

Squished Penny Museum Curators visit St. John's during Catholic School's Week.

Curators Pete and Christine display squishing technique.



Interested students look on.

Pete looking for ideas for school penny.



Pete begins to design unique penny.

The Enterprise newspaper article about museum visit.
Feb 8, 2006

They're on a

SQUISHIN' MISSION

Museum curators spread the good news about smashing pennies

BY SUSAN CRATON
STAFF WRITER

For the uninitiated, they look like oblong, copper slivers with a design on one side. Mildly interesting, maybe.

Squished pennies, however, mean a great deal to Christine Henry and Pete Morelewicz.

Henry and Morelewicz, curators of the Squished Penny Museum in Washington, D.C., visited St. John's School in Hollywood on Friday morning to share their views on the souvenir coins and the joy of collecting them. The visit was sponsored by the St. John Francis Regis Council of the Knights of Columbus as part of the school's celebration of Catholic Schools Week.

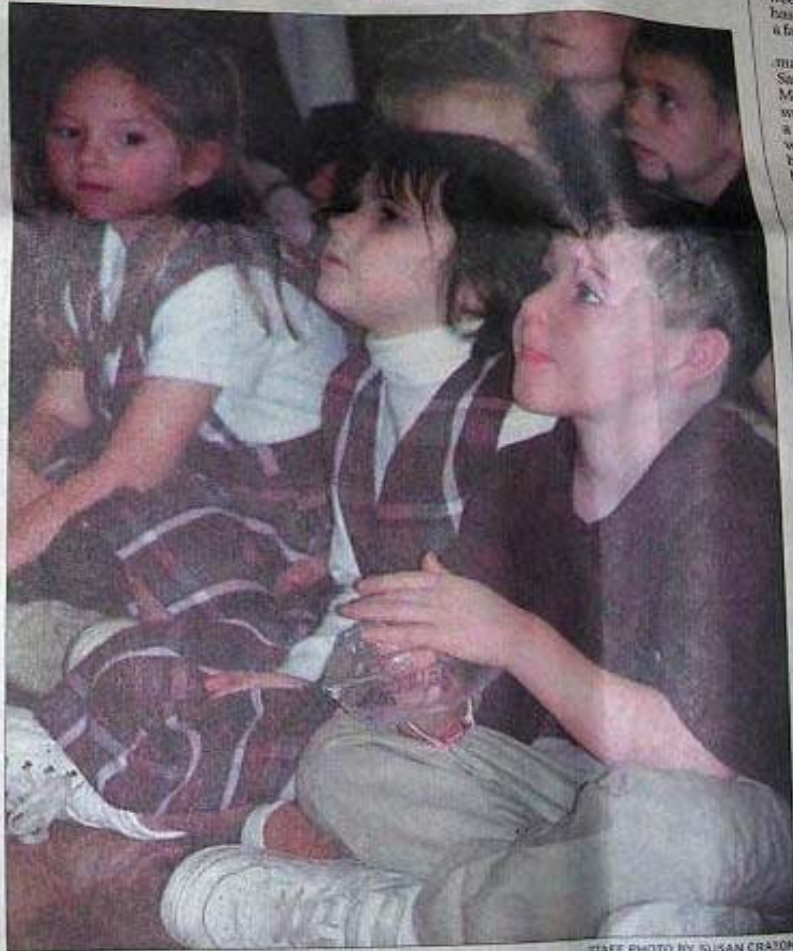
"I'll bet you've met people ... who thought squishing pennies was silly," Henry said during a presentation to the school's younger grades. Henry pooh-poohed this assessment.

"It's infectious," she said of the process of putting a regular penny into one of the machines and cranking out an entirely new creation. The hobby of collecting these souvenirs began in 1893 at the World's Fair in Chicago, the same World's Fair that gave the world Cracker Jack, Juicy Fruit gum and the Ferris wheel.

But "it's not just the fun of squishing pennies, ... it's going to all the neat places that have squished penny machines," she said. The squished penny, then, becomes like a snapshot of that place; it reminds you of that visit, she said.

Henry and Morelewicz have collected more than 5,000 squished pennies on their trav-

See Pennies, Page A-13



Erin [redacted] left to right, Kenza [redacted] and Nathan [redacted] three Kindergartners at St. John's School in Hollywood, hold their pennies and listen Friday morning to a presentation from the curators of the Squished Penny Museum in Washington, D.C.

Blind injure with

Two men s

BY JOHN WHAR
STAFF WRITER

A woman, who was shot as her blind son scuffled, remained in a hospital in critical condition for a week in critical condition. She has taken "a turn for a family member's ..."

"They said she make it the own Sandra Brooks". Monday of the weekend's effort to a 380-caliber pistol went through his bladder and his kidneys.

No Brooks.

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"That said Le woman ty Health Mad get her from the Jan Lisa practice pended year-old kronis ectors



Chris Woehrer of the St. John Francis Regis Council of the Knights of Columbus, demonstrates how a penny-squishing machine works during a presentation on the tiny souvenirs at St. John's School on Friday morning as Pete Morelewicz, a curator from the Squished Penny Museum in Washington, D.C., observes.

STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN CRATON

Pennies

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els, all 5,000 of which are displayed in their museum, which also serves as their home's living room. Visitors from at least 35 states and five other countries have taken the time to stop and admire the couple's collection.

"If you stood them up, end to end, they would reach to the top of the National Monument," Morelewicz said of their pennies, to the gasped amazement of their audience of kindergartners through third-graders.

They described their hobby as "22 tons of fun," explaining that this is how much weight is required — about the combined weight of three elephants — to impress a souvenir design on a penny.

The couple's message was not lost on the pro-squishing group of students at St. John's. Several children told of their own collections of squished pennies. In the presentation to the older students, almost every student

If you want to go

The Squished Penny Museum is located in Northwest Washington. A visit to the museum is free but is by appointment only, usually set up at least a couple of weeks in advance. Call 202-986-5644 or e-mail spm@squished.com. For more information visit www.squished.com.

raised their hand when asked if they had saved a squished penny.

Tyler, a second-grader at the school, impressed the curators with the information that he had already amassed a collection of 36 squished pennies himself. He started his collection by finding his first squished penny when he was hiking in the woods with his father, he said. He keeps it up "because it's fun," he said.

He said he hoped to visit the Squished Penny Museum.

Robbie, a third-grader, said he gets a squished penny every time his family visits Cape May, N.J. "They have a picture of a ferry boat on them,"

he said of his own collection.

Other students said they'd made squished pennies at museums, zoos, theme parks and aquariums.

Morelewicz, who wore a T-shirt decorated with the slogan "I'm on a Squishin' Mission, and Henry gave the students information on sites in Washington, D.C., that have penny squishing machines — the National Zoo, National Geographic Society, Old Post Office Pavilion, Navy Museum, National Aquarium and the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, Va.

Like the curators of the museum, Chris Woehrer, one of the Knights of Columbus who set up the squished penny presentation, is a member of the Elongated Collectors Club. "I have maybe 400," Woehrer said on Friday. "It's a little individual piece of art, and it's the cheapest souvenir in a souvenir shop."

"And it's the only souvenir you make yourself," Henry added.

"I'm crazy about it," Woehrer said.

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