



Cheer team: success in competition season

By Tefta Mino
Sports Editor

Cheer coach Joshua Saliva gave his final updates of this year's competition season, which included five competitions and one every Saturday in February, concluding everything by being interviewed one last time Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

"States passed, we did pretty good against elite teams," he said of the team, who placed 20th in States, 10th in NVLs, 11th at Crosby's event, 7th at Naugatuck's event, and 4th at the Battle of Viking Valley; senior Tanai Miller was third in jumps.

Saliva is planning new stunts and conditioning for next year.

"We're gonna start prepping for next year," he said, that way...

"When our competition season comes up we're not rushing like we kinda did this year."

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CONCLUDING COMPETITION SEASON Cheerleaders who competed in January-March 2026 are from left to right, (back row) senior Amarie Rivera; senior Chavanesse Perry; senior Tanai Miller; junior Kamyra McClain; senior Olany Roche; (next row) juniors Imaje Pitt; Symphanie O'Neil; Jayleyah Harris; (third row) sophomores Danielle Nugent; Abrianna Jackson; Isabella Vargas; Addison Wimberly; (front row) freshman Jayda Rodriguez; sophomore Liz Encarnacion; freshman Aaliyah Howard; senior Keyci Rapalo; and freshman Arlin Evangelista. Photo courtesy of J. Saliva



HAVING FUN Cheerleaders, along with their coach and Kennedy graduate Joshua Saliva (center), take a break from competition to have fun posing for the camera. Photo courtesy of J. Saliva

Continued from front page

If you did not know, the team had competitions every Saturday in February.

“This season in total we did five,” he said.

But Josh, as he is known in the building, wants to do more.

“This year we’re gonna try to do six or seven. I know I’m trying to shoot for the stars,” he said.

For competitions, he wants to try going until the middle of March rather than every weekend in February.

The team does in fact do better every competition.

“Yes, they did improve every competition,” he said, then mentioning how one girl in particular went from not knowing anything about cheer to being one of the best on the team.

One trait that the girls have is...

“Determination. A lot of determination from them girls,” he said. “They work really hard; I’m proud of them.”

Time goes by so fast, it is already almost the end of the year.

“I’m sad ’cause it’s over but I’m happy I get a break and I get to think,” he said, so he can look back and see what to change.

It is ... “A good mental break for me,” he said.

The girls tend to use the same routine every competition but with a few twists.

“There were a lot of changes that happened very fast,” he said, since they usually had one or two days to change their routine

Due to the weather...

“They had to do a lot in a little time,” he said. “But we got it done... a lot of conditioning and doing reps of stunting, jumps and dance,” Josh said. “Going over and over and over it a thousand times. That’s the main goal - to perfect everything.”

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COMMENTARY

I have interviewed Josh many times, and every time has been such a great experience. Whenever he sees me he tells people I am his favorite reporter.

During this interview specifically, I got to see what goes on in the VPs office while students are in class.

A few of the other Behavior Techs were there and would jokingly add comments during the interview. And, being a reporter means they do not mind having you behind the scenes of the VPs office, seeing the reality of their everyday lives here at Kennedy.

For next school year's season, the cheerleaders will be starting on the field, then to the gym, and eventually the cafeteria for practices.

"They're not allowed on the field," was the comment said jokingly from one of the Behavior Techs.

Josh, cheer coach, is very set on the team's evolution and has specific goals.

"(To) basically get them stronger than they were this year," he said. "We can't let the other teams look better than us."

Tryouts are in May, the first summer practice is in June, and overall the schedule is to be determined. Competition season hopefully will be in February to the middle of March 2027.

Just to clarify, in one of my recent articles I wrote about senior Tanai Miller – she won third place for individual jumps.

The competition was called, "Top Gun Jump."

"She did what she did and it got her third place," Josh said.

Josh plans on making a Unified Cheer team that the original cheerleaders will be part of with the special education students, along with one regular cheer team.

Josh wanted to add that he is...



"Looking forward to next year. (We're gonna be) better, stronger, more fabulous, period," he said.

GO EAGLES! Cheerleaders represented their school and mascot by performing in five competitions in 2026, and their coach Joshua Saliva is already planning for next season with his team. He anticipates competing through March 2027. Image from Google

Preparing to Take Flight Night

APRIL 1ST
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

INFO SESSIONS AND
A COLLEGE CAREER
FAIR

KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL



COLLEGE BOUND?

HEAR FROM
UCONN AND CT
STATE-NAUGATUCK
VALLEY.

**INTERESTED IN A
TRADE?**

HEAR FROM
LINCOLN TECH AND
DOLCE ACADEMY

**WANT TO JOIN THE
MILITARY?**

ARMY NATIONAL
GUARD WILL GO OVER
THE REQUIREMENTS

Students and families are encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be provided.

April ushers in Poetry Month

World's largest literacy celebration encourages reading poetry year-round

By Joslyn Tremblay
Managing Editor

The Academy of American Poets created National Poetry Month, the world's largest literacy celebration in the United States and Canada, to highlight poetry's role in culture, increase its visibility, and to have recognition for poets; this can be celebrated with events like workshops and poetry readings, thanks to its creation in April 1996 and celebrated every April ever since.

"In coordination with poets, booksellers, librarians, and teachers, the Academy of American Poets chose a month when poetry could be celebrated with the highest level of participation. April seemed the best time within the year to turn attention toward the art of poetry, in an ultimate effort to encourage poetry readership year-round," according to poets.org, a nonprofit charitable organization that became one of the first online resources for poems.

Some people had time during the COVID-19 pandemic to find meaning in life experiences, and poems provided that!

"During the pandemic . . . people had the time and the need to find meaning in what

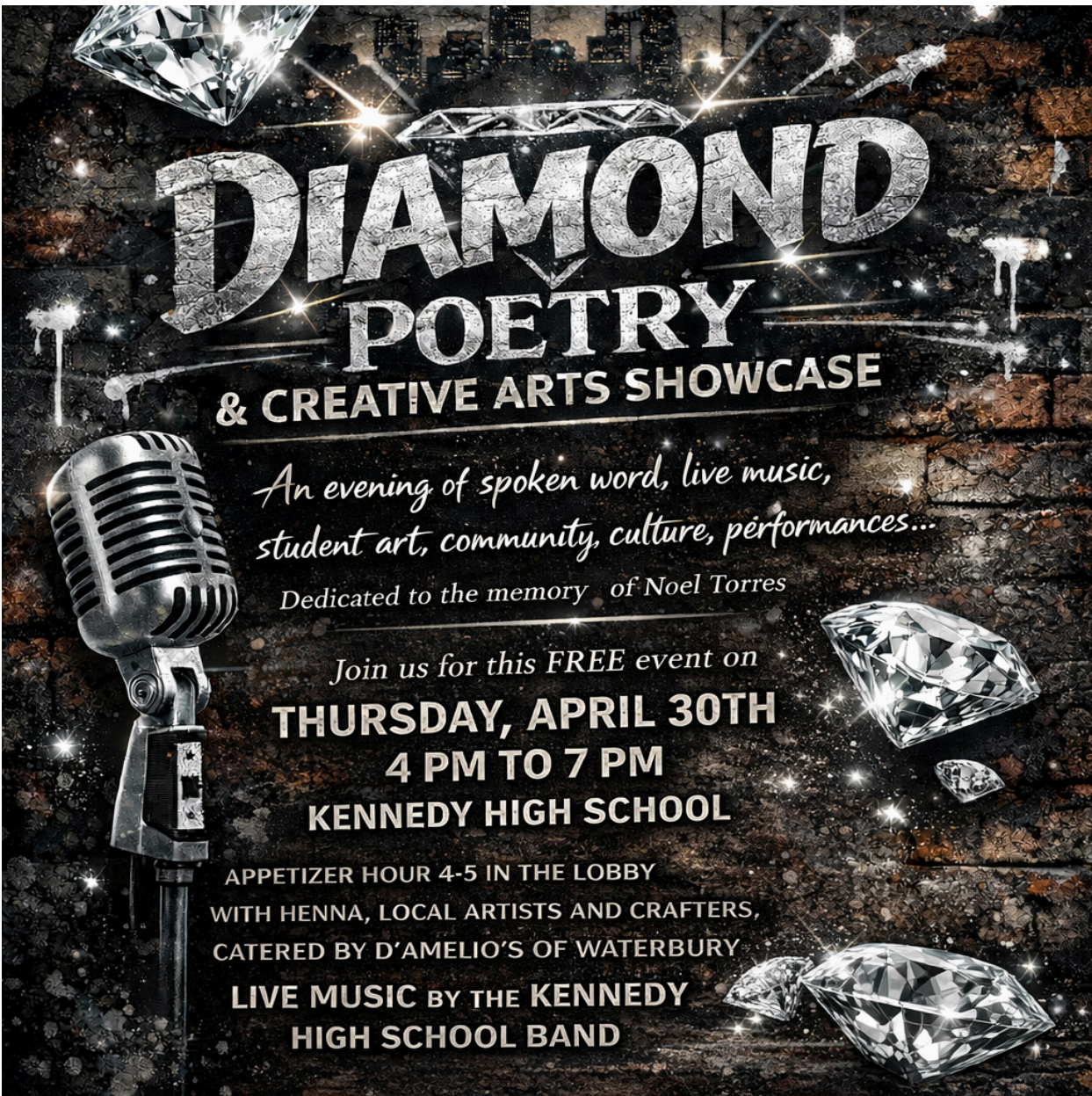


CELEBRATE NATIONAL POETRY MONTH by going to events like workshops or poetry readings. Even if you're not a writer you can still celebrate it! See page 6 to learn about the free Poetry Showcase at Kennedy Thursday, April 30 from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m., appetizers included! Image from laweranceville.org

they were experiencing, and poems provided them insights and connections across languages, cultures and eras," according to share.america.gov, a website of the U.S. Department of State's platform for sharing stories about American society.

This month would be a good time to release poetry and Kennedy is holding its own event at school, a Poetry and Creative Showcase, April 30 from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.; see Mrs. Cusack in room 107 for more information.

"Many publishers take advantage of the month to release their poetry titles; many libraries and schools celebrate the art form with special events that inspire young people to engage with poetry, some for the first time," according to poetryfoundation.org, a private non-operating foundation who transforms lives through their power of words.



DIAMOND POETRY

& CREATIVE ARTS SHOWCASE

*An evening of spoken word, live music,
student art, community, culture, performances...*

Dedicated to the memory of Noel Torres

Join us for this **FREE** event on
THURSDAY, APRIL 30TH
4 PM TO 7 PM
KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL

APPETIZER HOUR 4-5 IN THE LOBBY
WITH HENNA, LOCAL ARTISTS AND CRAFTERS,
CATERED BY D'AMELIO'S OF WATERBURY

**LIVE MUSIC BY THE KENNEDY
HIGH SCHOOL BAND**

Senior Events

Cherish your last year of high school; it's most important

By Joslyn Tremblay
Managing Editor

COMMENTARY

It's never too late to start saving money! Senior year is the most expensive and important year.

Seniors, when it comes to upcoming events here in Kennedy, this article is to make sure you are aware of all events and are on time with everything by giving you information needed for late March through April.

Seniors and juniors, make sure to get your prom tickets for \$95 in room 338 or the main office. The theme is Rhythm of Rio, and it will take place at La Bella Vista Friday, May 15, from 5:30 p.m. - 11 p.m. Get your ticket soon if you are planning on going because they are selling out quickly! Tickets stop selling at the end of April or when they are gone. Speaking of paying for things, also make sure to pay for your yearbook, \$65 in room 158, with either cash, check or online with a card. Caps and gowns are also being sold for \$50 in the main office. Make sure to fill out your height and size in the Senior Google Classroom.

On a different topic FAFSA is, I would say, the most important for seniors. I did my FAFSA, make sure to get onto yours. There is help all around the school. It's getting to that time if you are planning on going to

college. Do your FAFSA! Shannon, 'the FAFSA expert,' is always coming to Kennedy in the school counseling office. So listen to the announcements, look at the Senior Google Classroom, and talk to your counselor to make an appointment with her.

On the same topic, apply for all the scholarships you can! Check out your Common App for recommended scholarships or talk to your counselor about ones that fit you.



GET INTO THE SCHOOL SPIRIT WITH ALL UPCOMING ACTIVITIES For seniors, there are so many events to be prepared for and be ready. Note the dates above. Image created by Joslyn Tremblay

Okay, let's refrain from college talk for right now since I know that's already a stress. You want something to cherish: you don't want people to look back on the yearbook and not know who you are, get your picture taken!

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If any seniors came to the school after Oct. 31, 2025, there will be a photographer here Wednesday, March 25 from 9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. This is ONLY for those students; this is NOT for people to retake pictures. If you want to retake pictures, schedule an appointment with the photographer. Make sure you go to get your picture taken, so you won't miss out. Don't be the person who isn't in the yearbook!

Also, NVCC is a good choice for college to save you tons of money, since college does get pretty expensive.

If you signed up for the CT State on Site Acceptance Day, it has been rescheduled to Tuesday, March 24 at 9 a.m. in room 124. This day is for students to complete a community college application with help from a NVCC counselor. A pass will be given to your first period class.

Sign up for this first time experience. And, if you aren't interested in that, at least come, there will be pizza!

Did you hear about the Senior Sign-out? Come out for it! This takes place on Tuesday, March 31 from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. in the Kennedy cafe. They are having pizza for everyone. This is the first time Kennedy has done this, so if you want to be a part of this first-ever experience, sign up in the Senior Google Classroom.

For this event all spots are taken. If you paid, make sure to come; you'll see me there!

The Dave and Buster's trip is coming: Thursday, May 21 from 4 p.m. - 10 p.m. All spots are already sold out. There will be unlimited arcades, a \$25 D&B play card, dinner and dessert, and there will also be a raffle the night before!

I know you've been waiting to film for the Senior Video, well here it is coming next month! Be sure to participate because I know as a freshman most of you saw the Class of '23 Senior Video and couldn't wait to be a senior so you can have your own Class of '26 video.

Senior Video filming will take place Wednesday, April 29 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. If you would like to participate in this, fill out the Google form in the Senior Google Classroom. Remember that the third marking period ends soon.

If you missed out on any Senior events earlier in the year like Senior Sunrise, there are plenty more events/activities to attend, so don't feel guilty! This is your last year, you don't want to look back on high school and regret not participating in anything. If you are too busy in your personal life, that is so understandable if you cannot make it to these events.

Don't be left out of any Senior activities! Cherish this year the most you can. Keep listening to the morning and afternoon announcements and check the Senior Google Classroom for anything upcoming.

National Cherry Blossom Festival

Tradition with deep historical ties to White House, nation's first ladies, continues in April

By Leonidas Rodriguez
Staff Writer

Mayor Yukio Ozaki from Japan gave the United States a gift of 3,020 cherry trees as a symbol of friendship, and today this 1912 gift of trees is celebrated through the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington D.C., which runs from Friday, March 20 - Monday, April 12, 2026.

“What began with a gift of trees from Japan at the Tidal Basin in 1912 now spans four weeks in Washington, D.C., and neighboring communities in Maryland and Virginia. Residents and visitors are invited to celebrate all that spring has to offer in Washington, D.C.,” according to nationalcherryblossomfestival.org, whose mission is to welcome “more than 1.6 million people to enjoy diverse and creative programming promoting traditional and contemporary arts and culture, natural beauty, and community spirit.”

Did you know the beauty of the cherry blossoms is a symbol with rich meaning?

“In Japan, the flowering cherry tree, or ‘Sakura,’ is an important flowering plant.



DID YOU KNOW it is illegal to pick cherry blossoms from the trees in Washington, D.C. because it is considered destruction of federal property? Mayor Yukio Ozaki from Japan gave the United States a gift of 3,020 cherry trees as a symbol of friendship in 1912. Photo by cherryblossomwatch.com

The beauty of the cherry blossom is a symbol with rich meaning in Japanese culture,” according to nps.gov, whose job since 1916 is “(t)aking care of the national parks and helping Americans take care of their communities.”

This tradition has deep historic ties to the White House and the nation’s first ladies.

“Every spring, the National Cherry Blossom Festival commemorates the 1912 gift of 3,020 cherry trees from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo, Japan, to the city of Washington, D.C. This cherished tradition has deep historic ties to the White House and the nation’s first ladies, beginning with First Lady Helen Herron Taft,” according to whitehousehistory.org, a private, nonprofit, educational organization whose mission is to enhance the understanding and appreciation of the Executive Mansion.

April Fool's Day: becoming lost history?

By Bryan Cruz Santiago
Staff Writer

April Fools' is officially over...just kidding!
Did we get you?

Everyone is invited to participate in fun and lighthearted jokes on April Fools' Day, a globally celebrated phenomenon where participants perform various acts of trickery, though the biggest joke might be no one knowing the true origin of the unofficial holiday that takes place annually April. 1.

"With the new Gregorian calendar, the beginning of the year was moved to January. The calendar change was slow to take hold and there was resistance to it, but those who continued celebrating the new year at the beginning of April, old style, were ultimately shamed as 'fools,' " according to daily.jstor.org, a non-profit organization that acts as a digital library primarily for scholars, researchers and students.

This is only one way that researchers speculate, though there's more theories than that!

" '(The) ancient Roman festival of "Hilaria," ' where at the end of March, people would come together to commemorate the resurrection of the god



"LAUGHING FOOL" Meant to be a bit creepy due to the difference in meaning for laughing back then (1500 A.D.), he symbolizes an aspect of tricks that represents something more serious like mockery. Image from blogs.loc.gov

Attis. It was a celebration of renewal in which revelers would dress up in disguises and imitate others," according to www.npr.org, the website for the National Public Radio, an independent and nonprofit media organization that aims to support an informed public

Even with the mysteries, the fun and tricks run way back, with actual proof this time.

"The first certain reference to April Fools' Day comes from a 1561 Flemish poem by Eduard De Dene..., " according to blogs.loc.gov, the website for the Library of Congress which acts as the main research arm of the U.S. Congress. "In the poem, a nobleman sends his servant on crazy, fruitless errands. The servant recognizes that he is being sent on 'fool's errands' because it's April 1."

April Fools' Day

How much do you participate in harmless little pranks?

By Alexis Ruiz, Safiya Arnold
Staff Writers

The practice of telling April Fools' jokes spread rapidly, and it has continued over the last 500 years. These jokes work best on people who have not been paying attention to the calendar, so you might want to get to them early in the morning, before they realize what day it is, which is Wednesday, April 1, 2026.

"It's like a regular day, but I do play some pranks on my students, but I can't tell them not to ruin the surprise," said Ms. Bosworth, a history teacher.

Does age affect when you play pranks?

"No feelings on the day, but I used to play pranks when I was your guys' age," said Mrs. Denise Cooke, school secretary.

On the other hand, some people no longer play pranks.

"I never participated. However, I think I should start with a good laugh," said Mrs. Brites, Parent Liaison.

How would you feel if someone played a mean prank on you?



JUST A RANDOM WEDNESDAY TO YOU?

Some people enjoy April Fools' Day (April 1) while others see it as a regular day in the year. Image from duluthnewsbtribune.com

"I think the day is something fun, and I like to play pranks on my children that are lighthearted, but it's not fun when it gets harmful," said Ms. Gaynes, an English and Special Education teacher.



ONE HARMLESS PRANK IDEA for April Fools' Day, or April 1, is to swap salt and sugar to cause a surprising taste difference. Image from almanac.com

April recognizes autism awareness

By Matthew Twasam
Staff Writer

National Autism Month is recognized in the month of April but most specifically on April 2, when Autism Awareness Day is celebrated, and it's acknowledged by educating the populace about this condition, plus accepting autism in society. It has worldwide recognition because there is belief society thrives off of tolerating one another, no matter the differences.

“Autism Awareness Month was founded in April 1970 by Bernard Rimland, Ph.D., a psychologist and autism researcher. He chose the month of April to coincide with his son's birthday, as well as the start of spring—a time for new beginnings,” according to deronschool.org, a website which supports enhancing the social, psychological and educational experiences of its students with supplemental educational materials and experiences, while fostering open communication and understanding between parents, caregivers and staff.

Terminologies are vital in this situation, especially a term such as ‘spectrum.’

“The term ‘spectrum’ in autism spectrum disorder refers to the wide range of symptoms and the severity of these



APRIL IS NATIONAL AUTISM MONTH This image shows the word autism in acrostic form, with each letter standing for a different term: Always, Unique, Totally, Interesting, Sometimes, Mysterious. Image from emcurranlegal.com

symptoms,” according to mayoclinic.org, the website for the Mayo Clinic whose vision and values are to forever alter the trajectory of healthcare, ensuring high-quality, personalized care is accessible to everyone, everywhere.

Autism may be life-changing but remember you're not alone in this and many children as well as adults live with different strengths and challenges.

“According to the Centers for Disease Control, Autism affects an estimated 1 in 36 children and 1 in 45 adults. Autism can look very different for each person that is Autistic. Each person with Autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges,” according to exploreandmore.org, whose mission is to provide best-in-class experiences where all children, families and the community can explore, learn and develop together.

Wear blue April 2 to honor Autism Awareness Day

By Britania Domville
Staff Writer

Autism Awareness Day is a worldwide celebration to increase understanding and support for people with autism when people can wear blue and some business owners put up blue lights on their stores, Thursday April 2, 2026.

“Since the United Nations General Assembly designated 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) in 2007, the U.N. has worked to promote the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for autistic individuals, ensuring their equal participation in society,” according to observances/autism-day, a website from the United Nations, an international organization founded in 1945 with 193 Member States dedicated to maintaining international peace, security and human rights.

This coming April will mark nearly two decades of the celebration of Autism Awareness Day.

“This year marks the 18th annual World Autism Awareness Day,” according to autismspeaks.org, a website that speaks about autism and helps people to understand more about autism.



WEAR BLUE THURSDAY, APRIL 2

To show support for people with autism, many people will be wearing blue, which signifies calmness and peace. Image from instituteofliving.org

Did you know that some organizations do fundraisers for that day and aim to raise awareness?

“Every year, autism organizations around the world celebrate the day with fundraising and awareness-raising events. Currently, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that 1 in 68 children is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder,” according to autismawareness.sites.yale.edu/, the website for Yale University in New Haven, Conn.

Wearing blue is meant to spark conversation.

“When Light It Up Blue began it also gave us the opportunity to start an even larger conversation about autism by wearing blue,” according to autismspeaks.org/blog/why-you-should-wear-blue-april-2, a post by Kerry Magro, an international motivational speaker on the autism spectrum. “When we wear blue, it’s not only about keeping that conversation going about autism but, it’s also making sure those with autism and their families don’t feel alone.”

Children's Book Day: inspiring ❤️ of reading

By Amiya Heyward
Staff Writer

International Children's Book Day (ICBD) is celebrated annually April 2, the birthday of author Hans Christian Andersen, to inspire a love of reading and highlight quality children's literature.

April 2 was chosen as the day of celebration because it is the birthday of Danish author Andersen, best known for fairy tales such as "The Ugly Duckling," "The Princess and the Pea," and "The Little Mermaid," but one idea was to have a weeklong celebration.

"In 1913, Franklin K. Matthiews, the librarian of the Boy Scouts of America, began touring the country to promote higher standards in children's books. He proposed creating a Children's Book Week, which would be supported by all interested groups: publishers, booksellers, and librarians," according to everychildareader.net, a website that discusses the history of popular books.

Now let's get a perspective of how some families feel about this certain holiday: "Families generally support the aim of Children's Book Day to promote reading, but many feel significant stress over the



PICK UP MORE BOOKS - TO DISCOVER

April 2 marks International Children's Book Day (ICBD) which is also the birthday of author Hans Christian Andersen (seen above). The goal of the day is to inspire a love of reading and highlight quality children's literature. Photo by Explore the Archive

intense focus on dressing up," according to YahooLifestyleUK, a website mainly focused on opinions of the United Kingdom.

Lastly, let's talk about how the children feel about this holiday dedicated to them.

"Many kids enjoy the fun of dressing up as characters and engaging in school activities, but others feel pressure or anxiety due to the focus on costumes rather than reading," according to Reddit, a website where people can share their emotions and feelings with other people all around the world.

Although Children's Book Day might sound like a fun and educational day, many others feel anxious and stressed about the cost and losing the focus on what this holiday is really about, which is seeking to inspire a love of reading. What do you think?

Get in, losers, we're moving dates!

By Corinna Hunter
Staff Writer

COMMENTARY

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: This headline above is a play off of a famous line in the movie *Mean Girls*!

Kennedy's Theater Department pushed back their performance of *Mean Girls* due to lack of practice days because of the amount of snow days this year; they contacted MTI and got approval to perform the show Thursday April 2, and Saturday April 4, 2026.

Since the beginning, there have been small problems with rehearsals. Due to the city water main break, the auditions got pushed by two weeks. When we finally did start, it took time to cast. It's a process.

After we got past that, things were good. Until it started snowing at least.

We cancelled around 10 practices in total; that is almost two weeks of practice gone. Students were practicing at home more than at school! Rehearsal is more than just practicing your lines; it feels more natural over time. It gives the shy people the opportunity to get all the jitters out and really lay into their role. Practicing in your bedroom is different than on stage. It's something you have to get used to.

The theater director and chorus teacher, Ms. Pape, knows how much the show has been affected because of this, so she decided to step in and try to get the show pushed back.

"It's a lot of work to put a show together, so missing so many days had an impact," she said.



THE UPDATED POSTER for *Mean Girls* was released Tuesday March 17, 2026, informing people of the new April dates. Image courtesy of Ms. Pape

It took only one day for the company, called MTI (Music Theatre International), to get back to her. And in the middle of practice Tuesday afternoon March 17, she announced the show was pushed back two weeks. Every one cheered, screamed, and fell to the floor.

When asked if she was excited, Pape said, "I think it's going to be a very good show."

And, the students continue to uphold their excitement as well. They hope to see you supporting the Theater Department Thursday April 2, and Saturday April 4, 2026.

Why Good Friday still matters in 2026

Reflecting on sacrifice, love, hope for Friday, April 3

By Joslyn Tremblay
Managing Editor

Good Friday is observed by Christians and is a solemn day during Holy Week, celebrated worldwide to honor the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and prepare for the joy of Easter Sunday by religious services, fasting, prayer, and cultural traditions Friday, April 3, 2026.

“Although it might seem incongruous to refer to the day of Christ’s crucifixion as ‘good,’ the meaning of the name Good Friday can be understood as historically meaning ‘holy.’ The use of ‘good’ denotes that this is a day of religious observance, and since this Friday is one of the most important in Christianity it is also one of the holiest,” according to historyextra.com, whose mission is to make history accessible.

Have you heard of this planting lore on Good Friday?

“Ever heard the saying, ‘Plant your potatoes on Good Friday?’ Here’s another old adage: ‘Plant your taters on Good Friday, both white and red; they’ll make good taters with way less vine.’ Like many garden sayings,



GOOD FRIDAY NAME ORIGIN is thought to derive from “God’s Friday,” suggesting it reflects holiness rather than its happiness. Image from restephens.com

it’s remembered as much for its rhyme as for its advice,” according to almanac.com, a site associated with The Old Farmer’s Almanac with forecasts, astronomical data and more.

Despite the efforts of some, the dates of Good Friday and Easter change each year.



EASTER SUNDAY concludes the Holy Week that begins with Holy Thursday and Good Friday; this year the latter is April 3, 2026. Image from fity.club

“In the 20th century several attempts were made to arrive at a fixed date for Easter, with the Sunday following the second Saturday in April specifically proposed. While this proposal and others had many supporters, none came to fruition,” according to britannica.com, a website with multimedia content and resources for education and discovery. *Editor’s Note: Waterbury Public Schools are not in session Good Friday.*

Birth of Persona in America

By Jacob Barbera
Staff Writer

Persona 5, soon to celebrate its nine-year anniversary of release in America back on April 4, 2017, was the most popular and praised JRPG (Japanese Role Playing Game) for its voice acting, jazz-influenced music, and strategic combat. But why? What made this game hold so much passion?

What is Persona?

“Persona is a RPG (Role Playing Game) series set in modern-day Japan that is acclaimed for its narrative style of confronting everyday realities such as forging friendships and romances, alongside supernatural and paranormal themes, including uncovering and solving mysterious rumors and various urban legends,” according to sega.com, the SEGA website for gaming community.

Persona was a globally acclaimed game, but what was the rating and critics’ input?

On Metacritic, the game holds a Universal acclaim of 9.3 out of 10! By users, the game holds an 8.9 on PlayStation alone. Here are some reviews by critics: By Cube3 with a 90 out of 100, “Persona 5 is an absolutely amazing game that convinces with its art style, music, and story.

It has anything one could ask for such a

game and more.

The turn-based battle system offers a wide array of opportunities.

While it may not be everyone's

cup of tea, it is definitely recommended to give it a go.” And by a user from Metacritic, “Ever since I got P4G on my vita I became a huge fan of the Persona series. So when Persona 5 was first announced it was a crazy day. Game got all the clout for a reason; it’s phenomenal. Super stylish, great cast of party members, voice acting, dungeons, etc. It ended up getting over-saturated in the gaming industry with various spin-off release titles. However, that does not take away from the fact that this game is pure creative art at the highest level,” according to Metacritic.com, a site curating a diverse group of highly respected critics and assigning scores to their reviews.

The story is shifted to show its influence from Western culture. Why is that?

“The Phantom Thieves in Persona 5 follows a more traditional Western storytelling journey. They reject the notion of passively accepting their own circumstances as underdogs, and actively fight against the oppressive systems of Japan” and “In a sense, this resembles what we have seen in Western heroes: they take on a

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sense of social justice and fight for change. This is a significant departure from the more introspective, fatalistic protagonists of previous titles. The game still grapples with deep psychological themes (what would Persona be without Jungian psychology??), but the core drive represents a shift away from the previous games' more Eastern storytelling traditions. By embracing this, Persona 5 demonstrates that Eastern and Western views can blend cohesively into a strong story that engages with both internal and external themes," according to medium.com, a home for human stories and ideas.



Creating joy: organized Easter events

Student, staff members recall fond memories or plan ahead

By Corissa Hunter
Staff Writer

COMMENTARY

Students and staff members at Kennedy High School enjoy Easter activities like easter eggs hunts, family dinners, church services, and inside events to celebrate the holiday, which is Sunday, April 5, 2026.

Freshman Lenny Corniel said when he was younger, he did some Easter egg hunts at his family and friends' houses.

Did you know that some high school students still get Easter baskets on Easter Sunday? Why not?

Also, Corniel said that when he was young, his mother wanted to make him a basket for Easter.

Parent Liaison Mrs. Brites said when her kids were younger, they were always dressed up for church.

There was also a special photo Brites would try to get.

She said that when her son, a Kennedy graduate, and daughter were little, she took them for a picture with the Easter bunny.

And, she would dress them up on Easter.

Some people enjoy a nice breakfast or brunch for Easter.



TREATING FAMILY Parent Liaison Mrs. Brites shared this photo of sweet chocolate treats and cards her mother put together for the grandkids and family to celebrate Easter. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Brites

Teacher of English 10 and UConn ECE grade 12 Mrs. Drewry said she and her wife are hosting an Easter Sunday brunch this year.

Drewry will be serving items like breakfast muffins, and both sides of her family will also have bagels and breakfast potatoes. *Fun Fact:* Drewry is also going to have her cousin over for Good Friday (Waterbury Public Schools have the day off) before Easter.

Nice weather is another common wish.

Drewry is hoping for good weather this Easter so her two and a half-year-old son could have an Easter egg hunt outside.

Visiting with family is a way to spend the Easter holiday for some.

English 11 teacher Ms. Doyle said she would go visit her family or her aunt on Easter.

Earth Day origins: protect planet

*Plant trees, clean up parks,
recycle to celebrate April 22*

By Josiah Brown
Staff Writer

Founded by U.S. Senator Gaylor Nelson, Earth Day is now a global event held every year April 22. This movement encourages people all around the world to protect the environment through actions like planting trees, cleaning up parks, recycling and more.

Earth Day is the largest secular day of protest in the world, and considered...

“The dawn of the modern environmental movement. Earth Day 1970 became, and continues to be to this day, the largest secular day of protest in the world,” according to earthday.org/, a website whose mission is to broaden, educate and activate the environmental movement worldwide.

The movement didn’t just raise awareness; it also caused change in the U.S. government.

“It also secured political action that led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by President Richard Nixon later that year and the passage of important environmental protection legislation including the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts throughout the 1970s,” according to archives.gov/, a



HOW WILL YOU CELEBRATE EARTH DAY?

Some places hold events on a nearby weekend. Waterbury has a clean up for Earth Day Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. - noon. Meet at the former Sears Automotive in the Brass Mill Center. Image from breezy.hr

website containing The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

When it comes to local events, Waterbury is hosting a cleanup; meet at the Brass Mill Center’s former Sears Automotive Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. - noon, according to the city Health Department’s Instagram.

Senator Nelson created Earth Day to raise awareness about how factories spew toxic smoke into the air or dump toxic waste into nearby streams, but some could not be taken to court to stop. A new agency was created.

“In spring 1970, Senator Gaylord Nelson created Earth Day as a way to force this issue onto the national agenda. 20 million Americans demonstrated in different U.S. cities, and it worked! In December 1970, Congress authorized the creation of a new federal agency to tackle environmental issues, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,” according to epa.gov/, a website that creates and organizes timely, needed government information and services and makes them accessible anytime, anywhere.

English Language month highlights literacy importance

By Jose Lopez
Staff Writer

English Language month is a month-long celebration in the United States centered around April 23 to highlight literacy and recognize people who are still learning the language by taking a test called TOEFL.

“English Language Day at the United Nations is celebrated on the 23rd of April — the date traditionally observed as both the birthday and date of death of William Shakespeare. As well as being the English language’s most famous playwright, Shakespeare had a significant impact on modern-day English,” according to www.un.org, a website from the United Nations.

By drawing attention to this single day or month, others can realize there are thousands of people who are working on their English language proficiency, and many schools accept TOEFL scores.

“More than 10,000 colleges, agencies and other institutions in more than 130 countries accept TOEFL test scores. The TOEFL test is the most respected English language proficiency test in the world and is preferred by four out of five admissions officers,” according to www.nationaldaycalendar.com a website made to be the original and



ENGLISH LANGUAGE MONTH is a month-long celebration of the uniqueness of the English language and all the learners working hard to master it! Photo from www.nationaldaycalendar.com

authoritative source for fun, unusual, and unique National Days.

The importance of reading and writing the English language is discussed this month, as well as its enjoyment through music, film, poetry, and more.

“National English Language Month allows us to highlight the importance of literacy initiatives and to advocate for increased support and investment in educational programs that address the needs of learners at all levels and ages. This holiday also encourages individuals to explore the language through various mediums, including literature, poetry, film, music, and digital media,” according to www.ywcanwil.org, a website created by the YWCA Northwestern Illinois dedicated to promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

Academy Awards outcomes surprise

By London Antrim
Staff Writer

COMMENTARY

Did you watch the 98th Academy Awards? Every year, the Academy of Motion Pictures holds the Oscar award ceremony at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, Calif., handing out a few records and surprises this year, March 15, 2026. A few films received the excessive attention they deserved and other films that were anticipated to win the most, won nothing.

“The 2026 Oscars honored an especially extraordinary year in cinema, with widely treasured films such as Paul Thomas Anderson’s *One Battle After Another*, Ryan Coogler’s *Sinners*, and Guillermo del Toro’s *Frankenstein* leading the winners list,” according to discussingfilm.net.

Three of the best films this year received the most awards with *One Battle After Another* winning the most awards and *Sinners* breaking a record for the awards with 16 nominations, the most nominations for a film of all time.

However, *Marty Supreme*, starring Timothee Chalemet, was expected to win many awards especially for best actor but lost to Michael B. Jordan for *Sinners* and the film ended up winning nothing at all.

Paul Thomas Anderson’s *One Battle after Another* was being called the movie of the year, and won the most awards this year and even awarded the director his first award after having 14 nominations and losses over the years.

“Paul Thomas Anderson’s drama about a washed-up revolutionary battling old foes for the safety of his daughter picked up best picture at the 98th Academy Awards. In all, it earned six awards, including best



2026 OSCAR AWARDS Not only were there surprises in winners and nominations at the Academy Awards March 15, but there were a few history-making records. Image from Google

supporting actor, best adapted screenplay and best director,” according to www.cnn.com, the news site.

Not only were there many surprises in winners and nominations, but there were a few history-making records. The most significant was the winner for best cinematography with the first female win in history.

“*Sinners* director of photography Autumn Durald Arkapaw made even more Oscar history as the first woman to win in the cinematography category,” according to vanityfair.com, a website for the entertainment publication.

This year, the Oscars also had a record-breaking tie in the category for best live action short. Everyone was shocked by the tie since it is a very rare occurrence within the Academy Awards.

“This was only the seventh tie ever at the Oscars, and the first in the live-action short category since 1995,” according to usatoday.com, the daily news website.

Costly movie night still worth memories



By Alexi Knott
Staff Writer

COMMENTARY

Many people today go to the movies less often because of tickets and snacks becoming more expensive. So instead, people watch movies at home on streaming services or personal devices. Lots of Gen Z members (57 percent) said they find social media content “more relevant” than traditional TV shows and movies and for many families, going to the theater is no longer something they do often, according to the New York Times Scholastic magazine.

Back in 2003, more than 1.6 million tickets were sold to the public. (The average movie ticket in 2003 was approximately \$6.03). Since the hit of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, U.S. theaters saw a great decrease in sales (a single ticket costs \$9.16).

The last time I went to the movies was to see the second *Five Nights at Freddy's* with my family because my little brothers really enjoyed the first one. My mom had just received her first paycheck from work and decided she wanted to treat us to a movie night.

Since I have four siblings, taking all of us to the theater meant buying several tickets along with

snacks and drinks. By the end of the night, my mom had spent more than \$100 so we could enjoy the movie together.

Even though she wanted us to have a fun night, my mom had been working very hard and was very tired. I remember looking over and seeing my mom asleep during the movie because she was so exhausted from work.

Even though we laughed about it later, it reminded us how hard she had been working while still trying to do something nice for us.

With prices going up it has become harder for families to even want to take a trip to the movies and enjoy just one good movie night. Many agree that, “It would be one of the last things on our list.”

Experiences like these show why many families do not go to the movie theaters as often anymore. The cost can add up quickly, especially for bigger families. Still, that night was special because it was about more than just the movie. It was about spending time together.

Give back for April's National Volunteer Month

By Adrianna Perez
Staff Writer

People around the nation take the time to volunteer within their community, especially during National Volunteer Month, which was established in 1991 to encourage people to spread kindness by helping others at local community centers, shelters, and more during the month of April.

“Held in April every year, National Volunteer Month is a time to celebrate and recognize the contributions of volunteers. It is an opportunity to join the impact of volunteerism and encourage more people to get involved in their communities. This is a great month to reaffirm your commitment to giving back,” according to volunteer.gov, a website that connects volunteers to opportunities within the community.

Some may wonder, when and why did this become a nationally-observed month?

“This began as a celebration to honor the contribution women made on the home front during World War II. After the war, interest resurged in the late 1960s and early 1970s and April became National Volunteer Month as part of President George H.W. Bush’s 1,000 Points of Light campaign in 1991.



APRIL IS TIME TO GIVE This is the time to help others within your community out of the goodness of your heart. Image from elements.lbl.gov

National Volunteer Month is a time for organizations to honor volunteers and recognize the irreplaceable impact volunteers make on our communities,” according to seniorcareinc.org, a website based in Massachusetts to help get volunteers for elders and others who need assistance to help them live independently.

Who knew volunteering was needed so close to home?

If you ever want to volunteer (aside from seeing what your school needs), you can contact Phil Blonski at pblonski@unitedwayinc.org or 860.493.1132 to sign up for a project from the United Way, where you as “volunteers will support agencies through hands-on activities such as cleaning and organizing spaces, preparing for upcoming events, assisting with community gardens, and other tasks that strengthen agency capacity and create welcoming environments for those they serve,” according to unitedwayinc.org, a website based in Central and Northeastern Connecticut to help volunteers connect with the community.

Spring cleaning: restart, refresh

By Autumn Bohlman
Staff Writer

COMMENTARY

How often do you clean? As we enter April, spring is here, along with spring cleaning, an opportunity to restart and refresh after a long winter by dusting, opening windows, throwing out old clothes, and rearranging the home.

“Viewed as a fresh start, the tradition symbolizes the transition from the dormant winter season to the vibrant growth of spring. By purging the home of accumulated debris and organizing its contents, individuals create a cleaner living environment and a sense of mental clarity and freshness,” according to [nationalgeographic.com](https://www.nationalgeographic.com), a nonprofit scientific website used to explore the world and its history through scientists, explorers, storytellers, and educators.

How do I get into the right mindset?

“Think of each room as an individual space. Treat every closet and storage area as a separate space as well. If you have a large room, like a big garage, you can further divide it into front and back, left and right—whatever makes sense. The idea here is to make ‘spring clean my home’ a smaller and more specific task, such as ‘declutter the back half of my basement,’ ” according to [wired.com](https://www.wired.com), a website that focuses on reflecting on the stories of the past and present.

Did you know spring cleaning is actually therapeutic?

“Melatonin causes us to feel less inclined to refresh our space. When the seasons start to shift, feelings of sluggishness reduce, and we regain energy and feel inspired to

deep clean our living environments,” according to author and psychotherapist Eloise Skinner. “When we refresh our environments, we can feel a sense of new beginning, or a renewed sense of drive and ambition,” according to [nationalgeographic.com](https://www.nationalgeographic.com).

What are some ways I can deep clean my home for spring?

1. Clean baseboards
2. Dust ceilings, vents, fans, and light fixtures
3. Clean walls
4. Vacuum and mop floors
5. Wash all bedding, including pillows and comforters

Ideas above are according to [goodhousekeeping.com](https://www.goodhousekeeping.com), a website with daily news and helpful tips. How will you spring clean?



IDEAS FOR SPRING CLEANING Good Housekeeping Magazine offers some suggestions such as wash all bedding, including pillows and comforters, as well as dust ceilings, vents, fans, and light fixtures. Image from Google

Two-year tennis coach encouraged

*Active in high school band,
Elliott switches focus to tennis*

By Bryan Cruz Santiago
Staff Writer

Have you ever changed focus?

English 9 teacher Ms. Elliott is a two-year girls' tennis coach at Kennedy who originally spent high school focused on music, eventually switching over to coaching once she became encouraged by students and staff alike, and her team's first game of the 2026 season will take place in Torrington Saturday, April 4.

"I spent most of high school in music," said Elliott, who was active in Southington H.S. Band.

When asked why she became a tennis player and coach, she recalls being encouraged by others.

"I don't think of myself as an athlete," said Elliott.

Previously, the girls (who were coached by Mr. Wiener who now teaches in New Haven, Conn.) needed to share the courts with others, but they've recently gotten access to Chase Park courts.

"We don't have to share with the boys," said Elliott.

This is a huge deal for the team, since the 25+ interested girls are going to practice every school day and even Saturdays.

"We'll see how it goes," said Elliott.



SPRING TENNIS It's that time again: Kennedy's first game for the Lady Eagles will be Saturday, April 4 in Torrington. Photo by indoward.com

The tennis coach mentioned that their first game will be taking place in Torrington, and she stated that the team had never been there before. Initially, she assumed they meant going there with her, but it turns out they've truly never been!

"I think all the girls are thrilled," said Elliott. "(I think we'll do)... just as well."

So much to do and so much to be excited about, and she isn't fazed despite it.

"This is only my second year," said Elliott, whose classroom is room 232.

Golf team goal: qualify for championship

By Favour Agboola, Farha Ahmad
Staff Writer

The Kennedy golf's team initial practice/tryouts for the season, overseen by History teacher and coach Mr. Dubois, is scheduled for Monday, March 30, 2026 at Western Hills Golf Course, and participation requires student athletes, males and females, to have completed a physical examination or have one on file with the school nurse.

Is it a co-op team? And how many players? Actually, the team is open to all genders and new members are encouraged.

"The benefit of golf is the opportunity to do something new. (Some people say) I didn't try golf and I wish I tried golf so that I can develop skills that I need," he said.

The team's first practice is March 30 and the first game is Thursday, April 9 against St. Paul High School of Bristol, Conn. and practices are nearby.

"The practice is at Western Hills and it is also the location where the golf team play their home game; both genders can play," said the coach.



WESTERN HILLS GOLF COURSE This is the place where the Kennedy golf team practice and play their matches. Photo from Google Image

Here is a quick lesson: when games are played between people it is called matches and each student athlete who plays golf must first earn a spot to play in the championship.

"You must qualify as an individual to be able to play in the championship," Dubois said.

As for goals of the golf team: "I want us to be able to have two qualified players for the championship," Dubois said.

See Dubois in room 200B for more information.

Note to our readers:

As this issue went to press – originally March 19, 2026 – we were working on articles regarding additional spring sports, including boys' volleyball, softball, baseball, and more. Stay tuned for updates!

Track coach focuses on positive energy

Team practices 3x weekly, see Ms. Scialla in room 222 to join

By Tefta Mino
Sports Editor

Math teacher Ms. Scialla coaches outdoor track here at Kennedy to help students push themselves by staying positive and being there for them after school with practice from 2 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, with meets being held Tuesdays.

“Do better, beat yourself,” she said, wanting students to beat their records each time.

“This is my second season alone but I did it two seasons prior as the assistant,” said Scialla, who also coached softball from 2008 to 2021, cheerleading and cross country, since she graduated college.

What does spring track consist of?

“It’s a combination of track and field events,” she said, which consists of long and high jumps, two minute long distance events including hurdles, and so much more.

As a team, she hopes to see much sportsmanship, chemistry and positivity.

“It’s important to stay positive, keep a positive energy,” she said, encouraging kids to explore new things and try their best.

“I like to just be supportive and encouraging, holding them accountable and just giving them tools to be successful,” she said.

Scialla also mentioned the difference between her coaching style for softball versus outdoor track.

In softball she would say...

“Do what I told you to do.”

But for outdoor track she said...

“They are in control of their own density.”

When Scialla first joined the track coaching staff, there were many experienced seniors, but now that they graduated, the team has younger and inexperienced students working towards growth and evolution.

“We’re young still, we’re growing,” she said.

The team faces a couple challenges, including when it comes to a practice spot, but they make it work!

“Because we don’t have a track, we practice outside where the buses line up. It’s very limited,” she said.

The season started March 23 and goes until the end of May.

“We’re always looking for new members. So if anyone is looking to join, I’m in room 222,” Scialla said.

Boys' tennis seeks those willing to learn

By Tefta Mino
Sports Editor

Boys' tennis is another school spring sport that also just started!

"I think people should join to learn and have some fun," junior Emre Azizoglu said.

"It's really fun, an enjoyable sport," he said. "I've been playing since freshman year."

Their practices switch every now and then due to the girls' tennis team practice. When the girls are practicing on the school court, then the boys' team goes to Chase Park. They practice every day after school until 3:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.

The boys practice with a tennis ball launcher, where it shoots the balls for them to hit. Also, at least one team member had a sibling play on the team in the past.

"My brother played tennis in high school. That was my motivation as well to play tennis," said Azizoglu, which is why he started playing freshman year, many good memories.



Join us!

Join The Eagle Flyer, Kennedy's award-winning school newspaper. New members are welcome, and no experience is necessary. Stop by room 105 for more information. The deadline for submissions for the May 2026 issue is Thursday, April 2, 2026.

Since 1939: growth of March Madness

By Daurelys R-N
Staff Writer

Henry V. Porter founded March Madness in America to determine the college basketball national champion by inviting eight teams to participate in the NCAA Tournament for the first time March 27, 1939.

Did you know only one school has won the men's and women's championships in the same year?

“The University of Connecticut has swept the competition on both the men's and women's side not once, but twice, winning the two titles in 2004 and again 10 years later,” according to [usnews.com](#), a multifaceted digital media company dedicated to helping consumers, business leaders, and policy officials make important decisions.

Ever wondered how the teams are picked?

“The 68 tournament teams are comprised of 31 automatic qualifiers — teams that win their conference tournaments – and 37 at-large teams. The NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Committee uses a combination of metrics and evaluation tools to choose the at-large teams,” according to [ncaa.org](#), a website offering a world-class athletics and academic experience for student athletes.



MADNESS IS BACK: LET THE GAMES BEGIN

The NCAA Basketball tournament has it all: wild buzzer-beaters, broken brackets, and teams giving everything they’ve got for a chance to win it all. Anything is possible. Image from [ncaa.org](#)

The tournament record for most points scored by a player in a single game is 61.

“Shooting guard Austin Carr scored 61 points for Notre Dame against Ohio in the first round of the tournament in 1970. More than 40 years later, his record still stands strong. Carr went on to play for the Cleveland Cavaliers in the NBA,” according to [usnews.com](#).

Thanks to their efforts, both the UConn men and women have moved forth in brackets.

The Huskies are #3 and #2 seed for the women and men, respectively. The men played two games; Round 1 was 82-71 against Furman and Round 2 was 73-57 against University of California, Los Angeles. The women played against the University of Texas, San Antonio with a final score of 90-52 (Round 1), and an equally strong win against Syracuse with 98-45 (Round 2), according to *The Hartford Courant* and online news sources.

Staff Writer Bryan Cruz-Santiago contributed the last paragraph to this article.

April SCRAMBLED!

Unscramble these five words related to April. By Autumn Bohlman

SOTPE

RATHE

ALTONIAN

AAEUGNLG

ONNISTMAION

Email answers to acybart-persenaire@waterbury.k12.ct.us

First to email receives a \$5 Dunkin Donuts gift card. Separate prizes given for students and staff.



Arthur Hughes, 'April Love', 1855–1856, Tate Britain, London, UK.