

Entertainment/Ticket

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Family: See the gravity of science In 'Newton's Revenge 2,' children have fun while learning about Sir Isaac Newton's laws of motion

By Josh Krane

For someone who has the job of lying on a bed of nails while a bowling ball is hurled toward her body, Sarah Argue sure has a lot of faith in science.

As a performer demonstrating Sir Isaac Newton's second law of motion — force equals mass times acceleration — for the children's science show "Newton's Revenge 2," Argue protects herself from the 16-pound bowling ball by placing a block of ice across her stomach. When the ball is released the ice absorbs the impact, leaving Argue unscathed.

Despite the painful consequences that would come as a result of a bad drop, Argue said she never doubts whether the experiment will be successful.

"I still get nervous every show and play it up, but it's fun," said Argue, who plays the energetic character Crash in the performance. "Science allows it to work."

Designed for children 7 to 14 years old, "Newton's Revenge 2" demystifies the famous physicist and mathematician's laws of motion through an interactive show that's equally fun and educational.

The performance comes to the Clark Center on Friday.



Professor Pruvitt and assistant Crash demonstrate the laws of motion in 'Newton's Revenge 2,' coming to the Clark Center on Friday night. (The science-minded characters in the upcoming show are played by a different duo than the actors shown above.)

NEWTON'S REVENGE 2

7 p.m. Friday

Clark Center, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande

\$15 to \$25 489-9444 or www.clarkcenter.org

Audience members are divided into competing teams throughout the show and are often called upon to help Crash and her partner, Professor Pruvitt (played by Adam Lloyd Wilkinson), conduct experiments.

Argue said the hands-on nature of the performance creates a flurry of excitement for science among children and adults alike.

“The audience definitely walks away from the show learning who Sir Isaac Newton is and what he did for the science world,” Argue said. “The show is so interactive that by the end the audience is yelling out the third law with us.”

The performance starts when Professor Pruvitt uses a machine he invented to resurrect a fictional Sir Isaac Newton. The exhumed scientist then begins dispensing wisdom to the audience about the famous laws of motion he developed in 1686. Crash and Professor Pruvitt invite the audience to test these laws.

In an experiment demonstrating Newton’s third law of motion — for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction—audience volunteers try to propel fake plastic brains into a basket by stepping on a catapult. The team with the most brains at the end of the experiment wins.

“It’s great because the audience is cheering on their team and they’re counting the brains as they fly in the basket,” Argue said. “Brains are flying everywhere. It’s kind of fun.”

To demonstrate inertia, Newton’s first law of motion, Crash and Professor Pruvitt place an egg on a pie plate above a bucket of water. After an audience member pulls a handle, the pie plate flies across the room while the egg drops safely into the bucket.

The lesson: objects at rest tend to stay at rest, while objects in motion tend to stay in motion.

“The audience thinks we use a fake egg, or they think the egg is going to smash on the stage,” Argue said. “The suspense and the reaction after it actually works is wonderful.”

Leonard Lipes, managing director of Mad Science Productions, which produces “Newton’s Revenge 2,” said the unpredictability of young children makes for some of the most entertaining aspects of the performance.

“Watching a show with a thousand kids at 10 o’clock is different than watching a show with a thousand kids at 9 o’clock,” said Lipes, who has

overseen Mad Science Productions since 1997. “You never know what that kid is going to say onstage. You never know how the audience is going to react.”

In addition to producing touring shows, Mad Science runs educational programs in markets throughout North America and 20 other countries worldwide. The franchise develops curricula for after-school programs, in-class workshops, birthday parties and other special events with the goal of making science fun and accessible to children.

“Truth be told, they haven’t really invented a science experiment in years,” Lipes said. “It’s just how you serve it up and how you package it. You have to put the sizzle in the steak. That’s what we do.”

