

GET BEHIND THE WHEEL OF A SOAPBOX RACER

Attend or participate in the Soap Box Derby race in Superior, Arizona, Jan. 16 - 17. This two-day event will include races in three divisions, with one single and one double elimination race each day. Cars are available for public use. Visit azsoapboxderby.com, or contact Race Director Carl Osborne at (480) 639-3310 to register. Further information can be found at the All-American Soap Box Derby Homepage, at aasbd.com/SBD_page_1.htm.

The Osborne Family



GO Speed Racers!

Gilbert family races to the finish line as soapbox racers

WRITTEN BY EMILY SEPULVEDA

Carl Osborne grew up wanting to participate in the soapbox races that were so popular in his native Midwest, but never got the chance to steer one of the aerodynamic little cars himself. Years later, however, he's been able to watch his twin daughters, Karla and Krista, zoom down hills and across finish lines throughout the United States, as they've competed in soapbox events alongside competitors from around the world.

Soapbox racing has been an American tradition since 1934. The races are youth


events, and competitors are behind the wheel of vehicles that are completely unpowered, and strictly reliant on gravity to move forward. The cars start each race at the top of a wooden ramp up to 12-feet high, and then zip down a designated course (often a closed off roadway) to the finish line. Drivers are responsible for steering and braking.

The Osbornes participated in their first race in September of 2003, inspired by the Soap Box Derby-themed Disney film *Miracle in Lane 2*. Krista climbed into the

driver's seat of a borrowed soapbox car for a competition in Tucson and, despite some initial trepidation, was instantly hooked. "At first I thought it was really scary, to be up on the ramps," she says, "but it was really fun once I got going." Krista placed fourth in her first event, and Karla decided she wasn't going to sit on the sidelines. "I saw it was really cool," she remembers, "and I got excited for it."

The family sent off for a car kit, and made building the vehicle into a family project. "That's one of the reasons I liked them involved in Soap Box Derby," Carl explains. "I wanted them to have an understanding of tools, and of how to put things together."

The soapbox racing quickly became a large part of the Osborne's life, as they spent weekends traveling to races in California, New Mexico, Las Vegas, Illinois, and elsewhere, many years ending the season at the Soap Box Derby World Championships in Akron, Ohio. Along the way, Krista and Karla viewed their competitors as friends, not rivals. "The best part of soapbox is meeting people," Krista says, explaining that they've made friends with individuals from places as far away as Japan, New Zealand, Germany, and Guam at the races they've attended. Karla agrees that the social aspect of soapbox racing is one of the most valuable parts of the sport, along with what it's taught the girls about sportsmanship. "It teaches you about friendly competition," she says. "And how to lose with a good attitude."

While the girls have a healthy outlook on losing, they still have a drive to win. Krista competed in the Ultimate Speed Championship in Akron in July 2008, and was named World Champion. She won the race in her bubblegum pink car. "Everyone made fun of it," she laughs. "Until I won." Karla plans of competing this coming July, and hopes to repeat her sister's win. Meanwhile, Carl is still heavily involved in the sport, as the VP of the local Soapbox Derby chapter, and race director of the annual Superior Soapbox Derby. And he's enjoyed every minute of his girls' racing career. "It was something I always wanted to do," he says. "It's been fun to watch them." 



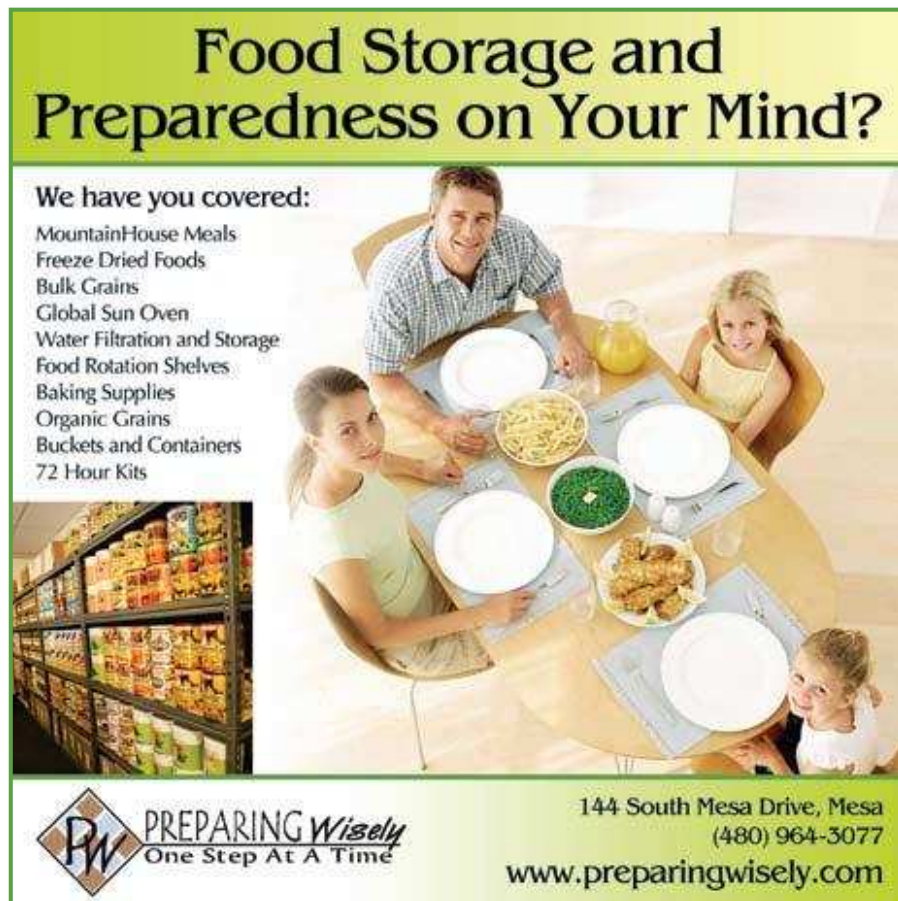
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