

northersentry

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WHAT'S INSIDE THIS WEEK:



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AIRMAN SHOTS FOR THE NORTHERN SENTRY

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PASSION, GRIT, AND THE MAT: A NINTH-GRADER'S WRESTLING JOURNEY

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MINOT AFB RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING YOUNG LEADERS



Students who participated in the annual Youth of the Year Awards Ceremony pose for a group photo Feb. 23, 2026, at the Jimmy Doolittle Center on Minot Air Force Base. Organized by the Minot AFB Youth Center, the event is part of the national Youth of the Year initiative through the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the organization affiliated with the Minot AFB Youth Center, celebrating leadership, confidence and community service. See page B7 for the results of the Junior Youth and Youth of the Year recipients.

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All About Pets

Teaching cooperative care



Cooperative care involves training animals to tolerate and even become willing participants in their own care procedures. Training pets in cooperative care is an effective way to make life easier and less stressful when it comes to vet visits, grooming, and other handling. When animals are put in situations where they are uncomfortable or fearful, it is not only traumatizing for the pet but it can be a dangerous situation for the humans involved. Here are some ways you can begin to teach your pet cooperative care!

- Pick an activity that your pet may not be fond of: this could include brushing, baths, handling paws, nail trimming, etc. As an example, many dog owners know how difficult nail trimming can be for certain dogs, so this is something they may want to work on. Dogs can be sedated or medicated to trim nails, and some may think it's easier for humans to just trim their nails and "get it over with", but if you can work with your dog to desensitize them and counter-condition (change a negative emotional response to a positive one) those reactions, then why not give it a try for their emotional wellbeing?

- Give your pet the opportunity to say no: many pets have different fear thresholds, meaning that there is a certain amount of exposure to their triggers that they can handle before it becomes too much. In the example of nail trimming, be sure to start desensitizing slowly with indirect motions, like touching your dog's paw or having your pet hold their paw still in your hand. If you leap right into the triggered activity, it can put your pet over threshold very quickly and without the option to stop, it can set back your training progress. If your pet is showing signs of discomfort (pulling back a paw, yawning, lip licking, running away), stop the activity and try again later or find a less stressful way to begin. You can also teach your pet a "start button" cue, such as laying down on a mat in order to be brushed or offering a paw for nail trimming. Because we want our animals to offer consent and feel comfortable with these activities, training is often a lengthy process. You may only be able to train for 4 minutes before your pet is ready to be done for the day, but with time and persistence, you can work your way up.

- Mark the successful moments: high value rewards are KEY to cooperative care! When your pet performs even one action, such as offering a chin rest or sniffing the nail clippers that they may be scared of, mark the behavior with a clicker or a "yes" and give them a reward. I prefer to use hot dogs or freeze

dried treats for triggers, because they are the highest value to my dogs. But some animals are motivated by praise, others by toys. Find out what your pet likes best and reward them for even the smallest success.

- Be consistent: for some animals, cooperative care training is not an easy process. It may take months for your animal to make progress, especially if they already have prior negative experiences with the activities you are training for. Do not give up! Practice daily, and continue to mark their success even after they make significant progress. Also, practicing outside of the context of necessary situations is an important part of cooperative care. Train your pet to feel comfortable with the movements of an ear exam or putting on a muzzle so that when those become necessary, everyone is prepared.

While cooperative care actually has a list of guidelines and even a certification course developed by Deborah Jones, Ph.D, I like to use it on a broader scale. For my dogs and I, cooperative care goes hand in hand with basic training. Teaching my dogs to get in and out of the bathtub when it's time for grooming is just as important and stress-reducing as training for the actual grooming itself. Teaching an "up" command for our couch or any raised platform helps my dogs get up on vet tables and on the scale to be weighed. From there, we work on the actual cooperative care essentials:

- 1) Chin Rest (or Bucket Game)
- 2) Lie on Side
- 3) Restraint
- 4) Wear a Muzzle
- 5) Foot Handling
- 6) Mouth Handling
- 7) Taking Medication
- 8) Injection or Blood Draw
- 9) Eye Exam
- 10) Ear Exam

www.whole-dog-journal.com/training/cooperative-care-giving-your-dog-choice-and-control/ is a great resource for learning about cooperative care, as well as www.cooperativecarecertificate.com for the actual course. While these resources are meant for dogs, cooperative care principles can be applied to all sorts of animals from tigers to elephants in zoo settings! Cooperative care is a great way to strengthen the bond with your pets through training and trust building, and offers a healthy alternative to more stressful practices.

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Behind It All

ERIN BEENE, NORTHERN SENTRY

So much happens behind the scenes of daily military life. The base mission has dozens of moving pieces that (mostly) intertwine seamlessly to provide Airmen and their families not just a job, but a sense of stability and a place to call home. Minot Air Force Base at its core is a military installation, but it is also home to thousands of Airmen and families. It is a way of life. It is a community.

What makes the MAFB community so unique? Beyond its remote location (set far from any major city and planted squarely

in the middle of "nowhere") he base offers military families a wide range of community events: markets, holiday parties, social gatherings, free meet-ups and more. After nearly two decades as part of a military family, I can confidently say Minot stands out in the way it fosters connection and belonging compared to many other bases around the globe.

Why? Location plays a role, but it's the people who truly make the difference. A dedicated group of Airmen, spouses and civilians give their time and energy to ensure these programs and events

continue. Without them, the base would not be what it is today.

One such dedicated volunteer is military spouse Carrie Driver. Carrie is no stranger to Minot AFB; her family previously completed a tour here. Her passion for volunteering, however, dates back to her husband's first duty station in Germany. She explained that her journey began after attending Heart Link, and she has not looked back since. At every installation they've called home, Carrie has actively sought ways to serve and support others.

At Minot, Carrie has played



Minot Vendor Market the first time they joined the Exchange for their Holiday Bazaar on Dec 18. Photo of Kid Vendor Ryleigh McMillian from Creative Crochet.

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Chief Thomas at the Month of the Military Child Open House on April 18th, 2025.

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Free Breakfast and Gift Exchange with the SFG Chaplain on Dec 21st at Lil Riders.

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March 5th Dorm Dinner Hosted by the SFG, and headed up by the 791 MSFS.

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pivotal roles in numerous base organizations and events. She has served as a Resident Advocate Council member, a Giving Tuesday Military Ambassador, a leader for the Military Family Vendor Market, a host for the weekly Moms Coffee & Conversation meetups and a coordinator for the Adopt-a-Dorm program. She also manages several base community Facebook pages and oversees some of the carrier routes for the Northern

Sentry. Carrie has consistently advocated for positive changes across the installation and says she is always willing to step in wherever she sees a need. She encourages fellow military spouses and Airmen to step outside their comfort zones and find ways to give back. "Everyone can be a positive influence," Carrie said. "You can step up and fill a need."

Like many who come to Minot

and are pleasantly surprised, Carrie and her family have grown to love the area and hope to retire here someday. She is passionate about helping others discover things to do both on base and in the local community, believing strongly that connection is key to thriving in military life. "You don't need someone to tell you that you can do it, just do it. We can all do our part."

Volunteer opportunities are plentiful across the base.

Squadrons are often looking for Key Support Liaisons. Spouses' clubs need board members. Programs that mentor children welcome adults who are willing to guide and encourage young people who need positive role models (<https://www.companionsforchildren.org/>). Sometimes, volunteering is as simple as helping a neighbor shovel a driveway or pulling weeds at a local playground.

There is tremendous value in giving your time. When you look around and respond to the needs you see, your experience at Minot Air Force Base becomes richer, filled with friendships, purpose and a deeper sense of belonging.

A short list of volunteer opportunities can be found at: <https://northern Sentry.com/2025/11/26/giving-and-volunteering-are-one-and-the-same/>

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**A VIEW FROM
 OUR SIDE**
 ROD WILSON



I may have shared with you that I had a journalism teacher in college who would often stop her lecture and start talking about her "Where Were You When" moments in time.

Her name was Hazel Heiman, and to get any grade more than a "C" you had to work hard, and be prepared to have your work (she taught Journalism 101- Writing) put on an overhead projector where she would either praise you for the paper you turned in, or create a total mess by circling and crossing out portions of your "terrible and not well thought out" story.

But, as all of you know, a teacher like Ms. Heiman did a lot to create a passion and desire to "do your best" instead of just "getting by" in her class.

The very first time Ms. Heiman told us that there would be moments in time that would define our lives, she talked about being in her dorm room on a Sunday morning, working on an assignment for you guessed it, Journalism 101- Writing. Her small radio was creating a bit of a diversion as she was listening to a local station playing in her words "hit tunes of the day".

She said that "in the middle of a song the announcer broke in

A "Where Were You When" Moment

and made the announcement of the attack on Pearl Harbor. I can and will remember that moment for the rest of my life. That moment is burned in my memory, right down to the color of the paint on my dorm room walls."

Such is the case of Sunday morning...and the moment that Jack Hughes, #86 for the Americans, scored the game winning goal as the Americans beat the Canadians to take gold in the 2026 Olympic games. Although not as monumental as the December 7th, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, yesterday's gold medal hockey game, and the victorious outcome for the Americans will be one of those defining moments for me.

AND NOW...THE REST OF THE STORY

Hockey fans probably heard over and over that is has been 46 years since the United States won the gold medal at the Olympics. That, too, was a pretty defining moment for me. Through my association as a television production coordinator with the University of North Dakota, then Fighting Sioux hockey team, I had met Herb Brooks who was the coach of the 1980 team. In an interview with Mr. Brooks, he was asked the question "Do you really think the U.S. has a chance to win gold?" Mr. Brooks replied "Do you think that anyone else is talking about their chances of winning a gold medal? Of course not. If they are going to put on the sweater of the United States of America and play for me they better not think they are underdogs. They better have a vision of themselves wearing the gold medal." I'll never forget that interview. Even though I was but a lowly camera person, Herb Brooks walked over to me after the interview and thanked me for my time, and then he said, "Do you



Jack Hughes celebrates his "golden goal" as Team U.S.A. wins at the Winter Olympics.

believe we can win?" From that moment forward I had no doubt, even though the rest of the world probably did, that the U.S.A. would bring home the gold. My answer to Herb Brooks was "yes, of course we can."

IN THE MOMENT

It will be easy for Jack Hughes to remember the exact moment that the puck went into the net, and the gold medal game ended with the U.S. victorious. As I watched various sports channel reports that said the gold medal game broke records for the number of viewers, my thoughts went back to Journalism-101. We all have moments that will define our lives, some good and unfortunately some bad. Time erodes some of the details of those defining moments. Dates and times become a little blurry. We can't have a defining moment like yesterday's gold medal winning goal every day. And it may be that the next gold medal for the United States will be 46 years from now.

But how lucky we were to see that moment that galvanized us all as Americans. Many of us saw the gold medal game in person and many others watched replays on TV, social media or even Facebook. But the results were probably the same for those who were cheering on the red, white & blue clad Team U.S.A. This will be a moment that we won't soon forget.

STILL TIME TO ENJOY...

A couple of phone calls to local ski areas quickly confirmed that there is still snow even though we had some rather warm weather in Minot. Bottineau Winter Park and Frost Fire reporting good conditions, and Huff Hills still has runs open so call for current conditions.

TODAY'S CHUCKLE

Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's little nut that held its ground.

Isn't North Dakota scenic in winter?

Stopping in nearby Watford City after getting a close look at the park in winter, is part of the enjoyment of winter. And, although most people look at you a bit strange when you tell them you've been in the park with a 10-degree temperature, they begin to appreciate what they take for granted because it's in front of them all the time.

Here are some things that aren't characteristic of the rest of North Dakota. Herds of antelope graze alongside the road, horses grazing among the snow covered bluffs, tall evergreens with snow on the branches for contrast and other wildlife such as lions or bighorn sheep, if you're lucky enough to see them.

Then, there's the Long X bridge that crosses the Little Missouri River just south of the park's entrance. What a beautiful location to just sit and ponder.

It's hard to believe that back in territorial days, this area often had skirmishes between Native Americans and Union Soldiers.

Now, it's so peaceful, I don't think the tranquility can be matched at any price. Outside the occasional traffic along U.S. 85, it's incredibly peaceful, historic, scenic and of course the word picturesque comes to mind.

You've heard it, I've heard it, we've all heard it; young people telling us they can't wait to get out of North Dakota and find greener pastures because there is nothing here.

Those people may not have explored the state. Yes, this article is about Roosevelt Park, but there is a whole lot more to see across North Dakota in the winter.

Think about this, the Pembina Gorge, Bottineau Winter Park,

Devils Lake, Sully's Hill, Fort Ransom, Huff Hills, White Butte, downtown Fargo, especially at Christmas, and many others to include Cross Ranch and Lake Tschida.

Go ahead, take in some of these sites with the little bit of winter we have left. I've been to many of them this time of year and will go back 100 times.

When people complain about the dull, flat landscape without trees, maybe that's what they want to see. Get out, dress warm, explore. You

might be surprised at what you find out there, like I did when I first started this hobby 35 years ago.

North Dakota is a big state geographically and there is a lot to see. It's just that those places aren't concentrated in one small radius.

Since I've left high school, I've traveled on nearly every highway and many gravel roads in the state. There's a lot of beauty to behold even during this time of year. I wouldn't trade it for anything. The natural beauty of North Dakota in winter is endless.



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The Unexpected Reason March Matters for Minot Families



SHE'S NOT FROM AROUND HERE
AMY ALLENDER

Five years ago, my husband was preparing to deploy. I had an infant who refused to sleep through the night, and a three-year-old who refused to nap consistently. We hadn't faced a deployment since becoming parents. Six months as a solo, stay-at-home mom was an intimidating abyss. I was determined to find ways to make the days manageable, and even fun—but had no idea how to do that. Just before my husband left, I was painting pottery at Margie's with a group of women from my church. Over pallets of glaze and cups of coffee I started voicing my worries out loud. "How old is your oldest?" one woman asked. "He just turned three." Then several women chimed in at once. "Oooh — that's the magic age in Minot." I had no idea what they meant. But they were right. Three is a magical age. March is the magical month. That's when summer sport registrations begin opening up, and suddenly a whole new world becomes available to you. From age three on, opportunities start to bloom. T-ball. Kickball. Gymnastics. Golf. Tennis. Sports camps. In March we're looking past the snow, and toward endlessly light, warm

summer days. There is one catch: spots are limited, especially for the youngest participants. I learned that the hard way. That first year, armed with minimal knowledge of what Minot offered, I set my sights on a classic: T-ball through Minot Sertoma. It would get us out of the house, my son could play with others, I could sit in the stands with the baby and maybe — just maybe — talk to another adult. Registration opened. I forgot to set a reminder. By the time I logged in the next day, every single three-year-old team was full. I joined the waitlist, slightly devastated. A few days later, an email arrived: "We have enough children on the waitlist to form additional teams. However, we do not have enough coaches. If parents are willing to step up and coach, your child will be placed on a team." And that is how I found myself coaching three- and four-year-old T-ball with a baby strapped to my chest and a husband deployed overseas. For the record: I have never played softball. I did not grow up in little league. I had zero qualifications beyond "can show up, corral small humans, and provide snacks." But they didn't need a former college athlete. They needed someone willing to be there. It ended up being wildly fun. Chaotic. Sweet. Slightly unhinged at times. But fun. For several years after that, I continued coaching T-ball and kickball through Minot Sertoma — partly because it guaranteed my kids (and our friends) a spot on teams, but mostly because I realized something important: Opportunities exist here because volunteers create them. Minot has an incredible number

of summer sports and activity options for kids — but they don't run themselves. If you're new, here are some places to begin looking as registrations open in March (this is not exhaustive — do your own research for dates and details):

- Minot Sertoma – Little League and kickball, starting at age 3
- Gymagic Gymnastics – Independent classes begin at age 3
- Rebel Gymnastics – Independent classes begin at age 3
- Minot High Tennis Camp – Starting at age 3
- Minot Soccer Association – Beginning at age 4
- Minot Junior Golf Association
- Minot Parks & Recreation – General fitness, tennis, Little League, spring track, Summer Olympics
- Minot State University – Summer sports camps across a variety of sports

If a minimum age isn't listed, most programs begin around kindergarten. Here's what I wish someone had told me sooner: Set reminders. Registrations fill quickly. Especially at the younger ages. And if you land on a waitlist? Consider coaching. You don't need to be an expert. You need to be willing. Even if you don't have kids, volunteering in youth sports is one of the fastest ways to plug into this community. It's also one of the most practical responses to the complaint I still hear from time to time — "There's nothing to do in Minot." There are things to do. But they require people to make them possible. Sometimes that someone is a sleep-deprived mom with a baby carrier who just needed an anchor for her day. Sometimes that someone is a young airmen with no kids, but a desire to invest in Minot. Three really is the magic age here. And March is when the door opens.



"Summer sports registration begins to open in March. It's the perfect way to start dreaming about warm, sunny days."

Come back next week when I discuss building long-term health more on living in North Dakota, join with Cornerstone Chiropractic. For me online at amyallender.com or on social media @HeyMinot.

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Lt. Madison Branson

5th Operations Group
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First Lieutenant Madison Branson has distinguished herself as a hard hitting leader by standing up Minot Air Force Base's first Aerospace Physiology program in eight years! She's responsible for preparing roughly 300 B 52 and UH 1 aircrew to recognize and respond to the physiological threats of high altitude, high stress flight, ensuring they can operate safely in some of the Air Force's most demanding missions. Her impact extends beyond Minot as she routinely travels to other bases to deliver specialized training, strengthening human performance standards across multiple wings!

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91st Missile Security Forces Squadron
Hometown: Detroit, Michigan
Airman First Class Wilkie has served in the United States Air Force for three years. She is a member of the 91st Missile Security Forces Squadron and is a Missile Security Operator on Alpha Flight. Demonstrating outstanding initiative, she led a four-member team on short notice to provide 72 hours of critical security during an emergency maintenance sortie. Her leadership was a key factor in the Missile Wing achieving an impressive 99.6% ICBM readiness rate. A1C Wilkie's exceptional performance was instrumental in her team earning both the Security Forces Group Team of the 4th Quarter, Security Forces Group Team of the Year and the 91st Missile Wing's Nuclear Deterrence Operations Team of the Year awards.

GAME SALUTE: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Recipients of the Northern Sentry Salute will be honored at the respective Minot Minotauros home game. In recognition, each recipient and three guests will receive V.I.P. seating to the noted home game, a \$25.00 Gift Certificate good for concessions at the game, and during the game they will be recognized by the Minotauros public address announcer as well as having their photo and nomination published in the Minotauros Magazine.



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Our mission is to promote dominant U.S. Air and Space Forces as the foundation of a strong National Defense; to honor and support our Airmen, Guardians, and their Families; and to remember and respect our enduring Heritage.

MONTHLY MEETING (Third Tuesday of Each Month)
Tuesday, March 17
1200, Rockers Bar & Grill, Minot AFB
Looking for all AFA members, and potential AFA members.

For more information contact:
Jim Bowman- nd135.president@afa.org

AFA.org



AIR & SPACE FORCES ASSOCIATION
DAVID C. JONES CHAPTER - 135
MINOT, ND - MINOT AIR FORCE BASE

Jones.afa.org

Airman Shoots for the Northern Sentry

DILLAN GISSEL, NORTHERN SENTRY

Hello, My name is Dillan Gissel and I'm very excited to begin working as a journalist with the Northern Sentry. I'd like to share a little bit about myself, starting with my family. My wife and I are from Colorado, and we met in the summer of 2016. After two full time missions for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we came home to get married in the Fort Collins, Colorado LDS Temple on August 10, 2019. I served my mission in the Mexico, Ciudad Juarez Mission and she served hers in the Brazil, Belem Mission. After our wedding, my wife finished her Public Health Degree at BYU while I worked as a Commercial Plumber in Orem, Utah. Following our marriage, we promptly began our family life. We welcomed two children: our daughter Lyla was born in May 2020, and our son Luka arrived in October 2022.



Robbyn Gissel, Luka Gissel, Dillan Gissel, Lyla Gissel. Taken winter 2022; Greeley, CO.

Regarding my Department of War career, I enlisted in August of 2020 to become a weapons maintainer. After my extended stay at Sheppard AFB's Technical Training Program, I arrived on station at Minot AFB in July of 2021. I've had many great moments working for the 705th Munitions Squadron ever since; to include the countless hours on the flightline during Global Thunder, the innumerable bits of rust busted on all our support equipment, and most recently, my promotion to Staff Sergeant. My time in has been great so far and I'm very excited to see where this takes me for the next 14 years of my life.

When I'm not at work, I can find myself doing one of very many things, the most common of them being something sports related. As a viewer, I am a lifelong fan of the Detroit Lions, Tigers, and Red Wings (oh my!) while also loving the Utah Mammoth, Jazz, and the mighty BYU Cougars. As a player I've played for the Minot AFB Bombers hockey team for the last few years. I was even able to be a part of our championship winning team in the 2023 Las Vegas Veteran's Day tournament. When I'm not playing hockey, you will most likely find me either golfing at Souris Valley or playing tennis at Hampton Park.

As for my non-contact hobbies, I've found much enjoyment after I entered the world of photography. I have spent many years perfecting my craft and have enjoyed every minute of it. Most of my subjects have been automotive photography but recently I have begun a love and admiration for the outdoors. My goal in writing for the Northern Sentry will be to use as much photojournalism as I can to share the stories of Airman on base. Everyone has a story to tell and a perspective to understand and it's my hope that those can be shared to all.

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A Marriage for Time and All Eternity: Robbyn Gissel, Dillan Gissel. August 10, 2019; Fort Collins LDS Temple, Colorado



After an unfortunate hiatus to photography, I was blessed to be able to photograph my flight commander's Infiniti Q50; a perfect way to restart my passion. Summer 2024; Minot, ND.



A Weekend in the Rockies: A special trip for me being my first road trip with my newly beloved Nissan Xterra and a newfound love and admiration for the outdoors. November 28, 2025; Allenspark, CO.

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NOTES ON BEING SAFE

COMPLACENCY, THE SILENT KILLER

Every day in the United States on the average, 15 workers lose their lives as a result of injuries or illnesses related to their work. When you add the figures that's over 5400 people a year. Unfortunately these people leave behind families, friends, and co-workers.

Recently there are more and more "mishaps" that come across my desk dealing with everything from damaged or lost tools and equipment. Damage to Government vehicles due to inattention, dressing inadequately for the cold weather conditions, this list can go on and on... I think you understand the point. Airmen at levels need to fine tune the skills we have been trained and imbedded to our thought processes and way of thinking.

So what is the point am I driving home? Complacency! When it comes to safety, complacency is deadly. If you come to work in an environment that has dangers, you can't afford to let your guard down, you can't relax. If you become comfortable in hazardous areas, your lax attitude will end up getting people hurt. Or worse, it gets you hurt. We can fall into the mindset, "I went to work and nothing happened, nothing happened last week and nothing dangerous happened last month." This allows you to let your guard down. We all need to remind ourselves we're working in a dangerous environment and we need to be alert.

All of us, no matter where you work, or what your job is, need to create a culture within our own organization, and remind everyone that complacency is a treacherous thing - it's a killer. Supervision at all levels needs to find ways to stimulate employees' interest in finding ways to make safety improvements.

We all need to create motivation for a positive change in the organization by believing it's possible to achieve zero mishaps or incidents and communicating that belief to all employees. All of us, by raising our right hand have an obligation to show employees the relevance of working safe to their jobs, careers, and, most importantly,

their families. This will create an atmosphere where everyone at every level in the organization will increase their commitment and their contribution in making the workplace mishap or incident free.

Yes, I understand all of are busy we have tight schedules and deadlines to meet, but we also need to take a step backwards, think of your thought processes, take a "one more time" look around your surrounding and ask yourself "Did I leave anything behind? Are all my tools and equipment accounted for? Did I remember to do that last check before we left the building? Are all the documents properly signed off and reviewed?, am I properly dressed for the outdoor temperatures?" Never forget where you are. If you work in a dangerous

fast paced environment, remember that I'm not asking you to live your life dreading every moment at work. What I am asking each and every one of us is to follow proper procedures at work, and think ahead of what elements await us that can possibly kill us. Think of your surroundings, identify the littlest detail.

In closing, please remember complacency is an ever present danger. When a person becomes complacent their stress level for the task decreases, and consequently, so does their performance. A greater stimulus will be required in order to obtain a response. Let's all take a deep breath and a step back... your life and the life of others may depend on it.

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A RISKY SPLASH

Kim Fundingsland

Several years ago, I was the key instigator of an incident that still wakes me up some nights. Not in a cold sweat or turn-on-the-light fear, but rather with a chuckle and a laugh.

However, the incident which I am about to reveal placed me in a situation so precarious that I might never have enjoyed the opportunity to laugh again. So much so that others in my company sternly warned that my very life was dangerously close to being extinguished.

The entire episode happened during an otherwise pleasant fishing trip. By agreement among friends, we arranged to rendezvous at the Parshall Bay boat ramp to engage in some wonderful walleye fishing on famed Lake Sakakawea. After some friendly greetings and warm handshakes, we backed three boats down the ramp and into the water.

Since I was a driver this day, I pulled my vehicle and trailer up the ramp and into a parking spot. During my short walk back to the dock

I noticed a set of keys someone had apparently dropped in the parking lot. I picked them up and put them in my pocket, intending to inquire if someone in our group had lost them.

However, so eager were we to head out for what surely was going to be some fantastic fishing, I forgot about the keys.

We were catching fish within minutes of reaching our chosen destination. All three boats were within close proximity of one another, close enough to talk fishing presentations and the like. As the cool of the morning gave way to warm sunshine and I began taking off my jacket, I felt the recently found keys in my pocket.

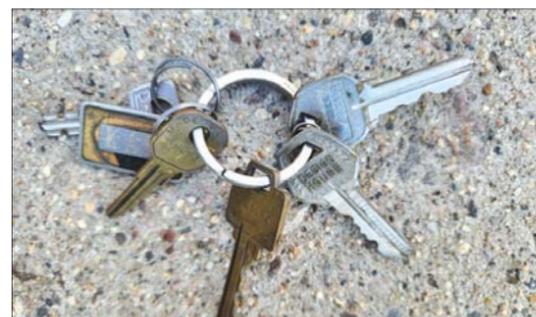
I placed the keys in a zippered compartment of my tackle bag for safe keeping. As we approached the noon hour the captain of one of our three boats said he forgot his boat's lunch cooler in the back seat of his pickup and would have to make the long trip back to the dock to retrieve it.

It was an opening far too good to pass up. I said I was about to make a run back to the dock to get some necessary fishing gear I'd forgotten and wound kindly grab the lunch for him and his fishing buddies at the same time.

What I expected next was that he would be unable to locate his lost keys and tear his boat apart trying to find them. However, he produced his keys from his pocket, moved his boat next to mine, carefully handed me the keys, and generously thanked me for making the run up the lake so he could continue fishing.

I noticed that his keys were on a ring with no fob and similar in appearance to the set I found earlier, the very set of keys I had secreted away in my tackle bag.

I piloted my boat back to our fishing spot, pulled alongside the boat missing the cooler, and handed it



off to them. This kind act was met with a very pleasant response from all. My plan was working to perfection. As I eased my boat away from his, he said, "Wait. My keys."

Having already switched to the keys I'd found earlier that morning, I carelessly tossed them to him, high enough in the air so he could see them but woefully short of landing in his boat. This act, of course, was my intent with the full knowledge that his real set of keys remained safely in my possession.

It was but a millisecond after the keys disappeared beneath the water that the air was filled with expletive deleted oaths that covered everything from my sanity to well-being. The third boat joined the fray too, expressing similar sentiments which now were gaining concurrence from the other occupants of my boat. My fishing partners strongly suggested we return to the dock before the others to avoid the threatened retaliation.

Naturally, I let this storm of saucy criticism build until I thought it best to come clean before someone made good on the threats directed at me or suffered from some sort of internal combustion.

Smiling, I held up the real set of keys which I safely handed from one boat to another. Well received at first, compliments quickly reverted to more threats rather than gracious appreciation for my memorable and cunning prank. When I questioned their obviously fragile persona and absence of sense of humor, their tone was elevated to a level never believed possible. Fishing boats nearby began moving away, staying close enough due to morbid curiosity, but unwilling venture within the "cone of the volcano".

My previously friendly fishing companions were now brandishing fillet knives and needle-nosed pliers and, in a tone that could only be described as unfiltered rage, led me to believe that I had, perhaps, overplayed my hand. I dismissed that possibility quickly, hiding a smirk and a smile I dare not reveal given the volatile and somewhat unpredictable circumstances of the moment.

Ahhh, the joy of fishing!



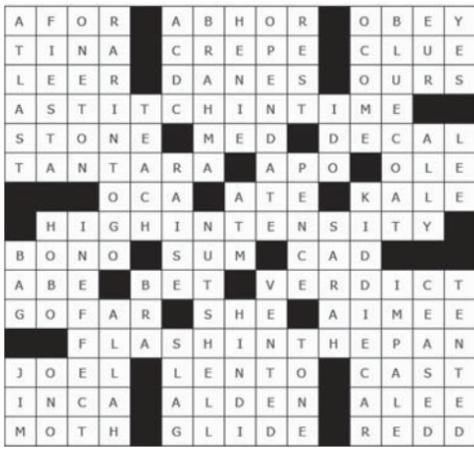
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Across

1. Skewed view
5. Pillow
9. Like a rainbow
14. Together, musically
15. Six-sided state
16. Casals' instrument
17. Quaint stopover
20. Reebok rival
21. Debussy's sea
22. Caustic solutions
23. Chief Norse god
25. Scruff
27. "The Big Sleep" costars
33. Pickle holder
34. Italian wine center
35. Dogcatcher's quarry
36. "Don't dawdle!"
38. Molly Ivins' home
41. Autograph
42. Concern for Keats
44. Actress Raines
46. Census datum
47. Livelihood
51. Minstrel's instrument
52. Taj Mahal site
53. "Hamlet" opener
56. Egg cells
58. Going public with
62. "Greatest show" twosome
65. B.B. King's genre
66. Copenhagen citizen
67. Lawyer employer
68. Baseballer Pee Wee
69. Not much
70. G-men

Down

1. Ali
2. Picked from a lineup
3. Imported auto
4. Old salt
5. Most foamy
6. Gambling site, briefly
7. "Green Acres" locale
8. Last words, often
9. Comics cry
10. Thinks quietly
11. Sculpting medium
12. If that fails
13. Things kids connect
18. Gymnast Comaneci
19. Saudi, for one
24. NBA great
26. Family men
27. More dishonorable
28. Make a speech
29. Put the kibosh on
30. Crop up
31. Tavern selection
32. Short-tailed cat
33. Doorway part
37. Nutty confections
39. Jessica of "Fantastic Four"
40. Lazybones
43. University URL
45. Skylit courtyards
48. Unit of matter
49. 15 Across neighbor
50. Import fee
53. Shortened wd.
54. Racer Yarborough
55. In alignment
57. Med. school study
59. "Would __ to you?"
60. Uncool one
61. Workout locations
63. Function
64. Something inherited

SUDOKU

Solution to puzzle on page B10

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

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11:00am Contemporary Service

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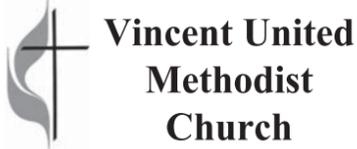
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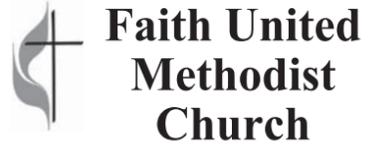
Sunday Schedule

Contemporary Worship 9:00am
Sunday School (All Ages) 10:00am
Traditional Worship 11:00am

Wednesday Evening Schedule

Community Dinner 5:30-6:30pm
Contemporary Worship 6:30pm
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9:15am Sunday School
10:30am Worship

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6:15pm K-5th & Middle School Start
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Contemporary Worship Service 9:50 a.m.
Adult Sunday School 11:00 a.m.
Contemporary Worship Service 11:05 a.m.
Children's Church 11:05 a.m.
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WINTERY PHOTO CONTEST

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While the Wintery Photo Contest may be wrapping up, winter in Minot might not be ready to say goodbye just yet! You still have until midnight on Feb. 28 to submit your best winter shots for a chance to win tickets to Bottineau Winter Park.

Every photo submitted counts as an entry, and next month we'll randomly select one lucky winner to receive a Family Five Pack to Bottineau Winter Park. In past years, we've also awarded prizes for standout photos, and some submissions have even landed on the cover of our annual Winter Guide magazine!

You never know what surprises this year might bring, so don't wait. Dig through your camera roll, show off your winter moments, and submit your photos by Feb. 28. Those snowy shots are just sitting on your phone. This could be their moment to shine!



Bottineau tubing is the funnest way to enjoy winter in ND!

MACY HUMISTON PHOTO



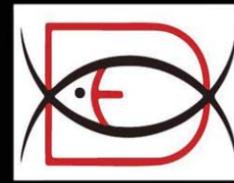
Having fun outside in the snow

SHYLA PARRIS PHOTO



You have to get creative during snow days on ND! This was for a class assignment, ALIEN ABDUCTION INCOMING!

VIOLETA VAZQUEZ PHOTO



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A LOOK BACK THIS WEEK IN USAF HISTORY

FIRST USAF WOMEN TO ATTAIN PERMANENT RANK OF COLONEL
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Maj. Gen. Jeanne Holm (USAF Photo)

After Public Law 90-130 was signed by President Lyndon Johnson on November 8, 1967, Major General Jeanne M. Holm and Colonel Helen O'Day became the first women promoted to the permanent rank of colonel in the United States Air Force. Gen. Holm enlisted in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in 1942. In 1949, she transferred to the USAF. She was appointed director of Women in the Air Force, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, in November of 1965. Gen. Holm helped to modernize Air Force policies for women and expanded their job opportunities. Col. O'Day joined the WAAC in July 1943. She was promoted to major in 1951, and became the first woman assigned to the Air Force Legislative Liaison Office in the House of Representatives. For six years, she served in Paris before retiring in July of 1967. She came back to active duty as one of the first female colonels soon after President Johnson signed the new law into effect, which lifted many promotion restrictions for Air Force women. Maj. Gen. Holm and Col. O'Day are two USAF women who broke many glass ceilings throughout their careers, and spearheaded the progress of women in the Air Force to where it stands today.

Information courtesy of: static.dma.mil / af.mil / Air Force Historical Foundation

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Wheel Alignment Tips

Have your Wheel Alignment checked every other tire rotation and always when installing new tires. Wheel alignment sometimes referred to as tracking, is part of standard automobile maintenance that consists of adjusting the angles of the wheels so that they are set to the car maker's specification. The purpose of these adjustments is to reduce tire wear, and to ensure that vehicle travel, is straight and true (without "pulling" to one side). Alignment angles can also be altered beyond the maker's specifications to obtain a specific handling characteristic. Motorsport and off-road applications may call for angles to be adjusted well beyond "normal" for a variety of reasons.

Primary Angles

The primary angles are the basic angle alignment of the wheels relative to each other and to the car body. These adjustments are the camber, caster and toe. On some cars, not all of these can be adjusted on every wheel.

These three parameters can be further categorized into front and rear, so summarily the parameters are:

Front: Caster (right & left)

- Front: Camber (right & left)
- Front: Toe (left, right & total)
- Rear: Camber (left & right)
- Rear: Toe (left, right & total)
- Rear: Thrust angle

Secondary Angles

The secondary angles include numerous other adjustments, such as:

SAI (left & right)

- Included angle (left & right)
- Toe out on turns (left & right)
- Maximum Turns (left & right)
- Toe curve change (left & right)
- Track width difference
- Wheelbase difference
- Front ride height (left & right)
- Rear ride height (left & right)
- Frame angle

Setback (front & rear) is often referred to as a wheel alignment angle. However setback simply exists because of the measuring system and does not have any specification from car manufacturers.

Measurement

A camera unit (sometimes called a "head") is attached to a specially designed clamp which holds on to a wheel. There are usually four camera units in a wheel alignment system (a camera unit for each wheel). The camera units communicate their physical positioning with respect to other camera units to a central computer which calculates and displays how much the camber, toe and caster are misaligned.

Often with alignment equipment, these "heads" can be a large precision reflector. In this case, the alignment "tower" contains the cameras as well as arrays of LEDs. This system flashes one array of LEDs for each reflector whilst a camera centrally located in the LED array "looks for" an image of the reflectors patterned face. These cameras perform the same function as the other style of alignment equipment, yet alleviate numerous issues prone to relocating a heavy precision camera assembly on each vehicle serviced.



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AFRICAN WARTHOG

CREATURE FEATURES

- A Warthog's disproportionately sized head has thick protective pads on both sides that look like warts. Their warts serve as a fat reserve and are used for defense when males fight.
- Their tusks are actually teeth. They use them for fighting, rooting, or digging.
- Warthogs do not have sweat glands. They must wallow in the mud to cool off.
- Lions and leopards are the Warthog's chief enemies. Warthogs protect themselves from predators by fleeing or sliding backwards into a hole, thus being in a position to use their formidable tusks in an attack.

Fact File

Life Span	7 - 18 years
Weight	100 - 300 pounds
Height to Shoulder	25 - 33 inches
Head and Body Length	3 - 5 feet
Top Speed	34 mph
Wild Diet	Omnivore Carnivore (Herbivore) Grasses, Roots, Tubers, Berries, Bark



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A NORDIC APPROACH TO A MINOT FEBRUARY



HOPE ANDERSON

GETTIN' AROUND
DOWNTOWN
MINOT



As the calendar quietly turns from February to March in North Dakota, it can feel like a collective exhale. The days stretch a little longer, moment by moment. The air still has a bite, but it's more tolerable now because we know there's an end in sight. That deep winter urge to stay tucked inside loosens its grip, just enough to let curiosity back in.

Around these parts, and especially here in Minot, we've always carried a quiet Nordic way of life with us, whether we realize it or not. Our history, our climate, and our instincts reflect it. Long winters shaped by resilience, practicality, and community don't ask us to wait for perfect conditions, but instead to live well within them.

That Nordic mindset isn't about pushing through winter or pretending it's easy, it's about adapting and finding warmth and connection within the season we're in instead of fighting it. It's choosing movement over stagnation, light over isolation, and small

daily rituals over the long winter doldrums. As we all get into this time of the season, it is common to feel a bit of blasé, but here are a few ways to combat it and feel good about the season with a touch of Nordic inspiration.

In Nordic cultures, one of the most beloved winter practices is Fika (pronounced fee ka), a purposeful pause for coffee, conversation, and connection. Fika isn't rushed and it isn't extravagant. It's a reason to step outside, even when it's cold, knowing warmth and familiarity are waiting on the other side of the door. A stop at Prairie Sky Breads, Margie's, or Cookies for You for a coffee and a chat with a friend will make you feel a sense of Fika in no time. You don't have to linger long; the pause itself is the point.

There's also Friluftsliv (pronounced free loofts liv), the belief that fresh air and movement, even in small doses, are essential to well-being. Friluftsliv doesn't require a hike or ideal weather. Walking a block or two between downtown shops, feeling the

cold air wake you up, and letting winter daylight reach your eyes absolutely counts. Downtown Minot's compact layout makes this kind of movement accessible, even on the chilliest days. A skate or ice bumper car ride at Citizen's Alley will bring a moment of Friluftsliv into your day in a unique and memorable way, too.

Then there's Hygge (pronounced hoo ga), often misunderstood as staying inside with blankets and candles. Hygge is really about creating comfort wherever you are. It's warm mittens, good boots, and stepping into a welcoming space after a brisk walk. It's the contrast between cold sidewalks and warm interiors that makes winter outings feel grounding instead of inconvenient. A pair of mittens from Koselig at 106, a new jacket from Weekender or Mainstream Boutique, or a cozy throw from The Foundry can get you feeling Hygge in no time.

And finally, Lagom (pronounced lah-gom), the idea of "just enough." Winter errands

downtown don't need to be all or nothing. A 10-15 minute loop is enough for movement, connection, and that feeling of the sun on your face to show us that spring is coming. Pick up a new gadget from Gourmet Chef or a vintage item from Downtown Antique Mall, Central Avenue Variety, or Robyn's Place and you can bring some cozy into your own home.

As late winter gives way to early March, getting around downtown Minot doesn't have to be about enduring the season. Through a Nordic lens, it becomes a way to stay engaged with it. Every short walk, intentional stop, or simple ritual carries us forward and allows us a time of connection with those around us. A simple smile from a shop owner can change an entire day and a friendly conversation can make a person feel a little more a part of a community, even on the coldest of days.

Spring will arrive soon enough. Until then, downtown offers a way to live well right where we are.

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Congratulations to TSgt Joshua Hock, the Base Motorcycle Safety Coach, for leading motorcycle safety training for both wings at Minot AFB. Through the Basic Rider's Course, he ensures riders are properly trained before operating a motorcycle on or off duty. This course covers core skills like controls, braking, cornering, inspections, PPE, and defensive riding. TSgt Hock's dedication, professionalism, and commitment to the safety of others make him the standard and a true example of what a "Knight-Hock" should be. For his impact on our Airmen and families, TSgt Hock was coined by the 5th Bomb Wing Chief of Safety. Outstanding work and well deserved!



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Upcoming Events

3&4 MAR **EXPLORE THE SKY: DRONE SHOW**
8:00PM
Magic City Discovery Center,
1545 1st Street NW
Sponsored by the Aggie Foundation

Get ready for an unforgettable night in the sky! Jaw-dropping drone show where 300 glowing drones soar together to create colorful, animated images overhead. With color-changing LED lights and music bringing it all to life, this high-tech sky show blends science, creativity, and pure magic! Shows begin around 8:10 PM (please plan to be ready by 8:00 PM) Where to Watch: Guests are welcome to park at the Discovery Center or the lots by the baseball fields and watch from their cars. The drones will lift off from the baseball field. Want the best seat in the house? Get the VIP Rooftop Experience: \$5 per person. Popcorn & hot chocolate included. VIP tickets must be purchased in advance. Museum exhibits will not be open during this event. Doors open at 7:50 PM for VIP guests. We recommend arriving early, as parking availability may be limited and crowds are expected.



For more information and tickets:
<https://www.magiccitydiscoverycenter.com/>

11 MAR **ST. PATRICK'S DAY SUCCULENTS AND SIPS**
6:00PM-8:00PM
Minot Parks Horticulture Department,
300 14th St NE

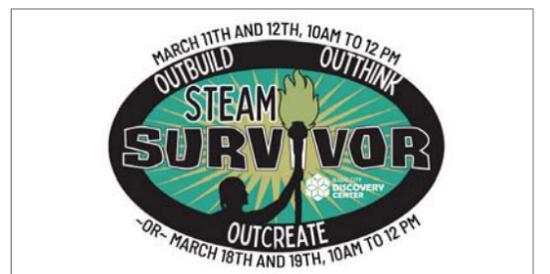
We had such a blast at our last Succulents & Sips event that we're doing it again for St. Patrick's Day! Cost: \$25. This event is 21+. This session will be a little different. We'll be planting one festive favorite, a lucky shamrock plant! If you joined us last time, don't worry, we'll be planting something new! Bring your favorite drink (BYOB), enjoy some tasty snacks, and get ready for a night full of fun, laughs, and greenery. Spots are limited, so grab yours and let's celebrate with some green vibes and good times!



For more information:
Facebook / Minot Parks/ events

11-12 MAR **STEAM SURVIVOR CAMP**
10:00AM-12:00PM
Magic City Discovery Center,
1545 1st Street NW, Minot

Can you out-build, out-think, and out-create in our STEM Survivor Camp? Join your "tribe" for two days of hands-on fun as you tackle engineering builds, mystery puzzles, and creative challenges inspired by the hit show Survivor! Work together to complete team tasks, earn tribe tokens, and design your own flag. Who will become the Ultimate STEAM Survivor? Ages: 8-13 years old Dates: March 11th - March 12th (2 Day Class). Time: 10:00am - 12:00pm. Location: Community Rooms at the Magic City Discovery Center. Cost: \$48 for Non-Members, \$43.20 for MCDC Members, \$38.40 for Military Members



Sign up today:
www.magiccitydiscoverycenter.com

10 APR **THE BIG ONE - MINOT SPRING SHOW**
10:00AM-12:00PM
ND State Fair Center
2005 Burdick Expressway East

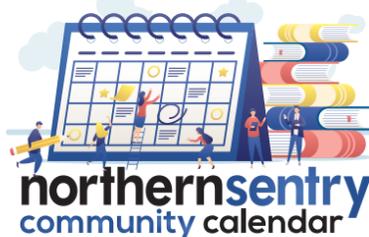
The 35th Annual Minot Spring Show includes over 250 booths showcasing products handmade from across the US. Over 175 exhibitors will fill their booths with arts, crafts, and baked goods that all have a touch of being handmade. Admission: \$5.00.
Friday, April 10th, 2026 - 10am - 8pm
Saturday, April 11th, 2026 - 9am - 5pm



For more information:
<https://thebigone.biz/minot-spring-show/>

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More photos can be found on Minot Air Force Base Public Affairs Flickr page.

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Scottish Rite - 1st Wednesday at 6:00PM
Eastern Star - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 7:00PM
Prince Hall - 2nd Saturday at 9:00AM

Bryleigh McBride, FTC Dean's List Finalist

ROD WILSON, NORTHERN SENTRY

Robotics is a key factor in attracting STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & mathematics)-qualified students who learn to work as a team to build and operate robots designed to accomplish tasks that are similar to real life situations. One of the organizations advocating and creating competitions for these teams is First Tech Challenge. "FIRST® is the world's leading youth robotics community, delivering youth robotics competitions that inspire innovation, build confidence, and prepare young people for life. Discover what drives our global movement."

These teams of students, of which Bryleigh McBride is on the Minot North & Minot High combined team, are given the challenge and then the responsibility to build a robot to meet the challenge in a competitive environment against other teams from their region.

From the FTC website, "The FIRST Leadership Award recognizes the dedication and individual contributions of outstanding secondary school students participating on FIRST Tech Challenge or FIRST Robotics Competition teams. Students in 10th or 11th grade are eligible to be nominated by their team for the FTC Dean's List Award for excelling in areas such as leadership, entrepreneurship, and dedication to advancing the



Spare Parts 32434 Coaches (left to right): Steve Baldwin and Aaron Klingbile stand with Bryleigh McBride.

mission of FIRST within their communities. FIRST is the world's leading youth robotics community, delivering hands-on STEM learning that inspires innovation, builds confidence, and prepares kids for life. Across the globe, students thrive in our programs-powered by mentorship, teamwork, creativity, and engineering challenge."

Bryleigh McBride is a sophomore and a second year competitor and this year her team "Spare Parts 32434 Team" recently competed

on a state level at a First Tech Challenge competition. Leading up to the First state competition Bryleigh's coach/advisors for Spare Parts nominated Bryleigh for the FTC Dean's List award, which could eventually culminate with a trip to Houston, Texas where she would compete on a national level.

Each team is invited to select up to two (2) students who are in the 10th or 11th grade (sophomores or juniors) as FIRST Dean's List Semi-Finalists. The students who

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Bryleigh McBride advises as second driver in match.

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YOUTH IN ACTION

earn FIRST Dean's List Award status as a Semi-Finalists, Finalist or Winner, are great examples of student leaders who have led their Teams and communities to increased awareness for FIRST and its mission. These students have also achieved personal technical expertise and accomplishment. It is the intention of FIRST that these individuals will continue on, post-Award, as great leaders, student alumni, and advocates of FIRST.

"After being nominated" shares Bryleigh "I, and the other students that were nominated, had an interview at our First qualifying competition. Two of those who were nominated would end up being finalists and we would have a chance for a trip to the FTC World finals in Houston."

Ten students will be chosen from the group of FTC Dean's List Finalists, and those 10 will be awarded the FTC Deans' List award. Bryleigh's entire family are planning on making the trip to Houston with Bryleigh as a vacation, "it's going to be fun" said Bryleigh.

Bryleigh is also helping to recruit younger students into the First program by distributing posters about First throughout the school "we actually make sure we talk to Minot Air Force Base kids who are new to Minot about joining. We have a big robot and a small robot we take to schools and let them (the younger kids) drive and get the robot experience" says Bryleigh.

Most robotic teams like "Spare Parts" are helped out by community partners, and going



Bryleigh McBride wins Dean's List Finalist Award

out and asking for donations is also part of the tasks of the team.

In the end the goal of groups like FIRST is to increase interest in STEM programs for high school students and give them more opportunities for college scholarships. "First is a big help because kids start early in the STEM programs" adds Bryleigh.

On a larger scope, incoming Minot Air Force Base commander,

Col John Burrell is a supporter of the robotics driven programs at the high school level. And at a national level the Air & Space Force Association is also developing programs to inspire younger high school students to take an interest in STEM driven programs.

As far as goals for Bryleigh McBride? "I would like to study some type of engineering at Yale, that would be my dream."



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MINOT NORTH SENTINEL REPORT

Fast Breaks and Full Hearts, Minot North Makes Mark

BRYLEIGH MCBRIDE, STUDENT JOURNALIST

Near the middle of February, Minot North athletes proved that sports are about more than just the scoreboard. They are about leadership, resilience, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. Across the week, the Sentinels celebrated seniors, gave back to the community, and racked up key wins, showing what makes their programs exceptional.

Standing under the bright gym lights on Feb. 17, Kinzy Welstad (#5), the team's point guard, soaked in the spotlight during Senior Night. Recognized for years of dedication and leadership, she faced teammates, coaches, and family who applauded her impact on the girls basketball program. Reflecting on her role, Kinzy Welstad shared, "Being a senior I want to be a good role model for the younger girls and make a positive impact on the program and its future." Even as the Sentinels fell to Stanley 43-97, the celebration carried more weight than any score could capture.

Two days later, the teams turned energy toward something bigger than basketball. The Minot North Boys and Girls Basketball Boosters generated a \$2,100 donation to the Trinity Health CancerCare Center, often referenced as the Trinity Health Foundation, through fundraising efforts. According to Welstad, "It was funds raised during our cancer awareness game, from both boys and girls." Supporting families facing life's toughest battles reminded everyone why they compete. The lessons learned in practice extend far beyond the court.

Battling fiercely on Feb. 20, the girls went toe to toe with Bismarck High in a 66-73 game. Fighting for every possession, they kept the score tight and showcased a refusal to back down. Meanwhile, the boys energized the crowd with an 89-80 victory in Bismarck, combining skill, strategy, and unshakable focus.

Driving the offense, senior Elijah Thomas controlled the pace, ensuring every possession counted. Contributing clutch points, junior Brady Vigested and seniors Brayden Blikre and



Minot North Basketball comes together to give back to their community.

Traydon Bachmeier helped push the Sentinels ahead in the final minutes. Their combined efforts turned a tough matchup into a memorable win.

On the ice, Minot United boys hockey dominated throughout the weekend, repeating as West Region champions with a 2-0 victory over Legacy. Spreading the scoring across five different players in an earlier 5-1 win over Williston, the team showed depth and cohesion. Recording a goal and two assists, senior forward Oliver Thompson extended his point streak to 22

games, while goaltender Luke Richeson shut down 15 shots to keep the team on top.

Just as the final buzzers sounded on a packed basketball and hockey season, Minot North Cheer is ready to flip the energy forward into spring. The team will host clinics April 7-8 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., with tryouts for the 2026-27 season set for April 9. From sharp motions to high flying stunts, fresh spirit is on the way, so keep an eye out for upcoming moments as Sentinel athletics rolls into spring.



Minot North Varsity Basketball Senior: Kinzy Welstad

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Spotlighting Future Leaders at the Minot AFB Youth of the Year Ceremony

NATALY ZARRELLA, NORTHERN SENTRY

Leadership, confidence and community spirit were on full display as nine outstanding young leaders were honored during the annual Youth of the Year Awards Ceremony at Minot Air Force Base. Hosted at the Minot AFB Youth Center, the event celebrated five Junior Youth of the Year candidates and four Youth of the Year candidates who spent months preparing essays, speeches and personal portfolios that reflected not only their achievements, but their growth as leaders.

The ceremony is part of the national Youth of the Year initiative through the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the organization affiliated with the Minot AFB Youth Center. Through its Keystone Program, a leadership development initiative for teens to learn essential skills in leadership, service, teamwork and community engagement while navigating the unique challenges of military life.

Pre-Teen and Teen Coordinator Jay Wyatt opened the ceremony by explaining the significance of the Military Youth of the Year distinction, introduced in 2013 to recognize exceptional teens served at Boys & Girls Club-affiliated youth centers on military installations.

Through partnerships with the Armed Services, the program provides safe spaces, consistent mentorship and opportunities for youth to develop resilience and leadership skills. Winners at the installation level advance to state competition, where they compete against other military bases and local clubs. From there, participants may advance to regional competitions in Chicago and even the national level, earning scholarships along the way.

"This program is one of the most impactful leadership development opportunities for youth," Wyatt emphasized, noting that participants complete four essays, a speech, a résumé and a cover letter. Junior candidates complete an essay and speech as preparation for the senior

competition.

This year's nine candidates included Gabi Hamill, Amelia Martin, Alex Langan, Addison Cunniff, Fatimazahra Elbouab, Youness Elbouab, Milli Gomez and Bryleigh McBride.

Youth Program Director Sara Acord praised each nominee's dedication. "Every single one of the candidates has already achieved something extraordinary, and regardless of who wins they all walk away as champions in my heart," she said.

The Junior Youth of the Year category highlighted five young leaders beginning their journey.

Amelia Martin was named Minot's Junior Youth of the Year winner. After four years at the youth center, she described the program as a place where she can express herself and explore new interests. Preparing alongside her peers strengthened her confidence and public speaking skills. She shared that winning made her feel proud and relieved, not just for herself but for her friends who worked hard beside her. Amelia said she hopes to continue helping others by being a positive example and encouraging fellow youth to believe in themselves.

Runner-up Addison Cunniff described the youth center as her "third home," a safe and welcoming environment where she feels free to express herself and grow.

In the Youth of the Year category, candidates reflected on how the Keystone Program challenged them to move beyond comfort zones and discover their leadership voice. Bryleigh McBride, named Traditional Youth of the Year, shared that while she had always taken school seriously and maintained strong grades, she once struggled to find direction as a leader. Keystone pushed her to use her voice, take initiative and lead with purpose, helping her become the leader she knew she could be.

Runner-up for Military Youth

of the Year, Youness Elbouab, echoed that sentiment. Before joining Keystone, he worked hard academically but had not fully stepped into leadership roles. The program stretched him, teaching him to lead intentionally and with confidence.

Fatimazahra Elbouab was named Minot's Military Youth of the Year. In her essays, she wrote about her belief in opportunity and her desire to support underserved youth. She credited her parents and Mr. Wyatt for their guidance throughout the process.

Being named Military Youth of the Year, she said, brings her closer to her goals and gives her a platform to make meaningful change, from supporting youth to protecting the environment. She looks forward to preparing for the state competition by refining her speech and essays and is excited to meet fellow young leaders along the way.

She hopes her journey inspires other military-connected youth to pursue leadership roles and use their voices to create opportunities for others.

While awards were presented and titles earned, the evening underscored a deeper message: leadership is learned through challenge, teamwork and perseverance. Throughout months of preparation, the candidates supported one another, practiced together and learned how to work as a team to achieve shared goals. They were challenged not only academically, but personally, discovering strengths they didn't know they had.

For parents in the audience, the ceremony was a powerful reminder of the impact of mentorship and opportunity. For the youth watching, it was proof that their voices matter. As the applause faded and photos were taken, one thing was clear: at Minot AFB, the next generation of leaders is already rising, confident, compassionate and ready to serve their community.

YOUTH IN ACTION



Fatimazahra Elbouab winner of the 2026 Minot AFB Military Youth of the Year Award Winner!

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO | AIRMAN FIRST CLASS VINCENT PADILLA



Amelia Martin Minot AFB 2026 Junior Youth of the Year Award winner!

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Fatimazahra (winner) and Youness (runner up) 2026 Minot AFB Military Youth of the Year Award with their parents at the award ceremony.



Fatimazahra Elbouab, Youness Elbouab and Milli Gomez candidates for the Military Youth of the Year Award. Bryleigh McBride candidates for Traditional Youth of the Year Award.

Gabi Hamill, Amelia Martin, Alex Langan, Addison Cunniff candidates for the 2026 Junior Youth of the Year Award.

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Passion, Grit, and the Mat: A Ninth-Grader's Wrestling Journey

FATIMZAHRA ELBOUAB, NORTHERN SENTRY INTERN

Who knew a pair of wrestling shoes could change a life? Madisyn Racine, a freshman at Minot High School, wasn't originally going to wrestle, but a single moment at the Rattlers Wrestling Club changed everything. The club, hosting practices at Magic City Campus and Minot State University, is a place for wrestlers to improve during the off-season. Racine's first experience with wrestling happened when she and her dad went to pick up her brother from wrestling practice. After watching him wrestle, five-year-old Racine told her dad she wanted to try it out. "Once I put on those wrestling shoes for the first time, I fell in love. I found my passion; my obsession. Wrestling has shaped me into the person I am today because of all the discipline, sacrifice, and commitment it takes," she recalled.

Soon after, wrestling became more than just a sport for Racine. It became a way of life, drawing her closer to her family, friends, and faith. Growing up in a household where wrestling runs in the family, Racine learned the sport alongside her cousins and brother Evan. "Being the only girl, I wanted to stand out, but I also wanted to be tough just like my brother and cousins," she said. Cohen, her cousin and an eighth-grader who wrestles on the boys' team, became Racine's

first practice partner. "Once I started wrestling, my cousins and I became extremely close. We stayed late after Rattler practice to work on things we needed to improve on, woke up early to train with each other, and even though [we sometimes] beat up on each other, this sport made us best friends."

Beyond practice, the lessons learned on the wrestling mat have carried into her everyday life. The lessons she learned are reflected in her dad's saying: "If you're not going to give your 100% effort, then you might as well just not do it." She said that quote spoke to her because, "What's the point of doing something if you're not going to give it your all?" For Racine, this saying doesn't just apply to wrestling. It applies to school, jobs, and everyday responsibilities. Effort, their family word, guides Racine. "There is nothing more my parents want than to watch me succeed," she said. "Even when I lose, [as long as] they know that I gave it my 110% effort, they don't care about the outcome."

Handling pressure is another skill Racine has mastered. Her uncle is the head coach of the Minot United Boys Wrestling Team. He always reminds Racine that anytime she is nervous before a match, that "pressure is a privilege. If you feel pressure, know that you earned that pressure because that means that your coaches and teammates believe in you and know that you can do it. It's just another match, you've wrestled thousands. Go wrestle YOUR match."

Despite her history of success, including being a state runner-up in 2025 as an eighth grader and a runner-up in 2026 as a ninth grader, Racine's motivation is rooted in what's next. "I'm still motivated to continue wrestling and get better every day because I haven't gotten what I want. And when I get what I want, I won't stop because I will put another goal in front of me and continue until I accomplish that goal. That's what happens when you're obsessed," she said.

This season, Racine had a clear goal: a state title, which was a part of her long-term ambition to win six state titles in her high school career. "Losing in the state finals two years in a row is definitely heartbreaking, but that is only going to make me

even more hungry than I was last year. It's all in God's plan. I will do everything in my physical and mental strength to make me a better wrestler and whatever I can't, God will do the rest."

For Racine, wrestling is more than just medals and rankings. It's about growth, community, and resilience. "I hope people know that I am hungrier than ever to succeed," she said. This doesn't just apply to the state championship. Racine wants to create friendships between her opponents and build a family in the state of North Dakota wrestling.

From her first pair of wrestling shoes to her ongoing pursuit of excellence, Madisyn Racine's journey shows that wrestling isn't just a sport, but a lifelong passion that shapes character, strengthens bonds, and fuels ambitions. For her, the mat isn't just a place to compete. It is a place to learn, grow, and chase goals.



Madisyn Racine reached 100 varsity wins during the semifinals at the Bismarck Rotary Tournament. She is presented with her poster at the Turtle Mountain/ Bismarck Century Tri-dual at Magic City Campus.

MASON KRAMER PHOTOGRAPHY



Madisyn Racine preparing to meet her opponent before the finals match.

CAPTURED BY KD



Minot wrestlers participate in a team prayer before a dual at Magic City Campus.

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Preparing for her match during the dual against Turtle Mountain's wrestling team at Magic City Campus.

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State of the School Liaison Program

I have officially served as Minot AFB's School Liaison Program Manager for one year. There were a number of unique challenges (Government Shutdowns and MFCL contract changeover) and new laws/procedures (K-12 phone-free legislation and on-base school am/pm supervision). I jumped into a changing landscape, which involved processing overdue STARBASE ND payments, and closing out the old bus contract for a new 5-year bus contract.

When the government shut down, I was "excepted" and worked without pay for weeks. Despite this situation, I kept students fed working with Minot Public Schools and Backpack Buddies, kept our community informed of valuable counseling resources and shutdown effects: Mission: Transition Workshop delay and STARBASE ND operating tempo adjustment from 5-days to 3-days, and kept a smile on my face! The shutdown also caused the cancellation of the annual MIC3 Business Meeting TDY in Indiana, and subsequent pivot to an online ND State of Education briefing, which remains a critical readiness tool that empowers School Liaisons, Command Teams, and senior leaders to proactively address education concerns for military-connected students. I successfully transformed local experiences into enterprise-wide understanding and strategic action—ensuring education remains a supported pillar of the Total Force Quality of Life framework.

This year also welcomed new staff in new roles: 5th MSG Commander, Yellowfin Bus Manager, Summer Military & Family Life Counselor (MFCL), Fall MFCL, ND Superintendent of Public Instruction, and turnover/reassignments in CYP...to name a few. From the very beginning, I stood impressed by Col Zeigler's impactful speech to all Minot Public School' educators at the beginning of the 2025/2026 School Year, sharing his personal connection to STEAM via his own children's school experiences and subsequent career choices. A strong advocate for quality education, Col Zeigler immediately established six-week meetings to stay informed of all School Liaison Program happenings; assisted in the election of a new MAFB School Board Member; setup and attended my School Busing Town Hall, Back-to-School event, and Healthy Harvest event; and has already saved-the-date to bestow Purple Graduation Cords on May 13th to our local military-connected students in honor of their sacrifice.

Throughout all changes above—easily navigated with an invested leader and his beautiful, helpful wife—I was able to improve processes, data collection, and information dissemination. Some standout School Liaison Program improvements: Records Management System clean-up (adding 52 new schools to my local footprint), School Liaison website clean-up (deleting outdated documents from as far back as 2018), School Liaison section in the MAFB Leadership Resource Guide, School Liaison' Education section in the new Five and Thrive Minot resource initiative with the Minot Area Chamber EDC, School Liaison MFCL Orientation implementation, Data Warehouse access, and base-wide quarterly MFCL contact information dissemination. The effect of these improvements will be felt for years to come.

Also new this year: Pre-K Legendary Learners book dissemination to base-wide and in town schools/libraries/centers to ensure our military-connected students thrive in early literacy despite no universal PreK offered in our state, engaging School Liaison' Right Start briefings to new civilian

and military members, and new and improved military family events: Back-to-School brigade with nine new organizations and 25% increase in backpacks, Healthy Harvest bowling/Operation Homefront gift card event with 42% increase in funding, monthly "Conversations with the Mayor" at North Plains Elementary School, monthly MFCL Lunch n' Learn parent sessions, and this week's first ever Mission: Transition - Managing Stress Together family workshop.

Not to mention, this year's new implementation of the following youth sponsorship opportunities: Anchored4Life at Erik Ramstad Middle School (the first school in North Dakota with this program) and -soon- the School-Age-Care Program at the Youth Center (the second program in North Dakota; the first is the SAC Program at Grand Forks AFB), and coaching—with my excellent co-coach Ms. Meghan Langan—a FIRST Lego League Robotics Team at Minot AFB via Full STEAM Ahead, scoring 6th place out of 21.

Additionally, through successful School Liaison and Superintendent/Principal collaboration on criteria-implementation, we now have two new Purple Star schools (the first schools in North Dakota to achieve this recognition outside of Minot AFB): Glenburn Public School and Erik Ramstad Middle School. The ceremonies for these military-friendly schools will commence in the near future.

Throughout this year, I also had personal feats to reach: I scored 95% on the mandated new employee School Liaison course in April, and 100% on both the Department of the Air Force Emerging Leader Course in August and the DAF Unannounced Higher Headquarters program inspection in December. I also sought after and secured School Liaison involvement in two North Dakota opportunities for which to advocate for military-connected students: PreK-12 Education Steering Committee Member and ND State Literacy Team Member.

Yet there was fun to be had when I met a famous rodeo clown, a Polar Express conductor, and a Theodore Roosevelt Impersonator! I also enjoyed speaking in length with my comptroller on noise-cancelling cat earmuffs, engaging with two homeschool groups devoted to sensory and science experiments, and learning that K-9 dogs actually listen to classical music to calm

down. Dressing up as a lasagna and calling-in an emergency situation involving a loose dakrat in my office building were...interesting. These special moments cannot be replicated and truly showcase some of the weird fun that contributed to one memorable year!

My 5th FSS Leadership—Lt Col Bold, Ms. Becker, and Mr. Balas—set standards, encouraged best practices, and educated me; along with our 5th MSG Deputy Director, Mr. Bartholomew, School Liaison Division Chief, Ms. Phipps, and Regional Directors, Ms. Goodier and Ms. Allen. These people prepped, scolded, guided, and led me to all that was eventually accomplished this year. Thank you!

As I start my next year, I look forward to sowing what I've reaped - attending my first state meetings as a committee/team member to share advocacy initiatives, repeating new events/processes with the goal of continuously improving them, and overseeing the new Anchored4Life programs in our area. I also wish to grow all relationships, especially with our PSMI School Principals and homeschool community.

At a MPS School Board Meeting in January, Mr. Erin Raab—Vital Network Presentation Rep—stated administrative staff are most impactful in their fifth year. Along these same lines, I argue that motivated government employees are most impactful in their first year if they're beneficially situated within a strong Great American Defense Community among leaders—Col Jesse Lamarand and Mrs. Nathalie Lamarand, as well as, Col Jimmy Schlabach and Mrs. Monica Schlabach—exemplifying excellence!

Lastly, thank you to all the amazing base and community members I've met over lunch, training educators, in competitions, at events, and on committees! I look forward to our continued student-focused partnerships and hope to unfailingly connect with a shared sense of purpose and usefulness. I also cannot wait to meet others with the sincere promise that I will always strive to "leave with a friend" (famously spoken by Minot Mayor, Mark Jantzer).

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Timothy Timm of Minot currently attends Minot State University, is a Minot High School graduate, artist, cartoonist, author and illustrator. Timm has also created other works of art that are on display in his art studio downtown located at 201 Main St. S. in Minot.

TIMMOTHY TIMM

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

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Tax Guidance for Minot AFB Families

MINOT AFB LEGAL OFFICE

Although the Minot Legal Office does not provide tax advice or preparation services, there are several free tax filing resources available to service members and their families.

Military One Source is backed by the Department of War and made exclusively for the military community. Their MilTax program is free for service members, eligible family members, survivors, and veterans up to 365 days from their separation or retirement date. With MilTax, you can complete your tax return with specialized software, connect with a Tax Pro, file your federal return, and file up to three state returns. MilTax software is available starting 15 January 2026

at <https://www.militaryonesource.com/financial-legal/taxes/miltax-military-tax-services>.

The Internal Revenue Service offers the Free File program as a do-it-yourself online tax preparation available to any filer with an Adjusted Gross Income of \$89,000 or less. Learn more at [IRS.gov/freefile](https://www.irs.gov/freefile).

Various Professionals may be hired at your own expense, including certified public accountants, investment advisers, enrolled agents, and attorneys. These professionals may be appropriate for especially complex tax filings. For guidance on choosing a reputable tax preparer, please visit <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc254>.



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by Patricia Stockdill

FISHING:

Lake Sakakawea elevation, Feb. 23: 1,827.73 feet above mean sea level (MSL); 15,800 cubic feet per second (CFS) Garrison Dam average daily releases.

Devils Lake elevation: 1,449.01 feet above mean sea level (MSL). Stump Lake elevation: 1,448.92 MSL.

- N.D. Game & Fish Dept. game wardens: No new reports from lakes throughout the region.
- Devils Lake, Woodland Resort, Devils Lake: Devils Lake has more snow on the lake after last week's storms moved through. 4-wheel drive or tracked vehicles needed for best access and mobility on the lake. Fair to good night walleye around 10 feet. Try the west end around the Minnewaukan Flats or north in Pelican Lake or Lake Irvine. Perch remain finicky with a tough bite.
- Lake Darling, Karma C-Store, Ruthville: No new reports with weather limiting activity
- Lake Metigoshe, Four Seasons, Bottineau: Continued fair bluegill success with lots of small fish to sort through for keepers. Best walleye activity is in the morning or late evening. Pike activity continues along with some spearing on North Lake with its clearer water.
- Lake Sakakawea/Lake Audubon, Cenex Bait & Tackle, Garrison: Use caution along shorelines on Lake Sakakawea with slumping ice and a mix of thawing and now freezing conditions. Anglers generally moved ice houses off with earlier warm weather and activity is light after last week's snow and wind.
- Lake Sakakawea/Lake Audubon, Hwy. 83 Lawn & Leisure, Garrison: No walleye reports from the east end of Lake Sakakawea but some pike spearing is underway in the back bays. Use extreme caution on the ice, though, especially along the shorelines with slumping ice. No Lake Audubon reports.
- Lake Sakakawea, New Town: No new reports from the Van Hook

Thanks to Woodland Resort, our Outdoors Report sponsor, for helping keep readers up-to-date on happenings throughout the region. For complete details about fishing Devils Lake and its array of recreational opportunities visit their website, (www.woodlandresort.com), Facebook at (facebook.com/woodlandresortDL), telephone (701) 662-5996, extension 1, or email (woodlandresort@gondtc.com). They're located at 1012 Woodland Drive, Devils Lake, N.D. 58301.



- Ice is never completely safe. Avoid areas with vegetation, moving water, pressure ridges, and springs. Check conditions as you go along on the ice and don't move around at night.
- Light Goose Conservation Order now open for light geese only (blues, snows, and Ross' geese). Go to the N.D. Game & Fish Dept. website, (gf.nd.gov) for details and licensing.
- March 7: Coteau Hills Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation banquet, Grand Hotel, Minot, 5 p.m.
- March 13 - 15: KX Sport Show, N.D. State Fair Center, Minot.
- March 13: Muddy Buck Mule Deer Foundation banquet, Grand Williston Hotel & Convention Center, Williston, 5 p.m.
- March 14: Turtle Mtn. Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation banquet, Cobblestone Inn, Bottineau, 5 p.m.
- March 15: Darkhouse spearing season closes.
- March 15: All unoccupied ice houses must be removed from all state water bodies.

TOURNAMENTS:

- Feb. 28: Devils Lake, Woodland Resort.

Arm.

- Lake Sakakawea/Missouri River, Scott's Bait & Tackle, Pick City: Missouri River tailrace generally quiet due to last week's weather. No new reports from Lake Audubon or the east end of Lake Sakakawea.
- Lake Sakakawea/northwest N.D. lakes, Scenic Sports, Williston: Fairly nice walleye bite remains from Lund's landing to Hofflund Island in 14 to 16 feet on the upper end of Lake Sakakawea. Decent pike showing up in the back bays around Lund's landing and White Earth Bay. Continued crappie activity on Trenton Lake. Look for occasional perch and bluegill from Blacktail Dam.
- North-central/central N.D. lakes, Towner Hdwe. Hank, Towner: No reports with little to no activity on area lakes after last week's weather front moved through.

DOWNHILL SKI REPORTS:

- Big Sky Resort, Big Sky, Mont.,

(800) 548-4486: 38- to 56-inch base with 282 runs open.

- Bottineau Winter Park, Bottineau, (701) 263-4556: 12- to 24-inch base with 6 runs, 2 carpets, chair, lift, and tubing and terrain parks open.
- Frostfire Ski Area, Walhalla, (701) 549-3600: 8 runs and Terrain Park open.
- Huff Hills Ski Area, Mandan, (701) 663-6421: 16- to 2-inch machine groomed base. 5 runs, 1 lift and 1 tow open.
- Terry Peak, Lead, S.D., (605) 584-2165: 16- to 36-inch base with all but 6 runs open with all lifts and carpet open.

NUMBERS TO KNOW:

- N.D. Game and Fish Dept., main Bismarck office: (701) 328-6300, website: (<http://gf.nd.gov>).
- Report All Poachers: (701) 328-9921.

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What's Going On Minot AFB

FRIDAY 27

- FTEC, 0730-1600, Professional Development Center
- Senior TAP DOL Employment Track Workshop, 0800-1600, M&FRC
- Red Carpet Membership Day, 1600-1730, Youth Center
- Airmen's Night Out, 1600, Outdoor Recreation
- Friday Flicks, 1630-2200, Rockers Bar & Grill

SATURDAY 28

- Winter STEAM Challenges, 1000, Minot AFB Library Facebook Page
- DJ Nights at Bowl, 2000-2400, Rough Rider Bowling Center

SUNDAY 01

- Sunday Escapes Book Club, 1330, Base Library

MONDAY 02

- AFFT, 0530, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Reintegration Briefing, 1000-1100, M&FRC
- AFFT, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Palace Chase/Front Briefing, 1400-1500, Professional Development Center

TUESDAY 03

- AFFT, 0530, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Sponsorship Training, 0900-1000, M&FRC
- Tuition Assistance (TA) Brief, 1000, Education Center
- Game Day, 1000-1930, Base Library
- AFFT, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Strength & Mobility, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Home Buying Seminar, 1300-1500, M&FRC
- Quiet Book Club, 1800-1930, Base Library

WEDNESDAY 04

- AFFT, 0530, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Informed Decision Seminar, 0800-1200, Professional Development Center
- Pre-Deployment/Remote Readiness Training, 1000-1100, M&FRC
- Storytime, 1030, Base Library
- AFFT, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Brown Bag Book Talk, 1200-1300, Base Library
- Dungeons & Dragons Game Night, 1800-2000, Youth Center

THURSDAY 05

- LOIs Due: Intramural Volleyball, McAdoo Fitness Center
- AFFT, 0530, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Pre-Separation Briefing, 0830-1130, M&FRC
- Reintegration Briefing, 1000-1100, M&FRC, Zoom Meeting
- AFFT, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Iron Endurance Circuit Training, 1100, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Tuition Assistance (TA) Brief, 1330, Education Center

FRIDAY 06

- 12th Annual Winter Games, 0800-1600, McAdoo Fitness Center
- Fish Fry Special Lunch, 1030-1330, Dakota Inn Dining Facility
- Fish Fry Special Dinner, 1630-1830, Dakota Inn Dining Facility
- Fun Fri-yay, 1630-2000, Jimmy Doolittle Center
- Friday Flicks, 1630-2200, Rockers Bar & Grill
- Pre-Teen Movie Night: The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants, 1800-2000, Youth Center

SATURDAY 07

- Winter STEAM Challenges, 1000, Minot AFB Library Facebook Page
- Chess Club, 1200-1400, Minot AFB Library

Scan for full event details



SPECIALS

Rockers Bar & Grill Featured Item
Shrimp Basket

Bomber Bistro Featured Item
Chicken Fried Rice and Pork Egg Roll

The B-Fifty Brew Featured Item
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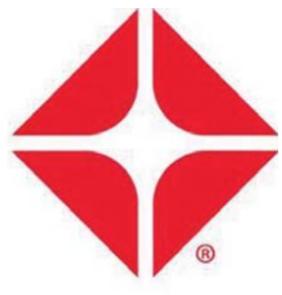
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