

Rally News

* "No Alibi" Rally 2006, by Ron Sorem

Wenatchee, WA. June 3 & 4, 2006. Rainier Auto Sports Club presented their premier gravel tour rally. Twenty-three cars took the start at Confluence State Park, bordered by the Wenatchee and Columbia Rivers, 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. While a complete route of gravel-only would be ideal, reality, locked gates, and time constraints provided connecting paved transits with plenty of gravel, over rolling hills of wheat and narrow twisting roads through areas of the Okanogan and Colville National Forests.

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". Very well said. "No Alibi" uses "Passage Control" format. Checkpoint crews may be hidden, and competitors do not stop as they are timed when they pass a checkpoint location. Pauses, breaks, and slack time during transits provided ample opportunity for photos.

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 the Park, east over the Columbia, and south on the Sunset Highway into East Wenatchee before starting the 8-mile climb up Badger Mountain with excellent views of the valley and snow-capped peaks in the Wenatchee, Stuart, and Cascade Ranges.

"Badger Mountain" TSD began at 35-mph and quickly increased to 43 and 47 for driver's warm-up on gravel, dropping into Beaver Creek Canyon with appropriate slower CASTs and Quiet Zones, as needed past ranch houses, before regaining a short section of pavement at CAST 48, then gravel again at the highest elevation of the section, some 3500 feet above Confluence Park, then dropping quickly to historic Waterville.

Just north of Waterville, "Browns Canyon" TSD revisits 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 the Columbia again. Then river view Transit through orchard land nearly to

Chelan (Beebe Bridge) and the rally's next climb to the plateau.

"McNeil Canyon" TSD, the longest of the day at 29.91 miles, began at the Beebe Orchards apple packing plant and after 6 miles of 12% grade, leaves pavement for the rolling hills and dips through wheat land where the green new growth is interrupted by monumental lava rocks. The new growth was also interrupted by fresh, day-old puddles from recent rainstorms. Good for the wheat, also good for photos at CAST 26 with BIG splashes and drivers having great fun. Many were quite early to the checkpoint accompanying the photographer.

Unfortunately (or not, depending on one's score) the checkpoint was thrown and the entire field voted upon "mock" scores during dinner – related solely to the height of the mud spray. The digital photos were projected on a restaurant wall, to the applause of all.

With regard to puddle protocol, slow and easy may be fine for the tortoise in you, but for the wild hares, straight-on full blast is just that, a blast – until, a big puddle IN a corner changes all you plans. Straight-on, the spray arches off to each side of the car, no wipers needed. On corners however, off-to-the-side is where you are turning and consequently you drive into the splash – sometimes with spectacular results. Veterans turned on wipers entering the corner puddles – newbies gained a valuable lesson.

Fifteen miles into the section a curious instruction reads: "CG (PREVENTS VIRTUAL CATTLE)". Upon arrival, the humor is revealed: No longer a cattleguard, therefore no cattle to be guarded... A bit further along, the rally passed Sunday's re-entry from Central Ferry, jogged right then left and began a gradual 2-mile downhill off Dyer Hill, before a "falling" descent of Bridgeport Hill Road, with its hairpins and vistas overlooking Chief Joseph Dam and Bridgeport's Spike-Days Festival.

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, "Coleman Hill" TSD climbs some 1300 feet over a twisting course above the river onto Coleman Hill and Pearl Hill. 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 vary from

32 to 38 to 45 – 18 miles in 30 minutes.

A short Transit from homestead sites at Niles Corner, passed Del Rio and Four Corners, the rally turns north for “Strahl Canyon” TSD and REX roads – REX is not explained- however the section is more “Animal Farm” than “Jurassic Park”. Oddly, many fence posts and gate poles are adorned with stuffed animals, and an occasional helmet tops a post as the teams twist through an undulating path with “BR OVER CREST”, a 6-foot blue alien “ET”, and “R AT CREST” as the animal ornaments disappear. A short rough section (at CAST 15!) is followed by sweeping lefts or hairpin rights and nice views overlooking the Columbia, ending with a viewpoint for Grand Coulee Dam. (Still huge and magnificent after many years of visiting this viewpoint.)

A Transit southeast into Lincoln County and the rally briefly leaves the views of Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake, the 150-mile impoundment of the Columbia behind Grand Coulee. “Sage Hen Draw” TSD played in the section-line roads. A mile straight, drop into a creek bed, twist back up the other side; right over blind crest into dip; left at Sage Hen Draw, roughly 1300 feet above the river. More up and down; an acute right on gravel at 38, climb at 44; drop again, 300 feet below the previous high point. Due south now to Highway 2 at Creston, near the highest point of the Columbia Plateau and a brief transit east for a welcomed rest break.

“Miles Creston” TSD revisits former “No Alibi” roads featuring a 4-mile dirt track twisting through pine trees (with a well-camouflaged checkpoint) then a 7-mile stretch of twisting pavement dropping to the Columbia and another surprise checkpoint.

“Lake Roosevelt” Transit is the longest stretch of pavement for Day One and travels past historic Fort Spokane (1880). North along the river bluff the route traverses Enterprise Valley, Fruitland Valley, Hunters Valley and Cedonia – between Hunter and Cedonia there is a black bear sighting -- then a picturesque drive through old dairy and cattle farms.

“Old CC” TSD is the last timed section of the day. Fourteen miles in twenty-six minutes; climbing along Summit Range to 2900 feet, dropping briefly, then climbing again to a checkpoint on Dunn Mountain at nearly 3700 feet only to drop 1500 feet through the forest in six miles.

A brief Transit took the rally into Colville where the traditional Saturday Night Banquet featured a fine meal, good beverages, and something new to replace the guest speaker. A 8mm film was donated by a film archivist in Spokane, featuring the 1965 Ponderosa Sweepstakes Rally, and transformed to DVD with soundtrack by the RASC staff. The recollections of twenty-or-so past Ponderosa competitors enlightened the “youngsters” in the room, by identifying vintage Alfa Romeos, Austin

Healys, Hillmans, early VWs and even a Ferrari. There were speculations as to some of the locations on the rally that often utilized some of the same roads as Saturday's run. 282.54 miles in 6:01:33, led by Satch Carlson and Russ Kraushaar with 11, followed by Gary Webb and R. Dale Kraushaar from Arizona with only 13.

One car was late arriving when a flat tire required a side trip for new rubber.

Day Two began with rain. No dust worries this day. Running northwest out of Colville, eleven miles to “Mingo Mountain” TSD. Beginning twisting through the trees the route quickly climbs then drops into a hairpin, with photographer. For a wake-up or warm-up, “Mingo” posted three checkpoints in 4.72 miles ending at Lake Roosevelt.

The Transit skirts Kettle Falls, joins Highway 20, and runs west into the mountains to the South Fork of Sherman Creek and “Sherman Creek” TSD (elev 2536). The route is a wide Forest Service road with a gentle rise for 8-plus miles, then a sharp right uphill (elev 4430). The road narrows, actually gets very tight in spots, through blown-down trees. Over a crest there is snow in the shade of a cliff, followed by a gradual descent twisting through more trees and branches to a hairpin over Pass Creek to end at the highway again (elev 4356). We begin 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 (1896) the Transit crests Wauconda Summit and sweeps down to “Cape Labelle” TSD. The road rises and falls and twists along at 28 /25 /20 for 6-plus miles of narrow road, then opens up to CAST 33 through the valley, slows briefly for a resort area and pulls through a series of uphill switchbacks. On the long descent, a “straight” instruction proves to be much more of a keep left while in a long sweeping left turn. Fortunately the confusion is short-lived and there is no checkpoint.

“Aeneas Valley” Transit travels though the homestead lands of Chief Aeneas of the Okanogan tribe, around 1863, and leads to “Talkire Lake” TSD. The recent rains have 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 big hairpin uphill. Continuing, climbing 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 travels due west, a checkpoint crew can be

seen quite some distance away, across a canyon. The route drops into the canyon and a long hairpin right, crossing a bridge for Tunk Creek, then climbing, to the crew's cars and no interest in our passage – we'd been timed across the canyon!

The towns of Riverside, Omak, Okanogan, and Brewster are the high points of the 43-mile Transit leading to “Central Ferry Canyon” TSD. This section climbs rapidly, topping out in the wheat fields from Day One, with the lava boulder monuments. The overnight rainstorms have caused some areas of “May be slippery”. Sections of smooth clay or topsoil now have a layer of water and several corners were a surprise, 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 grade is a rush. This year would be different. The section began on saturated gravel – feeling like running on a flat tire. The first 90-right had a different “line” of travel for each car. The next sweeping, muddy, downhill left had maybe two lines for each car, front and back. Sliding quietly through the homestead site of Alstown, then trying to gain speed after Douglas Creek 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 the turn up Titchenal Canyon, 2-inch deep mud ditch to ditch. “May get some wheelspin” probably uttered in all of the computer cars. Sideways at best, for two miles, clearing the hairpin at the top to find the RASC photographer with an ear-to-ear grin, then wondering if he was also a checkpoint. Downhill briefly, then fairly good running on gravel past another checkpoint.

The rally gets a brief glimpse of the mountains west and of the river far below. Ground fog has erupted with the bright sun finding breaks in the clouds and warming the wet fields. Thick white clouds are flowing upward out of the river canyon obscuring the roadway, the sign references, and the checkpoint. Now, a chance to adjust the odo, then only a few yards later a stretch of mud, 6-inches deep, downhill, braking, cars sideways again. Checkpoint! The clouds parted to reveal a breathtaking view off 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 Sunday's 251.18 miles in 6:33:17, for 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 / Russ Kraushaar taking 1st Overall; and Gary Webb / R. Dale Kraushaar with 20, for 2nd Overall. First Equipped to Steve Richards/ Gary Reid.

First SOP to Steve Perret/ Kathryn Hansen. And, First Novice to Derek Mitchell/ Mathew Brucker.

Complete results and photos at www.rainierautosports.com

Thanks to our Workers:

Marvin Crippen, route and routebook, checkpoints, scoring. Jessica Fleenor, checkpoints and putting up with Marvin
Dan Comden, registrar, rally precheck, checkpoints, sweep.
Kim Prater and Michael Garvais, lunch hosting, checkpoints
Steve Willey, decal production, checkpoints.
Joel Wright, checkpoints.
Tom Palidar, checkpoints.
Mark Nolte and Sally DeVore, checkpoints (and 2nd grader test correcting.)
Ken and Sue Lingbloom, checkpoints.
Jim Hogan, rally precheck, checkpoints.
Kirk and Terry Simons and family, rally precheck. - and inspiration.
Paul Horst, checkpoints and photography.
Jeff McMillen, trophies

The annual trip to the vastness east of the Cascades is always worthwhile. Passing traffic on two-lane roads isn't normal operating procedure in the Puget Sound basin. Being able to see more than 4 car-lengths ahead still comes as a shock. Like 40 miles!

One highlight was coming to a halt on Highway 20 outside of Republic for a cattle drive. 350 head were being moved from winter pastures to the high country. Real cowboys herding reluctant cattle across the highway - for 20 minutes!

Working CP's is different from the rally. I got to chat with Mr. Lewis, who said he'd be "Mayor of Dyer" if there could be such a thing, and raised 2000 acres of organic wheat on land that had belonged to his father. He proudly pointed to a fiber optic cable that the PUD had strung for the farmers on the vast East Wenatchee Plateau.

It was always a relief when every car was accounted for. RASC makes sure all the rallyists are well taken care of, even if it requires a CP crew to accompany them. - MN

.* Alcan: Jerry is on course measurement as you read this. He's already run over the Top of the World Hwy, and will survey the Denali Hwy next. So, all the nasty stuff is done.

* Olympus May 20/21: Ed Millman sat in on the early organizing meetings and things looked hopeful. At a RASC meeting he asked if the club wanted to get involved, and consensus was to move forward with a RASC participation.

The "Maxwell Loop" stage was awarded to RASC, with Ed Millman being appointed Stage Captain duties. This mostly amounted to wrangling enough workers to fill the many tasks. Ed got just barely enough. The Saturday stage ran twice, at 11AM and 1 o'clock.

Sheila Millman (Mrs....) and Ron Sorem greeted the 30 some competitors at ATC, then sent them up to Joel Wright to Start, while Ed (N7CAJ) tracked them on the radio.

On stage were Dan Comden and his 7 year old, and the Mountain Top (radio net) was run at the other intersection.

Jeff McMillen had a nice view, working Flying Finish. The STOP control worked well with Marvin Crippen filling out the log sheets as the rallyists arrived in nice order. Mark Nolte (N7RZF) radioed the finishers to the Start HAM. Considering that the stage was a loop, a tin can and string might have sufficed.

All in all, RASC came through with the bare minimum of people. Hopes for a "different kind of rally" went for naught as things went as they always have.

One new item was to have a dedicated scoring crew at the finish of each stage; either radioing or calling (cell phone coverage is scarce) the scores in as each competitor arrived.

Sunday's RASC participation was more typical, with the HAMs out on the Nahwahtzel stage, in a 23-mile version.

The NASA-sanctioned event ran safely and the DNF's were minor mechanical problems.

Club News

* Check the RASC website for exciting updates. Pictures of "No Alibi" should be great.
<http://www.rainierautosports.com/>

TRIVIA

From the RASC list:

Eric Horst; "What I know of Mabel Plodsberry is from on an old Nor'Wester document. Not sure the year but it was the one where (Steve Richards) was apparently "scalded quite badly on the chest after his Tiger's radiator cap jammed as he was trying to remove it at control #8 and were rushed to hospital after finishing the rally."

"Anyway, it says: 'MABEL PLODSBERRY AWARD (for overall performance on index of something or another): Chuck and Joan Pickerel - who suffered a holed sump after a rock flew from nowhere for no apparent reason and put a sizeable vent in their Corvair's sump while Chuck was touring gently up the Friday closed section - (for one of the fastest times of the day))

"I wondered if anybody remembered enough about this award to consider resurrecting it on certain occasions when somebody "performs well on index of something or another."

Steve Richards: "I had to refresh my memory by calling an old friend and retired Rainier member from the 70s, Mary Fears. Mabel Plodsberry was created in the fantasy world of Jack Deno, Rainier founder. I do not know the significance of the name Plodsberry but her navigator, Lance Runthrough, was so named because of his constant need to stop to relieve himself during all phases of a rally.

There is also some obscure connection with the alley at Avenita De Las Gatos (avenue of the cat) or otherwise known as the alley behind the cat house, where they somehow obtained spare parts for their rally car - spare parts such as wishbones, and thus the name of the club newsletter, Wishbone Alley Gazette.

" One more thing. Mabel and Lance were constantly having to drive flat out in effort to make up time due to Lance's poor bladder control. I believe Mabel drove a Ferrari but I'm not sure."

RASC Calendar

Stage events in italics

- Jun 8-11 13th Annie & Steve Norman Classic
Motorcar Rally, Lk Crescent Lodge, WA
- Jun 9 Friday Nighter -PSRC, Bellevue
- Jun 11 ORG SCCA 2006 Rally Cross #3 of 8 Oregon
Rally Group
- Jun 11 Nooksack Nonsense, Bellingham, (NWRC
Monte Carlo series)
- Jun 16 Night Road Rally, Portland OR
*Jun 16-17 Mountain Trials, WCRA, BC Regional
Stage Rally*
- Jun 23-25 Performance Rally Driving School
Washington County Fairplex, Hillsboro OR*
- Jun 23-25 Columbia Gorge Classic Rallye, Columbia
Gorge MGA Club, Portland OR
- Jun 24 Rallycross, Team Vanquish
location TBA near Olympia WA
- Jul 1 Grand Prix Imports Rally Against Parkinson's,
SCCA Regional Tour, Portland
- Jul 2 SCCA 2006 Rally Cross #4 of 8 with all club
party @PIR ORG, Portland
- Jul 8-9 Golden West 2005 (PCC series) Yreka, CA
- Jul 14 Friday Nighter -ORCA, Bellevue
- Jul 15 or 8/26 Mountains To Sea, Cascade, Touring
TSD, Portland
- Jul 15 Sno-git NWRC Monte Carlo Series
ORCA, Marysville
- Jul 21 Friday Night Road Rally Portland, OR
- Jul 22 Gold Digger (BC Regional TSD) (may move
to late Aug/Sept) Pemberton, BC
- Jul 29 Brooklyn Bash Rallycross, Team Vanquish,
Rallycross, Brooklyn, WA
- Aug 4-6 Performance Rally Driving School
Thurston County ORV Park, Olympia, WA*
- Aug 5-6 Rally Worker RallySprint, Pacific Rally
Group, ORV Park
- Aug 10-13 Monte Shelton North West Classic
Motorcar Rally, Portland, OR
- Aug 11 Friday Nighter, Bellevue
- Aug 12 Ray's Rambler Pacific Rally Group Rally
Worker's Rally Sprint Party, Montesano, WA*
- Aug 13, Janice's Jaunt, PRG, Rally Worker's Rally
Sprint/ Party, Montesano,*
- Aug 12 Beaver Goes to Mars SCCA National Road
Rally (Course), Centralia/Chehalis
- Aug 13 Bob Goes to Town SCCA National Road
Rally (Course) Centralia/Chehalis
- Aug 14-22 Alcan5000, Kirkland-Dawson-
Anchorage**
- Aug 18 Friday Night Road Rally, Portland, OR
- Aug 19 Tsunami, IRC TSD night, paved, Vanc. Is.
Series #3 Naniamo, BC
- Aug 26 or 7/15 Mountains To Sea, Cascade Touring
TSD, Portland, OR
- Aug 20 Western Whatcom Wobble, Chuckanut
Sports Car Club, Bellingham, WA
- Sep 8 Friday Nighter - NWRC, Bellevue
*Sep 8-10 Wild West International Rally
NASA/USAC/FIA, Shelton, WA*
- Sep 15 Friday Night Road Rally, Portland, OR
- Sep 17 Ketchum Again II, Monte Carlo Series,
Puget Sound Rally Club (location tba) WA
*Sep 22-24 Performance Rally Driving School
w/RallyX, Portland, OR*
- Sep 24 "Churn and Turn" Primitive Rallycross,
Portland, OR
- Sep 30 -- Oct 1 Maryhill Loops Hilleclimb,
Goldendale, WA
- Oct 7 Night on Bald Mountain, ORCA night TSD
- Oct 8 ORG SCCA 2006 Rally Cross #3 of 8,
Oregon Rally Group
- Oct 13 Friday Nighter - RASC, Bellevue**
- Oct 21 Mt Hood Rally, ORG Regional Stage Rally
(Hood River) Odell, OR*
- Oct 27 Friday Night Road Rally, Portland, OR
- Oct 28 Ghouls Gambol XL, Cascade
Halloween TSD Portland, OR
- Oct 28 Midnight, night gravel TSD, Vanc. Is.
Series #4 Duncan BC
- Nov 4 Armageddon XXIV, TSD, Bellingham WA
- Nov 10 Friday Nighter- ORCA Bellevue
- Nov 18-19 Totem, WCRA, (PCC series)

Rainier Auto Sports Club

will meet this coming Monday, June 12 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 pass, 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: No Alibi stories, applause for Eric, Marvin and the rest of the laborers. Special attention to Dan Comden who rebuilt his Saab along the way.

After organizing the Olympus stage, Ed Millman may not show up to inspire participation in Wild West.

Jerry may be back in time for an Alcan pre-survey report.

2006 Board Members

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

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The Wishbone Alley Gazette

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