The Eagle Flyer

Kennedy High School
422 Highland Avenue
Waterbury, Conn. 06708

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School sets up food for families following government shutdown

By Tefta Mino
Sports Editor

Parent liaison Mrs. Brites and Ms. Rodriguez, special education teacher, along with teachers, staff and administration, hosted a food drive to help school families in need by collecting donated food items, then packaging bags to be sent home three consecutive Fridays Nov. 7, 14, 21 after the government shutdown Oct. 1-Nov. 12, 2025.

"(There was) enough food to service 47 families for three weeks in a row," said Rodriguez, and if you were wondering about the process if someone at school is in need of food…

"They would contact Mrs. Brites (in the office)," she said.



STUDENTS HELP WITH FOOD DRIVE From left to right: Best Buddies Aleah Jimenez, junior; Gabriella Riley, sophomore; and Mikayla Elliott, junior, help sort and package food items donated by teachers, staff and administrators for families to take home Friday afternoons in November. Photo courtesy of KHS Community Based Training (CBT) program

Word was sent out by email and school staff quickly donated.

"(Assistant principal) Mrs. Fitzpatrick would send an email at the end of school around three and by the next morning we could feed the first 47," said Rodriguez. *Continued on page 2*

Continued from page one

Rodriguez was asked what she thinks this says about the school, to which she replied with…"That we really know how to come together and get things done," she said.

Brites would visit Stop and Shop and Aldi's, and purchase staples like bread, rice and peanut butter with donated funds, and LaBonne's Market in Woodbury, Conn. donated a gift card so a teacher could purchase food items to be distributed.

Principal Mr. Johnston, along with Fitzpatrick, also visited stores, purchasing enough food items to fill 10 gray Post Office bins with food, according to Brites.

Something Rodriguez would like to add is that…

"The *Best Buddy* program and CBT (Community Based Training) students helped out a lot. They did a lot of the work with us," such as organizing, packaging and helping unload the car after grocery store trips, she said.



SCHOOL COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER Behavior counselor Mr. Joseph Giampetruzzi (left), assists parent liaison Mrs. Brites (right), by donating food items, unloading groceries from her car, and carrying supplies to the first floor conference room for families in need to take home Fridays in November 2025 following the government shutdown.
Photo courtesy of Ms. Rodriguez

Water main break update

By Adrianna Perez
Staff Writer

The city of Waterbury had another water main break on State Street Tuesday Feb. 17, 2026 after spending millions repairing the December 2025 break, with money going to bottled water and overtime for police.

“An 8-inch water main break has been repaired on State Street in Waterbury, according to a statement posted by the mayor’s office early Wednesday morning,” according to wnth.com, a website for News Channel 8 based in New Haven, Conn.

Luckily, the problem was fixed overnight.

“The mayor’s office said the water department crews worked overnight to complete the necessary repairs and restore full water service to affected businesses on State Street and portions of Grand Street,” according to wnth.com.

Before this, millions were spent on repairs.

“The $17 million spent on repairs to the Thomaston Avenue and Huntingdon Avenue disruption adds to $30 million spent in 2025 on infrastructure improvements. Nearly $10 million was allocated to upgrade pumps and mixers that deliver water to the city’s storage tanks and distribution system,” according to nhregister.com, a website for



MOST RECENT WATER MAIN BREAK Crews work on State Street Tuesday Feb. 17, 2026 at around 8 p.m. fixing an 8-inch break. Photo from wtnh.com

New Haven, Conn.’s Register Newspaper.

These numbers are only for fixing the break itself, but how much was spent to provide supplies and the police overtime?

“The city spent $230,000 on bottled water for residents and $146,284 in police overtime during the citywide water outage that lasted five very long days and closed schools and businesses,” according to nhregister.com.

People wonder if this could happen to neighboring towns due to how old pipes are.

“Much of the underground infrastructure across Connecticut is close to 200 years old. Some of the oldest water main pipes in the state are in Hartford, which were installed in 1854,” according to wtnh.com.

Does the state plan on fixing any of these old pipes anytime soon?

“Regional water systems, cities and towns all have a plan in place to repair and replace water mains. The projects come with a high price tag, delaying their plans to refurbish their systems,” according to wtnh.com.

Origins of Black History Month

By Ivana Camacho
Staff Writer

Black History Month is a month-long commemoration of African American history and achievement, recognizing the role of many United States individuals with educational events and community programs as a celebration that takes place each February.

How did Black History Month begin?

“Black History Month’s first iteration was Negro History Week, created in February 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, known as the ‘Father of Black History,’ ” according to weforum.org, an organization whose mission is to improve the state of the world through public-private cooperation.

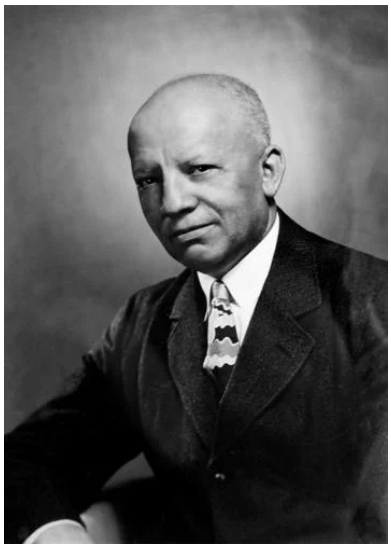
Why was February chosen for the month?

“February was chosen by Woodson for the week-long observance as it coincides with the birthdates of both former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln and social reformer Frederick Douglass. Both men played a significant role in helping to end slavery,” according to weforum.org.

This change from a week to a month of celebration did not happen overnight.
“In the decades that followed, the week of acknowledgment grew steadily in popularity. The Civil Rights Movement and an awakening of Black consciousness that spread through cities and across college campuses helped transform the celebration from Negro History Week to Black History Month in the late 1960s,” according to splcenter.org, the website for the nonprofit Southern Poverty Law Center founded in 1971 to ensure that the promise of the civil rights movement became a reality for all.

Now, Black History is recognized for the contributions of African Americans.

“Today, Black History Month is a time to honor the contributions and legacy of African Americans across U.S. history and society,” according to history.com, a website from the A&E Television Networks.



MEET THE FOUNDER Carter G. Woodson, who was the second Black person to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University, was the son of formally enslaved parents. He founded the Association of the Study of African American Life and History and would go on to establish “Negro History Week” that would eventually evolve into today’s Black History Month. Image from harvard.edu

Ramadan 2026: spiritual growth, reflection month

By Farha Ahmad
Staff Writer

Muslims worldwide celebrate Ramadan due to religious beliefs by fasting from sunrise to sundown days of the week Tuesday, Feb.17 to Thursday, March 19, 2026.

Why do Muslims fast?

"Muslims observe Ramadan as a commandment from Allah (SWT). It is a month of spiritual purification, reflection and devotion…fasting is an act of worship prescribed to teach self-discipline, gratitude and humility while earning Allah's pleasure and blessings," according to muslimaid.org, a legacy of faith, resilience and compassion since 1985.

Did you know that Ramadan is at a different time every year?

"The reason is due to the Islamic calendar following the lunar cycle rather than the solar cycle, as the Gregorian calendar does. This means that the length of each month differs slightly from the months in the Gregorian calendar, which is typically used in more Western countries…because of this, each Islamic month, including Ramadan, shifts every year," according to orphansinneed.org, a UK-based organization supporting orphans and their families in 13 countries including Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



GREETINGS THROUGHOUT THIS MONTH
Some things Muslims say during this holy month is 'Ramadan Mubarak,' meaning Blessed Ramadan or 'Ramadan Kareem,' meaning Generous Ramadan, and 'Eid Mubarak,' reserved for the holiday at the end meaning Blessed Eid or Blessed Festival. Image from freepik.com/

At the end of Ramadan comes a celebration for all Muslims.

"At the end of the month of fasting, Muslims celebrate with observance of the holiday Eid al-Fitr, 'the Festival of Breaking the Fast.' The day starts with performing a special prayer service at the mosque, known as salat al-eid…Eid al-Fitr is also a time to visit friends and relatives, and many Muslims celebrate with their families for two or three days. Children receive new clothes, jewelry, toys and other gifts, and parents inculcate in their children the importance of observing the fast and serving God in this month," according to pluralism.org, the Pluralism Project website which studies the U.S. religious landscape.

Students have no school for the end of Ramadan Friday, March 20, according to the 2025-2026 school calendar online.

When (and what) is Ash Wednesday?

By Arielle Henry and Josiah Brown
Staff Writers

Ash Wednesday is a holy day of prayer and fasting observed by many Christians, especially ones a part of the Roman Catholic Church. It marks the first day of Lent and is 46 days before Easter Sunday. During Church services a priest or minister places ashes on a person's forehead in the shape of a cross; the day was Feb. 18, 2026.

"Ash Wednesday is traditionally observed with fasting and abstinence from meat in several Christian denominations. As it is the first day of Lent, many Christians begin Ash Wednesday by marking a Lenten calendar, praying a Lenten daily devotional, and making a Lenten sacrifice that they will not partake of until the arrival of Easter," according to www.umsl.edu, the website for University of Missouri-St. Louis, a public research university.

You might be wondering, where do the ashes for Ash Wednesday come from?

"Usually, the Ash Wednesday ashes are created by burning palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration, which is the last Sunday of Lent and leads into Holy Week," according to mercyhome.org, a Catholic children's charity based in Chicago.



ASH WEDNESDAY'S PURPOSE Week. It is on this day (which marks the start of Lent that ends with Easter) "people laid palms to cover Jesus's path as he arrived in Jerusalem, just days before he was crucified," according to mercyhome.org. In 2026 Ash Wednesday is Feb. 18, and in 2027 it will be Feb. 10.

You might also be wondering, "why do Christians get ashes on foreheads for Ash Wednesday?"

"Throughout history, ashes have been a powerful outward symbol of interior repentance and spiritual awareness. The ashes themselves are made from burning the palm fronds from the previous year's Palm Sunday . . . connecting our change of heart with Christ's passion, death and resurrection," according to www.usccb.org, a website to support the ministry of bishops with an emphasis on evangelization.

What do the ashes stand for, and what phrase is said when ashes are distributed?

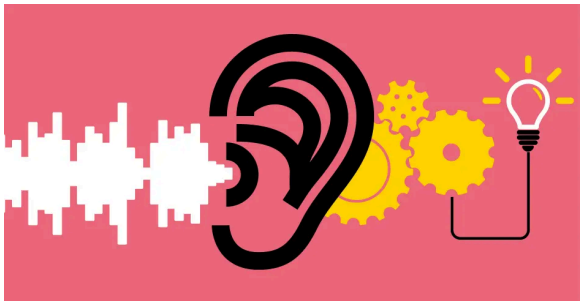
"On this special day of reflection… The ashes symbolize our mortality – 'Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return,' " according to mercyhome.org.

In 2027 Ash Wednesday is Feb. 10, with Easter celebrated Sunday, March 28. Check out area churches' websites and bulletins to see when they will be distributing ashes.

Where words fail, music speaks: it says, get to class on time!

By Corinna Hunter
Staff Writer

It was a bit of a shock when music suddenly blasted through the speakers on a random Thursday during the passing periods, and it's been happening ever since, but how did that come to be?

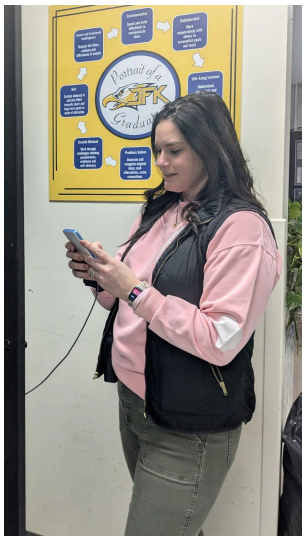


Assistant Principal Mrs. Fitzpatrick, known as Mrs. Fitz, started playing music over the loudspeaker during passing time after a suggestion by an education consultant as a way to not only prevent hall sweeps, but to raise spirits and make kids smile, starting Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026.

It was just an idea, given by an education consultant, but Mrs. Fitz saw it as a way to not only get students into class, but also make the atmosphere better for everyone. And so far, it seems to be doing just that.

School counselor Mrs. Stellmach said she "enjoys the music," and likes that the school is trying something new. Another school counselor, Ms. Moutinho, said she loves the anticipation of which song is going to come next. Students are even getting so into the music playing that they want to be part of it as well.

"Are they taking requests?" said senior Ana Julia Tavares while junior Milagro Mendez, said she'd "love to place suggestions, and sometimes the music is a little cheesy but it's overall very fun."



And though the point is to have fun, the school is hoping to receive, and is already seeing, some amazing results.

LEFT IMAGE REPRESENTS WHAT HALLWAY MUSIC IS FOR: "To get students thinking in advance of when they need to be in class," according to Assistant Principal, Mrs. Fitz, seen above starting the music in the main office Friday, Feb. 13, 2026 at 12:16 p.m. Left image from www.trymintly.com; photo above by Mrs. Stellmach

"We're really hoping to lessen the amount of students getting caught in hall sweeps. Usually students go by the bell, and so by the time the bell rings, they're still in the halls. The music ending a minute before the bell rings will act as a reminder to get to class before a hall sweep is called. We've already had a better turnout," said Mrs. Fitz, when asked why they started playing the music. When it all comes down to it, she said, "My hope is that it brings people joy."

Fun Fact: The first song played Feb. 5 was *Pink Pony Club* by Chappell Roan!

Presidents' Day, (Feb. 16), one to remember

By Jacob Barbera
Staff Writer COMMENTARY

Presidents' Day, a U.S. holiday held annually on the third Monday of February, celebrates the legacy of George Washington and honors his birth since 1879.

Where did the date come from for this day?



OH, PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT
God bless America, the sweetest of homes and the land of the free. Without it, what would this country be? Image from harrisonburgva.gov

"The road to what the majority of the public in the United States now recognizes as Presidents' Day is a long and confusing one. After Washington died in 1799, his birthday was informally celebrated across the country. It wasn't until Jan. 31, 1879, that Washington's birthday became a federally recognized holiday," according to mountvernon.org, the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association website whose mission is to preserve, restore and manage the estate of George Washington.

What's next, other than the date… oh yeah! For all the kiddos out there, why was there no school Monday, Feb. 16, 2026?

"It all started as a day to remember the life of George Washington, the year after his passing Feb. 22, 1800. Several states unofficially observed the day throughout the 1800s until Senator Steven Wallace Dorsey of Arkansas proposed it become a federal holiday, and President Rutherford B. Hayes signed it into law in 1879. The law was originally confined to the District of Columbia, but in 1885, it was expanded to include the entire country. Washington's Birthday was the first federal holiday set aside to honor an individual American and the fourth federal holiday to be nationally recognized," according to fcshawaii.org, the Friendship Christian Schools' website.

Kids love no school, but you know what adults love more? Actual history… I think? What made this date so special, especially in 1930s?

"Washington's Birthday (and Presidents' Day) has long been considered a day of patriotic commemoration, sometimes including public ceremonies and historic reenactments. During the Great Depression (1929-1939), the holiday was an occasion to spark patriotic hopefulness, with images of the nation's first president appearing on the front pages of newspapers nationwide," according to hfcc.edu, a public, community focused website from Henry Ford College.

Waterbury Public Schools closed Feb. 16 in honor of Presidents' Day, and also Tuesday Feb. 17 in observance of Lincoln's Day, according to the online school calendar.

Feb. 17 marks Random Act of Kindness Day

By Bryan Cruz Santiago
Staff Writer

Are you a RAK-tivist?

Random Act of Kindness Day (RAK Day) is celebrated internationally, chasing the simple goal of spreading positivity through small, random acts of kindness; people sometimes put out mini-mission lists, but celebrators aren't pressured to do anything specific as they enjoy the annual holiday each Feb. 17.

"Whether you've experienced kindness, witnessed it, or made it happen yourself, your story can inspire others to do the same," according to randomactsofkindness.org, the website for the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, the creators of the holiday whose goal is "making kindness the norm."

Some say that it's the small things that count, and that's the idea behind this day.

"(RAK Day is) inviting people everywhere to spread kindness through simple, unexpected gestures," according to savethechildren.org, an international organization that seeks to provide for children in and outside of crisis.



EXAMPLES OF MISSIONS that people put out for others to follow are seen above. This provides ideas for anyone and everyone, from anonymous to direct. Image from www.spicepots.com

Sometimes, people forget that being kind has real benefits, and this isn't limited to Feb. 17.

"Psychologists have found that performing acts of generosity boosts happiness and well-being and is even linked to physical health benefits," according to www.apa.org, the website for the American Psychological Association, the leading scientific organization which aims to utilize psychology to benefit society.

Some possible acts include holding the door open for strangers, being patient and kind with service workers, and supporting a small business. Don't forget about being kind to yourself either: taking a lazy day off or a relaxing walk can help you clear your mind. If you ever need more ideas, look right to the source, randomactsofkindness.org!

13th origins; if you missed Feb. 13 look out for March 13!

By Matthew Twasam
Staff Writer



IS THIS SCARY? OR JUST MADE UP?
When it comes to anything associated with Friday the 13th, could all the fear be hearsay since people tend to instill some type of fear in themselves for a plethora of reasons? Image from supposedlyfun.com

Friday the 13th has been around for centuries as a widely recognized day known worldwide; the name implies it is celebrated on any Friday throughout the year but in particular the 13th day of the month. There is a superstitious belief associated with the date which goes back to Christians, Norse mythology and many other traditions of it being a day filled with bad omens, yet Friday the 13th is celebrated by reminiscing and explaining facts associated with it.

"In Christian tradition, Jesus was crucified on a Friday, and the Last Supper had 13 individuals present, the 13th being Judas, the betrayer. The merging of these two associations Friday and 13 has helped shape a superstition that persists to this day," according to guptoncollege.edu, the website for John A. Gupton College, which provides a basic liberal arts education as well as a professional curriculum in funeral arts and sciences.

Aside from the religious aspect of this day, the mythological aspect is somewhat similar.

"In Norse mythology, a dinner party of the gods was ruined by the thirteenth guest called Loki, who caused the world to be plunged into darkness. Even today, it's considered unlucky to have 13 people sitting at a dinner table and some pop a teddy bear in a seat to make up the number of guests up to 14," according to to.bbc.co.uk, a website which aims to provide content that informs, educates and entertain millions of people in the United Kingdom and around the world.

One shouldn't judge a book by its cover, however. Could the day of the week be to blame?

"One theory is that the fear of this day arises from a combination of two separate superstitions: the fear of Fridays and the fear of the number 13. In various cultures, both have been considered unlucky," according to traumaresearchuk.org, a website to help people in the United Kingdom who are dealing with some type of trauma.

Sweet treats rule Valentine's Day food preferences

By Corissa Hunter
Staff Writer

Students and staff were interviewed prior to Valentine's Day 2026, and asked about what foods and treats they most enjoyed for the holiday, with the top choices being sweet treats like chocolate, candy and … pasta!

Junior Jamar Grant said his favorite is dark chocolate but he loves gummy bears.

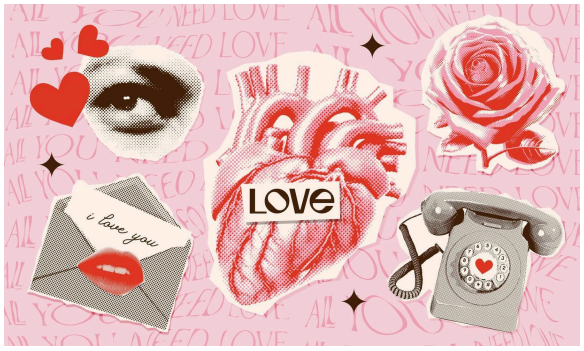
Sophomore Anaya Santiago said her favorite treat is milk chocolate but she also likes chewy candy.

Algebra 1 teacher Mrs. Romaniello, said her favorite Valentine's Day treats are chocolate-covered strawberries. Her favorite food is pasta with butter and cheese.

Social Studies teacher Mr Dubois said his favorite Valentine Day treat is Twix. He loves mac and cheese on Valentine's Day, too.

Junior Jamar said he loves snacks like Nacho Cheese Doritos and Lay's chips.

It seems to be candy that is most popular, with surveys showing nearly six out of 10 people had planned to buy it for Feb. 14.



VALENTINE'S DAY TREATS: WHY NOT ENJOY YEAR ROUND? Do you send notes, flowers, or phone a friend for Feb. 14? Students and staff said they enjoy chocolate, candy and pasta for the holiday. Image from *Vecteezy*

"Candy remains the most popular Valentine's Day purchase, with 56 percent of consumers planning to buy sweet treats for someone special. Chocolate boxes, confections and edible gifts continue to be easier and (the) most universal way to mark the holiday," according to creators.yahoo.com, a dedicated publishing platform for content creators.



SOME POPULAR TREATS People tend to enjoy these sweet treats including cookies, cakes and pies Feb. 14. Image from www.spoonforkbacon.com

Films for Feb., winter season

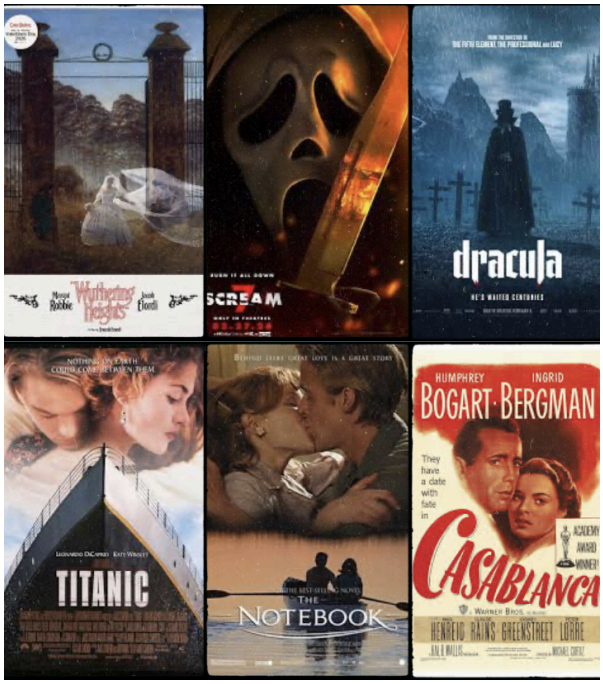
By London Antrim
Staff Writer COMMENTARY

How will you be celebrating Valentine's Day? There are so many ways to celebrate the season but something you could never go wrong with is going out to a theater to see a movie with friends, family and your loved ones, or even watching films at home. The most common movies for February are usually romance to fit the theme of Valentine's Day. This February, there are so many new films in theaters and older films to watch to match the season.

"Who doesn't want to escape from the real world from time to time, especially these days? And given the impressive lineup of romance movies coming out in 2026, that desire for escapism is going to be stronger than ever," according to cosmopolitan.com, a website dedicated to the monthly magazine.

This Feb. 14, there are a few anticipated films you should go see to celebrate the season that are filled with love, and even some dark and more tragic themes. The most anticipated films being released in theaters in February are a new adaptation of *Dracula;* the newest and said to be the last addition to the franchise *Scream 7;* and even a 40th anniversary re-release of 1980's classic *Pretty in Pink* starring Molly Ringwald. The most anticipated film everyone is most excited for could be Emerald Fennell's adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* starring Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi.

"Inspired by Emily Brontë's 1847 novel of the same name, *Wuthering Heights*, follows the stormy, all-consuming relationship between the



MOVIES FOR FEBRUARY, VALENTINE'S DAY *Wuthering Heights*, *Scream 7*, *Dracula*, *Titanic*, *The Notebook*, and *Casablanca* are some films to check out to celebrate the season. Images from Google

fiery Catherine Earnshaw (Robbie) and brooding Heathcliff (Elordi), revealing the destructive power of a passion driven by obsession and vengeance," according to deseret.com, newspaper/magazine owned by Latter Day Saints.

Although there is a good line up for films in theaters, many would prefer to watch at home.

"The tradition of watching love-centered movies Feb. 14 aligns closely with broader cultural rituals surrounding the holiday, including dinner dates, gift exchanges and shared experiences." according to party.alibaba.com, a website dedicated to celebrating special occasions.

Some of the most watched films Feb. 14 are classic love stories like James Cameron's *Titanic* starring Leonardo Dicaprio and Kate Winslet, a popular favorite love story *The Notebook,* and even the classic 1940's film *Casablanca.* What will you be watching?

Check out anticipated films of 2026

By London Antrim
Staff Writer COMMENTARY

2026 is said to be a very successful year for the film industry with important new films, sequels and adaptations that have been in the works and anticipated for years finally being released.

"This year is shaping up to be a promising one for movies, with big-event releases from titans Christopher Nolan, Steven Spielberg and Greta Gerwig already generating excitement," according to criterion.com, a video distribution.

With a large variety of films featuring something for everyone to watch "2026 stands to be a strong year for cinema, with familiar franchises, family films and ambitious auteurs filling the upcoming slate," according to variety.com, the entertainment business news site.

The most anticipated film could be *The Odyssey,* directed by Christopher Nolan and starring well-known actors like Zendaya, Tom Holland and Mia Goth, and is set to release July 7. This film has been in production and anticipated by movie fans for a few years and is said to be the most significant release in film this year.

"Just before Christmas, it was revealed that Nolan's latest project would be epic in more than one sense of the word as it will adapt Homer's epic poem composed around the 8th century BCE.," according to deadline.com, the entertainment website that originated in 2006.

A new adaptation of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* is 2026's second most anticipated film and has excited fans since being announced after Emerald Fennel's release of her film *Saltburn*.

Directed by Emerald Fennell, it stars Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi with original music by Charli XCX, *and is set* for Feb. 13.

"The trailer boasts lavish cinematography and costume design, which feels like a throwback to costume dramas of the '50s but with a modern edge and knowing Fennell's previous work, everything may not be as it seems," according to letterboxd.com, a social site with film interests.



ANTICIPATED FILMS include Chris Nolan's *The Odyssey*, Emerald Fennell's *Wuthering Heights*, and Marvel's *Avengers Doomsday.* Images from Google

2026 is also going to be an exciting year for Marvel fans with two significant film releases since Marvel is one of the most famous and idolized cinematic universes: "The MCU is back in epic fashion with Robert Downey Jr. as Doctor Doom, taking on a jaw-dropping ensemble including the X-Men, Fantastic Four, Wakandans, and the new Thunderbolts Avengers," according to letterboxd.com

Marvel is also releasing the fourth Spiderman film, *Spiderman: Brand New Day* directed by Destin Daniel Cretten and starring Tom Holland and Zendaya. This movie is highly anticipated since it is the first Spiderman franchise to have a fourth adaptation. Which are you excited to see?

Eat up during National Snack Food Month

By Favour Agboola
Staff Writer

National Snack Food Month from the Snack Food Association (SFA) and the National Potato Promotion Board is a month-long February observance dedicated to all forms of snacking to raise awareness about healthy snacking. It can be observed by making homemade versions to control ingredients.

“National Snack Food Month was created by the National Snack Food Association and the National Potato Promotion Board in 1989. Their goal in founding this month was to increase consumption and raise awareness about snacking,” according to nationaldaycalendar.com, a website that tracks national holidays with a calendar.

Annual snack sales in the United States exceed $60 billion, based on research from the U.S. United States Sweet and Savory Snacks Market, and nutritious snacks matter.

“Snacking, especially with nutritious choices, can positively impact overall health and even aid in weight loss. Snacks can satisfy cravings, help with weight management, boost metabolism, and even address emotional states,” according to bellevue.edu, Nebraska’s Bellevue Univ.



FEBRUARY HOSTS SNACKS FOOD MONTH
This observance was founded by the Snack Food Association and the National Potato Promotion Board in 1989 to boost snacks sales. Photo from Google image

National Snack Food Month often kicks off during Super Bowl, a major snacking event.

“Whatever your mood, there is a snack for you! They can satisfy cravings, help you watch your weight, boost your metabolism, and even help you deal with sadness. So, let's take advantage of National Snack Food Month in February,” according to trinityhealth.org, a Mayo Clinic Care Member healthcare website.

Did you know 94 percent of Americans snack daily, and many snack multiple times a day, sometimes more than eating meals?

“Research shows that most people consume 25 percent of their calories every day in the form of snacks and it’s important to choose snacks that are nutritious, such as nuts, fruit, vegetables, whole grain bread, cheese, and yogurt, to name a few,” according to Nuthealth.org, a website from the nonprofit International Tree Nut Council Nutrition Research & Education Foundation, dedicated to supporting nutrition research.

Leap Day gives Feb. extra day

By Joslyn Tremblay
Managing Editor COMMENTARY

Every four years, the calendar gives us a gift!

Julius Caesar reformed the Roman calendar, adding an extra day to the calendar every four years worldwide, because of the mismatch between the calendar year and Earth's orbit since Earth takes roughly 365.24 days to orbit the sun so, the next Leap Day will be Tuesday, Feb. 29, 2028.

"Without Leap Day, the dates of annual events, such as equinoxes and solstices, would slowly shift to later in the year, changing the dates of each season. After only a century without Leap Day, summer wouldn't start until mid-July," according to jpl.nasa.gov, a website focused on robotic space exploration and sent rovers to Mars.

If my birthday was on Leap Day, I would go all out for my parties!

"For some people, Leap Day means frog jokes and extravagant birthday parties," according to npr.og, a nonprofit website that covers news, politics, music, and more.



LEAP DAY ISN'T JUST ABOUT FROG JOKES If your birthday is on Leap Day, get ready to throw a big birthday party in 2028, since Feb. 29 only comes around once every four years! Otherwise, February has 28 days. Image from handleyregional.org

Did you know the earth does not orbit around the sun in exactly 365 days? It's off ¼ each day; that is why we have Leap Day!

"Unfortunately, the amount of time the earth takes to go around the sun is not exactly 365 days. It's off by about ¼ of a day each year," according to udel.edu, a website for the public University of Delaware.



EVER SEE A CALENDAR LIKE THIS? If you see a calendar with an extra day in February, namely Feb. 29, don't fright – it's just Leap Day (which occurs every four years)! Image from forbes.com

Winter sports: improving one day at a time

By Tefta Mino
Sports Editor COMMENTARY

Cheerleading, boys' swimming, and boys' basketball have been showing signs of improvement and making their way to the top here at Kennedy by gaining more confidence with practice as of Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2026.

Cheerleading coach Joshua Saliva won first place for jumps against other advisors at a recent competition! The team placed 8th out of 10, not to mention the team won a spirit award for showing great sportsmanship and support for every team throughout another competition.

"We're adding upgrades to place higher," Saliva said.

He and the girls had lots of fun for their first day in *Rally in the Valley*!

"We were rock stars for a quick photo session," Saliva said.

The night before, the team did a showcase with Waterbury Career Academy; families were supportive that day and the day of the competition.

"We went out there, everything looked great. They did great," he said.

Josh was asked his favorite memory from that day, to which he responded, "Going through warm ups and everyone locking in," he said. "Everyone snapped into play."

The girls also had their Senior Night!



CONFIDENCE IS KEY IN SPORTS
Cheerleadering, boys' swimming and basketball teams finish their winter seasons. Images from Google

"Senior Night was great," he said. "It was amazing. It was very heart touching; it made me almost tear up because they're my first seniors."

Something Saliva would tell his younger self is… "You better level up and set the bar because the bar is not what it should be."

The team has competitions every Saturday if anyone would like to come out and support! See Saliva for more information.

Did you know that Kennedy hosts the NVL (Naugatuck Valley League) for swimming?

"We had our last swim meet last week," said Emre Azizoglu, a junior.

Something Azizoglu is proud of?
"One of our freshmen, he's improving. That's good to see from everyone, hoping

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(to see that) next year too" he said.

As a note to our audience, I want to point out that everytime I interview Emre for updates, one thing he always says is how well they have been doing compared to last year, which is so nice to hear.

"It's been going well. It's better than last year," he said.

If you have not read my other interviews with boys' swimming, another thing that excites me to hear from Emre is their times improving by every interview.

"I could see the improvement a lot," he said. "To see a lot of our times get better, including mine."

Are you familiar with the phrase "there is always room for improvement" no matter how good someone or a team is?

"We could always improve. We could always get better, but that comes with practice," he said.

One goal from Azizoglu for this year…

"For the team, we wanna get our personal records," he said.

Onto boys' basketball!

"I feel like our team is playing more like a team," said Tyler Morrison, a junior, who is also captain of the boys' basketball team.

Morrison mentioned that in the beginning of the season, the team had some selfishness but now have been…

"Bonding both on and off the court."

While Morrison's older brother was captain during his senior year (which was last school year), he is proud of…

"Being able to lead the team as a junior and still having a year left."

Confidence is key, and that is one of the things that Morrison is proud to see from the team.

"There were certain players nervous in the beginning," he said.

Now, they have started…

"Easing their way to shooting the ball more," he added.

Something the boys tend to struggle with is…

"Probably just our second half play. After half time we kinda tone it down," he said, which gives the opposing team a better chance at stealing the ball and scoring easier.

One goal from Morrison, for the team, is to win more games, and for himself, to score 1,000 points.

"I'm gonna do what I can do to get there," he said.

Closing chapter for girls' bball

By Matthew Twasam
Staff Writer

The girls' basketball team concluded their 2025-2026 season Friday, Feb. 13 against Waterbury Career Academy with a 39-31 victory, and at the end of the season, captain Tanaiya Clarke reflected on the goals they set in the beginning – both on a personal and team level by analyzing the results.

"It was good; volleyball and basketball taught me to be a better leader. It helped me be a better person," said Clarke.

Chemistry existed both on and off the court.

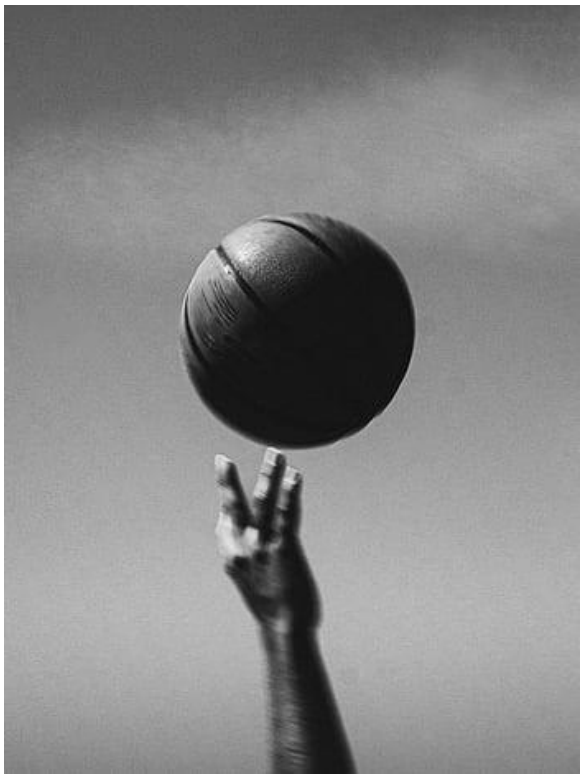
"We built a friendship and bond off the court," she said.

Post season vibes are positive, as is appreciating playing your last game.

"I feel excited, I finally get more free time, but I'll be happy to play my last game," said Clarke.

Her last message to colleagues is a 'thank you.'

"Thank you for the support, hope you guys look forward to next season and remember to keep going and don't give up," she said.



Senior wins first in hurdles

Senior Dhonnivon Cosme placed first in both the preliminary and finals races to win the 55 meter hurdles at the NVL Indoor Track and Field Championships at New Haven's Floyd Little Athletic Center Friday, Jan. 30, 2026.

Cosme's time was 7.97 seconds in his preliminary race, and 7.92 seconds in his finals race. Junior Cassius Bryant placed 14th in the boys' 55 meter dash prelim with a time of 6.94, and sophomore Shamar Ashman was 10th in the boys' 300 meter dash finals with 38.69 while sophomore Christian Sosa was 16th with 40.27. Stay tuned for more race updates.

Juniors: explore options after h.s.

Free event offers military, trade, college, career choices

By Joslyn Tremblay
Managing Editor

Juniors: if you're interested to see your options after graduation, come join!

Preparing to Take Flight Night is a college and career fair open to juniors and their families to expose students to options after high school, and was put together by the School Counseling Department for Wednesday, April 1, 2026 from 5-7 p.m.

"This event is for juniors, so I'm hoping by exposing them to the different options after high school, they'll be able to come up with a solid plan," said counselor Ms. Moutinho.

It's coincidence the event is on April Fool's!

"It's always a Spring event and it works with SATs and (Spring) break. It being on April Fools is just a coincidence," said Moutinho.

With this opportunity, counselors are hoping at least 20 - 30 students and families show.

"The college plan night we get low turn outs, not a lot of kids showed up. So we wanted to try a new format and make it more interactive," said Moutinho, and the event is free and includes refreshments.



CAN'T MISS OPPORTUNITY Juniors have lots of options to check out April 1 at this free event plus student volunteers from all grades are needed. See a counselor for details. Poster by Ms. Moutinho

"This event is free. (Parent liaison) Mrs. Brites is funding the food for students and families. (Principal) Mr. Johnston is providing everything else from the CN (Commissioners Network) funds," she said.

Five rooms will feature a lot of opportunities.

"So the juniors will be signing up to learn about different pathways in different rooms. There are five rooms, one room is (for) four-year colleges. Then, two-year colleges. The Army and National Guard will be in our military room. Then two trade school rooms, Lincoln Tech and Dolce Academy," said Moutinho.

February SCRAMBLED!

Unscramble these five words/phrases related to articles in this issue, and tell us on which page it appears.

TNLE

ARDMNAA

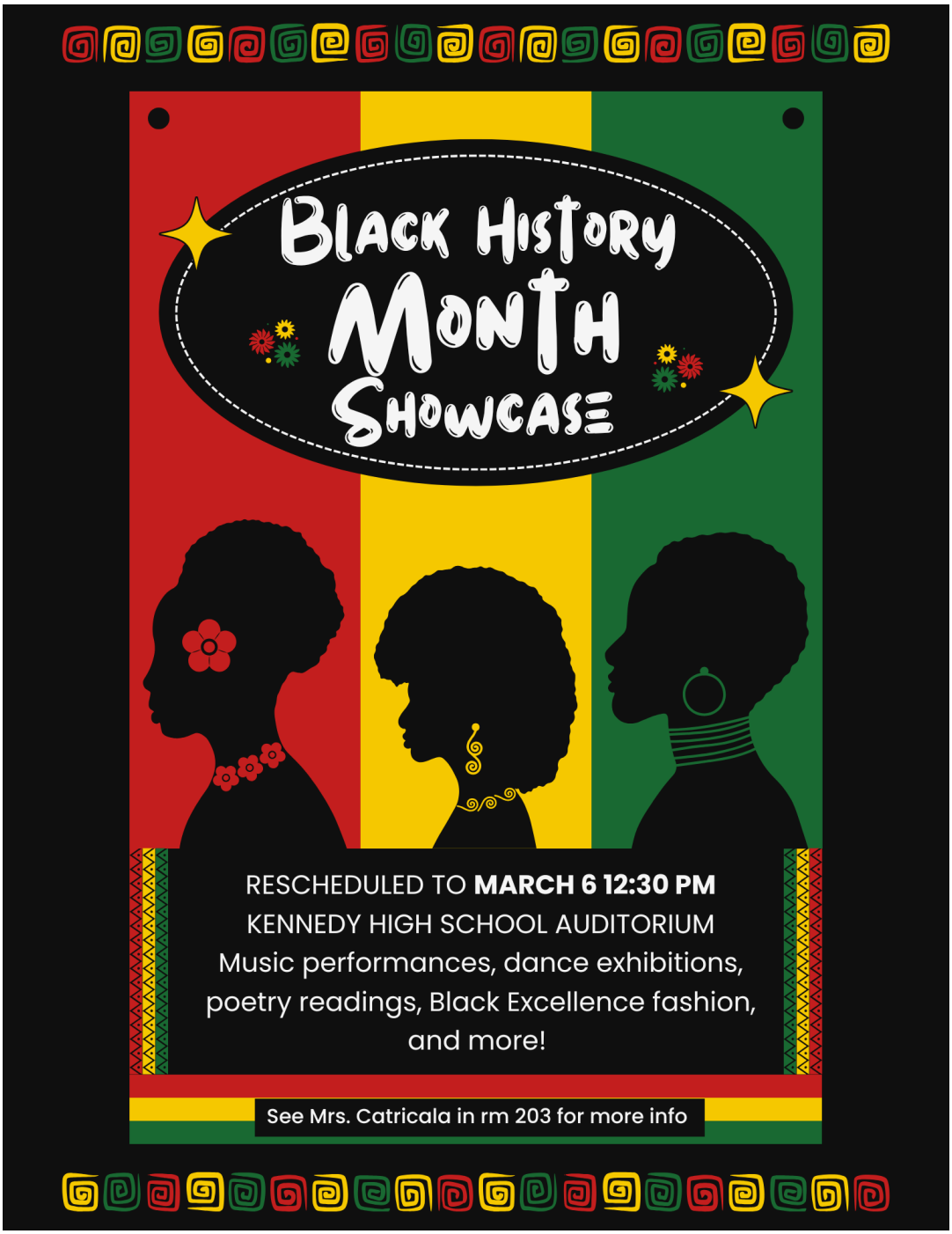
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Email answers to acybart-persenaire@waterbury.k12.ct.us

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



February honors Children's Mental Health Week

By Autumn Bohlman
Staff Writer

Originally created in Clerkwell, London in February 2015, Children's Mental Health Week is a fundraising charity event that takes place each year in February to help support young children in the battle against negative mental health in schools and at home, so read below for ways on how to participate.

"The theme for Children's Mental Health Week 2026 is 'This Is My Place,' " according to www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk., a website that aims to support the systems around children and young people to help them feel they belong.

What is being done to help?

"We offer Mental Health and Counseling services in schools, training and support staff and parents and careers, as well as counseling qualifications for anyone wanting to become a qualified counselor for children," according to to childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk.

What is mental health?

"Mental health describes our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act but also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices," according to www.bbc.co.uk, an impartial and independent public service broadcaster.



HELPING CHILDREN One week every February has been designated Children's Mental Health Week, with the 2026 theme of 'This is My Place' offering support and a feeling of belonging. Image from the official Mental Health Week cover on the UK website

What are some resources or advice to use to help children? Although this event and website is based in London, anyone can call or text 988 in America, and they will be connected to a trained professional. Help save a life if you see something or say something. Visit: www.nimh.nih.gov, www.cdc.gov, and ww.childmind.org for more information.


SAVE THE DATE
Thursday, April 30, 4:00–7:00 PM
Kennedy High School
POETRY & CREATIVE
SHOWCASE
4:00–5:00 PM
Dinner and live music by the Kennedy Band, art displays, crafts, and student club booths in the Kennedy High School Lobby.
5:00–7:00 PM
Formal Poetry Reception in the Kennedy High School Auditorium
An evening of spoken word, art, community, culture, and performance.
I am looking for performers!