

OKEFENOKEE HERITAGE CENTER NEWSLETTER



“ELVIS RETURNS”

By Elizabeth Pond

Elvis Presley will soon be back in Waycross. The Okefenokee Heritage Center is commemorating the 70th anniversary of “The King’s” February 22, 1956, Waycross appearance with a special presentation. OHC is bringing Elvis Tribute Artist and Georgia native Jordan Poole to the CC McCray City Auditorium on Saturday, September 26, for an evening of old-time rock and roll. Poole, who hails from Sylvester, has won several awards for his portrayal of Presley, most recently being named the 2025 Tupelo Ultimate Elvis Champion in the birthplace of Elvis Presley, Tupelo, Mississippi.

OHC Executive Director Carla Garrett Cornett says the September fundraising performance fits beautifully with the OHC mission. “One of the goals of the Okefenokee Heritage Center is to keep our rich, cultural heritage alive,” Cornett says. “Our Willie R. Character Entertainment Venue houses posters of many famous performers who came to Waycross, specifically to the Waycross Auditorium. Knowing that Elvis performed here 70 years ago, and his music is loved by so many, we felt it fitting to bring “The King of Rock and Roll” back to the same stage Elvis performed on.”

Elvis’ stop in Waycross was part of a grueling tour during which he performed “Baby Let’s Play House,” “Tutti Frutti,” “Heartbreak Hotel” (which was mistakenly cited as being “Heartburn Hotel” by a local newspaper reporter), and “Blue Suede Shoes.” On the same ticket with Presley were performers Justin Tubb, The Louvin Brothers, The Alabama Sanddusters, Mother Maybelle, The Carter Sisters, June Carter, and Benny Martin. Presley had only recently made his television debut on CBS’s Stage Show, hosted by the Dorsey Brothers, on January, 28 and was not yet the entertainment icon he would evolve into. Following the concert, Presley and his entourage went to the Plant Café in downtown Waycross. According to the current owner of the café, Marla Howell, Presley’s manager, Colonel Tom Parker had orchestrated a contest following each of his concert dates for a local young lady to dine with Presley. “After his two shows at our City Auditorium,” said Howell, “a young lady’s name was pulled and Plant Café, being open 24 hours those days, was the meeting location for them to arrange their dinner the next day at The Green Frog restaurant.”

(continued on page 3)



**JULY
AUGUST
SEPT
2026**

OHC Calendar

JULY Gregory Newson Exhibition		Gallery
Tues -	Line Dance Classes	6PM
2,9,16	Legacy & Literacy ~ Learning	6:30PM
3 -	OHC Heritage Marketplace	5:30-8:30PM
4 -	AMERICA 250 Celebration	Happy Birthday America
7 -	Gregory Newson Program	6PM
8 -	OHC Board of Trustees Lunch	12PM
13-17	OHC Art Camp ~ Week 1	9AM
14 -	OHC Photography Guild	6:30PM
16 -	OHC Quilt Guild	6PM
20-24	OHC Art Camp ~ Week 2	9AM
28 -	OHC Art Guild	5:30PM
AUG Don Yaun Exhibition		Gallery
Tues -	Line Dance Classes	6PM
1 -	OHC Heritage Marketplace	10AM-1PM
2 -	Don Yaun Art Reception	2-4PM
4 -	OHC Genealogy Guild	6PM
6 -	Learning Series ~ Bob Brown	6PM
11 -	OHC Photography Guild	6:30PM
18 -	Black Heritage Committee	5:30PM
21 -	SG Modern Quilt Guild	6PM
25 -	OHC Art Guild	5:30PM
SEPT Ben Smith Art Competition		Gallery
Tues -	Line Dance Classes	6PM
1 -	OHC Genealogy Guild	6PM
2 -	OHC Board of Trustees	12PM
5 -	OHC Heritage Marketplace	10AM-1PM
8 -	OHC Photography Guild	6:30PM
15 -	Black Heritage Committee	5:30PM
17 -	BAH ~ Ben Smith Winners	5PM
17 -	SG Modern Quilt Guild	6PM
22 -	OHC Art Guild	5:30PM
26 -	“ELVIS RETURNS” Concert	6PM

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Happy 250th America!! We are blessed to live in such an incredible nation! May we never take for granted the freedoms we enjoy each and every day. This year, the OHC has endeavored to commemorate our nations birth-day through all of our events and activities of 2026, from painting Old 9's coal tender red, white & blue, to creating an OHC America 250 Mural to be placed as a lasting memorial on the OHC building facing N. Augusta. We will continue the celebration till the end of 2026 with a recognition during our OHC Heritage Marketplace July 3rd night market, OHC Summer Art Camp, "Elvis Returns" concert, Veterans Day Celebrations and our end-of-year Christmas in the 'Cross event. What a wonderful 2nd Quarter we had at OHC and we are looking forward to our 3rd Quarter events and activities. As always, I have to thank our amazing members, sponsors, donors, volunteers and elected officials who help keep OHC a vital part of our community. If you are not a member, we invite you to join us. If you haven't visited in a while come and see our wonderful updates and improvements.

The Okefenokee Heritage Center, we're on the right track!!

Carla Garrett Cornett, Executive Director



CHECK OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT OHC !

AMERICA 250 — The OHC Art Gallery Presents: **GREGORY NEWSON**
ART EXHIBITION ~ JULY 2026



Art Reception for and Presentation by
★ Artist and Historian, Gregory Newson ★

★ **TUESDAY, JULY 7TH, 6PM** ★

OKEFENOKE HERITAGE CENTER
SUMMER ART CAMP ~ 2026



Wk 1: July 13-17 **Wk 2: July 20-24**
FOR AGES 5 - 15 MON - FRI 9AM - 12PM
\$75 FOR NON- OHC MEMBERS OR \$65 FOR OHC MEMBERS.
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 912-285-4260
1460 N. AUGUSTA AVE. WAYCROSS, GA 31503
SEATING IS LIMITED SO SIGN UP TODAY!!

Okefenokee Heritage Center



Heritage Marketplace

FRIDAY, JULY 3RD ~ 5:30PM - 8:30PM
SATURDAY, AUGUST 1ST ~ 10AM - 1PM
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5TH ~ 10AM - 1PM
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3RD ~ 10AM - 1PM

Don Yaun
Art Exhibition
OHC Art Gallery ~ August 2026



Art Reception:
Sunday,
August 2,
2026
2 PM-4PM

Okefenokee Heritage Center
1460 N. Augusta Ave.
Waycross, GA

~ Celebrating the Beauty of Nature Through Art ~

SEPTEMBER 2026
JUDGE BEN SMITH
ART COMPETITION

PAINTING | DRAWING | PHOTOGRAPHY | 3-D

Artwork entires must
be submitted by
AUGUST 29TH
AWARDS PRESENTED
SEPTEMBER 17TH

Okefenokee Heritage Center
1460 N. Augusta Ave.
Waycross, Ga. 31503
(912) 285-4260

Okefenokee Heritage Center
presents
"ELVIS Returns"
to the
CITY AUDITORIUM
in
WAYCROSS GEORGIA
★ after 70 years. ★



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026
OPENING ACT 6PM ELVIS PERFORMS AT 7PM

1956
OHC FUNDRAISER ★ **LOOKING FOR SPONSORS!** ★ **PERFORMANCE BY Jordan Poole, ELVIS TRIBUTE ARTIST**

Special Events:.



OHC partnering with OSP



Okefenokee Folk Festival ~ May '26



Installing outside exhibits



POGO at Swamp Fest ~ Apr '26



Award winners (L-R) Kacie Perritt, Aliya Courson, Rose Belmondo, Alexis Smith, and Maggie Faith are pictured with OHC Art Gallery Director Bob Brown (L) and OHC Executive Director Carla Garrett Cornett ~ Apr '26



OHC America 250 Mural Paint Party ~ June '26

(Continued from page 1)

As many Waycrossians know, Presley's Waycross performance made a lifelong impression on a young audience member named Ingram Cecil Connor, later known as Gram Parsons. Parsons would become known as the creator of Cosmic American Music, a hybrid of country, rhythm and blues, soul, and folk music. Parsons went on to work with the Flying Burrito Brothers, the International Submarine Band, the Byrds, and Emily Lou Harris. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2026. The Okefenokee Heritage Center hosts a permanent exhibit honoring Parsons.

Advanced tickets for the 70 th Anniversary "Elvis Returns" event are available for \$30.00 at the Okefenokee Heritage Center located at 1460 N. Augusta Ave., or online at www.okefenokeeheritagecenter.org.

Tickets will be \$40.00 at the door. Doors will open at 5:00 p.m. The opening act (TBA) will begin at 6:00 p.m., and Elvis will take the stage at 7:00 p.m.

For more information, call 912-285-4260 or email okeheritage@gmail.com.



Swamp Art Exhibition Artists ~ May '26



Special thanks to our OHC America 250 Community Mural Sponsors:

Common Sense Housing	Memorial Satilla Health
Lee Hardware & Building Supply	Sherwin-Williams of Waycross
GA Power	GATX
SEGA Estates, LLC	Sienna Fox Studios, LLC
Waycross Convention & Visitors Bureau	
Ellianos Coffee of Waycross	

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR COMMUNITY ARTISTS!!

Okefenokee Heritage Center

1460 N. Augusta Avenue
Waycross, GA 31503
912-285-4260

www.okefenokeeheritagecenter.com

OHC Mission Statement:

The Okefenokee Heritage Center is a cultural art center and local history and train museum for all people, which seeks to promote an appreciation of the arts and an increased understanding of history and development of the Okefenokee region through its cultural and educational programs, collections, and exhibitions.

Proudly serving Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Pierce & Ware.



State Farm



Stacie Jones Agency



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Carla Garrett Cornett, Executive Director
Amy Shadron, Office Manager



A special thanks to ALL of our
OHC Members!!
Thanks to YOU....
“We’re on the Right Track”!

Invite a friend to join the Okefenokee Heritage Center

Individual	\$36
Family	\$60
Heritage Club	\$100
Sue Clark Society	\$200
Small Business	\$150
Business Sponsor	\$500
Corporate Sponsor	\$1,000
Corporate Partners	\$5,000+

* Join one of our many Guilds

All donations are tax deductible

RENT OUR SPACE

You can rent the facilities at the
Okefenokee Heritage Center
for parties, reunions, etc.

Community Room	\$250
Community/Kitchen	\$300
Depot	\$300
The Venue	\$250
Warehouse/ Depot	\$400
Grounds	\$200

(Tables & Chairs available for rent)

For more information call:

912-285-4260

Visit us on Facebook
For Updates on Events



And on YouTube
For video interviews
okeheritage@gmail.com

