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

- CONGRATULATIONS to Elizabeth Roth for earning a Superior at State for her Poetry selection.

GERMAN PHRASE OF THE WEEK

- Happy Holidays
  - **Frohe Feiertage**
- Thanks to Johanna Knauer for providing the Phrase of the Week.

December 12, 2025
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Garretson High School
Garretson, SD

GARRETSON
BLUE DRAGONS

Blue Ink



E-learning now a possibility

School Board approves remote learning during excessive snow days

by **Cecelia Fiegen**
staff writer

When students mark the last day of school in their planner, they expect to actually be done on that date. Throughout the years, teachers and students have been disappointed when their summer comes late due to snow days. A solution proposed at Garretson the past few years was to have virtual learning on snow days. Finally this year, the plan is actually being put in motion.

How will the snow days work?

Online snow days will go into effect on the third snow day of the year, the first two will be off thanks to the snow days built into GHS' calendar. Mr. Terwee, a representative on the e-learning committee, explained that if there is an advanced warning for the storm, teachers will advise students to take home their iPads and any other materials that they might need for the next day. Then teachers will be able to decide whether they would like to Zoom with the class or take attendance in another way. Each class period will be around 30 to 35 minutes to finish the assignments given to students.

E-Learning Schedule

Middle School Schedule:
1st period *9:00-9:30*
2nd period *9:40-10:10*
3rd period *10:20-10:50*
4th period *11:00-11:30*
Lunch *11:30-12:00*
6th period *12:00-12:30*
7th period *12:40-1:10*
8th period *1:20-1:50*
9th period *2:00-2:30*

High School Schedule:
1st Period *9:00-9:35*
2nd Period *9:45-10:20*
3rd Period *10:30-11:05*
4th Period *11:15-11:50*
5th Period *11:50-12:25*
Lunch *12:25-12:55*
7th Period *12:55-1:30*
8th Period *1:40-2:15*

How was it decided to do E-Learning on snow days?

McGregor shares that a few years ago the school had a surplus of snow days, and because there are only two snow days built into the calendar, they had to make up those days at the end of the year. Many people were unhappy with having to continue school late into May. To adjust to this superintendent, Mr. Johnson, proposed the idea of virtual learning on the overflow days. He then formed a committee of teachers from elementary to high school, including TerWee and McGregor who would help decide. Other schools in the area including but not limited to Sioux Falls and Tea also do online school for excess snow days.

What will the online schedule look like?

While the order of the classes stays the same, the times will be different. The online school day will start at 9:00 AM and end around 2:30. To make the day manageable from home, the classes' time had to be cut shorter to be only thirty minutes in middle school and forty-five minutes in high school. In between each class there will be a ten minute time period to allow students a break.



Once again, online learning will not take place until after the first two snow days. This will be an adjustment for both teachers and students, but the hard work will pay off in May when school is out and the weather is nice. This would ensure that school truly does end when it was scheduled to.

Which sweet treat is best to eat?

by **Harper Hanisch**
staff writer - editorial

Sweet, rich, and creamy or artificial, tough, and processed? Well, of course I am talking about chocolate candy and gummy candy. After all, chocolate candy is much more delicious and even slightly more nutritious.

When many people think of candy they think about Halloween. Going from door to door all night long to see who can come out with the most candy. But, at the end of the night, what candy do you always try to trade off to younger siblings or friends? That's right, gummy candy. It sits for weeks after October 31 getting stale and collecting dust. Chocolate candy is a classic, spanning all the way from 1200 BCE. While gummy candy was only invented in 1922. This means that people have loved chocolate for thousands of years.

The average chocolate bar is around 200 calories. On the other hand, a pack of gummies the same size runs about 350 calories. Also, looking at the average chocolate bar ingredient list, I can read and understand most ingredients. However, the gummies ingredients list has long, winding words I can't even begin to pronounce. Maltitol, synthetic food dyes, and dextrose are all part of this concerning list. Aside from the obvious better flavor, chocolate is healthier!



For as long as I can remember, chocolate has been the first choice for me. If it isn't your first choice, I highly encourage you to rethink.

Club sports open up athletic opportunity

Students continue to participate outside of school season

by **Colton Buchholz**
staff writer

Many student-athletes are balancing club sports as well as their own school activities. Club sports are very beneficial to a student-athlete for many reasons: it gives you opportunities to make new friends, to get better at your club sports of choice, and to get the exposure from extra scouts and personnel that school sports would not.

At least twenty four students from the Garretson Middle/High School were enrolled during the off-season in a club sport. That is only 9.42%. Although clubs come with a hefty price, they come with a lot of advantages.

"Rodeo gives me the opportunity to meet so many amazing people and travel to new places. I've made so many amazing memories because of it that I'm so thankful for," said rodeo participant Blair Ellefson. AAU/Club athletics and competitions give people more than just a place to play their sport outside of the designated school season, if that even exists…It is a place to make friends and travel, all while having fun.

Throughout the Sioux Falls metro area, there are over 100 club options ranging from basketball and volleyball to figure skating and lacrosse. Finding the club to play for is a little difficult at first, but once people find out where, when, and how much tryouts are, it's a cake walk.

Many people who start club sports are convinced by a friend or family member like Maddie Waltman was. "Last year I wanted to try club because I really enjoy playing and I wanted to get better. Then Vivian persuaded me to try out for SoDak Juniors."

Lastly, club gives exposure that schools may not. Waltman stated, "I would say that club ball gets you more exposure to recruiters at big tournaments. And…club is more of a one on one with your coach, where you only have around 10 girls on your team, and school is different because you have three teams, so it's a little harder to have that time for feedback."

Club sports have given Garretson students and more than 2 million other student-athletes around the nation the opportunity to meet new people, gain new skills and talents, and exposure needed to excel in sports after high school. Club opportunities can be available through big names like Sanford and Avera, all the way to Ambush and Impact. Club opportunities are waiting around the corner for student-athletes to keep joining today.



Senior Spotlight
Aaliyah Stensland

Activities Involved In:
4-H

Who/What Will You Miss Most:
Mr. Ehrisman, Mr. Moehlenbrink, and Mr. Heumiller

Favorite School Lunch:
Steak
Strawberries in a Cup
Hot Cheetos

Favorite Class You've Taken:
US Government

Plans for Next Year:
Work

2026 Class Of



This Week's Need to Know

Upcoming Events

Friday, December 12
- Girls Wrestling @ Baltic Tourney (5:00)

Saturday, December 13
- JH GBB @ Chester (9:00)
- JH BBB @ Chester (9:45/10:30)
- GBB @ Chester (11:15/1:15)
- BBB @ Chester (12:15/2:30)

Monday, December 15
- Band/Choir Pie Social (7:00)

Tuesday, December 16
- JH GBB @ Canton (4:00)
- GBB v. Canton (4:00/6:30)
- BBB v. Canton (5:00/8:00)

Wednesday, December 17
- Semester Tests: 4th Period

Thursday, December 18
- Semester Tests: 2nd Period, 5th Period, 7th Period
- Wrestling @ Parker Quad (5:00)
- K-2 Music Concert (7:00)

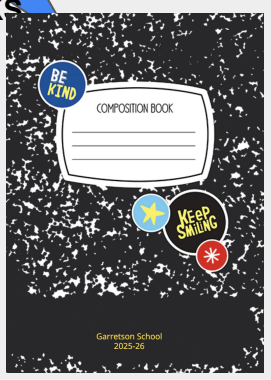
Friday, December 19
- Semester Tests: 1st Period, 3rd Period, 8th Period
- JH GBB @ Baltic (3:30)
- BBB v. Tri-Valley (4:30/5:30/7:00)

Worth Mentioning

ONLY ONE WEEK left for first semester. Please be checking your emails for the Semester Test Schedule and other pertinent information before Winter Break.

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 YEARBOOKS 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.



Wrestling competes in first meet



by **Chase Costello**
staff writer

Five boys, two girls place in opening meet of the season

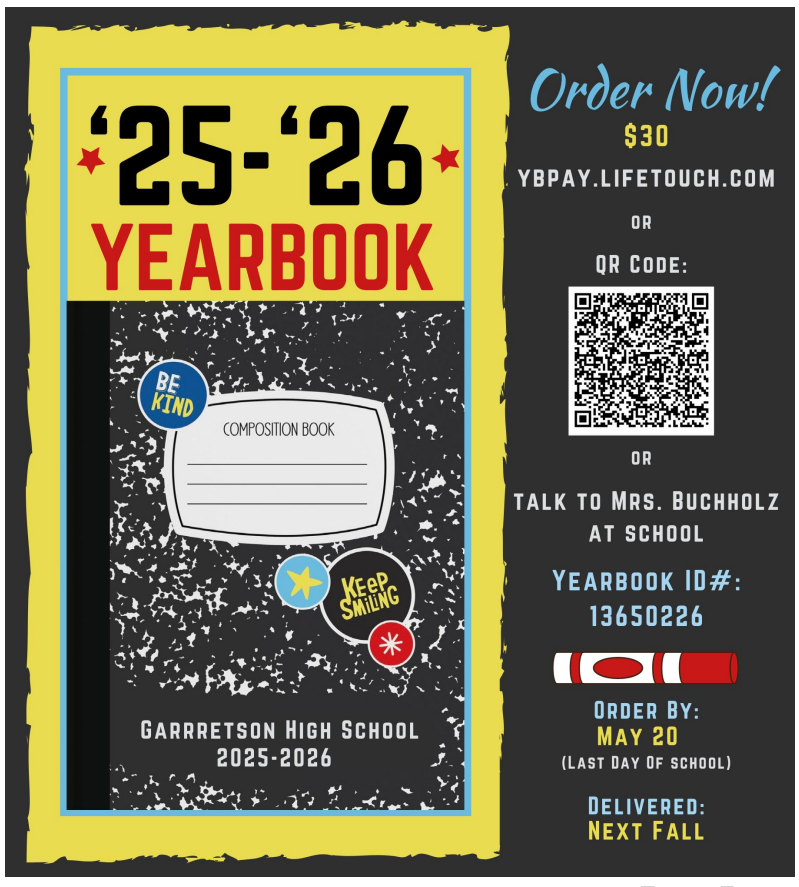
As Garretson starts their winter sports, wrestling had their first tournament in Flandreau, and they had multiple placers. The team has a mix of returning varsity wrestlers and some new wrestlers. One of the goals set for this season was to fill every weight class. Even though that goal was not met the first tournament, that team still did well without a full roster. There were 14 teams that competed at the first tournament of the year.

They had Blake Benson, Chase Arend, Gavin DenHerder, Cole Schleuter, and Tanner Baatz. Benson placed 4th, winning 3 and losing 2. Arend placed 4th, winning 3 and losing 2. DenHerder placed 3rd, winning 3 and losing 2. Schleuter placed 4th, winning 2 and losing 2. Finally, Baatz placed 3rd, winning 4 and losing 1. They all wrestled well for the first tournament and hopefully they wrestle even better the rest of the season.

As Garretson closed out the first tournament of the year with more confidence than they walked in with. They also learned a few things they need to fix as the season goes on. The team now has momentum to keep the winning and placing going. Good luck to the team for the rest of the season.

GIRLS WRESTLING PLACERS

100lb - Stella Frewaldt
1st Place
125lb - Macie Miller
2nd Place



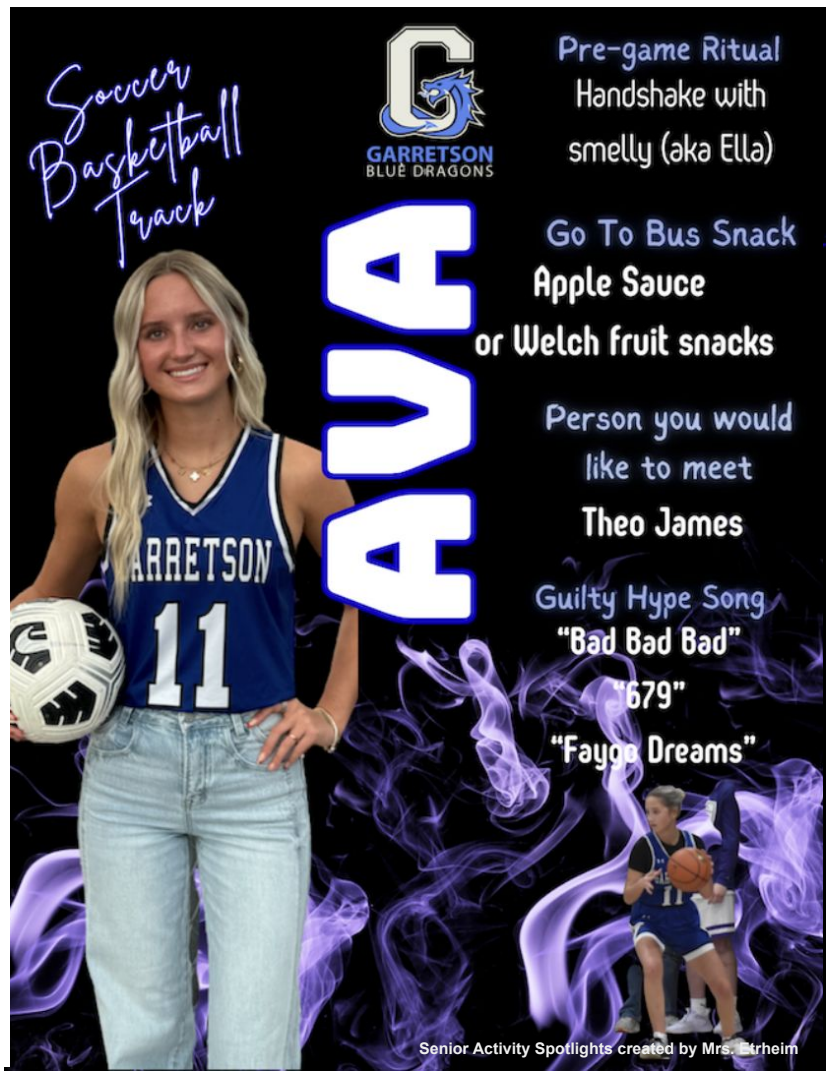
MS/HS SCHEDULE



MONDAY DEC. 15	**ELF vs. SANTA** Traditional Schedule	
TUESDAY DEC. 16	**GRINCH vs. WHOVILLE (Crazy Hair Day)** Traditional Schedule	
WEDNESDAY DEC. 17	**DECK THE HALLS (Festive Accessories)**	8:25-9:17 - 4th Period 9:20-10:12 - 7th Period 10:15-11:30 - 4TH PERIOD TEST 11:33-12:26 - 2nd Period 12:26-12:56 - LUNCH 12:59-1:30 - Staff vs. Student Basketball
THURSDAY DEC. 18	**CANDY CANE DAY (Red & White Stripes)**	8:25-9:40 - 2ND PERIOD TEST 9:43-10:35 - 1st Period 10:38-11:29 - 5th Period 11:32-12:47 - 7TH PERIOD TEST 12:47-1:18 - LUNCH 1:23-2:38 - 5TH PERIOD TEST 2:41-3:06 - ICU
FRIDAY DEC. 19	**UGLY SWEATER DAY**	8:25-9:40 - 1ST PERIOD TEST 9:43-10:35 - 8th Period 10:38-11:29 - 3rd Period 11:32-12:47 - 8TH PERIOD TEST 12:47-1:18 - LUNCH 1:23-2:38 - 3RD PERIOD TEST 2:41-3:06 - ICU

SEMESTER TEST WEEK | DRESS UP DAYS | TESTING SCHEDULE

Senior Activity Spotlight



Taking a risk

While it may be called a comfort zone for a reason, it might be worth it to push your limits

by **Johanna Knauer**
staff writer - editorial

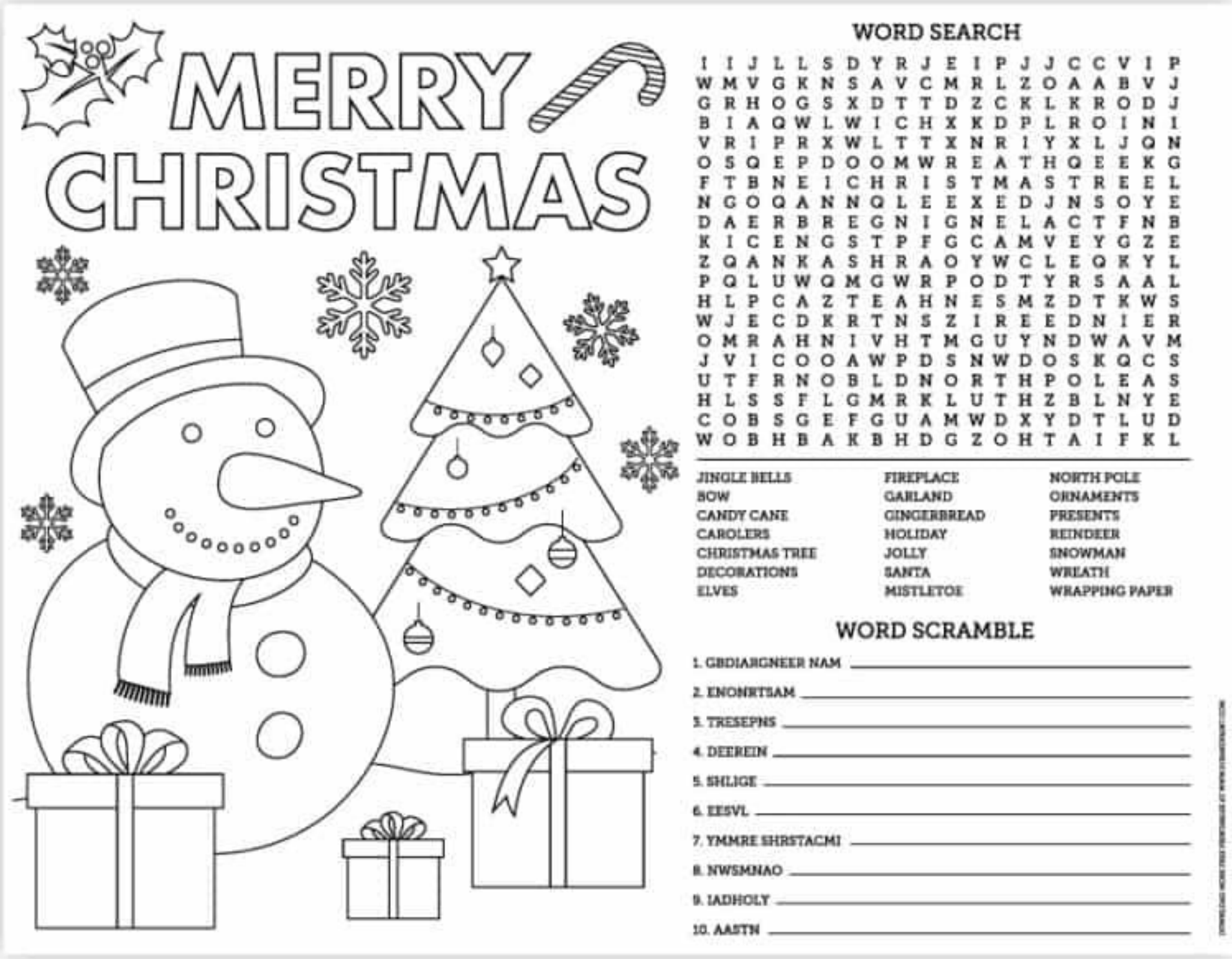
Stepping out of your comfort zone is important, yet many people don't do it. It is so essential because it's the only way to gain new experiences. If your boundaries are never pushed, you will not have a chancae to achieve anything. Your whole life can't be spent in a bubble, trying to protect yourself from the real world. Take the risk and do something you've never done before.

You gather the most meaningful experiences, discover hidden talents, or find new sides to yourself that you never knew existed when you leave what you know. Every time you try something new, even if it's small, you gain more confidence. You start questioning, "Why have I always done it this way when this other option is so much better for me?" The simple answer is that you never left your comfort zone. The adventure leads you to meeting many new people. There are far more opportunities to learn, which can make many things easier for you later in life, like applying for a job.

It's easy to set small, achievable goals like giving a presentation in class. For some, that's a normal situation, but for others it's a real challenge. Try doing things you've never considered or even avoided. Once you start, it becomes easier each time. Leaving your comfort zone doesn't have to be something huge, but it's important to try to gain valuable experiences in life.

An extreme example is moving to another country, something I did myself. My exchange year was a decision I never thought I would dare make. I just wanted something new because my life was too boring. This experience changed my life, and I want to encourage others to do the same. Moving alone to a country where you don't know anyone is super hard. I knew from the beginning that this adventure would change me, no matter how it turned out. I trusted myself that everything would work out. Now, I've built a second life on the other side of the world, with a new family and friends.

Stepping out of my comfort zone by leaving Germany was the right decision for me and it can be the right one for you. Trying new things is scary, but believing in yourself makes everything easier. This is the most important and first step to self growth.



Activity board created by PJs and Paint

Sleep being challenged by screen time

by **Zach Hermanson**
staff writer - editorial

Students across the nation are investigating whether phones, tablets, or computers are disrupting the amount of sleep we receive.

In one study, the teenagers who spent over four hours daily on screens had higher chances of getting less than five hours of sleep per night, this impacts grades and school work efficiency. In a different study, teens who watched a screen before bed lost around 24 minutes of sleep and could be more likely to have problems falling asleep. Teens spending six to nearly nine hours a day on screens lost around 23 minutes of sleep on average and those spending nine hours or more lost around 32 minutes.

Teachers have observed students reporting to school with a tired look. According to a staff member, many students discuss how they stay up late using devices, whether it is homework or simply scrolling the Internet. Students also reported that it is difficult to quit using devices at night because of notifications and apps. Scientists are continuing to research the impact of screen time on sleep and what can be done to ensure that teens get sufficient sleep.

Sustainable holiday magic instead of year end garbage

Holidays provide an opportunity to celebrate and help others but are there ways to celebrate and help the Earth too?

by **Gracie Fiegen**
staff writer - editorial



The end of the year is usually filled with warm memories of family and holiday magic. It can be a season of love, warmth, family, nostalgia or time for consumerism, plastic, and junk. This guide will help you save your pocket while saving the planet. My main tips are how to become more sustainable with decor, hosting, gifts, shopping, and food.

Decor

To help them get in the holiday mood, people prepare for the holiday season by decorating their living space. Try not to follow they yearly trends because they cause mass waste for the landfills. Instead use or update what you already have. Another option is to craft garlands, ornaments, nativity scenes, and other pieces of decor that can give your home a personal touch. Crafting works to reduce waste by reusing scraps you already have or creating things built to last. These can easily be created with salt dough, clay, or paper which are long lasting and recyclable. Upcycle old outdated decor by painting or refurbishing it to fit your vision.

Christmas trees and wreaths are one of the most classic symbols of the season. The Garretson band and choir sells hand-crafted, natural wreaths every fall, which is a great way to support local causes and have biodegradable decor. If you want to turn wreath making into a hobby, there are several DIY tutorials from evergreen scrap branches.

Hosting

As somebody who loves hosting parties, I have decided to only use real dishware instead of paper or plastic. Although this is slightly less convenient, my attendees are always willing to lend a helping hand for a quick clean up. Instead of letting the water run, a way to cut back on water waste is scraping the dish and washing it in a sink filled with soap and water. A bonus to using real or festive dishware, it can add to the aesthetic creating more Christmas spirit.

Gifts

Thrifting presents is a great way to find new to you items that are unique or vintage. It's an opportunity to give new life to an old piece. My favorite areas to look in the store are purses, glassware, and craft supplies. These older pieces can be prettier, cheaper, and better quality than new items. Many things built in the past were made to last with excellent materials.

Throughout my childhood, my mother always said it's the thought that counts. What has more thought behind it than a handmade gift? This could be a crochet blanket, specialized candle, clay pot, or a meaningful card. Crafted gifts do not have to be sentimental for a loved one, they can also be perfect for a less personal gift exchange. Examples of this are a baking kit, a wooden cutting board, or warm winter accessories.

A way to keep your area thriving is by shopping local and small businesses. There are several shops in Garretson and surrounding towns like The Treasure Chest, Downtown Style Boutique, Untamed Collective in Dell Rapids, and South Dakota Threads Boutique in Brandon. Small businesses and local shops directly benefit the community through supplying jobs and sharing the wealth with their communities and schools.

With the time off from work or school, I believe the holidays are the best time to spend with loved ones. Experiences do not always mean a grand trip to Disneyland; it can mean gifting a massage, a day trip, or a meal together. These could also be non-material, free things like a chore coupon booklet or breakfast in bed.

If your family is like mine then you too have piles and piles of discarded wrapping paper. At my house, we enjoy ripping apart the paper to get to the prize inside, so a small swap we made was ensuring our wrapping paper is recyclable. Another swap that could be made is reusing past years' paper, gift bags, or paper from grocery bags.

Shopping new items

I know that having the time to create intricate handmade gifts is a privilege and that some people may want new items, but I also know that sustainability is not an all or nothing concept. There are many sustainable brands that create quality items and use eco-friendly packaging. I try to shop with quality over quantity with long term use in mind. A way I do this is by getting less holiday specific items including red or green items that can be used year round. When I want to buy something new, I look for natural fibers and materials such as cotton, wool, linen, wood, and other biodegradable products. This helps ensure my waste will not outlive me.

Food

One of my family's favorite ways to share the holiday cheer is by making a feast of foods and treats. Excess food can be a huge waste. On Thanksgiving alone, Americans waste over 300 million pounds of food. This can be fixed by buying what you need, cooking what you're going to eat, freezing leftovers, and donating to local charities are sustainable solutions. Making Christmas goodies is one of my favorite traditions because I love baking, but a way I cut down on plastic is by avoiding single use plastic bags and containers.

Sustainable holidays do not have to be an all or nothing task. Choosing a few of these to incorporate into your holiday season can reduce waste and help save money. Many of my tips can be shared across all the categories. From Thanksgiving to New Year's, the US alone sends around 25 million tons of extra garbage to the landfills. To me, making yearly memories is the most important part of the holiday season and I believe these tips help me achieve that.