

YOUTH GROUP: Activities eschew screen time

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the Gathering, Dungeons and Dragons, and Warhammer, or opt for ping pong and board games. King said they often play D&D, “but we have everything, including a Sisters version of Monopoly.”

“We believe that peer relationships, in a creative, youth-led space is critical for youth development and wish to create an environment for young people to flourish,” the group stated in a recent email to *The Nugget*.

Adults may get involved as mentors or coaches. Mostly, though, kids themselves propose activities and ideas. “Let’s say there’s a group that wants to play Magic the Gathering,” King explained. “They could meet up at a coffee or tea house, or meet at somebody’s home.”

Kids and parents might both prefer that the gaming take place at the church. “We’ll provide snacks and oversight,” said King. “And if there are kids that don’t have the means, we’ll help them with that, too. If a child can’t afford a Magic deck, we’ll buy it for them.”

David Wentworth is also involved in the group’s programming.

“I’m a jazz musician,” he said. Kids can sing with the choir or play with the jazz group, then optionally perform for an audience at the church.

“The more chances you get to play in front of people,” Wentworth said, “the better you’ll be.”

Former high school principals and teachers, musicians, and a counselor are among the adults responsible for starting the group. Author Edie Jones is also among them. Her book “Raising Kids with Love, Honor, and Respect: Recipes for Success” won a gold medal from the Living Now Book Awards and won first place in the “Parenting & Family” category of the 2016 Best Book Awards.

King is educated as a mythologist. He wears other hats as well: CEO, adjunct professor at the University of Oregon’s Charles H. Lundquist College of Business, and recent school board member for Sisters School District.

The group set up a space at the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, but is non-religious in nature.

“The venue is a church, and so by definition that place



PHOTO PROVIDED

Sisters teens can play games, learn musical skills, and suggest their own activity ideas at a new youth hangout.

has a particular flavor to it,” said Wentworth, “but it is primarily a venue, a safe positive space. It is not proselytizing, it is not Evangelical, it is not Episcopalian.”

King praised Transfiguration parishioners for donating money and offering a venue to the group.

“Many of us have been through the church’s training” to be youth counselors,” King added.

The church conducted background checks on all adults working with the group. These include reference checks and a sexual offender registry check “in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven years,” according to

church policy.

Reverend Joseph Farber confirmed, “It is required by the Diocese in every Episcopal Church program involving youth.”

Sessions are frequently attended by Heather Lasecki, a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) at the Sisters school-based clinic. “Our rule is there has to be two adults,” King said. “There is supervision, but frankly, we don’t really do anything. It’s just to provide the space for the youth to be creative.”

The group has grown through word of mouth and through contact with Sisters schools. The game group, for example, “is an extension of

a game group that meets during lunch at the high school,” King said.

According to King and Wentworth, the group is open to new ideas and new participants, but had not yet conducted outreach to home schoolers or the community at large before this interview. To get involved, a kid or parent simply has to email skmyth.king@gmail.com, call Michelle at 541-549-7087, or “show up on a Saturday.”

The game group meets on Saturdays from 4 to 6 p.m. in the basement of the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, 68825 Brooks Camp Road in Sisters. Youth in grades 8 to 12 are welcome.

Furor in Ore. Senate over ban on coyote contests

By Andrew Selsky
Associated Press

SALEM (AP) — Voices were raised and tears were shed in the Oregon Senate amid stinging talk over the divide between rural and urban Oregonians, and conservatives and liberals.

The catalyst for the anger on Wednesday, June 5: a bill banning coyote-killing contests, which happen in the sparsely populated, high desert of eastern Oregon. Republican lawmaker Dallas Heard declared the bill “is an assault on us.” Senate Republican leader Herman Baertschiger, Jr., said he wouldn’t tell his colleagues from Portland what to do about homeless people defecating on sidewalks.

When Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, asked the lawmaker to tone down his remarks for decorum’s sake, Baertschiger claimed his right to free speech was being violated.

The bill passed 17-12, sending it to the House.

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