

Island Sports

Derby brings parents and kids together

By Adrienne Downing

The rain may have dampened the spirits of St. Patrick's Day parade-goers on Saturday, but not the nearly 40 Cub Scouts who flocked to the Portuguese American Citizen's Club for the Pack One's annual Pinewood Derby.

The Scouts put their cars to the test after weeks of designing, shaping, painting and perfecting them.

Most of the Scouts got started on their cars at one of two workshops offered by Jim Archibald, manager of the Jamestown Boat Yard.

"We have done this for seven years and it is a great way for the kids to get down the basic design of their cars," Archibald said. "We have tools at the boat yard that most people don't have around their house."

The cars are required to be a maximum of 5 ounces, 2.75 inches in width, 7 inches in length and 3.5 inches in height, so shaping them with common house tools can be a challenge.

"The kids come to the workshop and draw a sketch of how they want the cars to look and then we cut them on the band saw. It is a lot easier to get the right shape with band saw over a hand saw," Archibald said.

"It is easy for people to get over-

whelmed when they think about building these cars from a block of wood," Cubmaster Bill Pratt said. "The workshop brings the project down to a workable level."

Assistant Cubmaster Greg DiGasper added, "It gives the kids such a sense of accomplishment for a son and mother or father to work together, start with a block of wood and make it into a racing machine."

For the Christie family, working on the car every year provides not only father-son time, but some real life lessons as well.

"Truman has liked Volkswagen buses for years and it was something he really wanted to build this year. He had a model of one he wanted to copy, but it was smaller than what he needed for the competition, so he had to scale it up by 1.34," father Jack Christie said.

"It taught me how to measure to make something a certain size," Truman Christie said.

Each year since their first competition five years ago, Jack has handed more of the responsibility of the car building over to Truman. "This year he did a lot of the work himself with me as a guide teaching him about how to scale the car," Jack said.

DiGasper said the racetrack used



The winners from the Jamestown Pack One Cub Scout Pinewood Derby are, rear from left, Truman Christie, Jacob Maguire, Jackson Hawkins, Finn Dwyer and Milo DiGasper. Seated are, Ben Sabourin, Ryan Downing and Ian Archibald.

Photo by Adrienne Downing

for the derby was purchased by the pack three years ago and explained that it is not just a matter of having it put together and ready to run.

"We had a few problems with the timing, but we had some excellent volunteers who stood up to the task and did a great job," he said.

"The best thing was that we had some patrons of the PAC Club come through as we were setting up the track on Friday night and share their stories about derbies they did as a kid or with their kids," DiGasper added. "The derby is really ageless, and it was nice to hear those stories to remind us of that."

The race was divided into three divisions: Wolf, second grade, Bear, third grade, and Webelos II, fifth grade. There were enough heats in each division to allow each car one run on every lane of the four-lane track.

After the division races, there was a semi-finals race with the top cars in each division and the first and second place finishers moving on to the finals.

Awards were given for the top six finishers in each division, the top six overall racers, best in show, sportsmanship and several other design categories.

All the times were close, at just over three seconds. In the finals, Finn Dwyer finished in first place overall with an average time of :03.053. Ian Archibald, with an average time of :03.086, finished in second place and Jacob Maguire finished third with a time of :03.101. Ben Sabourin finished fourth. Jackson Hawkins came in fifth place and Ryan Downing finished in sixth place overall.

Milo DiGasper took home the Best in Show award for his car "Milo's Mouth" and Christie was the runner up with his Volkswagen bus.

Pratt commended all of the scouts for their hard work and sportsmanship.

"All of the kids had a really good time," he explained. "I am proud of all the boys. We had a couple of really close races, down to one ten-thousandth of a second in one, but they all showed excellent sportsmanship."

This is the time of year to join the Cub Scouts, because the registration year runs from April 1 to March 31, however, the Jamestown Cub Scouts have a rolling enrollment, so anyone interested may join at anytime.

"We do a lot of fun activities. We march in the Memorial Day parade and do campouts in May and October. The scouts are a service based organization and what we really do is help other people," Pratt concluded.

For more information on the Jamestown Pack, call Bill Pratt at 423-1698 or Greg DiGasper at 423-2468.

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