

Free Public Library of Monroe Township

Out and About

A Community Newsletter

May 2026

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

Spring Arts and Crafts Festival

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The twice-yearly Monroe Township Arts and Crafts Festival returns to Main Street on Saturday, May 9th, from 10 AM to 3 PM!

As always, this event is free to the public. There will be vendors galore with everything from soaps and perfumes to costume jewelry, toys, and specialty foods. Many of these are hand-crafted. The "food court" at the Pfeiffer Center lot will feature plenty of food trucks. There will also be all kinds of activities and fun stuff for families...a petting zoo, some bounce houses, face painting, hair braiding, balloon art, a DJ and more!

If you're interested in taking part as a vendor or non-profit table, visit tinyurl.com/craft2026 and fill out the online form. The Department of Community Affairs will send you an email close to the event with arrival and setup times and instructions.

All ages (as well as pets!) are welcome to the event. It's a perfect way to spend a spring day. (If you can't make this one, there's always the September one!)



Special Points of Interest:

- *Derby Day Celebration at Autumn Lake Winery*
- *Mother's Day Brunch at Scotland Run*
- *Walk for Wellness at Owens Park*
- *The Gershwin's landmark Porgy and Bess comes to the Ritz in Oaklyn*
- *The Mandalorian and Grogu on the big screen*
- *What the Dickens?! New novels focusing on Charles Dickens' life and work*

Derby Day Dance at Pfeiffer Center

On the eve of the Kentucky Derby, Williamstown's Pfeiffer Community Center on Main and Blue Bell will be holding an all-inclusive dance on Friday, May 1st, from 7 PM to 9 PM.



This event welcomes members of the LGBTQ+ community. There will be a DJ as well as refreshments. You're encouraged to attend in your best derby attire...or at least a hat, since there will be a Best Hat contest during the event.

The dance is free to the public, but you must RSVP. Visit tinyurl.com/derbydaydance to do so.

Enjoy a wonderful night's dancing at an event which welcomes all!

Derby Celebration at Autumn Lake Winery

The Kentucky Derby is here, and there are special events for Derby Day all over South Jersey...including one at Williamstown's own Autumn Lake Winery on Malaga Road, taking place on Saturday, May 2nd from 2-7 PM.



Come dressed in your best (especially those hats!) to celebrate. The event (which is rain or shine) will feature a cigar lounge, food trucks, vendors, live music from local band Poor Mouth Henry, and a wine tent. Your ticket price also includes a complimentary glass of wine from Autumn Lake's best vintages.

When it's time for the big race, you'll get to watch it streaming live on the big screen Autumn Lake has provided for the event.

General admission is \$20 per person (under-21s get in free) and will include access to the vendors, food trucks, screen, and your complimentary glass of wine. If you'd like to splurge for the VIP ticket (\$65 per person), you'll get access to the special VIP tent, a lunch buffet from Buon Viaggio Wood Fired Pizza, an extra drink ticket, and premi-

um seating for the race.

To order tickets, visit autumnlakewinery.com. Happy Derby Day!

Greek Night at Blue Cork Winery

Maybe there's a little Greek in all of us...and there's no better place to express it than at Blue Cork Winery's Greek Night on Saturday, May 23rd beginning at 5 PM.

The winery (on Blue Cork Road in Williamstown) is teaming up with the Pan-Macedonian Youth society to celebrate Greek culture. The event will include live music by Kefi Greek Band, as well as food (brick oven pizza as well as barbecued food, and ice cream for dessert) and traditional Greek dancing and other activities. (No word on plate-smashing.) And, of course, Blue Cork will have its best wines for sale.

Tickets must be purchased at the door. It's \$25 for adults and \$10 for kids under 12...not bad for all this event includes.

Come celebrate a great culture! OPA!!!



Mother's Day Brunch at Scotland Run

Celebrate Mom in the best way by taking her to brunch on Mother's Day at Scotland Run Country Club's Highlander Pub & Grill!



There are several seatings available from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM...choose one when you reserve. The brunch includes the Highlander's fantastic buffet, as well as a mimosa or a beer-mimosa for each adult attending.

The fee is \$60 for each adult and \$25 for each kid from age 3-12. (Children under 3 years old can eat for free.)

To register, visit www.opentable.com/booking/experiences-availability. Scotland Run is located at 2626 Fries Mill Road in Williamstown.

Show Mom how much you love her by taking her to this extra-special event!

Moving for Mental Health Walk for Wellness

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and you can support those struggling with mental health or addiction by coming together at the Moving for Mental Health Walk for Wellness on Saturday, May 16th at Owens Park in Williamstown.

The event begins at 10 AM and runs until 2 PM. It starts off with a low-key community walk, to connect and to get yourself in the right space. It's free to participate in and you can walk solo, with your family, or as part of a team. You can sign up at tinyurl.com/WalkWithUsNJ.

After that, there will be plenty of activities to strengthen the body, soothe the mind, and encourage connection with others. There will be a student art showcase and contest from young artists all over Williamstown. There will be yoga and exercise sessions. There will also be a wellness fair featuring tables with mental health resources. (If you'd like to participate with a resource table of your own, visit tinyurl.com/ResourceVendor.)

Show your support for those who are struggling—and find the resources you may need if you are—by taking part in this vital community event.



Collingswood May Fair

As Memorial Day Weekend rolls around, it's time to celebrate the coming summer in one of the best ways possible...with crafts, art, food, and live music. You'll find all of these at Collingswood's annual May Fair, taking place on Saturday, May 23rd from 10 AM to 5 PM.



The event is free to the public, and will take place rain or shine along Haddon Avenue. There'll be over 250 artists and crafters selling their wares. There will be plenty for kids to do, such as carnival games and rides in the KidZone. For car enthusiasts, there's a vintage car show. For music lovers, there will be several stages featuring live bands playing everything from blues to folk to classic rock. There will be plenty of food trucks, and, of course, Collingswood's great restaurants will also be open...as will its shops, which you can also check out.

For more information or to register as an artist, a crafter, a vendor or a volunteer, you can visit https://collingswood.com/things_to_do/arts_and_events/may_fair.php. (Keep in mind that very severe weather may mean rescheduling.)

Enjoy a great spring day in one of South Jersey's best towns!

Cutting With The Devil at 13th Child Brewery

St. Baldrick's, a charity for kids with cancer, is hosting a special benefit event on Saturday, May 16th...Cutting With the Devil at 13th Child Brewery on Williamstown's Main Street.

To take part, you can get friends and family to pledge money to you for having your hair shaved. This is to show solidarity for kids who have lost their hair through treatment. The proceeds will go to St. Baldrick's.

The festivities will begin at 11:30 AM with a yoga session. The hair cutting starts at 2 PM.

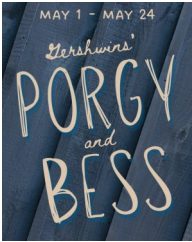
To sign up or to donate, visit <https://www.stbaldricks.org/events/williamstown2026>.





All The World's A Stage...

George and Ira Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* was a first for the American stage...a uniquely American opera that incorporated jazz and blues, and featured a nearly all-Black cast. This landmark work comes to Oaklyn's Ritz Theatre from May 1st-24th.



In the Black community of Catfish Row in Charleston, South Carolina, the residents muddle through the hot summer as best they can. Porgy, a good-natured disabled beggar, is in love with Bess, a good-time girl who is a bit too fond of whiskey and drugs (the latter provided by the pusher Sportin' Life). After Bess' brutal lover Crown kills another resident in a fight and flees the community, Bess grows to love the gentle, stable Porgy...but it may not be enough to keep her flighty nature in check. When Crown returns to claim her, and Bess' resistance falters, Porgy is forced to resort to violence...and in the aftermath, the temptations of Sportin' Life may be too much for Bess to withstand.

With a score that features such standouts as "Summertime", "I Got Plenty Of Nothin'", and "It Ain't Necessarily So," this groundbreaking opera deserves its reputation. To order tickets, visit ritztheatreco.org.

The music of Alanis Morissette, Canadian musician (and alumna of the kids' comedy show *You Can't Do That On Television*) is the basis of the jukebox musical *Jagged Little Pill*, onstage at Haddonfield Plays and Players from May 8th-23rd.

The Healys, led by mother MJ, are a seemingly-perfect white suburban family with an adopted Black daughter. But beneath the surface of the family's image, there are problems...husband Steve's porn habit and MJ's painkiller addiction, for starters. Daughter Frankie is struggling about how to come out to her parents as bisexual, while son Nick is dealing with the pressures of having to be perfect. When Nick catches a friend assaulting a drunk girl at a party, he must decide whether to come forward about what he saw. The incident brings the family's various crises to a head, forcing them all to confront their own self-deceptions and decide on how they will move forward. It all goes down to the tune of Alanis' best songs like "You Oughta Know," "Ironic", and "Head Over Feet."



To order tickets, visit haddonfieldplayers.com, and enjoy this new interpretation of the music of one of alt-rock's greatest songwriters.

"Come on, babe, why don't we paint the town...and all that jazz!" Philadelphia's Forrest Theater presents the hit musical *Chicago* from May 12th to May 17th!

Based on a straight play by Maurine Dallas Watkins (which was itself inspired by a true story), *Chicago* tells the Roaring Twenties story of Roxie Hart, would-be vaudeville star, who is arrested for the murder of her adulterous lover. In jail, she forms a rivalry with Velma Kelly, a vaudeville singer who murdered her sister. The two vie for publicity and the help of a shady lawyer, as Roxie finds the fame she's always dreamed of—proof positive of the phrase "there's no such thing as bad publicity." But there's always some new criminal to grab the public's attention...and Roxie must do whatever it takes to keep all eyes on her and keep herself off the gallows. Coming from the team of John Kander and Fred Ebb (*Cabaret*), this show, which had an Oscar-winning film version, has been a stage hit for years—with some pointed things to say about our cult of celebrity.



To order tickets or to find out more information, visit ensembleartsphilly.org...and all that jazz!

What's New Onscreen!

Some of the best work in the *Star Wars* universe lately has been on the small screen, not the big one...especially the hit series *The Mandalorian*, which comes to the big screen May 22nd with *The Mandalorian and Grogu*!

The story picks up from the series, which followed Mandalorian bounty hunter Din Djarin (Pedro Pascal) and the lovable little Force-sensitive creature that fans nicknamed “Baby Yoda” and “The Child” before his name was revealed as Grogu. In the wake of the Galactic Empire’s fall, Din and his adopted son have found their niche working for the fledgling New Republic...but new orders are often fragile when they start out, and remnants of the Empire are still a threat to everything the Republic is trying to build. Din and Grogu must contend with these threats, such as Rotta the Hutt, son of the deceased Jabba, who’s out for vengeance. With many different elements converging to undermine the delicate peace, it’s up to Din’s resourcefulness and curious little Grogu’s ongoing mastery of his Force powers to save the day.



Enjoy this first big-screen outing of the *Star Wars* universe in eight years, and May The Fourth...I mean, Twenty-Second...be with you!

Classic mysteries are in vogue again (not that they were every really *out* of vogue), but you’ll never believe the kind of sleuth you’ll see on the screen May 8th with *The Sheep Detectives*!



Based on Leonie Swann’s novel *Three Bags Full*, this movie introduces us to George Hardy (Hugh Jackman), an Irish shepherd who keeps himself to himself and mainly only interacts with his sheep. He loves to read to them from his favorite mystery novels. Of course, he’s got no idea that the sheep actually understand these stories and discuss them among themselves (with the voices of Julia Louis-Dreyfuss, Sir Patrick Stewart, Bryan Cranston and others). But when poor old George turns up dead, the sheep put their heads together and decide to figure out who killed him, using the methods and conventions from the novels George used to read to them. It’s not an easy task...they are, after all, *sheep*, and not only do they sometimes have trouble understanding human behavior, they’re limited in what physical actions they can perform. But with a little luck, they just might be able to unravel the mystery and bring about justice for their beloved shepherd...

It’s *Knives Out* meets *Babe* in a whodunit that really isn’t baaaaaaad.

A lonely widow finds an unusual friendship with an entirely different species in *Remarkably Bright Creatures*, based on Shelby Van Pelt’s bestselling novel and debuting on Netflix May 8th.

Tova Sullivan (Sally Field) lives a quiet life in a Washington State seaside town. She and her late husband suffered the loss of their son Erik when he was eighteen to a mysterious disappearance. After her husband’s death, Tova takes up the night shift as a cleaner at the aquarium. During her long, quiet hours there, she begins talking to the octopus Marcellus, sensing his intelligence and needing someone to unburden herself to. However, she has no idea just how intelligent Marcellus is...he has his own thoughts (voiced by Alfred Molina), and wants to help this kind woman in any way he can. Then there’s the case of Cameron Cassmore (Lewis Pullman), a brilliant but aimless young man who comes to town searching for answers about his absentee father and ends up working as the aquarium’s janitor. It’s up to Marcellus to bring Tova and Cameron together so she can help him find the answers, and the path in life, he desperately needs...and to help Tova find a new purpose as well.



This unusual tale of friendship and connection across generations—and species—is bound to delight both fans of the book and newcomers to the story.



The Biblio-Files

What the Dickens?!

Enjoy some recently published novels about the
life and characters of Charles Dickens.

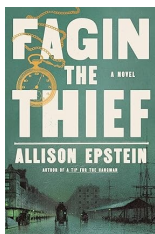
One of the more infamous episodes in Charles Dickens' life was a visit by fairy-tale author Hans Christian Andersen...who became *The Thing That Would Not Leave*. Francine Prose's *Five Weeks In The Country*, out this month, depicts this period in both writers' lives from several different points of view.

In the summer of 1857, Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, famous for his fairy tales, shows up at Gad's Hill in England, home of equally celebrated author Charles Dickens. Dickens had offhandedly invited Andersen to visit...*ten years ago*. From there, we get the points-of-view of the various inhabitants of the house as things deteriorate. Andersen, who has few social skills and barely speaks English but longs to be part of a family, picks up on the tension between Dickens and his wife even as he overstays his welcome. The nine (*nine!*) Dickens children can't understand why their father has been so cold lately. Catherine Dickens wonders the same of her husband, while the great author himself, in the throes of a midlife crisis, chafes at the restrictions of his marriage and family and wrestles with his infatuation for the ingénue actress in one of his plays. Unknown to Andersen, all this will lead to an upheaval in the author's life that will wreck the family and leave a stain on Dickens' legacy.



This novel, which has already received good reviews, is a fascinating look into two literary geniuses' minds.

The character of Fagin in *Oliver Twist* is one of the most memorable villains in literature...but to today's audiences, he can be problematic because of the question of anti-Semitism. Allison Epstein's 2025 novel *Fagin the Thief* explores the background of this most frightening of villains.



Orphaned young when his beloved mother Leah died, Jacob Fagin grew up living by his wits and his light fingers. He has little choice in a society that has already judged him simply for being Jewish. As he makes the acquaintance of brutal teenage thief Bill Sikes and gathers other young thieves, including the young pickpocket Jack "The Artful Dodger" Dawkins and Bill's girlfriend Nancy, he does what he has to in order to protect himself and those he's taken under his care. The story takes several different turns from the novel we know...Bill has some sympathetic qualities while Oliver isn't as innocent as Dickens painted him. And in the end, Fagin, who has his own code of honor even as he breaks the law, takes a different road from the one Dickens laid out for him.

One of the most acclaimed novels of 2025, this reimagining of Dickens' classic novel delves into its characters—and its main villain—in wondrous new ways.

And speaking of *Oliver Twist*...the character of Nancy, the prostitute with a heart of gold who ends up helping young Oliver and paying for it with her life, gets to tell her own side of the story in Kathy George's *The Scent of Oranges*.

Having been taken in by Fagin as an abandoned child, the streets have been the only life Nancy knows, whether it's in stealing from others or selling herself. But one unusual client, the handsome and well-bred Rufus, isn't so much interested in her body as in recruiting her for a false marriage to win his inheritance. Thrown by his genuine kindness to her, Nancy must try to fool Rufus' wealthy aunt while keeping all of this secret from her lover, the brutal and abusive Bill Sikes. All the while, the events of Dickens' novel unfold, as Nancy feels a connection with young Oliver Twist's innocence and tries to protect him from Fagin's plans. Anyone who's familiar with the novel knows Nancy's eventual fate, but the novel takes us to her death...and beyond, as her departed spirit ties up loose ends.



One of Dickens' most compelling female characters finally gets to tell her story in her own words.