

Airtime

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RALLY UPDATE



Kris & Jaclyn Schofield sacrificed a podium finish to help a stranded competitor at Mountain Trials

SUMMER'06
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Pace Notes



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Just like a hairpin left at the end of a long easy straight, mid-year has come upon us faster than expected and this issue has taken an untidy line to get here. Somewhat dis-settled, and with slight off-course scars, I must now accept the consequences of being max-late.

At first glance at the WCRA calendar, it might seem that we've had a quiet or "slow" start to the '06 rally year. Some faces have been absent from meetings and I've heard "what's new?" a couple of times. Perhaps I can shed a little light from my viewpoint.

The popular Barnes Lake rally-cross on ice succumbed to scheduling clashes when weather forced the host ice racing series to utilize their reserve dates. We have learned in the past that it is unwise to attempt a race if there is melting water under the competitor's cars and reluctantly scratched the event for this year. The Novice TSD workshops have also taken a hiatus. For no simpler reason than a shortage of organizers we will miss the opportunity to initiate new enthusiasts into the wonderful world of motion sickness, basic maths, and tulip drawings. The club will provide detailed introductory briefings to any that choose to contest regional TSDs, but many first timers are put off by the idea of learning the ropes in total darkness or miles from home. Hopefully we can see a return to the fun and friendly format of the workshops before too long.

What we have been doing is hosting two TSD rallies and one performance event as well as lots of stuff behind the scenes. The WCRA filled their usual role as route marshals during the annual running of the Vancouver First-half Half Marathon this past February. The weather was beautiful if brisk as we cheered the participants to new heights of physical encouragement. At least that's what we claim the jumping up and down and wind-milling arms were all about.

Some of our members have been helping a new rally club get started in Prince George. They've been assisting with event organization guidelines and supervision and the result was a passing grade for it's first fully sanctioned TSD. I think this is very exciting not only for rallying to reach out to a new sector of the province and likely attract at least a couple of new teams, but it is also useful when approaching event sponsors to be able to show that there is spreading interest in this sport. Secretly too, I have my eye on the expanding network of TSD stages in BC with a thought to a Super-Rally that might rival the Alcan for challenge and variety in the years to come.

June was especially busy this year. WCRA became involved with MCL Motors and BC Special Olympics at the first "Rally For Champions". A charity event with a \$5000 entry fee, it raised over \$40 000 for an exceptional cause. We have been asked to do it again next year and we will jump with both feet as it has opened the door to new businesses and owners. Jamming as many company CEOs and corporate owners as possible into an exotic grade TSD car can only help our cause. That was the week before MT rally and the week after we were on hand at the Kits Soapbox derby for the sixth time to handle timing and scoring. This was huge fun and it is easy to see why it has been so successful for 16 years.

As I write this the sun is shining and it is easy to get distracted, the garage sure is hot and that mud on the rallycar could stay a little longer. Golddigger is coming up and the other clubs have events to look at also....

See you on the stages,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John McLaren'.

Thunderbird Rally '06

by Ron Sorem

February 18 & 19, 2006.

Merritt-Vernon-Merritt, BC.

Rally Master Paul Westwick, and the West Coast Rally Association, presented the 35th running of the Thunderbird Rally, first presented in 1957.

Thunderbird covered a varied route with dusty gravel and white bank-to-bank polished snow and ice - mostly plowed aside, and for 2006, the catch phrase might be "Summer Roads - Winter Ditches" describing brisk speeds on bare gravel, between 2- to 5-foot walls of white.

Forty-nine teams gathered in sub-freezing temperatures at the Start. Day One began with the Odometer Check, to Kentucky-Alleyne Regularity. 60km/h on well-traveled unbroken white, with a few twists before narrowing into deep snow. Slowing to 18km/h through a campground, then 6km of twists and turns at 50 and 68. The regularity was uneventful for most, however, Car 14 found a snow bank at 7.70km. Other natural features on the first regularity surprised Car 25 -- while approaching a checkpoint at 68km/h, they met a moose! They were still a bit uncertain, and 7-late when they passed the

checkpoint.

A very short transit brought the rally to the 70km Otter Valley Regularity, second longest of the weekend. Beginning on snow-covered forest roads at 72km/h the route was smooth and wide. At 16.31km the speed dropped to 50km/h, a clue as to what's ahead, where the road narrowed, and dropped left into the canyon for Otter Creek. When Rally Master Paul Westwick was asked if this corner was as icy as past years - his reply: "H*** yes!" Snowy roads continued into Tulameen, then snaked along the cliffs on dry pavement, to the end of section.

A brief break in Princeton for gas and snacks, then Osprey Lake Regularity parallels and criss-crosses the abandoned Kettle Valley Railway (KVR) whose roadbed now carries the Trans Canada Trail. Teams were presented with an easy rolling path at 60 and 65km/h, then 50 for a bridge, checkpoint, and hairpin hillclimb, and 68 to the end of section.

The transit passed through Summerland, Penticton, and Okanagan Falls before climbing into the hills again. OK Falls Regularity at 73km was the longest of the event. Beginning at 72km/h, speeds dropped to 55 for the first hairpins on dry



gravel. Climbing through more hairpins and increased speeds, the rally entered the snow-zone, becoming all white with "nice big snow banks". Speeds on top of the plateau ranged from 60 to 72.

A short transit led to McCulloch Regularity, which began wide and smooth at 60km/h. At 14km the road narrowed a bit through easy curves, passed a huge snowmobile campfire -- our "spectator area" for Thunderbird. At 17km the road became seriously narrow and twisted. At 22km the hairpins dropped into the valley.

Kelowna Transit led to 49km Beaver Lake Regularity, which climbed quickly on dry roads becoming snowy twists skirting the Provincial Park. On the snowy forest roads, about half the field passed with flying colors, the remainder found Beaver Lake "challenging", including the hairpins descending to Vernon, as the snow gave way to dry roads again.

Accommodations, dining, and camaraderie, at Vernon's Prestige Inn allowed the rally to relax and await scoring, after 479.55km (297.98mi).





Day Two began with a transit through Lumby to Trinity Valley Regularity. The route was 36km, with a slight rise early, then gradual fall along Trinity Creek. Speeds were 72km/h over the mostly bare gravel, slowing to 65 for well-sanded snowy sections before pavement.

Salmon Arm transit took teams 52km north, to Skimiken Lake Road for the Turtle Valley Regularity. The section has been deep powder for past events; bare this year with only occasional sanded snow areas.

Chase provided a break for fuel and food, before the 36km Loakin Bear Regularity. A recurring theme for the forestry sections, Loakin Bear Creek Road began with bare gravel, climbing rapidly at 58km/h into the snow. Speeds ranged from 60 through 72 on the gentle route skirting the Provincial Park. Several km later the snow diminished as the route dropped at 36km/h through hairpins to the

ledge above the Thompson River.

Crossing the Thompson at Pritchard, Duck Range Regularity ran through Martin Prairie and Duck Range cattle country on dry roads.

Reaching Hwy 97 again, the rally turned south to Twig Creek Regularity. A few km into the section the rally would have to share the road with firewood cutters, before continuing at 65 and 72km/h. Road conditions gradually became all snow, no sand, with taller walls of white to buffer one's indiscretions. At 25.4km, the CP and photos would be busy. Downhill, off camber, in the sun - melting and refreezing - nearly a "square right" with exposure and trees on the outside edge. Car 4 pushed wide on exit, high-centered on ice and rock. They would wait for Sweep; and their triangle would warn others of the same fate. As the road opened up to 72km/h, cattle guards provided numerous hard-points for

calculations and tweaking the computers, over the 30km to end of section.

The transit to the Village of Douglas Lake turned south for Minnie Lakes 10km to Nicola Lake, Highway 5, and the 23km transit into Merritt.

Day two covered 370.52km (230.23mi) in 7 hours. The weekend total read 751 (528) in just over 16 hours.

Congratulations to 1st Overall / Unlimited, Peter Hill and Geoff Hill with only 12 points. Peter becomes the "winningest" Thunderbird driver with this, his fourth win. First Historic Equipped / Second Overall, to Satch Carlson and Russ Kraushaar with 17. First Calculator / Fifth Overall, to Steve Richards and Gary Reid. First Historic / Ninth Overall, to Richard Childs and Helen Welter. First Novice to Luc Girouard and Bernd Schmitzer. First in Paper to Steve Perret and Kathryn Hansen.

Full results at www.rallybc.com

More rally stories at www.tsdrodrally.com



Error and Apology

In the last issue of *Airtime*, it was announced that Ren and RJ Carroll had clinched the WCRA TSD Championship at Totem Rally. It is in fact, the British Columbia Regional TSD Championship, to which the WCRA and the IRC both contribute rounds to the series. This mistake was typographical, and no attempt at proprietorship was intended. The staff at *Airtime* apologize to the members of the IRC.

South of the Border

By Ron Sorem

Wenatchee, WA. June 3 & 4, 2006. Rainier Auto Sports Club presented their premier gravel tour rally, No Alibi. Twenty-three cars started under high broken clouds with brilliant bouts of blue sky and bright sun.

No Alibi Rallymaster Eric Horst and the RASC crew built a two-day course covering 530 miles, with past routes revisited and plenty of new rally roads. Quoting the Rallymaster's introduction in the route book: "As usual you'll see some of the best least-traveled roads in the state and hopefully take home some good pictures and great memories".

The Odo Check opened with this tidbit: "...this park is at almost the exact geographic center of Washington State. The Rock Island Dam drowned the rapids that gave the Wenatchee (WINATSHI) river its name". Nearly every section would provide a bit of history of the territory over which the rally would travel. North from Confluence Park, east over the Columbia, and south a bit before starting the 8-mile climb up Badger Mountain with excellent views.

"Badger Mountain" TSD began at 35-mph and quickly increased to 43 and 47 for a driver's warm-up on gravel, dropped into Beaver Creek Canyon, regained a short section of pavement at CAST 48,

then gravel at the highest elevation of the section, some 3500 feet above Confluence Park, before dropping quickly to historic Waterville.

Just north of Waterville, "Browns Canyon" TSD revisited past No Alibi adventures. CAST 38, then a very brief stint at 25 for a particularly loose corner, and back to 38 for the rest of the descent through sweeping gravel turns, to just above the Columbia again, for a transit through orchard land along the river to Beebe Bridge site (1919) and the rally's next climb to the plateau.

"McNeil Canyon" TSD, began with 6 miles of 12% grade, then left the pavement for the rolling hills and dips through wheat land interrupted by monumental lava rocks. The new growth wheat was also interrupted by fresh, day-old puddles from recent rainstorms, good for BIG splashes and a photographer. "Mock" scores were voted upon by the entire field during dinner - based on the height of the mud spray, from the day's photos. A bit further along, the rally jogged right then left and began a gradual 2-mile downhill, before a "falling" descent of Bridgeport Hill Road, with its hairpins and vistas overlooking Chief Joseph Dam.

The typical No Alibi picnic lunch featured a broad choice of sandwiches,

chips, cookies, candy, sodas and water at Bridgeport State Park, overlooking Rufus Woods Lake behind Chief Joseph. Bright sun, blue skies, shade if desired, and LOTS of stories about the mud-splash.

No time for a nap after lunch. "Coleman Hill" TSD climbed some 1300 feet over a twisting course above the river. CAST 44 over blind crest, and yes, the road did go straight. Whew! Continuing along a rolling gravel path through sagebrush and lava rock, speeds varied from 32 to 38 to 45.

A short Transit and the rally turned north for "Strahl Canyon" TSD and REX roads -- "REX" was not explained, however the section was more "Animal Farm" than "Jurassic Park". Oddly, many fence posts and gate poles were adorned with stuffed animals, an occasional helmet, and a 6-foot blue alien, as the teams twisted through an undulating path with "BR OVER CREST", and "R AT CREST" as the animal ornaments disappeared, followed by sweeping lefts and hairpin rights, and nice views overlooking the Columbia, ending with a viewpoint for Grand Coulee Dam.

A Transit southeast into Lincoln County and the rally briefly left the views of the Columbia. "Sage Hen Draw" TSD played in the section-line roads. A mile straight, drop into a creek bed, twist back up the other side; 2-mile straight to right over blind crest into dip; more up and down; an acute right on gravel at 38, climb at 44; drop again, to Highway 2 and a brief transit east for a welcomed rest break.

"Miles Creston" TSD revisited former No Alibi roads featuring a 4-mile dirt track twisting through pine trees, then a 7-mile stretch of twisting pavement dropping to the Columbia.

"Lake Roosevelt" Transit passed historic Fort Spokane (1880). North along the river bluff the route traversed Enterprise Valley, Fruitland Valley, Hunters Valley and Cedonia -- between Hunter and Cedonia there was a black bear sighting -- then a picturesque drive through old dairy and cattle farms.

"Old CC" TSD was the last timed section of the day. Climbing to 2900 feet, dropping briefly, then climbing again to a checkpoint at nearly 3700 feet only to drop 1500 feet in the last six miles.

A brief Transit took the rally into Colville for the traditional Saturday Night



Banquet and something new to replace the guest speaker: A DVD, featuring the 1965 Ponderosa Sweepstakes Rally, with soundtrack by the RASC staff. The recollections of twelve-or-so past Ponderosa competitors enlightened the "youngsters" in the room, by identifying vintage rally cars. Ponderosa often utilized some of the same roads as Saturday's run, led by Satch Carlson and Russ Kraushaar (both Portland OR area) with 11, followed by Gary Webb (Mohave Valley AZ) and R. Dale Kraushaar (Fountain Hills AZ) with only 13.

Day Two began with rain. Northwest of Colville, "Mingo Mountain" TSD began twisting through the trees. The route quickly climbed, then dropped into a hairpin with photographer. For a wake-up, or warm-up, Mingo posted three checkpoints in 4.72 miles.

The Transit skirted Kettle Falls, joined Highway 20, and ran west into the mountains to "Sherman Creek" TSD (elev 2536), a wide Forest Service road with a gentle rise for 8-plus miles, then a sharp right uphill (elev 4430). The road narrowed, getting very tight in spots, through blown down trees. Over a crest there was snow in the shade of a cliff, followed by a gradual descent twisting through more trees and branches to a hairpin ending at the highway (elev 4356), where we began the climb over 5575-foot Sherman Pass.

While we were doing our best Petter Solberg imitation through the woods, checkpoint crews from the previous TSD were leap-frogging the course, on-highway -- and narrowly avoiding a close encounter of the MOOSE kind. Rainier Wildlife Wranglers always come up with something!

West of Republic the Transit swept down to "Cape Labelle" TSD. The road rises and falls and twists for 6-plus narrow miles, then opens up through the valley, slows briefly for a resort area then pulls through a series of uphill switchbacks before dropping to the valley.

"Aeneas Valley" Transit led to "Talkire Lake" TSD. The recent rains had taken their toll on some of the roads. The note, "a little bumpy", needed a couple of exclamation points added by the time the rally came through the first acute hairpin uphill. Climbing, ruts, through a long hairpin left into a long hairpin right then



leveling for 4- to 5-miles before a gradual descent to pavement. As the rally traveled due west, a checkpoint crew could be seen quite some distance away, across a canyon. The route dropped into the canyon, sharp left following the rock wall, then a long hairpin right, climbing to the crew's cars and no interest in our passage - we'd been timed across the canyon as we came into view!

The towns of Riverside, Omak, Okanogan, and Brewster were the high points of the 43-mile Transit leading to "Central Ferry Canyon" TSD. This section climbed rapidly, topping out in the wheat fields from Day One, with the lava monuments. The overnight rainstorms caused areas of "May be slippery". Sections of smooth clay now had a layer of water, including a VERY "slippy" downhill right.

A Transit passed tiny Withrow led to the final TSD. "Rock Island" has been a staple for No Alibi and "climbing The Rock" is a rush. This year would be different -- downhill. The section began on saturated gravel. The first 90-right had a different "line" for each car. The next sweeping muddy downhill left had maybe two lines for each car, front and back. Teams were sliding quietly through the homestead site of Alstown; then trying to gain speed in the slick roadbed. An acute left, more mud, hard to stay on the crown of the road with on-coming traffic - on a level section, two lanes wide! Then up Titchenal Canyon, 2-inch deep mud ditch-

to-ditch. "May be some wheelspin". Sideways at best, for two miles, clearing the hairpin at the top to find the RASC photographer with an ear-to-ear grin. Downhill briefly, then fairly good running on gravel passed a checkpoint. The rally saw a brief glimpse of the mountains west of the river below, but ground fog erupted with the bright sun finding breaks in the clouds and warming the wet fields. Thick white clouds were flowing upward out of the river canyon obscuring the roadway, the sign references, and the checkpoints. Now, a chance to adjust the odo, then only a few yards later another stretch of mud, 6-inches deep, downhill, braking, cars sideways again... Checkpoint! The clouds parted to reveal a breathtaking view off each of the hairpins of Rock Island Grade, dropping 1500 feet to the Columbia.

A short Transit, "The End", took crews to pizza, stories, and awards in East Wenatchee, after a two-day total of 533 miles in 12-and-a-half hours.

Congratulations to Day Two winners, tied with only 7 seconds penalty, resulting in a total of 18 for Satch Carlson and Russ Kraushaar taking 1st Overall; and Gary Webb and R. Dale Kraushaar with 20, for 2nd Overall. First Equipped to Steve Richards and Gary Reid. First SOP to Steve Perret and Kathryn Hansen. And, First Novice to Derek Mitchell and Mathew Brucker.

Rally for Champions a great hit

Special Olympians the winners in inaugural event

The following appeared in The Province newspaper Wednesday, June 14 2006 and is reproduced here in its original form.

By Nigel Matthews

The MCL Motor Cars' first Rally for Champions made a champion out of everyone that took part last weekend. Race Day was Saturday, but the starter's gun really sounded at a Thursday evening briefing from West Coast Rally Association representatives, who quickly disabused us of any notion that the first past the post wins.

Winning actually boils down to a series of mathematical calculations, communication with your navigator, map-reading skills and, above all, patience and adhering to the posted speeds. Within an hour, most of us were very confused, trying to calculate to the second where we should be at any given time.

Too early on Saturday, we dragged ourselves to MCL's Jaguar dealership in the Northshore Auto Mall, where we were awakened by countless volunteers and a very cheerful and enthusiastic team of athletes from the B.C. Special Olympics, beneficiaries of the cash raised by the rally. Although only the event's first year, it brought in \$40,000.

The Province and Driving.ca entered two vehicles. My wife Yoki joined me as

navigator in a magnificent 1969 Morgan Plus 8, generously loaned by avid Morgan collectors Ken and Pat Miles.

The other car, a Ford Mustang, was driven by Les and Rena Hayes, of Victoria, winners of an online Driving.ca contest. Perusing the row of vehicles, I began to feel at a slight disadvantage -- a Maserati, two Mercedes-Benz, one of which was a Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren, three Land/Range Rovers, five Porsches, one of which was a Carrera GT, two Bentleys and one Toyota.

There was also a collector-plated 1952 Cadillac driven by Jason Bosa -- at last, another vehicle with a speedo that read in miles per hour and was probably lacking the all-important trip meter than one can set to zero.

We followed the directions to the first timed section of the day, which was at the east end of the Pitt River Bridge. We thought things were going so well and were having great fun and then it happened -- we were hopelessly lost.

We went around in circles for an hour and experienced the first and only bout of frayed tempers.

To be honest, I said: "Oh to heck with it.

Let's just proceed to Harrison for lunch." She who must be obeyed had a different idea.

Eventually, by backtracking, we were back on course and heading for 256th Street and Dewdney Trunk Road for the next staged event.

Most of us live a hectic life and normally travel from point A to point B, so the opportunity to get off the beaten path and travel these country lanes was a real treat. In the back of my mind, I was wondering how the Carrera GT, Mercedes-Benz SLR and the other cars with GPS navigation and all of the other luxury creature comforts were managing.

I was having a serious workout. The Morgan is fitted with a Moss crash gearbox. This means that you have to double-clutch between every shift and have an arm like Popeye to move the shift lever. The Morgan also lacks power steering as it is fitted with Arm-strong steering -- an old automotive joke.

It also lacks a roof, which made it quite chilly in the tree-shaded avenues. However, neither of us would have wanted to travel in anything different though.

Just seeing the smiles on people's faces when they spotted the Morgan gave me as much joy as seeing the smiles on the faces of the Special Olympians throughout the day.

This is certainly not the first rally in which the Morgan has participated. It has been involved in events in Canada, U.S. and even as far away as New Zealand.

The Miles' next big Morgan trip with one of their cars will take place in 2009, when Morgan celebrates its 100th anniversary in England.



FORMULAPHOTOGRAPHIC

Mercedes McLaren SLR: aka Batmobile

Rally for Champions



Part of the rally took us over the Ruskin Dam, through farming country in the Mission area and, before we knew it, we had arrived in Harrison Hot Springs for a one-hour lunch break and a chance to stretch the legs and rest the rear end.

The Morgan was parked alongside the Porsche Carrera GT and the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren super cars. However, it seemed to get all of the attention from the spectators.

It was soon time to head back to the city.

Two more timed stages took us through the Sumas Mountain area and another through the Mount Lehman farming district.

In the rally, the total distance travelled was 251 kilometres, out of which 80 kms were timed stages. The only vehicle that did not make it home under its own power was the

conjunction with numerous infractions for exceeding the posted 45 km/h had something to do with it.

Trying to convert from m.p.h. to km/h did not help. Well, that is my excuse and I'm sticking to it. I know better than to blame the navigator.

The winner of the rally was a Toyota Yaris driven by Dean Carratt with navigator Chris Donald. The joke at the evening social was that is certainly was the car that got the best gas mileage!

What happened to Driving.ca winners Rena and Les Hayes? Well, they had a great time.

Unfortunately, the navigator, who is constantly looking up and down at a map and reading instructions, can fall victim to motion sickness. Rena was the navigator

and even large quantities of Graval did not do the trick.

All in a good cause, though.

The 3,500 Special Olympic athletes in this province face great challenges on a daily basis. The sports programs and competitions offered by the Special Olympics folks provide them with more than improved health and athletic ability-- they also help them develop social skills and new friendships.

The Rally for Champions can accommodate 40 vehicles, with 18 taking part this year.

I urge you to step up to the plate and start planning for next year's event. With luck and determination, you have time to raise the \$5,000 required to enter the event with your car and have a very rewarding day out.

Nigel Matthews is the appraiser of vintage and collector cars for the Insurance Corp. of B.C.



1952 Cadillac, which retired suffering from mechanical problems.

The event concluded at the Waterfront Hotel in Vancouver, where the organizers had already tabulated the results.

We had finished last, accumulating a grand total of 2,540 penalty points, out of a maximum 3,000. I suspect missing some of the checkpoints on the first stage in



Special Olympics
British Columbia

The 16th annual Kitsilano Soap Box Derby

Sunday June 25th, 2006

7:00am the sun was shining as work crews lined the course with straw bales. For 3 city blocks along West 4th between Burrard and Arbutus, the competitors would "plunge" downhill in vehicles made of wood, plastic, aluminum or fibreglass, and even one constructed of bagels! This was not a random gathering of cobbled together go-karts, but rather a high profile stop on the soap box racing tour. Some of



Father and Son, Bill and Liam Westhead

the racecars showed hundreds of hours of work spent building and finishing to a standard that would shame many fully prepped rally cars. One veteran racer was built completely of aircraft aluminum with rows of perfectly parallel rivets, machined billet steering cogs and arms, and drilled foot pedals and seat. All immaculately polished to a high shine. As with any organized competition there are regulations regarding specified components. For example all racers were shod with basic utility wheels provided by the organizers. No tire pressure or tread grooving tricks to be had here, only what types of oil you squirted into the hub bearings. Dimensions are governed as well and also a maximum weight of 250 lbs including driver, helmet, and competitive machine. Needless to say there was tremendous scope for imagination within these guidelines and while some carts were open cockpits with driver either sitting upright or lying fully reclined others were completely enclosed with aerodynamic fuselage and transparent canopy reminiscent of designs proven on

the Bonneville Salt flats. I was particularly intrigued by the spectrum of braking systems in use. Many were simple rubber ended levers that dropped to the pavement or leaned against the rear wheels when applied. Some employed bicycle brakes activated by cable and a couple of these produced cool looking plumes of blue smoke when the cars crossed the finish line. One that caught my attention in

particular belonged to a very professionally prepped "Blue Flame" looking vehicle. After crossing the finish, the brake was activated and a pogo-stick contraption complete with large rubber pad sprung straight down from the belly of the racer and made violent contact with the street surface. As I watched, it physically raised the rear wheels from the road and came quickly to a grinding, teetering halt. I watched this car with interest in subsequent runs and I noticed it stopped in a more demure manner after that so perhaps the pit crew had been summoned by the driver to make some "small" adjustments to the braking force.

Why am I writing about this in a rally-oriented magazine? For the 6th time, the WCRA has provided the official timing and scoring expertise for this annual event. A team of 6 club members were on hand to make sure that hundredth of a second accuracy was available in determining who was the fastest down the hill in these head to head races. We were also there to cheer

on Liam Westhead (son of club member Bill) in car 28. A sleek red missile built by Martin Wilson and Andrew Dobric several seasons ago, making the most of aerodynamic expertise and heavy fork lift pieces for ballast. The car was pulled from storage after a skipped year of inactivity and dusted off. A couple practise runs in a back lane that was more reminiscent of Helmer South than a paved track and our first time driver was keen to do battle. When the car and driver were positioned atop the starting ramps, with all of W 4th dropping away in front of them, I'm sure young Liam was very glad to have a complete 5 point harness from a Lotus holding him securely!

Each entry took four runs down the hill and the best three times were scored. After 4 hours of competition in the 30-degree sun, pilot Westhead secured a fifth in class and seventh overall. An excellent result for a first outing! Well done Liam with help from Bill and Martin.

Next year the event will return, and next year the WCRA will be back to do the timing. I can think of no better way to catch sunburn on a Sunday morning and I encourage everyone to come out and take part in this flashback to our racing roots.



Mountain Trials 2006

Two Drivers and a Co-Driver - the Car Zero Chronicles Continue

by Ron Sorem

June 16 & 17, 2006,
Merritt, British Columbia.

West Coast Rally Association presented their Spring BC Regional Stage Rally, Mountain Trials, featuring the roads overlooking picturesque Nicola Valley in Central BC's cattle country.

Spring rains had more than settled the dust for days prior to the event, then skies cleared, roads (and watersplashes) dried out a bit and conditions were near perfect to play in the woods. The missing ingredient was - cars. Two weeks prior to the event only two entries graced the website. Rallymaster Paul Westwick assured things were not nearly as dire as shown, that the website was just a bit backed up, and he was right. It seems a trend has developed recently, whether due to gas prices, entry fees, or a very busy rally calendar, pre-registration has lost its luster. Fortunately for many recent events, including Stage and TSD, last minute entries have allowed "event-break-even" and reasonable fields, including 19 teams in Merritt.

Mountain Trials is a "Recce" event, allowing teams time for at least two runs through the course to write notes detailing as many of the bumps, jumps, twists and turns as they can, in addition to the route book. Allowing a reconnaissance aims at reducing the "surprises" of a blind rally. Route book "Alpines" (an overhead depiction of an intersection, first used in European rallies four decades ago) are only able to convey limited information. Recce allows notation of just how sharp or steep, smooth or loose, tightens or opens, at each turn - detailed notes contain a running text to describe the route, with the co-driver narrating non-stop, to the driver. Rallymaster Westwick had earlier approved the use of prior events' notes, so many teams brought along their Pacific Forest Rally (WCRA's National event) notes and tweaked as needed.

I had been invited to perform Course Opening duties again for 2006, following stints in BC for the 2005 Spring

Regional and the 2005 Fall National, each with different "non-co-drivers". This year I enlisted fellow driver (TSD and Stage) and experienced Stage Rally Co-Driver, Lee Sorenson, to read the routebook while I tried my best to read the road, and to stay on the road -- bad form for the pace car to crash. We ran "Recce", with a much more

Saturday morning brought tech inspection at Canadian Tire, and set-up for Service in the Railyard Mall. Teams were flagged out from the Mall, followed by a short transit to Active Mountain Raceway for two quick rounds of Spectator action. AMR claimed one gearbox (2nd gear



Ever a "good sport", Warren Currie returns to Merrit with a new car

detailed course book, containing banner guard notes, Marshal positions, and any troublesome corners needing warning arrows. We wrote notes to add to this course book as well, most notably the conditions over crests, and severity of dips, cattleguards, and ruts. "Easy Left, Dip" became "long easy left, drops slightly, sharp dip - slow down! -- climbs, kinks 100" (meters or yards to next note). The "slow down!" was added, and re-emphasized after each bone shaking landing in our non-caged car. Watersplashes on our first run were "less-water-more-mud and rock" after the field ran through. Rocks ranged from gravel, to fist sized, to "embedded" (think build the road over it) and by the third running of the two premier stages, Princeton Cut Off and Helmer, several corners would progress from loose, to swept, to big excavated rocks.

only), bits and pieces of coachwork, and one close encounter of the EVO kind, involving a wooden observation deck and stairs, following a tight hairpin uphill. The quick little Mitsu of Peter VanBogart and Tracy Manspeaker continued the event carrying a few splinters, and gaining excellent crowd response (including the landowner) and a stunning action photo sequence posted on the web.

Next up for the rally was Nicola Lake Stages, one "in", a regroup at the dead end, and one "out". The road surface here is crushed sandstone, very fast, and very precise. Nicola Lake North, SS3, claimed only one car, the Car 8 Group D historic 1973 Corolla of Peter Hill and Tomasz Karzynski, out with mechanical problems, only a short distance into the stage. At the "turnaround" most teams

relaxed between runs, enjoying the view overlooking the marina across the lake. Nicola Lake South, SS4, was almost trouble-free, followed by the short transit to Princeton Cut-Off. The "stair killer" EVO suffered a minor off, crunching the front suspension and a brake caliper put them out of the event.

Precision driving is a key to success in Stage Rally, and for Car 0 as well. I found one of the embedded rocks on Princeton Cut-Off, within 2km of the start, in the left wheel track, a nice little chicane with the rock cliff on my side -- "don't cut" -- and just air on Lee's side -- "don't miss it" -- and made a mental note of it on Recce at under the 60km/h speed limit. On the first running of the stage, at a relatively brisk pace, I found the same rock, apparently with sufficient force to bend a strut, as pointed out by the control workers at stage finish. No big deal, but the camber was a bit more "Baja 1000" looking than Mountain Trials. The car "turned in" great one way, not so great the other. We went on to hit that same rock all three times we ran the Princeton stage, and precise as it might be, I never saw it once. Lee suggested I hit more rocks with the right front to "even it up", but this never worked. The one and only time I got Lee to jump was on Princeton One, SS3, medium left uphill exposure right, and still very loose, car slides from cutting apex left side, and hooks up just before the grass on the right side, all while Co-Driver is looking down for next instruction, looks up to see no road on his side. Not really so dramatic, just interesting timing.

Also on Princeton a major crowd-pleaser was the big jump over cattleguard at Spectator just before "90 right onto pavement" and downhill to Flying Finish. Car 1, Norm LeBlanc and Keith Morison, took top prize for improvised flight in their bright blue Impreza. Second highest to Car 7, Aaron Neumann and Graham Coates in their Group 2 Honda.

Princeton claimed several cars, ranging from minor "offs", to suspension, tires, and electrical. Fortunately none of the retirements occurred in the very narrow twisting exposures early in the stage. Then, the stage opens briefly, clinging to the slope through the radio point at

3.60km, a sharp right along the slope, where at 5.77km the "Princeton parking lot" collected most of the disabled cars, followed by sharp corners in and out of

stop, then as the dust cleared, the Jeep was nowhere in sight. Hopefully no competitors suffered this problem.

At SS8 Helmer One, we arrived as



Warren's resolve is tested

creek cuts in two locations, both with big exposures on the outside. A brief straight, climbing, into 90-right, rutted, and through the trees, the tunnel, and a long Spectator Area. Aaron's third jump resulted in an overshoot of the corner, a five minute delay, assisted back on by Kris and Jaclyn Schofield, a half-minute act of true sportsmanship that cost the Schofields a podium by 10 seconds!

Our third run on Princeton, SS7, we encountered the dust. Traveling along the highway approaching Stage Start, we could count five cars on stage by the dust trails at one minute intervals. We entered the stage while Sweep was extracting Car 6 to a safe point from Princeton Two, SS6. At 7.49km we held for them to clear, then chased them out to the finish. At some points visibility was nil, forcing a complete

spectators were still walking into the stage. Car 0 was held by Net Control to cover delays on earlier stages. We ran the stage at a moderate rate (we didn't want to delay the rally any further). We encountered LOTS of COWS. The course was slightly less loose after recce. We added more cautions to more dips, added "long", "tightens", "drops", as appropriate. We also noted the bare mark on "Warren's Tree" corner (more on this later). We unweighted the Legacy on the big jump after the long straight, and commented on the "loose medium left" a short time later (more on THIS later too). Flying Finish at 22.83km in a little over 18 minutes. Car 1 ran this at 14:07, 14:01 and 14:00 (97.84km/h average).

Car 0 was held again at SS 9 Helmer Two start. Car 19 was off about

2km from the end of Stage 8 with electrical problems. The crew was working feverishly to get the 1974 Dodge Colt to fire - before they reached Max Permitted Lateness. Sweep couldn't pass them or collect their time card until then. The stage would be delayed. I tried to calculate how much time I needed to open the stage, leaving time to clear Car 19, yet not get caught by Car 1. I knew I could be safely quicker through the second running and still check all the Marshal, Spectator, and road closure banner. The entire field was assembling at Stage Start for Helmer Two and getting restless. I walked back to Car 1 and asked Keith what his time was on the first run. "14:07. Why, are you going to try to beat it?" My answer of course was "yes". Just then the call came from Net Control for Car 0 to start. Sweep had gotten Car 19 off the course after MPL. We beat our first time by over a minute, but still nearly 4 minutes off Norm and Keith. Net Control had started them only six minutes behind us to keep the rally closer to "on time". Fortunately a herd of cows nearly stopped Car 1 and Norm didn't catch us.

Exiting the Helmer Stage, through hairpins off the ridge to Hwy 5A is as challenging as any stage road. Steep, tight, loose, and exposures. As we approached the highway we found Car 19's crew, Morten Labo and Daniel Lee, pushing their car out to where a service crew could retrieve them. A brief pull from Car 00 Glyn Trafford and Bart Vogelzang helped get them closer, faster.

We pulled through Service in Merritt, caught up on the latest gossip and conditions behind us -- Car 5 was off at 19.67km, "over crest to medium left", into tree (now Warren's second Helmer tree). Sweep tried in vain between stages to extract Car 5, Warren Currie and Robin Chapelsky, while we returned to Exit 315 for Helmer Three, by dusk.

There were no further delays on the final running. Norm and Keith ran a restrained consistent run, holding to 14:00 flat, taking big air on the jump - grass on the right edge into jump, 155km/h, straight line over crest, land on line in the middle of the road, "a blast" according to Keith. Tire failures plagued Car 3, Jamie Thomas

and Ben Bradley - taking time to change the tire cost them one podium step, but running out on a fresh spare saved their 3rd place finish by seven seconds. Jamie claims this was her first tire changed on stage - she doesn't count the previous two failures on the event, changed out on transits. Another finish position fell to Helmer tire failure for Car 17 Corolla, the number 10 finisher.

Lee seemed completely non-plussed on the last running of Helmer, pushing harder yet, when landing after one of the ever-deepening "dips", the Legacy's ABS light came on, followed closely by no speedo, and the Check Engine light. When I asked him what he thought about the ABS light, his was a calm cool Co-Driver

On leaving their last assignment, Helmer in the dusk-to-dark, several of the cows still blocked the road, then after the cows, another blockage, but different - a bear!

Norm LeBlanc and Keith Morison, Car 1, took First Place in the Subaru WRX (running Production specs in Open class). Second Place to Eric Grochowski and Leanne Junnila, Car 10, in their Group 5 VW Golf, over eight minutes back. Third Place, only 1:02 back, to Jamie Thomas and Ben Bradley, Car 3, Production Subaru WRX Wagon, holding off First Novice, Fourth Overall, by seven seconds, Martin Chung and Christa Monasch campaigned in the now Open Class Impreza. Martin reported taking 2 minutes off his Helmer



Overall winners N. Leblanc and K. Morrison at full tilt

response -- "I don't know, but maybe you should test your brakes" -- before the "easy right, off camber, drops, into easy left, exposure" just coming into view. I did as instructed, twice -- the brakes worked and we continued.

Mountain Trials depends on their quality volunteers from all around the Pacific Northwest. One crew, Washington's Steve Perret and Kathryn Hansen, worked eight stages and tech inspection.

time in the "new" car. There were only ten finishers for Mountain Trials.