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Community Service

Girl Scout Silver Award Recipients

Submitted by Molly Wendt



From left, Troop members Kelcey Higgins, Marie Whitmore, Kelsey Wendt, Erica Goodman, Elise Berg, Brittany Stoddard, and Cienna King. (Asha Singh not pictured.) Photo provided

The girls of Girl Scout Troop 30245 completed their Silver Award last fall after more than 40 hours of hard work planning and creating a butterfly garden at Stanley Middle School. The girls met with Stanley seventh-grade science teachers who outlined how they hoped to use the garden in their teaching of life science to middle school students. They then met with a specialist at Orchard Nursery who taught them the plants needed to attract and feed butterflies in all stages of life from pupae to adult. The Scouts spent hours raising funds through selling mistletoe, baked goods, and candy canes. With additional financial help from their family and friends, they were able to

raise more than \$2,000 to fund their project. In spring they spent more time researching various plants, building garden boxes, and making cement stepping stones. Planting day finally arrived in May when the troop spent eight straight hours hauling soil, gravel, and planting over 100 plants to create a beautiful butterfly garden. The school installed a bench at the site last summer, and the project was completed this fall when the girls returned to weed, prune, and clean up the garden in preparation for winter. The girls worked together beautifully and had a lot of fun in the process. Stop by Stanley Middle School to see what a beautiful butterfly garden they created!

Unlocking Secrets to Winning Pinewood Derby

Submitted by Maggie Wu



Local Cub Scouts are laden with trophies and smiles at a recent Blackhawk 500. Photo provided

Local Cub Scouts curious about how to win the Pinewood Derby race this spring can attend a special workshop in Orinda Feb. 9 sponsored by Boy Scout Troop 233 and facilitated by Coach Allen, who successfully coached his son to win the 2010 Blackhawk 500 Grand Prize.

Starting with a block of wood made of pine, four plastic wheels and four nails, a Cub Scout's finished car must use all nine pieces, but must not exceed a certain weight, a certain length, and must fit on the track used by that particular Scout pack. Scouts are judged on speed and creative design.

Hard work and a little luck seem to improve the odds of winning. Asghar Riahi, a Troop 233 parent, was certain things could be invented and tested to enhance the outcome of Pinewood Derby competition, and met liked-minded thinker, Coach

Allen, who happily shared his design tricks and speed enhancement strategies with Riahi's boys, Razmin and Ryan, who won sixth and seventh place respectively in the prestigious Blackhawk 500 competition in 2008.

Allen was concerned with health hazards associated with using graphite as a lubricant for Pinewood Derby cars, and invented a dry lube to help make cars race much faster and greener. With the help of the secret lube, Allen's son Alex won the 2010 Blackhawk 500 Grand Final Trophy with a time of 12.3240 minutes – a record that remains unbroken.

The workshop, Secrets to Winning Pinewood Derby, will be held from noon to 4 p.m. Feb. 9 at Holy Shepherd Church, 433 Moraga Way in Orinda. Scouts who build their cars ahead of the workshop will be able to test them on a racetrack.



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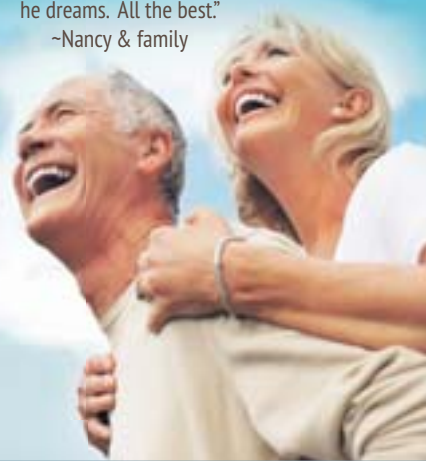
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