

## SCIENCE FAIR: Event touches full range of fields of inquiry

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hallways. The World of Physics featured a ping pong gun shooting ping pong balls through a tube at high speed, and Rijke's tube that turned heat into sound created by a self-amplifying standing wave.

Excited kids gathered around a large course watching Spheros rolling in many directions. Spheros are programmable robotic spheres about the size of a navel orange that you can drive around. Spheros have been adopted as a tool for teaching kids about robotics and computer programming in over 1,000 schools across the country.

Wes Estvold has been a teacher at Sisters Middle School for 20 years, and his computer technology classes are a favorite for many.

"I teach multiple classes, and my maker class is about hands-on building and constructing things," Estvold said. "I also teach a programming class, and right now we are programming Spheros to do a specific task."

Jon Renner was back with his "backwards bike," which is a reverse-steering bicycle. When you turn the handlebars right the wheels go left. The question is: How far can you ride it? And the answer is: It's impossible to ride. Your brain is fixed by what you know.

"I rebuilt the mechanism

with starter hardware so it's stronger. No one has managed to ride it so far, and there's \$100 for anyone that can. One man tried riding it four times and couldn't do it so he gave me \$100 as a donation to the science club," Renner said.

The ISTARR group based out of Sisters is an international science technology and research company that specializes in near-space stratospheric balloon launch systems supporting primarily polar research projects.

Sisters resident Steven Peterzen, president of ISTARR, had a table at the fair full of information and has a local office at Sisters Eagle Airport.

"We launch these large balloons that carry over 70 tons of instrumentation to the stratosphere for research. They go up to about 100,000 feet," Peterzen said. "We have a tracking system and carry cameras. The balloons circumnavigate the planet and carry instruments to test satellites."

The Dead Programmers Society showcased an original computer game titled "Space Race."

The Dead Programmers Society is a group of kids that are involved in the Oregon Game Project Challenge (OGPC). It's a statewide competition that takes teams from all over the state to one place to show off their games that they have created over a period of months. It is meant to promote a new generation of coders and game designers. A group of Sisters kids belonging to the society meet once

weekly at Sisters City Hall. School board member Stephen King is the master mentor for the Dead Programmer's Society.

**“These kids produce a video game from scratch. The future's in technology, and this is giving them a life skill and real-world experience.”**  
— Stephen King

"I'm the technical guy, the kids pretty much teach themselves, we just facilitate the project," King said. "These kids produce a video game from scratch. The future's in technology, and this is giving them a life skill and real-world experience."

Black Butte School from Camp Sherman also had a table showcasing astronomy projects.

"We had an astronomy team this winter so the kids made different displays on the different elements of astronomy," head teacher Delany Sharp told *The Nugget*. "The fourth- through eighth-graders did a display on the expanding universe theory and they



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Kaylee Huber and Sydney Head set up a stain slide for visitors to view.

made a demo of the solar eclipse and a board of constellations seen in March. The younger students are involved with building the mousetrap cars."

The Design, Construct, Compete (DCC) contest is always a highlight of the fair and they were back again with a competition of hand-designed mousetrap cars created by elementary students navigating around barriers, going the distance. And DCC for middle and high school students featured catapult

competition where participants built a device from plastic, wood, or steel capable of propelling tennis balls across the room and into a hoop. The DCC contest was held in the gym, conducted by Rob Corrigan. Winners of the catapult competition were David Novotny and Asher Bachtold, and second place went to Megan Greaney and Molly Winter.

Kids gathered around the high school flight simulator

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