

Join the statewide kickoff to Black History Month at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh. On Sat., Jan. 30, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the 15th Annual African American Cultural Celebration will feature over 75 musicians, storytellers, dancers, chefs, historians, playwrights, authors, artists, re-enactors and more. Admission is free for this family festival, named a "Top 20 Event" in 2015 by the Southeast Tourism Society.

From acclaimed gospel singer Mary Williams and the MLK All-Children's Choir to New York Times best-selling author Damon Tweedy and "Personal Chef to the Stars" Chef Rome, a variety of presenters will share African American heritage and culture. Plenty of hands-on activities for children will include a scavenger hunt and making a cowrie shell necklace.

"This year's African American Cultural Celebration will focus on the theme Civil Rights — March On!," said Emily Grant, who has organized the event since 2001. "It's a great way to learn about our history, both the celebratory and painful pieces of our past."

For example, re-enactor Carolyn Evans will portray activist Mamie Till in her presentation of Women Who Could've Sung the Blues, and Sauda Eshe will sing freedom songs when she presents a powerful characterization of Odella Holmes, who had an active role in the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

The festival's excitement begins on Bicentennial Plaza at 10:30 a.m., when the Tryon Palace Jonkonnu Drummers and A Drummer's World Drumline will process to the museum to open the event. There is so much to see and do, so plan to stay for the day.

The African American Cultural Celebration will be presented in six categories that encompass culture and history. Several event highlights follow; however, for a complete schedule of all performances and presentations, visit NCMOH-programs.com.

Music, Movement and Drama Catch performances throughout the day:

- Larry Draughn, renowned drummer who has shared a stage with Branford Marsalis, Nnenna Freelon and others;
- Johnny White and the Elite Band, a popular dance show band known for its Motown medleys and high-energy choreography;
- MLK All-Children's Choir, a 130-voice ensemble of many races that performs across the country;
- The Gifted Arts, presenting step dance and drama; and
- Tim Jackson, a poet, spoken word artist and rapper.

History, Film and Enterprise Learn about African American life from individuals and groups, such as:

- B. Bernetae Reed, showing excerpts of her film "Thomas Jefferson's Slaves," based on her book *The Slave Families of Thomas Jefferson*, a two-volume genealogical study documenting the lives of 619 enslaved individuals at Monticello;
- Bill Wilkerson, one of the first black pilots at Piedmont Airlines; and
- panelists in the discussion *Slave Gardens to Black Wall Street*, a retrospective about African Americans and business.

Literature and the Spoken Word Hear from award-winning authors and storytellers, including:

- ReShonda Tate Billingsley, national best-selling author of more than 35 books, who will participate in a panel discussion on publishing;
- Damon Tweedy, author of *Black Man in a White Coat: A Doctor's Reflections on Race and Medicine*, during a panel discussion on civil rights;
- Jaki Shelton Green, one of the inaugural N.C. Piedmont Laureates;
- Patrik Henry Bass, editorial projects director of *Essence* magazine;
- Carole Boston Weatherford, acclaimed author of children's books; and
- storytellers from the N.C. Association of Black Storytellers.

Craft and Arts Traditions Watch artists at work:

- beading by Elizabeth Constant Lewis and fabric art by Kimberly Cartwright;
- performances by puppet maker Jeghetto and by MopTopShop characters; and
- quilting with the Ebony Raleigh Area Group Stitchers and the African American Quilt Circle.

Food and Health Learn about cooking and healthy living from:

- Clarissa Lynch, presenting the cooking demonstration *How to Feed Your Southerner*;
- Jerome Brown, known as Chef Rome and "Personal Chef to the Stars," discussing his book *Eat Like a Celebrity: Southern Cuisine With a Gourmet Twist*;
- Bridgette Lacy, author of *Sunday Dinner*, highlighting southern cooking; and
- Rhonda Muhammad, featuring cooking demonstrations of traditional foods.

Education and Heritage Learn from individuals from historic sites, organizations and more:

- community members will share firsthand accounts during the session *Advocates for Change: N.C. Student Interns and Community Organizers of the 1960s*;
- panelists Cash Michaels, Paul Jervay and Kenneth Edmonds will discuss the impact of African American newspapers on the Civil Rights movement;
- Rebecca Hyman will give a presentation on researching African American ancestors; and
- Pope House Museum staff will highlight Dr. M.T. Pope and lead an activity in making a doctor's headlamp.

The African American Cultural Celebration is sponsored, in part, by the N.C. African American Heritage Commission; PNC; the City of Raleigh, based on recommendation of the Raleigh Arts Commission; the United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County, with funds from the United Arts Campaign; N.C. Writers' Network; and the Museum of History Associates.

Mark your calendar for this educational and fun-filled festival at the N.C. Museum of History.

For information about the N.C. Museum of History, a Smithsonian-affiliated museum, call 919-807-7900 or access ncmuseumofhistory.org or follow on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ or YouTube.

Follow and tag the museum in posts about the African American Cultural Celebration on Twitter @ncmuseumhistory and Instagram @ncmuseumhistory. Hashtag is #AACC2016. "Like" us and share our posts on Facebook for the museum at www.facebook.com/NCMuseumofHistory and for the African American Cultural Celebration at www.facebook.com/events/473778269473910/.

Ring in the New Year With A Perfectly Precious Pet, Adopt One Soon!

Many have only days until they are euthanized



If you are still looking for a wonderful way to ring in the New Year, why not adopt a perfectly precious pet to make your family complete? The Anson County Animal Shelter in Polkton has pets who desperately seek the love they want and the home they need.

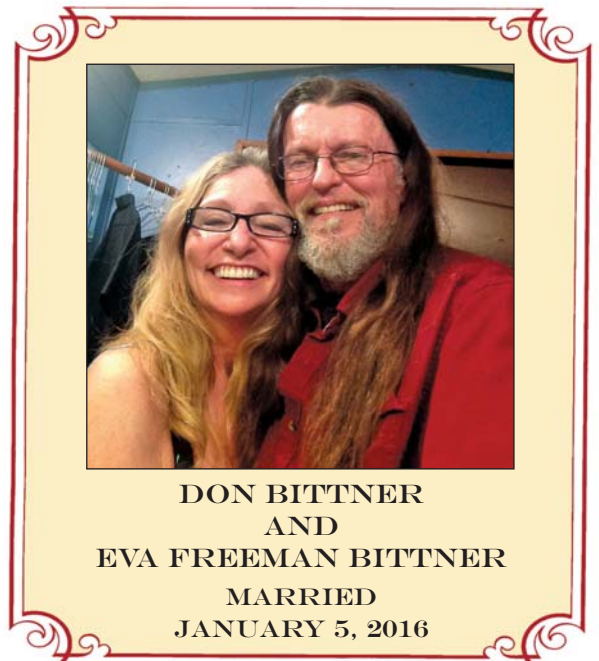
If you have ever considered adding a pet to your family, do it NOW. What better time to adopt a rescue than with the arrival of a brand new year? Make 2016 the year you open your hearts to an animal adoption rather than a pet purchase. There's a huge difference in the two.

Adoption hours are at the Animal Shelter are Tuesday through Thursday, from 1 until 5 p.m. Make haste and do not wait. In less than 15 days it will be too late for this kennel full of cuties. That is how much time they have before they are euthanized. For more information call 704-694-4832.

If pet adoption is not in your future you can still lend a helping hand to the workers at the shelter and to the animals who are currently living there. The MOST needed resources are bleach, paper towels and food. This is typically a time when we all are in the spirit of giving, and all three of these items would mean so MUCH and cost so LITTLE.

Or consider volunteering your time to help clean, feed, walk and spend time with the animals. There is a job for every person - all you have to do is show up with a little love to share with an animal who desperately needs it. After all, "It takes nothing away from a human to be kind to an animal."

By Melanie Lyon



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