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Shelburne Public Library encourages the community to recognize Black History Month

There are several meaningful ways to recognize Black History Month. Here are just a few ways to participate right here in Shelburne:

1. Read books ? fiction or non-fiction ? by Black authors and share your review with friends and family or on social media. At the library, we have several titles on display and are always happy to recommend your next read.

2. If you have young children, attend our weekly Story Times. Not only are we sharing stories by Black authors, but we have the privilege of hosting students from Centennial Hylands' Huskies of Colour as special guest readers. The goals of this student-led club are to develop confidence, leadership skills, and academic excellence.

3. Attend a Black History Month Celebration. On Saturday, Feb. 21, from 6 to 8 p.m., at Grace Tipling Hall, the Dufferin County Canadian Black Association (DCCBA) and the Town of Shelburne have planned a powerful community event celebrating culture, history and Black excellence. This all-ages event is free, and we hope to see you there.

Staff pick of the week

Black Cherokee by Antonio Michael Downing is the Shelburne Public Library's staff pick of the week. In this story, Betty meets Queenie in a courageous coming-of-age story about a Black girl fighting for recognition in a South Carolina Cherokee community that refuses to accept her ancestry as legitimate.

Why Molly recommends it: This is the first book I've read by this author, and after the first few pages, I slowed way down to savour it. Told between the 90s and mid-aughts from the perspective of Ophelia Blue Rivers, I was immediately drawn in because I also lived in South Carolina at the same time.

To say I was ignorant of the area's history is a profound understatement. In Black Cherokee, Downing winds a fictional (but historic) river tale of South Carolina around his readers in order to deliver a deeply North American story, coming of age in a time of great division.

Ophelia moves through her family and is moved around by them, but she tries to remind herself of how she is connected through them. I was impressed by Downing's adept writing of female characters and how he showed their greatness through their human faults. This book brings together two things I'm passionate about: truth and learning through ancestral narrative.

Save the date! Antonio Michael Downing will discuss his book in conversation with library CEO Shannon McGrady as part of Small Town, Big Ideas at the Museum of Dufferin (MoD) on April 25 at 2 p.m. Tickets are available via the MoD's website.

This article was written by the Shelburne Public Library staff.