

Rally News

* (News release) Subaru of America is returning to the U.S. rally scene with a formal team effort for 2006.

The company has signed two-wheel pro Travis Pastrana to lead Subaru Rally Team USA in 2006. The Supercross and Motorcross Champion, multi-time X Games gold medalist and up-and-coming rally star says he's thrilled to take on the challenge. "Rally is an incredible sport that demands high-level preparation, focus, and tremendous skill," says Pastrana. "I know what it takes to be a champion on two wheels, and I'm excited to now be rallying for Subaru in what I consider the best all-wheel-drive machine."

Joining Pastrana in the two-car effort is 2005 Rally America Rookie of the Year, Ken Block. Block is the co-founder and president of DC Shoes.

The pair will drive in nine Rally America events in 2006 Subaru Impreza WRX vehicles prepared by Subaru Motorsports partner, Vermont SportsCar. #

* Reno Rally (Dec. 3-4) Thirteen starters, two or three DNF's each day. Five stages on Saturday, four on Sunday.

Best story, good even if it isn't true (rally lore), is that the organizer arranged road use permits for both Nevada and California. The California deal was so nice that the organizer even sold a gray-market Porsche to the California road guy.

When it turned out that the Porsche couldn't be registered in California, the organizer guy said a sale is a sale; he wouldn't take the car back.

The Californian, a little miffed, pulled the road use permits. So Sunday's rally was built from Saturday's route. This, late on Saturday night.

* World Rally Championship rules change:

"The following rallies will be linked for engine and chassis in 2006: Monte Carlo and Sweden, Spain and France, Italy and Greece, Germany and Finland, Australia and New Zealand.

"For these rallies the engine and chassis will be sealed together and it will not be possible to separate them, except under the supervision of the FIA. Each car will use the same engine and chassis for both rallies.

"The following rallies will be linked for the gearbox in 2006: Italy and Greece, Cyprus and Turkey, Australia and New Zealand.

"On the first rally of the link, two gearbox and differential assemblies per car will be sealed. On the second rally of the link, one gearbox and differential assembly per car will be sealed.

"There will also be a limitation on other mechanical parts across linked events."

(I think this means the end of the 15-minute gearbox change- Ed)

* Mitsubishi has withdrawn from the World Rally Championship as a full factory entrant, but the RalliArt team, which has long campaigned the Japanese

manufacturer's WRC and Dakar efforts, will contest at least the initial rounds of the upcoming WRC season. RalliArt is fully owned by Mitsubishi Motors.

The squad, officially dubbed Team RalliArt Italy, announced that former works Mitsubishi driver Gigi Galli will steer a Lancer at the Monte Carlo and Swedish rallies, the first two rounds of the '06 campaign. The Italian's former teammate Harri Rovanpera is expected to appear aboard a second Lancer in Sweden, an event he won back in 2001.

Team RalliArt Italy's participation in the remaining rounds of the 2006 WRC season will depend upon sponsorship being found.

* When the "silly season" of arranging the team lineups for the motorcycle MotoGP season was over, Gauloises, Camel, and Telefonica-Movistar were left without teams to sponsor. The money unclaimed is at least \$50 M, and that does not include what the three rejected sponsors, spent on trackside signage, hospitality and promotion.

Club News

Dues can be paid at the January

Meeting. (see below)

* Membership dues have increased to a rate of \$25 for individual and \$30 for family membership. This is the first dues increase in a decade and attempts to bring dues more in line with our club expenses.

Most notable is a dramatic increase in our annual per-member insurance expense over the last five years but other basic expenses have increased as well. If you have any questions or concerns about this increase the Treasurer or any board member would be happy to provide more information (or point you to the board meeting minutes.)

Every member is important to our club and we look forward to having you on board for another year.

TRIVIA

Things to consider

>>(The Washington State Legislature approved use of traffic control cameras):

Automated revenue generators - the much-hated Gatso traffic cameras are coming. The camera records a picture of a vehicle speeding or running a red light. Reportedly bullet proof in Great Britain, where only registered hunters have the high power guns common to American homes.

British users of the TomTom GPS software can subscribe to a list of Gatso locations, such that the GPS will display a warning when one might be encountered.

Other countermeasures include a polarized license plate cover that defeats the camera.

>>(A rally driver?)

*Dutch company Gatsometer BV, founded by the 1950s rally driver Maurice Gatsonides, invented the first road-rule enforcement cameras. Gatsonides wished to better monitor his speed around the corners of a race track and came up with the device in order to improve his time around the circuit. The company developed the first radar for use with road traffic, and is the world's largest supplier of speed camera systems. Because of this, in some countries speed cameras are sometimes referred to as "Gatsos". They are also sometimes referred to as "photo radar", even though many of them do not use radar.

* In December Washington Governor Gregoire issued an endorsement of Washington Department of Transportation chief Doug McDonald.

This probably assures thousands of contractors a continued income ...for traffic studies.

* Richard Burns died November 25. The top ranked rally driver was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2003.

* One project in need of funding was Seattle's Alaska Way Viaduct. The 1932 structure could be destroyed if an earthquake like the 2001 "Nisqually earthquake" occurred. Replacing the viaduct with a tunnel could cost \$4 billion, about \$1 billion more than a re-build.

(Famous 240Z driver Bob Chandler was involved in replacement studies, and may delay retirement until its done.)

* ISC has decided on Bremerton for a 1.2-mile oval. Visions of a full-blown Nextel Cup race probably support this, dismissing the fact that NASCAR's premier series is already the longest schedule on every calendar.

Of an amateur mechanic dealing with the family BMW, By Gary Reid

Virginia and I drove back from SeaTac around noon after our Xmas visit to the darling granddaughters in ABQ. After coming up our rather puddly driveway, I paused in front of the garage door while it opened. We saw vapor coming from the front of the car. I figured I had splashed through a puddle and it was just steaming off. But inside the garage I could see that quite a jet of steam was coming out the front grill. Opening the hood (bonnet for some of you) confirmed this. The temp gauge was smack in the middle, where it always runs on a Fine German car. I shut it down and now the steam had become just a jet of warm air coming from a small bright indentation high on the radiator. A fingertip-size chunk of our notoriously sharp-edged basalt lay on the plastic shroud below. Foul words ran through my head, and I began making contingency plans.

The PBMGB sat in the next bay with its hood (bonnet) raised, as I had left it from the last time I started it up about 3 weeks ago, when it had idled VERY roughly, almost on 3 cylinders, at best. I had returned it to its nest, jiggled the spark plug wires, and put it on my Xmas "to do" list." The Porsche was with our house-sitter's mother, a woman at my old office, who needs it for transportation while her daughter drove her Accord out to our house to take care of our extremely geriatric dog.

I checked the coolant level in the Fine German Car, and found it to be only a little down, kind of the minimum mark on the float, for those of you familiar with the extremely ostentatious way that Fine German Automobiles allow you to check such things. The jet of warm air was still issuing forth. I was now thinking about the order of phone calls -- our Fine German Mechanic in Shelton, Walt's Radiator Shoppe, Mary-of-the-Porsche, etc. V was pissed, and wished that it had happened while we were coming through Fife, as she simply would have stopped at the dealer's and purchased a new Fine German Auto (she now holds all voting shares of financial stock in the family corporation).

I decided to see if the doughty British Motorcar had healed itself, as they so often do. Sure enough! A Christmas Miracle had occurred! It started after only about 15 seconds of cranking, came to a smooth idle, and I ran it up the short hill nearby just to make sure, meanwhile thinking nostalgic thoughts about the virtues of simple old crocks. And smart comments I would have for my mechanic of Fine German Autos. As I pulled it into the garage, I noticed more than a wisp of steam coming from under the hood. Must of hit another damn puddle, I tried to convince myself, but an underhood inspection revealed some squirting around the thermostat housing, fortunately located right on top of the block, and a gasket I had replaced many times myself. The legendary "10 Minute Job."

So now I called Mary-with-the-Porsche, who agreed to return the car that afternoon, and then called the Mechanic of Fine German Automobiles in Shelton, only 15 miles from our house. Big Steve, the founder, was still off on Holiday, spending the money thrust upon him by devoted clients, but the Other Steve, a partner for the last several years confirmed that Oh No, my aluminum radiator could not be soldered up at Walt's, but must be replaced at their shop. I figured I could make it there without the car overheating, since the hole appeared to be so small and the radiator appeared to be holding fluid just fine; and there had been no overheating. Steve ordered the radiator and hoped it would be there the next day (Wednesday) and asked me to bring the car in that morning so he could start taking things apart. It appears to be a much more involved operation than on the PBMGB or our late departed 76 Ford Econoline, vehicles on which I myself had enjoyed performing such tasks.

Wednesday morn I checked fluids again and all appeared well. The BMW's sleepy owner drove it to Shelton, while I followed. No overheating, no problems. It seemed that the pinhole leak only opened under the increased pressure caused by a slow trip up our (not very) long, steep driveway. The leak in the Ford had been that way, only opening up after extended idling at a horse ranch on Crowsnest Pass. Steve told me that if the radiator arrived in good time, he might have the car ready by the end of the day.

My fortune from the Chinese cookie of the night before was coming true -- something about my problems being solved quickly. (Didn't say anything about inexpensively though.)

Back home I tackled the PBMGB's leak, and the 10 Minute Job only took two and a half hours. But I polished the bottom of that thermo housing to a farethewell, cut a new paper gasket myself as the commercial one I had on hand wasn't even close to a fit, made two phone calls about whether to use gasket cement, and received two different opinions about cork versus paper gaskets and the advisability (or non-advisability) of cement for each application. In any event the job went well, no leaks even after a thorough road test, and I once again basked in the pleasures of owning a simple car.

Steve the Fine German Mechanic called back to inquire as to whether I was SURE that the radiator was really leaking, as after removing it from the vehicle and pressure testing it, he could find no leak. I told him that I had seen the hole with my very own eyes, on the fourth row of tubes, a shiny indentation emitting first vapor, then warm air. THAT radiator, Steve informed me was really the air conditioner condenser, which is mounted just in front of the engine cooling radiator, but of course is covered by that wonderful plastic shrouding to deceive the unschooled. After a great deal of hemming and hawing and suggestions that this was a job for an A/C shop, not the Fine German Auto shop, Steve realized that the radiator had to be removed to allow removal of the A/C condenser. As I was groaning about paying for all this double labor, Steve came up with the idea of calling the local A/C shop at the top of the hill and seeing if the car could be towed there to finish the job, saving me a bit of double labor charges.

An afternoon of phone calls and consultations later, Steve had arranged for his shop to do the Remove/Replace work on the condenser and the dryer (an additional item the A/C guy told him was most assuredly almost full of water on a 5-year old vehicle), and then drive the car up to the A/C shop for recharging. I was immensely pleased by this arrangement, as all wrenching would be done by a Fine German Mechanic, and the carcinogenic procedures would be done by a certified carcinogen handler (the A/C guy). The fiancée of this complicated operation was heard to complain that this probably meant that she wouldn't have her car back to attend a Ladies' Dinner Meeting tonight (Thursday) but I pointed out how fortunate she was to have such a crack team of mechanics available to work on her car on such short notice. Harrumph, she said.

Having heard nothing from the FGA mechanic by midday of New Year's Eve, and under pressure from the vehicle owner, I steeled my nerve and called the mechanic. Guess what?!! Another surprise. As he was reassembling the growing collection of costly parts, he found that the lower radiator hose leaked at the connection to the radiator. And of course a FGA cannot

use anything so simple as a \$1.29 hose clamp available at any autoparts store to secure this connection, but instead requires a uniquely constructed hose using an internal O-ring and an external wire clamp, all made of Unobtainium (especially on New Year's Eve). He had located the parts in Renton, but it would take UPS until Tuesday noonish, January 3rd, to deliver them to his workbench, what with the holidays and all. And the owner had a Hell-or-High Water business trip with a departure on Wednesday noonish. It was going to be nip-n-tuck to get this all together in time. My credit card would receive a hearty nip while I got tuck by the consortium of mechanics and parts suppliers.

The next Big Surprise was a phone call on Tuesday, the day before the O-ringed hose was due in Shelton, from Steve the mechanic telling us that our car was ready! A New Year's Miracle. UPS had delivered on the official Federal/State Holiday, and the last hour of labor got the installation completed and the A/C shop was open to charge the system. O, the wonders of the private sector, those hardworking folk who toil even while their public counterparts are home watching six bowl games in one day.

Unbeknownst to me, Big Steve the owner of the FG Autoshop had returned early from his warm-place holiday to personally prepare the accounting for this complex choreography of radiators, condensers, dryers, hoses, coolant, refrigerant, and "special" oil.

The single sheet of paper was lying all alone on the counter, and neither mechanic was visible as I approached it. OMIGAWD!! Had they misplaced a decimal, I wondered as I checked and rechecked the list of parts, subcontracted work, and labor. The total was about twice what I had been planning to spend on some long-deferred maintenance on the other FGA in our stable, and about half the initial purchase price of the doughty British Motorcar waiting so faithfully at home. I inquired as to his rate for shop labor nowadays and rocked back on my heels when he casually tossed off a number well above what I would dare charge as a "consultant" were I so fortunate as to have any clients to consult.

Such is the price of life, not in the Big City, but on the Thurston-Mason County line. A Happy and Prosperous New Year to you all.

FOR SALE / Wanted:

2005 Mitsubishi Outlander AWD. Pearl white with 11,900 miles, \$15,800. This is based on the Lancer platform. Very similar to the Forester, CRV, and RAV4 except less common, cheaper, and less ugly. If you're not ready now just wait a year - the Turbo Forester has kicked everyone's butt so new engine options are on the way :->) Jerry Hines 425-823-6343

Calendar

February18/19 Thunderbird 2005 Regional TSD Rally

Rainier Auto Sports Club will meet this coming Monday, January 9 at 7:30 PM at Café Veloce at the Totem Lake shopping center. Best way I can think of to get there is north on I-405, take the "NE 124th" exit, then keep right under NE 124th and straight at the signal. This puts you on Totem Lake Blvd, not whatever the frontage road is next to I-405. Then right first poss, with the Café on your right at that point.

Monthly meetings are the second Monday of each month. Past Members, visitors, and spectators are welcomed.

Agenda: After long debate and the give-and-take of expert negotiations, the new Board will announce the club officers for 2006, as well as expect acclaim for raising Dues fees. Other than paying your Dues, pretty much everything else has been decided as of January. Bring money.

2005 Board Members:

President: Marvin Crippen, mcrip@drizzle.com;

Vice-President: Jerry Hines jhines@eskimo.com; 425-823-6343

Secretary: Eric Horst, erich@teamd.org ,206-363-9752

Treasurer: Ed Millman, edm@adservices.com 206-361-7389,

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