

Peeps Diorama Contest



Sinking of the MV Peepsarge, by Jill Montgomery. - Amanda Perkins photo

PEEPS TAKE OVER THE LIBRARY ARTS CENTER By Ann St. Martin Stout

Once upon a time there were yellow Peeps. They arrived on the grocery store and department store shelves, only at Easter time. That was 60 years ago. Now Peeps come in all the colors of the rainbow, around many other holidays through the year, and as a variety of characters, not just chicks.

Within the last decade a new phenomenon has developed -- Peeps Diorama Contests. Newport's Library Arts Center (LAC) jumped on the Peeps trend within the first few years, and this Spring will host the 5th annual Library Arts Center Peeps Diorama Contest, making it the longest-running Peeps competition in NH.

The contest is open to all - young and old, individuals and groups, families and businesses. Competitors have been as young as two or three, and as old as 90 or more. "There is something about those marshmallow confections that levels the playing field among professional artists, amateur artists, kids, and those adults who swear they are not creative," says Kate Luppold, LAC director.

Through the years the number of entries brought to the LAC the week before Easter has

ranged from 70 to 100. "I love the Peeps contest," says Kate, "There is something about it that fits our mission here [at the LAC] perfectly -- bringing the whole community together through the arts, getting everyone to enjoy their creativity and being creative together."

Of the notable effects that seem to surface each year is the creative play on the word "peeps" that contestants work into the titles of their diorama creations. Though this is not part of the rules, it lends itself to the fun. The word Sunapee (Sunapeeps) suggests the key word, and many creations have been entered based on that, including the lake, skiing, and more. Other names have included "Purple Peep Liter" (childrens song) created in a one liter bottle; The Peeps have a Pope (current event); Heep of Peeps in a Jeep (rhyme); Dispeepable Me (movie); Cleopeeptra (historic figure). As mentioned, the use of the word Peeps is not required.

Even those who do not consider themselves creative somehow find a way to express wit and humor when given a glue gun and some Peeps. And those who generally do not frequent art galleries or museums find themselves drawn in by

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"Cleopetra on the Nile" - by Abby (age 16) and Sam (age 12) Schneiderman. - Ron Garceau photo

the relaxed and fun Peeps theme. Judges determine the winners in several categories prior to the opening, and everyone who attends the opening or exhibit can vote for the People's choice award.

The Opening Celebration of the Peeps Diorama Contest is held on the Friday before Easter, with drop-off throughout the week before. The next day (this year, March 26) more than 70 visitors wander through the gallery and take in the variety of imaginative creations. Guests from out of the area stop in when they see it on event calendars and news sources. The exhibit has been covered by local and regional newspapers and television, including a clip from WMUR which went national and was seen as Associated Press footage on several major stations.

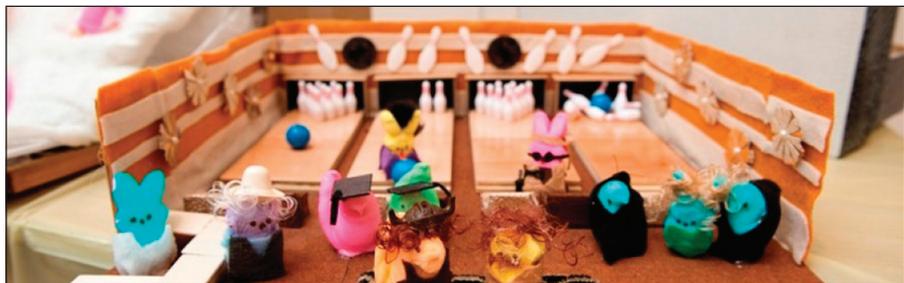
The rules are: Use any Peeps candy products, create your diorama in a shoe/boot box, or box of similar size. Info, photos and entry form can be found at www.libraryartscenter.org/peeps/

Deliver anytime from March 22 - 24, between 11 am and 4 pm, to Library Arts Center (behind the Richard's Library), 58 N. Main St., Newport, NH. 603-863-3040. Deadline for entries is 4 pm on Thursday, March 24.

Peeps Party "Opening Reception" - Friday, Mar. 25, 5:00-7:00pm. Winners will be announced.

1st, 2nd, & 3rd Prizes will be awarded, as well as a "Best in Peeps" award.

Additional Peeps Gallery Hours: Sat. Mar. 26 - Sat. Apr. 2, during regular gallery hours: Tu-Fri. 11am-4pm, and Sat. 10am-2pm



Peeps bowling in a scene from "The Big Lebowski". - Amanda Perkins photo