SCIENCE FAIR: Event featured wide range of student projects

so you can't see it anymore. So, we take a video of the asteroid going in front of the star. The amount of time that it blinks out can determine how big the object is and that can tell us different things, like what it is made of."

Recently McCrystal and five other Astronomy Club students met in Boulder City, Nevada, at a science conference to discuss their findings.

In the main gymnasium elementary students wowed the crowd as each student signed up for the competition races with their own specially designed and decorated balloon cars. Then the older students competed in the DCC contest. This year there was a contest featuring flying tennis balls, conducted by physics teacher Andy Scheele, with the help of Mark Thompson from Sisters Science Club.

Thompson noted, "Everyone makes their own apparatus to launch a tennis ball through a two-meter square aperture that will fall into a hula hoop."

Sisters Science Club President Bob Collins was having a great time observing students demonstrate the science behind each unique project to hundreds of spectators.

"I just spent about a half an hour in what I call 'poison alley.' These exhibits are about all the waste humans have put into the water trying to make money," Collins said. "Some demonstrate arsenic and oil spills, others are mercury poisoning, acid rain, and plastics. These students have studied their own exhibits and have come up with some solutions for the problem. I think it's a step up this year in terms of it's getting the kids not to just study a scientific problem but to come up with a solution. And some of these solutions that the kids have come up with are amazing."

A lot of plastic garbage inevitably ends up in the ocean waters, and the accumulation of millions of tons of plastic trash in what are known as gyres has been well documented.

Last January, Emilie Turpin and Olivia Bertagna gave a presentation at a city council meeting working toward ending plastic bag use in Sisters.

"Right now, the state is working on banning plastic. There is a bill that I testified in favor for last month to remove all disposable plastics," Turpin said.

She explained, "Gyres are large circular ocean currents caused by the world's wind patterns. The water is so stagnant in gyres that trash, like plastic, collects there. But gyres are also a place where nutrients collect that the ocean life is attracted to. The marine life ends up eating little plastic pieces that mixes with the nutrients or they get damaged by it."

Ninety percent of seabirds have plastic in their stomachs. It is predicted that 700 marine species will go extinct because of plastics.

Many students are going above and beyond the staples, taking on projects that could change the future. From exploring the asteroid belt to revolutionizing the disposal of plastics, these students prove you don't have to be an adult to have amazing, world-changing ideas about science.

A group of four Sisters High School chemistry students displayed a mini scaled weather balloon and Patagonia swatches of different grades of material that will be tested for insulation value in near space.

Makenna Liddell, Emma Farley, Amy Hills, and Sydney Rawlins were accepted by the ASGARD project in Belgium after creating a proposal for launching an atmospheric balloon up into the stratosphere while conducting an experiment testing how insulation of commercial-grade and

Makenna Liddell, Amy Hills, Sydney Rawlins and Emma Farley shared their experiment (that they will be taking to Belgium) with science fair visitors.

industrial-grade materials compare in insulation quality in near-space conditions. The group will be going to Belgium and meeting with 35 other jury-selected teams from around the world in April.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to share our experiment with other students, to learn from their unique projects, and develop new STEM skills that will open up new horizons and opportunities both for us and the Sisters High School Science Program," Liddell said.