

The 2nd annual Gualala Arts “Winternationals” Pinewood Derby races drew an enthusiastic and noisy crowd that cheered on the 34 cars entered in six classes, along with the traditional “Grudge Match” race between David “Sus” Susalla and Mike “Bone Daddy” Thomas. A total of 54 races across all categories were used to determine the winners in each class, along with the Best Time Overall winner.

Several of the racers built their cars with the assistance of Thomas and Mark Haveman, owner of the Gualala Joinery, by participating in a Pinewood Derby Car Building class at Action Network. Some of the participants helped test the track and its timing system in the week leading up to the races.

The four lane aluminum track with an electronic timing system that displayed immediate finishing order, race times and scale miles per hour (SMPH) for each race was in use again this year and was surrounded by racers, their families and other race enthusiasts. Donations from Team Susalla, Waterman Racing, Bones Roadhouse, Coasting Home Vacation Rentals, Four-Eyed Frog Books, HogFather’s Smokehouse, Jack’s Gualala Pharmacy, Dave’s Gualala Video, Gualala Supermarket and Brodie Architecture & Design purchased the 1st and 2nd place and Most Artistic trophies for each class, the Best Time Overall trophy, and participation medallions for every racer. Every racer ran a race in each lane of the track, with all racers being able to cheer for their cars for at least four races. An average taken of all four runs was used to determine the top four finalists in each class, and a finals round was run to determine to overall winners.

The 8 & Under class had the most entries with 11 cars, and first time entrant Tali Arvayo won 1st place and returning racer Gavyn Woolsey won 2nd place. Brother and sister team of Brandon and Caitlin Huse moved up from the 8 and Under class to the 9 to 13 class this year and continued their winning ways from last year, with Brandon taking 1st place and Caitlin, last year’s 8 & Under and Best Time Overall winner, taking 2nd place. The most hotly contested races came during the face-off between 13 – 18 class racers Christopher Roddy and Odalys Ramirez, both first time entrants. The audience was treated to virtual ties during the first heat, with only 1/10,000ths of a second separating

the racers after four races. Ramirez took the 1st place trophy by slightly edging Roddy in the final heat, posting an average time of 2.6474 seconds to Roddy's 2.666 seconds. The 18 and Over class was also filled with very close and competitive racing. James Roddy edged out Alan Ricioli for 1st place honors, with first time entrant (and father of 9 -13 winners Brandon and Caitlin) Mel Huse making it into the finals before fading to 4th place. Vintage class was won by Harrison Shaw, and Brandon Huse used his car from the "Summernationals" to take 2nd place. The new Unlimited class only drew two entries, and in keeping with the intention of this new class they were fascinatingly different approaches to race cars. Alan Ricioli's beautifully crafted all aluminum wedge shaped racer flew down the track at 195.6 SMPH, easily taking 1st place over Mark Hancock's wild "Pencil Car" which was crafted to resemble a four wheeled Dixon Ticonderoga pencil. Best Time Overall (Vintage and Unlimited not eligible) was awarded to James Roddy, with an average time of 2.6121 seconds and speed of 194.5 scale MPH. The Grudge Match was won by Thomas for the second straight year, but Susalla and Thomas agreed to build all new cars for their next Grudge Match at the "Summernationals" Pinewood Derby that will be held in conjunction with the 6th Annual Gualala Arts Auto Show on Saturday, July 19.

Most Artistic awards were judged by Jim Grenwelge and Meghan Diggins, and they commented on how difficult it was to choose the winners in each class from the amazing array of cars entered. They ultimately gave the awards to Talan Kreck in 8 & Under, Harrison Shaw in both 9 – 13 and Vintage classes, Christopher Roddy in 13 -18, and Alan Ricioli taking 18 and Over with his red and blue arrow shaped car and Best in Show for his aluminum Unlimited racer.

The cars were beautifully and creatively made, the racing was close and exciting, the crowd noisy and enthusiastic and the turnout a great combination of new and returning racers. Thomas and Haveman manned the "Pits" before the race, helping racers tune their cars before inspection. Dave Bradbrook and Laverne Hancock returned as race starter and timer respectively, Jake Maxwell stepped up to be race stager, and Paul

“P.D.” Serratori was car transporter. Tanya Radtkey of Black Oak Catering manned the kitchen throughout the races, serving up hot dogs, chili, chips and desserts.

Gualala Arts plans to hold the 3rd Annual “Winternationals” Pinewood Derby Races Saturday, Jan.19, 2015.

Top 3 results for each racing category are shown below.

8 and Under

Place	Racer	Average Time	Average Scale MPH
1	Tali Arvayo	2.6672	190.4
2	Gavyn Woolsey	2.6784	189.7
3	Kyle Coughey	2.6991	188.2

9 – 13 Years

Place	Racer	Average Time	Average Scale MPH
1	Brandon Huse	2.6247	193.5
2	Caitlin Huse	2.6489	191.8
3	Hailey Caughey	2.6789	189.6

13 – 18 Years

Place	Racer	Average Time	Average Scale MPH
1	Odalys Ramirez	2.6474	191.9
2	Christopher Roddy	2.6666	190.5

18 Years and Older

Place	Racer	Average Time	Average Scale MPH
1	James Roddy	2.6121	194.5
2	Alan Ricioli	2.6409	192.3
3	Jr. Roddy	2.6433	192.2

Vintage

Place	Racer	Average Time	Average Scale MPH
1	Harrison Shaw	2.6680	190.4
2	Brandon Huse	2.7184	186.9
3	Caitlin Huse	2.7620	183.9

Unlimited

Place	Racer	Average Time	Average Scale MPH
1	Alan Ricioli	2.5968	195.6
2	Mark Hancock	2.6833	189.3

Best Time Overall (Vintage and Unlimited not eligible)

Place	Racer	Average Time	Average Scale MPH
1	James Roddy	2.6121	194.5
2	Brandon Huse	2.6247	193.5
3	Alan Ricioli	2.6409	192.3

“Grudge Match”

Place	Racer	Average Time	Average Scale MPH
1	Bone Daddy	2.6795	189.6
2	Sus Susalla	2.7185	186.9