Civilizations

Acclaimed actor Liev Schreiber will narrate the series CIVILIZATIONS, which tells the story of art from the dawn of human history to the present day. Premiering in the spring, the program is inspired by “Civilisations,” Kenneth Clark’s landmark 1969 series about Western art.

From the landscape scrolls of classical China and the sculpture of the Olmecs to African bronzes, Japanese prints and French Impressionist paintings, CIVILIZATIONS explores the wealth of treasures created through the entirety of the human experience.

In nine episodes, the series travels across the globe, exploring a sweeping range of topics. These include the earliest human cultural artifacts and the representation of the body in art, what happens when different civilizations encounter each other and the nature of “renaissances” around the world.

Underlying the series is an exploration of the premise that it is through the creative imagination that humanity expresses its most essential self and looks for the fundamental meaning of life.

New programming from PBS Kids!

PINKALICIOUS & PETERRIFIC, which premieres on Feb. 19 at 9 AM and 2:30 PM, follows the adventures of Pinkalicious and her brother, Peter, as they explore the town of Pinkville with their neighborhood friends. The imaginative Pinkalicious finds creative opportunities everywhere she looks, with Peter and her friends Jasmine, Rafael and Kendra in tow. She inspires everyone around her to be creative and find imaginative solutions to problems, and expresses herself in ways that encourage children to do the same.

PINKALICIOUS & PETERRIFIC encourages children to engage in self-expression and the creative arts, covering areas such as music, dance, theater and visual arts. Each episode includes two 11-minute stories featuring Pinkalicious, Peter and their friends, and one live-action interstitial. The interstitials feature real-life kids creating art, as well as profiles of professional artists. Renowned musicians such as blues recording artist Vanese Thomas, dancers such as New York City Ballet principal Ramar Amasar, and author-illustrator Victoria Kann are among the artists featured.
Programming & Local Productions (cont’d.)

Coming this summer
The Great American Read

A new eight-part television competition and nationwide campaign explores the power of books and the joy of reading through the lens of America’s 100 best-loved novels, as voted on by the public.

THE GREAT AMERICAN READ launches with a two-hour special event on Tuesday, May 22, at 8 PM. Key authors, celebrities and notable figures including Margaret Atwood, Lesley Stahl and Junot Díaz, among others, will lend their voices and passion to THE GREAT AMERICAN READ.

Over the course of 15 weeks in the summer, viewers can read and vote on favorite works of fiction. The series then returns in the fall with additional episodes exploring the nominated books through themes including “Heroes,” “Villains & Monsters,” “Who Am I?,” “What We Do for Love,” and “Other Worlds,” and will conclude with an exciting finale and countdown to “America’s Best-Loved Book.”

THE GREAT AMERICAN READ is supported by an extensive multi-platform digital and social media campaign designed to inspire Americans to read, vote and share their personal connections to titles on the top-100 list and beyond over the course of the summer. Additionally, PBS will develop resources and materials to extend the campaign and encourage summer reading activities.

Kicking off with a two-hour launch event, THE GREAT AMERICAN READ will journey across America to uncover illuminating details and new reflections, sometimes from unlikely sources, about some of the titles on the top-100 book list, revealing the story behind the story from multiple perspectives. To spark conversation about the books that have inspired, moved and shaped us, both individually and as a society, viewers will hear from a variety of sources about what the novels on the top-100 list can tell us about our diverse nation, our shared values, our cultural identities and the common themes that tie us together.

Over the course of the summer, THE GREAT AMERICAN READ will roll out an unprecedented campaign across PBS digital and social platforms, inviting viewers to share the works of fiction that have touched them most and to disclose their personal connections to the stories they love.

Family inspired by cooking program

Viewer Debbie Kasper, of Hiram, who just may be the mom of the next great PBS cooking show host, shared that her family enjoys watching MY GREEK TABLE WITH DIANE KOCHILAS. “Not only do we enjoy watching, but my young son has fallen in love with cooking as a result.” Here, her son displays the impressive results of his efforts.
Educational Services

Station conducts professional development for educators

Several professional development sessions were held at Western Reserve Public Media in January and February. Anthony Luscre, professional development facilitator, led the session “Deep Dig for Science Resources,” which explored free online science resources for the classroom. Heather Smith, educational technology consultant, led a group of teachers exploring invention literacy and the use of MakeyMakey devices. Ten additional training sessions for educators are scheduled through March.

Station to produce educational videos

Western Reserve Public Media has received a State of Ohio grant distributed by the Broadcast Educational Media Commission (BEMC) for the production of an educational multimedia project that highlights Ohio’s new Learning Standards for Technology.

Six short videos are currently in production for this project—three for grades 3-5 and three for grades 9-12. The videos, which will be made available to Ohio teachers for viewing online, will show the integration of Ohio’s technology learning standards in the classroom. A few of the school districts that will be represented in the videos for their unique teaching-through-technology practices are Akron, Jackson, North Canton and Ravenna.

Director of Education Jeff Good wrote the grant proposal for the project, which is being produced by Kelly Woodward with assistance from Maria Mastromatteo, retired educator and retired employee of Western Reserve Public Media. Gary Manke in our Production Department serves as project manager. The videos will be completed by June 30.

Staff members attend state conference

Educational Services staff participated in the annual Ohio Educational Technology Conference, held Feb. 13-15 in Columbus. Director Jeff Good and Heather Smith, technology consultant, gave presentations during the conference and manned the Western Reserve Public Media booth. Conference participants had an opportunity to “make” duct tape luggage tags at our booth.

New staff members welcomed

In November, Heather Smith joined the ranks of the Educational Services technology consultants. Smith previously worked for Summit Academies, where she served as a technology integration specialist, and at Believe to Achieve in Canton as tech curator. She holds an early childhood degree from Youngstown State University and a graduate degree in educational technology from The University of Akron. Smith will plan and deliver professional development and new educational initiatives, plus she will represent Western Reserve Public Media at presentations and conferences.

Anthony Luscre has worked in the educational technology field for over 30 years, previously at the Stark-Portage Area Regional Computer Consortium (SPARCC) as well as Mogadore and Stow-Munroe Falls school districts. Luscre will facilitate professional development opportunities at our Kent office.

Ohio Ready To Learn training held

Ohio Ready To Learn training for family child-care providers began in November. The Ready To Learn staff has received updated instruction on Ohio coursework and will provide training throughout the year, assisting child-care facilities in obtaining Step Up to Quality status.

Six training sessions have been conducted, with another 24 to be completed before April. This project is funded through Ohio Educational Television Stations, with a grant from Ohio Jobs and Family Services. It is facilitated by Western Reserve Public Media’s early learning consultant, Pam Oviatt.

Communications efforts stepped up

Print newsletters were mailed to 720 educators in December and four electronic newsletters were delivered to 20,800 educators across Ohio. Educational Services has also increased its social media presence on Twitter and Facebook, promoting resources, upcoming events and classes.
Outreach & Special Events

Station supports reading festival
Western Reserve PBS will bring Buddy from DINOSAUR TRAIN to Plant the Seed to Read: Youngstown Area Children's Book Fair on Saturday, April 14.

Now in its 12th year, the event promotes literacy and is held at beautiful Fellows Riverside Gardens in Mill Creek MetroParks. It features storytellers, character meet-and-greets, crafts and more.

Staff News, Training & Conferences

Trina Cutter’s recent activities
On Jan. 12, President and CEO Trina Cutter spoke at the Canton Rotary. Her presentation, titled “Western Reserve Public Media in the Age of Alexa,” discussed the organization’s original purpose, current activities and future plans.

On Feb. 14, Cutter attended the Broadcast Educational Media Commission quarterly meeting in Columbus.

On Feb. 15, Cutter participated in a panel discussion about working with the media. Held at Tangier Restaurant in Akron, the event was sponsored by the Akron chapter of Public Relations Society of America. The discussion was designed to inform public relations professionals on how they can best work with the media. It was moderated by Bruce Winges, editor of the Akron Beacon Journal. Also on the panel were Dan Kadar, Akron Beacon Journal/Ohio.com digital content editor; M.L. Schultze, WKSU digital editor and reporter; and Sue Walton, Crain’s Akron business associate editor.

On Feb. 19, Cutter attended the Knight Foundation’s two-day Media Learning Seminar. The forum brought together foundation and media leaders seeking to identify trends and find practical, replicable solutions to meet the information needs of communities.

Cutter participates in web events
On Jan. 9, President and CEO Trina Cutter participated in an APTS webinar about the educational, public safety and business revenue opportunities possible in the newly adopted Next Generation Broadcast Standard, ATSC 3.0.

On Jan. 24, Cutter participated in a National Association of Broadcasters webcast titled, “The Road to ATSC 3.0.” The webcast focused on some of the key elements that are necessary for the success of Next Gen TV. Participants reviewed the FCC’s Report and Order on ATSC 3.0 and considered further action contemplated by the commission in its Second Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the subject. Finally, they delved into test station and test market projects that are happening in Cleveland and Phoenix.

IT/Engineering

New broadcast equipment installed
Viewers of Western Reserve PBS (WNEO 45.1 / WEAO 49.1) may notice an improvement in video and audio quality thanks to a December upgrade to our broadcast encoding system.

The new Harmonic encoders include the latest technology for broadcast video quality plus audio processing for dynamic range and loudness control.