

# FALCON POST

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## INTO THE UPSIDE DOWN: YEARBOOK '26 THEME UNVEILED

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BY CURTIS BERZOFSKY

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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“Stranger Things Have Happened” is Jordan’s 2025-2026 yearbook theme.

“The inspiration behind the *Stranger Things* theme was the fact that the last season is coming out at the end of this year and heading into next year, which encompasses our whole school year,” says yearbook Editor-in-Chief Sophie Thornburg. “It is important to note, though, that the theme is not solely *Stranger Things*, but rather the phrase that the title is based on: “Stranger Things Have Happened.”

With a few nods to the Netflix series, the yearbook is “mainly leaning into the concept of ‘strange’ in a broader sense,” Ms. Fontham, the yearbook advisor, explains. Sophie follows this, saying the theme is “redefining what strange is.”

“This theme represents the idea that Jordan is a place where anything

can happen because of the community we have. For example, *Stranger Things Have Happened* than the theater program getting picked to pilot *Water for Elephants* because our program is just that good,” continues Sophie. “If someone at Jordan did some crazy thing, think Sydney Barker (‘23) scoring more than 1,000 points in basketball, it wouldn’t be unusual because Jordan fosters that kind of achievement and excellence.”

The Duffer Brothers, creators of *Stranger Things*, attended Jordan in the early 2000s and were a part of the theatre and mass communications programs. Sophie cites this as part of the theme inspiration. “I wondered what relates to the 25-26 school year and Jordan. I went down a Wikipedia rabbit hole and came across the Duffer Brothers page and said that was it.”

Ms. Fontham is “excited to share the final product with students, and [hopes] they are excited to see it!” Yearbooks are currently available for purchase on [jostens.com](http://jostens.com).



# JHS Volleyball Soars to New Heights in Playoff Run

**BY KATIE TAYLOR**  
*STAFF EDITOR*

Jordan's High School Varsity volleyball team made it to the semifinals of the state playoffs—the furthest the team has gotten since winning the state championship in 1990. The semifinals, also called the regional championship, ended in a 3-0 loss at West Forsyth three weeks ago.

Three wins into the playoffs, having previously beaten Ardrey Kell, the team was looking to make this game a fourth consecutive win. During the West Forsyth game, some of Jordan's strongest players included senior Tamari Hill, who had seven kills. Natalia Rosa, the team's setter, also proved valuable, with her 12 assists, as well as Ella Baggett, a senior captain who “controlled things from the service line,” according to Max Preps, with two aces.

Jordan had just come off of a big win against Ardrey Kell in round three. Caydin Hylton, a sophomore on the team, expressed how that win was a “game filled with tears, and [the team] was all just so ecstatic to make it to another round.” She believes the team's strong will was one of the factors that propelled the team forward to get to this game, stating the game was the “highlight of the playoffs.”

While the team didn't make it past regionals, their run was a victory in itself. Tamari Hill expressed how “In the beginning we didn't think we would make it past the first round.” She made it clear that as the team continued working hard throughout the season with their new coach, their confidence grew. This confidence grew not because of luck, but as Tamari expresses because “[the team] went so far because [they] loved and supported each other the whole way.”



Photos by Grayson Evans, Falcon Post staff photographer

# Football Team's Historic Streak Continues

**BY FALCON POST**  
*STAFF*

For the first time in school history, the football team is 11-0. The latest win—a 28-24 second-round, home playoff game victory against Leesville Road on Friday night—may have been the most thrilling. The ball literally and figuratively bounced the way of the Falcons at the most crucial moment.

With Jordan trailing 24-21 with just 44 seconds left in the game, quarterback Landon Melton took off on a designed run play, scampering 23 yards until he got hit near midfield and fumbled. The ball sputtered out and was recovered by wide receiver Michael Young Jr., who dashed 42 yards for a scoop-and-score touchdown.

“God just put the ball right there for me and I picked it up,” Young Jr. said. “When I picked it up I looked at the end zone and thought this is my

shot. A defender grabbed my leg at the 3 (yard line) and I jumped into the end zone. It was madness, total madness!”

Although the offense produced the dramatic score, Coach Antonio King singled out his defense for its steady play. When asked about how everything's come together this season, King said, “I've got an outstanding cast. The guys like each other and like what we're doing. This is the culmination of three good years of work.”

The Falcons travel to powerhouse Millbrook (Raleigh), also 11-0, for a Friday night showdown in the third round of the playoffs. The winner will advance to the state semifinals. Jordan reached this quarterfinal round three times in the last four years but has never appeared in a final four.



QB Landon Melton races toward the end zone during Friday night's playoff win over Leesville Road.



# National Honor Society Raises the Bar

BY LYNN MOHAMED

SOPHOMORE WRITER

This year, earning a spot in the National Honor Society was more competitive than ever. Jordan's National Honor Society chapter has implemented changes to its requirements for new members, aiming to maintain the organization's integrity, increase rigor, and improve the induction process. These changes affect volunteer hour requirements, meaning students will have to complete 15 of their 30 hours before the ceremony in the spring, allowing them to have extra time between now and the induction deadline to get their hours done. They have also raised the

minimum cumulative GPA requirement from 3.0 to 3.5. This decision was driven by the realization that the national minimum of 3.0 was not challenging enough for Jordan's truly accomplished students. The timing of the induction ceremony has been changed from the fall to the spring. As of the most recent NHS application cycle, advisors Ms. Daye and Ms. Stacy wanted to make it more rigorous because it felt like everyone was getting in and being inducted. They worried that too many acceptances could "diminish the integrity of the organization," voiced Ms. Daye. After a year of having discussions about it, the new

GPA guidelines were officially implemented this year. "We have been having conversations about it, but it was just that we just decided this year that we would go ahead and initiate it," added Ms. Daye. During the selection process applications stood out for their strong and creative responses to the questions emphasizing how the applicants demonstrate the four major tenets of National Honor Society: leadership, scholarship, character and service, in their personal lives. Teacher recommendations also played a huge role when going through applications by giving deeper insight into the applicant's character. On the other hand, applications that were rejected

were rejected due to bad teacher recommendations, incompleteness of AI, or a GPA below 3.5. "It's kinda unfair because people have other things they need to do like school and jobs," expressed sophomore Wynter Hodges-McGhee, who feels like the new guidelines interfere with student's everyday responsibilities. She believes the expectations placed on students who balance part-time jobs along with schoolwork, making it feel unrealistic and overwhelming. However, sophomore Lailani Coovadia offered a different perspective, saying "I think it's a good way to, like, show people this is what we do and this is what we expect from you."

# A Weeklong Break for Turkey. No Demogorgons, Please.

BY KATIE STANSBURY

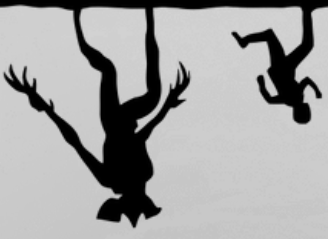
SOPHOMORE WRITER

For the first time in over fifteen years, Jordan students will enjoy a full week off for Thanksgiving, generating excitement across campus. In past years, students were released early Tuesday and returned the following Monday, but this year, a teacher workday on Monday gives students the entire week off. "I really like it because it gives me time to soak up family time or to travel, and also to reset," Ella Stankavage, a sophomore, remarked on the longer Thanksgiving break.

Students aren't the only ones who are expressing excitement about the break. Mrs. Holmes, a Spanish teacher at Jordan, shared that, "A longer Thanksgiving break is much needed. Everyone is very tired and needs rest. It also gives people more time to spend with their loved ones and makes it easier to travel if you need to." Some students are taking full advantage of the week off to spend more time with family or to travel. Shia Carter, a junior, stated, "I'm excited because I get to spend more time with my mom," after sharing that she would be traveling to Richmond to see her mom. "My

grandma is coming to visit from Pennsylvania, and my friend is coming from Indiana. Now it's not as stressful and their trip will be more worthwhile because they will see me for longer," Stankavage explained. But this doesn't mean those without plans aren't also excited. Ms. Rubenstein said, "I just noticed that we had a longer break and I was ecstatic! It means I have more time to grade papers!" However, while students and teachers alike are looking forward to more time off, they also have varying opinions about the calendar. The calendar never looks the same two years in a row. While most students

and teachers aren't too bothered by this fact, some students, however, expressed negative feelings about this. Carter explained that, "It's kind of annoying because it's hard to plan for. Especially for kids with divorced parents, because visitation revolves around the schedule. Some people have certain circumstances that are hard to manage with a constantly changing schedule."



## Stranger Things Trivia

Which Durham road is referenced frequently throughout the show?

- A. Fayetteville
- B. Garrett
- C. Cornwallis
- D. Kerley

What song does Eddie play during the fight in the Upside Down in Season 4?

- A. Running Up That Hill
- B. Master of Puppets
- C. Every Breath You Take
- D. Should I Stay or Should I Go

What famous Durham event is referenced by Jim Hopper in Season 1?

- A. Durham Bulls game
- B. The Farmers' Market
- C. The Peterson murder



Eleven once said:

- A. "You can't spell America without Erica"
- B. "I can't believe I'm gonna die in a secret Russian base with Steve 'The Hair' Harrington"
- C. "Mornings are for coffee and contemplation"
- D. "Friends don't lie"

Where do Steve and Robin work in Season 4?

- A. Scoops Ahoy
- B. Family Video Store
- C. Melvald's General Store
- D. RadioShack



W4E songs "Easy" and "The Lion Has Got No Teeth," photos by Joy Knight

## FALCON POST

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## REVIEW: *Water for Elephants* Opening Weekend

BY FALCON POST

STAFF

The theatre program's production of *Water for Elephants* (W4E) exceeded my expectations. I came into the show skeptical of the original source material, the inexperienced cast, and the technicality behind creating and depicting the circus environment on a public high school's budget. But with a great set and dedicated actors, the show was better than I expected.

Tech theatre did a masterful job with the circus through props and installed aerial silks and a lyra hoop. Emily Neill (Marlena), shined on the lyra hoop. The use of the train cars in the set was especially impressive. The costumes in the show brought me into the story. Rosie the elephant puppet was a particular stand out with life-like features and its large scale.

The new actors definitely surprised me; one standout was Camden Brown, who plays Camel in the show. His voice and character work were incredible. The ensemble was energetic in group numbers, especially in "The Lion Has Got No Teeth." I did, however, find it unfortunate that some of the cast members were only featured once or twice in the show.

The theatre program definitely managed to pull together this production in a great way, setting the precedent for future high school productions.

## OPINION: When Can You Start Listening to Christmas Music

BY SYDNEY SARVER

MANAGING EDITOR

It seems like in early November Christmas staples start popping up all over. The limited edition Chick-fil-A peppermint milkshake comes out, Costco adds new Christmas decorations alongside the ones that have been up for a solid month, and Mariah Carey famously announces "It's tiiiime!" Despite all of this Christmas spirit, there are plenty of grinchers who are unwilling to embrace the joy of this special time of year. "It's not time for Christmas music yet!" they say. "Wait until after Thanksgiving!" This mindset is not very jolly.

I used to be a firm believer that Christmas music comes after Turkey Day, but I have realized the fault in my former ways. Waiting to listen to Christmas music until after Thanksgiving leaves a mere month for your favorite Christmas hits, which just isn't enough time to truly immerse yourself in the Christmas spirit. This leaves you laying on your couch during the aftermath of Christmas feeling unfulfilled, eating too much chocolate and wondering what day of the week it is, filled with despair because you didn't fully embrace the most wonderful time of the year. That reality may seem bleak, but there is an easy solution. Worry about that last minute scramble to purchase gifts later and instead turn up your favorite Christmas tunes!