



Window on Swanson

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Swanson at the Soapbox Derby



continued on page 2

Subscribe!
See page 2

Unitary Plan
Pages 4-5

Gardening
Page 8

125th Anniversary
Page 12

New Swanson Team Leader Roy Waite helped make sure Swanson School was well represented at the 10th Annual Soapbox Derby, with new and additional sponsors and enough enthusiastic pupils for two teams and two cars – the first time Swanson has been able to field two.

Although the Waitakere Race Day was rained off, the following weekend Northcote and Waitakere Rotaries combined to hold a joint meeting at Glenfield. With just 2.146 seconds separating the first and last Western cars (and there were 50 of them) it was a hard-fought race.

Luke Metcalfe was the first Swanson pupil home with Tegan Kettlewell and Storm Murphy close behind, all in the white car. The black car saw Jamison Tuigamala-Tutini, Alex Watson, Dylan Waite and Faith Murphy a fraction behind them. Special mention to Curtis Waite in the white car for stepping in at the last minute!

The drivers were ably assisted by pit crew Curtis Waite, Zachery Shannon and Nishan Shrestha.

Congratulations to all – a very good performance and you did the school proud!



The American Soap Box Derby in New Zealand

by Heather Pattison

In 1934 a newspaperman in Akron, Ohio challenged local children to build gravity carts and race them down a hill. This evolved into an annual event using kitset cars on a purpose built track.

In 2000 a North Shore City Councillor came across the Soapbox Derby and approached Glenfield Rotary with the idea of racing in New Zealand. Kitset cars were imported and in 2002 the first race was held in Glenfield, with other Clubs joining in the following years.

Five Rotary Clubs including Waitakere Rotary now hold annual races and the New Zealand Finals are held in March/April, with the national champion heading to Akron in July to compete in both the All American Soap Box Derby Finals and the International races.

2012 saw our 10th Annual Finals and the 75th World Finals in Akron, with children competing from all over America and the world. Gemma McDougall, a ten year old from St Ignatius School in St Heliers, brought home the International Trophy that year.

Each Rotary Club owns its own kitset cars imported from America, which means all cars are exactly the same. Every year they are lent to local schools who find a team of eight children – four drivers and four

support crew. Rotary charge the schools an entry fee to race, and sponsors are found to cover this.



Above: Waitakere Rotarians L.N. Dominic Wood, Roger Fries, Jim Anison and David Fuller waiting to serve drinks on the rained-off Waitakere Soapbox day.



Left: Super Kid car driven by Whenuapai Scout Fairlan Watch with a special needs passenger. These cars were a real hit at this year's derby