

The longest-lasting lipstick, and more science work

BY CATHERINE BAUM STAFF WRITER



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Norris School sixth-graders Brenna Gaspari and Bryanna Kaehn play game they created for the science fair.

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SOUTHAMPTON - When Norris Elementary School sixth-grade teachers assigned their students a "scientific method" project to display at the annual science fair, some students cringed. But their attitudes changed by showtime last week.

Students found the project useful, as it answered questions they personally raised. Questions like which brand of popcorn pops the fastest, what kind of bat will hit a softball the farthest, and which lipstick brand will last the longest under water.

"When I first heard about the whole project I thought it would be boring but when I did it it was actually really fun," said Tyler Paton, who discovered that Pop Secret popcorn pops faster than Big Y and Orville Redenbacher's popcorn. "I got to work with food and eat all my evidence afterwards."

Four sixth-grade classes, about 80 students total, made projects for the fair, according to sixth-grade teacher Lisa Rice.

"It gives them a chance to demonstrate their learning in a different way," Rice said. "Each one is really unique and individual."

Many students made games or songs for their projects, while others performed experiments, she noted.

"This project got me more into science," said Julia Lavigne, a sixth-grader in Matthew Meunier's class. "It shows you that you can have fun doing science."

Lavigne's project, "It's Water and It's Science," discovered that a brick loses more weight in water than a rock or a baseball. For the project, Lavigne and other students followed the six steps of the Scientific Method: problem, hypothesis, materials, procedure, data and conclusion.

"It looks like it's a lot of hard work but it really isn't; it's really fun," Lavigne said.

Lavigne posted "Thank you Dad" on the project. Her father, Rick Lavigne, brought Julia to his Easthampton office for her to work on and type her project. The office was free of distraction, he noted.

"She was the driving force behind the project and it was fun to watch her," said Rick Lavigne, one of several parents who came out to the fair. "I'm really quite impressed with the projects. A lot of constructive knowledge came out of this; now I know which gum to choose and which laundry detergent to use."

Brianna Weltlich's father assisted her with her project. Weltlich, a sixth-grader who plays softball, said she used to wonder why her softball team uses aluminum rather than wood bats. Her father, Bill Weltlich set up a pitching machine at the softball field where she batted.

"Normally he's working so to play softball with him was fun," the 12-year-old said.

Weltlich tried to spread her feet apart and hold the bat the same way each time. She found that balls hit with the aluminum bat went farther than those hit with the wood bat.

Other students found that Neutrogena face masks dry faster than St. Ives and Got to Be; Wisk laundry detergent gets the stain out better than Ivory Snow and GV; and lipstick that costs more lasts longer.

Veterans Day

Area veterans are invited to attend a celebration in their honor at 9 a.m. today in the White Brook auditorium.

The band will play a montage of songs that represent the different service branches, the National Anthem and God Bless America, according to Julie Salzman, principal. Students will read what a veteran's service means to them before talking with the veterans.

"It's always been a very important part of our school year," Salzman said. "The veterans are always very grateful for being acknowledged and the students take it very seriously."

Catherine Baum can be reached at cbaum@gazettenet.com.