

What is a Pinewood Derby Garage?

Cub Scout Pack 3104 in Hudson prepares for the big race...

For the majority of Cub Scouts, two words bring visions of pole positions, paint jobs, and – principally – victory.

“Pinewood Derby.”

Unfortunately, for many Cub Scout parents, those words (needlessly) bring sheer terror.

Not because the day is a bore. No, there’s plenty of fun to be had from top to bottom of the track. However, for many modern families, the sound of a bandsaw is just as rare as the dings, dongs, and pings of dial-up internet.

Yes, coupled with the ever-churning imagination of a child, the thought of bringing a muscle car out of a block of pine can make even the most talented lawyer, teacher, chef, or – ahem – writer downright apoplectic.

Thankfully for Cub Scouts in Hudson, Massachusetts, this year a pair of brothers came to the rescue, wearing dark blue Pack 3104 sweatshirts and sawdust speckled beards. Taking the Boy Scout motto to heart, they remain *prepared* to take on the toughest of paper napkin-drawn designs and guide enthusiastic or frustrated Cubs, moms, dads, and mentors through the process.

And they succeeded.

From the wood to the winner, there is an unstated method that is better taught in a garage than a classroom, better shown than told. And, like so many Cubmasters and grandfathers and den leaders (and, yes, professional carpenters) throughout the

United States and the Scouting world, they also center their work in the Cub Scout motto: “Do your best...”

You see, Andrew Hermann, Cubmaster, and his brother Jeremy, the father of a new Lions scout, both know their way around a workbench. And, when there’s a Pinewood Derby car to cut, both Scouters offer up one of their well-stocked garages for everything from a tutorial to a tune-up.

There, wielding the well-used equipment (passed down through several generations of scouts) and oft-proven techniques (passed down through years and years of races – and on YouTube) a bit of magic happens.

Out of the shavings and the sweat comes a car. And it’s not any old car. It’s a Pinewood Derby racer, more precious to the Cub Scout that designed it (or painted it, or decorated it) than any video game avatar or smartphone.

So, how does a good Cub Scout Pinewood Derby garage get run?

Any old way that gets the job done!

A smile helps, too. After all, a Scout is cheerful, no? Interested in running a Pinewood Derby garage? Write to Pack 3104 for some tips and tricks.