



DIVERSITY in DUBUQUE



February 2025

A newsletter from the City of Dubuque's Office of Equity & Human Rights

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Holidays & Observances

February 2

Imbolc (Pagan and Wiccan)
Candlemas (Christian)

February 4

Rosa Parks Day (U.S.)

February 12

Tu BiShvat (Jewish)
Lantern festival (China)
Māgha Pūjā (Buddhism)

February 15

Parinirvana (Buddhism)

February 17

Presidents' Day (U.S.)

February 26

Maha Shivaratri (Hinduism)

February 28

First day of Ramadan (Muslim)

Black History Month

Art serves as a fundamental way for humans to understand the people and the world around them through shared experiences. It often serves as a way to express emotions that language alone cannot capture. Art contributes to a sense of cultural identity. Contributions from Black artists, writers, and musicians, have molded our cultural landscape into the beautiful tapestry we see today.

Literature written by Black authors is profoundly important because it provides essential insights into the diverse experiences, histories, and cultural contributions of Black communities worldwide. The lived experiences of Black people have been left out of the history books of America far too often. Black authors have brought to light the horrific experiences of slavery and its effect on today's Black community. They have brought forward the hope and struggles of the civil rights movement, and social justice issues still facing the Black community today. These stories not only inform, but they also challenge readers to confront their biases, and they seek to inspire activism to confront societal injustices.

Black literature offers a window into the richness of Black culture. This includes their traditions, music, art, language, and spirituality. Recording Black heritage preserves it for future generations to learn from and celebrate its beauty. Black literature is not only a form of artistic expression but also a powerful tool for education, advocacy, and cultural enrichment. By reading and valuing these works, we contribute to the mission of creating a more just and equitable society.

**"Hold fast to
dreams, for if
dreams die, life
is a broken-
winged bird that
cannot fly."**



~ Langston Hughes

"As long as the people don't fear the truth, there is hope. For once they fear it, the one who tells it doesn't stand a chance. And today, truth is still beautiful... but so frightening." ~ Alice Walker

**"All that you touch you change.
All that you change changes you."**
~ Octavia Butler

**"The function of
freedom is to free
someone else."**



~ Toni Morrison

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences."

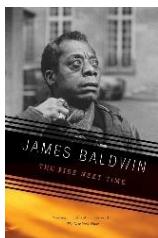
~ Audre Lourde

"The truth is no one of us can be free until everybody is free."

~ Maya Angelou

Black History Month

Check out one of these must-reads by Black authors:



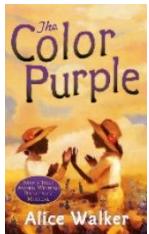
"The Fire Next Time" by James Baldwin

This powerful collection of essays examines race, religion, and the struggle for justice in America. It offers a poignant and prophetic critique of racial inequality and a call for compassion and change.



"Beloved" by Toni Morrison

This haunting novel follows Sethe, an escaped enslaved woman in post-Civil War America, who is haunted by the trauma of her past and the ghost of her deceased daughter. It explores themes of slavery, motherhood, and the struggle for freedom and redemption.



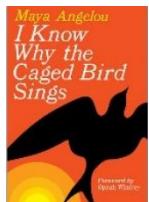
"The Color Purple" by Alice Walker

This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel follows the journey of Celie, an African American woman in the early 20th-century South, as she overcomes abuse, oppression, and racism to find her voice, self-worth, and a sense of community.



"Invisible Man" by Ralph Ellison

This groundbreaking novel is about a young African American man's journey of self-discovery as he navigates racism, identity, and invisibility in a society that refuses to see him for whom he truly is.



"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou

This powerful memoir chronicles Angelou's early life, as she overcomes racism, trauma, and hardship to find her voice, identity, and strength through resilience and self-expression.



"Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe

This landmark novel tells the story of Okonkwo, a proud Igbo warrior and leader, whose life unravels as his traditional society's disruptive forces of colonialism and cultural change in late 19th-century Nigeria.



"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." ~ James Baldwin

"You have to decide who you are and force the world to deal with you, not with its idea of you." ~ James Baldwin

"Art gives us the opportunity to have clarity as well as hope that we might be able to survive a situation or hope that we can find a way out of it without too much more injury to ourselves." ~ Ntozake Shange

"Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible." ~ Maya Angelou



"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." ~ Maya Angelou

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." ~ Audre Lorde



"Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year."

~ W. E. B. Du Bois

"Nations reel and stagger on their way; they make hideous mistakes; they commit frightful wrongs; they do great and beautiful things. And shall we not best guide humanity by telling the truth about all this, so far as the truth is ascertainable?" ~ W. E. B. Du Bois

"Your voices matter, your dreams matter, your lives matter. Be the roses that grow in the concrete." ~ Angie Thomas

A Note from the Office of Equity & Human Rights

On his first day in office, newly elected President Donald Trump issued executive orders that eliminated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs from the federal government. He also ended policies intended to promote racial equity and protection of rights for LGBTQ+ persons. Similar policies endangering human and civil rights are predicted to continue over the coming months.

Initial reactions to this might include feelings of helplessness and disbelief. We have come so far, only to be pushed back down again. To avoid feelings of despair, try to look for reasons to hope, and if you look for it, hope is what you will find!

History has shown us that what's happening today is nothing new, it's called the "backlash effect." A backlash is a strong reaction against an idea, or an action. In this case, when progress is made, there is a backlash against that progress. This has been seen time and again throughout the history of this country:

- **Progress:** During Reconstruction after the Civil War, Black people gained political and civil rights.
- **Backlash:** Southern states implemented Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws.
- **Progress:** The feminist movement fought for and won workplace equality and reproductive rights.
- **Backlash:** The overturning of Roe v. Wade, and companies refusing to pay for birth control.

Backlashes can be countered with hope, endurance, empathy for yourself and others, and working towards slower incremental progress. Small victories lay the groundwork for larger victories, and they help to slowly shift public opinion. Making small changes can be done through organized groups and coalitions. Find one, join it, and focus on being a part of incremental change.

There is still hope for new progress to be made, and for existing progress to remain and grow stronger. Equity is nothing more than helping everyone to achieve success in life. For those who fear DEI, it is a fear misplaced. Fight the good fight, and don't lose hope. The cycle of history shows us that progress will eventually return.

Cultural Events Happening in the Tri-States

[First Friday](#) is a free downtown monthly community arts event with open galleries, artists' studios, and live entertainment, fostering community and celebrating arts in Dubuque. This month, events are held on February 7.

A. Alanda Gregory

The Stu @ 5 – 8 PM

Lena Happ Olsen

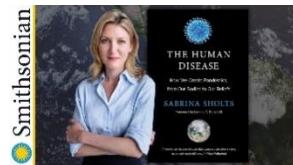
Outside the Lines Gallery @ 4:30 – 7:30

Carnegie-Stout Library Virtual Author Talks

Each month, a selection of authors discuss their books and expert topics. These events are virtual and live; however, recordings of the talks will be archived for later viewing. [Registration on the library website is required.](#)

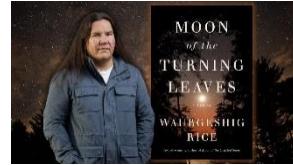
How We Create Pandemics, From Our Bodies to Our Beliefs with Sabrina Sholts

February 4 @ 1 PM



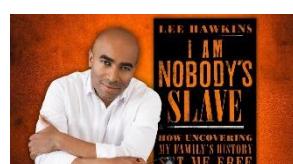
Dystopian Tropes from an Indigenous Perspective with Waubgeshig Rice

February 11 @ 6 PM



I Am Nobody's Slave with Lee Hawkins

February 18 @ 1 PM



Volunteer Opportunity of the Month

[Snow Stomping for the Winter Arts Festival](#)

Let's stomp some snow! Crews are needed to stomp snow into huge blocks for the upcoming Winter Arts Snow Sculpting Festival. Multiple shifts are available. Lunch and a warming tent will be provided. Sign up to help with this organization or any of the 200+ other opportunities at volunteerdbq.com.

Cultural Events Happening in the Tri-States



[Winter Arts Snow Sculpting Festival](#)

February 7 – 9

Washington Park

Teams of professional, amateur, and collegiate artists transform blocks of snow into masterful works of art. The community festival and people's choice voting are on February 9, from noon – 4 PM.

[Dubuque Symphony Youth Orchestra: Mozart's Requiem](#)

February 8 @ 7:30 PM

Five Flags Theater

Mozart's Requiem performed by the musicians of the Dubuque Symphony Youth Orchestra. (cost varies)

["The Meskwaki Nation, The Mines of Spain, and Why You Must Know Indigenous History"](#)

February 9 @ Noon

EB Lyons Interpretive Center

Engage with Dr. Eugene Tesdahl in this historical dialogue on the importance of indigenous and Black history and their voices.

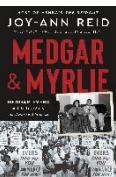
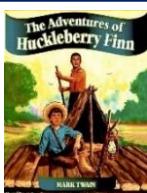
[Reading Roundtable Adult Book Discussion:](#)

["Adventures of Huckleberry Finn"](#)

[by Mark Twain](#)

February 10 at 6 – 7 PM

Carnegie-Stout Library



[2025 Black History and Reading Challenge:](#)

["Medgar & Myrlie" by Joy-Ann Reid](#)

February 23 @ 3 – 4 PM

Carnegie-Stout Library

DSO Spring Family Concert

February 15 @ 1 PM

Five Flags Theater

This vaudeville-inspired performance is sure to capture the imagination of all ages.

Plus, special guest Professor Trumpeterclangor, a whimsical sound scientist, needs your help to complete Mozart's "Toy Symphony." (cost \$14–\$34)



[Dubuque Symphony Orchestra: Beethoven's 5th](#)

February 15 @ 7:30 PM and February 16 @ 2 PM

Five Flags Theater

The Dubuque Symphony Orchestra will feature Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana," Mendelssohn's "Hebrides Overture," and a commissioned piece by Flute Timothy Hagen's first Flute Concerto. (cost varies)

[Learning about Critical Media Literacy with Dr. Nolan Higdon](#)

February 20 @ 6-7 PM

Online

In today's times of questionable sources of news, media spin, and disinformation, there seems to be no reliable standard for accurate information. Join Dr. Nolan Higdon, for a thought-provoking presentation about critical media literacy. RSVP with the Shalom Center. (cost \$15)



[Mary Mcleod Bethune: The Voice of Hope](#)

February 22 and 23 at 3 PM

First Baptist Church of Dubuque

This play will highlight how May Mcleod Bethune and Eleanore Roosevelt partnered in shaping government policies for Black Americans during the 1930s and '40s.

[Film: "No Address" Hosted by Dubuque Rescue Mission](#)

February 27 at 7 PM

Phoenix Theatres



"No Address" is a cinematic exploration of hope, humanity, and resilience as the characters who unexpectedly fall into homelessness navigate the stormy challenges of life with no physical address. (cost \$11.24)

[My Black Excellence](#)

February 13, 20, 27

at 6 – 8 PM

Multicultural Family Center

Themes include the art of black music and love, empowering and supporting black voices, and black excellence in the kitchen. Open to all! Adults 18+.

