

TIGER TIMES



Valentine's Edition

No. 3

Jan. 31, 2025

Cupid's Masquerade: Love unveiled

With the second semester in full swing, there are a multitude of events that many Illini Bluffs students look forward to, like the Winter Formal held on Feb. 8.

Students gathered for a night of excitement and mystery at this year's "Cupid's Masquerade" themed Winter Formal.

The event, organized and executed by the Student Council, welcomed just over 100 attendees, with each receiving a masquerade mask upon arrival.

One of the nights most standout out moments came with the crowning of the Winter Formal royalty. This year's king and queen were sophomore Ronee R. and junior Ty B., and, for Ronee, the announcement was an exciting experience.

"When I heard our names announced, it was really cool, and wearing the crown all night was super fun," she said.

Not only was the crowning of the king and queen a hit, but the entire setting and ambiance was appreciated by many, too.

"I did love the decorations and the vibe of Formal," Ronee said.

The Student Council selected this year's theme as a new take on the traditional Valentine's Day aesthetic, making it a night many will look back on and fondly remember.

"We wanted to do another Valentine's theme, but just with a little twist to it," said Student Council President Sarah P.

So as to bring the vision of the Council to life, they held several planning meetings focused on decorations and atmosphere. The result: a completely different experience from last year's winter-themed formal.

"This year's formal was completely different because we had a Valentine's masquerade theme with totally different decorations," Sarah said.

The setting featured romantic lighting, themed decorations, and music to fit the festive atmosphere. The masks added an air of mystery, but students approached the wearing of them with varying levels of commitment.

"I feel like the dance was definitely more casual," Ronee said.

Throughout the dance, students took advantage of all the different areas set up at the dance for the enjoyment of the attendees, but one space stood out as a fan favorite.

"I feel like the dance floor was definitely the most used," Ronee said.



Winter Formal King and Queen Ty B. and Ronee R.

With the dance floor, entrance and all the other beloved places at the event, this year's Winter Formal provided an exciting night for many of those who attended, but some students wished for a larger crowd.

"The vibe of formal was very fun," Ronee said, "I just wish more

people were there."

Despite the lower attendance, the event brought students together for, what many students would call, a night of fun and excitment.

With Winter Formal now behind them, many students are looking ahead to the next big event coming up on the school calendar, Prom.

Senior column: Waffle's Impact

By Mazzi R.
Copy Editor

The school years have been filled with disappointments, achievements, secrets and many regrets. But, despite everything that's happened, there has been one creature who's heard me out about everything and stayed by my side. Has it been by choice or force? We're still figuring that out.

I learned about Waffle's presence from the words of my sister. A girl who sat near her on the bus told us about the litter her cat gave birth to and we were finally allowed to choose which kitten we would want. With very little debate, we chose the brightest colored kitten in the litter. Little did I know that she would be my soulmate who would help me through some of my hardest moments in school and life.

While raising my cat, I've learned how to be more patient and open, not only with her, but with people too. People have never made sense to me and I've never felt a place within people but when I was with Waffle the feeling of fitting a mold wasn't there anymore. I felt comfortable being me again and that began to help me get through school.

Everything started to make more and less sense as the days passed and, even when nothing seemed to make sense at all, waffle was always waiting at home for me. She is a place of escape when my mind fills up too much.

Pets in general are a great place of escape because they can understand you, they might not be the best at comforting you, but they certainly try their hardest, even when you don't feel like you deserve their love and comfort.

Waffle is truly such an incredible companion and I feel extremely lucky to have been given the opportunity to love and care for her. Thank you for being so, so amazing.



Waffle, Mazzi R.'s cat.

Letter from the Editor: Valentine's Day

By Alexis R. Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

This is our third annual Valentine's Day edition. This year, you can expect to see our staff's perspective on Valentine's Day as a holiday, and what gets us through this season.

Everyone on staff has written something suited to their interests and that they have a deep connection with. These articles range from evaluations of the GRAMMYs to the science of Hallmark movies. Everyone in these pages has put in the time and care to share what they enjoy talking about with you, our readers, and we hope you find something you can enjoy as well.

While Valentine's Day is a romantic holiday, I view it as more of a celebration that love exists. It's important to recognize that loving yourself and the people around you is the real meaning of the season, but also something we can take away from the holiday itself and apply each and every day.

P2 • THE TIGER TIMES January 31, 2025

Authentic love: How to exercise each different type

By Kennedy K.
Voice Editor

With Valentine's Day approaching, we should make sure to exercise all types of love this season. Eros, storge, philautia, and philia are all different types of love that the ancient Greeks suspected us of being capable of. While Valentine's Day is primarily known for celebrating romantic love, we can take inspiration from this ancient empire and show authentic love in all of its forms.

Eros, the romantic love, is the most familiar form of love expressed on Valentine's Day. As soon as Christmas wraps up, the supermarkets fill their isles with assorted chocolates and plush bears for the upcoming holiday. Every year millions of people run by their local stores to grab these cheesy and predictable gifts for their loved ones. This valentines day gift your special someone something intentional. The Ancient Greeks saw eros as a deep emotional connection. You can display this connection by planning an evening together or trying something new. Whether you go rock climbing or out to a nice dinner your partner will appreciate the gesture of being thought of.

However, romantic love is far from the only type of love we experience. For many, storge, familial love, is the first love we experience -- love that a parent and child relationship depicts. While this isn't the love that makes Valentine's Day famous, it is just as important. Consider showing Storge by making your parents a card this Valentine's Day or gifting them their favorite candy.

Philautia love is what the Greeks refer to as self-love. This type of love they deemed not just healthy but also necessary. Without loving ourselves it makes it hard to give and receive love to others. To show Philautia love this Valentine's Day spoil yourself. This Valentine's day buy yourself flowers, take yourself out for coffee, or even just take a moment to give yourself credit for all that you do.

Philia is the love that you find in a friendship. Much like storge, philia is a love that we are capable of when we are rather young. The greeks describe this love not as romantic but as feeling at ease. Friendships are something that can truly stand the test of time and there is many ways to show your love for your friends this valentines day. While you might not feel apt to take your bestie on a fancy dinner date, either dropping them off a sweet treat or sending them a nice message would get your message across just the same.

This Valentines Day, make it a point to show love in one way or another. To your parents, friends, significant other and most importantly, yourself. Whether you plan an extragevegant night out or leave a nice note for someone, you are making someone else feel special, which is the reason for the season.

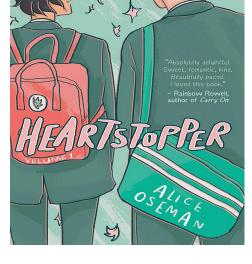
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Romance novels ranked: The four best romance books ever

By Lanie K.

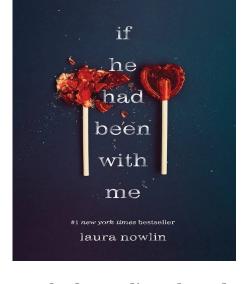
Heartstopper series

The Heartstopper series is a fan favorite. The novel follows the two main characters, Nick and Charlie, along their journey. Nick is struggling whilst trying to come out and is scared that all of his classmates will say nasty and rude things to him just as they did to Charlie. While there are some sad scenes, most of it is a cute love story between the two and shows their adventures of being themselves.



This is a story about a highschool girl named Autumn and her life as a teenager. It shows her good and bad days, and shares her growing up next door to her best friend, Phineas. It's a slower paced book, but, once you get to plot twist, you'll be stuck reading to find out more. This novel is one that I highly reccomend to any and everybody, it is the perfect mix of love and relatability. Phineas and Autumn are so interesting.

If he had been with me

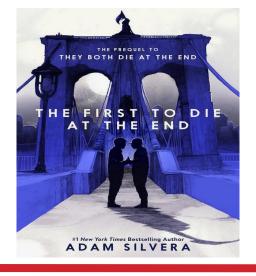


The first to die at the end

This book is a queer love story of two characters, Orian and Valentino, the whole point of the book is to know that someone is dying at the end but you don't know who until they get the phone call. They share their journey with less than 24 hours before one is to die. Other than that, most of the book is a happy story about them.



This is the first book of the ACOTAR series and, starting off, this one is an enemies to lovers situation. Throughout the book the main character, Freyre, has a love-hate relationship with a mystery character which you'll find out more about once you read. The book shares her journey of defeating three tasks to win back her lover from the queen who stole him.



What guys want for Valentine's Day: The ultimate guide to getting men gifts

By Ayden B.

Voice Reporter

Valentine's Day is here and, if you, like most people, are not sure what to get your boyfriend, or whatever lucky guy you asked to be your valentine, this list can help

SARAH I. MAAS

#5 Candy:

While candy is a safe pick it, shouldn't be the first thing you reach for. Candy is one thing you can always get right, ask them what they like and then go pick it out. This one is easy and it will make

them happy, but you can definitely do great because there are so many better. different choices as to what you

#4 Cologne:

A good cologne increases a man's confidence by leaps and bounds. This is lower on the list because it's harder to find a good cologne for cheap, but getting this item will surely make you both happy.

#3 Legos:

Legos are a solid pick for any age. They'll keep your special person busy for hours. Legos are beyond great because there are so many different choices as to what you can build and create. You will definitely see their face light up if they see these on Valentine's Day.

#2 A handwritten letter:

A handwritten letter is by far one of the most thoughtful gifts you can give anyone because it comes from you directly. A letter is something that you have to put time and effort into giving someone, and it makes it all the more special and more meaningful. Buying a gift is all well and good, but making one is on a whole different level.

#1 Sword:

Now, I know what you're thinking, a sword isn't a Valentine's Day gift, but hear me out. A sword will keep your Valentine entertained and out of your hair for hours and hours. Most men can agree and say they have wished to have a sword at least once in their life. A sword will make them smile, be silent and more able to protect you, its really a three-in-one gift.

January 31, 2025 THE TIGER TIMES ● P

Hallmark movies: What's the science behind them?

By Josh B.

PR Manager

Hallmark Movies are an interesting case study of mine and have been for a while. Some people love these movies but others hate them, and the reason they feel these opposing feelings are for the same reasons.

"There are a lot of people that like to watch the same show over because you can enjoy it without the element of surprise" Local Hallmark expert Mike Crall said, "it's kind of like a comfort. And Hallmark movies are like that in that you have a rough idea of how they're gonna turn out and the plot beats, yet they're different places, different people, different mixtures of people."

But what are these plot points that make Hallmark Movies what they are? My research has shown these results.

In the beginning, the main character, usually a woman, is leading a happy life. Then something happens, and they have to go somewhere else, a hometown, a big city, as long as it's recognizable,

that's the "complication" in the plot. Next, the encounter happens. They meet their (soon-to-be) romantic interest, they're usually an ex, longlost first love, family friend, or the like. They normally have a neutral to negative opinion about them at the start. Throughout the plot they keep meeting each other, the romantic interest is always there, making themselves helpful, and being a generally good person, while the main character begrudgingly accepts the situation. Eventually, the main character finally starts warming up to the love interest, they enjoy their time together and it's less awkward until one of them drops their stuff, the other goes to help them pick up, they lock eyes and then awkwardly part ways right after. Then there is a little bit more filler, they probably talk to their friends before finding each other. They meet outside of the place they first met, they lock eyes and almost kiss before they're interrupted one last time. They get away from each other and rethink everything thinking it was never meant to be. But finally one of them decides to reconcile, they are with each other, spill their feelings, kiss, and live happily ever after in the big city, small town, or whatever "magical"

place they met.

That's the magic of a Hallmark movie. Each one is exactly like that, the only difference is the names and places, they all have seemingly copy-paste personalities and copy-paste plots. Some people hate this, they might see watching this same thing over and over as torture. Whilst others love it, it's comforting to watch these predictable nice movies. And whatever fits your fancy, I hope that you can enjoy your Valentine's season while finding your true love at the pumpkin patch, Christmas tree farm, or your ex-lover's parents' coffee small-town coffee shop.



Staff Picks: 2000s heartthrobs

By Staff

Matthew McConaughey - Grace H.

"How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" is Matthew McConaughey's role that has gotten him the title of heartthrob. While he has played in other movies, where he is a love interest, "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" is one of his most famous. He starred with Kate Hudson who was his love interest. They had many adorable scenes together like when they went to get ice cream and rode his motorcycle. In another scene he seemed very human. When he was at his parents house playing a card game he seemed like a normal person. Then later in the movie he and Hudson were at a work party which they had been drinking at. They ended up singing karaoke together but neither of their voices sounded too great which made both of them more human. McConaughey has become someone that is known to play a good love interest which definitely makes him a heartthrob.

Chad Michael Murray - Grace H.

Chad Michael Murray is known for many roles that have had him as the love interest. He was one of the main guys in "One Tree Hill" where he played Lucas Scott. Playing Lucas Scott was Murray's breakout role. He played a teenage guy who a lot of girls find attractive. That wasn't his only big role. He played Austin Ames in "A Cinderella Story." Murray was the movie's version of Prince Charming. While he doesn't play basketball in this movie like "One Tree Hill" he does play football. With both of these roles and many others he has had he has become a heartthrob. While he has played some characters that aren't the nicest or best guys he has always been good looking.

Jim Carrey - Alexis R.

No matter what crazy role this man could possibly play, you can't help but be entranced by his charm. I feel like talking about simply just a single performance of Jim Carrey's just doesn't do him justice at all. He's an exceptional actor that somehow is able to immerse himself in every role he has. In "The Truman Show", I was particularly fond of the way he was able to really pull off his character, Truman Burbank, and his spiralling mental state as he slowly learns that the world around him is not what it seems to be. Another role I really like from him is Doctor Robotnik in the "Sonic the Hedgehog" movie franchise. In that, he really brings a side to Eggman that is truly so fun to watch. His chemistry with Lee Majdoub—who plays Agent Stone, the right-hand man of Robotnik—is genuinely one of my favorite things about the movies. Watching Carrey interact with the world inside the films he's in genuinely has me swooning at times, which isn't a surprise to anyone at this point.

Plankton - Alex R

The plankton that went to college, Sheldon J. Plankton is truly one of a kind. A man of true cuisine, who only eats the best of holographic











meatloaves. Plankton is a man of true ambition, he has been chasing his dreams for 26 years, hoping to finally create Bikini Bottom's best restaurant. Who wouldn't love this guy. Plankton has quite the origin, growing up with his long time best friend, Eugene Krabs, creating the perfect burger. Unfortunately Krabs betrayed him, stealing his recipe leaving him with chum. But that never stopped him, as he built his life up, opening the very successful, Chum Bucket. Plankton is very crafty, inventing many machines to help him in his endeavors. Although Plankton is married, that doesn't prevent him from pulling in all the fish and robots. Who wouldn't like a guy like him.

John Krasinski - Karrigan W.

John Krasinski, in my opinion, is the number one heart throb of the 2000s. If you watched "The Office" you understand! As Jim Halpert in "The Office," he was portrayed as the boy next door (or I guess you could say the boy at the next desk). He swept Pam off her feet. She fell in love with him because of his kind and caring personality. He was a friend to her when she was in a toxic relationship. Not only was he sweet, but if looks could kill? We'd all surely be dead. Even as he's aged, John Krasinski is still as handsome as ever.

Johnny Depp - Lanie K and Annabella S

When I think of Johnny Depp, I think of him in "Pirates of the Caribbean." This franchise was very popular and many have found that his role in this movie was definitely made for him and he rocked it. Even when he's shouting about his jar of dirt he's got that tinge to him that's irresistible. Still, to this day, this man has aged like fine wine and many other fans of his would agree.



THE TIGER TIMES January 31, 2025

The 2025 GRAMMYs

By Alexis R.

Editor-in-Chief

The 2025 GRAMMYs-which broadcasted Feb. 2 of this year-was certainly a night to remember. Between performances, award winners, and acceptance speeches, this specific broadcast is definitely one that will be talked about for years to come.

Considered to be the biggest night of music, this year's GRAMMYs definitely lived up to the name. It was especially amazing to see how many queer and female artists won awards this year, most notably Chappell Roan, Doechii, Sabrina Carpenter, and Chali XCX. The performances from these artists were also incredibly well choreographed and thought out, all having a special flare to them that had viewers glued to their devices in anticipation as their acts continued on.

Starting with the artist who won the Best Rap Album award with her album titled "Alligator Bites Never Heal", Doechii. Her award was nothing short of deserved, something she took great pride in and explained, with teary eyes, that she knew her hard work would pay off in the end. She also pointed out the fact that she is the third black woman to ever receive this award in GRAMMYs history, the two before her being Lauryn Hill and Cardi B. On top of getting her well deserved recognition dn award, she had quite a spectacular performance that featured a mix of both of her songs "CATFISH" and "DENIAL IS A RIVER" from her award winning album.

Another highlight of the night was the 2025 GRAMMYs Best New Artist: Chappell Roan. Roan, who climbed the charts in what seemed overnight in 2024, most definitely deserved this award. In November of 2024 during the VMAs, she had also been awarded the same title, which is such an incredible feat. She used her acceptance speech to talk about how healthcare and living wages needed to improve for newer artists, which sparked lots of misguided backlash. Other than that, she had a rather eventful night, especially considering how elaborate her performance was. Chappell Roan performed her song "Pink Pony Club" while riding in on a large, pink pony with her rodeo clowns.

And, while not a queer nor female artist, rapper Kendrick Lamar made GRAMMYs history with his song "Not Like Us" at the awards show. His song gained a total of five wins, becoming the most decorated song in the history of the awards show. It won Record of the Year, Song of the Year, Best Rap Performance, Best Rap Song and Best Music Video. What started as a diss-track towards Drake eventually became quite a hit track in pop culture as we know it today.

This year has definitely been one of the best and most genuine in GRAMMYs history. Some might argue that people were definitely snubbed at the annual awards ceremony this year, and while that is true in certain cases, it's important to recognize the people who worked hard to get where they are today. This specific broadcast also definitely sets the bar high for next year, leaving music enthusiasts excited for what the future holds for the music industry.











Kendrick brings feud to SB LIX

By Alexis R.

Coming off of his five GRAMMY wins just a week before, Kendrick Lamar took his sound to one of the biggest stages on live television: Super Bowl LIX. During the halftime show held on Feb. 9, Lamar performed 12 songs and incorporated quite meaningful in-betweens for each song. These in-betweens were statements about the current state of politics in the U.S., using references that flew over the heads of some people who were watching them happen. While the performance itself was very stunning and visually pleasing, people were left confused and had mixed opinions about the performance overall.

The people who did enjoy it, however, were mostly watching to see if the Drake v. Kendrick Lamar beef

would make it to the halftime show. Over the summer of 2024, Drake and Lamar had some serious beef that resulted in what seemed to be a musical battle of diss tracks. One significant part of the whole ordeal, however, was the drop of Kendrick Lamar's song "Not Like Us," which ended up being a pivotal moment in the beef between the rappers. To add salt to the metaphorical burn, Lamar only made eye contact with the audience to address Drake with a smile. During this portion of Kendrick Lamar's performance, the visuals and choreography of the people on stage with him ended up being jabs at Drake as well. Many people weren't expecting this song to be played at the Super Bowl considering the contents of the song itself, but it's safe to say that this halftime show performance will be remembered for years to come.

2025 GRAMMY snubs

By Annabella S. and Lanie K. Cartoonist & Copy Editor

Billie Eilish - Lanie K.

If you have kept up with the GRAMMYs which aired on Feb. 3, there were many successful music artists that were nominated for a variety of different categories, with many dubbed winners and others snubbed. Starting off on snubbed is Billie Eilish, a nine time grammy winner who came out with a hit album called "Hit Me Hard and Soft" with 10 songs. After teasing a 14 second clip of her most played song "BIRDS OF A FEATHER," she got her fans more excited and since that day, she has released her new album which has a little over 2 billion streams. Going into the night, she was nominated for seven GRAMMYs. Everyone of her fans were excited for her to win some more GRAMMYs after she posted a thanks to all her fans for helping her album reach number one on the charts and explain how happy she was and that she felt that this album that she and her brother Finneas worked so long on has been the greatest album that she has made and showed that they work so very hard on it and felt that it deserved a grammy. After watching her chances of all 7 GRAMMYs fade away, they finally landed on album of the year: the last category she was nominated for. Ultimately, Billie would lose this GRAMMY to "Cowboy Carter", which was released by Beyoncé.

As Beyoncé was giving her speech, the cameras cut to Billie crying, obviously sad to have not won a single grammy for the album that she worked so hard on. Many fans have shown their frustration on social media, talking about how billie deserved this grammy and that she was snubbed. Others don't understand how a country album won over a pop album with almost 3 billion listeners.

Tyler Gregory Okonma - Annabella S.

Tyler Gregory Okonma, otherwise known as "Tyler, The Creator," dropped a well-enjoyed album on Oct. 28, 2024. Many people were very excited about the release of this album, "Chromakopia," as it had been three years since his last album dropped.

"Chromakopia" includes 14 songs totaling 53 minutes. Tyler not only released his lyrical genius upon everyone, but also provided a story within his music. As with all his albums, Tyler conveys emotion and storytelling from beginning to end in each album. Expressing himself through alter egos and singing about complex things such as the absence of his father in his life, battle with depression and his extreme struggle with his love life.

In "Chromakopia", he expresses himself through his character Chroma who sings about themes such as monogamy, unplanned parenthood and the struggles with being so famous. It was very well received by many people all over the world, earning about 85,665,784 first-day streams on the global Spotify chart and being one of the top 20 Spotify debuts of all time and simultaneously occupying the entire top 14 on the U.S. Spotify charts, with "St. Chroma" being No. 1.

"Chromakopia" was Tyler's first number-one album... So you'd expect such a popular album to get a GRAMMY, but alas poor Tyler went home empty-handed. Do you want to know why? It's simply because the album was dropped too late. The cutoff for being nominated for a GRAMMY is in September. This means that, if Tyler is to be nominated for a 2025 GRAMMY, it'd have to be in 2026, a whole year from now. By the time they come around again, "Chromakopia" will have been piled under a bunch of new content and have a lesser chance of being nominated, let alone winning the actual GRAMMY.



January 31, 2025 THE TIGER TIMES ● P5

Ending on a high note: Cheer squad makes state

By Will G. Sports Editor

In between the basketball season is a shorter cheer season. It is filled with hardships, and requires extensive dedication. The sport of cheer is a hard one, requiring consistent practice, motions and words memorization, and extreme technical skills. All of the hard work of a season leads up to three minutes on a Saturday competition.

The Illini Bluffs Cheer team has always been successful, as they have been to state five times now under the leadership of head coach Aana Giftos, but this year's state appearance proved to be significant for a few reasons.

"Cheering at state as a freshman was unreal because we had all seniors on the mat." Senior cheerleader Tori Brown said. "This year was truly a full circle moment."

However, not just the seniors are going to be leaving. After 11 seasons as the high school head

cheer coach and thirteen seasonss as a cheer coach here at IB, Giftos has decided to retire.

"I couldn't have asked for a better way to retire from coaching than hitting zero at state!" Head coach Aana Giftos said.

During the season, the athletes on the team were determined to make this year a memorable one.

"Getting Aana back to state for the last time was really special, especially being there for 2 out of 5 state runs." Senior cheerleader Tori Brown said.

Now a change of coaching will happen for the first time in over a decade. Riley Morgan is poised take over the head coaching position next year and is going to miss her mentor, who coached her intermittently from 2012-2017.

"She has always been an influence and she prepared me this year more." Ms. Morgan said. "Mentally, I feel ready. I know it's going to be a lot."



Megan R. and Annie S. hold Miley R. in prep at IHSA state.

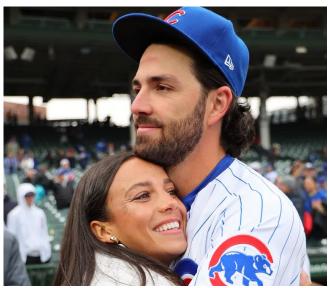
Hitting it off: Modern sports' best power couples

By Will G.
Sports Editor

Jrue and Lauren Holiday

Jrue Holiday plays with the Boston Celtics and Lauren is a retired soccer player. Lauren retired in 2015 after the 2015 Fifa Women's World Cup team to focus on being with her family more. They met in 2008 while attending UCLA when Jrue was playing basketball and Lauren was playing soccer. Jrue and Lauren met when a fan thought Jrue was a different person and asked for his autograph. They married in 2013 in Malibu California. Now the two live in a mansion outside of Boston.





Dansby and Mallory Swanson

Dansby Swanson plays shortstop for the Chicago Cubs and Mallory plays for the Chicago Stars FC. Dansby and Mallory met because of teammate Jace Peterson. Peterson was Dansby's teammate on the Atlanta Braves and he married Mallory's sister. After they met the two went on a blind date and got married in 2022. Their relationship took a good turn when Dansby became a free agent before the 2023 season, he signed with the Cubs for a 7 year contract. Putting the couple much closer than before when he played in Atlanta.



Zach Ertz played with the Washington Commanders this past season and is hoping to continue playing with them, while Julie took a year and a half break from soccer and came back for one season before retiring. Zach and Julie Ertz met through mutual friends at a Stanford baseball game in 2012. They hit things off really well and got married in 2017 at the same baseball field where they met. Now Julie gets to see Zach anytime with her being retired.



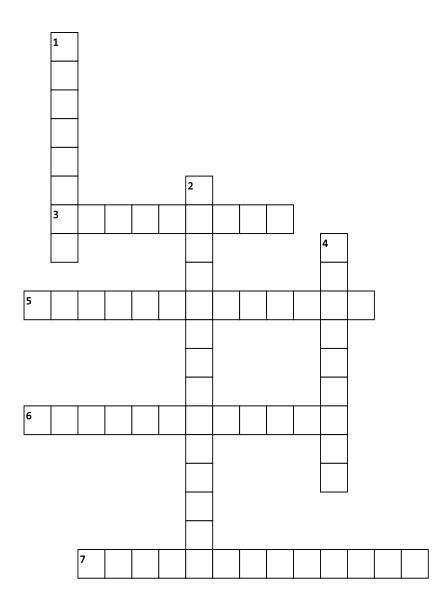
Check out our online sports' galleries at ibhstigertimes.com



P6 • THE TIGER TIMES January 31, 2025

February Crossword

Answers posted at ibhstigertimes.com



Acress

- 3. Important game that takes place on February 9
- 5. On this day this creature predicts our weather future after winter
- 6. This month is given to a group of people to recognize and celebrate their achievements
- 7. It's not officially recognized as a holiday but most couples still celebrate on it

Down

- This is the birthstone for February
- 2. This president's birthday is onFebruary 12
- 4. A 2025 horror movie about a serial killer who kills couples on Valentine's Day.

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Life of Larry Episode 2: Valentine's Self Love



