



Lecture lights metaphorical bulbs

Leslie Shaw Hi-Desert Star



Museum educator Crystal Mason demonstrates how rubbing negatively charged particles onto two balloons makes them repel each other during the museum's Science Saturday lecture.

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YUCCA VALLEY — Kids bent water and separated salt and pepper as they learned about electricity at the Hi-Desert Nature Museum's Science Saturday program.

Museum educator Crystal Mason explained about the structure of the atom and how electrons have a negative charge. She then demonstrated how rubbing a pair of balloons with a wool sweater transfers negatively charged electrons onto the balloons and caused them to repel each other.

Mason then demonstrated how to bend water with static electricity.

The hands-on experiment for the lecture was for children to rub plastic spoons with the sweater and use the spoons to separate pepper from salt. The salt and pepper both have a neutral charge but the negatively charged spoons will pick up neutrally charged things as long as they are light enough. Because the pepper is lighter than the salt, the spoons can pick it up," Mason explained.

The electricity lecture was the last of the Science Saturday programs for the summer. The museum's fall Science Saturdays will resume 11 to 11:30 a.m. Sept. 7, when the lecture topic will be plate tectonics.

Science Saturdays are free and no pre-registration is required.

The museum is on Dumosa Avenue just north of Twentynine Palms Highway. For information, visit www.hidesertnaturemuseum.org or call (760) 369-7212.