Library hosts Lunar New Year celebrations

Multnomah County Library hosted two special celebrations — at Gregory Heights Library on February 17 and at Central Library on February 18 — for the Lunar New Year, a festive event observed in many Asian countries to represent the beginning of the lunisolar calendar.

At Central Library, over 200 attendees gathered in a space decorated with flowers, paper lanterns, Chinese couplets and dragons to enjoy activities and refreshments. The program kicked off with a traditional lion dance for good fortune, presented by White Lotus Lion Dance, which made its way through the entire first floor of the library, pausing to do tricks in the Popular and Children's rooms before ending in the U.S. Bank Room.

The event also featured dance performances from the Portland Chinese Women's Group and children from the Portland Art and Cultural Center; a martial arts demonstration by the Summit Wushu Academy; and “Year of the Dog”-themed crafts, provided by the Formosa Association of Student Cultural Ambassadors (FASCA).
At Gregory Heights, attendees enjoyed similar activities, including a performance from White Lotus Lion Dance, and a visit from calligraphy artist and Vietnamese refugee Nho Nguyen, who showcased his artwork, which remains on display through mid-March.

“It's such an exciting event for the community. It was great to have so many people who've never been to a Lunar New Year celebration before come into the library and tell us how much they appreciate learning about different cultures” said Lan Phan, bilingual library assistant at Gregory Heights.

A third Lunar New Year event was scheduled to take place at Holgate Library on February 20 but was canceled due to snowy weather conditions. Library staff are working to reschedule some of the performances for May 2018 during Asian Heritage Month.

In addition to the Lunar New Year celebrations, the library is participating in the Voyage to Vietnam exhibit at the Portland Children's Museum. The theme of the exhibit is “Celebrating the Tết Festival” (the Vietnamese New Year). Vietnamese bilingual staff from Holgate, Midland, and Gregory Heights libraries will present storytimes in Vietnamese and introduce traditional Vietnamese craft activities and children’s games.

**Library contact center reaches first year milestone**

Multnomah County Library opened its contact center in January 2017 as a new way to streamline information for patrons. Rather than contacting individual library branches or departments to receive help, patrons call one number, or fill out the contact form on the website, and get assistance for everything from renewing items to historical records.

In its first year, the contact center processed thousands of virtual contacts, answering a staggering 142,216 calls and handling more than 13,000 patron emails!

“We are thrilled that our library colleagues and our community have embraced this model,” said Heather Rogers, contact center supervisor.
Since opening, contact center staff have developed their own resources to better answer patron questions. Staff have also helped the library to evolve its policies and practices, as more services — such as account management — are able to be handled through the contact center.

“This first year has been a process of learning and growing. We have worked hard to build trust with our colleagues and with our patrons — letting them know we are here to help. It might work differently than before, but we are committed to providing the same level of excellent service they expect,” said Rogers.

The contact center anticipates helping more than 200,000 patrons in its second year.

**Library partnering with local musicians for new collection**

Multnomah County Library is debuting on the local music scene. Over the past month, the library has been inviting submissions from local musicians for a new online streaming music collection.

“The Portland area is already known for its vibrant music scene,” said Javier Gutierrez, director of collections and technical services for Multnomah County Library. “This new
collection is a great opportunity for the library to help showcase and share all of the great talent in our community.”

The Library Music Project is accepting submissions of local music from any genre from through March 14, 2018 at librarymusicproject.com. A team of local music experts will review all submissions and all artists selected to be part of the catalog will be compensated for their work.

The library's first online collection of local music will be available for free download and streaming in May of this year.

“Many of us are connected in some way with local musicians: as neighbors, friends or parents at a school,” said Kady Ferris, electronic content librarian. “We're hoping to spread the call for submissions far and wide to give musicians and community members a chance to connect through the library.”

**Patron comments**

"Margaret [Finnan], many thanks to you and your team for assisting me with this. Your ILL [interlibrary loan] office is a wonderful resource. It's not easy to find time for my research labor of love due to my day job and family life, so the extra assistance you've provided with this index means a lot. One more reason MCL is a gem. Many thanks!” — Jeremy, March 5

“I express my gratitude to Sara Garcia for her attentive behavior and always helpful at me problems I have occurred in the I use of public computer in Rockwood library.”

— Konstantin, February 27

“...I suggested some books to purchase and am delighted and encouraged to see they've been ordered! I'm doing a global reading project and have found there are a few countries that are nearly impossible to find material from, and I think it's great to expand representation within the library catalog. I hope you don't mind if I suggest some more titles, and I'm very excited to read the ones you've ordered!” — Celeste, February 14

**In the news**

The Quest for Digital Equity (Government Technology, March 1)
Linked RA: Libraries recommend books based on patron tattoos (American Libraries, March 1)
Library plugs into local music scene (Portland Tribune, March 1)
Multnomah County Library joins million-book download club (Portland Tribune, March 1)
Portland Author Renee Watson to Read From ‘Betty Before X’ at North Portland Library Feb. 24 (The Skanner, February 20)
Celebrate Black History Month at Multnomah County Library (The Skanner, February 15)
You can Soon Stream Music at the Library (Willamette Week, February 14)
Multnomah County Library Seeks Contributions from Local Musicians (The Skanner, February 14)
North Portland Library celebrates Black History Month (Hollywood Star, February 14)

Upcoming events

Black American Women and Questions of Citizenship in the U.S. Media
Tuesday, March 13
Kenton Library
5:00 pm

Beginning Somali Sewing Class/Barnamij Sharqaan (a four-part series)
Saturday, March 17
Capitol Hill Library
12:00 pm

Earthquake Ready
Sunday, March 18
Kenton Library
2:00 pm

Books, Babies and Brains
Thursday, March 22
Gresham Library
5:30 pm

Enter West: Refugee Women Reflect on Exit West and Their Migration Experience
Saturday, March 24
Hollywood Library
3:00 pm

Babysitter Training for Teens
Monday, March 26
Capitol Hill Library
10:30 am

Ukrainian Eggs/Писанки
Monday, March 26
Rockwood Library
6:00 pm

Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior
Saturday, March 31
Belmont Library
3:00 pm

Blogging with WordPress
Monday, April 2
Central Library
12:00 pm

Everybody Reads 2018: Mohsin Hamid
Thursday, April 5
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall
7:30 pm