

Rally News

Raindrop (April 23) - The flyer is out. Entrants will have to catch the Mukilteo ferry (\$6.30 for two people) for the 20-minute ride to the Clinton start. Registration is best done at the RASC web site, but late registration opens at 9am, FCO 10:31. Only \$25 for early registration, \$30 after April 21.

The tour is about 115 miles, mostly on Whidbey Island, ending in Anacortes.

Rallymaster Steve Richards has settled the route and claims to only do final tweaks to the instructions. He's assembled a staff to take care of things, such as Vince Plancich planning the CP performances, and the well-practiced and excellent scoring crew.

The rally will be limited to 35 entrants, a first for a Sunday TSD in the NW.

No Alibi (June 3-4) A route to Colville is being put together. The town has grown a few more motels than the last time RASC overnited there.

Doo Wop stage rallies (Feb 25-26) had their share of trauma, not the least deep snow on one of the Saturday stages as of a few days prior. A grader made that a non-issue.

Jim Hogan and Mark Nolte showed up on Sunday to use their amateur radios on the familiar "Smith Creek Stage". The field had whittled down to 34 (from 39) at this point.

No serious DNF's, mostly the "first rally of the year" blues.

Thunderbird Rally 2006 by Ron Sorem

February 18 & 19, 2006. Merritt-Vernon-Merritt, BC. Rallymaster Paul Westwick, and the West Coast Rally Association, presented the 35th running of the Thunderbird Rally.

Thunderbird covered a varied route with dusty gravel and white bank-to-bank polished snow and ice. Based in Merritt, B.C., forty-nine teams gathered in sub-freezing temperatures at scrutineering – checking for proper safety equipment, and that everything in the car was secure "in the unlikely event" of a conflict with a Thunderbird snow bank.

Totem Rally, WCRA's November event, presented "Winter Roads with Summer Ditches" (no snow banks). Thunderbird had snow – just most of it had been plowed aside. 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. This is not to say there was no snow – nearly every shaded corner was a combination of bare wheel tracks and wall-to-wall ice. Gauging (or guessing) how much speed to carry into each corner kept the driver's full attention!

Day One began with the Odometer Check, south of Merritt on 97C to Loon Lake, through the tunnel under

the freeway. Kentucky-Alleyne Regularity began at 60km/h on Loon Lake Road, well-traveled unbroken white, through the replanted forest rolling gently with a few twists before narrowing into deep snow. Through the Provincial Park campground and picnic area, slowing to 18km/h for the sole hardy camp trailer, 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, shoveled out for most of the time before Sweep, then forgot to clear the snow from the radiator, where it froze – restricting air flow. After a quick extraction by the big red diesel, the blocked radiator presented an overheating problem, so Jeff Bain and Michele Toffler bypassed the next regularity to reach Princeton closer to on-time. Ironically, their heater had quit working on the way to Merritt; now the engine at least, was too hot. Other natural features on the first regularity surprised Car 25 while approaching a checkpoint. Rounding a corner at 68km/h Ron Janzen and John Hurton met a moose! Ron was still a bit uncertain, and 7-late when he passed the checkpoint.

A very short transit brought the rally to the 70km Otter Valley Regularity. Beginning on snow-covered forest roads at 72km/h the route was smooth and wide, interrupted by the occasional long sweeper and back-to-back hard right into hard left. At 16.31km the speed dropped to 50km/h, a clue as to what's ahead. In 1km the road narrowed, dropped left into the canyon for Otter Creek through a long right over bridge. When Rallymaster Paul Westwick was asked if this "left over crest dropping" was as icy as past years – his reply: "H*** yes!" The planned checkpoint and photo-op at the bridge was scrubbed due to the deep snow. Snowy roads continued into Tulameen, then snaked along the cliffs above Coalmont on dry pavement, ending under the watchful eyes of the big rock formations called "hoodoos".

A brief break in Princeton for gas and snacks then on to Princeton-Summerland Road, Bankier, and Osprey Lake. Osprey Lake was used again (from T-Bird '05) due in large part to the icy conditions elsewhere. The fantastic pre-run photo of Hedley-Nickel Plate hillclimb on the website doesn't convey how it became "just too slippery".

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 down to 50 for a bridge, checkpoint, and hairpin hillclimb before a brief 6km stint creeping up to 68 at the end of section.

The transit passed through Summerland, south through Penticton and Okanagan Falls on 97 before climbing into the hills again. OK Falls Regularity at 73km was the longest of the event. Climbing through instructed hairpins and increased speeds, the rally entered the snow-zone, becoming all white with "nice big snow banks". The initial steep ascent may have

been the “spoiler” for the little 1969 Saab Sonnet of Satch Carlson and Russ Kraushaar. The hilltop CP caught the bright red V4 at 1-late (under winter scoring this becomes a zero), followed by on-time absolute zeroes for the remaining five checkpoints and best score on the section. Speeds on top of the plateau ranged from 60 to 72.

A short transit through the Idabel Lake area led to McCulloch Regularity. This well-used access to snowmobile trails began wide and smooth at 60km/h (a bit more urgent for the twin checkpoint cars just arriving from earlier duties on Osprey Lake). At 14km the road narrowed a bit and passed through easy curves, passing a huge snowmobile campfire and our “spectator area” for Thunderbird. At 17km the road became seriously narrow and twisted, prompting the question from CP car driver — “HOW fast are they supposed to be going through here?” — before taking up position on a tight right, above Hydraulic Creek on the outskirts of Kelowna. From this vantage point, three cars could be viewed at once on the hairpins dropping into the valley.

Kelowna Transit led toward Vernon and 49km Beaver Lake Regularity. Beaver Lake climbed quickly on dry roads becoming snowy twists through the many recreation sites skirting Kalamalka Lake 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. Nine teams failed to make the start, and a couple more were late but took advantage of winter scoring to salvage some time. Car 9 Navvie Stu Fealk (dad) calc’ed out a “late” time for Driver Dan Fealk (son). No sooner had the announced lateness been noted then the Subaru XT-6 immediately found a snow bank. Sweep arrived, and they rejoined the route, clearing the last CP with 2331 seconds lateness, reduced to 19-late under winter rules.

Accommodations, dining, and camaraderie at Vernon’s Prestige Inn allowed the rally to relax and await scoring, after 479.55km (297.98mi), although that would be a long wait, and a very short night for the organizers.

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 to the Shuswap River Bridge at Ashton 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 near Tappen, where the route turned west on Skimiken Lake Road for the Turtle Valley Regularity. The section, including Turtle Valley Road has been deep powder for past events; bare roads this year, with only occasional sanded snow areas.

Chase provided a break for fuel and food, before Highway 1 and the Thompson River Bridge took the rally to 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 and alongside recreation

sites. Several km later the snow diminished as the route dropped at 36km/h through hairpins to the ledge above the Thompson, ending at Pinantan-Pritchard Road.

Crossing the Thompson and Hwy 1, Duck Range Regularity ran through Martin Prairie and Duck Range cattle country on dry roads.

Reaching Hwy 97 again, near Monte Creek, the rally turned south for 14km to Twig Creek Regularity. Twig Creek began after running through the log sort yard. A few km into the section the rally would have to share the road with firewood cutters, before continuing at 65 and 72km/h to the first scored checkpoint where 27 cars scored zero! There would be a long gap before the next CP. Road conditions gradually became all snow, no sand, with taller walls of white to buffer one’s indiscretions. At 24.8km an acute left, under the shade of big trees, *could* have been a great photo-op, given enough crews. As the Rallymaster pointed out, just 0.6km later at 25.4, 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. The first cars made it (some checkpoint cars put on a good show) then Car 4 pushed “just a little wide” on exit, high-centered on a small berm of ice and rock, with no way to regain traction. They would wait for Sweep; and their triangle would sufficiently warn the rest of the field against the same fate. There was some minor discussion of the conflict of scoring the CP, while everyone slowed for the triangle, but all were affected in the same way and the necessity to slow down overruled any grumbling, and saved swapping paint! As the road opened up into cattle country on the Douglas Ranch, 72km/h cattle guards provided numerous hard-points for calculations and tweaking the computers, over the 30km to end of section.

The transit followed the main road 10km to the Village of Douglas Lake, turning south along the Douglas Creek drainage for Minnie Lakes Regularity. As this section undulates through rangeland, the low spots on the road usually become mini lakes, with spectacular water splashes at 60km/h, but were now mini skating rinks – frozen solid. Turning north at the ranch gate, Pennask Lake Road is wide and smooth (except for a couple of cattle guards) and turns to bare gravel as it drops the last 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. (3rd on day 1) Peter becomes the “winningest” Thunderbird driver with his fourth win. First Historic Equipped / Second Overall, to Satch Carlson and Russ Kraushaar with 17. (2nd on day 1) 1st Calculator / 5th Overall, to Steve Richards and Gary Reid. 1st Historic / 9th Overall, to Richard Childs and Helen Welter. 1st Novice to Luc Girouard and Bernd Schmitzer. Continuing their streak, winning the Pacific Coast Challenge in 2005, First in Paper to Steve Perret and Kathryn Hansen.

Thunderbird is known for many things, and now may count a cure for motion sickness: Dave Sharp of Edmonton and Marcel Chichak would routinely catch one of the Historic cars on the steep T-Bird hill climbs, then have to follow along in the twisty narrow sections with no chance to pass, falling a few seconds down, behind the minute-late car. The smoke and fumes from the oily exhaust contributed to Marcel's motion sickness. On day two they had an opportunity to move into a vacant starting slot, a few numbers ahead of the Historic car. No fumes, no nausea, fewer points with a cure.

Full results and photos at www.rallybc.com
More rally stories at www.tsdroadrally.com

RASC (overall placing): S. Richards/Reid -5th;
Horst/Woodbridge -18th; Comden/Kyle-20th;
McMillen/Crippen - 35th.
42 of 48 cars finished.

Club News

*** Dues can be paid at the March**

Meeting.

* Check the RASC website for exciting updates.
<http://www.rainierautosports.com/>

* Changing the meeting site is again contemplated. The Renton-based newsletter staff is scouring Tukwila and Renton for possible locations.

TRIVIA

* Ken and Sue Lingbloom "worked" the Mexico WRC rally. They ended up arranging the rally cars for the "Superspecial" stage, but did get out of town to see a little bit of rally action.

* Historically, the snow pack measured as of March 11 determines how much irrigation water will be available in the Yakima Valley orchards (and vineyards).

FOR SALE / Wanted:

* For Sale: 1990 Subaru Legacy AWD wagon. 5-speed, new clutch, 16" alloy wheels. 190k miles but runs well, yours for \$1500 before we put it on Crain's List. Jerry Hines 425-823-6343

Calendar

(The Canadians swapped dates-HOD for C-to-C, Sno-git is now July 15. Thanks to Ron Sorem for keeping track.)

Other events

Jun 8-11 13th Annie & Steve Norman Classic Motorcar Rally, Lk. Crescent Lodge WA
Aug 10-13 Monte Shelton North West Classic Motorcar Rally Portland OR
Aug 14-22 - Alcan5000 2006 (Kirkland-Dawson-Anchorage) www.alcan5000.com

Northwest to mid-June

Puget Sound TSD

Mar 10 Friday Nighter, NWRC
Apr 2 Flapdoodle Express by Chuckanut SCC, Gimmick, Bellingham, Start: Bellis Fair Mall Food Court (exit 256), Reg opens 9:30, FCO 11am Entry fee \$20 +3 cans of food, After March 29: \$30 +cans
Pre-register at <http://www.chuckanutsc.org/>
Apr 14 Friday Nighter, ORCA
Apr 23 Raindrop by RASC (Whidbey Is)
May 12 Friday Nighter, ORCA
Jun 3-4 No Alibi by RASC, (Wenatchee-North Central WA)
Jun 11 (to be named) CSCC, Bellingham WA
Jun 9 Friday Nighter, PSRC
July 15 Sno-git, ORCA, Marysville

British Columbia TSD

Apr 8 TSD Rally School by IRC
Apr 9 Storm the Island (STI) by IRC, paved night TSD by IRC, Victoria
Apr 29-30 Coast To Coast by IRC, PCC, Port Alberni
May 13-14 Heart of Darkness, WCRA BC Regional, Coquihalla region
Jul 8 Novice TSD by IRC, #3 (of 4) Duncan BC
Jul 22 Gold Digger WCRA BC Regional TSD (may move to late Aug/Sept) Pemberton BC

Oregon TSD

Mar 11 CSCC TSD Rally School & Rally Cascade Sports Car Club, Tigard OR
Mar 17 Friday Night Road Rally, Portland OR
Apr 28 Friday Night Road Rally, Portland OR
May 13 The Oregon Trailblazer, Cascade SCC, Course, (location tba)
May 26 Friday Night Road Rally, Portland OR
Jun 16 Friday Night Road Rally, Portland OR

NW Stage

Mar 31-Apr 2 Performance Rally School w/RallyX Washington County Fairplex Hillsboro OR
Apr 2 "Fools Play" Primitive Rallycross Washington County Fairplex Hillsboro OR
Apr 21-23 Wagons Ho / Oregon Or Bust / Trails End Reg'l (5 coef. over 3 days) Hillsboro OR
May 20 John Nagel Memorial Rally, Regional Stage Rally, Shelton WA
May 21 Gene Nielsen Memorial Stages, Regional Stage Rally, Shelton WA
May 26-27 Rocky Mountain Rally, CARS National Stage Rally CRC, Calgary AB
Jun 16-17 Mountain Trials, BC Regional Stage Rally

Rainier Auto Sports Club

will meet this coming Monday, March 13 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: Bring money. Dues are \$30/family, \$25/individual. Fill out the 2006 Membership Renewal Form, being sure to tick the "e-mail only WAG" if you find the paper issue cumbersome.
Maybe Thunderbird boasting, or just stories. Some samples of various Raindrop stuff; Steve Richards has firmed up Raindrop, now needs to rope some workers. Discussion of Generals, moving the club meetings to Renton or (gasp) Lake City.

2006 Board Members:

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Vice-President: Dan Comden, dan@comdens.com, [REDACTED]

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The Wishbone Alley Gazette is published for the members and friends of Rainier Auto Sports Club. Subscription price is \$10 per year (paper), free e-mail.

The editor is Mark Nolte, ph. (425)226-3155. View back issues at

<http://www.rainierautosports.com/wag/default.htm>

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