

NWACC Spring Arts and Culture Festival

Event Schedule (March 2-5, 2026; theme: Connection)

All events are free and open to the public. Questions can be directed at SACF@nwacc.edu.

Most events happen at [NWACC's Bentonville campus](#), unless otherwise noted.

Full Week Exhibits

Connecting the Costs of Our Education

First-floor
Rotunda,
Student Center

This display explores the costs of textbooks and other high education costs in the lives of students through an interactive dialogue about the production of knowledge, the limits of the human body, and the resources to maintain educational institutions. It points towards various horizons of praxis and leaves other frontiers contingent, emergent, and moderately legible. It allows students to write their thoughts in response to open-ended questions and the ideas of others.

Connecting the Dots: The Art & Science of Data

Lobby, Burns
Hall

The connection between art, science, and mathematics may not appear to be an obvious one. However, the work done by scientists and mathematicians to study and describe the world around us requires creativity. Join us for an exhibit that highlights the creativity of ongoing scientific research through data visualizations, photographs, and physical models, and prepare to connect with science and mathematics in a new way!

Puzzling Connections

First-floor
Rotunda,
Student Center

Come enjoy some puzzles by yourself and with others.

Solve the Puzzle of the Seven Bridges of Königsberg

Bogle Plaza

Come and try your hand at solving a famous 18th-century puzzle, The Seven Bridges of Königsberg. The city of Königsberg had four landmasses (two riverbanks and two islands) connected by seven bridges. We will have a small-scale model of the bridges for you to interact with. To solve the puzzle, try to devise a walk through the city that crosses each bridge only once. After attempting the puzzle, learn about Euler's solution and how it led to the founding of graph theory and topology by focusing on connectivity.

Connecting to the Past

Info Commons
hallway, Burns
Hall

Channel retro nostalgia and make a screen-free 'connection' station, an ongoing, interactive display. Stop by or spend the day playing old board games, card games, Koosh balls, Rubrik's Cubes.

PRIDE at NWACC Presents Leave Your Own Story

Comm Arts long
display wall,
Burns Hall

My Culture Connects to Me interactive display

Back Wall, Room
108, Student
Center

Connections – A Collection of Works by NWACC Art Faculty
(Tuesday 3 pm through end of the semester)

Integrated
Design Lab

Monday (March 2)

9:00-10:15 am	Improv with Me! How to Connect through the Fundamentals of Improvisation	White Auditorium, Burns Hall
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"Make your Partner look good": A proper maxim for life, as well as this workshop, where actor Avery Redmond guides participants through games and warmups, and lectures on how to use improv in the real world. Redmond also provides the 'Basics' of improv by continuing a game, scene, or warmup while staying on your toes!

10:30-11:45 am	Connections Through Spoken Language	Room 108, Student Center
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Verbal communication involves the USE of language. When discussing verbal communication, scholars do not look just at language structures but explore language usage in human interactions. In this event, we explore this notion by creating connections much like the popular New York Times game and connect through communication to find shared meaning and understanding with others.

12:00-1:15 pm	Students Creating Connections	Room 108, Student Center
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Students create an interactive presentation about connections through a multiplicity of different speeches.

1:30-2:45 pm	Impromptu Speaking	Room 108, Student Center
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Impromptu speaking is the art of delivering a speech with little to no delivery, a skill that we use in our interpersonal and professional relationships every day. In this event, participants cultivate this capacity by drawing a quotation, spend two minutes to create a speech structured by an outline, present their thoughts, and answer audience questions.

3:00-4:15 pm	Beat the Geeks	Room 108, Student Center
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Are you smarter than Honors faculty or students? Join moderator Dana Doughty (seamstress, artists, and NWACC Honors graduate) to find out by playing in a quiz show game focused on academic, arcane, and popular trivia. Bring your team. Play solo. Win prizes, even bragging rights.

4:30-5:45 pm	Book Club Discussion of <i>Is Love the Answer</i>	Library Wing (Room 1342, Burns Hall)
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Join PRIDE, Intro to Gender Studies students, and Book Club regulars for a facilitated discussion of *Is Love the Answer?* manga by Uta Isaki that explores the aromantic and the asexual.

6:30-8:30 pm	Star Party Public Observing Night	Top floor, NWACC Parking garage
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Join us in looking through telescopes at different astronomical objects. Astronomy experts from NWACC and the local Northwest Arkansas community give context about the viewable objects, answer questions, and discuss the universe and our connection to it. Drinks and snacks are provided.

Tuesday (March 3)

9:00-10:15 am

Stitching Well-Being and
Crafting Calm

Room 108, Student Center

Led by Beatriz Segura, owner of Magic Craft Hands, this interactive workshop explores how traditional fiber arts—like embroidery—can positively support mental well-being. Participants are invited to slow down, work with their hands, and experience the calming, meditative qualities of making. Through guided activities and discussion, Segura demonstrates how these crafts help reduce stress, improve focus, and build resilience by encouraging mindfulness and creative expression.

10:30-11:45 am

Local Ecology of Northwest
Arkansas: An Informative Guide

White Auditorium, Burns
Hall

What makes the ecology of northwest Arkansas unique? How deep are the roots of local plants? How have animals and plants adapted to local conditions? What challenges does this ecology face? What role might you play in addressing these challenges? Ellen Turner, emeritus biology professor at NWACC and environmental advocate, addresses these questions in a lively lecture.

12-1:15 pm

Raising the Spirit

White Auditorium, Burns
Hall

How does Black music create a space for participation, mobilize young people against injustice, create connections across difference, foster legible and novel claims about the world, and elevate the present to a better future? Dr. Najja K. Baptist – Director of African & African American Studies, Sylvia G. Swartz Endowed Chair, and Associate Professor of Political Science at University of Arkansas – explores these questions in an interactive and lively fashion that draws upon the Black prophetic tradition (in his role as an academic and preacher). Baptist, in this talk, draws upon his recent book “In the Spirit, In the Dark” (NYU Press, 2026) to bring these points home.

12-1:30 pm	Connect with NYT Connections	Room 1208, Burns Hall or Microsoft Teams
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Play Connections, a daily category matching puzzle published by the New York Times, and access other NYT content for free using your NWACC account. We'll help you download the app, set up your account, read the news, and play Connections and other NYT games. We'll even teach you how to connect with other friends playing the game to create a custom leaderboard! [Signup and get the Teams Link](#) through the library.

1:30-2:45 pm	Chrystal O'Boyle: Shaping Connections	Room 124, Integrated Design Lab
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Ceramicist Chrystal O'Boyle, a Fayetteville native who has returned to the community and currently serves as the Artist in Residence at the Community Creative Center, discusses their journey and work. A reception follows.

3:00-4:15 pm	Reception for Connections – A Collection of Works by NWACC Art Faculty	Integrated Design Lab
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This event explores how relationships shape artistic practice — between people and places, materials and ideas, memory and identity. These connections may be visual, conceptual, or material, emerging through collaboration, influence, or the dialogue between tradition and innovation. Artworks will engage with the theme of Connections through content, process, or the relationships formed between works.

4:30-5:45 pm	Chamber Singers	White Auditorium, Burns Hall
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Under the direction of Michael Baker Brown, the mixed chamber ensemble performs selections in multiple languages and from different parts of the world.

7-8:15 pm	Adoration	White Auditorium, Burns Hall
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Adoration is an evening recital centered on connection — between artists, across generations, and within the Northwest Arkansas community. Featuring NWACC faculty member Austin McFarland on clarinet and saxophones, the program brings together a group of close collaborators whose shared musical lives reflect connections. McFarland is joined by NWACC faculty member & pianist Sung Kun Jung, with special guest performers Em Lindsey (oboe/English horn) and Samantha Canon. Rather than a one-time collaboration, Adoration reflects an active creative community at work. The program features music by Florence Price, Katherine Murdock, Jenni Brandon, Jenni Watson, and Karalyn Schubring. Each selection was chosen for its personal, artistic, or historical connection to the performers. Murdock's works

hold special significance: she taught several of McFarland's teachers and later retired to Northwest Arkansas, creating a direct link between artistic lineage and place. The inclusion of Florence Price's *Adoration* anchors the program in a broader American musical legacy, connecting past and present through expressive, enduring music. Attendees can expect an intimate and reflective concert experience that highlights contemporary chamber music alongside historically significant repertoire. The program moves fluidly between solo and collaborative works, offering varied instrumental colors and emotional range. Rather than focusing solely on virtuosity, *Adoration* invites listeners to engage with the stories behind the music — how relationships, mentorship, collaboration, and community shape artistic expression.

Wednesday (March 4)

NWACC faculty, staff, and students read excerpts from their favorite writers that demonstrate human (dis)connection.

10:30-11:45 am Sociology's Superpower: Making Connections in Everyday Life White Auditorium, Burns Hall

This interactive lecture by Eric Vest, Professor of Sociology at NWACC, explores and unlocks the superpower found in each of us that comes by embracing the Sociological Imagination. Be prepared to think differently, make connections, and expand your understanding of the world around you.

12:00-1:15 pm Nucleus Release Party & Open Mic Poetry Reading Room 108, Student Center

This event invites those published in the Fall 2025 issue of *Nucleus* to read their work; offers open mic reading for those wishing to share their poetry, fiction, or creative non-fiction; break bread with others through a reception; and get a copy of the latest edition of the *Nucleus* journal (while supplies last).

1:30-2:45 pm	Our Nuclear Past and Present: The Shared History between the United States and Marshall Islands on the 80th Anniversary of the First Nuclear Test	Room 108, Student Center
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This event consists of a week-long exhibit, a presentation, a short film, and musical performance. The presentation explains the shared nuclear history between the US and Marshall Islands, where the US conducted nuclear testing from 1946-1958. It explores how the Marshallese Educational Initiative uses art and music to educate youth about the nuclear and climate legacy, and touches on traditional culture of *Aelon Kein Ad* (the traditional name of the Marshall Islands). Matthew John follows the presentation with a musical performance. The audience engages with Marshallese culture and explores shared connections to home, memory, and community; and learns about own challenges of living in diaspora.

3:00-4:15 pm	<i>Bananas are a Gateway Crime!</i> A Performance and Q&A	White Auditorium, Burns Hall
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'Bananas Are A Gateway Crime!' uses absurd hero/villain dynamics to explore the unexpected ways that people can become connected, even when those connections are unwanted. Molokov, a retired supervillain, is constantly and relentlessly pursued by Captain Stalk!, whose obsession turns conflict into a bizarre form of intimacy. Through escalating chaos, support group confessions, and stolen panic produce, the show reveals how unexpected connections form through frustration, misunderstanding, and sheer persistence. It ultimately argues that even the wrong connection can shape who we are, forcing us to confront our identity, our boundaries, and the people we become in relation to others. Actor Hidgens Leonard interprets this material on stage and then takes questions from the audience.

4:30-7:30 pm	Community Chess Club	Bentonville Public Library (Library) off-site
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Drop in to the Bentonville Public Library to connect with the community and meet new people over a friendly game of chess. Boards and limited clocks will be provided. Just show up and have fun! Provided in partnership with Downtown Bentonville Inc. this event is free and open to all ages. Find more information on the [Bentonville Public Library website](#).

Thursday (March 5)

9:00-10:15 am After Pea Ridge: Neighbors at Odds in the Civil War White Auditorium, Burns Hall

Dr. Chris Huggard – Professor of History at NWACC who has published extensively on African American, southern, southwest, and mining histories – explores the human aftermath of the 1862 Battle of Pea Ridge, shifting focus from troop movements to the fractured communities left behind. While the battle secured Union control of Missouri and northern Arkansas, it also deepened divisions among neighbors who had once shared churches, markets, and family ties. This talk examines how allegiance, occupation, and survival reshaped everyday life in the borderlands, where loyalty was often ambiguous and conflict personal.

10:30-11:45 am "Connected By Story: How Fiction Old and New Shapes Who We Are": A Keynote White Auditorium, Burns Hall

Travis Simpson, recent Printz award recipient and Russellville newspaper editor, speaks about his journey and reflects on, the importance of connecting today's youth with reading.

1:00-3:00 pm Bike and Trail Makers Studio Cycling and Trails Education Center

Drop by any time from 1-3 pm. Join us for a hands-on art experience inspired by our local trails and the culture of cycling in Northwest Arkansas. Visitors can explore materials and create small sculptures and visual pieces that celebrate movement, connection, and the outdoor spaces that make our region unique, through make-and-take projects, along with a few guided ideas for anyone who wants inspiration. No experience needed. Just bring your curiosity to create something connected to the bikes and trails we love.

3:00-5:45 pm "Join or Die" film screening with facilitated discussion and snacks Room 108, Student Center

Come watch the documentary "Join or Die" and join a discussion facilitated (with snacks) by Weave: The Social Fabric Project about social capital. This documentary explores the state of (dis)connection and apathy of American citizens (not) engaged in politics and the importance of human connection for forming the cornerstone of any meaningful political institution. This exploration takes place by examining the actions and institutions of American society and politics empirically and through the concepts of social capital, the glue that holds society together through informal norms, developed by Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam.

4:30-5:30 pm True Crime Investigation: All You Never Knew About The Black Dahlia Library and MS Teams

80 years ago, Elizabeth Short was found brutally murdered on the streets of LA. Her death a mystery, possible solutions have been a source of endless fascination for investigators, professional and amateur alike. Producer and researcher Eli Frankel provides a compelling new take, connecting cases and uncovering overlooked evidence. Participants engage in interactive activities, drawing upon the FBI case archive and contemporary news coverage. [Signup and get the Teams link](#) through the library web site.