

Heading East...

CARS AGM UPDATE

Day 1

My first trip to Ontario came about none other than to attend the 2004 CARS AGM being held at the Delta Airport Hotel in Mississauga. I left Vancouver on Jan 13 at 09:00 and arrived at the Toronto Airport at 16:30 local in time to catch a shuttle to the hotel and meet with Ken, Dennis, Bill and Paul who had caught an earlier flight. First order of business was of course to visit the lounge for a welcome cocktail and I found the group already there (not a surprise) with drinks in hand.

The second order of business was substance, so I tagged along as the Canadian National Rally Committee (CNRC) headed across the street for a bite to eat and a catch up. For those not familiar with the CNRC, they report to the CARS Board and are comprised of organizers from the Canadian National Championship. Their mandate is to manage the CNC that takes place in 6 cities across the country. One person I had the honour of meeting that needs to be mentioned is Monsieur Jean Chevarier who is the Rallymaster for the 2005 Pierce Neige Rally and has announced his retirement this year. One of the amazing things I learned about Jean is he has been Rallymaster for this event for the past 28 years! Should you ever have the honour of crossing paths with Jean, he will have a few stories for you!

After dinner with good company, it was back to the hotel to attend my first CNRC meeting. The group meets several times throughout the weekend, with their first meeting on the Friday. Due to the distance separating the organizers, face to face meetings are infrequent, therefore any available time together is fully utilized. It was interesting to listen and participate regarding the CNC and how other organizations face the same challenges we do in running a national event. I was impressed with how information is exchanged between the organizers to ensure all events are successful. As with the rest of us involved in the sport, we share the same goal of growing rallying in Canada. I finally tucked myself into bed at 02:00.

Day 2

I woke at 06:30 to the standard annoying hotel alarm thinking the AGM is just like any other rally event with it's long nights and

early mornings. Given the recent news surrounding the national sponsor, it was expected there would be a good turnout! At a quick count, there were 80+ guests from the CARS Board, competitors and organizers in a room that had a comfortable capacity of 60. The meeting started with a count of clubs in attendance which was a strong 21/26 including proxies. Going to the AGM gave me an understanding of how large our organization across Canada truly is!

The Agenda chaired by the CARS President Mr. Terry Epp proceeded swiftly as the AGM was expected to be the brisk meeting with the EGM (Extra Ordinary Meeting) to follow after lunch taking up the majority of the day.

Mr. Epp opened the AGM by reading a statement in regards to the termination of RDG's contract, and the subsequent withdrawal of Subaru Canada as sponsor for the CRC. After Mr. Epp completed the statement he informed the quorum that Subaru and RDG were gone with no chance for reconciliation. A discussion relating to the events took place with the end result being that what was done is done, and that we need to move forward.

A change in the agenda was then requested and they proceeded to review the financials that were prepared by Mr. Eric Curtis. There were questions regarding some items that were answered satisfactorily and the meeting moved forward. Other than housekeeping items, the only significant announcement was that there is going to be an increase in performance license rates for 2005 in order to assist making up a shortfall in the budget due to the lack of sponsor. For 2005, increases are as follows:

Single license from \$80 to \$95
Regional license from \$115 to \$130
National license from \$140 to \$170

The AGM was completed and we proceeded to the dining area for the lunch and awards ceremony.

A short reception was followed by a three-course meal that was enjoyed by all with our very own WCRA member and CARS representative Mr. Paul Westwick as the MC. Many awards were given out with the highlight being WCRA's Pat Richard and his co-driver Natalie Richard receiving the honours for winning three

championships including the North American title which has never been won by a Canadian. WCRA's own Norm Leblanc and Paul DeLeeuw were honoured with 2nd place for P4, in addition to Norm Leblanc receiving 1st place for novice driver. As with all ceremonies, speeches were made and thanks given. One such touching memory came from Ms. Trish McGeer as she took the podium to thank Team Subaru Canada for a memorable year, as well as put closure on the team's exit from the CNC. It had been a wonderful four years since the team had come together and it was sad to see it end. The sport is thankful for everything Subaru and the team have done for rallying in Canada. I myself experienced the team's generosity first hand during the Pacific Forest Rally in 2004 and for this, I will never forget them.

Another announcement from the CARS Board was that our beautiful city of Vancouver has been named the location for the 2005 AGM in January 2006! This is the first time in CARS history the AGM will be held in BC and will be our chance to shine and show our West Coast hospitality as we host our rally brothers and sisters from across Canada.

Lunch was followed by the EGM which brought forward accusations as to why the termination of the RDG agreement took place at the 11th hour, and why the agreement could not be salvaged. Part of what came out of the exit of RDG and Subaru was a desire for the members to have more control over the board's decisions and actions which is what sparked the EGM, and several motions to amend the CARS bylaws. In the end, of the 19 motions put forward to be voted on, 6 were defeated, 6 were withdrawn, 4 passed, and 3 were sent to a special committee which once established will comprise of 5 members (one from each region) across Canada that will review bylaw changes prior to vote at future AGMs. My feeling at the end of the EGM was that although not all parties accomplished their tasks set forth, all had an understanding and respect of what needed to be done. I also felt a sense of urgency that 2005 will be a building year with the goal of being in great shape for 2006. Sometimes you need to take a step backward before you can take two ahead.

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