FIND ME IN THE PAPER

- This picture will be hidden in the Blue Ink somewhere.
- Look for it throughout the issue as you read the articles and browse the pictures.
- Thank you Mrs. Granberg for creating the Blue Ink dragon

WORTH MENTIONING

- Wrestling picked up a tournament this weekend in Parkston.

GERMAN PHRASE OF THE WEEK

- Goodbye
  - **Auf Wiedersehen**
- Thanks to Johanna Knauer for providing the Phrase of the Week.

January 23, 2026
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Garretson High School
Garretson, SD

GARRETSON
BLUE DRAGONS

# Blue Ink




# Unforgettable experience

by **Johanna Knauer**
staff writer - editorial

Time in Garretson has come to an end but the memories and friendships created will last a lifetime

In the beginning it was just a dream, the idea of living on the other side of the world, experiencing a new culture, speaking another language. I always wanted to leave my hometown, not because I don‘t like it, but just because I wanted to experience something new.

This idea escalated really fast into looking for organizations that can make this dream happen. Between the approach of starting all the paperwork, getting my visa, my placement, and finally being at the airport leaving my parents behind for 9 months. A whole process were I made the decision to leave everything I knew behind multiple times, but I was always sure I wanted to do an exchange year.

The moment I actually realized I was leaving was when we drove to the airport. Saying goodbye to my family and friends never felt real until that moment. Stepping on the plane with other exchange students that had the same dream as me was a feeling I can’t describe, everyone was so nervous but I knew that everything would work out for me and if not I could always fly home.

The first time I met my Host Family, after I landed in the US, was so special to me because people that I have never met before welcomed me in their home and their life. From the beginning I knew that my family was a perfect match for me. With Anna being my age I found my best friend in the first days and knew I had her always by my side.

To be honest the first day of school was one of the scariest days of my life. Stepping into a place where you only know a few people, in a different country with another language was a challenging moment. Of course I had an imagination of how I thought High School would be, but it was completely different. Teachers are more like friends instead of an authority, classes are fun, and everyone knows each other. I was not used to that from my school in Germany, everything is about academics, other social interactions are outside of school, sports are not played in school and we don‘t have Homecoming, Winter Formal, or Prom.

Playing soccer for Garretson gave me the chance to play with a new team, make memories but especially to make friends in the first few weeks. Playing with a new team after I played with my soccer team in Germany for over 7 years was a great decision but during the season I noticed that I missed my soccer team in Germany more than I thought I would.

Missing friends and family is a huge part of an exchange year, but what every exchange student has to learn is, that homesickness is normal. Being away from your family for such a long time is not easy but you have to grow with that.

The most important part is talking about it, every time I was homesick I knew that I was not alone and that I can talk to my friends and my Host Family about it, even if they didn‘t understand my situation they would always listen to me.

I got super lucky with my Host Family, because through them I got to travel to 10 states. I lived my own American Dream with experiencing High School Football Games, Homecoming and traveling through the whole country.

Some of my highlights were being at an Ohio State Football Game, Vikings Game, Thanksgiving in Wisconsin Dells, skiing in the Rocky Mountains, visiting Florida, and of course Homecoming. I have never experienced school spirit in the way that I have here, being a part of that made me really happy. I got to know sides of myself that I didn’t know before, I would have never thought that I would love football as much as I do know or that I would try a new sport.

This experience has taught me so much and if I would ever get the chance to live here again I would immediately take it. This has been the best time of my life even if not everything was perfect, and I just want to say thank you to all students, teachers and the staff for accepting me and making this a great time for me.







## The Garretson Grid

| | In FFA | Has a sibling in high schoool | In Band |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sophmore | | | |
| 6’0 or Taller | | | |
| In Basketball | | | |

Start by filling out the 3x3 grid with a person that fits the description at the intersecting square.

**Note:** You can only use a person once per grid.

**Possible Answers:** Some (not all) options are listed at the bottom of page 4.

Good Luck!

Infographic created by Colton Buchholz

# Go do the thing

## Experiences open up opportunities and views

by **Gracie Fiegen**
staff writer - editorial

After attending Garretson High School for a total of 13 years, I find myself having a bountiful supply of advice. Almost all of it has to do with putting yourself out there and taking as many opportunities as possible.

Although this concept always made me feel like I was insanely busy, I do not regret any of those experiences. Each adventure I went on taught me an important lesson about myself.

The two most seasonally relevant bits are attending winter formal and signing up for random camps.

**Winter Formal**

Formal at Garretson is a once yearly occasion that happens to be next Saturday, January 31. To me, this silly dance is about getting together with friends amongst the stress and dullness of winter. Maybe it is just me, but I relish any opportunity to dress up and take life a little less seriously.

Attendance numbers for formal are becoming more slim, but it can easily go through a revival. My mother always said to me, “It is only as fun as you make it.” This rings true to me because I have had a blast at formal every year. Garretson is a small school, so there should be friendly faces ready to take on the dance floor with you.

**Summer Camps**

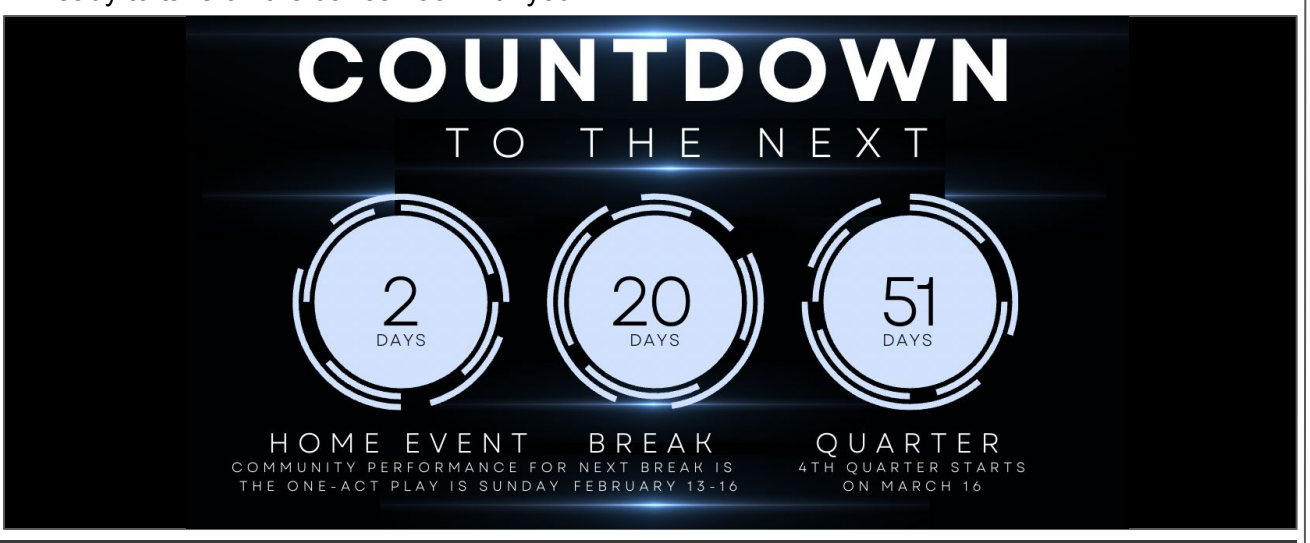
Over the past years, I have met hundreds of peers and learned more about my interests through summer camps. The application pages are waiting for you to sign up now.

My first experience was Dakota News Now Media Camp where I got to explore a career interest in news television. Although I decided a newscast career is not for me, it helped me narrow my future routes.

Girls State is where I got my first taste of USD, the college I will be attending in the fall. I met over three hundred women from around South Dakota that I will hopefully see around the state for years to come.

The Service Leadership Academy through The Humanity Launch is where I networked with amazing leaders who aspire to change the world. Within those 48 hours, I found a friend group that I spent all summer hanging out with.

Putting yourself out there can be a huge risk, but it can have major payouts. Formal could be boring, or it could be the highlight of your month. Summer camp could be forgettable, or it could create lasting memories and friendships. In the end, it is up to you to carefully consider your options and weigh the outcomes to find what is best for you.




# Senior Spotlight
## Cole Schleuter



**Activities Involved In:**
Wrestling, Football, Baseball, Trapshooting, FFA, NHS

**Who/What Will You Miss Most:**
Friends and the weight room

**Favorite School Lunch:**
Deer sandwich and YooHoo

**Favorite Class You’ve Taken:**
Metal Fabrication

**Plans for Next Year:**
Attend Lake Area Tech for Welding




# Gracie’s Unsolicited Advice

## This Week’s Need to Know

### Upcoming Events

**Saturday, January 24**
- JH GBB @ Sioux Valley Tourney (9:00)
- Wrestling @ Parkston (10:00)

**Sunday, January 25**
- One Act Community Performance (3:00)

**Monday, January 26**
- CABIN FEVER WEEK - Preppy Polos
- Pickleball @ 8:30
- JH/JV Wrestling @ Brandon (4:00)
- C BBB @ Baltic (4:00)

**Tuesday, January 27**
- CABIN FEVER WEEK - Hawaiian Day
- Rock-Paper-Scissors Contest
- Region 2A One-Act Play @ Lennox
- JH GBB @ Estelline-Hendricks (4:30)
- GBB @ Estelline-Hendricks (6:00/7:15)
- JH BBB @ Flandreau (4:00/5:00)
- BBB @ Flandreau (5:00/6:15/7:30)
- Wrestling Quad v. Parkston, MVPCS, Groton (5:00)

**Wednesday, January 28**
- CABIN FEVER WEEK - Pajama Day
- In-Class Trivia

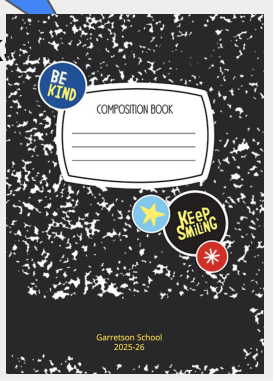
**Thursday, January 29**
- CABIN FEVER WEEK - Athletes vs. Mathletes
- Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader @ 2:15

**Friday, January 30**
- CABIN FEVER WEEK - Spirit Day
- Blue Dragon Olympics @ 8:30

### Worth Mentioning

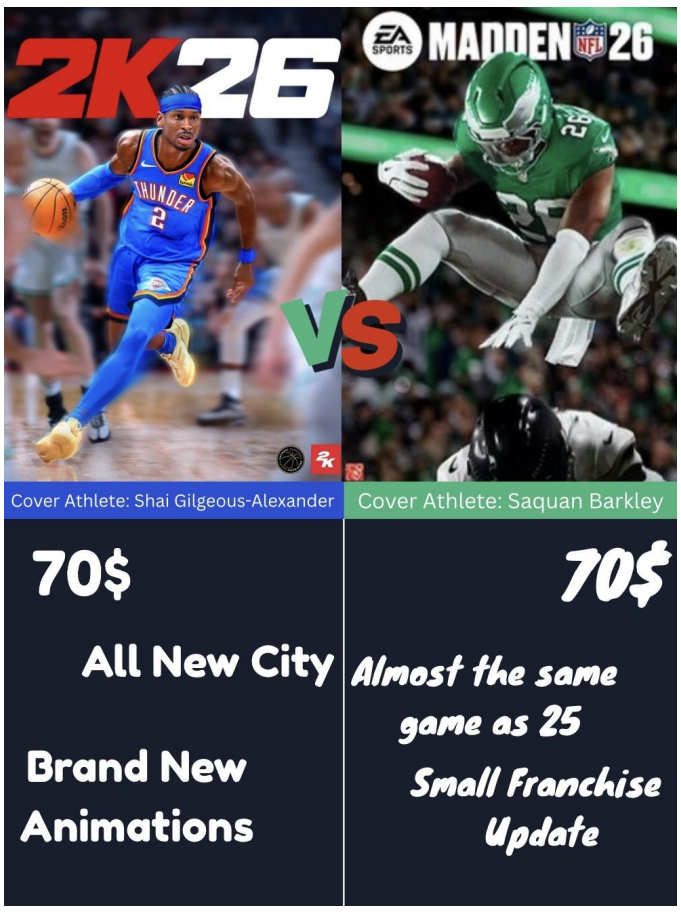
**CONGRATULATIONS** to all of the students who have been recognized for showing positive ACE qualities (Attitude, Character, Effort). Our five winners from November are Cooper Smith, Alyssa Olson, Drew Chester, Caylix Buchholz, and Bryce Howe. Please see Mrs. Costello in study hall for an extra reward.

**ORDER YOUR ‘25-’26 YEARBOOK** today. They are $30 each, a steal for the millions of memories made this year. You can order online at ybpay.lifetouch.com. Please come find Dr. Buchholz if you have any questions.



# Basketball vs Football

## Which video game sports experience takes top honors




by **Shea Smidt**
staff writer - editorial
infographic creator

I think that NBA 2K26 is better than Madden 26 for a number of reasons. First is that NBA 2K26 is way more enjoyable to play compared to Madden 26. Where in NBA 2K26 the game keeps going, in Madden 26 the game stops after each play, which after some time becomes boring.

Another reason is the MyCareer mode is part of NBA 2K26 as well. In the MyCareer, you actually get to create your own player and increase their skills as well as play major games and even get to go out into the city. In some ways, it feels as though you are that player's life. Madden does have this as well, though not as interesting.

NBA 2K26 is also more visually appealing. The characters look more realistic when moving around, and their animations look natural. In Madden 26, the characters sometimes look stiff when moving around, and their animations look repetitive.

"The main difference between the games is probably like, the career mode is better on 2k because you can play for an NBA team and play online one vs ones. On Madden I only play franchise because that's the only fun mode for me," said Casey Smith. Ethan McGregor said, "2k is just so much better than Madden because it's not as pay to win. They give away so many free rewards just for playing the game. As the best 2k player in the school, so I know what I'm talking about."

Lastly, it is more enjoyable to play NBA 2K26 with your friends. There are more options, which make the experience more enjoyable. Generally, NBA 2K26 is more enjoyable, more exciting, and better looking compared to Madden 26.

# Snowmobile Safety

## Sunday provides opportunity to increase winter preparedness

On Sunday, January 25, there will be a free snowmobile safety training available to anyone 12 years of age and older.

The safety course put on by Siouxland SnoTrackers will take place at Nordstrom's Automotive from 1-4 pm.

The course focuses on operation safety and ethics, proper clothing, trail markings, safety gear, and more.

If there are any questions or an interest in attending please contact the Siouxland SnoTrackers by email at siouxland.snotrackers @gmail.com.



# WINTER OLYMPICS

What countries have won the most Winter Olympic medals since 1924?

1. Germany - 408
2. Norway - 368
3. Russia - 314
4. United States - 305
5. Austria - 232
6. Canada - 199

Infographic created by Harper Hanisch

# GOOD NEWS

EARTH'S OZONE LAYER IS HEALING AND IS ON A PATH TO FULL RECOVERY

GREEN SEA TURTLES ARE NO LONGER ENDANGERED

SCIENTISTS IN JAPAN INVENTED A PLANT BASED PLASTIC THAT DISSOLVES IN SALT WATER AFTER A FEW HOURS

COLUMBIA BANNED ALL NEW OIL AND LARGE SCALE MINING IN ITS AMAZON

THERE WILL BE NO DEEP SEA MINING IN NORWAY'S ARCTIC SEAS FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

U.S ELECTRICITY NEED SPIKED IN 2025 AND SOLAR POWER HANDLED 61% OF IT

KENYA OPENED THE WORLD'S LARGEST RHINO SANCTUARY

Infographic created by Cece Fiegen

# JOURNALISM'S GUMMY OFFICIAL RANKINGS

| RANK | GUMMY | RATING |
|---|---|---|
| 01. | PEACH RINGS | 8.4/10 |
| 02. | APPLE RINGS | 8.2/10 |
| 03. | SOUR GUMMY WORMS | 8.1/10 |
| 04. | UNICORNS | 7/10 |
| 05. | SOUR GUMMY BEARS | 7/10 |
| 06. | GUMMY WORMS | 6.9/10 |
| 07. | BLUE RINGS | 6.3/10 |
| 08. | GUMMY BEARS | 5.4/10 |
| 09. | ORANGE RINGS | 5.2/10 |
| 10 | COLA BOTTLES | 5/10 |

Infographic created by Cade Risty

# Local teacher honored with regional recognition

Agriculture education teacher, Miss Kientopf, acknowledged by peers



naae

2025 NAAE REGION III OUTSTANDING AGRICULTURE TEACHER AWARD

**ALYSHA KIENTOPF**

GARRETSON HIGH SCHOOL SOUTH DAKOTA

National Association of Agricultural Educators
www.naae.org | #TeachAg

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The Garretson Grid Possible Answers:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 |

1: Blair Ellefson, Khloe Susie, Brielle Weir
2. Brielle Weir, Chase Arend, Cooper Smith
3. Casen Smith, Wyatt Potter, Rylee Farrell
4. Jacoby Costello, Elijah Winterton, Tanner Baatz
5. Connor Smith, Jacoby Costello, Cecelia Fiegen
6. Dan Hoskins, Lucas Schotzko, Connor Smith
7. Brecken Weir, Colton Buchholz, Ella Frerk
8. Michael Hanisch, Brenna Smith, Jackson Arend
9. Jackson Collins, Ava Ockenga, Brooklyn Trudeau