



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Stephanie Lenox
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Bring Your Toys! A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village Hosts Collector's Showcase

Salem, OR—You're never too old to play with toys. So believed A.C. Gilbert, Salem native and inventor of the Erector Set, who would have turned 124 this year.

On February 16 and 17, A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village hosts a two-day exhibition of the famous entrepreneur's toys. As part of Gilbert's extended birthday celebration, collectors from the Pacific Region of the National A.C. Gilbert Heritage Society will showcase their Erector Sets and other Gilbert toys. With opportunities to sell, trade and buy the collectors' items, the event will feature history talks, children's activities and a magic show.

The showcase runs noon to 4 p.m. both days and highlights networking opportunities for collectors, presentations on the life and inventions of A.C. Gilbert and activities for all ages including Erector Set building contests, balloon animals and face painting. Admission to the toy showcase includes full access to the museum's exhibits and Outdoor Discovery Center.

The founding building of the children's museum is the A.C. Gilbert House, home of A.C.'s uncle. This colorful Victorian is on the National Historic Register and is one of three historic buildings on site that offers hands-on exhibits in the sciences, arts and humanities.

“Because of his ties to Salem, his innovative and creative ideas and the many successes in his life, Gilbert serves as a wonderful namesake and role model for the organization,” explains Kim Baldwin, Assistant Director of A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village.

A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village

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Not just a businessman, Gilbert was an innovator who excelled in everything he touched. While earning a medical degree at Yale, he paid his tuition by performing magic tricks and received an Olympic gold medal in pole vaulting. After graduating with his degree, he decided to start his own company. His first product was the Mysto Magic kit, a set of tricks that children could perform. Gilbert came up with the idea for the Erector Set while riding a train and observing a building under construction. Later, he reinvented and popularized American Flyer trains.

Credited as the man who “changed the way that boys and toys are made,” Gilbert believed that children needed challenging toys. His philosophy that “playing is essential to learning” has been embraced by the children’s museum, which honors its namesake with a permanent exhibit on his life and inventions.

The A.C. Gilbert Toy Collector’s Showcase is funded in part with funds from City of Salem’s Transient Occupancy Tax. For more information about this event, including admission or participation, contact the museum at 503-371-3631 or info@acgilbert.org.

A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village is a private nonprofit children's museum located in downtown Salem's Riverfront Park. Founded in 1989, A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village provides innovative and stimulating educational experiences that spark children's natural curiosity. The Village's mission is to provoke curiosity, inspire awe, foster enjoyment, encourage learning, and enable understanding in all youth.

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