

## Hershey Bar Fools Mom, Wins the Prize

As appeared in the *Sudbury Town Crier*

January 27, 2011

By Brian Mulcahey

Getting ready for his final Pinewood Derby as a Cub Scout, 5<sup>th</sup> grader Will Melick swung for the fences with his creative design, and nearly got in trouble with Mom in the process. Will's design bears a striking resemblance to a partially-eaten Hershey bar, and when he left the nearly-completed car on the kitchen counter a few weeks before the race, his Mom questioned Will and his sister to learn who snuck a snack before dinner. That's when Will knew he might have a winner on his hands.

For more than 50 years, the Pinewood Derby often has been the highlight of Cub Scout's formative years in scouting. Just ask Sudbury resident and former Scout Scott Melick, who's done the event with his son Will for the last five years, and has fond memories of doing the Derby while growing up in Sudbury himself years ago. "We award a lot of trophies, but the event is about far more than winning and losing gracefully; it's about the fun my son and I had together, and my final Pinewood Derby really highlighted that the event (and Scouts) is made successful by the efforts of many."

The tradition is a simple one: Cub Scouts, with the help of a parent or adult partner, build their own cars from kits containing a solid block of pine wood, four plastic wheels and four metal axles. And the rules haven't changed much at all over the years: the cars must use all nine pieces, be five ounces or less, and have the proper clearance to run on the track. The rest is left to the creativity and workmanship of the individual Scouts. They typically spend long hours carving, sanding, weighting, painting, polishing and perfecting their cars, and they see the fruits of their labors as simple pine blocks are gradually transformed into sleek and stylish pinewood racers.

The Pinewood Derby event was founded in 1953 by Cubmaster Donald Murphy of Manhattan Beach, CA, and it was an instant success. Murphy's idea for the Pinewood Derby formed out of a desire to devise a wholesome, constructive activity that would foster a close father-son relationship while promoting craftsmanship and good sportsmanship through competition. Murphy, who passed away in 2008 at the age of 90, created a lasting phenomenon and the premier event in Cub Scouts – experienced by more than 1.4 million children annually. At the derby's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2003, Murphy was honored with a presidential proclamation from President George W. Bush. And in 2006, the pinewood derby was selected by *Reader's Digest* magazine as part of "America's 100 Best" as "a celebrated rite of spring".

On a thrilling, action-packed Saturday morning in late January, 50 boys from the Loring Pack 60 Cub Scouts competed at their annual Pinewood Derby. Some of these cars raced for pure speed, while others competed for "Best Workmanship" and "Most Creative Design" trophies. And all of the scouts took home memories to last a lifetime.

Powered only by gravity, and opposed by the enemies of friction and air drag, cars were raced down a sloping, 32-foot, 4-lane wooden track with 109 races run over nearly three hours. Webelos I racer Ryan Mulcahey's car was the fastest, clocking a blazing heat of 2.4505 seconds (just shy of 9 MPH) – the fastest heat in more than three years, and less than 0.09 seconds off the Pack 60 track record. The day featured dozens of photo finishes and run-offs won by several

thousandths of a second! Thank goodness for the electronic finish line – we’ve come a long way since the original 1953 race, which used a battery-run finish line made from doorbells and light bulbs to identify the winner.

The event showcased sleek racers crafted with skillful workmanship and fancy paint jobs; a volcano; pickle; rocket; fire engine; several Mario-themed cars; and cars that boasted the ingenuity of their scout builders. But it was the car that looked amazingly similar to a real Hershey bar that the judges deemed to be the most creative of all, and a streamlined and meticulously detailed racer that the judges thought exhibited the best workmanship.

Congratulations to the 2011 Pack 60 Cub Scout Pinewood Derby champions:

Pack-wide winners: 1<sup>st</sup> – Ryan Mulcahey; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Chandler Katz; 3<sup>rd</sup> – Karl von Goeler; Most Creative – Will Melick; Best Workmanship – Benjamin Schneider.

Tiger winners (1<sup>st</sup> Grade): 1<sup>st</sup> – Matthew Childs; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Benjamin Resnic; 3<sup>rd</sup> – Noah Buttner; Most Creative – Orion Melanson; Best Workmanship – Nicholas Olsen.

Wolf winners (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade): 1<sup>st</sup> – Joe Duggan; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Brett Westerberg; 3<sup>rd</sup> – Kyle Keelan; Most Creative – David Hutchings; Best Workmanship – Jack LaRochelle.

Bear winners (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade): 1<sup>st</sup> – Philip Cass; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Michael Cavanaugh; 3<sup>rd</sup> – Jack Urdang; Most Creative – Andre Singer; Best Workmanship – Benjamin Schneider.

Webelos I winners (4<sup>th</sup> Grade): 1<sup>st</sup> – Ryan Mulcahey; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Karl von Goeler; 3<sup>rd</sup> – Aidan Cavanaugh; Most Creative – Brian Arthur; Best Workmanship – Jeremy Xu.

Webelos II winners (5<sup>th</sup> Grade): 1<sup>st</sup> – Chandler Katz; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Joey Palmerino; 3<sup>rd</sup> – Joe Sziabowski; Most Creative – Will Melick; Best Workmanship – Matt Perricone.

Reflecting on his final Pinewood Derby, Will Melick said, “The Pinewood Derby has been a fun experience for me because over the years I learned skills like using tools and learning how to cut and sand. I also got to let my imagination run wild when designing my cars. Last year, I made a Landspeeder (from Star Wars) and the parent judges didn’t know what it was. So this year, I decided to make something everyone would recognize: a Hershey bar! I have loved working with my Dad for the past five years on multiple cars, and I am sad that this year was my final Derby.”

Cub Scout Pack 60 welcomes all Loring area boys in 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. For more details, please see <http://www.pack60sudbury.org/>.

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**Pictured are the pack-wide winners. (l-to-r): Benjamin Schneider (Bear – Best Workmanship); Ryan Mulcahey (Webelos I – 1<sup>st</sup> Place); Karl von Goeler (Webelos I – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place); Chandler Katz (Webelos II – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place); Will Melick (Webelos II – Most Creative).**



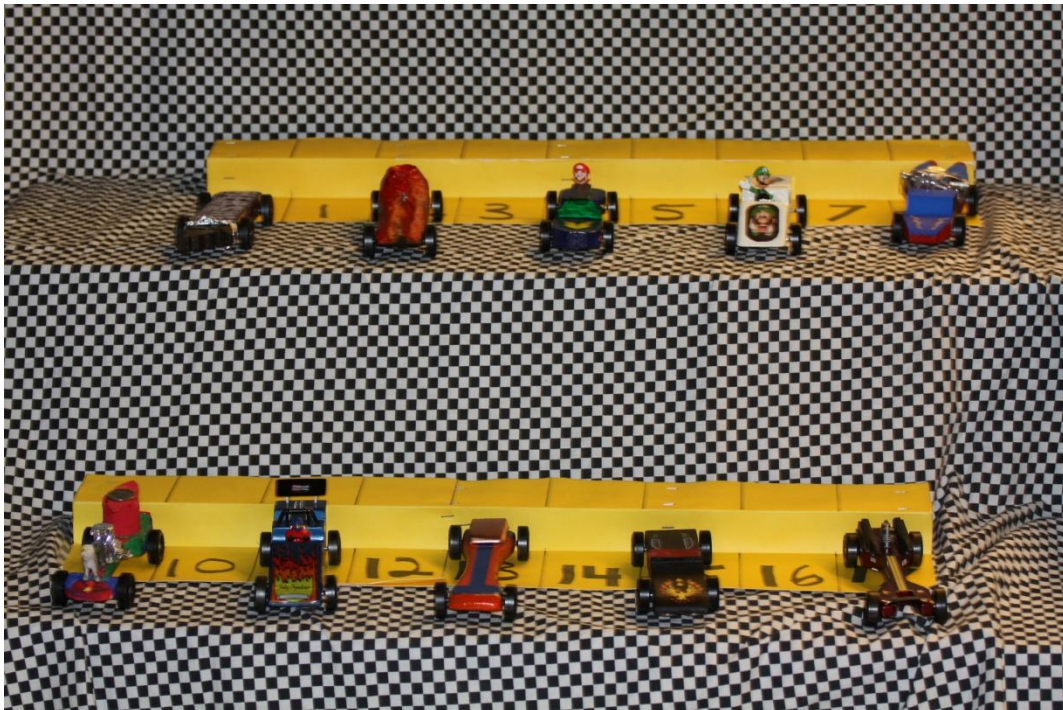
**Pictured are three race cars in a photo finish, with the lightning bolt taking the heat by a nose. Note that the cars are about to crash into the shock absorbers on the right after passing under the computer-controlled electronic timer at the finish line.**



Pictured is the overall fastest car crossing the finish line. Note above its lane is a red light, which has triggered the computer-controlled electronic timer to automatically record its finishing time.



Pictured (l-to-r) are Jack Urdang, Kurt Westerberg, Ryan Mulcahey and Charlie Cavanaugh as they anxiously await the results of a close race.



Pictured are finalists for Most Creative design (top, with winner on far left) and Best Workmanship (bottom, with winner on far right).



Pictured is Will Melick's Hershey bar car – winner of Most Creative design.



Pictured is Den leader Anne Childs rallying the troops between races.