

Going for glory brick by brick

Enthusiasts gather at Hermiston Public Library for Lego competition

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — This past weekend, Julie Lara was able to take a breath, finally.

For weeks, she promoted an event at the Hermiston Public Library. Even the day before the event, as she was setting up tables, she said she was not fully confident people would attend.

"I just don't know," she said Friday, Feb. 25.

Even though registrations were in, and people were telling her they would be there, she said she was not fully certain the crowds would come. On Feb. 26, the date of the 2022 Lego Build Challenge, her feelings changed.

"I'm pretty, pretty excited," she said, after she saw the large attendance.

There were two categories for the competition — home builds, in which competitors created unique Lego designs at home, and the 100-brick challenge, in which they put together creations in a set time limit. Both contests took place with around 30 competitors each, which pleased Lara.

Lara, the owner of a Lego store, JB Brick Company, 295 E. Main No. 1E, Hermiston, saw the large gathering Feb. 26 and proclaimed the event a success. Creations filled the tables, and people packed a downstairs room in the library. Competitors and their families were present.

"A lot of these people have been frequent customers of mine," Lara said. "I've been seeing them buy sets. Now, I get to see the other side of things, with them building and working their creative juices."

Her husband, Bobby Lara, was present at the challenge, too. While Lara buzzed around the room, meeting people's needs, Bobby Lara



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

Xavian Peak, 8, shows off his award and his Lego creation on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, at the 2022 Lego Build Challenge in Hermiston.

sat at a table and welcomed competitors.

"This is great," he said. "Julie did a great job, and it turned out well. We've wanted to do this since before COVID happened, and we had to put it off. This has been our goal for a while. To see it take off, it really makes me happy."

Competitors express their joy

Part of what made her happy, she said, was to see so many smiling faces. Xavian Peak, 8, and his mom, Gina Peak, were among the biggest smilers.

"This is fun," he said. "I like that you can connect (the Legos) together and make huge things out of them." He added that he has made many other large designs, including ones of his favorite video games.

Xavian had made a 100-brick build that included a yeti and a tower. In addition, he created an at-home build of Adam and Eve, which garnered him a third-place victory in its category.

Byron Spicerkuhn, 9, was another prize-winning competitor at the contest. He said he, too, enjoyed Legos.

"I like being able to build things my own way," he said.

His creation was his interpretation of a scene from a Dog Man story. It took him two hours to create, he said.

"This was a lot of fun," he said. "I'll be back."

There were two vendors at the event. Lara, herself, was one of the sellers, as she set up a table to sell Lego sets. A seller from Yakima, who said he wants to start his own store, was present to also sell Legos as well.

"This is my first attempt," Rob Gifford said, as he had never sold Legos before. He added that he was grateful to Lara for telling him about the event. He said he was selling a lot of Legos at the Lego Build Challenge, and he would open his own store if he could continue to do well with booths like the one he set up Feb. 26.

"I'm impressed by how this turned out," he said. A frequent customer to the Hermiston Lego store, he said he was happy to see many happy people and their Lego creations.

Lara said she intends to repeat this event at the Hermiston library next year. Also, she is planning at least one other event in the area soon.

"The Irrigon library has already asked me to do one in the fall," she said.

COMMUNITY BRIEFING

Hermiston chamber celebrates businesses

HERMISTON — The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce encourages people to help celebrate during upcoming ribbon cuttings:

- Friday, March 4, noon at South Hermiston Industrial Park (to get there, head south on Highway 395, take a right on Southeast 10th Street and another right on Cook Avenue). Cookies and water will be served.

- Thursday, March 10, 5 p.m., Stellar Realty Northwest Team Carver & Company, 120 E. Hurlburt Ave., Hermiston. Appetizers served.

- Thursday, March 31, 3 p.m., Boylan Realty, 210 S.W. Third St., Hermiston.

For more information, call the chamber at 541-567-6151.

Moose Lodge knows when to hold 'em

STANFIELD — Members of Stanfield Moose Lodge No. 920 and their guests are dealing in a Texas hold 'em tournament. Money raised from the event will help with the lodge's scholarship fund.

The game gets started Saturday, March 5, 3 p.m. at 615 W. Coe Ave., Stanfield. Those planning to play should arrive early to register and pony up the \$40 buy-in. The initial buy-ins will be paid out to winners. There's an optional \$20 add-on and re-buys, with both going to the scholarship fund.

For more information, call the lodge at 541-449-3304 or search www.facebook.com/stanfield-mooselodge.

Good Shepherd offers scholarships

HERMISTON — The Good Shepherd Medical Center Auxiliary is accepting applications for \$2,000 college scholarships for the 2022-23 school year.

To be eligible, students must have completed at least one successful year of study in the medical field at a college or university. In addition, applicants must have a home residence within the areas served by Good Shepherd Health Care System, including Hermiston, Boardman, Echo, Irrigon, Stanfield or Umatilla.

College transcripts must accompany the completed application. Scholarships will be awarded contin-

gent upon acceptance into a medical program.

Applications can be obtained at the Education Department at Good Shepherd Medical Center, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston, or by contacting Lena Ray, scholarship chairperson, at 541-564-2514 or lena1104ken@centurylink.net.

Completed applications must be received by April 29. Mail application packet to: Auxiliary Scholarship Committee, % Lena Ray, 830 S.E. Eighth St., Hermiston, OR 97838.

Sendoff scheduled for Snells

HERMISTON — People are invited to say farewell to Jeff and Lori Snell as they prepare to move out of state.

Clinic director at Eastern Oregon Physical Therapy, Jeff Snell received business person of the year during the 2010 Hermiston Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Citizens Awards banquet. The couple, who moved to Hermiston in 1997, raised five children and are moving to Utah to be closer to family.

The community is invited to drop in and wish the Snells well on Friday, March 11, 4-7 p.m. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1035 S.E. Ninth St., Hermiston.

Boardman chamber gets ready to sparkle

BOARDMAN — The Boardman Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for a night of Denim & Diamonds.

The 32nd annual Distinguished Citizens Awards Banquet is Saturday, March 12, at the Port of Morrow Riverfront Center, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman. The evening begins with cocktails at 6 p.m., a catered dinner by Paradise Rose Chuckwagon at 6:30 p.m. and the awards will be presented at 7 p.m.

People are invited to don casual or formal wear. Regardless of the style of dress, those in attendance are encouraged to take the opportunity to sparkle with jeans and gemstones, sequins or upscale pieces.

Tickets are \$40 per person. Visit www.boardmanchamber.org for a link to purchase tickets. For questions, call the chamber at 541-481-3014.

—EO Media Group

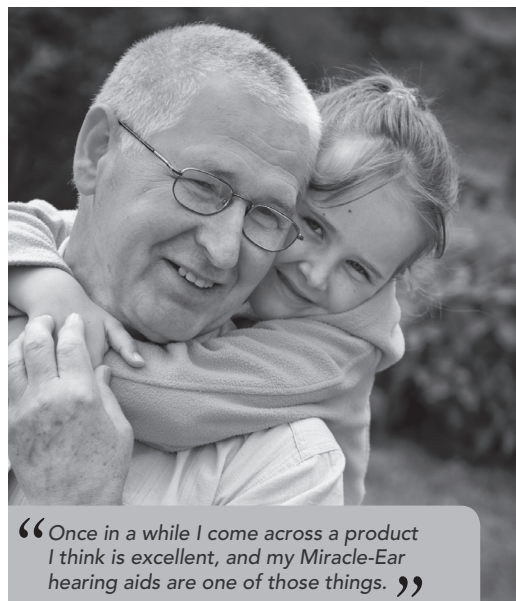
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