



# CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES STAFF REPORT

February 23, 2026  
Agenda Item No. 7

**TO:** BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

**FROM:** Library Services Department  
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**PREPARED BY:** Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager

**TITLE:** Arts and Culture Update

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## **ABSTRACT:**

Staff will present the annual report on the activities of the Cultural Arts Division.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Cultural Arts Division of the Newport Beach Public Library, with guidance and support from the City Arts Commission (CAC) hosts a variety of programs and events that are culturally enriching for residents and visitors of Newport Beach. The CAC acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council in all matters pertaining to artistic, aesthetic, historical, and cultural aspects of the City.

Cultural activities are ongoing throughout the year and include the coordination of revolving art exhibitions at Central Library (Central), the Sculpture Exhibition at Civic Center Park, the annual Newport Beach Art Exhibition, Concerts on the Green, and a variety of other arts events.

The division includes one staff member, Cultural Arts Assistant Camille Escareal-Garcia, who provides administrative assistance for the program.

In 2025, Cultural Arts presented the following programming:

### **Concerts on the Green**

Three concerts were held in the summer on the Civic Center Green with thousands of residents and guests in attendance at each performance. In July, Cassie B performed a mix of pop hits and Motown soul. In September, crowd favorite, Tijuana Dogs, returned to give a high-energy rock/dance performance. The CAC was pleased to welcome back the Pacific Symphony in August after a seven-year hiatus. The Symphony performed patriotic and traditional songs that had the crowd singing along. They also hosted a musical playground with interactive, hands-on activities for children. Attendees at all three concerts were able to purchase food from onsite food truck vendors. Children's activities included face painting and balloon animal artists.

### **Marina Park Concert**

In October, residents and guests enjoyed the annual Concert at Marina Park, which featured 805 Social Club with a history of pop spanning the decades and included an audio montage of news and pop culture sound clips.

### **Newport Beach Art Exhibition**

The CAC hosted the 58th Annual Newport Beach Art Exhibition on June 28, 2025. This juried art show invited residents and guests who attended to view and purchase original paintings, photography, and sculptures created by regional artists. A portion of the proceeds from the one-day exhibit benefit Newport Beach arts programs. City Councilmember Robyn Grant along with Juror Rick Stein presented the awards to the exhibition winners. Award categories included Drawing, Painting, 3D Art, Photography, Juror's Choice, and People's Choice.

The event featured 244 pieces of artwork by 139 artists. Attendees visited with the artists and heard live music with refreshments available in the Pavilion on the Civic Center Green. Children's arts activities were also offered to allow young artists an opportunity to express their own artistic creativity.

### **Cultural Arts Grants**

Each year, the City of Newport Beach awards grants to arts organizations, enabling them to expand arts programs offered to the local community. The following art organizations received Cultural Arts grants in 2025:

- **Backhausdance: \$4,000**  
Backhausdance used their grant money to present a dance education partnership program, *Dance Expressions: Creativity and Choreography*, which was held at three different Newport-Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) schools (Corona del Mar Middle/High School, Back Bay High School, and Newport Harbor High) culminating in a Fall 2025 Student Showcase.
- **Balboa Island Improvement Association: \$3,000**  
The Balboa Island Improvement Association presented a new season of the Balboa Island Classical Concert Series, held at St. John Vianney Chapel and Carol Beek Center.
- **Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar: \$4,000**  
The Baroque Music Festival focused on evocative vocal works by Vivaldi and Antonio Lotti. Grant funds allowed middle school, high school, and college students from Newport Beach to attend the dress rehearsals and opening concert in June.
- **Emerald Magic Events Inc: \$2,000**  
Emerald Magic Events presented *The Best Romantic Pieces of the Centuries*, featuring two classical music concerts at OASIS Senior Center in October 2025. The concerts showcased groups from Newport Beach performing classical crossovers that fused classical with contemporary music.
- **Newport Theatre Arts Center: \$5,000**  
The Newport Theatre Arts Center presented a new program conducting a theatre seminar for the local community with multiple sessions throughout the day for children and adults.
- **Pacific Chorale: \$3,500**  
Pacific Chorale's chamber choir presented three performances at Our Lady Queen of Angels Church, featuring Handel's *Exodus: Israel in Egypt* and Carols by Candlelight.

- **Pacific Symphony: \$5,000**  
The Pacific Symphony used the grant funds for the Class Act Music Education Program at Andersen and Newport Coast Elementary Schools. This program places union musicians into local schools where students receive the value of music learning from teaching artists.
- **South Coast Repertory: \$3,500**  
The South Coast Repertory used the grant funding for the Theatre for Young Audiences free school-day matinee performances of *The Incredible Book-Eating Boy* for students, augmented with weekend performances for the public.

### **Student Art Exhibition**

The Newport Beach Student Art Exhibition features artwork created by pre-K through 12th grade students. A total of 103 young artists participated in the 2025 program. Accepted artwork was displayed at Central in January and February 2026, with entries coming in during October and November 2025. A ceremony recognizing first through third place and honorable mention winners was held during the CAC's February 2026 Regular Meeting.

### **Exhibits in the Central Library**

The CAC maintains exhibit space at Central. The Lobby Gallery has approximately 38 feet of linear wall space designed for two-dimensional pieces of art. Additionally, artists may apply to exhibit three-dimensional works in two display cabinets. The CAC's Art in Public Places Ad Hoc Subcommittee meets periodically to review artist's submissions for exhibits in the Lobby Gallery. Six artists' works were displayed in the Gallery in 2025. Artists are currently booked for exhibition into 2026.

### **Halloween Spooktacular**

The Recreation and Senior Services Department holds an annual Halloween Spooktacular event at Mariners Park every year at the end of October. The CAC hosted a pumpkin painting booth at the 2025 8th Annual Spooktacular. Attendees had two different sized pumpkins to choose from and enjoyed painting and drawing on their pumpkins. Over 400 pumpkins were distributed.

### **Holiday Ornament**

The CAC passed out 100 custom-made commemorative holiday ornaments at the Marina Park Community Center Family Fun Night in December 2025.

### **NOTICING:**

This agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the Board of Library Trustees considers the item).