

Special Events Prove Boca Library Downtown More Than Just a Place to Borrow Books

“Artists Practicing Art”...
“From Japan With Love”...
“Fake or Fact: A Politifact
Talk”, all interesting and all
free to attend.

One can fill up a cultural calendar very easily these days, at no cost and going no further than the Boca Raton Public Library Downtown, thanks to the program schedule offered by the library’s staff. Here are three events deserving of your attention.

The Palm Beach County Art Teachers Association’s exhibit, “Artists Practicing Art,” will be on display at the Downtown Library, an Art in Public Places venue, at 400 NW 2nd Avenue. The art organization’s mission is to support and maintain the highest quality of art education in Palm Beach County. Its focus is on helping students develop their own creativity and potential. “Artists Practicing Art” is running now through April 26. This free exhibit is open to the public during regular library hours.

On April 29th, from 3:30 to 5 p.m., the library brings professional storyteller, Kuniko Yamamoto, to the Downtown Library for a unique performance, “From Japan with Love: The Magical, Musical Storytelling of Kuniko Yamamoto.” As part of this year’s Story Central focus on Cultural Connections, Yamamoto combines her personal experiences and charming Japanese folktales with traditional musical instruments, magical masks, origami and mime to create storytelling that will have audiences spellbound in their seats.

A native of Japan, Kuniko Yamamoto received her Bachelor of Psychology from Otani University of Kyoto. She started performing professionally in her hometown of Osaka where she grew up studying traditional dance, music and theater. She received national exposure through the Japanese Storytelling at the Silk Road International Exposition and on Kansai National TV. Later, she studied in the United States with Tony Montanaro, a highly respected mime and actor.



Kuniko Yamamoto

Being married to world-renowned magician Jon LeClair has inspired her to add subtle magic and mystery to her act. Kuniko performs in theaters, schools, colleges, and festivals across the country.

“Historically, stories have been shared in nearly all societies to entertain, educate, and preserve the native culture,” notes Program Services Librarian Oyuki De Santiago Poletz. “In this month’s Story Central presentation,

Yamamoto shares her fascinating Japanese culture through the spoken word, music and drama.”

The Story Central series, “One World, Many Cultures,” is coordinated by Caren Neile, former chairperson of the National Storytelling Network, who teaches storytelling studies at Florida Atlantic University, and performs and lectures on storytelling worldwide. These programs will be held on Saturdays at 3:30 p.m. at the Downtown Library. Registration opens 30 days before each program on the library’s calendar at bocalibrary.org.

Then, on May 17th, from 7 to 8 p.m., the library continues its focus on Civic Engagement by welcoming back Amy Sherman in a new talk, “Fake or Fact.” Amy Sherman is a staff writer for the *Miami Herald* and *PolitiFact* Florida, a partnership between *The Tampa Bay Times* and *Miami Herald* to check out truth in politics. Sherman’s talk will address the current issue of “fake news,” as well as how to fact-check Florida’s and national politicians.

“Amy’s previous talk, *Pants on Fire*, was a big hit with audiences last year,” says Oyuki De Santiago Poletz, Program Services Librarian. “Don’t miss this opportunity to see her for another dynamic presentation at the library.”

Register to attend through the Calendar at bocalibrary.org.

Government

Memo from Palm Beach County Commissioner Steven L. Abrams: Palm Beach County Baseball...and Turtles!

Let’s Play Ball! On March 2nd, I attended the first official game at the new Ballpark of the Palm Beaches, located at 5444 Haverhill Road in West Palm Beach. It’s the new Spring Training home for the Houston Astros and the Washington Nationals. The 160-acre complex, built on an old landfill, is a state-of-the-art, two-team facility with a 6,500-seat stadium, a 360-degree concourse, suites and party areas. Each team has six practice fields that can be easily navigated by visitors.

In addition to Spring Training games and practices, the Ballpark of the Palm Beaches will also be available for tournaments, corporate functions, concerts, festivals and other events. The 160-acre campus includes a public park featuring a large playground, splash park, four lighted basketball courts, and a 1.8 mile walking trail, and is open daily.

The ballpark, which has been under construction for the past 15 months, was jointly funded by the Houston Astros, Washington Nationals, the State of Florida, City of West Palm Beach and county tourism dollars.

In addition to the Washington Nationals and the Houston Astros, the county is also home to the Florida Marlins and St. Louis Cardinals, who train at Rodger Dean Stadium in Jupiter. Consequently, the new facility creates a top-tiered cluster of baseball teams that will make Palm Beach County a spring training destination. For more information, visit <http://www.ballparkpalmbeaches.com/>.

Turtle Talk. What you need to know: March 1st was the official start of the sea turtle nesting season in Palm Beach County, and the experts are predicting another good year ahead. Our county is one of Florida’s most important loggerhead nursery areas in the Western Hemisphere. Every year, thousands of loggerhead, leatherback and green sea turtles come ashore to nest on our beaches, resulting in over two million hatchlings!

The process starts when the female sea turtle crawls ashore at night to dig a nest, deposit her eggs, cover the nest and return to the water. While on the beach, sea turtles are timid and vulnerable, and can be easily frightened away if disturbed.



It takes from one to three hours for the female turtle to lay between 80 to 120 eggs (each shaped like a ping pong ball).

The nests are located approximately 18 inches below the surface, and are generally found above the high-tide line on the dry beach. Eggs and nest must remain undisturbed in the warm sand for 47 to 60 days before they hatch.

The majority of the hatching occurs from July through September, and hatchlings usually emerge from their nests as a group at night. In a natural situation they crawl down the beach to the water, where they must swim for many hours to reach the open sea.

Unfortunately, thousands of hatchlings die every year in their attempt to reach the water. Instinctively, newly hatched sea turtles follow the natural light reflected on the water by the moon and waves. However, they become disoriented by artificial light from homes, businesses, street lights and cars, and crawl in the wrong direction. Consequently, they die from exhaustion, dehydration, predators and debris.

Here are some simple tips to help protect sea turtles:

- Beaches must be free of debris and potential obstacles. Sea turtles have poor vision on land and cannot go backwards. Many times, they return to sea without nesting if an obstacle is encountered.

- Do not disturb sea turtles, nests or eggs; it’s against the law.

- If you encounter a nesting turtle, keep lights off, remain still, and keep your distance.

- Turn off coastal lights and keep flashlights and phones off while on the beach at night.

- Keep pets away from nesting females, nests and hatchlings.

- Do not disturb nest markers. Numerous organizations, including the county’s Environmental Resource Department, monitor sea turtles.

- Operate your boat with caution. Sea turtles are found offshore, near shore and inshore, and have to surface to breathe.

Sea turtle facts: (Source: *National Geographic*)

- Sea turtles are among the oldest creatures on earth, unchanged for over a million years.

- After epic migrations at sea around the world, loggerhead sea turtles return to almost the exact spot where they were born, to mate and lay their own eggs. Reportedly, this is based on the coastline’s magnetic signature, which the turtle remembers and uses as an internal compass.

- Sand temperature can determine gender. For example, cooler sand tends to produce male hatchlings.

Supervised sea turtle walks are available at locations throughout Palm Beach County, including Gumbo Limbo Nature Center in Boca Raton. For more information about sea turtles and walks, visit <http://discover.pbegov.org/erm/Publications/SeaTurtleWalks>.



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