

**SCOUTS-L**

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**PINEWOOD DERBY  
FOLLIES**

**Date:** Fri, 28 Oct 1994 01:25:54 -0400 (EDT)  
**From:** "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
**Subject:** Pinewood Derby Run Amuck  
**To:** SCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.BITNET>

**Fred Maslan,**

**Here's a short list of things that have or could go wrong:**

- 1. Wheels fly off in various directions**
- 2. Car doesn't move when starter handle is flipped**
- 3. Car takes the lead then stops a hair short of finish**
- 4. Car leaps from track colliding with onlookers**
- 5. Lever used to release cars gets stuck in shut position**
- 6. Electric timers start to show results before cars cross finish line**
- 7. Parent won't let Scout or anyone else touch car**
- 8. Car weighs too much**
- 9. Car is whittled down so much that it falls apart going down track**
- 10. Smart scout drills hole in rear and inserts booster engine with remote controlled igniter**
- 11. Stray dog enters through open door and borrows a car to use as a chew toy**
- 12. Car has an obscenity painted on it**
- 13. Car loses one wheel crossing the other tracks knocking each of the cars off track**
- 14. Little brother/sister puts bubble gum on axles to help hold on wheels**
- 15. Pack has pit crew to help with last minute adjustments; e.g. adding or removing weight, lubricating wheels, etc. Leader removing weights accidentally breaks car into pieces**
- 16. Cubmaster announcing race with microphone who ate too many baked beans at Pack concession stand makes an unscoutlike raspberry sound - every one looks at him and no one sees which car crossed the finish line first**
- 17. Excited mother is cheering son on through successive raises in one of tougher finals, he wins and she faints falling over the track, enter rescue team that decides to use a section of the track as a backboard, shortening the race (pun intended) :)**
- 18. Tacking nail holding center strip in one lane comes lose and as car heads down, it suddenly pops out and the warped strip pops up flipping car in the air**
- 19. Car has so much oil on axles that it creates an oil slick all down the lane, closing it for the rest of the race**
- 20. Two cubs think they both made the same car (obviously a parent told**

them it was their car)

21. Nobody will claim one of the cars and it races to victory as the great unknown, but ugly as sin winner
22. On the great race day everyone shows up and the track assemblers discover that a section is missing - oops
23. On the great race day everyone shows up and the track assemblers discover that a section that was used in the school display window has old cars glued in place thanks to a thoughtful den leader
24. Very thin car runs off the end of the track, across waxed floor and lodges under a coke machine that is bolted in place
25. After winners are announced three Scouts show up and want to know when the race will begin
26. Cubmaster's car gets switched with a Scout's car in one race and is the only one not to cross the finish line
27. Pack has family races after Pack races are done, two adults get in a fight over whether one cheated on weight or design
28. During the last races, police enter and tell everyone to evacuate immediately due to a gas leak, they lock the building, the janitor that opened the building for you goes home with the key
29. The electronic timer shorts out and starts smoking
30. You have the big one (heart attack) when the car your son actually made all by himself wins beating the ones crafted in design shops

Hope this helps bring a bit of mirth.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver  
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA  
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .

\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_

Date: Fri, 28 Oct 1994 09:26:16 -0500 (EST)  
From: "Christopher L. Rankin (216) 397-5100" <CRANKIN@jcvaxa.jcu.edu>  
Subject: Re: Pinewood Derby Run Amuck  
To: mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu

[Lots of GREAT comedy deleted]

>Hope this helps bring a bit of mirth.

Mike,

Ever considered writing for Letterman's Top 10 Lists?

YiS,

Christopher L. Rankin                      CRANKIN@JCVAXA.JCU.EDU  
Assistant Scoutmaster:                      Box 1387, John Carroll University  
T-7, French Creek Council                      University Heights, OH 44118  
T-620, Greater Cleveland Council (216) 397-5100

[[End Of Transmission]]

Date: Fri, 28 Oct 94 09:34:48 EDT  
From: Don IZARD <IZARD@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Pinewood Derby Run Amuck  
To: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU>

On Fri, 28 Oct 1994 01:25:54 -0400 Michael F. Bowman said:

>30. You have the big one (heart attack) when the car your son actually  
> made all by himself wins beating the ones crafted in design shops  
>

NOT as remote a concept as it might seem. ;)  
Pack when I was a den leader, for my sons den, one cub  
in the den made his car alone. (no dad to help)  
He sanded and painted but did not change the shape much.  
We nicknammed it the 'RED BRICK'.  
He won by such a large margin, that the following year,  
many cubs copied his radical design ;)  
My son was an original thinker. He like to create original  
designs for our best original design. One year he made  
a HOT-dog, with a pickle shaped driver, and later years,  
a space shuttle, and a hocky stick. Fun part was when the  
hot-dog also won 2nd place in the faster car class!!!

scouter don

Date: 28 Oct 1994 07:42:49 -0800  
From: "Peter Van Houten" <peterva@qm.WV.TEK.COM>  
Subject: Re: Pinewood Derby Run Amuck  
To: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>,  
"Multiple recipients of list SCO" <SCOUTS-

Michael listed some very humorous events that could happen at a  
Pinewood =  
Derby. One in particular stood out:

>> 10. Smart scout drills hole in rear and inserts booster engine with =  
remote controlled igniter

Last year one of our parents, who happens to be a committee member, and  
a =  
zealous type person created a 'DEMO' rocket car, that would beat any car =  
up the track. He put a rocket engine inside and we did a couple of demo's  
=  
between races in which he shot it UP the track into a large pillowed stop. =  
Like a model rocket it would have taken flight if the pillows had not =  
been placed on the track.

Peter

Peter Van Houten / E-Mail: =  
peter\_van\_houten.techsupport@qm.wv.tek.com

Date: Fri, 28 Oct 1994 21:46:05 -0400 (EDT)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
Subject: Re: Pinewood Derby Run Amuck  
To: "Christopher L. Rankin (216) 397-5100" <CRANKIN@jcvaxa.jcu.edu>

Chris,

Thanks for the compliment. The "humor" comes from just being a little  
onery and enjoying what I've seen over the years.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver  
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA  
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .  
\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_

Date: Fri, 28 Oct 1994 11:57:35 CST  
From: Jim Sleezer <JHS8@OSUVM1.BITNET>  
Subject: More Pinewood Derby

Peter's posting about the rocket car demo reminded me of some of the things I have seen (or done) over the years.

One year our theme was trucks. My son built a fire truck and discovered that a double A battery laid on top brought it up almost to 5 oz limit. So we got an old flashlight bulb and made it red. We then mounted it in the top of the cab of the truck with the battery hidden under the hose at the rear of the truck. The hose was actually wire. We rigged it so that by connecting two ends of hose the light came on. So he raced down the track with the light on. The connection must have been loose because it flashed several times on the way down. The treat was that my son had taken a tape recorder to the local fire station (just a couple of blocks from home) and recorded the fire siren which the firefighters were only too happy to sound for him (along with a couple of blasts of the horn). He hid the recorder but as the race started he turned it on full blast!!!

Another year one son drilled out the car and installed a 35mm film canister. He ran a tube from the canister to the front of the car. At race time he added bit of hot water to the piece of dry ice in the film canister. The result looked like the car had caught on fire with little puffs of smoke coming from under the hood.

Our pack has often tried to build our cars according to some theme. Trucks was the best, but I did like the year a tennis shoe raced down the track!! Only problem was when it came to district competition, we often didn't fit! But, we were always in the running!! And having fun!!

jim Sleezer

Roundtable Commissioner, Pawnee Bill District, Will Rogers Council  
Stillwater, Oklahoma

JHS8 at OSUVM1.BITNET      JHS8 at VM1.UCC.OKSTATE.EDU (Internet)

Date: Sat, 29 Oct 1994 05:45:52 -0400 (EDT)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
Subject: Re: Pinewood Derby Run Amuck

Don, George, Peter et.al.,

Your comments on the pinewood derby were great fun to read. When I was

Cubmaster of a Pack, we had a "red brick" car win, because the Cub had spent all his time on the wheels and axles. Hideous car, but it won. Similarly, we had a family race after the Cubs' races were over. We had two categories: speed with regulation cars and pure fun with no holds barred. One year I build what some of the parents called the Elvis special. The car had working head and tail lights operating off of a battery fitted in the bottom in lieu of weights. The outer body was covered everywhere with blue and gold glitter. Over the glitter were layer upon layer of verathane to make the body smooth again and prevent

littering the track. The car actually was pretty fast at exactly 5 oz and a favorite of the Cubs to challenge. Of course with a little judicious sabotage at the starting gate, it never beat any Cub's car, only other parents' cars. One parent had carved a car to look exactly like a 1950's era Chevy. At the last minute her knife slipped and she cut a large part of it off and reglued it. During the race the two sections separated and the rear section flipped up and landed backwards on the next track. Both ends slid down with the rear end beating the front end. Quite a feat of engineering. Another car had a hole drilled from the top down. At the bottom of the hole was a fine wire connected to a battery that had been put in a carved out compartment and covered over with putty. The wire got

warm and then the dad added a few drops of the same oil you use for electric trains to get smoke. The boys loved watching it roll lazily down the track creating a smoke screen as it went. Another creative dad took the electronics out of one of those musical greeting cards and rigged it so that when you inserted a metal driver figurine in the cockpit it completed the circuit and caused the car to play a short musical piece. Probably the funniest car was one that had a "T" shaped piece of metal stuck in its front end where the top of the "T" was wide enough to extend across the adjoining track on either side, thereby preventing any car from getting ahead of it.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver  
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA

**Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**  
**\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_**



**Date:** Sun, 30 Oct 1994 21:42:56 -0500 (EST)  
**From:** "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: Pinewood Derbies

**Let me second Jim Sleezer's comments. Getting derbies out in the public is a great idea and a potentially good recruiting method. Don't forget to bring registration forms!**

**Our District Pinewood Derby has been held in a local indoor mall for the past few years. The merchants were absolutely tickled to have someone come in that would increase the day's patronage by over 500 people. Most Malls, I suspect, should be cooperative.**

**Date:** Sun, 13 Nov 1994 00:28:49 -0500 (EST)  
**From:** "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: HOWDY  
**To:** Wise men still seek Him <jhall@HAYES.COM>

John,

Welcome aboard! Hope you enjoy this foray onto the list where discussion on Scouting topics is never ending and always fun and different.

As to Pinewood Derbys the key is planning, planning and more planning! Plan to have a weigh-in/measuring station where the Cubs surrender their cars. Use a box made so that only a regulation car can fit inside (length and width). In the box put a center strip, like on your race track to make sure the car won't hang up or damage the track. You want to

keep the car separate from its owner after registration to prevent parents alleging unfair activities/cheating; e.g. changing weight, oiling wheels, etc. There are many ways of organizing heats, the main point is to make sure each Scout gets to race several times, win or lose. Have several winner categories - speed, design, artistic creativity, originality, ugliest, or what have you and announce them in advance. Plan on having a family race after the cubs are done - this allows older brothers/sisters and parents to make their own cars instead of one for the Cub (depriving the Cub of the learning experience). Give prizes to family members too. Plan on lots of simple prizes. Most can leave having won something.

In our Pack Old Saint Nick delivers presents at the December meeting to each Tiger and Cub (pinewood derby kits). Tigers participate in the family race and its okay if mom or dad do a lot of work with them.

Plan on a concession stand during the race with soft drinks, baked goods, donuts, and hot dogs. Everyone will stuff themselves while enjoying the race and the Pack will turn a profit (usually enough to pay for the pinewood derby kits that Santa delivered).

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F Bowman  
Used to be a Beaver, National Capital Area Council, B.S.A.  
mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU (mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG after 12/13/94)

**Date:** Sun, 20 Nov 1994 22:58:14 -0500 (EST)  
**From:** "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: Tiger Cubs Racing  
**To:** Mike Lake <lakefam@USNET.US.NET>

**Mike,**

**Was good to see you at PowWow a few weeks ago!**

**Here we've encouraged the Packs to have a family race after the Cub races. Likewise, we've encouraged them to let the Tigers with an Adult Partner race here. At the District level its still a negative. Our reasoning is that these boys are too young to be working with knives and it wouldn't be fair to the other Cubs to have parent engineered cars racing against them.**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F Bowman  
Used to be a Beaver, National Capital Area Council, B.S.A.  
mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU (mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG after 12/13/94)**

**Date: Wed, 8 Nov 1995 02:38:12 -0500**  
**From: Ray Kathol <SWCrafts@AOL.COM>**  
**Subject: Pinewood Derby S & W Crafts**

**S & W Crafts has been making Pinewood Derby Cars since 1957!**  
**We make the "Original" Pinewood Derby Car. Narrow wheels, a seperate wood**  
**dowel axle and screws to hold the wheels.**

**Our wood craft kits have been used by thousands of scouts for 38 years!!**

**Scout Day Camps order 1000's of craft kits each summer. They are**  
**inexpensive**  
**and**  
**they are easy to make!!**

**Here is a partial list of the Craft kits: Paddle Boat \$.85 Rainspout**  
**Sailboat \$1.25**  
**Indian Magic Stick \$.60 Totem Pole \$1.15 Bird House \$2.50 Bug Cage \$1.00**  
**Mahogany box to hold Derby Car \$1.75 Recipe Holder \$.50.**

**--- Back to Derby Stuff: We have three types of Pinewood Derby Race**  
**Tracks.**  
**Paint kits, lead weights,graphite,decals 4x4 kits, flags,scales,lapel**  
**pins,POGS trophies,**  
**ribbons, medals . and MORE!!**

**Send us your:Name, Address,City,State,ZIP and we will send our Catalog to**  
**you.**  
**Let us know how many dens are in your pack and we will send you**  
**enough**  
**Catalogs**  
**for everyone.**  
**If you attend ROUNDTABLE [and you should] let us know how many**  
**Leaders attend**  
**and we will send Catalogs for them too!!!!**

**Note: S & W Crafts is a family business: Ray, Cathy,Greg[An Eagle Scout]**  
**and**  
**Toni**

[A Girl Scout]

S & W Crafts Mfg.  
PO Box 5501  
Dept. E.  
Pasadena, CA 91117-0501  
818 793-2443  
FAX 818 793-5216

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Fri Nov 10 01:50:18 1995  
Date: Fri, 10 Nov 1995 01:50:17 -0500 (EST)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
To: Ray Kathol <SWCrafts@AOL.COM>

Ray,

I can appreciate your enthusiasm to spread the word about your commercial enterprise, but question your method of advertising. This list is devoted to discussions of items of interest to those involved in youth organizations and not as a forum for advertisers. For the hundreds of folks that download the list in digest form, I have to question how many enjoyed paying for the time to download your advertisement.

Your advertisement is also misleading as applied to Cub Scouting. You represent that you are selling the "'Original' Pinewood Derby Car." BSA's official pinewood derby car is advertised by BSA as being the original pinewood derby car in the Scouts 1995 Official Catalog. BSA's claim precedes your claim by two years. BSA started selling official pinewood derby cars in 1955 - 40 years ago. The facts suggest that your representation is not correct.

Cub Scout Leaders should be aware that the Kits sold by S&W Crafts may not be acceptable for BSA Pinewood Derby Competition. In every Council that I've been associated with and that's a few, the Pinewood Derby rules specify that all entries must be made by the Cub Scout from an Official kit with nails fitted into the axle groove to hold the wheel. This rule prevents a Cub from getting an unfair advantage by using a different configuration by focusing attention on the actual construction of the car by the Cub Scout. Similarly, in most Councils the use of a pre-cut car shape is banned in competition. The idea is that the Cub needs to learn skills and have the joy of having made the car himself.

There is nothing worse than having to disqualify a Cub from a derby because his car does not meet the entry requirements. Frequently this causes the Cub to lose heart and quit. This is not good for Scouting. Too often I've seen a parent go buy one of these kits and have it rejected either at the Pack, District or Council competition.

These kits may be excellent for a boy or girl that wants to make a car for their own amusement or pleasure, but could present a problem if the intended use is for a Pinewood Derby. As a consequence I would suggest to you Ray that if you want to promote your product that you reconsider your claim to "Original" status and indicate that it can be fun for kids to build, but that people need to check their local rules before using it in an official BSA Pinewood Derby. I don't want to diminish the value of your product, but I would appreciate more responsibility in your advertising and choice of methods.

Caveat Emptor - Buyer Beware

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

Date: Sat, 11 Nov 1995 15:56:03 -0600 (CST)  
From: Jon Eidson <eidson@unix4.is.tcu.edu>  
To: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
Cc: Ray Kathol <SWCrafts@aol.com>  
Subject: Re: S&W Crafts

On Sat, 11 Nov 1995, Michael F. Bowman wrote:

> Jon,  
>  
> Chatted by phone today with Ray Kathol <SWCrafts@AOL.COM> regarding his  
> postings to the list. From what I can tell I only received a portion of  
> his first posting and did not receive his second posting at all. Ray  
> indicates that he followed up the first with a second to correct a gap in  
> his first message. Not sure what the problem was in this case, but  
> thought you would want to be aware of the problem.  
>  
> Now that I know that Ray was trying to make a number of resources  
> available to help Cubs/Webelos, I can say in retrospect I probably

> wouldn't have been as vehement in my responsive posting. Ray BTW has  
> also agreed that to avoid confusion with BSA advertising to indicate that  
> his cars are based on the original 1955 design and not the official kit.  
> He also advises that he does ask customers who are Cubbers to check  
with  
> their local Councils and Districts for rules on construction. From the  
> sounds of what he has to offer, his kits probably would be useful to many  
> Cub units.  
>  
> Depending on what you think, I am willing to send a posting to the list  
> capturing the substance of the above.  
>  
> Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
> DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

Michael ...

Please feel free to post. While I dont want our-right advertising on  
scouts-l, I dont mind information/resource postings. It does become  
a fine line at times....

Jon.

-----  
Jon Eidson (J.Eidson@tcu.edu)  
Senior Systems Programmer  
(817) 921-7695 ext 6835

Information Services  
Texas Christian University  
Fort Worth, Texas 76129

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Sat Nov 11 13:33:02 1995

Date: Sat, 11 Nov 1995 13:33:01 -0500 (EST)

From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>

To: Jon Eidson <eidson@UNIX4.IS.TCU.EDU>

cc: Ray Kathol <SWCrafts@AOL.COM>

Subject: S&W Crafts

Message-ID: <Pine.SUN.3.91-FP.951111132308.15410A-  
100000@cap1.capaccess.org>

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII

Status: RO

X-Status:

Jon,

Chatted by phone today with Ray Kathol <SWCrafts@AOL.COM> regarding his

postings to the list. From what I can tell I only received a portion of his first posting and did not receive his second posting at all. Ray indicates that he followed up the first with a second to correct a gap in his first message. Not sure what the problem was in this case, but thought you would want to be aware of the problem.

Now that I know that Ray was trying to make a number of resources available to help Cubs/Webelos, I can say in retrospect I probably wouldn't have been as vehement in my responsive posting. Ray BTW has also agreed that to avoid confusion with BSA advertising to indicate that his cars are based on the original 1955 design and not the official kit. He also advises that he does ask customers who are Cubbers to check with their local Councils and Districts for rules on construction. From the sounds of what he has to offer, his kits probably would be useful to many Cub units.

Depending on what you think, I am willing to send a posting to the list capturing the substance of the above.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

Date: Sun, 12 Nov 1995 01:49:46 -0500 (EST)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
To: Jon Eidson <eidson@unix4.is.tcu.edu>  
Subject: Re: S&W Crafts

Jon,

Will do. I kinda saw red when all I got was what looked like an advertisement that wasn't all that accurate. Ray also gave me some references from NCAC that checked out as to his business practices.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

Date: Sun, 12 Nov 1995 02:00:03 -0500 (EST)



**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>**

**A short while back I sent a posting to the list regarding S & W Crafts. Chatted by phone today with Ray Kathol <SWCrafts@AOL.COM> regarding his postings to the list. From what I can tell I only received a portion of his first posting and did not receive his second posting at all. Ray indicates that he followed up the first with a second to correct a gap in his first message. I only recieved the paragraph regarding the pinewood derby car and his signature block.**

**Now that I know that Ray was trying to make a number of resources available to help Cubs/Webelos as opposed to outright advertising, I can say in retrospect I probably wouldn't have been as vehement in my responsive posting. Ray BTW has also agreed that to avoid confusion with BSA advertising to indicate that his cars are based on the original 1955 design as opposed to being the "original" and to note that it is not the official kit. He also advises that he does ask customers who are Cub Scouters to check with their local Councils and Districts for rules on construction. From the sounds of what he has to offer, his kits; e.g. birdhouses and the like, probably would be useful to many Cub Scout units.**

**I can also say from the chat that I was impressed with Ray's desire to be of help to Scouts and other youth organizations.**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

**Date: Tue, 31 Oct 1995 07:44:22 -0500  
From: Bruce Rosen <rosen@SPECKLE.NCSL.NIST.GOV>  
Subject: Tigers and Pinewood Derby**

**Back when I was a Cubmaster we did include Tigers in the Pack's Pinewood Derby, but we did not have them build cars. Instead we encouraged each boy to bring their favorite Hot Wheels or Matchbox car to the Pinewood Derby. The cars fit perfectly in the space between each of the "guide strips" of the race track. What we did was have a special "Tigers Race" using their**

Matchbox/Hot Wheels cars while the judges were looking over our Cub's cars to determine the winners of the special awards we gave like best paint job, most outstanding, most realistic, funniest, etc. This Tigers race accomplished several things. First, it got the Tigers all fired up about the Derby and eager to build their car the next year. Second, it gave all the other boys in the Pack something to pay attention to while the judges were looking over the cars and making their decisions on the special awards.

After their racing was over the Tigers were free to stay or go as they desired.

YIS,  
Bruce Rosen  
Scoutmaster T-1948  
Rockville, MD USA  
brosen@nist.gov

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Thu Dec 21 00:31:00 1995  
To: Kenneth Corey-Edstrom <corey002@maroon.tc.umn.edu>  
Subject: Re: PineWood Foul Ups

Kenneth,

And I didn't even know that it was a Web page, or as likely, I have forgotten. If was part of the MacScouter website or the U.S. Scouting Service Project website or the Scouts-L Archives, you have the genuine article most likely. If it was from elsewhere, I'd sure like to know just to refresh my recollection and perhaps thank someone. I'd like to authenticate that what you have is my stuff. If it is, I have no objection to your making free use of it in any way that will be of positive benefit to either Scouts or Scouters.

Speaking Only for Myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
a/k/a Professor Beaver (WB), ASTA #2566, OA Vigil Honor '71, Eagle Scout '67, Serving as Deputy District Commissioner for Training,  
G.W.Dist., Nat. Capital Area Council, BSA - mfbowman@capaccess.org

Date: Tue, 16 Jan 1996 16:38:42 -0500  
To: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
From: Fran Carchio <stallion@postoffice.ptd.net>  
Subject: Re: Tips for Winning Pinewood Derby

I remember our first Derby, my son opening his kit and seeing this block of wood, four nails, and four wheels. I said to my son, "Well buddy, I guess we're supposed to turn this stuff into a car". We called that first one "The Screaming Eagle". He had a cockpit cut out and a windshield from a model car glued on. I didn't know what to do for weight so I unscrewed this

Eagle from one of my bowling trophies, took everything to the Postoffice and

got them weighted. Everything was about 4 1/2 oz.. We came home and glued

the eagle into the cockpit, what a sight. I looked at those nails and wheels, and I looked and looked. Finally something clicked. Well, with that silly looking car we won our first Pinewood. The first three cars in our Pack went on to Districts. I learned a quick lesson, some people know how to build cars. We were out of competition before I could say "We made

it to the District Races". The second year rolled around and we built "The Roadster". As usual, my son did the car with the side view mirrors, windshield, exhaust pipes, radio antenna, etc.. Hey, it was his car, I wasn't going to tell him what to do and he wasn't going to tell me what to do with the wheels and nails. I got those things and I spun and spun and spun.... until the night before the race and finally put them on the car.

OK! First place in Pack again and off to the Districts again, only this time feeling bigger and better. I forgot one thing, Some People Really Know

How

To Build Cars. We were blown off again. I decided, next year my boy is going to be in that winners circle, it will be our last chance. We will become Some of those people that really know how to build cars. Here we are

Year 3 now a Webelo, both of us two years older and I hope two years wiser

than when we first saw that block of wood and nails. We kept our same responsibilities, he had the car and I had the wheels and weight. Yeah, we were wiser. He didn't put windshields and mirrors on, and I didn't put on bowling trophy Eagles. He wanted to spray it with lacquer, five coats. He never sprayed before and had runs and drips, and for the first time I was going to interfere. He set it down to dry, thinking he did good. When he went to bed I set my alarm for 5am, got up, sanded the drips and runs, and

sprayed a light coat of lacquer so it would dry before he got up to check it. He never knew. Only problem was he wanted five coats. Yup, five days

of getting up at 5am, sanding drips and runs, and spraying lacquer. Let me tell you, you can really get a buzz on breathing that stuff at 5am. Well it was finally finished, shinny, slick, and smooth as a baby's..... it looked like it was speeding just looking at it. I ask him what he wanted to call this one and he said "The Teardrop". I said "Neat" thinking he meant it's shape. He said "No, that's what it's going to bring to the eyes of everybody that has to run against it". I said "Neat". That's what it did but we lost first place in the Districts by a very controversial finish. The Electronic Timing Device was removed and the final race judged by eye.

Could you imagine the three fastest cars in the District judged by eye. It hadda be a dead even heat at the finish line, but somebody called a winner.

Anyway, if it should ever come to anyone's mind that Some People Really Know

How To Build Fast Cars, in year 3, my son and I made it. We are now "Some People".

When I finish with this lesson about Velocity, Friction, and Inertia, you will see your car screaming down that incline, picking up that extra 7" of Velocity, and no matter how close any other car is at that time, your car carrying maximum weight, and all the friction fighters you use, will have Inertia push it on the level part through the finish line and slam it into whatever device is at the end of the track to stop the cars. Better have extra axles and wheels on hand.

That beginning sounded a little melodramatic, but if these hints are followed correctly.....Hmmm! Can all that happen!!!

Let's start with the Design of the car. It's important, but not the most important thing. Let the boy design it to his liking. Try to make it aerodynamic and leave a lot of wood in the back. The simple wedge shape in

the instructions is the quickest and easiest. You'll have to hollow out the wood in the rear and fill it with Lead. Molten lead or liquid lead is easiest. I don't have time now to explain how to do that. Ask around. Postoffices will always let you check your weight with their scales. If the weigh in scales show your car overweigh, ask if you could do the drilling, then drill off some lead, not wood.

You are dealing with three scientific laws. Friction, Momentum (Inertia),

and Velocity. If you gain a fraction of a second with each hint, you will cross that finish line in style. Let's deal with Velocity first.

In the 16th Century, Galileo proved that Objects of different weight will fall at the same speed. Record has it that he dropped them from the Tower of Pisa. It doesn't matter if you shoot a gun, level with the ground, and drop a bullet at the same time. Both bullets will hit the ground at the same time. Same as the Pinewoods rolling (falling) down the incline. In a no friction atmosphere (vacuum), the front of all cars would reach the bottom of the incline at the same time, no matter how much they weight, or

the placement of the weight. Remember, I said the front of the cars. Now for a lesson in Velocity (rate of motion). A falling object will increase it's speed at the rate of 32.17 feet per second per second until it reaches Terminal Velocity, that's no typo, it is per second per second. It means that an object keeps increasing it's speed by that rate. The longer it falls, the faster it's rate of motion. Now let me explain the importance of placement of weight in the rear of the car. The block of wood for the car is 7" long. When you design your car it is very important that you do not, I repeat, do not alter that 7". I don't know how big your track is or what angle the incline is, doesn't matter. Science applies itself the same. If you would measure the track from the starting gate to the bottom of the incline (where the track levels), that's the distance the cars fall and gain speed. They can't gain speed on the level part. If you don't have the speed at the bottom of the incline, ain't no way you're gonna get no more. Now lets say you put two cars at the starting gate, one car with the weight in front and your car with the weight in back. Do you know what's going to

happen? What did you learn so far? Well, before I told you to measure the

distance from the gate to the bottom of the incline. All cars will fall the same distance at 32.17 feet per second per second. Go back to the cars and mesure from the weight to the bottom of the incline. This will tell you the distance that the Weights will fall..... Yours will fall 7" farther than the other because it's weight is 7" farther away from the bottom of the

incline before the gate opens. Look back to the part where I said "the longer it falls, the faster it's rate of motion". Well, at the bottom of the incline both cars are falling at their fastest speed when the front weighted car stops falling and you continue falling at that fastest speed, and increase it by 32.17 feet per second per second for another 7". Does that mean anything? You bet it does.

Have you ever sat near the finish line at a Pinewood Derby? If you did, you noticed how close some of those races are. Do you think falling an extra 7" at 32.17 feet per second per second might make a difference? If so, put that weight in the rear.

**WARNING: DON'T TAKE SO MUCH WOOD OFF THE FRONT THAT YOUR FRONT WHEELS CAN'T STAY ON THE GROUND.** In fact I'd use the groove closest to the end as the rear axle holder.

OK, now for the most important and hardest part, FRICTION.

Earlier I mentioned about Galileo with different weights falling at the same speed and hitting the ground at the same time. If that's true, why is weight so important in a Pinewood Car. Well a bowling ball and a feather won't hit the ground simultaneously, but a bowling ball and a golf ball will. Why? Friction, the air has too much friction for that feather to fall. Now roll the bowling ball and golf ball down a grass hill that levels off and remains grass. Lots of friction there. Which ball will roll faster and farther? The bowling ball. Why? Inertia (Momentum). Remember their meaning? A body in motion will remain in motion until it is stopped by friction.....or sumptin like that. Well, Friction is an enemy of motion and weight is an enemy of friction. It's harder to stop a big truck than a sports car. OK, now we know why we need maximum weight, where to place it, and why.

One obvious point of Friction are the Axles and Wheels. The instructions that come with the kit tell you this. Be patient, don't put the axles on and spin the wheels yet. Since the wheels are plastic, some may have a nub

on them from the mold. Lightly rub your finger around the part of the wheel

that will be touching the track. If you feel a nub, that's a Friction point. Remove it gently with a very fine grade sandpaper. You don't want to remove more than the nub or you'll create a flat spot (Friction) that you can't fix. You'll have to get another wheel. If you don't feel any nubs, leave the wheels alone, every other important part on that wheel is as smooth as possible. Now pick up an axle and look behind the Head. You will

see two braces going from the shaft to the head. Bad Friction points and

must be removed, some are worst than others depending on your kit. The best way to remove these is with a lathe if you have one or know someone who

does. Get a good smooth 90 degree corner. Should look like this -----| . If you don't have a lathe, use a drill. Put the axle in like a drill bit and use a file. Be careful not to remove too much from the head or shaft. The smoother that corner and the back flat side of the head, the better. The biggest friction headaches are; wheels bumping the center strip (the car

must go as straight as possible) the more it bumps the slower it goes. Wheels rubbing against the car body, and wobbling wheels.

Let's get to work fighting these types of Friction. Place an axle in each wheel and get four sheets of paper. Using no graphite, pick an axle and wheel. With the wheel down and slightly off perpendicular, spin it. Time the spin, and write that time on a sheet of paper. Do this with all four. When you place them on the paper, make sure the nail is pointing up and the

wheel is flat on the paper. You will never remove these nails again. Get the graphite and place some between the wheel and the nail head, also a little between the axle and wheel. Begin spinning the wheel, very slowly at

first to settle the graphite, then gradually increase the speed of rotation. Each time you spin a wheel at full speed record the time. DO NOT USE A DRILL AS SHOWN IN THE INSTRUCTIONS. THE DRILL SPINS TOO FAST AND THE AXLE WILL CREATE HEAT THAT MAY DAMAGE THE WHEEL. Anyway, you don't want to spin

the axle, you want to spin the wheel. Put more graphite on and spin and record again. Try to be consistent with the force of your spins so you can accurately record the times. Do this with each set about 5 to 10 times, two or three times a day until you see no further increase in their times. Then spin them once a day until you're ready to put them on the car. The car must be completely finished before you install the axles. I hope you never removed an axle during this process. With all that spinning, the axle and wheel are matched to each other along with their times. Look at the spin times and pick out the fastest set. Use that as the right rear set. Now take the second fastest and place it on the left rear. The third fastest on left front and the slowest on right front. You don't want your car zig zaging down the track or running against the center strip all the way down because of wrong wheel placement.

Next Tip, you want the wheels as far apart (width) as you can. The rules

**bumping into the car in the next lane. When you install the axles, make sure they are square to the car body or you'll ride the center strip all the way. Maximum Friction, sure loser.**

Keep the axles at a slight upward angle so that the wheels are slightly raised. I can't draw the angle in ASCII.

Remember the wheels are 2 3/4 inches apart (outside to outside). The axles are 90 degrees to the body and slightly raised. All these things play an important part. The raised axles immediately force the wheels to the outside when the car starts to move. This does a few things. The wheels are set to the maximum distance from the center strip. If the car hits the strip it will go farther down the track before the other side hits, less hits less friction. It also keeps the inside part of the wheels from rubbing against the wood on the car (much friction), instead the outside smooth graphited part is rubbing against the smooth graphited metal of the back part of the nail head (very little friction) and no wobbling wheels.

**When you're sure you have the wheels and axles correctly placed, glue them solidly, being extremely careful not to get any on the axles past the edge of**



the car.

You're team is now ready to let the other cars taste your dust and see only your car's back end as they pass the finish. That is if you did everything correctly and carefully.

Give me some feedback on what you think and how you finished. Also, was this car faster than your others? Was there anything I forgot? I had to do this in a hurry.

With all the races just around the corner, I had to hurry. This is about the best I could do within the time factor. I was thinking about making it bigger and better to try and earn a few bucks for pin money in my retirement. Ya know, maybe a faster modem, better printer, etc..

Date: Wed, 17 Jan 1996 12:46:22 CST  
From: Jim Sleezer <JHS8@VM1.UCC.OKSTATE.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Pine Wood Derbys

We always had the cub whose car was to race pick it up from the "pit" table and take it to the starting line. He then went to the finish line to await the arrival of his car. Once the race was run, he returned his car to the pit. That got every cub involved several times during race day and eliminated any problems with someone else "damaging" a car. When the cub was not racing he took a seat behind the safety line (a yellow line that went along the sides of the track about six feet back. At the finish line, the cubs remained about three feet back until the race was declared "official". everyone else who wanted to be at the end had to remain behind the safety line (about 12-15 feet off the end of the track).

BTW, we had a starter who would help the cub place the car on the track if any assistance was needed. Otherwise, no one but the cub touched the car. We only had one complaint in four years--one father told us we were dumb to allow the cubs to handle the cars. His son had just dropped his car and knocked a wheel out of line! The cub wasn't nearly as concerned. He picked the car up, dusted it off and headed to the pit crew to ask for assistance in getting it fixed. After the race he apologized for his father's behavior!

As for weight, our pit crew would assist the cub-parent team in adding weight to a car that came in rather light. Although we advised everyone that coming in at five ounces was usually best, a few didn't understand. The year we made no adjustments, light cars finished way down in the standings.

In any case, remember it is supposed to be fun!

jim sleezer

Date: Wed, 7 Feb 1996 21:42:57 -0600  
From: Rick Covington <rcovingt@CCMAIL.DSCCC.COM>  
From: "rcovingt" <rcovingt@ccmail.dsccc.com>  
Subject: Pinewood Derby Tips.

Hello Scouters,

I've debated in replying to the list on this subject. For many of us scouters we promote the concept of the boy making the total car. But for those dads that want to build a winning car for the 'adults race' I will offer a few more tips.

Materials:

Pinewood Derby Kit  
extra wheel kits  
small triangle file  
cloth sandpaper, 600, 400, 200, 150, 80  
0000 steel wool  
crocus cloth  
rubbing compound  
pumice  
arbor tool for spinning the wheel in the drill motor.  
Avery 5/8 inch diameter labels

Tip 1 First thing, order the booklet "How to build cars and rockets" by Hugh T. Hodges from Hodges Hobby House Box 3923 Glendale, Ca. 91201.  
(818-845-6123)

**Tip 2.** Order a bottle of Hodges moligraphite. It is little balls of graphite, it does not cake up. Important for later use.

**Tip 3.** Shape the body into a thin wedge shape. The rear of the car has the axle slot nearest the end.

**Tip 3a.** If race rule allow, lengthen the wheel base. Longer wheel base runs faster.

**Tip 4.** Add weights up to 5 oz. There was a very good discussion on the location of the weights. Position them to the rear. I like to have the car's center of balance about 1.25 inches in front of the rear axle. Drill hole in the side behind the rear axle for the round weights. Add wood putty to cover. Route out enough clearance for the flat 2.2 oz plate weight under the car.

**Tip 5.** Axles The Pinewood Derby kits supply nails for axles. But you have to use them. Using a drill motor, chuck each axle and spin slowly to determine 4 straight nails. It may be necessary to buy a couple boxes of spare wheels to find 4 straight ones.

Under the head of the nail, there are a couple of burrs. I use the triangle file to remove, but instead of maintaining the 90 degree angle between the head and nail body, I like to remove about 15 degree to reduce a friction point between the nail head and the wheel hub.

Cut a groove at a 45 degree angle into the nail body where the head meets the nail body. That way the wheel hub cannot rub the rough corner of the nail head.

**Tip 6.** Polish the underside of the nail head, the axle and the TOP of the nail head. To polish the axles, tear the 600 grit silicone carbide sandpaper or crocus cloth into strips. Dip into water and apply pumice and polish until it looks like a mirror. The smaller the diameter (0.75 inch) of the axle the faster it goes.

**Tip 7.** Use a spare nail to drive a pilot hole in the axle slot. Leave about a 1/4 inch sticking out. The nail must be at 90 degrees to the body. It is very important to drive the nail in straight.

**Tip 8.** Wheels. Check your race rules. If you are allowed to modify the wheel, cut a vee or undercut the surface to leave a single raised

track around the wheel. Most rules prevented these obvious modifications.

It usually takes several wheels to find 4 matched wheels. Starting with the rougher sandpaper, spin the wheel at about 30 percent speed to remove the rough edges and smooth the wheel to a slight curve. Finish sanding with the 0000 steelwool. Polish with rubbing compound. Don't forget to polish the inside of the hub. Clean up the compound with running water.

**Tip 9.** Use a combination of graphite and molybdenum disulfide ( graphite-moly lube )lubrication. Put a small amount of this graphite in a ziploc bag. Put the wheels and axles in. Work the graphite over all. More rubbing the better.

**Tip 10.** Install the wheels and axles. Test for three wheels. Using your kitchen counter or dining table, gently roll the car to determine if one of the front wheels does not turn. Three wheels are faster than four wheels.

**Tip 11.** Wheel Alignment. Faster cars roll straight. Using your kitchen counter or dining table, gently roll the car to determine if it rolls straight. If it does not, turn the axle 1/4 turn to see if that corrects it.

**Tip 12.** Check for 1/8 inch wheel clearance between the inner wheel hub and the car body. Glue the axles in place. Using elmers white glue, glue the axles in place. Let dry.

**Tip 13.** Add moly lube graphite into the axle area. Spin, spin, spin the wheels to work the lube into place.

**Tip 14.** Wheel Hubcaps. Paint if desired the 5/8" dia. Avery Labels to match the car color. When dry, take one of the 3/8 inch number circles that come with the PD kit and place it in the center of the 5/8" dia. avery label sticky side. Put some molyube into the wheel cavity around the hub. Using super glue gel, put a bead of super glue on the wheel edge and apply the hubcap.

The hubcap prevents the wheel from touching the car body and provides a source of lubrication.

**Tip 15. Add additional weight to reach 5 oz.**

**If your lucky dad, your car might win.**

**Date: Fri, 19 Jan 1996 03:17:13 -0500 (EST)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Pinewood Derby**

**Chris,**

**In an ideal world each Cub Scout with a LITTLE help from his parents would build his own car growing in self-confidence at his ability to learn and use new skills. In the real world there are all too many parents that are so focused on the car winning that the Cub may never do more than watch the car being built. I've even seen cases where a Dad was afraid to let the Cub handle the car, fearing it would get damaged. Sadly these eager parents are depriving their sons of a wonderful chance to grow, learn and just plain have fun.**

**A wonderful solution used successfully by many Packs (including my own when I was Cubmaster) is to have a Derby Day that features morning Cub Competitions, Parent Races, Sibling Races, Grudge Matches and Funny Cars. You know how much trouble it is to get the track set up and working well, so why not take advantage of it once its set up and at the same time see to it that every Scout has fun, win or not.**

**When we used this approach some families purchased as many as four kits!**

**The wonderful thing was that Dad, Mom and other family members were so**

**busy perfecting their cars, they didn't have time to ruin the Cub's chance to make his own car. There were a few exceptions, but a lot less than in just a cut and dried Pinewood Derby.**

**The Parent races were dead serious with some of the best looking cars you ever saw. Brothers and sisters had a wonderful time too.**

**The grudge matches were a hoot. Cubs were allowed to pick and challenge anyone. The Cubmaster's car got a real workout and routinely lost. :-)**

The funny car races had to be seen. We saved these for last to keep everyone in good spirits at the end. We had one that the Cubs dubbed the Elvismobile. The car was covered with three colors of glitter under several coats of verathane to keep it smooth. The underside was hollowed out nearly to the top to form a battery compartment. The rear end had a hole large drilled large enough to place a flashlight bulb in about 1/4 from the surface. A translucent plastic flame was inserted into the hole and lit up when the car was switched on. Small diodes were used for head and tail lights with requisite interior channels (tough to drill). Another car had a flashing red light on top. Still another funny car had a internal rubber band drive that caused a propeller to spin on top of the car, hence helo-car. Another car was made in pieces that were stuck together with glue stick. At the bottom of the track the car literally exploded into pieces and had to be reassembled later. The Cubs really liked that one. We even had one that made sounds. A parent had taken a sound greeting card apart and then put the sound components into the car.

We had awards for the parent, sibling and funny car races too. For the funny cars the award was a set of donated amusement park tickets given to the car voted by the Cubs to have been the most fun to watch. The Elvismobile came in second to the exploding car. Nobody wanted to leave until the last car had been tested on the track.

Of course, if you do this, you really have to pump up everyone to participate and give them plenty of ideas. Doesn't hurt to challenge a few folks too.

Hope this will give you a few ideas for rollicking good time.

Speaking Only for Myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
a/k/a Professor Beaver (WB), ASTA #2566, OA Vigil Honor '71, Eagle Scout '67, Serving as Deputy District Commissioner for Training,  
G.W.Dist., Nat. Capital Area Council, BSA - [mfbowman@capaccess.org](mailto:mfbowman@capaccess.org)

Date: Fri, 19 Jan 1996 03:17:13 -0500 (EST)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <[mfbowman@CapAccess.org](mailto:mfbowman@CapAccess.org)>  
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <[SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU](mailto:SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU)>  
Subject: Re: Pinewood Derby

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From <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU> Tue  
Jan 14 13:34:50 1997

Return-Path: <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

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[207.91.115.5]) by cap1.CapAccess.org (8.6.12/8.6.10) with ESMTP id  
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Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin MAILER@TCUBVM) by  
PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 5320; Tue, 14 Jan  
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TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 1990; Tue,  
14 Jan 1997 12:24:38 -0600

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with NJE id 1980 for SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU; Tue, 14 Jan 1997

12:22:54 -0600

Received: from TCUBVM (NJE origin SMTP@TCUBVM) by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail

V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 1979; Tue, 14 Jan 1997 12:22:08 -0600

Received: from mail1.new-york.net by tcubvm.is.tcu.edu (IBM VM SMTP V2R2) with

TCP; Tue, 14 Jan 97 12:21:58 CST

Received: from gw.lsfcu.org (lsfcu.org) by mail1.new-york.net (PMDF V5.1-5

#16082) with SMTP id <01IE7DILR1ME8WX0L1@mail1.new-york.net> for

scouts-l@tcubvm.is.tcu.edu; Tue, 14 Jan 1997 13:20:25 EDT

MIME-version: 1.0

X-Mailer: Internet Series for Microsoft Mail ( V3.0 (Beta 5.6) )

Message-ID: <01IE7DINK5DK8WX0L1@mail1.new-york.net>

Date: Tue, 14 Jan 1997 12:22:54 -0600

Reply-To: "Jim Miller Sr." <jjmsr@LSFCU.ORG>

Sender: Scouts-L Youth Group List <Scouts-L@tcu.edu>

From: "Jim Miller Sr." <jjmsr@LSFCU.ORG>

Organization: Liberty Savings Federal Credit Union

Subject: Re: physics behind Pinwood derby

X-To: Kevin Williams <akhwts1@PEABODY.SCT.UCARB.COM>,

"Jim Miller Jr. (jmillerjr@LSFCU.ORG)" <jmillerjr@LSFCU.ORG>

To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

Status: RO

X-Status:

What makes a Pinewood Derby car a winner?

A Pinewood Derby car is a winner if:

it makes a boy proud of his accomplishment;  
it brings a parent and son closer together by working together;  
it brings a smile to a boy's face;  
it brings an otherwise absent parent out to a pack event;  
it teaches a boy some skills in working with tools;  
...

Would anyone else like to add a few?

YIS

JJMSr

-----

**From:** Kevin Williams  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 14, 1997 8:31 AM  
**To:** Jim Miller Jr.; Jim Miller Sr.; multiple recipients of list scouts-l; Jim Miller Jr. (jmillerrjr@LSFCU.ORG); Jim Miller Sr. (jjmsr@LSFCU.ORG)  
**Subject:** physics behind Pinwood derby

I have been requested by my scout's parents to give a talk on the physics of what makes the Pinewood Derby cars win.

Can anyone help me with this?

Thanks  
Kevin  
Wolf Leader  
Pack 68  
Pioneer District  
Buckskin Council

-----  
**E-mail:** akhwts1@peabody.SCT.UCARB.COM  
**01/14/97 08:31:58**  
**Real Life:**  
**Kevin H. Williams**  
**(304) 747-7584**  
**The opinions expressed are my own,**  
**Let everyone else speak for themselves!**  
-----

**James J. Miller, Sr. <JJMSR@lsfcu.org>**  
**President, Liberty Savings Federal Credit Union**

**From** mfbowman@CapAccess.org **Sun Jan 26 23:54:22 1997**  
**Date:** Sun, 26 Jan 1997 23:54:20 -0500 (EST)  
**From:** "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
**To:** SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <scouts-l@tcu.edu>  
**Subject:** Last year's derby car :(

Message-ID: <Pine.SUN.3.91-FP.970126233406.15850C-100000@cap1.capaccess.org>

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Don,

Of all the things in Cub Scouting, I tend to think that Pinewood Derbies bring out both the best and worst in parents. It seems that we are a culture so wedded to competition that the idea of playing the game for the sheer joy of it is lost. Winning is everything to some folks, nevermind that junior may learn something about himself and gain just as much or more pride by building his own car and doing better than he thought even if he doesn't burn up the track.

The people in the stands at the Superbowl don't hold a candle to parents eagerly watching to see how "their" car does at a pinewood derby. At times it can get downright nasty with parents arguing over who won, whose car shouldn't be allowed to race, whose car was using a prohibited part, etc. Losing parents have been known to throw fits, make accusations about winners, etc.

In your case you have a rumor that the mother said last year's car was used and a denial by the father. Without more than rumor, you really don't have anything other than sour grapes. And those who might remember, but don't quite remember aren't much help in this situation either. If nobody is sure about this, it is best left alone. There isn't much that can be accomplished and it certainly will never come to resolution without something a bit harder than rumor. I'd be inclined to take something like this in stride and not act on it without better information.

This is an area where prevention is the best bet. How do you do that? Some have suggested a photo of each car each year. Well I suppose that could work, until some parent figured it out and repainted the car or made some changes to its appearance. I think the better way is to get the parents involved in a race of their own. Get them separated from their cub's car.

\* Start early with publicity about each person making their own car

**and an explanation of why it is important for cubs to make their own car.**

- \* Announce a family racing competition with prizes to follow the Cub event.**
- \* Make supplies readily available to the parents, e.g., take orders in advance and see that they get cars to build at the same time that the Cubs do.**
- \* Have a display area at Pack Meetings to show progress on the cars of both Cubs and family members in the month(s) between distribution and the race.**
- \* Really play up both races and run them.**

**You will probably find that a lot of the energy that used to go in helping the Cub make the car (not) gets redirected to the parent's car and the Cub really gets only the help he really needs. Likewise the parent's car can readily be compared with the Cub's car. If they look too much alike in skill level, everyone's going to know who did it and this isn't lost on the parents either. Yeah its gaming the parents by putting their egos to work on a diversion, but it works.**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
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