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FOR THE DALLAS POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Sarah Hastings adds food flavoring to her homemade lollipops while her mother Allison Hastings and her sister Abby lend a hand.

LOLLIPOPS help teach science

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK - Dallas Post Correspondent

Her Mom tried to talk her out of it. Her two older sisters were skeptical.

They even walked her through a website called sciencebuddies.org that helps children find their most perfect science project based on their interests, whether they are male or female and, most importantly, how much time they have — like, I need this project tomorrow!

But 7-year-old Sarah Hastings knew she “just wanted to make lollipops” for her science project at the Dallas Elementary School and that she has until March 7 to finish it.

So the Back Mountain munchkin started gathering material and the annual science project began.

She bought candy sticks, sugar, cream of tartar, corn syrup liquid, food coloring and borrowed a large metal candy thermometer from the Dallas High School cheerleaders, who always make their own lollipops.

Then she bought the final ingredient — flavor drops.

“I don’t like fruit but strawberry sort of would be my favorite,” Sarah said. “Hey, it’s all liquid, right?”

Sarah mixed and stirred, planning on three experimental batches.

“My arms and hands got tired from the stirring,” Sarah said, easily engaging the help from her mother, Allison, and her two older sisters, Emma and Abby.

There were so many questions, though “How do I know when the sugar is dissolved and what does ‘hard crack’ mean and why does it have to be sooooo... hot?” every one involved asked. After all,

this was the first time any of them had ever made lollipops.

We could make cookie dough instead and carve out the letters ‘Science’ and then we could all eat science,” Sarah quipped.

After what seemed like an eternity, the batch reached a smoky 300 degrees and the strong flavoring was added. There was hope that the lollipops would really taste like strawberry and that the family sauce pan would survive, too.

“Putting in the sticks and mixing were my favorite part,” Sarah said. Abby noted that the lollipops tasted like “burnt cough drops” and wondered if children at the school would eat the somewhat ‘burnt offerings’ during the science fair.

Like all good scientists, the trio agreed another batch was needed — this one with quality control in the name of science. And that was just fine with the girls and their mother.

DHS to begin eight-period schedule next year

Principal Jeffrey Shaffer outlines changes at high school Curriculum Night program.

By CAMILLE FIOTI
Dallas Post Correspondent

A new eight-period hybrid block schedule will be implemented at Dallas High School next year, principal Jeffrey Shaffer told parents Wednesday night.

Shaffer outlined some of the changes that will go into effect at the start of the 2013-2014 school-year during “Curriculum Night” in the school’s auditorium.

The new schedule contains some elements of the current five-period block-schedule, but will allow more time for electives, Shaffer pointed out. Block scheduling is defined as allowing students to have fewer but longer classes per day with each class lasting more than 60 minutes.

This year’s inception of the new Keystone Exam prompted the schedule change.

“If we stayed in a four to five period block, Keystone state courses would need to be year-long courses,” Shaffer said.

Another change next year will be a new Career Awareness Program which allows students to explore multiple career possibilities. In January, the school board appointed Matthew Kelly and Nicole Darling as part-time Career Awareness Coordinators to work one-on-one with students.

“The goal is for students to have an idea of what they want when they enter into college,” said Kelly.

Students have until March 5 to choose their classes for the next school year. Upcoming freshmen will choose their classes with the help of middle school guidance counselors.

Assistant Principal Brian Bradshaw demonstrated how to navigate the school’s Parent Portal on-line program. He encouraged all parents to enroll in the system to keep track of their child’s grades and attendance.

“We’re a pretty good school district,” Shaffer said as he wrapped up the meeting. “Very rarely does a day go by when we don’t think or reflect how we can do things better. We’re committed to your child and try to give them the best education. The kids are our number one priority, plain and simple.”

Back Mountain Library book discussion group grows

By MEGAN SCHNEIDER
Dallas Post Correspondent

Mae Rome and many other residents of the Back Mountain have had the pleasure of participating in the Back Mountain Memorial Library’s monthly book discussion group since the club began in 1995.

“When we started the book club, the library had a grant that paid for a facilitator,” Rome said, adding the facilitator chose the books and led the discussions. Unfortunately, the grant was only for one year.

When the grant expired, club members took it upon them-

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For more information on joining the Thursday Book Discussion Group, contact the Back Mountain Memorial Library at 675-1182.

selves to continue the discussions. Now, each year, four or five members of the club have a chance to choose the titles and run the discussions. Books were chosen this term by Diana Dreher, Iran Fahmy, Patricia Crahall, Lori Stine and Rome.

Some of the titles they have already covered this year include “Shanghai girls” by Lisa See, “In the Garden of Beasts” by Erik Larson, “Cutting for Stone” by Abraham Verghese and “The Fortunate Pilgrim” by Mario Puzo. The group will read the classic “Huckleberry Finn” by Mark Twain in April.

“We get an opportunity to read books we wouldn’t normal-

ly choose,” said Rome. “It’s a lot of fun.”

The book discussion group meets seven times a year on Monday morning and all members purchase their own copies of the books. Rome said the group tries to pick a good mix of fiction and non-fiction titles so there is something for everyone.

This year, the club has 33 members and a waiting list of individuals wanting to be a part of the discussion.

Due to the overwhelming number of participants in recent years, the library has decided to start a second discussion group.

“We do have people frequently call about being part of the discussion group,” said Krista Connolly, circulation director of the library.

Library Director Martha Butler said. “It’s an extension of the book club that is in existence and we are looking to give people the

opportunity to participate because the other one is filled. The other club was so full that people would end up on a waiting list.”

The new book club hosted its first meeting on Feb. 28 with at least six members signing up in advance. The new group will meet on the last Thursday of each month and will have the opportunity to form its own committee and choose its own titles.

Butler says the library is excited that the community is so involved that there is a need to create a second discussion group, and she hopes the new day and time will make it more convenient for those who want to participate. The library is confident the new group will be just as successful as the original.

For more information on joining the Thursday Book Discussion Group, contact the Back Mountain Memorial Library at 675-1182.

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FOR THE DALLAS POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Holding his own in the wind and weather, this front-yard snowman graces Franklin Street in Dallas. Although March sometimes signals spring is in the forecast, temperatures this weekend are not expected to be much higher than freezing.

