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Kids*Vention's goal is to draw interest to science

Saturday's event will feature paleontologist, astronomers, veterinarian, and human anatomy lab

By Jessica J. Burchard
The Winchester Star

Winchester — Since 2001, paleontologist Geb Bennett has explained dinosaurs and fossils to youths and their families as part of the annual Kids*Vention: Discover Science event.

Kids*Vention began in 1997.

Bennett, who works for the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum, will be one of 10 presenters at this year's free event, which is scheduled to be held from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Saturday at Daniel Morgan Middle School.

His topics vary, depending on his work.

"I'm looking at microvertebrate fossils, which is everything from fish bones to mammal teeth," Bennett said.

He conducts paleontological digs in Montana and brings casts of his finds for the students to see.

"It's a little difficult to get into the specifics, but one of the things to get at is that many of the animals we have were around at the time of dinosaurs," he said.

For anyone attending the free science event, Bennett and the other presenters will offer open discussions about their fields.

"The program is definitely used to encourage an interest in science and it's to link students to how people in the community use science," said Jan Kirby, who serves as the museum's director of education programs.

The museum is a co-sponsor of the activity and sets up its star lab for public use.

“It’s there so people who want to learn about the night skies and phases of the moon can see it,” said Kirby.

“It’s one of the most popular exhibits,” she added.

Some other presentations include an astronomy group from Front Royal discussing sundials, a veterinarian showing different types of animals and their treatments, and a human anatomy lab from James Madison University with microscopes.

Kirby described the free event as being “pretty much for the whole family.”