



Region News

Wednesday, July 17, 2013 Vol. 54, No. 29

E-mail
mtzionregionnews@comcast.net
Phone
217-864-4212
Fax
217-864-4711
Your Hometown
Newspaper!
Just...
\$1.00

Professor Steve Educates and Entertains During Final Summer Reading Program

By CRYSTAL REED
Editor



Professor Steve Walden stacked cups of water on a plate then swung the plate in a circular motion over his head without spilling a drop of water. This was the last summer reading activity of the summer.

The final summer reading program was held this past week combined entertainment and education when Professor Steve Walden brought his “Unseen Forces” show to Mt. Zion Library. The show presented science topics like air pressure, gravity, inertia and centripetal force.

Steve Walden aka Professor Steve is a 1977 graduate of Warrensburg-Latham High School and a 1981 graduate of Lincoln Christian College. He served as a youth and education minister at two churches in Indiana before going full time into clowning and science programs in 1989. He is also an ordained minister.

“Science is fun, science is amazing and no matter what you do you use science,” Walden said. All of the experiments that he conducted that day were safe for the children to do at home. He used a variety of experiments to explain the unseen forces.

The first experiment had him taking a roll of toilet paper and blowing on the toilet paper to create a stream of low pressure making the tail of the toilet paper float. After that he did the “amazing flying toilet paper” experiment. This experiment included a leaf blower, single ply toilet paper and a plunger. The toilet paper is placed on the

dowel part of the plunger and then Walden fired up the leaf blower blowing toilet paper above the audience's heads.

That experiment was an example of a contact force which is basically anytime one object touches another object. He also talked about distant forces, which include magnetism. "Everything is held together through the unseen force of magnetism," Walden said.

He also explained to the audience that magnets have two poles and that if the poles are the same they repel each other but if they are different they attract. Walden also talked about gravity and how it affects us on earth. He told the children that the earth is turning 800 miles per hour and that the earth is moving around the sun at 67,000 miles an hour.

Walden shared a lot of information but had one thing that he wanted attendees to remember about gravity. "Gravity doesn't care how heavy something is or its' size," he said "everything falls the same." He illustrated this by dropping small and large objects at the same time to demonstrate that indeed the objects despite their size did hit the ground at the same time.

Next he talked about inertia, basically objects that are resting want to stay resting and objects that are moving want to stay moving. He demonstrated it by performing the famous tablecloth trick, in which he pulled the cloth off of a table without disturbing the plates of food and water-filled glass resting on top. He demonstrated the other aspect of inertia by sending a Ken doll down a ramp on a skateboard, without a seatbelt, only to have the doll go flying in the air upon impact.

Walden for his final topic discussed centripetal force, which is an inward force. His way of illustrating this was using a plate on a rope then placing cups of water on the plate. He then swung the plate up and over his head in a full circle. He kept adding cups until he had a total of four cups and because of centripetal force not one drop of water escaped the cups.

Walden does not have a science degree but took all the science he could in high school and college. His ability to do these presentations he attributes to his ability to read, research and write programs with a good flow. Walden currently has 13 different 45-minute shows with topics ranging from electricity to optical illusions and science of the circus. "My goal is to make science fun and easy to understand," he said.