

A decorative border of red hearts surrounds the central text area. The hearts are arranged in a repeating pattern, with some overlapping. They have a textured, slightly raised appearance.

FEBRUARY 2026

The Dawg Print

FEATURING:

OUR VALENTINE'S DAY TAKES
AND MUCH MORE!

Valentine's Day Is Not Just For Couples

By: Alana Durham

When people hear “Valentine’s Day,” they usually picture romantic dinners, roses, and couples holding hands. Social media and movies often make it seem like this holiday is only for people in relationships. However, Valentine’s Day doesn’t have to be just about romance. Love comes in many different shapes and forms, and friendships and family relationships deserve just as much recognition and celebration.

Think about the people who are always there for you. Friends are the ones who make you laugh, help you get through stressful days, and stay up talking with you for hours. Family supports you through thick and thin, cheering you on, even when things get hard. That kind of love is just as meaningful and important as romantic love. Valentine’s Day can be a good reminder to show them you care.

There are lots of simple ways to show friends and family that you appreciate them. You don’t need to spend money to make someone feel special. Writing a note or love letter, making a homemade card, planning a movie night or family game night, or even baking something together can mean a lot. Even small things, like giving a compliment or sharing a laugh, can mean just as much as any expensive gift.

Valentine’s Day should be about connection and togetherness, not just couples. Friends, family, classmates, teammates, teachers, and even pets can all make life better in different ways. Taking the time to notice and appreciate them can make the day feel more meaningful.

In the end, Valentine’s Day is about more than just romance. It’s a chance to slow down and show gratitude for the people who matter most in your life.

Whether it’s sharing a snack with a friend, sending a kind message to your parents, or just making someone smile, there are endless ways to spread love and positivity – and that’s something truly worth celebrating.



Prom Dress Trends & Best Places to Shop

By: Gianna Manderichio and Ava Pallitta

One of the most anticipated events of the year for Jonathan Dayton students is prom. This year, prom is on Thursday, May 21st for juniors and seniors. For some students, the most exciting part of prom is finding a dress that suits them perfectly. Trendy dresses have come and gone throughout the years, and 2026 is no exception!

The first major trend that is predicted is florals. Soft, light colored patterns are popular among younger audiences. Rather than sparkly and obnoxious colors that contrast, complimentary colors such as pastel pinks, yellows, and blues are easier to style and liked. These styles of dresses are simplistic, and usually not form fitting. They reflect the trend of what TikTok labels as, “picnic style.”

Another trend is the addition of bows on dresses, whether that be in a pattern or physically attached to the dress. Bows have been a reoccurring trend this year, being a pattern on t-shirts, placed in peoples hair, and even embroidered on jeans. Designer brands like Sherri Hill have over 10 dresses of different styles that include physical bow that can be attached to their dresses. They are commonly long and flowing, creating a train effect on the dress itself.

When shopping for a dress, one can either target designer brands, like Sherri Hill, or more affordable options. Castle Couture, in Manalapan, offers a wide variety of dresses on the expensive side. Similarly, Lola’s, also located in Manalapan, carries brands such as Jovani, Atria, and Clarisse. The closest dress boutique—selling mostly designer brands—is Jacqueline’s, in Livingston, for those who are not willing to travel far.

On the other hand, if one is looking for a dress on the more affordable side, shopping malls can often be the best bet. Jersey Gardens is home to Camille La Vie, a store offering both designer and accessible brands. Comparably, Bella Bridal Prom & Quince can be found at the Bridgewater Commons. Lastly, a classic inexpensive shop that can be found in most malls is Windsor. No matter the store or brand though, every dress chosen by students is sure to be dazzling under the lights in May!

Winter Sports

By: Lucas Palermo

The winter sports season at Jonathan Dayton High School was filled with excitement, determination, and memorable moments across all programs.

The girls basketball team delivered one of the most impressive seasons of the winter, highlighted by their championship victory at the Joe Pepe Tournament. The Bulldogs also honored their seniors on January 22nd, celebrating their leadership and commitment to the program during a special Senior Night at home.

The boys basketball team put together a strong and resilient season, highlighted by a statement win against previously undefeated David Brearley, a victory that energized the team and the Springfield community. The win proved the Bulldogs could compete with anyone and marked a defining moment of the season. Senior Night is scheduled for February 10th, when the team will honor its graduating players.

This has been a great season so far for the JDHS Bulldogs, but there is still more to come from our incredible athletes. Best of luck to all of our teams: Girls and Boys Basketball, Girls and Boys Track, Wrestling, Ice Hockey, and Cheerleading!



Anticipated Books in 2026

By: Luciana Gomez

What better way to escape reality and all troubles than reading? Whether you are a new reader or one that has become quite accustomed to the ups and downs of the particular hobby– there are multiple novels coming out this year. Check out these books this year:

Contemporary Romance:

The Night We Met (Say You'll Remember Me #2) by Abby Jimenez

In Her Own League by Liz Tomforde

Our Perfect Storm by Carley Fortune

The Shippers by Katherine Center

And Now, Back to You (Heartstrings #2) By B.K. Boris on

Fantasy:

Rites of the Starling (Shield of Sparrows #2) by Deveney Perry

The Ballad of Falling Dragons (When the Moon Hatched #2) by Sarah A Parker

Burn of the Everfalme (Kidred's Curse #4) by Penn Cole

The Last King of the Faerie by Cassandra Clare

Fae & Alchemy Book 3 (Untitled) by Callie Hart

Mystery/Thriller:

A Penance for Crows by Shannon Morgan

The Storm by Rachel Hawkins

Death on the Lanai (Golden Girls #2) by Rachel Ekstrom

Her Last Breath by Taylor Adams

The Heirs by Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé

Science fiction & Dystopian:

Erease Me by Josh Silver

Platform Decay (The Murderbot Diaries #8) by Martha Wells

For Human Use by Sarah G.



Men's and Women's Fashion Trends In 2026

By: Zachary Gheng-Lausenn and Lila Carroll

Fashion in 2026 feels more personal than ever. Styles are moving away from strict trends and more towards self-expression.

Many styles help to influence this change, but streetwear styles sit at the center of this shift. Utility inspired pieces, relaxed tailoring, and worn-in textures are showing up everywhere, blending comfort with intention, rather than chasing perfection.

Certain standout items are shaping this current look. Statement sweatshirts, oversized cargos, compact crossbody bags, and bold outerwear like the Marty Supreme jackets are becoming staples because they feel expressive, but still wearable in everyday life.

Many girls around the world have participated in the sweat set trend. Popular brands such as Alo and Parke have taken off, making their sweat sets and mocknecks essential for daily life. Alo's comfortable material, as well as their notorious silver letters printed on each piece, draws consumers in! Parke's "mockneck" design has also been a pivotal fashion trend during this time.

Colors have become a central focal point of men's fashion. Earth tones still dominate, but they're paired with bright pops of color and unexpected layering that make outfits feel alive instead of safe.

TikTok and Instagram are a huge reason this is happening. Trends no longer come solely from designers alone anymore. They grow through outfit videos, fit checks, and casual styling clips from everyday people.

This shift makes fashion feel shared and unified instead of distant or exclusive. It's easier than ever to find like minded people worldwide who share the same passion.

Even on platforms that can feel negative, fashion spaces often do the opposite. They build small communities around creativity, confidence, and experimentation.

In 2026, what you wear says less about status and more about perspective. Streetwear especially has become a way people show who they are and connect with others who see the world in a similar way.

Sports Commitments with Insight from a Future Collegiate Player

By: Ava Pallitta

The class of 2026 has seen three college commitments for sports, thus far. Isabella Pintado committed to Susquehanna University for softball, Patrick Ferguson committed to Raritan Valley Community College for baseball, and Lauren O'Brien committed to DeSales University for lacrosse. While Dayton patiently waits to see if any more players continue their athletic career in college, a future college athlete shares her point of view on the process.

Lauren O'Brien has been playing lacrosse for six years and announced her commitment to DeSales last January. When asked how the recruiting process went, O'Brien shared, "It was difficult and very long. I visited over 20 schools on the East Coast and had several calls with college coaches." It is clear that when one is wanted as a player, they will have multiple opportunities offered to them. While this can be exciting, in O'Brien's case, it was also overwhelming. The process ultimately worked out for the best though, as O'Brien found her school and will be playing next spring. Likely, all of the athletes mentioned above are looking forward to playing for their school next year. For O'Brien's case, she is looking forward to finding another lacrosse family at DeSales: "Everyone seems so close and I can't wait to be a part of such a tight-knit group." Undoubtedly, O'Brien, as well as the other commits, will find their players to lean on and create bonds with. The "family" O'Brien speaks of could even help these athletes become better players on the field. Overall, Dayton cannot wait to see what the future holds for these players and if there will be any other sports commitments for the class of 2026!



Oscars Predictions

By: Talulah Whelan

2025 has been a year of tumultuous politics and culture. In a year that has seen volatility, unrest, and seemed at times to be making a permanent turn for the worst, it seems unexpected that it has synonymously seen a rise in potent and timeless cinema. Nevertheless, 2025 has widely been regarded as a historical year for film. Here are my predictions for a few major categories in the upcoming 2026 Academy Awards.

Actor in a Leading Role
Timothée Chalamet in *Marty Supreme*

Actor in a Supporting Role
Sean Penn in *One Battle After Another*

Actress in a Leading Role
Jessie Buckley in *Hamnet*

Actress in a Supporting Role
Teyana Taylor in *One Battle After Another*

Cinematography
Sinners (Autumn Durald Arkapaw)

Directing
One Battle After Another directed by Paul Thomas Anderson

Film Editing
Sinners (Micheal P. Shawver)

Music (Original Score)
Sinners (Ludwig Goransson)

Best Picture
One Battle After Another

Writing (Original Screenplay)
Marty Supreme written by Ronald Bronstein and Josh Safdie



Resonant voices in film have collectively chosen whether consciously or unconsciously to use their platform to reflect the current political climate as film's own form of resistance. Or maybe a public desperate for release has interpreted many of the nominated motion pictures for their themes of the value of active citizenship and personal liberation. One thing is for certain, any semblance of solidarity that we can find together especially through artistic mediums is certainly worth the while. Tune into the 2026 Oscars and connect with the world of film and each other on March 15th to celebrate an extraordinary year of moviemaking.

Dayton Winter Dance Performance

By: Gianna Manderichio

On January 14th, Dayton presented their dance one and two classes and eighth grade academy for winter performances on stage. Students learned choreographed dances in the styles of hip-hop, jazz, and contemporary created by both Ms. Theobald and student-choreographed pieces.

As a dancer in the show, I can confirm that the show went absolutely as expected and could not have been better. For two weeks before the show, classes began rehearsing in the auditorium to prepare for the performance in full costume. My personal favorite piece I was in was my self-choreographed piece entitled, "Landslide," to the iconic song by Stevie Nicks. The piece was a duet highlighting the experience of growing up and sisterhood, eventually leading to separation, due to adulthood. We created the piece highlighting our strengths in dance and made our costumes contrast each other - I was in all white and my duet partner was in fully black.

Dayton students attended this event and had many positive comments, describing it as simply, amazing, creative, and fun to watch.

Bella Silva stated, "the performance was a lot of fun to see, especially because I saw people who I didn't know could dance perform on stage with such emotion!"

Personally, my favorite dance to watch was the performance choreographed by dance one. It was a hip-hop dance to the song, "Diva" by Beyoncé. It was the perfect mix of creativity and emotion. The girls were invested in the dance and the costume was fitting.

Alessia Perez stated, "it was great! I am a dancer myself and I love seeing people I know dance on stage to music I love."

Overall the performances went extremely well and can be attributed to the hard work of Ms. Theobald and her students!



Dayton Winter Dance Performance

Photos by: Zachary Cheng-Klausen



9 to 5 Anticipation

By: Talulah Whelan

The spring musical is well underway. Beginning rehearsals in early January the cast has been hard at work to bring the late 1970s workplace to life. The story centers around three women, Doralzee, Judy, and Violet who have each felt the repercussions of sexism in the workplace. In one way or another each of the women has been pushed down and belittled by the domineering men in their life, especially their boss, Franklin Hart.

The musical composed and written by Dolly Parton has a score full of both upbeat numbers and heartbreaking ballads. Through comedy and catchy ensemble numbers (the familiar hit "9 to 5" being the opener) important topics are explored. Audiences are certain to laugh, cry, and empathize with the characters as they navigate their way through the drudgery of societal expectations. The musical makes some dramatic turns, bringing the women's crisis to new heights and ends with satisfying vindication that is sure to be showstoppingly fun.

As the cast continues to rehearse through February be sure to keep an eye out for ticket sales. The must see show will be taking place March 19th, 20th and 21st.



Sweet Treats for Valentine's Day

By: Mackenzie Gibb

Valentine's Day is an excellent time to be a little creative in the kitchen, and there are many easy recipes you can make for celebrations with family and friends, or for yourself, to make the day special! Here are some simple and super cute recipes for this upcoming Valentine's Day!

First, strawberries covered in chocolate. Because it gives you a lot of creative freedom and they are simple to make, these are some of the best Valentine's Day ideas. They're classic for a reason: a simple berry becomes elegant when dipped in melted chocolate (white, milk, or dark, depending on personal preference), and combined with a drizzle of a different chocolate or crushed cookie.

Heart-shaped sugar cookies are another fun treat! Using store-bought cookie dough, or a simple cookie recipe, makes things super easy. All you have to do is add some decorations – pink or red frosting, and/or sprinkles, or whatever you'd like, and they become a Valentine's Day delight. Making and decorating cookies can also serve as a fun activity to do with friends or a partner!

If you prefer cake or cupcakes to cookies, red velvet cupcakes are the thing for you! They're easy to make, especially with store-bought cake mix, and easy to decorate with a swirl of cream cheese frosting and some sprinkles!

Last, but not least, strawberry yogurt parfaits are a lighter alternative that's just as delicious. Layers of strawberries between creamy yogurt and crunchy granola creates a treat that's both satisfying and visually appealing. For extra flair, you can decorate with anything you like – a drizzle of honey, chocolate chips, or sprinkles!



Must Watch Movies During Valentines

By: Luciana Gomez

Valentine's is just around the corner and it does not always have to mean overpriced chocolates and roses. One of the most popular activities to celebrate this holiday is by watching movies. If you're on a date or even with your friends, there are always classics to watch around this time of year. Here are some of those popular movies you can watch:

Casablanca

Titanic

10 Things I Hate About You

A Walk to Remember

How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days

50 First Dates

The Notebook

13 Going on 30

27 Dresses

The Proposal

Me Before You

To All the Boys I've Loved Before

Five Feet Apart



Is Valentine's Day Overrated?

By: Alana Durham

Every year around February 14th, stores become filled with festive pink and red decorations, heart-shaped chocolates and candies, and cute stuffed animals holding signs that say, "I love you" or "Be mine." At the same time, social media becomes flooded with couple pictures, extravagant dinner dates, and oversized bouquets of flowers. However, this raises an important question that many people are starting to consider: Is Valentine's Day actually meaningful, or is it just an overrated holiday?

For some people, Valentine's Day can feel more stressful and overwhelming rather than romantic. There's pressure to spend a lot of money on expensive gifts, plan the "perfect" date, and post something online. If you don't spend a lot of money on a gift, it can seem like your love isn't enough. Not everyone has the money or time to go all out for Valentine's Day. Therefore, this shouldn't define how much someone cares about another person. In fact, love shouldn't need a receipt to prove it.

On the other hand, Valentine's Day can also be a really positive and meaningful holiday. It gives people a way to connect further and a reason to take a break and spend time with the people they care about. In our busy lives filled with school, sports, work, and homework, Valentine's Day can be a way to slow down and really express your love, gratitude, and admiration for your family, friends, or partner. It doesn't have to be about fancy gifts or dinners. Even small gestures like a handwritten note, a love letter, a homemade treat, or planning a fun activity together can make someone feel just as special. Sometimes the most meaningful gifts are those that come from the heart rather than a credit card.

Valentine's Day also encourages connection. Whether you are single, dating, or just hanging out with friends, it's a reminder to appreciate the people who make your life better. Spending time together, sharing a laugh, or even just having a heart-to-heart discussion can turn an ordinary day into a memorable one. So maybe Valentine's Day isn't completely overrated, but instead works best when people focus on the thought and effort behind it, rather than expensive, materialistic things.

At the end of the day, Valentine's Day isn't about how much you spend or how perfect things look on social media. It's about celebrating love in all its forms, slowing down to enjoy the people in your life, and taking a moment to show them how much you truly care. That's a message that's hard to call overrated.

A Playlist for Valentine's Day

By: Mackenzie Gibb

Valentine's Day is full of feelings, and sometimes a song can say what we can't. Some songs are upbeat and make you want to smile, while others are more emotional. Here's a few tracks – some happy, some sad – for Valentine's Day!

-“Can't Help Falling in Love” by Elvis Presley works for Valentine's day because it's a timeless classic with simple and romantic lyrics.

-“Lover” by Taylor Swift fits the day because it's about commitment and comfort, which makes it a more realistic love song.

-“Adore You” by Harry Styles is upbeat and joyful, and it's the kind of song that makes Valentine's Day fun and lighthearted.

-“Something” by the Beatles focuses on smaller details of love, rather than dramatic moments, which makes it a softer, more meaningful song. It's also another classic!

-“Valentine” by Laufey is the perfect song not only because of the title, but because it's a soft and simple song.

-“Cupid” by FIFTY FIFTY is a playful and upbeat Valentine's Day song that brings energy and fun to the playlist.

Altogether, these six songs cover the lighthearted and romantic vibes of Valentine's Day, making them perfect whether you're spending the day with friends, someone special, or on your own!!



2026 Movie Releases

By: Luciana Gomez

With a new year comes new and exciting adventures, maybe we won't be going through anything crazy or supernatural- but that does not stop us from watching some of those adventures on screen. Here is a list of some popular movies coming out throughout the year:

February:

Wuthering Heights - A retelling of the classical love-and-tragedy story inspired by Emily Bronte's novel

EPiC: Elvis Presley in Concert - Documentary about the famous musical artists Elvis

Scream 7 - Ghostface killer returns to terrorize a new generation

March:

The Bride! - Maggie Gyllenhaal's remake focusing on the Bride of Frankenstein, but with a twist of a setting of 1930s in Chicago

Project Hail Mary - An astronaut wakes up alone in a spacecraft with no memory- only to discover he is the last chance to stop the extinction of Earth

April:

Michael - Antoine Fuqua's Michael Jackson biopic

The Super Mario Galaxy Movie - Mario and his friends are back again for another adventure

May:

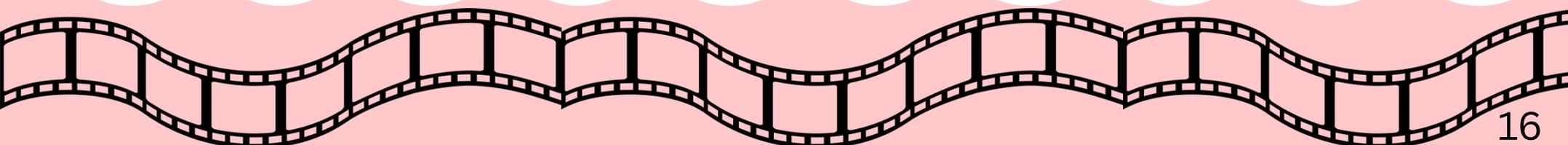
The Devil Wears Prada 2 - Comedy Sequel with Anne Hathaway and Meryl Streep

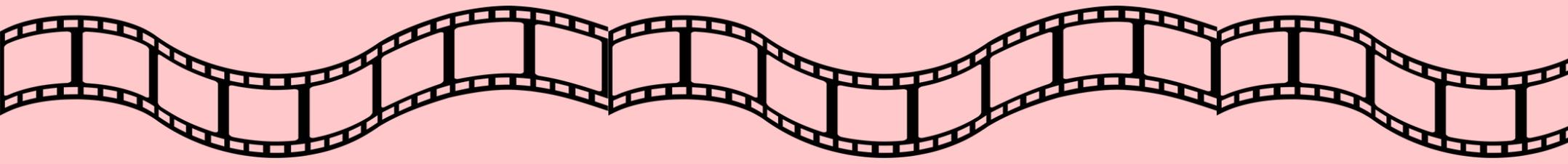
The Mandalorian and Grogu - Stand-alone Star Wars feature

June:

Toy Story 5 - Woody and friends come together for another adventure and another conflict

Supergirl - DC universe spinoff





July:

Moana - Disney makes another live-action feature

The Odyssey - A take on the Greek epic story

Spider-Man: Brand New Day - Spider-man goes through another adventure

August:

Flowervale Street – David Robert Mitchell’s sci-fi about a suburban family experiencing inexplicable events in 1980s suburbia

September:

Resident Evil - A fresh story in the Resident Evil universe with a new suspenseful narrative

Practical Magic 2 - Sequel to 1998 fantasy drama

October:

Terrifier 4 - A new chapter in the franchise Art of the Clown

The Social Reckoning - After a company’s behavior is exposed there are those who want to dismantle the system and those who believe it essential to life

November:

Narnia: The Magician’s Nephew - A more mythic and world building story than the previous trilogy

The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping - A return to Panem following Haymitch during the 50th Hunger Games with more violence and world building

December:

Dune: Part 3 - Final chapter of the trilogy that follows Paul as he confronts the consequences of becoming a messianic ruler

Avengers: Doomsday - Set 14 months after Thunderbolts and brings together nearly every major Marvel faction to confront a world-shaking treat



Featured Photos: Boys Basketball

By: Zachary Cheng-Klausen



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