



News

Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders
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Burlington County Freeholders Recognize African American History With Month Long Celebration

The Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, in collaboration with the Underground Railroad Museum and Amistad Cultural Alliance, are pleased to present a month-long celebration of African American history.

The centerpiece of the celebration, entitled, "AFRO Expressions: An Art Exhibit", features works by Amistad Artists Joe L. Speight, H. Alonzo Jennings, Vera Wright and Don Stephens. The exhibit is showcased at the Smithville Mansion Annex Gallery on the grounds of the Smithville Mansion, located at 803 Smithville Road in Eastampton. The gallery is free and open to the public every Thursday through Saturday from 10 AM to 4PM.

"The Freeholders are delighted to present this exhibit and accompanying programs in celebration of Black History Month and are excited to be working together with the Underground Railroad Museum and Amistad Cultural Alliance to promote such an important aspect of our American culture. We look forward to future collaborations on programs and the development of a permanent home for the Underground Railroad Museum at Smithville that will enhance the educational experience for all visitors to the Park," said Freeholder Director Leah Arter.

In addition to the art exhibit, the celebration will include three special weekend events:

On Sunday February 16th, from 2PM – 4PM, Vickie Still, the Great, great niece of William Still, Father of the Underground Railroad, will present "The Stories of the Still Family". Visitors can learn about the Still Family's contributions to American history. The famous Still Family of Southern New Jersey, included William Still, known as the father of the Underground Railroad; Dr. James Still, the "Black Doctor of the Pines"; and, Peter Still, subject of *"The Kidnapped and the Ransomed -Recollections of Peter Still and His Wife "Vina," after Forty Years of Slavery"*.

On Saturday, February 22nd, from 2PM – 4PM, visitors can attend "Amistad and Beyond", a poetry reading featuring poets, Saleem Ameer Hakim, Vincent K. E. W. Edgefield, Thomas Fitzhugh and H. Alonzo Jennings. The reading will be followed by a short open mic and light refreshments.

On Saturday, March 1st from 2PM – 4PM, listen and discuss Jazz music during a program entitled, "Talking Jazz". The program will be hosted by H. Alonzo Jennings and will feature the music of Duke Ellington. Visitors will begin with five LP's provided by the host. Visitors are welcomed to bring their own LP's, stories and personal history of "this thing called jazz".

In May of last year, the Freeholders announced plans to host the Underground Railroad Museum at Historic Smithville Park. While plans are underway to restore a workers house for a permanent exhibit, a preview of the exhibit can be viewed daily at the Park's Welcome Center, located at 34 Maple Avenue within the Park.

Also on Saturday, March 1st, at 6PM, join noted actor and orator Kevin Q. Jackson and The Jackson Family Players at the Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences, 301 High Street, Mount Holly for "The Life and Times of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The program promises to be a soul-stirring, multi-media presentation.

Additional information can be obtained by calling the Burlington County Division of Parks at 609-265-5858.

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