

Rally News

Totem Rally 2004 by Ron Sorem © 11/2004

November 13/14, 2004. Cache Creek to Clearwater, British Columbia. Final Round of the BC TSD Rally Championship, and the Pacific Coast Challenge

The West Coast Rally Association presented a spectacular mix of scenic roads, varying conditions and terrain, wrapped into a two-day package called **The Totem Rally**. First presented in 1962, this would be Version 2004.

The weather was questionable: Would there be "enough" snow? Web forums teased with snowy photos, reports of slush, mud, and ice, and of impassable water hazards.

Saturday morning's drivers' meeting brought the news that there would indeed be snow, but no snow banks to soften landings for errant cars ("winter-roads-summer-ditches"). There would also be mud, some icy mud, some snow over ice, some fresh snow over compact snow, and some dry gravel. Typical Totem. Road and weather conditions in Central British Columbia are unpredictable in November and provide arguably the most varied and difficult Time-Speed-Distance rally roads in North America.

The RallyMaster/Organizer team of Fred and Shelley Wiedemann sent 25 cars out onto the back roads south, then west of Cache Creek, for the Hat Creek Regularity, with the note to expect very icy conditions 12km into the first section. This notation seemed improbable as the section begins with a dusty uphill hairpin at 62km/h. The first checkpoint is hidden in the mix of pine trees, white-barked birch, and a blanket of yellow foliage. A moment or two later reality and concentration focus on the instruction: "**Caution!!! Exposure left**". (Single cautions ! are generally interpreted as corners or hazards that if ignored may cause you delay, double !! may cause damage to your car, triple !!! may cause damage to your person.) The dust is gone, the road is now rutted sticky mud. As the rally gains elevation through the conifer forest and crests a ridge there is snow, and a checkpoint, just short of the 12km mark at "**Hairpin R Caution!! Exposure next 500km**". Then, executing a series of hairpins on ice, dropping dramatically off the ridge there is another checkpoint, this one in a hairpin left.

With only a brief time to "relax" from the ice, competitors began a steady elevation gain within the rolling hills and valleys of Upper Hat Creek Ranch (...were those caribou?). Punctuated by "**Caution!!! Road goes Right over crest with Exposure L**", speeds are up to 68km/h here through the ranch, then dropping steadily, we pass two more checkpoints, to Highway 99 and the transit west through scenic Marble Canyon to Pavillion.

Pavillion-Clinton TSD begins with a steep switchback climb through several long hairpins at 52, then tops out into more ranchland at 72. Another drivers' meeting warning was here at 14km into the section: "Slow Down! Very Slippery!" The instruction read: "**Hard Left – Caution!! Off Camber downhill! Straight ahead is not an option!**" As the checkpoint crew for this corner was setting up, a wood cutter lost control of his pickup and trailer coming UP through the corner. Jack-knifed into the apex he was well and truly stuck, leaving only a narrow passage on the outside of the corner. The checkpoint crew's triangle warned on-coming rally cars, causing even slower approaches than intended. Managing to get past the big Ford's front bumper, noticing the checkpoint and cameraman, anxious teams would later be relieved to find the checkpoint would not be scored due to the congestion. The remainder of the section was Hairpin after Hairpin for 4km, down to two picturesque mountain lakes southwest of Clinton.

Big Bar Road to Dog Creek TSD covered 61.78km at a brisk pace northward past several guest ranch and resort areas with three checkpoints on the western-most loop of the rally.

A short transit brought the rally to the longest TSD of the day at 88.62km. Big Bar Road to 100 Mile House contains wet gravel, snow in the corners in the shade, rutted mud (think chocolate pudding), and snow over ice. At various points, the front runners all admitted to being very late, and luckily nearly every one was able to recover before the next checkpoint. That is, all but one team, who missed an instruction, were seven minutes late at one point, and after finding their mistake could only make up three minutes before a control and effectively the end of their hopes at a decent score. (Exhibiting great sportsmanship, this team volunteered to work checkpoints on Day Two. "We were still able to run the course at 70 to 80km/h" to stay ahead of the rally)

Fuel and snacks in 100 Mile House, then north to Spring Lake TSD where the second leg of the rally begins eastward past Canim Lake. Spring Lake is a moderate to brisk 25.84km regularity, roughly split in half by a slower twisty section covering 4km at 32, and closing with just under 8km at 68.

The last TSD of the day is usually well populated by all the checkpoint crews that have been spread over the countryside, now concentrated in a smaller area. Totem was no exception, with six controls in 56km, including two within 2km - Pay Attention!! – and, the last checkpoint less than 2km from the end.

Wells Gray Inn at Clearwater was the overnight headquarters affording choices of quiet dining, spirited celebration, and a live band. Scores for Day One were tight, with a tie for first with SIX points. (Tie breaker would have been 18 zeroes each, then two ones each, then two twos each, etc, etc. Absolute zeroes went to car 1 with 9, over car 5 with only 8.)

Day Two drivers' meeting presents several notes about the route including a mention of snow scraping the bottom of the car for 5km on the second regularity, and a small tree across the road (too big to move, but not too big to drive over). The transit leaves Clearwater due south toward Kamloops and soon provides a stop in Little Fort for food and fuel, before the rally climbs steeply up Boulder Mountain. In the valley it is raining, but soon becomes mixed rain and snow over mud, snow in the shaded corners, and eventually settles for gravel mixing long straights with twisty sections through the trees. We were warned of cows and golf carts on the road, but both seemed to have sense enough to find shelter elsewhere from the near freezing drizzle.

A very short transit just north of Barriere takes us to the rally's first real test on snow. 85km Lake Road TSD begins with a steep gravel climb into the snow, hairpins, and a control. As the route winds through a recent forest fire area the snow deepens and of course the speed increases. The front running cars are all All-Wheel- or Four-Wheel-Drive and concentrate on tweaking the computers for "zeroes". Further back in the two-wheel drive group, the concentration is just to stay on the road. One did not. The resultant extrication (no damage, just late) delayed several cars.

Shortly after passing the third checkpoint of the section, speeds increase to 62, 68, 58, and back to 68 for nearly 30km of smooth open road, with only a few "non-rally" vehicles. A 90° right across a bridge is "a bit icy". But the next "**KL, Caution! Tight**" is just an ice rink and of course, the road immediately begins to climb. Wheel spin, no hard-points for odo correction, and a checkpoint, keep drivers and navigators busy. Not knowing exactly where the timing line is, we show 2-early at the entrance, on-time at the bridge, and 2-late at the exit. Unable to correct our factors in time, we would later find we were 5-early—driver having too much fun? We recover composure for the last checkpoint at zero, however the first hairpin in the snow (late) and the double-left (early) will more than double our first day score.

The "stretch" transit allowed teams to compare notes, relax a bit, and enjoy an open-air lunch. A cold breeze, but no rain or snow.

Criss Creek TSD at 94.92km is the last and longest timed section of the event, and opens with a steady climb at 65km/h through a checkpoint and soon a notification of altitude: 1520 meters (4987 feet). The elevation is reflected in the road conditions – snow! This section opens up eventually to 72km/h to a bridge, a hard-point for corrections – and a checkpoint. Very busy for the navigator. Just under 8km later an alpine of "**90 L, then L at T**" looks like a fine place for another checkpoint and there it is... Given our previous experiences at these checkpoints (early-in, late-out) and still not knowing where the timing mark will be, we gamble with carrying 4-early into the first left, controlled power slide through to the second left, and take a 1, early this time instead of late. More work is needed on this technique.

A few minutes later we are caught by our "twin", I see my own car in my rear view mirror. Alas, no road fatigue hallucination, it is only a checkpoint crew in an identical car trying to regain their position ahead of the field after missing a turn earlier. They pass, and my thought is they may actually make it with only four more cars to go. They may also prepare any local traffic for me... for better or for worse! (We never saw them again until the finish, learning they had made yet another wrong turn and followed coincidental, but wrong, instructions for several minutes toward Tranquille.)

"**KL at Red Lake DR**" brings back a vague memory of rallies past. On previous Totem and Thunderbird, this section of road has been used uphill in the mud, uphill in ice, and downhill in snow over ice over mud. The first corner downhill is: "**Caution!!! Hard R Exposure L**". It is a very long drop into the valley below. Previous years' speeds have been 24km/h and difficult to maintain. This year 36km/h is tame, but there are muddy spots and no hard-points for nearly 3km. The traditional checkpoint location at the last hairpin is surprisingly vacant. Could this be where our "twin" was supposed to be?

Shortly after the drop into the valley, rally cars were treated to close-ups of cows. Throughout the two days there had been cautions to watch for cows on the road. All previous encounters had been casual, at a distance. Now, however, even after course-opening cars and several rally cars, these big white-faced Herefords had not given up their claim for the road. 44km/h into a cow is not an option, so ever so slowly, we crept between cows—their heads lowered, nostrils still above the side mirrors, we passed. The ear tag on the closest one read "100" on it's right ear and "26" on it's left ear (thanks Satch) and thankfully no slobber on the side windows.

The last 23km of the 95km TSD are familiar to Totem and Thunderbird alike: The westward climb to maximum elevation, the two or three "likely" checkpoint locations, and the hairpin switchbacks south down to the highway. With this year's dry conditions the conversation drifted off to commentary on topics such as "Glenn's second corner", "RJ's corner", "Ron's corner", "Jeff's corner" and so on... We've paid attention to the route book, to the road, and to the clock. We take a zero for 94.92km, but will it be enough? Three other cars would do the same. Previous indiscretions have taken their toll, however, and we move from tied for first to tied for third, a whole 4 seconds out of the lead.

Lee and Rod Sorenson, brothers (and our teammates) from the Sacramento area would repeat their 2003 Totem win for First Overall with 11 in Lee's RS2.5. Perennial driving threat, fresh from an Alcan 5000 win, Gary Webb from Arizona, and John Kisela from Seattle, would take Second with 14 in John's Legacy. Third Place tie was between Ron Sorem and Max Vaysburd, from the Seattle area, in a Legacy Turbo, and RJ and Ren Carroll, son and father team from Kamloops, in Ren's WRX. The tie was broken by most zeroes, 29 for Ron

and Max versus 27 for RJ and Ren, still very, very close. RJ and Ren will take First Unlimited and First Overall in the 2004 BC TSD Rally Championship.

First Calculator/Equipped went to Martin Chung and Christa Monasch with 28 in the bright red stage rally Impreza, also taking First Calculator in the BC Championship. Second Calculator/Equipped went to Jeff McMillen and Marvin Crippen with 51 in a WRX, despite having no odometer for Day Two, and running a back-up system that had added kms erratically. Jeff and Marvin will repeat as PCC Champions for 2004.

Paper and Pencil class (SOP) again went to Dan and Stu Fealk with Dan keeping their Subaru XT6 on the course and Dad doing the calcs. Dan and Stu will take First Paper in the BC Championship.

In yet another tie at 247, First Historic Equipped went to Mike Palm and Garth Hales in the 1973 Super Beetle, and First Novice went to the Calgary team of Johnny Summers and Brendan Youngberg in Brendan's 2005 Impreza RS – ON THEIR FIRST RALLY! They have already been heavily recruited for Novice team members at Thunderbird.

First Historic went to Richard Childs and Helen Welter, making the trek from Alberta in the 1974 BMW 2002tii to also wrap up their season try for First Historic in the BC Championship. However, William McRae and Dave Harms Second Historic at Totem in the 1969 VW Beetle was just enough to win the BC series by TWO points.

Our "twin" was Shawn Edstrom and Geoff Gauthier from Kamloops, who worked this event, but will be awarded First Novice for the 2004 BC TSD Championship.

Series sponsor Specialty Subaru must be enthusiastic over the 13 Subaru competitors and 3 more Subaru checkpoint cars, representing the manufacturer.

Totem accumulated 700.61km (438mi.) in an area roughly 135km by 95km.

For complete results, photos, and information on other BC events visit: www.rallybc.com

* On Saturday night, finding themselves severely penalized for taking a wrong turn, Eric Horst & Steve Willey DNF'd. They spent Sunday as workers. –MN

* Alcan 2006 updates:

* We're at nine 2006 entries, see <http://www.alcan5000.com/2006entr.htm>

* Subaru will again participate officially. They'll assist "about" 3 entries, and host our Anchorage finish & awards banquet like 2004 winter.

* The posted itinerary is 4300 miles, but could range from 3100 to 5000 depending on options chosen. 4300 miles is the "expected" route: running fewer miles would involve small penalties while a 5000 mile option would add special recognitions but no scoring reward.

* Tentative itinerary is at <http://www.alcan5000.com/06itin.htm>, by popular demand we'll probably change the day 2 overnight from Fort St John to Hyder. This would let us include both the Blackwater and Cassiar Highways, and perhaps a Telegraph Creek option for those who missed it last summer.

And...www.alcan5000.com now has links to 12 separate 2004 stories; the most recent is a (October 10) Chicago Tribune feature by Paul Duchene.

As usual, our mailing list has been BCC'd. If you'd like be removed please ask, to see more frequent info or participate in discussions join our Yahoo group at

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/alcan5000summer2004/>

*Stage Rally in the US will continue (maybe gloriously) in 2005. Rally America has announced an 8-event calendar. But under the auspices of USAC and NASA, four rallies make up the "United States Rally Championship".

Locally the Northwest Region of SCCA can (and will) continue to have a stage rally program (as well as rallycrosses), but insurance isn't available from SCCA.

The Mexican WRC event is March 11-13.

Trivia

* Roy Ward asked Gary Reid if he had anything to do with this particular passage in the Washington State lawbook:

"RCW 46.61.530: Racing of vehicles on highways -- Reckless driving – Exception:

"No person or persons may race any motor vehicle or motor vehicles upon any public highway of this state.

Any person or persons who willfully compare or contest relative speeds by operation of one or more motor vehicles shall be guilty of racing, which shall constitute reckless driving under RCW 46.61.500"

<<http://www.leg.wa.gov/RCW/index.cfm?section=46.61.500&fuseaction=section>>, whether or not such speed is in excess of the maximum speed prescribed by law,

"PROVIDED HOWEVER, that any comparison or contest of the accuracy with which motor vehicles may be operated in terms of relative speeds not in excess of the posted maximum speed does not constitute racing."

To which Gary replied, "YES !!! It is probably my single greatest legislative achievement. The WSP was toughening up the racing statute, and I feared it would make outlaws of us all. I got hold of George Tellevik, lobbyist for the WSP (he later became Chief), and explained TSD rallying to him and how it was all within legal

speed limits and that we never drove fast and a lot of other good stuff, and he put the proviso in the bill. I have made it a point to befriend the WSP lobbyist ever since."

* Dan Comden sold the Blazer. Now he's shopping "tweaks" for the Saab.

* Kirk and Terry Simons signed a purchase agreement for a home near KI Lake up by Smokey Point. It is a 2300 Sq Ft, 4-bedroom 2.5 bath tri-level on a 1/2 acre.

"Why all the way up there you ask? It is 1 of 2 homes that offers a place for us to park all of our toys at a price we can afford. We are moving from here due to the increase of traffic and the threat of the county making 228th a four-lane road. Not to mention "Bright Water" going in down the road at Hwy 9. Just getting out while the getting is good!!

Club News

Far less dreadful than the Washington Governor's race, the 2005 RASC Board will be elected by those present at the December 18 meeting. The *three* member nominating committee carefully reviewed the membership roster for qualified candidates. After eliminating the members who are retired (and out of town at every opportunity), those who asked not to be nominated, and the few who haven't expressed any interest in attending Board meetings, the committee nominated all members except *three*.

* The Hines' have graciously offered to host the December gathering. No regular monthly meeting, except for an interlude for elections.

FOR SALE / Wanted:

* For Sale: 4 studded snow tires, 205/60R15 BFGoodrich T/A WR. Great shape, \$100.

* 4 snow tires, 245/75R16 Bridgestone Blizzak Winter Dueler. New, \$300.

* 4 BMW 6 1/2" x 15" steel wheels, 5 on 120mm pattern. \$90

Wanted:

* Four 15" wheels to fit 1990 Subaru Legacy, or 4 14" wheels with snow tires. (Lucas has a new ski car...). Call Jerry, 206-227-6343 cell or 425-823-6343.

RASC Calendar

TSD -----

• Call the NWRC Hotline (206) 256-9627 for latest info on Puget Sound TSD events. The Friday Niter series resumes on February 11.

Feb 19-20- Thunderbird, TBA, British Columbia

June 11-12- No Alibi by RASC, eastern Washington

Stage -----

Feb 26- Club Rally Awards Banquet/ Workers party, Ft. Lewis Golf Clubhouse

March 5/6 – NWR-SCCA stage rallies (sanction TBA)

Rally America 2005 National Championship

January 28-29- Sno*Drift, Atlanta, MI

April 23-24- Oregon Trail, Hillsboro, OR

June 4- Susquehannock Trail, Wellsboro, PA

June 23-25- Pikes Peak Int'l Hill Climb, Colorado Springs, CO

July 29-30- Maine Forest Rally, Rumford, ME

August 26-27- Ojibwe Forests, Bemidji, MN

September 17-18- Colorado Cog, Steamboat Springs, CO

October 21-22- Lake Superior, Houghton, MI

United States Rally Championship calendar:

March 6-7 - Cherokee Trails, Cleveland, Tennessee

May 5-6 - Subaru Rim of the World, Lancaster, California

Sept 30-Oct 1 - Rally New York, Monticello, New York

December 1-4 - Ramada Express Rally, Laughlin, Nevada

British Columbia

June 19/19- Mountain Trials, Merritt

Oct 15/16- Pacific Forest, Merritt



Rainier Auto Sports Club (RASC) Christmas meeting

WHEN: SUNDAY December 18

WHO: RASC members, friends, ALCAN participants, kids, extended families, etc.

WHAT: A Christmas party. Videos, music, food, and drink. A chance to swap lies, rally stories, and favorite recipes.

Elections and other "business" at 5:30.

WHEN: Saturday December 18, roughly 4pm 'till 9pm.

WHERE: The Hines Hotel, 12640 88th PL NE, Kirkland (near Juanita Drive).

Call 425-823-6343 if you're lost...

WHAT ABOUT FOOD & DRINK? It's semi pot-luck. RASC is sponsoring a ham, scallop potatoes, salad, beer, wine & pop. Bring anything special you'd like to share, or just show up!

2004 Board Members:

President: Steve Willey – (206) 417-8517; Vice-President;; Marvin Crippen –(206)365-5915

Secretary: Eric Horst (206)363-9752; Treasurer: Ed Millman (206)361-7389

Members at Large:, Mike Jones- (425)823-8329, Jerry Hines (425) 823-6343

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