

Rally News

* The 2009 "No Alibi" was as good as expected. The weather was "odd", with thunderstorms and general cloudiness. Not to mention an afternoon hailstorm that was out of place.

Problems? Jim Hogan's WRX got internal indigestion in Davenport, which is about as far away from a certified Subaru specialist as you can get. The motor had a knock-knock sound that wasn't going to fix itself. He decided to head for Seattle and made it a couple of miles before it quit.

Out of cell phone range, he walked to a farmhouse, bracing for the worst. The nice lady volunteered to tow the car to Seattle! Jim took pictures of the whole thing.

The famous water-crossing was deemed OK during an early Sunday drive through. But the water may have been a bit deeper. And with Eric's dad, Paul, taking pictures, well, rallyists will be rallyists. WRX' radiators are kept in place by weak brackets. The score was at least 2 repaired in Moses Lake on Monday. (Great pictures, though).

Sweep was Jeff McMillen/Steve Willey, just picking up scores. Jeff left his skidpan at the water-crossing. Paul was in a pickup truck and didn't leave it behind.

Dan Comden and Hans Adomeit were crew "E". Since Dan had driven a checkout a few weeks prior, he got to pick out "his" checkpoints. No word what his criteria was.

Marvin Crippen and Jessica Fleenor seemed to be everywhere, including working CP's. His title for the weekend was "worker wrangler". He scoured the maps to pick out the route, so knew the shortcuts.

Ken and Sue Lingbloom volunteered to work, and were part of the large Bellingham contingent.

Diana Horst and Nicole Nuber worked controls, then hustled to Moses Lake to lay out the post-rally bar-b-que.

Mark Nolte and Sally DeVore enjoyed some roads they'd been on during the Evergreen State 1000 days, when maps weren't very good. Roy Ward knew pretty much where he was going since he did course work on earlier editions of the No Alibi rallies.

Jennifer Daly and Glyn Trafford came down from Canada to do whatever was needed, which turned out to be working checkpoints. They were also promoting the Targa Canada West event next May 23-28.

After decades and decades of trying, Ron Sorem finally got lowest score on a two-day rally. Congratulations! Asked what the scenery was like, he pointed out that he spent as much time looking at the Timewise readout as the road. "What scenery?" He did write a review anyway-MN

No Alibi Rally 2009 by Ron Sorem © 6-8-2009 "Wet and Wild"

June 6 & 7, 2009. Moses Lake, WA. Rainier Auto Sports Club, and Rallymaster Eric Horst, with a cast of characters from around the Northwest, presented the 10th Anniversary running of their Premier Gravel Touring Rally -- **No Alibi 2009** -- featuring "some of the best 'least-traveled' gravel roads" the Northwest has to offer.

Thirty-seven teams took the start in Moses Lake, under threatening skies, with openings of bright blue and

very bright sunshine. Entries ranged from a vintage Cadillac to historic BMW 2002 in full Targa Newfoundland trim, to 2009 luxury sport sedans and SUVs.

The Odo Check ran east of Moses Lake to Wheeler, then north into Rocky Coulee. "Black Rock Coulee" TSD rose gently through Sand Coulee before entering the steppe surrounding its namesake. Two checkpoints preceded a notable turn above Black Rock Lake. "Hard to see and easy to overshoot" was right on the money. Several cars passed the well-hidden turn, and found the other side of a delta, making an easy recovery to the course, but still losing several seconds time. Another checkpoint awaited errant teams before the end of section.

Down into the Crab Creek basin and the little community of Marlin (Krupp). A quiet pass through town, then the steep long uphill hairpin, and a climb north over the ridge and down into the Canniwai Valley before turning due east and the start of "Sullivan Lake" TSD. Early cars sat out their times in sunshine. Car 19 reported a few raindrops as they pulled away -- by car 25 there was heavy rain turning to "pea-sized" hail covering the ground and challenging visibility. Within a few miles teams were back to bright sunshine. Two checkpoints, then the route began to drop into Marlin Hollow before climbing again near Sullivan Lake and another checkpoint.

"Coffee Break" transit moved toward Odessa, skirted the south end of Apache Pass Road and dropped in on the campers and fishermen at Coffeepot Lake Park. No Alibi shared the weekend with "Free Fishing" promotions in several western states, although this brief stop was the only time there was any interaction. Climbing out of the rest break, teams turned east again, crossing Lake Creek and heading north.

"Telford" TSD followed Highland and Hatton and Swanson School roads to Seven Springs Dairy road, between two of the Swanson Lakes, quietly passing two farms and two checkpoints. No Alibi utilizes "passage" controls -- cars drive past the checkpoints -- some in plain view, some hidden, all precisely measured, but unknown to the rally teams. One such example at 25.67 came up 3 hundredths before the mileage reference "Primitive Road", on a corner, with corral fences and ranch roads. The checkpoint car could be seen for several agonizing seconds while the teams asked, "where is he timing?!!" A few miles later the only "off" of the event, in the twisty bits of Telford, winding between rock castles and cattail ponds. A following team managed to pull the truck back onto the road and all preceded without further delay. The rise and fall continued to a "Quiet Zone" at the Sheriff's house, and End Section at US-2.

Davenport was the lunch stop, with lots of choices for gas and grub, including glowing reviews of Edna's Drive-in for fast friendly service and great burgers.

"Bluestem" TSD, south of Davenport, saw more wild and wet weather. Storm cells converged west of the rally, with bright lightning and roaring thunder. These were great photo-ops until the lightning grew much closer and everyone returned to their cars! A few minutes later

the skies opened up for more hail. Very rare in the Pacific Northwest, two verified, and a possible third, funnel-cloud touched down around the rally -- not that close, but very interesting for some leapfrogging checkpoint crews! The section saw a transition from the plateau and rolling hill fields, to the pine forest, and into Sprague for a break.

"Hole-in-the-Ground" TSD began with a delay!

The explanation: Reports from advancing checkpoint crews of road blockages by flash flooding and a thick layer of hail, brought a 5-minute "hold" by the rallymaster to access water depth and how fast the torrent would clear... It did, but the aftermath, some 10 miles into the section brought thick mud over the road, and about two miles north of Pine City a culvert had been declared "probably OK" by some passing county official -- road repair pending. More gravel now, following above the Pine Creek valley, a new bridge, an improved horse and hiking trail, then checkpoint! Slowing for the narrow road, the route drops through a couple of twists, then exposure overlooking Hole-in-the-Ground canyon's fishing holes. Climbing out of the geologic cut, a big sweeper, a sharp right at crest and checkpoint!

The next transit, returning to Sprague, brought a stop at the Wagon Road monument, and a surprise No Alibi ice cream handout. A break for gas, then a brisk run along the south side of Sprague Lake.

"McElroy Coulee" TSD took the rally into the Karakul Hills (aka Corico Hills). Four checkpoints measured teams successes following the coulee (we saw only three), over a shallow ridge, then dropping down to cross Hwy 395 and head north again at Paha. The Targa Newfoundland entry retired here, limping back to Moses Lake with a broken exhaust.

"Gering" TSD had only eight instructions over the 14.85 miles, with four checkpoints, including one well hidden in the wheat fields -- green rolling hills now, "amber waves of grain" in a couple of months.

The transit along I-90 to Moses Lake brought a time for self analysis and thoughts of how to improve for Day Two. The Banquet was excellent and well reviewed. Scores were posted in a timely manner, about time for dessert, and the speculation began. The rally was measured with a BMW325ix -- first and second cars were BMW325ix... Oregon brought three cars to the top four, with scores of 8, Marinus and Renee Damm; 9, Russ and Katy Kraushaar; and 12, Jason Webster and Brandon Harer. Washington brought up number four at 14, Ron Sorem and Max Vaysburd. Very tight, over 27 scored controls and 301 miles of rallying in eight hours.

Day Two began north from Moses Lake with a better weather forecast and 36 cars. "Rocky Ford" TSD dropped into a shallow coulee and followed the hay fields and sagebrush, 5 miles due north to "camera corner", a 90-left on loose gravel. Most cars were on 'zero' into the corner, but realized late that the checkpoint car was another quarter mile down the road. 30 cars late, 4 early, and two zeros... Out onto pavement, then drop past a large hatchery spanning Rocky Ford Creek. The section ends just four miles south of Soap Lake, where the rally will rest, after a 115-mile westerly loop.

The transit worked its way through Ephrata, up the hill past the courthouse onto Sagebrush Flats Road,

over the top, downhill to an acute left that "comes up quickly". "Baird Springs" TSD might have been the "wild horses" section after several sightings in previous weeks. 2.76 miles into the section the wide gravel changes to a two-track with tricky hairpins into a wash, then Acute Right, a short jog and 90-left to continue fairly wide gravel at 44-mph. Keeping on time was troublesome at the well-hidden checkpoint a mile later. Right at Stop onto Baird Springs Road, following a valley on the north slope of the Beezley Hills. Descending into Lynch Coulee, several cars took an acute right, past a checkpoint car, onto an off-course excursion. Most recovered quickly; one took a looong adventure but eventually rejoined the route. One of No Alibi's landmark tunnels was there and waiting, but surprisingly there was no checkpoint as in the past.

A "quick trip along the Columbia River" took teams to "Welcome to the Rock" TSD, up Rock Island Grade. There is a tenth of a mile of pavement to get up to speed, then the gravel challenges drivers at 33-mph through a long 90-right, a hairpin left, checkpoint, another hairpin right, photos, hairpin left, and a checkpoint at the top. A long train of civilian traffic interrupted teams' search for checkpoints at the "usual spots". Not there. Not there. Huh! Not there either?... Into the climb over Badger Mountain, then a checkpoint in plain sight -- but where were they timing? Which rock? Just over a mile later the route follows a hairpin right, down Titchenal Canyon's twisting loose surfaces, for over two miles to another checkpoint, and end of section at pavement.

A short transit through the near ghost-town railhead of Alston, crossed Douglas Creek and climbed up the hill out of "town" into the wheat. "Olson Hill" TSD opened up with wide gravel along the section lines, with great opportunities for "pendulum turn" practice. At eight miles into the section the gravel turned to a narrow overgrown two-track for two miles, then back to gravel and the pendulum turns. The corners have good sight lines and are great fun, but maybe too much fun? The average dropped to 25-mph. For me, I got the read-out slowly, smoothly, down to 2-early, 1-early, a half, then zero at the cattleguard (checkpoint), only to find that the "fun" had put the odo off enough that my zero was a "two late". The rocky "Free Zone" and the short highway transit lead across Moses Coulee with it's "largest contiguous and intact areas of shrub-steppe habitat in Washington".

"Sheep Canyon" TSD began as an easy flowing run across Sagebrush Flats, then south into Grant County where the route joined Sheep Canyon Road, dropping into Soap Lake. The short rest break in town was followed by a brief trip back in time to the next Regularity. A mix of cultures -- cattle wranglers on horseback, working a small herd, while talking on cell phones. "Cows with guns" meets "cows with phones"? Cue the music.

More section lines for the start of "Dry Coulee" TSD, then a hard right, drop down through a hairpin left, past a gravel pit checkpoint, cross the valley, to an acute left onto Dry Coulee Road and the miles of alfalfa fields bordered by basalt cliffs. At 8.50 slow for the twisting climb through the rock walls up to Pinto Ridge. Right onto pavement near Summer Falls entrance and over the ridge for a long gradual fall through the wheat fields on a mix of pavement and gravel.

A short transit leading to the "Gloyd Seeps" TSD was the big "finale", with the double-caution water crossing. We'd all been warned it was deep, and assured there was no quick checkpoint following, but a big splash was alluring -- a bit too much for at least 5 cars who pushed radiators into engines, letting all the magic out of the motors, and leading to a tow into town. There are some great photos of the Wet & Wild Water Crossing. One more checkpoint, over a mile away, then three miles to the pavement.

The transit through Moses Lake to Blue Heron Park was time to reflect on the day and fill out the critique, before the great BBQ while waiting for scores. Day Two scored 20 checkpoints, covered about 189 miles, in just over 5 hours. First for the day was Glenn Wallace (WA) and R.Dale Kraushaar (AZ) with only 9. Second was Ron Sorem and Max Vaysburd with 16, followed by Oregon's LeFebvre and Trummel with 18, and Oregonians Jason Webster and Brandon Harer with 20 -- tied with first Equipped, Jason and Vanessa Stokes, also from Oregon. The two-day totals saw quite a mix-up of the first day leaders. No Alibi totals were 47 checkpoints, over 490 miles, and 13 hours.

Congratulations in **Unlimited** to Ron Sorem and Max Vaysburd for a "come from fourth" overall win with a total of 30 points. Tied at 31 were Russ and Katy Kraushaar in 2nd (Battleground, WA) and, Marinus and Renee Damm in 3rd (Portland, OR). The tie was broken first by most 'zeros' (the same), then fewest 'ones'. Fourth overall went to Jason Webster and Brandon Harer also from Portland, with 32. In **Equipped** class, Robert Gobright (WA) and Alex Schubel (BC) took First in Class and 8th Overall with 62; Second to Jason and Vanessa Stokes (OR) with 68; Third to Steve Richards and Gary Reid (WA) with 73. **Seat of Pants (SOP)** First to Hal Dittman and Susan Everett; Second to Joel McLaughlin and Chris Ringhofer; and Third to Vasco dePinna and Ben Miles. Honorable Mention, after several decades of TSD rally hiatus, went to Jeanne and Ed Rachner. In the Novice class, First to Tyson Bichler and Nate Cary; Second to Michael Dyrland and Candy Galindo; Third to Sam and Beki Ellis. The lone Vintage entry was William McRae and Bill Barbour who finished the event in style... "Ain't nothin' lackin' when you're Cadillac'n"

Complete results, photos, local interest stories, links to funnel-cloud slide shows and to other events at www.rainierautosports.com

* The 2010 summer Alcan (August 15->24) lists 16 cars and 28 motorcycles planning on the rally. Finish is in Anchorage, by way of Valdez.

Trivia

* Despite tough carcass, 20 somewhat bald gravel tires headed for the grinder in mid-June. No one recaps sedan tires anymore.

For Sale/ Wanted

* **1987 SUBARU RX 3DR, CAGED, LOG-BOOKED. 1.8TURBO, 5SPD DUAL-RANGE, LOCKING CENTER DIFF, LIMITED SLIP. \$3000 (LONG LIST OF SPARES FOR A PRICE)**
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RASC CALENDAR

BRITISH COLUMBIA & WASHINGTON TSD

July 10- Friday Nighter, by PSRC, Bellevue, WA
July 18- Sno-Git VI, TSD by ORCA, Marysville, WA
July 25-- Gold Digger TSD, Whistler, B.C.
Aug 14-Friday Nighter, Bellevue, WA
Aug 28/30- Crestline Trail, IRC, BC
Sept 11 -Friday Nighter, Bellevue, WA
Sept 19- 'Heart of Darkness', Kamloops, BC
Oct 3- Night on Bald Mountain, ORCA
Oct 9- Friday Nighter by RASC, Bellevue, WA
Oct 31- "Midnight" by IRC, Vancouver Island, BC
Nov. 7- Monster's Revenge" by Chuckanut, Bellingham
Nov 21/22- Totem, Cache Creek, BC

Rallycross

July 18 - PRG Brooklyn Bash, Brooklyn, WA
Aug 8 - PRG, "Ray Rambler" & "Janice's Jaunt", Montesano
Aug 23- Oregon Rally Group Rally Cross, OR
Sept 20- Oregon Rally Group Rally Cross, OR
Oct 11- Oregon Rally Group Rally Cross, OR

Oregon TSD

Aug 1/2- Oregon 1000, SCCA, Portland
Aug 14- Friday Night Road Rally, Milwaukie, OR
Aug 15- "Rally Against Parkinson's", PIR, Portland, OR
Aug 22- Mountains to the Sea, CSCC
Sept 4- Friday Night Road Rally, Milwaukie, OR
Sept 19- "Oregon Trailblazer", CSCC, Milwaukie, OR
Oct 2- Friday Night Road Rally, Milwaukie, OR
Oct 31- Ghouls Gambol, Portland

Stage Events

July 9- Idaho Rally/ RallyMoto, Mountain Home, ID
Sept 24/27- Wild West, PRG, Pomeroy, WA
Oct 1/3- Pacific Forest Rally, Merritt, B.C.
Oct 24 - Mt Hood/moto, Odell, OR

Other events of interest

Sept 12/19- Targa Newfoundland, St. Johns, NF

Rainier Auto Sports Club will meet this coming Monday, July 13 at 7:30 PM at Café Veloce at the Totem Lake shopping center. Best way I can think of to get there via 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: Maybe some talk of the recent Idaho Rally. The Board may have some business with our non-profit status.

Jeff might ask for some interest in populating the August Friday Niter.

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The Wishbone Alley Gazette

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