

Inside this issue:

Salt Lake County's 4th Annual Teen Yule Ball	1
Interview: Spring Lavallee	2-4
Strikethrough: The ULA Failure Workshop	4
YSRT Board contact info.	4

## Annual Teen Yule Ball @ Salt Lake County Library



History of Magic class

The spirit of Harry Potter lives on 17 years after the series' US publication. Almost 1,700 teens descended on the Viridian Center and West Jordan Library Friday night, January 15<sup>th</sup> to dance, mingle, and geek out over all things Harry Potter. The dance was an enormous hit and filled to capacity the entire night. Live video of the teens was projected onto a screen. The teens loved being able to see themselves and their friends onscreen in front of everyone and often heightened the dancing experience. Being live-streamed, it also had the unexpected benefit of allowing friends unable to make it still feel a part of the action. And since it was the 4th Yule Ball hosted by the Salt Lake County Library System, the teen volunteers put together a Triwizard tournament, complete with a golden egg dash and untying a friend. A Triwizard cup was awarded to the Slytherin representative; which house subsequently won the House Cup.

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Dark Lord Selfie



Rocky Mountain Muggles



Care of Magical Creatures

Also new to this year were "official" Hogwarts classes, ranging from Care of Magical Creatures, Potions, Divination, History of Magic, and Quidditch. These were taught in 15 minute segments, rotating every half hour. The classes were so unexpectedly popular that teens were lining up for the classes 20-30 minutes before the line-up time and filled to capacity as fast as staff could count them out. Divination had a line the entire night and had to be cut off so the remaining teens could get through.

A Horcrux Hunt was also met with staggering success. Using library iPads nestled inside customized book cases, teens were separated into groups and hunted down the secret horcruxes throughout the Viridian and West Jordan Library in a race against time. An app was specially developed for this and was a highlight of the night for many teens. The West Jordan Library stayed open all night (with staff) for parents to rest comfortably. Checkout stations were also left on through the night to allow teens another unique opportunity to read and check out books.

Finally, a covert surprise was unveiled in the middle of the dance by local sensation KFaceTV who performed Dark Lord Funk to literal screaming success. The Dark Lord Funk has garnered over 10 million views on YouTube, been picked up by national publications, and was acknowledged by J.K Rowling herself via twitter. Free Butterbeer from the Leaky Cauldron and live owls rounded out the night. There was an enormous variety to the activities, and many can be adapted for individual programs



Butterbeer @ the Leaky Cauldron



Gilderoy, Dobby, & the House Cup



On the Dance Floor



Waiting in line for classes

## Interview: Spring Lavallee and Her Teen Tech Club by Bekah Goodman

Spring Lavallee works at the Magna branch of the Salt Lake County Library System. She began a Teen Tech Club in January 2015 and is presenting a workshop at ULA in May called "Making it Work!" with low cost tech and making program ideas. With Spring's encouragement and help, I have started such a program at my library and thought her insights might benefit others looking for new ways to engage teens at their library.

### Why did you decide to start a Teen Tech Club?

I didn't feel like my previous programming was really interesting the teens. Previously, I had a monthly Craft Club and a monthly Gaming Club, both of which started to decline in attendance. I wanted to try something new, something we hadn't done before, and something I thought might grab their attention. Additionally, I think digital literacy is an increasingly needed skill among our youth. Operating a computer and knowing some basic electrical and tech skills can go a long way in helping inspire teens to tech careers and in preparing them for a successful future in the Information Age. Unfortunately, our schools are behind in teaching digital literacy skills, which means we (librarians) have a great opportunity to fill that gap!

### How is your attendance and how do you get the word out to Teens about Teen Tech Club?

My Teen Tech Club has an average attendance of about 20 teens. With all my teen programs, I try to do targeted marketing, meaning I focus my advertising to a specific group I think will most enjoy the program. For the Teen Tech Club, I made connections with some of the science teachers at my local junior highs and high school. I explained the program and personally delivered flyers; some of the teachers even give their students extra credit for attending, which is really great! Otherwise, we always have a lot of teens at my library, and having an interesting/flashy name of a program or an example of a tech project at the Reference Desk draws them in pretty well.

### Where do you find your ideas?

I use [www.instructables.com](http://www.instructables.com) quite a bit for ideas. I peruse new Instructables regularly and search using terms like "LEDs," "easy projects," and "for kids." Also, I am on mailing lists for the Utah STEM Action Center, Steve Spangler Science, and Make Magazine. Finally, I try to just pay attention to the techy things that are already around me and watch for projects that I might be able to adapt for a library program. Some of my favorite projects have come from colleagues or outings around Salt Lake with my kids!

### From your view, what has been your most successful programs? Your least successful?

One of my favorite project was making "Pizza Box Circuits." First, we had a pizza party; then we made a simple circuit using cardboard, LEDs, coin batteries, and paper clips. It's a really easy project that demonstrates a very basic concept but the teens were so into it! I had teens experimenting with adding multiple LEDs on a single circuit, creating shapes and designs with their circuits, and one girl even figured out how to make her LED blink using a capacitor, which was really cool.

My most difficult project was probably doing e-textiles bracelets this summer. We made bracelets out of felt and then the



teens were able to add LEDs using conductive thread instead of traditional wiring. Most of the teens had never sewn before, so that was a big challenge to overcome. We did finish all 18 bracelets, but it took over 2 hours!

### **What have your teens enjoyed the most?**

I think the teens would say their favorite projects were either the Pizza Box Circuits or a program I call Lego Wars. Lego Wars is a pretty simple concept. I just borrow a box of Legos from our Children's Librarians and create a set of challenges for the teens to compete in. Some of the challenges I have done include a speed challenge (where everyone gets the same set of plans and competes to see who can finish it the fastest) and a blindfold team challenge (where one team member is blindfolded and the other team member has to direct the blindfolded person to complete some pre-determined build, like a flower or a double-decker couch; only the blindfolded person can touch the Legos). My teens loved both of those programs, and both of them were very easy to do!

### **What are some low cost projects you've done with your Club?**

I try to do free or no-cost projects with my teens every other month or so to keep down costs. When I use recycled materials, I make a theme such as Cardboard Creations, Newspaper Fashion Show, or Book Page Origami and then I award a small prize (coupon, candy, bookmark, etc...) to the "best creations."

One of the easiest no-cost projects I have done with my teens is the Hour of Code, which is the first week of December every year. All I do is reserve a couple rows of our public computers for kids and teens to do the Hour of Code on and print off a free computer pass for everyone who wants to participate. The teens finish the Hour of Code (usually without my help!), and then I print them off a certificate and give them a small prize (e.g. candy, bookmark, etc...). It takes very little work since the activity is self-directed, and I spend no money to do this program.

### **You also run an Adaptive Tech Club. Why did you decide to start it, and how do you run it?**

I started the Adaptive Tech Club in August 2015. In March of last year, our library got its first 3D printer, and when that happened, we realized how much more we could do for our special needs patrons, especially our teens and young adults. So many of our special needs patrons were fascinated by the 3D printer, and in speaking with their families, I realized what a great opportunity I had to reach out and do something special that they might not get to experience other places. The Adaptive Tech Club also meets once a month, for two hours, and targets special needs families with teens and young adults between the ages of 14-24. Caregivers and other teen family members are encouraged to attend. I limit the Adaptive Tech Club to 5 families per month, and average attendance at this program is about 12. The projects in the Adaptive Tech Club and Teen Tech Club are usually the same, but the Adaptive Tech Club is more limited in size and distractions, with more one-on-one help.

### **What is your advice for a library that wants to start a Teen Tech Club?**

I think a librarian might be intimidated by the idea of tech or STEM program, especially if s/he does not identify as a "techy" person. However, I would say that there are some very easy STEM and making programs that anyone can do, with only a surface knowledge of some very basic processes. For example, if you understand how a basic circuit works, you can design an almost limitless number of programs (e.g. experimenting with "squishy" circuits, trying out conductive and non-conductive materials, building pizza box circuits, building alarms and buzzers, creating simple robots, etc...). You don't have to be an expert to do something like this; it's perfectly acceptable to learn along with your teens!



## Interview: Spring continued

### Any helpful tips or tricks?

- Plan out an entire year's worth of programming at once in order to buy electronic parts in bulk and cut down on costs. This year, we are doing a lot of LED projects, so I bought LEDs and coin batteries in bulk off of Amazon last summer. The parts are coming from China, so shipping takes a long time and purchases require pre-planning. However, local hardware and electronics stores charge up to \$2.50 per LED, and on Amazon I could buy LEDs for 7 cents per piece.

Not every program has to include expensive electronics. Making and STEM projects are also very popular and can be a great way to provide free or low cost programming. Computer programming games, QR searches, and free online media sites (like [Bubblr](#), [Inkle](#), [Animoto](#), [TinkerCad](#), and [PicMonkey](#)) can introduce techy skills such as animation, creating interactive media, and creating online content without any cost or much preparation.

- Be prepared for some failures. Electronics will fail and you will have projects that don't turn out quite like you expected. Practice your project in advance and prepare to do some troubleshooting. Then, display your project at the Reference Desk to advertise for your program!
- Sometimes tech projects can be frustrating for kids, too. If my group is a little younger, I start off with a little reminder that new things are sometimes hard to do and the project we're working on may be a challenge for them. It's ok to get frustrated and walk away from the project for a while, and it's ok to take something home if they don't finish it in the program. Individual kids may need extra help and one-on-one time, so look for knowledgeable helping hands during program times, if possible (one of our local police officers has been incredibly helpful on Teen Tech nights, and he often stops in to make rounds in the library on Tuesday nights).
- On the other hand, some teens are naturally techy and will pick things up faster than you! Put these teens to work! If someone finishes quickly, ask them to help their neighbor, or invite them to teach the class next time! I've had some amazing teen presenters do projects I would have never attempted otherwise. Most importantly, once you've figured something out, share it! Share it with your teens, your community, your colleagues, and others. Learning something new is only valuable when you do something worthwhile with that knowledge.



**Strikethrough: The Utah Library Association Failure Workshop** is an interdisciplinary discussion of failure for librarians. Experts in the fields of medicine, performance art, and librarianship (including past American Library Association President Maureen Sullivan) will share their perspectives on the many ways failure is an unavoidable and often integral part of their work. Participants will then engage in frank conversations about how to cope with mistakes, accept imperfection, and even invite failure into our practice in order to create stronger work environments and communities.

### Schedule:

\*Thursday, February 18, 2016, OPTIONAL reception for keynote speakers from 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. at the City Library.

\*Friday, February 19, 2016, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. FAILURE WORKSHOPS at the City Library.

\*Saturday, February 20, 2016, OPTIONAL Unconference at the City Library. (We will be workshopping and discussing ideas and situations involving failure), 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

<http://ula.org/failure-workshop/>

**STRIKETHROUGH**  
THE UTAH LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
**FAILURE WORKSHOP**  
Feb 19 & 20, 2016 • Salt Lake City

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