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Birney Elementary School Student Newspaper

FEB 2026

Marquee Magic!

Birney's new electronic marquee is up and running! Look for it when you pass by to see all of the fun things going on at our school.

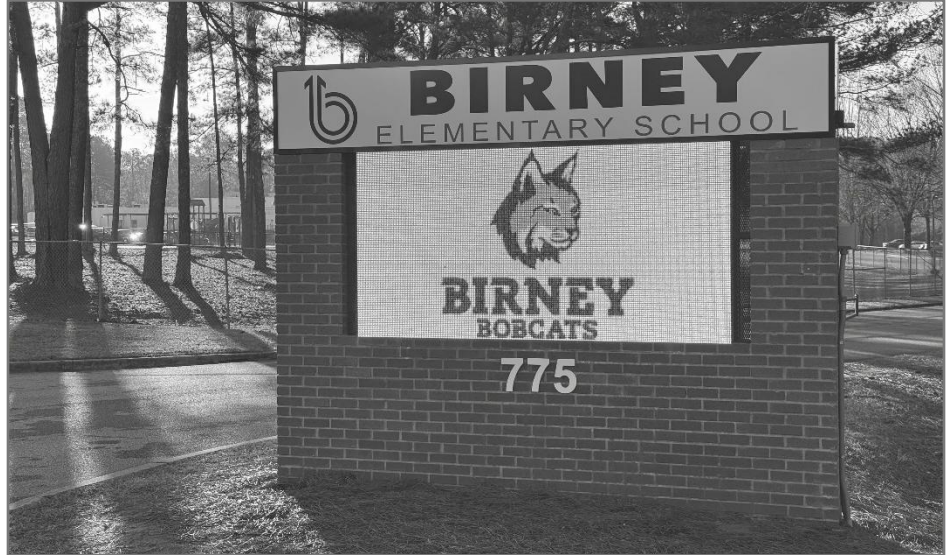
Valentine's Day History

By: Crystal Piña, 5th

Do you celebrate Valentine's Day? Some people do and some people don't. Also, what do you think Valentine's means? Today, I am going to talk to you about how people celebrate Valentine's Day, and what it's all about.

First, many people celebrate Valentine's Day by giving someone they like chocolate and asking them to be their valentine. Some people even give cards with their chocolate. Valentines don't have to be romantic, either. You can be friend valentines, where you give chocolate to a friend and it doesn't mean you're in love, you're just good friends. Some people have a name for Friend Valentine's, like Galentine's or Palentine's.

Second, if you are wondering what Valentine's really means, it's a holiday for expressing admiration, affection, and appreciation for the people you



love. Lastly, Friend Valentine's means celebrating love, appreciation, and companionship with close friends, rather than romantic partners.

This is how people celebrate Valentine's Day and Friend Valentine's Day and what they're all about.

Valentine's Celebration

By: Kailan Chilel, 5th

Valentine's Day is going to be awesome this year! I love it because everything is red and pink, and we get to eat more sugar than usual. I have a pretty big plan to make sure it's the best day ever for me and my friends.

First, I'm going to finish my cards. I will make them look amazing. I have to make eighteen of them so I don't miss anyone in

my class. I also made a mailbox out of an old shoebox and covered it in construction paper, so people have a place to drop my cards and treats.

At school, we're having a big party! My mom and I made heart-shaped cookies with tons of frosting to share. We'll probably play games and trade candy until we get a total sugar rush. I'm most excited to see if I get any of those funny candy hearts that say stuff like "Bestie" or "U Rock."

After school, I'm going to go home and give my parents their cards. I made my mom a paper flower bouquet that won't ever die, which is pretty smart if you think about it. My dad says we might order heart-shaped pizza for dinner too, which is basically the best way to eat pepperoni.

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I'm really stoked for the whole day. It's just fun to be nice to people and get a bunch of chocolate at the same time. I hope I don't get a stomachache, but even if I do, it'll totally be worth it!

Valentine's Day

By: Zaria Jackson, 4th

I love Valentine's Day. What I do to celebrate the holiday is different every year, but three things are always the same. First,

I give a gift to my classmates. Then, I give a gift to my family. Last, I go out to eat with my family. Some things change, but those three stay the same, and that's why I love Valentine's Day.

Bobcat Beliefs – Student Opinions & Editorials

Black History Month & The Night the Streetlights Spoke

By: McKenzie Collard, 5th

In February of 1960, the air in Greensboro, North Carolina, was cold enough to sting the skin, but inside the Woolworth's lunch counter, the heat came from something far stronger than the weather. Four young Black college students, Ezell Blair Jr., David Richmond, Franklin McCain, and Joseph McNeil, sat quietly on stools that had never been meant for them.

They didn't shout. They didn't threaten. They simply asked for coffee.

The waitress, her voice tight, told them they needed to leave. The manager hovered nearby, his jaw clenched. Around them, white customers stared, some with curiosity, others with open

hostility. But the four young men stayed.

Franklin McCain would later say that the moment he sat down, he felt "as though I had gained my manhood." That day, they weren't just students, they were a spark.

By nightfall, word had spread across the campus of North Carolina A&T. The next day, more students joined. By the end of the week, the lunch counter was filled with young Black men and women, sitting in silent defiance, their backs straight, their eyes steady.

The sit-ins spread like wildfire, into Durham, Nashville, Atlanta. Each time, the rules were the same: no violence, no retaliation, no matter the insults or the coffee poured down their backs. The power was in their stillness.

Years later, when Franklin McCain walked past that same

Woolworth's building, the streetlights seemed to hum with memory. The stools were still there, preserved behind glass, but the real monument was invisible—the courage that had rippled outward, changing laws, changing minds, changing the very idea of who could sit where.

Black History Month is filled with names and dates, but it is also filled with moments like that, when ordinary people, in ordinary places, decided they would no longer move. And in their stillness, they moved the world.

My Birthday

By: Jacqueline Rivera Mota, 5th

Today I'm going to tell you about how I celebrated my birthday. To get started, first I got home after school and unpack, then I went downstairs and ate some hot wings. After eating, I went to the living room and watched some TV. My mom and

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sister got home, so we went to 7 Brew. We got four drinks, and one was for free because it was my birthday!

Then my cousin came and we ate some more hot wings together. Afterwards, we cut the cake and I got gifts from my parents and sister. My mom gave me clothes, my dad got me some balloons, a plant, and some money, and they both got me a Pandora ring. My sister got us matching sisters Pandora charms that say, "I will always have a friend."

And that's everything I did on my birthday. Next week I'm having my birthday party, and I can't wait!

The Summer of 2024

By: Jackson Wruck, 5th

In the summer of 2024 me and my mom went to California for a week. We went to see two

baseball games and two of my friends. Then we went to this convention called Comic-Con. It is where you get top information that you cannot anywhere else yet, and people sell things. Some companies sell limited toys and there is a lot of cosplay. I saw a lot of cosplayers that cosplayed as Deadpool and my favorite was Sailor Mars, a combination of Bruno Mars and Sailor moon from the anime. At Comic-Con there are a lot of people and there is a good taco place near Petco Park and the food tucks near the convention center. At Comic-Con there are a lot of artists and people that make their own stuff. I loved the trip to California, it was fun and I would like to go back. California was one of the best places I will ever go.

Winter Break is a Blast

By: Tyler Goodwin, 5th

Last year, the winter break of the New Year was a great time to not miss out on the best. The goal of 2026 has surprisingly been reached, and the best vacations and holidays were there to join in to the party. Why not do it again? We can! Let's bring back some happy winter moments from the past and bring back that happiness.

Christmas is a first in winter break. The presents, cookies, and even the cozy campfire stories are something great in the winter. Vacations are a good way to celebrate the New Year, too. They're exciting and cool just like the New Year is. Speaking of New Year, the celebration of 2026 could be the best part about winter break. The Ball Drop, the fireworks, and best of all, new years resolutions are all the best of 2026.

Staff Interview with Principal Dills – Conducted by Romina Godoy, 4th

Romina: Alright, let's start. Why did you become a principal?

Mr. Dills: Oh man, you're starting with a good one. How many questions do you have? Let me prepare myself.

Romina: Five.

Mr. Dills: Okay, got it. I'm going to give you two answers.

First, both of my parents were educators. My mom was a teacher, and my dad was a social worker. I basically lived my life in school. Even during the summer, I was in school with them, so school was all I really knew.

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When I first went to college, I wanted to become a marine biologist. You know what that means?

Romina: Yes, my brother is one.

Mr. Dills: For real? That's awesome! Those are really cool jobs. But after about three chemistry classes, I realized I didn't like it very much.

My dad told me I should sign up for an education class that would allow me to go into a school and work with students. I ended up observing in a second-grade classroom, and it was so much fun. That experience changed everything for me. That's when I knew I wanted to be a teacher.

My second reason is, because my parents were educators, I learned the importance of serving others at a very young age. I always knew I wanted to help people, even if I didn't know exactly how that would look. So, I became a principal because I wanted to help people, help our school, and help our community grow and improve.

Romina: What do you like to do in your free time?

Mr. Dills: How many answers can I give?

Romina: Just a summary.

Mr. Dills: The first thing that comes to mind is my family. I have three children who keep me very busy. My youngest is seven years old and in first grade. I love helping coach his baseball team. I also enjoy playing golf. I say it helps me relax, but honestly, it sometimes makes me more upset because I'm not very good at it. And here's a weird one — I'm obsessed with my grass. I love mowing my lawn. I know it sounds crazy, but I really enjoy it.

So, baseball, golf, and grass.

Romina: If you could change anything about the school, what would it be?

Mr. Dills: That's a tough question because our school is pretty incredible...

The reason I have a hard time answering that is because our school is amazing. There are small things I would change, but I'm very grateful for so many things about our school.

If I had to pick something, I'd say the roof. We have some leaks, so we're getting a new roof that we're very excited about.

Romina: What inspired you to become a principal?

Mr. Dills: When I first started out, I was a teacher for several years. Can I give you a quote? I love quotes. The quote is:

"If I have seen further, it is because I stand on the shoulders of giants." ~ Sir Isaac Newton

What that means is that I've been inspired by the people I've worked with throughout my career. This is about my twentieth year working in schools, and I've worked with many incredible people. Some of them were just on another level. They inspired me, and I thought, I really want to serve people the way they do.

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Those people helped me see that I should keep pushing myself to grow and serve schools in different ways. I've learned how schools should run because I've worked with amazing people — those "giants."

Romina: What's your favorite holiday or season?

Mr. Dills: You ask really good questions.

My favorite holiday is Christmas. It just feels magical.

It might sound crazy, but I also love summertime, even though it's really hot. That's when I get to work in my yard. Mowing the grass is like therapy for me. When I've had a tough day, I put on my headphones, listen to music, and just focus on mowing. I also get to do baseball activities with my kids during the summer.

Romina: What's your favorite holiday?

Mr. Dills: It's definitely Christmas. I love the magic in the air. I love seeing houses transform with lights, trees, and decorations. Christmas just feels like home.

Romina's Roundup: In my interview, I learned that Mr. Dills became a principal because his parents were educators. In his free time, Mr. Dills likes to coach baseball and mow his grass. He likes almost everything about our school, except the roof. And Mr. Dills thinks the best holiday is Christmas because it feels magical.

Tyler's How-To

How to Make a Valentine's Day Card for Your Loved Ones

By: Tyler Goodwin, 4th

Have you wondered what things you can do for Valentine's Day? You could give someone a gift, plan a family fun day with things they want to do, and you can even make a card! In this article, you get to make a card and give it to your loved one.

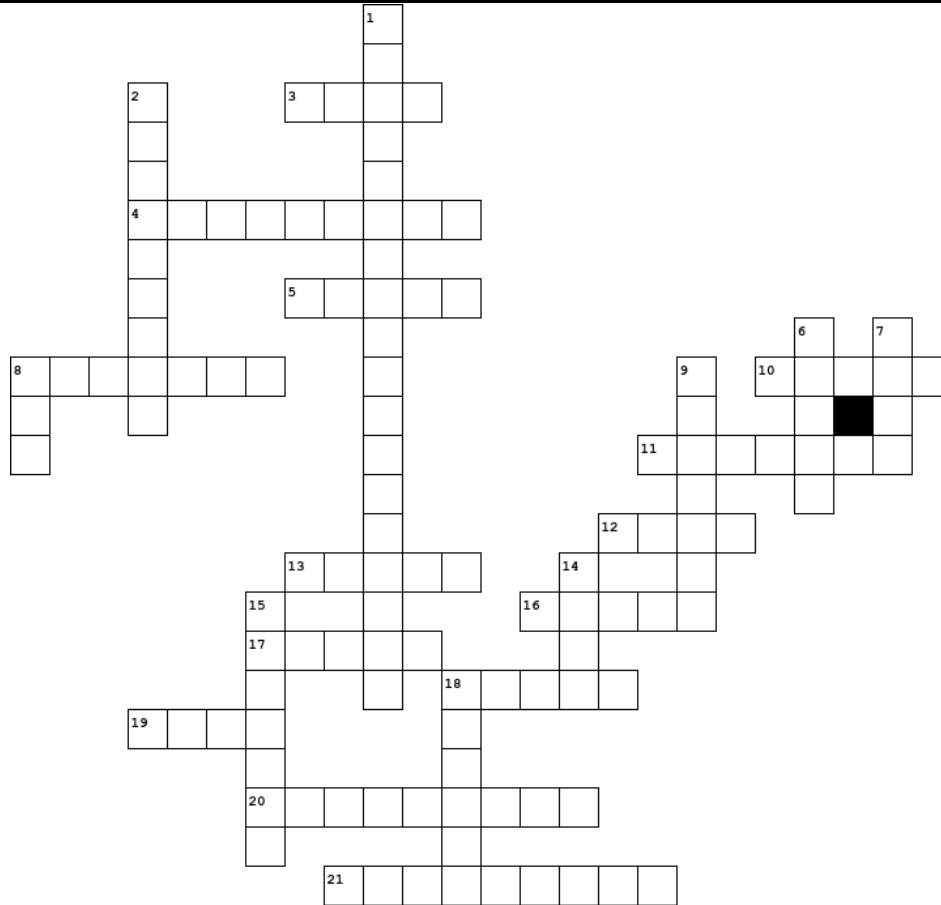
First, get a regular 8½-by-11-inch paper and fold it in half. Second, think about how you want to design your card. Think about the traits of the person you are giving it to, like their favorite color. Sketch out a few designs and pick the one you think they'd like the most. Third, design your card and color it. If you want, you can put a message on the inside of the card. When you are done, you can give it to your loved one for Valentine's Day.

Bobcat Brainteasers

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Across

- Valentine's colors are red, _____, and purple
- Sent to friends to celebrate V-Day
- The shape we draw around Valentine's Day
- The past we learn from
- Cupid shoots these from his bow
- Being brave even when you're scared
- Maya Angelou was a famous writer and _____
- Not afraid
- Rosa _____ would not give up her seat
- People coming together as one
- Sweet treats you might get in a Valentine bag
- A present for someone special
- People living and working together
- What you send to people you love

Down

- A Valentine candy that contains little messages
- A favorite Valentine's candy
- Martin Luther King Jr. gave a famous speech about this
- A big feeling we celebrate on February 14th
- A squeeze to show you care
- A common Valentine's gift that smells good
- A note you give to others with your name on it
- Fairness for all people
- Working hard to make the world better