

The Eagle Flyer



Kennedy High School
422 Highland Avenue
Waterbury, Conn. 06708

September 2026 Vol. XXIII, Issue I

Ready, set, let's go!

School began August 25 for 1,280 students; upperclassmen optimistic

By Alexis Ruiz
Staff Writer

Kennedy juniors and seniors shared opinions on their first three days of school as they're looking forward to both A and B days (of four different classes each of just under 90 minutes) since 1,280 students returned to school the week of August 25, 2026.

"My first two days were good; this is the first year where I enjoy both of my classes," said Kiara Silva, a senior.

Some like one day of block scheduling more than another.

"I like my A days a lot more than my B days, because I have a lot more friends (in class)," said London Antrim, a senior.

"I like my A day schedule because I have early dismissal," said Fayth Snipes, a senior.



EARNING COLLEGE CREDIT Seniors Isabella Rivera (left) and Alexa Kinion (right) work on their English 12 UConn ECE assignment to revise essays in Mrs. Drewry's classroom 110 Friday, Sept. 4, 2026 at 1:22 p.m.

"I really don't like my B days; I prefer my A day," said Noslin Rodriguez-Duarte, a junior.

One student noted the level of rigor expected. *Continued on page 2*

Continued from front page

“I like my classes; I just find some of them pretty challenging,” said Josiah Brown, a senior.

Getting schedule changes and planning for a June 2027 graduation were also on students’ minds.

“I arrived on the first day a bit upset because of the schedule. After fixing that issue, my mood got a lot better,” said Alexa Kinion, a senior.

“My one goal is graduating. I’m excited about this year; it’s gonna bring great memories,” said George Ocasio, a senior.

“It should be good,” said Naiyana Moore, a senior.

Overall, when asked their thoughts the morning of Day 4, Friday, August 28, 2026, students shared positive feelings.

“My first three days of school were pretty chill,” said Ilana Campbell, a senior.

“My first day was amazing. My first B day was even better!” said Levi Benjamin, a senior.



WELCOME BACK Joshua Saliva, Behavior Counselor and Cheerleading Coach (not to mention Kennedy graduate) helps students board their bus in the front circle during dismissal Tuesday, Sept. 15 at 1:43 p.m. Also visible are the new signs above the front doors and on the side panel windows.

Fall sports arrive: now weightlifting goes until winter

By Ilana Campbell and Fayth Snipes
Staff Writers

Like many other schools, Kennedy has fall sports, so reporters caught up with some of the coaches early in September to get the scoop on how their season started.

Starting off, Mr. Del Debbio, the school AD (athletic director), said that the football team had a scrimmage Sept. 3 and the boys' soccer team also had a scrimmage Sept. 4.

Girls' swimming is also in season, coached by physical education teacher Ms. Hibbert!

Hibbert shared that the first swim meet was Friday, Sept. 11, and there's still availability so if interested in swimming you should check it out! She said the team is looking okay but there's more practice to come.

Mr. Dubois, social studies teacher, is the new coach of the cross country team. They have good participants and 20 members so far, he said. Their first away race was Sept. 15 at Naugatuck, and students can still join as he is able to take new members.

People may not notice but school offers a lot for fall sports, even weight lifting training!

Mr. Ferrare, a physical education teacher



SWIM, CROSS COUNTRY, WEIGHT LIFTING, SOCCER, FOOTBALL, VOLLEYBALL, CHEER Driving by Kennedy H.S., would you know all the fall sports originating within these walls? Photo from nbconnecticut.com

and weightlifting coach, said there's weight lifting after school 2-3 days a week for an hour, and it's open to any student as long as they have their sports physical. One helpful fact: weight lifting is open to all athletes throughout fall and winter!

Italian teacher Mr. Likorana, boys' soccer coach, said the team looks good so far with a lot of familiar faces. They have overall good teamwork and a strong team, and there's still availability. Mrs. Drewry, English teacher, is the girls' soccer team coach, and the team looks good so far with a lot of seniors who have good experience, but the team is maxed out with no availability now, she said.

Mr. Sarlo, U.S. History teacher and football coach said the team looks small, especially with a small group of seniors. The team is optimistic, and they have more than 20 freshmen! The first game was Sept. 11 at Torrington and at this point, there is no space except for freshmen and transfers

Stay tuned for updates on girls' volleyball and cheer. Listen to morning and afternoon announcements. Visit ciac.org or maxpreps.org.

Popular Odyssey not accurate but made billion +

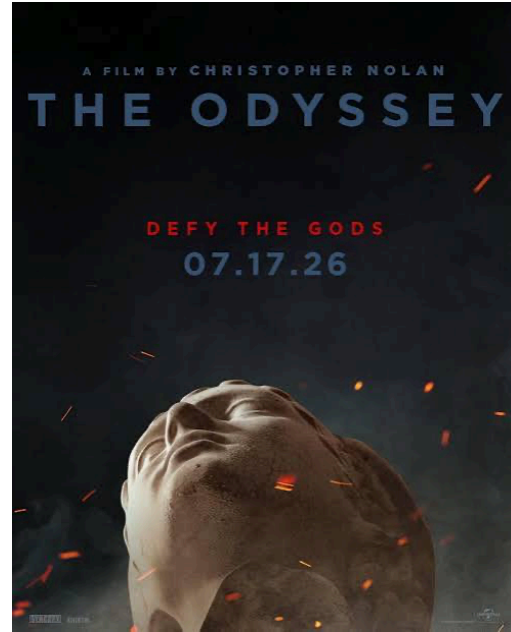
By London Antrim
Managing Editor

COMMENTARY

Have you seen *The Odyssey* yet? A new, highly-anticipated movie from director Christopher Nolan featuring many famous actors was released to movie theaters with very favorable reviews July 17, 2026. *The Odyssey* is a modern film adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey*, an ancient Greek epic poem that follows the Greek hero Odysseus on his dangerous, ten-year journey home after the Trojan War.

"Nolan, who adapted the script, takes liberties, but they're in the name of simultaneously expanding and uniting various accounts of Odysseus' deeds in service of a larger, more elusive goal. In its heart, *The Odyssey* is still about a legendary warrior and king of Ithaca," according to rogerebert.com, a popular American website for film reviews and criticism.

Although it is not accurate to the original, Nolan created a version of the story he thought would fit today's times, with some of the most popular and influential actors like Matt Damon, Anne Hathaway, Zendaya, Tom Holland, and Robert Pattinson. The film still follows many of the original themes and mostly the same story and events from the original poem.



HAVE YOU SEEN IT? This image from Google is the official poster to promote the July 17, 2026 release of Nolan's film adaptation of *The Odyssey*.

"*The Odyssey* is told in fragments, jumping between past and present, and it's how we get one of the opening scenes in which the horse, used a ruse in the Trojan War, is given to the soldiers of Troy to bring into the city as an offering for Athena," according to the-odyssey-2026, a personal blog based on film and TV reviews.

Since the film's release, it has become one of the most popular in the country, as well as one of the most profitable, successful films in Nolan's career, who also made popular films like *The Dark Night* and *Interstellar*.

"The film, which has received strong reviews from critics, has grossed \$1.104 (billion) worldwide, making it the most successful of Nolan's career," according to theguardian.com, a website based in Great Britain for global news, politics, environment, science, sports, and culture.

Grit, realism ground Nolan's *The Odyssey*

By Ms. Kristen Elliott
English teacher

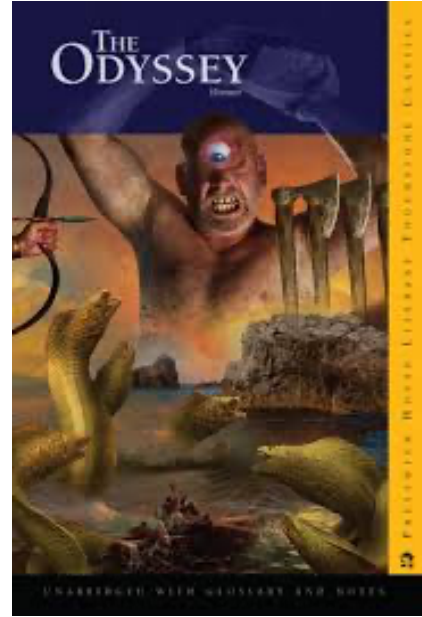
COMMENTARY

How does one retell a foundational piece of Western literature? What about one that's almost 3,000 years old?

If you happened to be in Ms. Elliott's English 9 class last year, you know that July 17, director Christopher Nolan released his adaptation of Homer's *The Odyssey*.

First written in 8th century B.C.E. as the original "Epic Journey," in addition to being the sequel to the original "War Epic," *The Iliad*, from the start Nolan had an almost impossible task on his hands. With source material so widely read and studied, everyone is bound to have a "hot take" on this movie, so here is mine, as an individual who teaches this historic piece every quarter four.

From a filmmaking standpoint, Nolan deserves his flowers. Shot completely on IMAX cameras and 70 millimetre film, with practical effects and little to no CGI, the movie is grounded in grit and realism, something that helps shape the film's overall themes. Similarly, the choice to shoot around the Mediterranean and the inclusion of music composed by Ludwig Göransson, using as close to time accurate instruments as possible, helped create a truly immersive experience.



THE ODYSSEY PRESTWICK HOUSE This edition of *The Odyssey* was taught in Ms. Elliot's English 9 class last year. Have you seen Christopher Nolan's film adaptation, released July 17, 2026?

Now from an ELA teacher's perspective, there is much to be critical of. My overarching criticism is that I am not sure if Nolan truly understood the epic itself or Ancient Greek culture and customs. While the movie is rooted in realism, which is Nolan's specialty, it seems in this case to be his Achilles' heel. Ancient Greek culture was colorful, bright and the belief in the gods was deeply rooted in almost everything people did, all things that seem to be lacking in Nolan's version. With this erasure of the gods, mysticism and Greek customs, Nolan's too-modern version of the world and Odysseus essentially takes away what makes *The Odyssey* so fun and memorable.

Overall, four stars out of five for the practical effects, inclusion of Argus the dog, and a haunting score. ★★★★★

Labor Day; why celebrate first Monday in Sept.?

Initial celebration held 1882

By Ivana Camacho
Staff Writer

Labor Day is an annual celebration of the social and economic achievements of American workers by labor activists who pushed for a federal holiday to recognize the contributions these workers made to America's strength; signed into law in 1894, the holiday is celebrated during the first Monday of September and it's why there was no school Sept. 7, 2026.

Labor Day has been celebrated for 144 years, but it all started with its first celebration in New York.

"The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated Tuesday, Sept. 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, Sept. 5, 1883," according to dol.gov, a website whose mission is to foster, promote and develop the welfare of U.S. wage earners, job seekers, and retirees.

Although people know when and where Labor Day was celebrated, no one knows who actually came up with it.



"LABOR DAY! OBSERVE IT" Protesters marched with signs like this seen above pushing for Labor Day to be observed, but it was not until 1894 that the day was signed into law. Photo from nationalgeographic.com

"The exact origins of Labor Day are unknown, but scholars typically credit either of two labor union officials — Peter J. McGuire of the national carpenters' union or Matthew Maguire of a machinists' local in Paterson, New Jersey — with the idea," according to ar.usembassy.gov, the U.S. Embassy in Argentina's website.

The death of striking workers got noticed.

"Working people began organizing and bargaining collectively to advocate for better working conditions and wages and celebrated the first Labor Day in New York City (in) 1882. Following the deaths of 13 workers during the Pullman Strike in June of 1894, President Grover Cleveland made reconciliation with the labor movement a top priority of his administration, making Labor Day a federal holiday in 1894," according to unionplus.org, a nonprofit organization of the AFL-CIO.

Don't wear white after Labor Day, as some say!

By George Ocasio
Staff Writer

Wealthy families in the United States created the 'rule' not to wear white after Labor Day during the Gilded Age to exclude the newly rich, as well as separate vacation wardrobes from their dark clothing by publishing the rule in high society fashion magazines and in social circles during the 19th-20th centuries.

"Exact origins of the rule are murky, but one popular theory is rooted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when New York's nouveau riche (the new rich) were jockeying to join the long-established social elite," according to history.com/articles, the site for A+E Studios studio unit of A+E Global Media and entertainment.

Who would make this a part of their wardrobe? Not everybody follows this 'rule,' including one famous businesswoman and fashion designer.

"As far back as the 1920s, Coco Chanel made white a year-round staple. 'It was a permanent part of her wardrobe,' says Bronwyn Cosgrave, author of *The Complete History of Costume & Fashion: From*



WOULD YOU WEAR WHITE TODAY? U.S. folklore has it that affluent families started a 'rule' back in the 19th century to stop including white clothes in their wardrobe after Labor Day in September. This is just a theory! Visual from Google Images

Ancient Egypt to the Present Day," according to time.com's article [/5658699/white-after-labor-day/](http://5658699/white-after-labor-day/), from their website with global journalism and a modern media company.

Saying goodbye to your own clothes and your certain style to follow this 'rule' must have been hard.

"For a long time—too long perhaps—Labor Day wasn't only about saying goodbye to summer, but an entire section of women's wardrobes throughout the South, where we favor breezy white clothing amidst our practically year-round warm weather, and beyond," according to www.southernliving.com/wear-white-after-labor-day-6528203, the website for the magazine whose first print issue of *Southern Living* was published in February 1966.

Fall starts Sept. 22, ends by Dec. 22

By George Ocasio
Staff Writer

The season of fall begins when the earth travels and starts to turn away from the sun, causing cooling temperatures and shorter days in the Northern Hemisphere, which this year is Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2026.

“Astronomical fall starts on the autumnal equinox, between Sept. 21 and Sept. 23, and ends on the winter solstice, between Dec. 20 and Dec. 22. These dates vary from year to year due to leap years and the elliptical shape of Earth’s orbit around the Sun,” according to accuweather.com/en/weather-news/why-meteorological-fall-starts-before-astronomical-fall/344058, a weather group founded by Dr. Joel N. Myers in State College, Penn.

What is there to really know about fall as a season? Well, the leaves dropping gave it its name, not to mention it’s when the weather starts to turn a little cooler.

“Autumn (is) the season of the year between summer and winter during which temperatures gradually decrease. It is often called fall in the United States because leaves fall from the trees at that time,” according to britannica.com/science/autumn-season, the website for Britannica Encyclopedia, which has been in existence for more than 250 years as a print publication with information on a variety of topics.



WHY IS IT CALLED FALL? 16th century English speakers named the season “fall” as a shortened version of the phrase “the fall of the leaf,” according to Britannica Encyclopedia. Image from Google

Most people know fall changes the time of the sun going down (so it gets darker early) but why do the leaves change color ?

“... in the fall, because of changes in the length of daylight and changes in temperature, the leaves stop their food-making process. The chlorophyll breaks down, the green color disappears, and the yellow to orange colors become visible and give the leaves part of their fall splendor,” according to esf.edu/eis/eis-leaves-color-change.php, the website for the State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science and Forestry out of Syracuse, NY.

Fun fact: did you know the phrase ‘leaf abscission’ is the technical term for the dropping of leaves, according to britannica.com? Now you do!

Why do leaves change color?

By Ilana Campbell
Staff Writer

When fall comes around, leaves begin to change their color, as shorter days and cooler temperatures break down their green chlorophyll pigment, the lack of chlorophyll reveals yellow and orange pigments that were already there hiding.

“Throughout spring and summer, leaves are busy making food for trees during photosynthesis. The pigment chlorophyll, which gives leaves their green color, helps absorb sunlight, turning it into energy. This process converts sunlight, water and carbon dioxide into glucose (sugar), which trees use to grow and thrive during the warmer months,” according to pacificsciencecenter.org, an interactive science museum dedicated to expanding access to science, technology, engineering, and STEM.

It boils down to two things: temperature and direct sunlight. Another impact is how Earth is tilting, which impacts how much of the sun’s rays reach different areas.

“Earth has seasons because its axis is tilted. Earth’s axis is always pointed in the same direction, so different parts of Earth get the sun’s direct rays throughout the year. For example, in summer, the sun’s rays hit



FALL FOLIAGE In this photo you can notice the trees’ colors changing, but did you know chlorophyll – or the lack of it – plays a role in revealing yellow and orange leaves? Image from becauseitees.com

that region more directly than at any other time of the year,” according to noaa.gov, which was designed as an educational resource to help students understand plant chemistry and the changing seasons.

The science behind the process is pretty interesting.

“In the fall, because of the changes in the length of daylight and changes in temperature, the leaves stop their food-making process. The chlorophyll breaks down, the green color disappears, and the yellow to orange colors become more visible and give the leaves part of their fall splendor. At the same time other chemical changes may occur, which form additional colors through the development of red anthocyanin,” according to esf.edu, the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, focused on the study of the environment, developing renewable technologies, and building a sustainable future.

Fun fact: chlorophyll is a molecule that helps plants turn sunshine into energy.

In loving memory of Hayden Panettiere

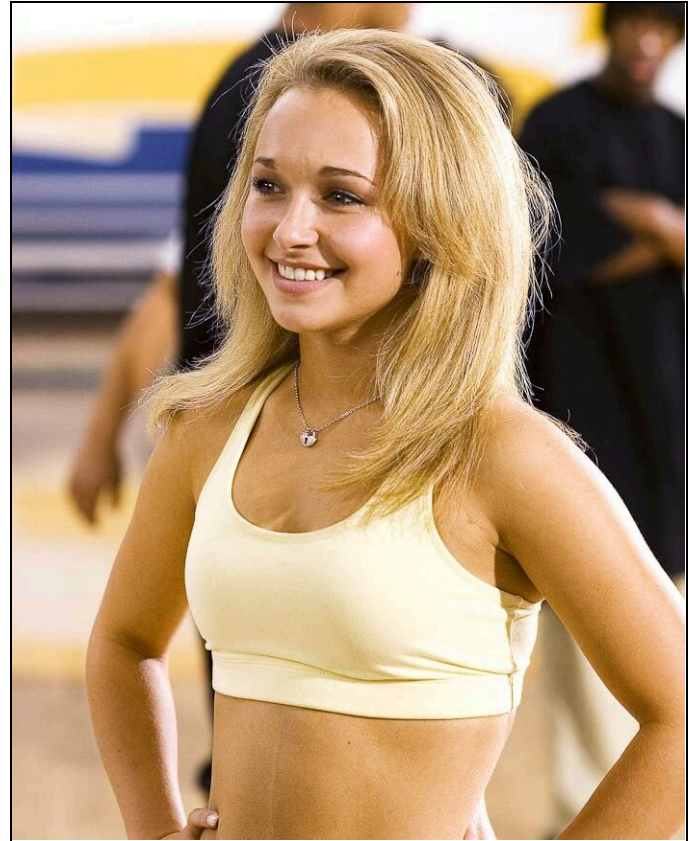
By Josiah Brown
Staff Writer

Hayden Panettiere, best known for her roles in *Scream 4* and *Heroes*, died at age 36 after being found in cardiac arrest by first responders at an apartment complex in Greenville, South Carolina, August 16, 2026 at 1:58 p.m.

“Though just 36, Panettiere had already been a working actor for more than three decades. After appearing in a television commercial at just 11 months old, she had roles on two prominent soap operas as a child actor: *One Life to Live* from 1994 to 1997, and *Guiding Light* from 1996 to 2000. She was also nominated for a Grammy Award in 1998 for her performance as Princess Dot in *A Bug's Life*,” according to www.legacy.com/, the world's largest commercial provider of online obituaries and memorials.

Officials initially did not know Panettiere's exact cause of death and released this:

“The official cause and manner of death have not been determined, pending the results of additional testing. Toxicology



ON SET OF BRING IT ON: ALL OR NOTHING

Seen here is actress Hayden Panettiere, who died August 16, 2026 and might be best known for this film role from 2006. Image from Alarm

tests, which are standard in many death investigations, can take weeks to complete,” according to www.cnn.com/, the website for CNN Worldwide's cable news.

Before her death, she was very open about her personal life and struggles.

“Shortly before her death, Panettiere discussed her traumatic birth, postpartum depression, alcohol and medication addiction, and her decision to give ex-fiancé Wladimir Klitschko custody of their daughter Kaya, who is now 11,” according to www.people.com/, a celebrity news magazine and human interest website.

Remembering Dolly Parton, businesswoman

By Kiara Silva
Staff Writer

Dolly Parton was a famous singer, songwriter, actress, and philanthropist born Jan. 19, 1946 near Sevierville, Tenn. who became known for her country music as well as a long line of acting and business ventures, and died August 25, 2026.

“...If a girl has dreams and creativity, she can come up with all kinds of ways to look pretty when she doesn’t have the real thing,” Dolly once said, according to her 2023 book *Behind the Seams: My Life in Rhinestones*.

One of her projects is now worldwide.

“Founded by Parton in 1988, The Dollywood Foundation began with a simple mission: help the children of her hometown dream bigger through the power of education. What started in Sevier County... has grown into a global nonprofit dedicated to inspiring children and families to Dream More, Learn More, Care More and Be More,” according to dollywoodfoundation.org, a non-profit organization still headquartered in Sevierville, Tenn.

“In 1965, Dolly signed her first record deal with Monument Records followed by a song



THE COUNTRY BARBIE Dolly Parton, legendary country singer, songwriter, actress, and philanthropist who died August 25, 2026, is said to have had a heart of pink. Image from PngFind

writing deal with Combine Music. Her debut studio album, *Hello, I’m Dolly*, made an impact on the Country charts with her first two singles *Dumb Blonde* and *Something Fishy*, ” according to dollyparton.com/ tribute, a memorial website in her honor.

Her business deals and career were noticed.

“During her Kennedy Center Honors tribute, an incredible lineup of artists including Reese Witherspoon, Reba McEntire, Kenny Rogers, Carrier Underwood, Alison Krauss, Shania Twain, and Vince Gill celebrated her remarkable career with the tribute including *Islands in the Stream*, *Jolene*, *Coat Of Many Colors*, and *I Will Always Love You*,” according to www.kennedy-center.org/ video, the website for the performing arts center in Washington, D.C.



In loving memory of Dolly Parton

By Janiah Thomas
Staff Writer

Dolly Parton passed away in Nashville, Tenn. due to a battle with cancer August 25, 2026, and previously discussed health concerns while hoping people would enjoy visiting her theme park.

“After bravely facing a brief battle with cancer, Dolly departed her Earthly life today at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center surrounded by loved ones,” according to apnews, a website with a mission to provide fast, factual news and press freedom.

Parton admitted since her husband passed away in 2025 that she paid less attention to her health.

“The star had been open about various health issues in the last two years, and especially after her husband Carl Dean died in March 2025. ‘Back when my husband Carl was very sick — that was for a long time — and then when he passed, I didn’t take care of myself,’ Parton said in a video to fans earlier this year. ‘So I let a lot of things go that I should have taken care of,’ ” according to [cnn.com](#), a website with a mission statement to inform, engage and empower the world.



DOLLY AT DOLLYWOOD This 1995 photo is at the 165-acre theme park she created in Tennessee. Photo from [britannica.com](#)

Did you know Parton has a 165-acre theme park with a 3,990 foot long mountain roller coaster and Wild Eagle, the first U.S. wing roller coaster to open, a waterpark, resorts, cabins, and dinner shows all in Tennessee?

“I was just hoping people would really want to come visit a theme park with my name on it,” Parton once said. “And even though I always try to dream big, I’ll admit I was a little bit nervous that first morning. But people did come out to support us that first day, and I’m so proud to see Dollywood has continued to grow through the years to become a place of fun and togetherness,” according to [people.com](#), a website with celebrity and human interest stories.

What makes Spider-Man: *Brand New Day* so amazing?

By Alexa Kinion
Staff Writer

COMMENTARY

In the span of just 32 days, *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* has grossed more than \$2 billion worldwide.

Spider-Man: Brand New Day has swung its way to theaters and made quite an impression, earning almost nothing but positive reviews and breaking numerous records in just one short month after its July 31, 2026 release.

“The film features Sony’s Spider-Man, Universal’s Hulk, FOX’s Jean Grey, Netflix’s Punisher, and Marvel Studios’ Yelena all in one film,” according to [/comicbook.com/movies/list/3-reasons](https://comicbook.com/movies/list/3-reasons), Clay Pitman’s August 28 article.

Some believe the film’s popularity stems from the two main characters being among the most beloved actors and actresses.

“Holland and Zendaya definitely bring in even more eyes,” according to [/comicbook.com/movies/list/3-reasons](https://comicbook.com/movies/list/3-reasons), Clay Pitman’s August 28 article.

The film is highly acclaimed for its



MAKING MONEY The most recent Spider-Man has made more than \$2 billion. Image from Google

extremely well-written plot. The storyline is informative without becoming boring or drawn-out, while its action-packed scenes hold your attention and keep you on the edge of your seat. Many fans also enjoyed a glimpse of the “Classic Spider-Man,” as seen in Tobey Maguire’s character, with Spider-Man returning to his roots as a grounded, broke and completely isolated neighborhood hero.

“Throughout the subsequent decades, whether it was Maguire playing him, or Andrew Garfield or Tom Holland, Peter has still struggled to mature, from teen to adult, from vigilante to avenger, from nemesis to hero,” according to pipelineartists.com/Why-spider-man-brand-new-day, featuring Jeffrey York’s August 3 article.

All in all, fans love the comic-accurate, friendly neighborhood Spider-Man authenticity of the movie since Peter Parker just seems like a regular guy doing his best to get through life.

“I feel like if I went to New York right now, I might actually SEE this man swinging around... I haven’t felt that in a long time,” according to *Letterboxd* user: *Framesofnick*.

Live-action Moana deemed major flop

By Isabella Rivera
Staff Writer

Grossing only \$265 million against a production budget of \$250 million.

Following the release of *Toy Story 5* and *The Minions & Monsters*, the live action remake of *Moana* suffered a significant flop after its opening weekend, with many Disney fans and critics disappointed. It was heavily criticized for being released too soon after the first movie, with the sequel's debut in U.S. theaters July 10, 2026.

“If you love it, great. If you don't, no problem,” said Dwayne Johnson, addressing mixed reviews after the film underperformed at the box office.

Though the original 2016 animated film *Moana* grossed \$687.2 million worldwide, the new film just didn't reach the same peak, receiving only “32 percent” from Rotten Tomatoes critics.



DID YOU CATCH IT THIS SUMMER? Seen here, from left to right, are the stars of the live-action *Moana* film Dwayne Johnson and Catherine Laga'aia. Images from abc7ny.com

“*Moana* was running low on Disney's signature magic,” as criticized by the BBC, a British newscast.

With harsh, blurry, cheap-looking CGI (computer generated imagery), the film was set to receive backlash; owing to it having a higher budget. The film, unfortunately, had a major belly flop, missing the mark for most Disney fans and many families globally.

“Is Disney's live-action remake era over?” according to [usatoday.com](https://www.usatoday.com), the website for the daily national newspaper.

SEPTEMBER SCRAMBLED!

By Autumn Bohlman

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

PDMAENRIS

LALF

BLOFOTAL

LPLOOLHYHCR

ORLBA AYD

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.



Grapes, Lemons, Pears and Apples by Vincent van Gogh, 1887