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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

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.

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,

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