



Valentine's Note to Another Prisoner Led To This Holiday

By Lauren Rosenblum
Tusker Tribune Staff

Have you ever wondered about the history of Valentine's Day? Well, it originated from ancient Roman festivals in mid February. During the middle ages, it turned into a loving holiday to show your love for one another. In the 5th century, Pope Galasius made February 14th as Valentine's Day.

A Roman priest who was named Valentine secretly married couples against the orders of the Emperor. Valentine got arrested because of this. When he was in jail, Valentine sent a note that said, "from your Valentine" after he befriended another prisoner's daughter while in jail.

The holiday became a widespread celebration in the 1800s where the Industrial Revolution made Valentine's cards. It was a forbidden marriage story and also a spring festival, but it later became known as a day to honor Saint Valentine. Modern celebrations now involve a day for showing, love and kindness to others and who you appreciate, and to friends, family, and classmates.

A Day to Recognize Our Presidents

By Lauren Rosenblum
Tusker Tribune Staff

President's Day is observed on the third Monday of February, which is February 16, 2026 this year. It is a US federal holiday and it was originally meant to only celebrate George Washington's birthday, but soon became known as also for Abraham Lincoln.

It was to honor the life of George Washington who was the first president, but then they celebrate this day to also honor and celebrate Abraham Lincoln, who was also the 16th president and all the other presidents.

Traditions usually followed for this day include the US senate usually reading George Washington's Farewell Address that dates back to the 19th century. Schools and businesses are usually closed on this day to help honor those who served in our country as the president.

We didn't make President's Day official till 1879, and it's official name was supposed to just be called Washington's Birthday.



You're Never At a Loss for Words with Conversation Hearts

By Ashley Hobby
Tusker Tribune Staff

Valentine's day is celebrated every year on February 14th. Valentine's day was first originally introduced by ancient romans. One way people exchange gifts on Valentine's Day is with candy conversation hearts!

Conversation hearts have been around for more than 100 years. They were first created in 1902 by the New England Confectionary Company. Conversation hearts used to be much bigger, and they were not all heart shaped when they were first invented. These candies are also one of the most recognizable Valentines treats.

Some people use them for decorations and games as well. Valentine's Day Conversation hearts are primarily made with corn syrup and sugar, which helps them keep their shape. They also have different flavors for each conversation heart. The main flavors are cherry, lemon, orange, grape, strawberry, bananas, and wintergreen.

These hearts, after they are pressed, take several days to dry. The conversation hearts are printed and made several weeks before February, so they are ready in time. They have words of kindness, love, and friendship. Once the hearts are completed, they are sorted, packaged, and shipped to stores all around the United States and other countries.

Every year, more than 8 billion conversation hearts are made. Each day, millions of these conversation hearts are made each day. The new company that owns the conversation hearts is the spangler candy company. Which conversation message is your favorite?



*Congratulations to SMS All County Band qualifiers:
Lucas Ruck, bass clarinet,
Eli Mundis, trombone,
Mason Holt, trumpet, Eileen
Cho, violin, Alex Gomez,
violin, Kaylee Jeon, violin,
Sienna Cheung, cello,
Francesca Steinberg,
soprano, Leah Stangarone,
alto, Francesca Palumbo,
alto, Alice Orzechowski,
soprano.*

From Backpack Crisis to New Friendships, Continued

By William Mifsud
Tusker Tribune Staff

This is a continuation of a story that was featured in last week's Tusker Tribune.

I walked into the science room. "First period," Eddie said. "Bit scary, huh?"

"Little bit..." I said to Ed. I was staring at the frog.

"Alright, children, settle down," the science teacher said. "And assign yourself a seat. Pick any seat you want." I assigned myself the seat next to Ed.

"Also," the science teacher said. "Do not mind the frogs. They are for the next period. I'm gonna have me some 7th graders."

I looked around the room. It had some cool 80s-style action figures. "Today," the teacher said. "We are going to learn about infrared and how it works." The teacher handed out sheets to us.

"Oh, this is e-" I said, until I was cut off by a voice saying, "Psst!" I looked over to where the sound had come from. It was a girl with blond hair and green eyes.

"I know about the backpack thing."

I flinched when she said, "backpack thing." My mind was panicking. What was I supposed to do!?

"You said you know this," she said. "So, here's the deal: you let me copy, I won't tell anyone about the incident."

Oh no! My mother wouldn't like this! She always told me that cheating is bad! But I didn't want to be humiliated. So, I let her copy mine after the minutes were up.

"Time's up!" the teacher said. "Let's see how you did." She took the sheets. "Good, good, good, fine, good, good, fine, okay, good, good, good." She got to my table. "So," she said, tapping her foot. "You seem to have the same answers. Good enough." I sighed in relief. Not only because I didn't get in trouble, but also because that girl didn't tell anyone about the backpack thing.

"Thanks," the girl said. "Also, if you wanna know my name..." I perked my head up. "...My name is Mia."

"Mia," I thought. "What a cool name!" The bell rang.

"Alright!" The science teacher said. "Time to show these frogs who's boss!" I saw some 7th graders walking up the stairs. When I exited, I saw my friend who I met when he was in 1st grade and I was in kindergarten! "What's up, man?" he said to me.

"Not much, Luke." I said back to him.

"Nice!" Luke said. "I must get going," I said. "Don't wanna be late!"

"Totally! Where you headin' to?" Luke asked me.

"Social studies." I told Luke.

"Who do you have?"

"Mr. Greenwood." I said.

Luke was surprised. "Do not mess with him." Luke told me. "I had him last year. Not really a nice person. If he catches you goofing off in class, he will put you in a corner for a minute. He calls it... the 'Shame Corner.'"

I gulped. I ran off to class. "Bye, Luke!" I yelled. "Good luck!" he said back. "You'll need it!"

I hope you enjoyed it! Stick around after February break for Part 5!



Bad Bunny Makes History at Super Bowl LX



By Lauren Rosenblum
Tusker Tribune Staff

The Super Bowl is the NFL's biggest annual game. This year, 2026, it was held on February 8th 2026, on a Sunday. It is always held on Sunday's because it is to maximize television viewership.

The first quarter's score was 3-0, with the Seahawks leading the score. The second quarter score was 9-0, with the Seahawks still in the lead. In the third quarter, the score was 12-0, still with Seahawks in the lead. For the final quarter, the fourth quarter, the final score was 29-13, with the Seahawks winning the game.

Bad Bunny performed at the halftime show for the Super Bowl this year. Guest performers were also Lady Gaga and Ricky Martin. Bad Bunny made history as the first Spanish speaking solo artist this year at the Super Bowl 2026. His performance was done entirely in Spanish.

Recent performers at previous Super Bowls were Kendrick Lamar in 2025 and Usher in 2024, Rihanna in 2023, and a 2023 hip hop showcase.

A Blend of Skill, Rythm and Speed at Winter Olympics

By Lauren Rosenblum
Tusker Tribune Staff

Do you know what the activities are for the Winter Olympics this year and what they do in each activity? Well here are some activities and hat you do in these activities.

There are a lot of new sports like ice sports in the Winter Olympics. One thing they do is figure skating. Participants do a choreography to music while on the ice. A duo performs throw jumps and spins.

Another activity they do is curling. This is where teams of four slide granite stones down a sheet of ice and you aim towards the center of the ice which is called the house. You have to get closer to the center than your other opponents.

Another activity is alpine skiing. You have to ski downhill really fast. This is the fastest event in the Olympics. It features 11 medal events for both men and women. It is a premiere and high speed event which is also very technological.



My First Ski Race

By The Great Outdoorsman
Tusker Tribune Staff

Hello and welcome to The Great Outdoorsman. Sorry for not posting last week, but we're here now. Two weeks ago, I released an article on ski racing and, obviously since the Olympics are happening, I'm going to touch a little more into that sport.

I am a ski racer, I race for Jiminy Peak, Massachusetts, a great mountain. I just had my first ever race, last weekend. I want to talk about the experience of racing for the first time. Also, so you are aware, this is my first year being on the race team.

In a nutshell, I am a beginner racer, but very excited to share my experience. I raced at a Mountain called Butternut, near Great Barrington in Massachusetts. There were a lot of other race skiers, and teams: the teams of Berkshire East, Butternut, Catamount and of course Jiminy Peak. I maybe missing one team? Not sure.

So, we were ranked on how fast we can get done with the course. First there is a inspection run. All racers go down the trail. It took a while. I think there were 200 racers. Then there is a race starting at 9 am, and the aim was to release two skiers a minute. We raced again after lunch. Each run took about one hour and forty minutes for all racers to go. It was excruciating since it was a very cold day, even by my standards. In fact, it was so cold, we were told no race suits--we should wear the normal ski gear. Everybody was pretty good. There were rewards by gender and by age. For example, the top five, nine year old boys would be given an award or the top five, 11 year old girls--you understand. Also, the top 3 racers overall, by gender get an award.

My time was not the best, but it was not the worst. I did pretty well for my first race! And that's basically it for the race. I'll see you next time on the Great Outdoorsman.



Jazz Concert Showed Kids' Talent

By Lucas Mejia
Tusker Tribune Staff

Hello and welcome to The Weekly Life of a Sixth Grade Musician. Sorry for not reporting on the Jazz band field trip last week, but we will do that today. For those who have not heard, last week, the Jazz Band Club went to see a performance at Sleepy Hollow High School. I have limited pictures of the performance because there is no photo taking in the concert.

Moving on, we had a club meeting at 7:30am (side note, I was not there, because I forgot...). Mr. Gilbert told us that there would be an announcement at 8:35am and to bring nothing to class. There was an announcement, and we headed down to the bus. I may have forgotten to mention, and I did not know this myself until I got on the bus, but the high schoolers were also coming.

After a long bus ride, we arrived at the Sleepy Hollow High School. There were many other school groups that were there. The Jazz Band started to perform. The Jazz band is called Mariel Bildstein Quintet.

Unfortunately, I do not know the name of songs they played. I was very focused on the sound of the music and it sounded great. The Jazz band cut up the music into proportions--there were solos and the piano player was very good; his sound supported every other instrument there.

After about 45 minutes, it was the end of the performance. Then they had a Q&A session. And basically I feel like that was it; there was not a lot more to it. I like how the band supports jazz and the education of music in children, and thank you to those people and the Sleepy Hollow High School for hosting, and to the jazz form in the schools for the event. And thank you Mr. Gilbert--he is the man who makes it possible, for me to report to you and for you to read these stories.

That's all I have for today and I'll see you next time on The Weekly Life of a Sixth Grade Musician

A Debate as Old as Time: Winter or Summer?

By Weston Volpe
Tusker Tribune Staff

What is better, Summer or Winter?

Many people love hot weather because there is no school, so people can hang out with friends all the time, bike ride, play outside until it's dark, but in the winter, there are holidays, like Christmas, Hannukah, and New Years Eve when you can spend time with your family who you do not see very often. You are also able to get cozy with a blanket and drink hot chocolate while watching a movie.

In the summer, it is hot almost all the time and not everyone likes that.

There is a lot to keep up with, so let's look below at the chart:

The Good things for Summer

- No School!
- Time to hang out with friends
- Camp
- You can go on long vacations and see family
- Hiking
- Summer Sports
- You can go camping
- Your Birthday could be in the summer
- You can swim in a pool, at the beach or in a Lake!

The Bad things for Summer

- All the really hot weather
- You may not like all the hot weather
- There are not many holidays, except for July 4th
- Bugs
- Sunburns

The Good things for Winter

- Christmas, Hannukah, and New Years Eve
- Good time to get cozy and watch a movie with hot chocolate
- Winter Sports
- Hockey
- Snow!!
- Sledding
- Skiing
- Making a Snowmen
- Fireplace
- Your birthday could be in the winter

The Bad things for Winter

- Cold weather
- You may not like cold weather very much
- All the snow makes it hard to do activities or work outside
- Shoveling can be annoying

Now that you have seen some good and bad things about both summer and winter, you probably realize that they are really different. You can even add in your own ideas! So the answer to which one is better, Summer or Winter, really just depends on whether or not you like hot weather fun or cold weather fun!"





Service Club's Visit to Ronald McDonald House Uplifts Spirits and Appetites

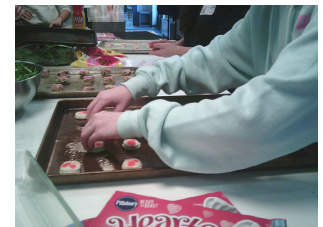
By Mila Cini
Tusker Tribune Staff

On February 3, the SMS Service Club went on a field trip to Ronald McDonald House. The Ronald McDonald House is a place for families who have kids in the hospital. The Ronald McDonald House welcomes people to volunteer in the kitchen and make food for the families so the Service Club went to the Ronald McDonald House and made food for the families who are staying there.

The Service Club made sausage and pepper sandwiches, salad, and cookies. When we were cooking, everyone had a job, like cutting peppers.

The trip to Ronald McDonald House was very meaningful because it was special. It was nice to make food for the families staying there, and it was nice to help in general.

After we finished cooking, we got a tour of the house and the lady who gave us a tour told us that every room had a different theme which is really cool. I had a lot of fun cooking at the Ronald McDonald House and if you do the club next year, you can do it, too.





Winter Accessory Day

By Andrew Pucci
Tusker Tribune Staff

This Thursday, the 12th of February, for school spirit week, we had Frosty Accessory Day. For Frosty Accessory Day, we had to dress up in winter clothes and wear winter accessories, such as scarves, hats, gloves, and more. This day was important to our school because after Winter break, winter will be starting to come to an end and spring will be starting. It has been a long and cold winter, so I'm sure we will all be excited for spring! Many teachers dressed up on Thursday, and it was fun to see them with their winter accessories on. But unfortunately, not many students dressed up. Here are some strategies for next year or next spirit week:

1. We can try to prepare more and get ready for the day.
2. We can set reminders so that we don't forget to show our school spirit.
3. Even if we don't have the accessories, we can still wear winter clothes and things like that.

Overall, even though a lot of students didn't dress up, we can still improve for next year.



Winter Colors Day

By Cyrus Clark
Tusker Tribune Staff

On Wednesday, February 11, there was a certain buzz like the air before a snowstorm because it was the week before winter break.

Everyone was discussing plans with friends but today was special--everyone was wearing their winter-colored apparel: blues silvers and whites. It was like a snowstorm through the halls.



Dolphins Show Intelligence in Many Ways



**By Emily Gardella
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Dolphins are one of the most interesting animals in the ocean, and they are one of my favorite sea creatures. Dolphins are mammals, not fish, which means they breathe air, are warm-blooded, and give birth instead of laying eggs. They live in oceans and all over the world, and some dolphins even live in rivers. Dolphins are very smart, friendly, and playful, which is why many people love them.

One cool thing about dolphins is how intelligent they are. Dolphins can learn tricks, solve problems, and even recognize themselves in mirrors. This shows that they are very aware of what is happening around them. They also communicate with each other using clicks, whistles, and body movements. Dolphins use a special skill called echolocation, which helps them “see” underwater by sending out sounds and listening for echoes. This helps them find food and avoid danger.

Dolphins usually live in groups called pods. Pods can have a few dolphins or sometimes more than one hundred. Living in pods helps dolphins stay safely and work together. They hunt fish together and help protect each other from predators like sharks. Dolphins are also known for helping injured dolphins by pushing them to the surface so they can breathe.

Another interesting fact is how dolphins behave. They love to jump out of the water, race boats, and play with objects like seaweed or even coconuts. Scientists think dolphins play for fun and to practice skills they need to survive. Baby dolphins are called calves, and they stay close to their mothers for protection and learning. Mother dolphins teach their calves how to swim, find food, and stay safe from predators.

Sadly, dolphins face many dangers. Pollution, plastic in the ocean, fishing nets, and climate change all hurt dolphins and their environment. People can help dolphins by keeping oceans clean, using less plastic, and supporting organizations that protect sea life.

In conclusion, dolphins are amazing animals that are smart, social, and fun-loving. They play an important role in the ocean ecosystem and deserve to be protected. Learning about dolphins helps us understand how special they are and why we should take care of the ocean for them and for us.

Independence With Affection Make Cats Ideal Pets

**By Emily Gardella
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Cats have been living alongside humans for thousands of years, and it’s easy to see why they are still very popular today. One reason cats are so fascinating is how independent they are. Unlike some pets, cats don’t need constant attention; they can occupy themselves, but they still enjoy spending time with people that they love. This makes them great companions for more busy people.

Cats are also incredibly athletic. They can jump up to six times their body length, land on their feet all the time, and squeeze into spaces that seem way too small. Their sharp senses help them hear tiny sounds and see well in low light.

On top of that, cats each have their own personalities. Some are playful, some are calm, and others act like tiny kings and queens of the house. All these traits together prove that cats aren’t just pets; they’re really cool animals.



There's So Much to Discover in New York City

By Olivia Ball
Tusker Tribune Staff

Are you looking for a fun adventure or mini getaway not far from home? I recommend a New York City overnight stay and will share cool ideas to guide you through your visit. We will go over places to eat, places to shop, and activities. So, buckle up and get ready to ride.

Depending on the time of year, if you're looking for something fun to do during the day you could take a walk in Central Park, go to a bookstore, or visit a museum. For breakfast, I'd recommend an authentic New York bagel. There are many great places around the city. After breakfast, head to a cool bookstore. My top choice is The Strand. It's New York's largest independent bookstore with four levels that have five miles of books throughout the floors. For a cool art museum, try the MoMA for modern art or the Met for a more diverse variety.

My first impression of the MoMA (or Museum of Modern Art) was confusion. Some of the artwork doesn't look hard or like art at all, but after a while, I began to understand the creative thinking of the artists. If you're looking for a less artsy museum or experience, try the Natural History Museum or Mercer Labs, an interactive visual show that tingles your brain and has some interesting exhibits. Some other cool experiences with amazing views are walking to the top of the Empire State Building or visiting the Summit at Vanderbilt Plaza.

Later in the evening, you should try out a Broadway show. You can sometimes get cheap tickets at TKTS or online at the last minute. They also have a 2 for 1 ticket deal in February for students. My favorites are "Hamilton, the Musical" on Alexander Hamilton's life, "Hadestown", which is a Greek myth about Orpheus and Eurydice, and "Six", a story about Henry the VIII's six wives. Depending on what you're into and if you're a big Disney fan or are going with younger siblings, "The Lion King", "Alladin" and "Wicked" are also good. For Stranger Things fans, "The First Shadow" is still playing and has some outstanding effects. It also gives more background to Henry Creel, the villain in the Netflix tv series, and some of the other grown-up characters from Hawkins.

If you're feeling hungry after a long day of sightseeing or are celebrating a special occasion, here are some fancy and hip New York City restaurants: Don Angie's, Del Frisco's and Bad Roman. It's very hard to make reservations at Don Angie's because the restaurant is tiny and it has the most famous lasagna in New York City, so if you want to try it, plan ahead and be prepared like you're getting tickets to a popular concert. If you want more of a casual and affordable spot that still has good food, I recommend Nom Wah Tea Parlor. They have the best Chinese food I've tried and it's a very authentic, famous spot. Several movies have been filmed on this site. If you're looking for something sweet, then hit up Taiyaki NYC for ice cream in cute waffle shapes like fish or pandas.

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New York

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Also, for cheesecake fans, Junior's Restaurant and Bakery is the best and has a location in Times Square, so a good stop after a Broadway show. It's like an old-fashioned diner, so you can get lots of different things other than cheesecake.

If you want to do something outside, which I don't suggest trying in our current sub-zero temperatures, you can rent an e-bike or take a walk in Central Park or on Little Island, which has amazing scenery. Little Island is close to Chelsea Market, which has shopping and food options. If you need a quick bite to eat while in Chelsea Market or are a Mexican fan, Los Tacos is a good affordable option. The Highline is also nearby and a different angle to see the city. It was once an elevated railway and has been converted into a garden and public park. It's free to walk on and it is nice in spring when all the flowers are blooming. Another great stop for teen shoppers is Mure and Grand. It has cute clothing and jewelry.

Some amazing hotels to stay at are the Motto by Hilton or the Archer. The Motto is my favorite, because it has a very classy vibe and the rooms are a good size. The Archer has amazing customer service and a cool view of the Empire State Building from the restaurant upstairs. The prices are reasonable, especially for a last-minute stay, and the location makes it very easy to get around different areas of the city.

So, the next time you have a free weekend, or you are feeling like getting out of Somers, but your parents don't want to spend time or money on a big vacation, you can visit the greatest city in the US. It is right in our backyard, a short train ride away and has activities for all budgets and interests. There are endless sights and activities for people of all ages. I especially like that I've visited several times now at different times of the year and I'm still finding new things to do.



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