

This guy can spin fun out of thin air

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Robin Booth entertains children of all ages with his bubble-making antics. He started out making bubbles to make people smile, but has since been hired as a fixture at the state park.

For someone who doesn't drive an ice cream truck or dress up as a superhero, Robin Booth sure draws a crowd when he shows up among the pint-size set.

By day, Booth is a mild-mannered quality control technician at a cake icing plant in Tucker.

But after work, he dons his purple ball cap, picks up his 3-gallon bucket—with its bluish content squishing here and there—and transforms himself into...Bubble Man!

And wherever he goes, the kids go wild. Giggling, squealing, chasing after the soapy pockets of air with tiny arms waving wildly.

"It could be something psychedelic," jokes Robert Apple, 45, of Dunwoody, explaining the appeal of bubbles to kids.

Apple and his wife were at the Stone Mountain Park one recent weekend, waiting patiently while their two children, and pack of others, flocked to Booth.

Nearby, a bubble exploded on 4-year-old Khaliha Nelson's nose. The Union City girl stopped in her tracks, squinted, then screamed in delight.

Booth began coming to the DeKalb County theme park about seven years ago on a lark. He'd noticed how animated his grandchildren got when he blew bubbles for them. The park was close to his Stone Mountain home. Why not, he figured, spread some cheer there?

The park, too, noticed something. Every time Booth stopped by, said entertainment manager Lynne Dundon, bubble sales at the park shot up. Plus, guests kept e-mailing the park how much they enjoyed the Bubble Man.

"It was really obvious that he loves to do what he does, and he'd be here with or without being employed by us," Dundon said.

So the park hired Booth and told him to do what he was already doing—entertaining guests as they waited in line at its most popular attraction, the skyliift ride to the top of the mountain.

So, what's so amazing about bubbles?

"I like bubbles because they...um...go up in the sky and they...um...float," said Parker Apple, 5½.

"They are cool and wiggly," offered Thomas Kruegler, 10, of Lawrenceville.

"You know a bubble's only temporary, so you've got to appreciate it while it lasts," said Ed Payne of Atlanta.

A plausible explanation. Then again, Payne is a worldly 54-year old.

Booth said he experimented with several ingredients before he settled on the right "sauce": a cup of dishwashing liquid, 10 cups of water and a quarter cup of corn syrup, to add strength to the bubbles.

He uses a 6-inch wand to create bubbles of various sizes, a modified fly swatter to make thousands of tiny ones, and a skipping rope tied to PVC pipes for ones the size of prize-winning pumpkins.

Today, Booth has parlayed his Stone Mountain fame into a lucrative side business. He entertains sick children at area hospitals for free and plays birthday parties and festivals. He has his own Web site—GaBubbleMan.com—and his business cards double as refrigerator magnets.

Next up, a serious push to sell his own bubble wands. And why not? Said Dundon, the park manager.

"When you actually see what the wand can do in the hands of an expert and how much your kids are enjoying it," she said, "you want to carry that experience home."

But, is it really that easy to be a Bubble Man, to blow bubbles inside a bubble?

"Oh sure," assured Booth. "Anyone can do this."

Right. Like, you really expected him to burst your bubble.