

LEGOs turn kids creative at library

By Diane Goble
Correspondent

Sisters Library Summer Reading Program wrapped up on Saturday with a “LEGO Block Party.” Over 30 kids showed up to Read! Build! Play! with a gazillion LEGOs and multitudes of assorted tiny critters, creatures and shiny things.

Community Librarian Paige Bentley-Flannery handed each participant a large plastic cup and said, “There are only two rules. Carry the LEGOs from the bins in your cup and do your projects on the green or purple paper, not the carpet. Otherwise there are no rules or guidelines, instructions or instructors.”

The children first spent a lot of time rummaging through the bins choosing the LEGOs and other items that caught their eye. Some kids stayed to themselves and did their own thing; others broke into groups of two or three and built more extensive projects. Projects started out small and grew in size and scope; some were quite involved. One small group joined another small group, combining their ideas into a greater whole. Boys and girls worked together. An observer witnessed teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, planning, consensus building, innovation, creativity in action. There was no arguing, no yelling, no fighting, no bullying, no tears.

No one was bored.

“I’ve been doing this for several years now,” Flannery said, “and I’ve never had any disagreements or discussions I’ve had to step into.”

LEGOs are one of those common playthings that almost every child can relate to and use to explore their creative mind. It can be a solitary activity, a contemplative



PHOTO BY DIANE GOBLE

Kids sparked their creativity with LEGOs at Sisters Library.

practice, or group play for all ages that starts children on a path to figuring out how things fit together and become something bigger than the sum of its parts.

Flannery is excited to be able to offer these programs, and hopes families will make it part of their Saturday morning routines so their kids will get to know the library as a safe place to hang out, learn new things, share experiences and make new friends.

Wednesday night there will be a “Pajama Party” starting at

6:30 p.m. for children up to 5 years old with stories, songs, rhymes and crafts; and it’s “Get Ready for Kindergarten” with stories, songs, crafts, and fun on Friday, August 21, at 10:30 a.m. Watch for Family Board Games on October 3.

Plans for the future include more family-oriented events in the evening. Flannery says they are not sure what yet, but they will involve family entertainment and interactive activities. If you have any suggestions, next time you’re in the library, let her know.

Growing number of cities banning pot

By Jonathan J. Cooper
Associated Press

SALEM (AP) — At least a dozen Oregon cities and counties have taken steps to ban marijuana businesses from their boundaries as the state prepares to begin retail sales in October.

Four counties and eight cities have informed the Oregon Liquor Control Commission that they plan to ban marijuana producers, processors, wholesalers and retailers. In some jurisdictions, the ban must go before voters.

Oregon lawmakers gave local governments the ability to keep out marijuana businesses, which were authorized by voters under last year’s Measure 91. In counties where at least 60 percent of voters opposed the measure, local governments can ban the marijuana businesses outright; elsewhere, a ban is temporary until voters weigh in.

Even in jurisdictions that opt out, adults can still grow and use marijuana subject to the same limits that apply in the rest of the state. But if they want to buy the drug from a retail store, they’ll have to travel to somewhere that allows them.

The strongest opposition so far has come from far-eastern Oregon, where Malheur County and three of its five incorporated cities have

adopted bans.

“I think some of our problem here really is our proximity to Idaho, where it’s totally illegal,” said Larry Wilson, a Malheur County commissioner. “We even had testimony from police agencies on the other side of the river asking us to please opt out, or restrict it as much as we can, because that’s a problem with people going back and forth across the river.”

Elsewhere, Douglas County opted out of allowing marijuana businesses, but its largest city, Roseburg, voted to allow existing medical marijuana dispensaries to sell pot to recreational users.

The cities that have notified the Oregon Liquor Control Commission that they’re opting out are: Ontario, Vale, Nyssa, Brownsville, Sandy, Island City, Sutherlin and Junction City. The counties are Douglas, Umatilla, Harney and Malheur.

State law gives local governments until Dec. 27 to adopt a ban, said Mark Pettinger, a spokesman for the commission.

Marijuana possession and use became legal on July 1, but the state won’t be ready to begin regulated sales until next year. As a temporary stop-gap, medical dispensaries are allowed to begin selling the drug in some forms on October 1.

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