



Kids take a trip around the world at the Hi-Desert Nature Museum's Art and Culture Wednesdays

Leslie Shaw Hi-Desert Star



Museum biologist Stefanie Ritter explains about the aurora borealis during the Hi-Desert Nature Museum's Art and Culture Wednesday presentation about Sweden.

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YUCCA VALLEY — Kids who attend the Hi-Desert Nature Museum's Art and Culture Wednesdays are getting a whirlwind tour of the world. This week, museum biologist Stefanie Ritter offered information about Sweden.

Children ages 3 to 13 went to the educational program.

Guinevere Dahlberg, 9, and her sisters had participated in the previous lecture about France. "We ate different cheeses. They eat sourdough bread there and snails!"

"They call it escargo," explained Elizabeth Dahlberg, 9.

The Swedish presentation began with a few Swedish words, a picture of the aurora borealis, some history about Laplanders and their reindeer herds and an explanation of the six-month days of summer and the six-month nights of winter.

The children learned about Vikings and how they traveled in longboats, visited North America, carved runes into rocks called rune stones and were responsible for a lot of trade.

The kids also sampled Swedish cuisine. Ritter served flatbread called mjukkaka spread with a choice of kalles kaviar or jam made from lingon or gooseberries. The children washed down their snack with rabarbersaft, a juice made from rubarb and sugar.

Rachael, 7, and Paige McArthur, 10, were suprised to discover they really like caviar. “Oh, it’s so good,” Paige said.

Art and Culture Wednesdays always includes an arts and crafts project. Children had a choice between making Viking longboats or decorating bookmarks with Viking runes. The Viking rune alphabet, called futhark, was provided to the children so they could compose secret messages on their rune stone bookmarks.

Ceramic artist Nichole Vikdal brought her two daughters to the program. “I think these programs are great for the kids,” she said. “I really hope the museum is able to continue them.”

The next Art and Culture Wednesday will be about Greece and will be held 10 to 11 a.m. July 24.

No pre-registration is required; just come to the museum. There is a \$2 materials fee per child.



Paige McArthur, 10, discovers an appreciation for Swedish kalles kaviar (pink fish egg paste) and rubarb juice called rabarbersaft.



Yucca Valley resident Lelaina Baird, 4, is coloring a Viking bookmark. After the children finished decorating their bookmarks, the museum staff laminated them so they would last forever.



Sebastian Marcos, 3, is enjoying a Swedish flatbread called mjukkaka with a gooseberry spread called krusbar.



Victoria Dahlberg, 3, makes that satisfying first cut into a fresh piece of construction paper. She is cutting out the sail part of her Viking longboat.