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Head to the History Center in February to Honor Black Trailblazers from Aviators to Artists, Explore the Wonder House, and More!

Visitors to the Orange County Regional History Center in February 2024 can learn about aviation and space pioneers, explore the tale of one of Central Florida's strangest structures, and honor Black heritage and culture with activities for the whole family. As usual, the museum is open free in the evening of the third Thursday of the month. For many History Center events, registration is recommended due to limited capacity. Learn more at TheHistoryCenter.org/Events. Here's a look at February's programs.

Lunch & Learn: The Wonder House

Friday, February 2, 2024, Noon – 1 p.m.

“House of a Thousand Gadgets,” “The House That Breathes,” and “The Crazy House” – these are just a few of the labels bestowed on a large concrete structure covered in foliage that's been sitting in Bartow, in Polk County, for nearly a century. When the man who created it was told he had just one year to live, he embarked on a passion project that may have saved his life. Join us as we explore the history, innovations, and secrets of the Wonder House, one of Central Florida's oldest and most eccentric tourist attractions.

Cost: Free for History Center Members; General Public \$5. Cost with lunch: \$9 for History Center Members; General Public \$14. (Lunch must be ordered by 9 a.m. on Thursday, February 1.)

More information: TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Lunch-Learn-the-Wonder-House/

History Alive: Bessie Coleman Aviation Adventure

Sunday, February 4, 2024, Noon – 3 p.m.

Celebrate the remarkable achievements of aviation pioneer Bessie Coleman! Experience engaging activities throughout the museum that highlight the incredible journey of America's first Black and Native American woman pilot, plus the important role of aviation in Central Florida history. Guided tours of the museum will be offered at 12:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. *Activities are included with museum admission.*

More information: TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/History-Alive-Bessie-Coleman-Aviation-Adventure

Hint of History Workshops: Galactic Trailblazers

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 1 – 4 p.m.

The History Center's monthly Hint of History drop-in sessions allow families to customize their learning experience and participate in activities at their own pace. Our program is geared towards children ages 5 to 11 years old and is ideal for homeschool students and nontraditional classrooms, but all ages and families are welcome to join in the fun and learning. During February, Black History Month, we'll explore the stories of some of the Black Americans who have contributed to our nation's space journey.

More information: TheHistoryCenter.org/Education/Home-School-Days

Third Thursday @ The Museum

Thursday, February 15, 2024, 5 – 8 p.m.

The History Center is open late on the third Thursday of each month with three hours of free admission. Third Thursday @ The Museum is part of a wider event at various downtown Orlando venues organized by the Downtown Arts District celebrating arts, culture, and history through art exhibitions, live performances, drink specials, and more.

More information: TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Third-Thursday-The-Museum

Honoring Black Heritage and Culture

Saturday, February 17, 2024, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Our second annual Honoring Black Heritage and Culture event highlights African Americans as leaders in the arts. We'll explore the tremendous impact Black Americans have had on visual arts, music, cultural movements, and more. City of Orlando poet laureate Shawn Welcome will kick off the event by sharing his personal story and poetry. The day will include performances, speakers, demonstrations, and activities for all ages, and we'll feature Florida craft artists from our Cultural Sustainability and Legacy Planning for Craft Artist project, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, and Craft Emergency Relief Fund. Museum admission is free, thanks to funding from Florida Humanities.

More information: TheHistoryCenter.org/Event/Honoring-Black-Heritage-Culture

The Orange County Regional History Center, housed in a historic courthouse at 65 E. Central Blvd. in downtown Orlando, features four floors of permanent and special exhibitions. The museum is a Smithsonian Institution affiliate and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. It is funded in part by Orange County Government through the Community & Family Services Department under Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings and the Board of County Commissioners. The Historical Society of Central Florida Inc. is supported by United Arts of Central Florida and sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. For more information, visit TheHistoryCenter.org.

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