

TAKE ONE!

Marlborough Mirror

Issue #7
February 2026



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Valentine's Day with a Japanese Twist

By Ryan Malyar, Executive Director, WMCT-TV

Marlborough's Sister City partnership with Akiruno-shi in Tokyo has fostered meaningful cultural exchanges and educational programs, particularly at Whitcomb Middle School, building bridges of mutual understanding and friendship between our communities. This connection makes it a perfect time to explore one of Japan's most interesting cultural adaptations: their unique take on Valentine's Day. While Valentine's Day in the West is all about roses and romantic dinners, Japan has put its own spin on the holiday. Introduced by chocolate companies in the 1930s and popularized through department store campaigns in the 1960s, Valentine's Day in Japan traditionally features women giving chocolates to men—a custom that emerged during the feminist movement era when Japanese women were encouraged to take more initiative in romantic relationships.

What started as a confession of love has evolved into a chocolate-giving phenomenon with its own vocabulary: *giri choco* (obligation chocolates for bosses and teachers), *hommei choco* (chocolates for that special someone), and newer categories like *tomo choco* (friend chocolates) and even *jibun choco* (chocolates you buy for yourself). The chocolate industry has successfully transformed Valentine's Day into an event where everyone participates, but interestingly, Japan reserves its most romantic celebrations for Christmas rather than February 14th. That's when the fancy dinners and jewelry purchases happen, leaving Valentine's Day to be primarily about the chocolates themselves—a delicious tradition that keeps evolving with Japanese culture while maintaining its distinctly local flavor.



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Jokes!



What's the best Valentine's Day Dinner?

A hearty one.

How do you put a flower in the friend zone?
You tell it, "You're my best bud."

Do you have a date for Valentine's Day?
Yes, it's February 14th.

Where do you find love in a grocery store?
Aisle B... there for you.



Trivia

- Who performed the first human heart transplant?
- In foosball, how many rods does a player control on a standard table?
- What is the smallest independent country in Asia?
- On which planet did the spacecraft Venus 8 land in 1972?
- Who invented the electrical bass?

(Flip the bottom of the page for Trivia answers)



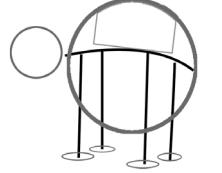
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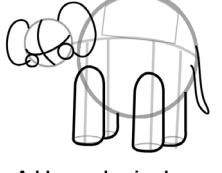
Drawing with Mark!

LET'S DRAW AN ELEPHANT

Start with basic shapes like circles and ovals:



Add connecting lines and tubing and ovals for the legs and ears



Add more basic shapes for the face



Now erase some of the lines as shown. Smooth and curve the outer lines as you wish.



Add details to face, trunk & feet. Color it too!

Keep practicing and having fun!

Drawing with Mark Now Showing on WMCT-TV, Marlborough Community Television



Better Together: The Benefits of Companion Planting

Winter is a great time for garden planning. You can sketch out new garden layouts, leisurely investigate new plants that you may wish to add, and daydream about relaxing in your beautiful nature retreat!

One garden technique worth exploring is companion planting, which involves placing two or more mutually beneficial plants close together in your garden to boost plant health and deter pests or attract beneficial insects.

This style of gardening can also make better use of smaller garden spaces and improve soil health. For example:

- Planting nasturtiums alongside squash plants can help reduce squash bugs.
- Adding pollinator magnets like lavender, zinnias, and sunflowers will attract bees and other pollinators to plants throughout your garden.
- Planting basil near tomatoes can repel flies and mosquitoes. Borage is thought to deter tomato worms and improve tomato growth and flavor.



You can learn more on February 11 when Gretel Anspach, Trustee of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and Lifetime Master Gardener, will speak on the benefits of companion planting at the Marlborough Public Library at 7pm in the Grice Community Room. The session, hosted by the Marlborough Garden Club, is free and the public is invited to attend.

Quotes

"Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

Benjamin Franklin

"I've failed over and over and over again in my life, and that is why I succeed."

Michael Jordan

"It always seems impossible until it's done."

Nelson Mandela



Community Connections Spotlight:

On a recent episode of Community Connections, host Matt Besachio sat down with Mark Pollard and Mary O'Malley from Fresh Start Furniture Bank, an organization making a powerful impact across Marlborough, Hudson, and surrounding communities. The conversation highlighted how Fresh Start provides more than furniture, offering dignity, hope, and a true fresh start for families facing housing insecurity, displacement, or major life transitions.

Pollard shared his inspiring journey from volunteer to operations manager, giving viewers an inside look at the logistics and care that go into every donation.

O'Malley, a longtime volunteer affectionately known as the "linen lady," spoke about the importance of treating every family with respect and compassion, and how small details can make a house feel like home.

Together, they discussed volunteer opportunities, donation needs, and the life-changing moments that keep them motivated every day. You can watch the full interview on our website at wmct-tv.com.



Valentine's Day Word Search

F L Z R F U Y A F K P O E M M L X
T E I A L X N O R V K F R M V K E
A M X C Y O W A I S W E E T G V O
O Y C S O J V W E G A K S I O P M
I B D A B U G E N Z N I F L B T Y
K Y L N R T D G D I M T D I E A E
Y L U A A D D I P U C H E A R T S
C I D I J C V A L E N T I N E Q O
J R C H O C O L A T E G U H N S R
K Q L S C Y Q I A M I J B M W K C

1. CANDY 2. CARD 3. CUPID 4. FRIEND 5. GIFT 6. HEART 7. HUG
8. LOVE 9. ROSE 10. SWEET 11. VALENTINE 12. CHOCOLATE 13. LOVE
14. PINK 15. POEM

WMCT



Panthers Poised for Playoffs

By Matthew Besachio, Sports Director, WMCT-TV

Twelve games into the 2025–2026 season, the Marlborough High Panthers boys hockey team has emerged as one of the top programs in the league. The Panthers currently boast an impressive 9-2-1 overall record and sit at 6-1-1 in MID WACH "B" play, placing them firmly in first place in the division.

Marlborough opened the season on a strong note with back-to-back wins over Haverhill and Algonquin before suffering its first setback, a 6-2 loss on the road against Wachusett. Rather than falter, the Panthers responded with resilience, putting together an eight-game unbeaten streak (8-0-1). That run included a key road victory over division rival Groton-Dunstable on December 22, as well as a thrilling 2-1 overtime win against crosstown rival Hudson High on January 10th.

Head coach Mike O'Brien credits the team's success to a combination of strong goaltending and experience. Axel Rydberg and Landry Guenard have anchored the Panthers in net, while seniors Tom Massalski, Anthony Tramontozzi, and Liam Byrne have provided leadership and production. Contributions from underclassmen have also added valuable depth.

With eight games remaining, five of them at Navin Arena, Marlborough is positioning itself for a potential deep playoff run into March.

1. Dr. Chris Barman 2. 4 Roads 3. Maidives
4. To no surprise, Venues 5. Leo Fender

February City Events

Bone City Rocks for Homeless Veterans

Saturday, February 7th | Marlborough Moose Lodge

50/50, Raffles & Great Music to benefit the New England Center and Home for Veterans. Tickets available at the Moose. Doors open at 6PM.

Divination with the Stars Astrology Workshop

Wednesday, February 11th | 6:30 PM - 8 PM | Lost Shoe Brewing & Roasting Company
Registration form to attend Read by Renee's Workshop online at www.lostshoebrews.com

Better Together: The Benefits of Companion Planting

Wednesday, February 11th | 7 PM | Marlborough Public Library

Learn how companion planting can boost plant health, deter pests, and make better use of garden space. Get practical pairing tips just in time for your 2026 garden planning. Brought to you by the Marlborough Garden Club.

Winter Farmers Market

Saturday February 7th and Saturday March 7th | 10 AM - 2 PM | Marlborough Public Library
The Winter Farmers Market will feature a wide selection of vendors. SNAP will be accepted. More information at www.marlboroughfarmersmarket.com

Collectibles Appraisal with Perfect Pastime 617

Saturday, February 14th | 9:15 AM - 12:15 PM | Marlborough Public Library
Rick Keller, from Perfect Pastime 617, is offering a community-wide collectibles appraisal event. So gather up all your Pokémon/sports cards/memorabilia, coins, watches, video games/consoles, comics, fine/broken jewelry, sterling silver, etc. to see if you have treasure or trash! All antiques and collectibles are welcome! Advance registration required, www.marlborough-ma.gov/157/Library

Champions Martial Arts Program

February 16th - 20th | 8 AM - 4 PM | 222D East Main St. Marlborough, MA

A full day experience focused on building confidence, fitness, discipline, and social skills. Participants rotate through Taekwondo training, games, team challenges, and character development activities. Open to youth ages 6-12. Register through Marlborough Recreation mrd.recdesk.com

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