

Young scientists prove theories with creativity



Ruby Hackett tests the best surface for a Hot Wheel to go the fastest. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Yarely Hernandez was all business when it came to explaining why the volcano was exploding.

The yellow lava spilled forth just as she intended. That's what happens when baking soda, water and dish soap are combined. A little food coloring added to the drama.

The Bijou Community School first-grader was showing off her project during the annual science fair. The multipurpose room became a science lab the afternoon of Nov. 19. The only thing missing was white lab coats.

Each student had to start with a question. From there a hypothesis was developed. The materials they used had to be

listed. The results were documented as well as their conclusion.

For the students in the two-way immersion program their projects were all done in Spanish.

"They are talking and building a vocabulary in science," teacher Laura Chappel told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The whole process started about three weeks ago when a packet about the event and what was expected was sent home. Parents could help, but the students were to do the bulk of the work.



Yarely Hernandez uses baking soda to make her volcano erupt.

Presentations were made before their peers in class. On Thursday it was time show off their expertise to parents, teachers, classmates and school board members who roamed the room.

Ruby Hackett had a Hot Wheels contraption where she shot a car on a track to see how fast it would go in various conditions. It was a definite Tahoe-esque test to see if the vehicle went faster on dry conditions or with salt water. The brine solution was the fastest surface.

For Diego Palacios he wanted to create lava lamps.

"I learned vegetable oil and water never mix because of the molecules," Diego told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He came up with the idea for the project by doing some research on the Internet.

Diego combined water, oil and antacid tablets to get a fizzy sensation that resembled lava lamps. Food coloring completed the effect.