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For the month of November, the Octavia Fellin Public Library will be hosting a myriad of events to celebrate “Native American Heritage Month” which will illuminate this year’s national theme: “Growing Native Leaders: Enhancing Seven Generations.”

The library’s Director, Mary Ellen Pellington, said that the main objective is to build the program up from last year’s events and to provide information to the community that will bring up some challenging discussions, such as the recent publicized incident of two local Native American actors, Loren Anthony and Goldie Tom, who walked off the set from an Adam Sandler film, “The Ridiculous Six.”

On Nov. 9, both actors will be attendance to lead an open discussion about Native American stereotypes portrayed in Hollywood films following the viewing of the film, “Reel Injun,” a documentary that studies the roles of Native Americans throughout film history.

“When the library puts together a celebration such as this, we look at what our resources are, who is in our communities, ideas and activities that the entire community would enjoy and learn from. We look at discussions, speakers and entertainers, artists, and films,” Pellington said.

Since it was already on top of the “to-do list” for the library staff to plan bigger for this year’s scheduled line-up, it took a tremendous amount of teamwork, said Marcos Chavez, library assistant, who has been a part of helping out with coordinating the library’s events. This will be the second year that he will partake in the library’s Native American festivities.

“Staff as a team did a great job reaching out to the different people that we brought in this year,” he said. “Each of us got out and attempted to contact certain people to have them be a part of this. All of the programs that we have happening was a result of multiple people working really hard to contact people, schedule dates and times, and get it all planned out.”

This is will be the sixth year that the library will be hosting different events for Native American Heritage Month, and an estimated 800-1000 people will be in attendance to see the festivities throughout the month of November.

“The library programs are always very well attended and different programs attract different people. The library looks forward in sharing our Native American Heritage Month celebration with our community,” Pellington said.

Here is a list of performances, films, discussions with guest speakers, storytelling and projects that the Octavia Fellin Public Library is hosting for the month of November for Native American Heritage Month:

Jerry Brown Art Exhibit

Navajo artist Jerry Brown will have his work on exhibit throughout the library during the month of November. His cultural and abstract works of art are a balance between stylistic strategies and cultural expression. Brown’s artwork will be visible from Nov. 1 – 30. On Nov.14, there will be a special reception during November’s Artscrawl from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm.

Occupation of Alcatraz

On Nov. 7 at 2 pm, the library will host Jean Whitehorse as she discusses the 1969 Occupation of Alcatraz by the IOAT (Indians of all Tribes). Eighty-nine Native Americans, including students, married couples and six children, occupied Alcatraz Island on November 20, 1969, claiming the property as part of the Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868). The 19-month occupation saw as many as 400 people on the island. Whitehorse was one of those occupants and she will talk about her experience during the IOAT takeover.

Whitehorse is from Smith Lake and she is the daughter of Edmund J. Henry Sr., who was a Navajo Code Talker. She served 10 years with the Navajo Code Talker Association and is currently working for the State Library with the Tribal Libraries Program.

Out-casting the Native Stereotype in Film: Documentary Viewing and Discussion

On Nov. 9 at 5:30 pm, there will be an open discussion about Native American stereotypes in film with local actors Loren Anthony and Goldie Tom. The program will begin with a viewing of the documentary “Reel Injun” by Cree film maker Neil Diamond. This film takes an entertaining and insightful look at the “Hollywood Indian,” exploring the portrayal of North American Natives through the history of cinema. It includes interviews with Clint Eastwood, Adam Beach, John Trudell, Chris Eyre, and many more. Following the viewing, Anthony and Tom will discuss first hand experiences, including the recent walk-off from the Adam Sandler film. Refreshments will be provided.

Hoop Dancer Derrick Suwaima Davis

On Nov. 10 at 6 pm, the Library will host Derrick Suwaima Davis, seven-time international hoop dancing champion. Davis is from the Hopi and Choctaw nations and will be performing at the library. After having performed internationally for years, he has turned his attention to presenting the people and cultures of the Southwestern U.S. via The Living Traditions Dance Troupe.

Chip Thomas and the Painted Desert Project

On Nov.12 at 6 pm, doctor and artist Chip Thomas will be at the library to discuss health and economic demographics on the Navajo Nation, combining arts activism with his work as a physician. He will also talk about the journey that led to him to create the Painted Desert public art project. Thomas is the founder of the project, a public art project connecting artists with communities through mural opportunities on the Navajo Nation.

Miss Navajo – Alyson Shirley

On Nov. 16 at 6 pm, Miss Navajo 2015-2016 Alyson Shirley, will talk about her journey to become Miss Navajo and her goals for her people. Her desire as Miss Navajo Nation is to promote the Navajo language and culture, and she will be sharing the importance of preserving her language and traditions.

Native Films

The library will hosting a variety of Native American Films that will begin at 6 pm and popcorn will be provided.

On Nov. 4 “Up Heartbreak Hill;” on Nov.18, “A Thousand Voices,” (a discussion with Teri Frazier to follow); and on Nov. 24, “Incident at Olgala.”

Cellicion Zuni Dancers

On Nov. 21 at 2 pm, the Children’s Branch will host the Cellicion Zuni Dancers as they perform traditional Zuni Dances. Founded by their late parents in 1983, the Cellicion Zuni Dancers entire dance group consists of 15 family members and is made up of second, third, and fourth generation performers. Under the direction of Fernando Cellicion, the group has become one of the top professional touring native Dance companies in the performing arts.

For the Kids

On Nov.7 and 14 at 2 pm, the library will present “Raven Tales.” This award-winning animated series introduces kids and their families to Aboriginal folklore in a humorous and entertaining way. Three episodes will be shown each Saturday. On Nov. 5 at 4 pm, the library will be hosting a Crafty Kids project pertaining to Navajo Weaving.

For more information, please call (505) 863-1291 or (505) 726-6120.