

Free Public Library of Monroe Township

Out and About

A Community Newsletter

February 2026

Your guide to
what's going on in
Williamstown and
the surrounding
area!

Warm Hearts Winter Fest at Pfeiffer Community Center

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Wine & Jazz Night	2	The event is free to the public. There will be vendors there representing local businesses, artisans, and crafters. There will also be booths there representing local community resources, such as some of our non-profits. Best of all, there will be some people from the physical and mental wellness community. You can learn about their services and resources to help be your best self. (After all, if this is the month of love, isn't self-love the first step?)
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What's To Read	6	You're sure to enjoy this warm winter event in the depths of all this freezing cold!



Special Points of Interest:

- *Chocolate walks in Pitman and Mullica Hill for Valentine's Day*
- *Wine and jazz at Camden County College*
- *The game's afoot with Sherlock Holmes at the Walnut Street Theatre*
- *Two literary classics are reimagined for the screen*
- *Some new romantic novels*

Souper Bowl at 13th Child Brewery

And speaking of warming up in the bitter cold...13th Child Brewery on Main Street in Williamstown is holding its Souper Bowl Saturday on Feb. 7th from 2 PM to 6 PM.



This isn't a competition...just a nice way to kick back and enjoy hot soup and craft beer. Registrants can bring their own homemade soup in a crock-pot and everyone can sample what's there and purchase some of 13th Child's best brewskis.

Space is limited, so to register, go to <https://forms.gle/xS38X3JsshWCNcJQ8>. For more info, go to 13thchildbrewery.com.

Sweetest Night in Pitman and Chocolate Walk in Mullica Hill

Two of Gloucester County's most charming small towns are keeping up their pre-Valentine's tradition. Sweetest Night in Pitman takes place along Broadway Avenue from 3 PM to 7 PM on Saturday, Feb. 7th. On the same date and at the same time, Mullica Hill will host its annual Chocolate Walk.

The passport that allows you to take part in the event is free, and available at participating stores. All you have to do is pick it up. Then, you'll be eligible to stroll the town's shops (which will have treats to sample), check out local vendors, visit Pitman's terrific restaurants, and get your passport stamped. For more information (or to volunteer as a vendor), visit uptownpitman.com.



Mullica Hill's Chocolate Walk operates on the same principle, but in this case the passport costs \$15 in advance or \$20 the day of the event. There's also a limited amount of tickets for each time slot. You'll check in at the Serendipity shop at 19 S. Main Street. Ticketholders will also be eligible for a gift basket raffle at the end of the evening. To order tickets, visit <https://events.ticketleap.com/tickets/wwwmullicahillcom/9th-annual-mullica-hill-chocolate-walk-2026>.

Enjoy some great treats, food, and fun at two of our best towns!



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 3-7PM
Chocolate走遍，Valentine's-themed vendors
Free event passport available at participating shops

Wine & Jazz Night at Camden County College

Whether you're spending Valentine's Day with a significant other or with a friend or two, the annual Wine & Jazz Night at Camden County College's Little Theater on its Blackwood campus is the perfect way to spend it! It will take place on Saturday, Feb. 14th, from 6 PM to 9 PM.



The night will feature music by Camden County College's Dr. Michael Billingsley and his ensemble. Thyme Kitchen Catering will provide a buffet, with one complimentary glass of wine and additional ones available for purchase. There will also be a raffle with various prize baskets.

To get a ticket (whether an individual or group one), visit <https://www.camdencc.edu/about-1/giving/foundation-mission/foundation-events/wine-jazz-night>. It's a perfect Valentine's outing!

Chili Cook-Off at 13th Child Brewery

If you'd like something a little more competitive than 13th Child's Souper Bowl (see previous page), the brewery will be holding its fourth annual Chili Cook-Off on Saturday, Feb. 21st, from 2 PM to 6 PM.

The event is open to ten contestants, but the public can also attend to sample the chili and vote. Once you've registered, you must bring your chili in a crock-pot by 2 PM. Guests will taste your chili and vote on it for the People's Choice chili prize. There will also be a Best of Show prize, thanks to the contest's judges.

If you're interested in putting your chili to the test, visit 13thchildbrewery.com. Or you could simply stop by during the cook-off's operating hours and see what's there...and enjoy 13th Child's best craft beers while you're at it!



Dine & Design Oil Candle Workshop at Dolce Vita Gelato

Dolce Vita Gelateria on Greentree Road in Sewell (across the road and catty-corner from Duffield's Farm Market) is sponsoring a unique event in collaboration with Grammy's Craft Shack. The Dine & Design Oil Candle Workshop will take place at 4 PM on Sunday, Feb. 8th.



You can choose between making two or three candles (it's \$30 to make two, \$40 to make three). All the materials will be included in the fee—bottles/jars, wicks, oil, and scented fruits/flowers. While you're making your candle, you can purchase some of the delicious gelato that Dolce Vita is locally famous for, as well as their signature coffee and to-die-for Italian hot chocolate. You can also BYOB (naturally, there's no alcohol for sale on the premises, but you're welcome to bring your own). When the evening's over, you'll have some new home décor, as well as some nice memories.

To register, you can Venmo your fee to @gina-shepherd920. For more information, visit Dolce Vita's website at www.dolcevitaselwell.com or call 856-885-9198.

Galentine's Night at Saddlehill Winery in Voorhees

Single gals need a reason to celebrate Valentine's Day as well. You can do so at Galentine's Night at Saddlehill Winery on Springdale/White Horse Road in Voorhees, on Thursday, Feb. 12th, from 5 PM to 7 PM.

There's no entry fee for the event, although food, wine, and merchandise are available for purchase. You'll need to make a reservation for dinner (which you can do on Saddlehill's website) and enjoy their farm-to-table cuisine. Then you can sip and shop as you browse the on-site vendors, with wares such as permanent jewelry, a DIY perfume station, and live portraits. There will be beauty product giveaways as well.

If you'd like to enjoy a little extra, there's a wine-and-chocolate pairing the same night, as well as a charcuterie board workshop. (Both cost extra and must be reserved in advance.)

For info or to make reservations, visit <https://saddlehill.com/pages/events-1>.



Black History Month Celebration at Pfeiffer Center

February is Black History Month, and Williamstown will celebrate it at the Pfeiffer Community Center on Main Street and Blue Bell Roads, on Monday, Feb. 9th at 6:30 PM.



The event is free to the public and will feature speakers about Black history, various presentations, art centering on Black history, vendors, and other programs.

If you'd like to take part in the event, as a speaker, a volunteer, a vendor, or anything else, visit <https://tinyurl.com/BLKHM26>.

Enjoy this wonderful celebration along with the rest of our community!



All The World's A Stage...

The game's afoot! *Sherlock Holmes: The Great Detective*, an original comedy by Bill Van Horn, is onstage at Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theater until Feb. 15th.

Like the Walnut's earlier Sherlockian production *The Speckled Band*, this puts a comedic spin on Arthur Conan Doyle's material with a revolving cast of six actors playing various roles. This one's based on the stories "The Final Problem" and "The Empty House", which introduced Holmes' nemesis Professor Moriarty and seemingly killed off Holmes, only to resurrect him in one of literature's earliest examples of a retcon. When Holmes and Watson track Moriarty to Switzerland, both men seemingly die in a fall, to Watson's sorrow. But months later, Holmes turns up alive and trying to outwit the remnants of Moriarty's gang...his sister Arabella, marksman Sebastian Moran, and a third whose identity is unknown to Holmes. As the duo captures and unmasks the gang, they're in for a shock as to the identity of the man who's been behind Moriarty, and his reasons for wanting Holmes dead...the mystery may not be so "elementary" after all.

To order tickets to this clever, meta-fictional comedy, visit walnutstreettheatre.org.

Sometimes, what's going on *offstage* is even funnier than what's playing *onstage*. Michael Frayn's hilarious British farce *Noises Off* is at Haddonfield Plays and Players from Feb. 20th to March 7th!

A small theatre troupe in England is performing the racy farce *Nothing On*, a comedy of mistaken identities and rapid entrances and exits that depends on down-to-the-second timing. Director Lloyd is just barely holding the rehearsals together in a storm of missed cues and personal problems among the cast (which includes his own romantic entanglement with one of the actresses). The first act takes us through a dress rehearsal as the conflicts among the cast play out. The second act shows the back of the set during a live performance, as the actors blunder their way through the play and the mish-mash of their own entanglements. The third act is another live performance of *Nothing On*...during which Murphy's Law is in full force. Can the troupe manage to pull off a decent performance? Perhaps not, but it's bound to be funny!



For tickets or further info, visit haddonfieldplayers.com...and laugh yourself silly!

"Tale as old as time..." Just in time for Valentine's Day, *Beauty and the Beast*, the stage version of the Disney animated classic, comes to Philadelphia's Academy of Music from Feb. 11th to Feb. 22nd.

The stage version (Disney's first foray into Broadway musicals) follows the plot of the movie closely. Book-loving Belle, daughter of inventor Maurice, feels out of place in her provincial village—and is definitely not interested in her would-be suitor Gaston, a handsome but insufferable egotist. But when her father stumbles into the enchanted castle of a Beast who imprisons him, Belle bargains away her own freedom in exchange for Maurice's. As she settles into the castle with its staff of enchanted household objects, Belle makes it clear she won't stand for the Beast's arrogance...and as time passes and the Beast becomes more gentle, the two develop feelings for each other. The Beast is actually a prince under a curse that can only be broken if he can love and be loved in return...and time is running out to break it. And all the while, Gaston is plotting how to force Belle into marriage. Can the pair overcome the obstacles and break the curse?

With all of the beloved songs from the original, with some new ones by Alan Menken and Tim Rice, this is one of the best shows to come from Disney Theatrical. To order tickets, visit ensembleartsphilly.org.

What's New Onscreen!

As Valentine's Day approaches, an unusual love story comes to the screen. Luc Besson's interpretation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* premieres Feb. 6th.

Like Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 version, this adaptation portrays Dracula as the former Vlad the Impaler, turning to evil when his wife Elisabeta is murdered (this wasn't in the novel). During his centuries of vampiric life, he attracts women to him, turning them undead, all the while hoping Elisabeta will return to him. Finally, in the nineteenth century, he finds Elisabeta reincarnated as Mina, the fiancée of a lawyer who has fallen into Dracula's clutches. It seems that nothing will stand in the way of Dracula's reunion with his immortal beloved as he tracks her to Paris...but Mina's loved ones, as well as a righteous priest (Christoph Waltz), will also stop at nothing to rescue her. Now, Dracula must come to terms with the fact that his love might mean the destruction of his beloved's soul...and, possibly, make the ultimate sacrifice for her sake.



Fans of paranormal romance should enjoy this visually striking reimagining by one of cinema's most innovative directors.

And speaking of love stories inspired by classic novels...director Emerald Fennell's unconventional but striking adaptation of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* debuts Feb. 13th.



This adaptation has drawn controversy for its atypical casting (the canonically brunette Catherine being played by blonde Margot Robbie is just a start) and its highly stylized and anachronistic visual aesthetic and soundtrack, but the story remains the same (at least, of the first half of the novel, which it focuses on). It begins in the two leads' childhood, when Catherine Earnshaw's father brings home a street orphan he encountered in his travels and names Heathcliff. Once Mr. Earnshaw dies, Catherine's brother Hindley abuses Heathcliff (now played by Jacob Elordi) and degrades him into the position of a servant. Catherine, for her part, is attracted to the lavish lifestyle of her wealthy neighbor's son Edgar Linton (Shazad Latif), though she knows that Heathcliff is her soulmate. Her decision to marry Edgar for material reasons triggers Heathcliff's rage, sowing the seeds of her own destruction and her lover's as well.

Though it's far from a conventional retelling, this unusual, arresting new take on one of the world's great literary romances is well worth a look.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has been adapted and reimagined countless times...but you've never seen an anime version that casts the lead as a medieval princess who teams up with someone from the 21st century, have you? That's the premise of director Mamoru Hosoda's *Scarlet*, which begins a limited release Feb. 6th.

Princess Scarlet leads a privileged life...until her usurping uncle Claudius murders her father and marries her mother Gertrude. When Scarlet's plan to murder her uncle fails, she ends up dead from poison. So far, so Shakespearean. But the story takes an unexpected turn when Scarlet awakens in limbo, where she meets a wise woman who advises her that Claudius is here as well, amassing an army of the dead. Scarlet is still determined to find a way to wreak her revenge on her uncle...until she meets Hiriji, a medical technician from 2026. Although he comes to understand that sometimes violence is necessary, his focus on care and compassion soon have her questioning whether the path of murder and revenge she's sworn herself to is the right one.



As with Hosoda's *Belle* (a spin on *Beauty and the Beast*), this stunning anime examines the themes of a story we all thought we knew well, and casts them in a new light.

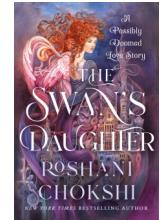


The Biblio-Files

Celebrate Valentine's Day with some recently published
romantic novels!

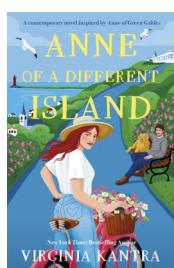
In Roshani Chokshi's *The Swan's Daughter*, a girl with an unusual power must use it to help a prince to whom love might mean death.

In a kingdom rife with magic, Demelza is what's known as a veritas swan...a shapeshifting bird-human whose song compels the truth from others. They also mate for life, and can die of a broken heart if their beloved betrays them or dies. Her wizard father has been using her sisters to amass more power...but when Demelza is a young adult, he realizes cutting out her heart could gain him immortality. Despite his promise to resurrect her afterwards (or at least try), Demelza flees to the kingdom's royal family, where its prince, Arris, faces a dilemma. A badly-worded curse on his family means that the male heir's female consort can rule as long as she "possesses the heart of the ruler"...which has led many past consorts to murder their husbands and cut out their hearts. When Demelza arrives seeking shelter at the same time as a competition of potential brides, she offers Arris a bargain: she will weed out the ones who seek to murder him. But as the competition goes on, she and Arris develop feelings for one another. In order to avoid love meaning death for either of them, they must learn that love means choosing to trust.



Rich with atmosphere and romance, this gracefully written original fairy tale will sweep you away.

Virginia Kantra has written modernized takes on *Little Women* and *The Wizard of Oz*. With *Anne of a Different Island*, she offers her take on another classic...the beloved series *Anne of Green Gables*.



Anne Gallagher grew up on Mackinac Island (familiar to fans of the movie *Somewhere in Time*, but that's another romantic story). She's always idolized Anne Shirley from the *Anne of Green Gables* books, to the point of dyeing her hair red. But as it turns out, her life doesn't follow such a smooth path: her teaching career hits a snag when she clashes with the school administration, her relationship falls apart, and worst of all, her beloved father passes away. These circumstances bring Anne back to Mackinac, which she was eager to leave behind when she began a new life. They also put Anne in contact with Joe Miller, a boy she used to clash with in her teenage years. But time has changed things, and Joe seems kinder now. Anne's life is upside down, and she needs to face the fact that the script she's written for her own life isn't going to work the way she planned. Can she face the fact that life doesn't always end up like the stories we've loved...and create a new path for herself?

Anyone who loved L. M. Montgomery's stories is sure to enjoy this romantic, affectionate homage, which points out that life can turn out fine even if it doesn't always end up as planned.

A magically talented girl in an alternate 1890s New York City seeks revenge on those who betrayed her in *Gilded in Vengeance*, a new YA novel by *Revelle*'s Lyssa Mia Smith.

In this version of Gilded Age New York, magic is a fact of life, and the Society of the Charmed, a cabal of the magical elite, rules high society. Two years ago, they framed Emmy Vallillo for fraud, leaving her to languish in prison. But all that changes when Jack Fontaine, former member of the Society but also framed by them, breaks into her cell. The two make a deal: he'll help her escape if she will use her magical talent to help them both get revenge on the Society. They manage to pull off the escape, and forge new identities for themselves thanks to Emmy's magic. Soon, the pair are sought-after members of society...which gives them an opening for their plans. But Emmy and Jack are developing feelings for one another. Can Emmy learn to trust in him despite her past trauma and his own secrets...and, when it comes down to a choice between her long-awaited revenge and a new life with Jack, which will she choose?



It's *The Count of Monte Cristo* meets *The Gilded Age* with lots of magic thrown in...and a slow-burn romance that will captivate romantasy fans.