

The Times Argus: Talk of the Town
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Pretty random

BARRE — If you've driven through downtown Barre recently you've no doubt noticed the massive contraption just beyond the large gallery window at Studio Place Arts.

We're told it is part cardboard, part Rube Goldberg machine, and part flight of fantasy. It has a tongue-twisting name — the "Randomizojustificator" — and a creator — Ben Matchstick and his associates from the "Cardboard Tech Instantute."

But what is it?

Why, an interactive sculpture, of course. One that was installed in the "Thinking Out of the Box" exhibit, which includes a variety of art made from cardboard.

The basic operation of the "Randomizojustificator" is about as straightforward as you'd expect: Inscribe a quandary; take three orbs (they're glass marbles, but "orbs" sounds so much more mystical); swallow all saliva; lower the lightning bolt; and load three orbs "with intention."

Of course it's worth remembering "justification" may require interpretation, and that's where Matchstick comes in.

If you're feeling unjustified and want to do something about it, Matchstick's next performances at SPA with the "Randomizojustificator" will be Saturday from 2:30 to 4 p.m.

He'll be back Feb. 9 (also a Saturday) from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. We're told there will be a free cardboard art activity for children preceding that performance (call SPA at 479-7069 to reserve a space for your child).

SPA Director Sue Higby says she has yet to be justified, but apparently that has more to do with Mother Nature than Matchstick.

"With the extreme cold last week, I was concerned that I needed all of the saliva I could conserve," says Higby, who doesn't sound terribly invested in her excuse.

"Perhaps I'm just justifying why I haven't yet been properly justified by the 'Randomizojustificator,'" she says.

Perhaps ...