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February fun at the library: Black History Month, Melrose Creative Expo, virtual reality karaoke and so much more

The Orange County Library System's February calendar of events is jam-packed with fun and celebrations. Join us at the downtown library on February 11 for the annual African-American Read-In, in which local celebrities, singers, writers and performers take the stage to recognize the contributions African-American authors have made to literature and art. Then on February 12, bring a special someone to the library for Cuisine Corner: Date Night for Two. Award-winning chef Warren Caterson will share tips for the kitchen, as well as how to prepare a simple and delicious meal for two.

On February 17, the Melrose Center hosts 2018 Melrose Creative Expo, a showcase of technology, creativity and innovation. The event features live music, vendors, virtual reality karaoke, an awards ceremony and more. See details below.

If you have any questions about library events, contact us at 407-835-7323. You can also check for more library events online at www.ocls.info.

AARP Income Tax Assistance

Herndon Branch, 4324 E. Colonial Drive
Mondays & Thursdays, Beginning February 1, 10 a.m.

Southeast Branch, 5575 S. Semoran Blvd.
Mondays & Fridays, Beginning February 2, 10 a.m.

South Creek Branch, 1702 Deerfield Blvd.
Wednesdays & Thursdays, Beginning February 1, 10 a.m.

West Oaks Branch, 1821 E. Silver Star Road., Ocoee

Fridays Beginning, February 2, 10 a.m.

AARP Volunteers will provide free income tax assistance. Attendees will need to have a valid ID, Social Security Card, any tax forms and Annual Benefits Statements (if necessary). For more information, visit aarp.org/taxaide. Attendees will be seen on a first come, first served basis.

Cuisine Corner: Empanadillas

Orlando Public Library, Cypress Room, 101 E. Central Blvd.

Saturday, February 3, 11 a.m.

Discover how you can make tasty empanadillas. Yamira Lee Johnson, head chef and founder of Breaking Bread with Mira and certified holistic life coach, will demonstrate how to make empanadillas. Similar to an empanada, empanadillas are lighter and baked. For more information about Breaking Bread with Mira, visit facebook.com/breakingbreadwithmira. Space is limited. Registration required.

Step Off

Orlando Public Library

Saturday, February 3, 2:30 p.m.

Break the Stage! Step up your game for the 13th Annual Step Off competition! Local teams will put their best foot forward in a battle to be crowned the top step team around. Cash prizes sponsored by McCoy Federal Credit Union. Seating is limited and will be on a first come, first served basis.

The Role of Hip-Hop and Its Precursors, the Liberation and Civil Rights Struggles of African-Americans, Past and Present

Orlando Public Library, Albertson Room, 101 E. Central Blvd.

Wednesday, February 7, 6:30 p.m.

Join us for a discussion on African music making sensibilities and other related African expressive and visual arts and the pivotal role they once played and how they now play into the African-American's effort to survive. Presented by Professor Don Harrell of Orisirisi African Folklore and the University of Central Florida Africana Studies.

Chinese New Year Celebration: Year of the Dog

Orlando Public Library, Library Central, 101 E. Central Blvd.

Saturday, February 10, 10 a.m.

Celebrate the Chinese New Year and enjoy a few Chinese traditions with a Dragon Dance, folk dances, a musical performance and a demonstration of Chinese calligraphy. Presented by the Chinese School of CAACF Inc.

Family History Fair!

West Oaks Branch, 1821 E. Silver Star Road., Ocoee

Saturday, February 10, 11–2 p.m.

Join us at the West Oaks Branch Library and Genealogy Center for our Family History Fair. Celebrate the three year anniversary of our grand re-opening. Explore your roots! If you are a beginner, this event can help you get started researching your family history. Experienced genealogists can learn tips about

additional resources to aid in your research. The Central Florida Genealogical Society, other local lineage and family history societies and West Oaks Library staff will be available to share information on how to research and document your family history in the 21st century. Bring your family and friends to this day of fun and exploration!

The Many Black Panthers: Building the Saga of the Black Panther from Print to Film

Orlando Public Library, Library Central, 101 E. Central Blvd.

Saturday, February 10, 12 p.m.

From his debut in 1966 to the new film, the Black Panther has evolved to reflect contemporary dialogue about race and society in the United States. This presentation will address question identity, community and power linked to the Black Panther. In many ways, the Black Panther film is the culmination of a legacy of imagining possible blackness in American popular culture. A talk by Dr. Julian Chambliss, author and professor of history at Rollins College.

African-American Read-In

Orlando Public Library, Library Central, 101 E. Central Blvd.

Sunday, February 11, 2–4 p.m.

Celebrate African-American literature in poetry, story and song, performed by local luminaries in conjunction with the 28th Annual National African-American Read-In. For more information, visit ocls.info/read-in.

Cuisine Corner: Date Night for Two

Orlando Public Library, Cypress Room, 101 E. Central Blvd.

Monday, February 12, 6:15 p.m.

Award-winning cookbook author, Warren Caterson, shares dozens of kitchen tips, cooking hints and humorous anecdotes about the joys and challenges of cooking. Chef Warren will demonstrate how easy it can be to cook for two, using fresh and readily available ingredients. Book sale and signing to follow. For more information, visit chefwarrencaterson.com.

Youth Art Show

Orlando Public Library, 101 E. Central Blvd.

Thursday, February 15, 6:30 p.m.

You are invited to view artwork created by local students. Enjoy these masterpieces and converse with other art enthusiasts. Awards will be presented to the Youth Art Contest winners. Artwork will be exhibited at the Orlando Public Library until February 28.

Mamma Griot and Her Rocking Story Bag! Hiawassee Branch, 7391 W. Colonial Drive

Saturday, February 17, 11 a.m.

Eatonville Branch, 200 E. Kennedy Blvd., Eatonville

Saturday, February 17, 2 p.m.

In this interactive, family friendly program, Dr. Naima Johnston-Bush shares traditional folktales and songs that participants choose and create by selecting items from her rocking story bag. Dr. Naima, performing as a griot (musician-entertainers of western Africa) will tell stories and sing songs from her griot bag from countries around the world. This program is an engaging joyous celebration of music, the universal bonding that occurs through storytelling and the beauty of diversity.

Melrose Creative Expo

Orlando Public Library, Melrose Center, 101 E. Central Blvd.

February 17, 2017, 1–4 p.m.

This open-house style event recognizes some of the best work made using Melrose Center resources. Join us for live music from Beth McKee, Marc with a C and E-Turn. Tour our fab lab, participate in demos in the audio and video studios, meet with vendors from the local maker community, enjoy virtual reality karaoke and more. Free and open to all.

Music in the Library: Wassalou Band

Orlando Public Library, Library Central, 101 E. Central Blvd.

Sunday, February 18, 2 p.m.

Wassalou is an Afropop band that presents a unique talent to the North American cultural landscape. It's the only band of its kind in Florida, bringing language, colorful traditional costuming and dance straight out of Africa.

Storytelling in Space

Herndon Branch, 4324 E. Colonial Drive

Tuesday, February 20, 7 p.m.

Author and artist Mike Maihack will discuss the origin and creation of the Cleopatra in Space series, the advantages of using historical figures in fiction and how to create your own strong characters whose traits can be used effectively (and humorously!) in a story. Mike will delve into the basic structure of sequential storytelling, background on the real Cleopatra, personal artistic influences and possibly a sneak peek at his upcoming graphic novels. There will be time for Q&A afterward. Ages 7 and up.

Southwest Nature Walk & Book Talk

Dr. P. Phillips Community Park

8249 Buenavista Woods Blvd.

Wednesday, February 21, 10:15–11:45 a.m.

Do you enjoy taking a walk and love to discuss books? Then join the Southwest Branch for a casual nature walk followed by a lively book discussion of *Stranger in the Woods: The Extraordinary Story of the Last True Hermit* by Michael Finkel. Attendees are encouraged to wear comfortable shoes and clothing. Light refreshments will be provided. Meet at the trail entrance of the Dr. Phillips Community Park (Longhorn Steakhouse Loop). Enjoy the benefits of exercising your mind and body! Registration recommended. Ages 18 and up.

Lorelei's Lit Lair Presents: Let's Talk Romance!

Alafaya Branch, 12000 E. Colonial Drive

Thursday, February 22, 7 p.m.

Curious about the Romance genre? Looking for new author suggestions and titles? Want to win free books? Lorelei's Lit Lair will offer recommendations and discuss all things romance, including contemporary, historical, romantic suspense and women's fiction with romantic elements. Attendees can win door prizes, lots of swag and book giveaways. Reserve your spot today!

LoreleisLitLair.wordpress.com.

Winter Garden's First Annual Cooking Day

Cooking for All Ages!

Winter Garden, 805 E. Plant St., Winter Garden

Saturday, February 24, 10:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

Winter Garden's First Annual Cooking Day! Join us for cooking demonstrations for all ages. We will have basic cooking programs for children and adults. Special guests include Yamira Lee Johnson, head chef and founder of Breaking Bread with Mira and certified holistic life coach.

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