

OKEFENOKEE HERITAGE CENTER NEWSLETTER



**JAN, FEB,
MARCH
2026**

Okefenokee Heritage Center In Review

By EJ Pond

2025 was a rewarding, exciting, and memorable year that saw the OHC celebrate a landmark anniversary, receive a highly prestigious cultural award, and install striking new signage. Among the components of the center, art is among the driving forces of OHC.

The OHC Art Gallery is among the most dynamic areas of OHC due to the diligent efforts of Executive Director Carla Garrett Cornett, OHC Art Gallery Director Bob Brown of Brown Ink Designs, OHC Photography Guild Chair Allen Allnoch and OHC Art Guild Chair Susan Newman. There is also an off-site art display at the Lykens Art Gallery at Memorial Satilla Health, which is refreshed regularly. Most recently, Brown has instituted the OHC Historical Building Traveling Art Exhibition, bringing the work of local artists to venues throughout the community. Brown is behind the OHC being awarded one of only ten locations throughout the state to host the REIMAGINE: Contemporary Georgia Artists exhibit on loan from the Georgia Council of the Arts this past May. Guild Chairs Allnoch and Newman welcome artists of all abilities to attend guild meetings and schedule a wide variety of programming for members. Local artists are encouraged to participate in the Judge Ben Smith Juried Art Competition, which is held every Fall. The competition features works produced in a variety of media.

For younger artists, the OHC hosts summer art camps, which are always full and always fun. Teen and young adult artists are the stars of the Steve Bean Youth Art Exhibition, drawing as many as 300 young artists.

The OHC is also a keeper of the cultural heritage of the area. One cannot consider Waycross without remembering the importance of the railroads to the area. OHC is home to Old Nine, a newly renovated engine from Rockton & Rion Railway in South Carolina. On October 14, the renovations of REA baggage car, funded by GATX, from the Okefenokee Chief were celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony. The final renovation project will be the passenger car, transforming the train into a railroad museum.

Engaging with the community and creating wholesome family events are the cornerstone of OHC. Among the many family-friendly events are the annual Okefenokee Folk Festival / Sue Clark Day in May and the Veterans Day Celebration in November. The holiday season brings the much anticipated Christmas in the 'Cross. There are always new classes and workshops to entice community members out of their comfort zones, the most recent offerings being line and swing dance classes.

Many patrons of the center are members of the numerous guilds and committees of the OHC, including the Black Heritage Committee and the Photography, Art, Performance, Genealogy, and History Guilds. There is also a Writers Group for new and experienced authors.

(Continued on page 3)



OHC Calendar of Events

JAN	OHC Photography Guild	Art Gallery
Tues-	Line Dance Classes 6, 13, 20, 27	6PM
6 -	Clover Heritage Club	4PM
6 -	OHC Genealogy Guild	6PM
7 -	OHC Board of Trustees	12PM
13 -	OHC Photography Guild	6:30PM
15 -	SG Modern Quilt Guild	6PM
17 -	Black History Tech Quiz Bowl	9AM
19 -	MLK Day & Parade	12PM
20 -	OHC Writers	4PM
20 -	Black Heritage Committee	6PM
23 -	OHC History Guild	6PM
25 -	OHC Photo. Guild Art Reception	2 - 4 PM
27 -	OHC Art Guild	5:30PM
FEB	Black History Art Exhibit	Art Gallery
Tues-	Line Dance Classes 3,10,17 & 24	6PM
3 -	OHC Genealogy Guild	6PM
4 -	OHC Board of Trustees	12PM
5 -	OHC Learning Series w/Scott Beahan	10:30AM & 6PM
7 -	OHC We Love Literacy Book Fest	10AM -4PM
10 -	OHC Photography Guild	6:30PM
17 -	OHC Writers	4PM
17 -	Black Heritage Committee	6PM
19 -	SG Modern Quilt Guild	6PM
24 -	OHC Art Guild	6PM
27 -	OHC History Guild	6PM
MAR	OHC Fiber Art Exhibition	Art Gallery
Tues	Line Dance Classes 3,10,17,24 & 31	6PM
3 -	OHC Genealogy Guild	6PM
4 -	OHC Board of Trustees	12PM
10 -	RISE & SHINE @ OHC	7:45AM
10 -	OHC Photography Guild	6:30PM
17 -	OHC Writers	4PM
17 -	Black Heritage Committee	6PM
19 -	SG Modern Quilt Guild	6PM
22 -	OHC Fiber Art Reception	2-4PM
24 -	OHC Art Guild	5:30PM
27 -	OHC History Guild	6PM
28 -	OKEFENOKEE COLOR RUN!!	8AM

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Wow!! 2025 was truly an eventful year full of celebrations for the OHC 50th Anniversary. And it looks like 2026 will be even more eventful with celebrating #America 250 and "Happy Birthday America!!" We will incorporate our nations birthday into the 2026 OHC events and activities. Please look at the last page for our upcoming 2026 events and activities and mark your calendars. Have you noticed the new signs at OHC? We have a new sign by the road as well as one near the entrance of the building. This was provided with a grant from the Okefenokee REMC Foundation. So many people would visit OHC asking what we were all about. This sign distinctively states we are a MUSEUM. Also, we encourage everyone to come and visit our Train Museum, the Okefenokee Chief, with its new and updated exhibits. One of our goals for 2026 is to complete the renovations of the train by updating the mail and passenger cars. As always, thank YOU for your continued support and confidence in the Okefenokee Heritage Center, we definitely could NOT keep our doors open without YOU!! The Okefenokee Heritage Center, *We're on the Right Track!*

Carla Garrett Cornett, Executive Director



CHECK OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING!

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH CARING

Martin Luther King Jr.


★★★★★

MLK Jr. Parade Route & Details
Join us Monday, January 19, 2026,
for the MLK Jr. Parade,
stepping off at 12:00 PM.

Parade Route:

- Starts at MLK Dr. & McDonald St.
- South on McDonald St.
- Left onto Oak St.
- Right onto Tebeau St.
- Left onto Carswell Ave.
- Right onto Pendleton St.
- Right onto Elizabeth St.
- Right onto McDonald St.
- Ends at Purnell Roberts Park

We encourage residents and visitors to line the route and join us in honoring the life, legacy, and service of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Calling All Book Lovers!

OKEFENOKEE HERITAGE CENTER
WE LOVE LITERACY BOOK FESTIVAL

FREE ENTRY

Featuring readings, workshops, book sales, and more

FEBRUARY 7
10A.M. - 4 P.M.

1460 N. Augusta Ave
Waycross GA

More information
okeheritage@gmail.com
912-285-4260



AMERICA 250

OKEFENOKEE HERITAGE CENTER PRESENTS

OKEFENOKEE COLOR RUN 2026

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026

5K RUN AT 8 AM **1 MILE RUN & WALK AT 9 A.M.**

Contact okeheritage@gmail.com for registration or Sponsorship information (912) 285-4260

Georgia Power

WAYCROSS GEORGIA



The fifty-year-old OHC has once again been awarded the Georgia Humanities Award from the Georgia Council for the Arts, all the more prestigious because of the center's rural location and size.

The two annual foot races were once again well attended and tons of fun. The Veterans Day 5k in November accompanies a wide array of activities celebrating our service people, and the Okefenokee Color run in the Spring celebrates all things new and colorful.

OHC received a donation from the Okefenokee REMC Foundation and installed beautiful updated signs at the roadside and front of the building. The new signs reflect the pride and forward movement of OHC as it steps into 2026.

In February of 2026, OHC will launch its inaugural We Love Literacy Book Festival, bringing together writers, readers, and lovers of stories of all ages for a fun day celebrating the written word. The festival will include a special presentation by young poets hosted by Atlanta's Alliance Theatre. The festival is free to the community.

The OHC is looking forward to the next fifty years as the creative and cultural hub of our community and continuing to work with the amazing volunteers and patrons that keep the center humming.

Special Events: Oct–Dec 2025...



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 & 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

OHC Guilds/Groups 2026

OHC Art Guild ~ 4th Tuesday, 5:30PM
OHC History Guild ~ 4th Friday, 6PM
OHC Photography Guild ~ 2nd Tuesday, 6:30PM
OHC Writers ~ 3rd Tuesday, 4PM
OHC Genealogy Guild ~ 1st Tuesday, 6PM
SG Modern Quilt Guild ~ 3rd Thursday, 6PM
Black Heritage Committee ~ 3rd Tuesday, 6PM
Clover Heritage Youth Club ~ Various Dates
OHC Learning Series - 1st Thurs. Feb, May, Aug, Nov
OHC Model Train Guild ~ Various Dates
OHC Performing Arts Guild ~ Various Dates
OHC Exhibit Committee ~ Various Dates
OHC Line Dancers ~ Every Tuesday 6PM

Visit us on Facebook
For Updates on Events



OHC Board of Trustees 2025/26

Stephen Winge, Chairman
Dale Wiley, Vice Chair
Kristy Foreman, Treasurer
Christy Thurston, Secretary
Alan Jones, Past Chair
Mr. Joseph Johnson, Jr., Legal Counsel

*Nancy King	Allen Allnoch
*Dr. S. William Clark	Vicki Kuhbender
*John Jordan	Steve Strickland
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Susan Newman	Phyllis Perry
Jenny Sweat	Kristy Foreman
Keith Jeffers	Robert Brown
Jason Christmas	

Ex Officio Members:

Dr. Brandon Carter, RESA
Mary Kathryn Thrift, WSL
Greg Smith, City of Waycross

Honorary Member:

Zane Williams

Staff:

Carla Garrett Cornett, Executive Director

OHC 2026 Events ~ Celebrating America 250

- OHC "We Love Literacy" Book Festival ~ Feb 7th
- Okefenokee Color Run 5K ~ March 28th
- Okefenokee Folk Festival / Sue Clark Day ~ May 2nd
- OHC Summer Art Camp ~ July 13-17 & 20-24
- Okefenokee Opry(s) ~ Various Times and Locations
- Veterans Day Red, White & Blue Color Run ~ Nov 7th
- Veterans Day Celebration ~ Program ~ Nov 11th
- 17th Annual Christmas in the 'Cross ~ December 5th
- Heritage Market Place ~ 1st Saturdays
- Rotating Exhibit Room ~ Various Quarterly Exhibits
- OHC Art Gallery ~ Monthly Art Exhibitions



Visit our YouTube Channel
For videos



Clark Eye Clinic
If You Can't See, See Me!

