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'Technological Petting Zoos' continue up to Feb. 29 *Final version next Monday in Yankeetown*



Jeremy Yates of the Putnam County Library System tells Jamie Schaffer, 16, of Chiefland about conductivity of electricity. Yates said one advantage of these circuits and equipment is that children do not need to use hot solder to make circuit connections as they learn about some aspects of electricity.

Story, Photos and Video By Jeff M. Hardison © Feb. 23, 2016 @ 8:47 a.m.

CHIEFLAND -- Jeremy Yates of the Putnam County Library System came from Palatka to Chiefland on Monday evening (Feb. 22) to assist his Levy County counterpart Youth Services Rodgers, Yates and others helped young people enjoy exploring the "Technological Petting Zoo" at the Luther Callaway Public Library, 104 N.E. Third St., in Chiefland.

Among the other adult workers and volunteer helpers were Levy County Public Library System Director Lisa Brasher, Luther Callaway Public Library Librarian SueAnn Burkhardt, Williston Public Library Assistant Jennifer Becker, Friends of the Luther Callaway Public Library President Ann Brown and Russell Wells, a member of the Putnam-Alachua-Levy (PAL) Library Cooperative Board of Directors.

It is thanks to the PAL venture, which Brasher helped bring to fruition, that children in all five Levy County libraries are experiencing "Technological Petting Zoos" during each of the five Mondays in February. The next (and final) one is in A.F. Knotts Public Library in Yankeetown.

Here is the first story ever published about the "Technological Petting Zoos" in Levy County public libraries:

<https://hardisoninkarchive.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/1-25-16-hardisonink-com-levy-county-4-h-stem-explorers.pdf>

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A simple Lego Mind Storms device is seen here. This one is directed by sensing colors. Other Lego Mind Storms can be directed using an iPhone as a remote control. Some can be built with “arms and legs” to perform actions under the direction of their operators.

This computer is as small as a relatively small human hand. It is known as a Raspberry Pi. The Raspberry Pi is a tiny and affordable computer that individuals can use to learn programming through fun, practical projects. The Raspberry Pi is a series of credit card-sized single-board computers developed in Wales, United Kingdom, by the Raspberry Pi Foundation with the intention of promoting the teaching of basic computer science in schools.

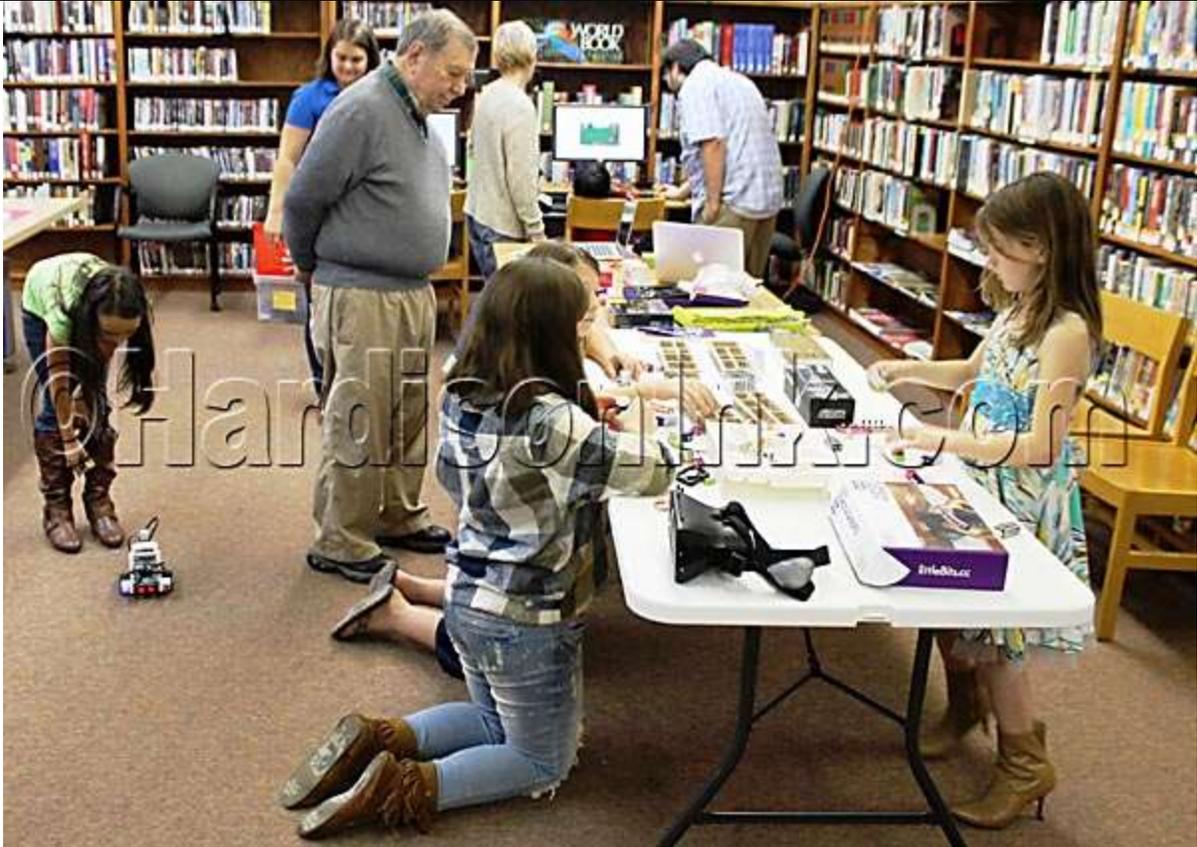


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The 3-D printer creates a plastic mold, directed by computer commands that have been input by a human.

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On Monday night, the children enjoyed all of the same opportunities as those first explorers from Levy County 4-H STEM, and there was more.

Some of the adults guests seemed to like the large iPad, with its adaptable high quality camera and potential boom microphone, and the green screen equipment.

That machinery, when combined with software, can produce good quality videos.

Children liked the video games on a computer. They also enjoyed using the Lego Mind Storms. As can be found on the Internet, prices on these do-it-yourself robot-making kits range from \$20 to \$350 and up.

Yates said there are groups of children who form teams in the United States, and they have Lego Mind Storms' "battles" with their robots.

As for the hands-on model used as an introduction Monday night, it rolled along the carpeted floor and could be directed to stop, go, and perform other maneuvers based on placing a color in front of it.

The young people enjoyed learning about conductivity of electricity, which can go through dough, and ink, and even their bodies as they made closed circuits at extremely low direct current (battery) voltage.

They had an opportunity to hear how the differences in resistance would make a different sound happen when that electricity went through a program, and then to a speaker.

And so they could play "music" by touching different electrically conductive articles while holding a wire and using their body as a "ground."

On Monday night, there were two 3-D printers, because Yates brought one from Putnam County to add to the one that is part of the Levy County Public Library System inventory.

After the Create-A-Con contest (see previous story), the "maker space" idea for Levy County public libraries appears to show some potential.

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Nonetheless, Levy County youngsters have enjoyed a taste of what may come at some point in the future, and there is that final offering next Monday at the public library in Yankeetown.

With Williston having such a strong showing during the preview for this experience, when Levy County 4-H Stem Explorers visited on Jan. 25, the Feb. 1 turnout there included a dozen children, Rodgers said.

At the Feb. 8 event in Bronson, there were 30 participants who signed in, Rodgers said.

At the Feb. 15 event in the Cedar Key Public Library, there were 25, she said.

Early on during the Monday night (Feb. 22) event in Chiefland, there appeared to be several children taking advantage of the “Maker Space” created on that evening for a sample of what the future libraries in Levy County may include.



Luther Callaway Public Library patrons start enjoying the wonders on display Monday evening at the library.