to your complete medical history. With a comprehensive view of your records, symptoms that might otherwise seem unrelated can be assessed and may assist with diagnosis. Talk to your doctor to determine if all your medical information and testing results are consolidated into one record, especially if you have doctors who work in different health care systems.

The primary care physician also serves as a guide between the patient and the specialist, offering valuable medical detail to the specialist and providing clarification to the patient.

Recently I had a patient who timidly started their question with the preface, "I'm not sure if I should ask you this, but..." I quickly reassured them that in primary care, any question is fair game. If it is something that I can answer, I will. If I do not have the answer, I can do some research, consult with a colleague, or refer you on to someone who does have that answer for you. So, no matter your condition from acne and amblyopia to zika virus and zoster, your family doctor should have you covered. Go ahead, ask anything from A to Z!

Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices as a hospitalist in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show celebrating its twentieth season of truthful, tested, and timely medical information, broadcast on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



By Jill Kruse, D.O.