

Rally News

* Totem 2009: The Back Story by Ron Sorem ©
12/11/2009

(One of my Editors commented on the Totem article as being factual but lacking personal experiences... As an article for the rally community, I intended it to gloss over our contribution to the adventure, to focus on the overall picture, not the intimate details of your adventurers. That said, the following will satisfy my Editor and perhaps entertain you, the reader.)

Paul Westwick and Nicki Beverly had all the cars registered, with help from Sue & Ken Lingbloom, and checkpoint crews were sent off to their meeting. Routebooks with shortcut instructions and log sheets were passed around. Cautions from the "experienced" attendees were offered to those newer at this hobby. Tony Latham and Aaron Wong were set to perform Sweep duties. Paul gave the usual speech, warning against the "red mist" on shortcuts and that the rally would work around any missing controls. (I nodded knowingly...)

Max and I grabbed lunch and headed north to Clinton with Steve Brown and Dave Glassman close behind. The first Regularity was gorgeous with increasing snow depth and decreasing travel. The first big surprise was the cowboys on horseback on the road! Over the ridge, and just a trace of snow on frozen roads. Then overlooking the Frazer Canyon on bare gravel.

Next up, the shortcut was "a bit tight" (possibly Paul's best line) and after climbing the hill, dropping into the village behind the last car, and encountering local traffic, we were running late. Now, a quad-runner leading a small herd of heifers (? -- didn't check that closely but I like the alliteration). Next, a snowplow, at speed, on a corner, with JUST enough room for me. And no one bothered to mention on the HAM radio it was coming. Off to the shortcut, with only Steve Brown ahead of me, we were both supposed to get ahead of the rally and do yet another checkpoint. A few minutes into the run, an intersection, and a bit later the call that "we should have turned back there"... Hard to make up time on this surface. We didn't, and slotted in behind Car 10 (Steve and Kathryn) so we could get to 100 Mile House, get gas, get something to soothe a navigator's sore throat.

North of the break, we flew past the early cars and headed into the deepening snow for our next spot. At 28.19km we found a likely spot, option two of three, and set up shop. The first cars were right on time. A bit later, Renee (in car #4) called out a "big slow truck" at about 27km. Hmm. Marinus & Renee and the snowplow all arrived at our checkpoint at roughly the same time (late). Deep into the run order there was a gap... Eventually a HAM call of "two cars off at 27.8km". When Max rolled down his window, we could hear the activity. It was that close. Then the cars came by in tight groups. Record the times, record the numbers -- sort it out later.

Eventually all but one of the cars were recorded, and the last missing vehicle was waaaay too late for us to wait. Into the dark for our next shortcut. A brief stop to talk to the returning snowplow, warning of the blockage, and we were heading into the dark night, deep snow, on a different route from everyone else (except Steve, somewhere behind me). The shortcut instruction was: "Left at Stop, drive 30km or so..." no further instruction or clarification. I was able to follow the route on a GPS, 500-foot focus, and see the corners coming up, slow appropriately, and proceed. Turns out, the "younger set" does need sleep occasionally and this long boring section afforded an opportunity for Max to get caught up -- which makes it eerily quiet for the driver.

Out on the highway, we made our way through Williams Lake and joined the rally on the transit. The taillights looked familiar, and I called for "O-B-N" to tap his brakes. It was Eric Horst and Stephen Mats Mats, I asked if we could cut in front at the next instruction -- Steve chimed in that he was just behind me so we both jumped in front of Car 6, then passed the rest of the field at the start. We jumped off at our next control and watched the parade of zeroes and ones...

After all the remaining cars came through, none too late, we moved on to the next task. Down the hairpins, crossing the railroad, with train in sight (it was a slow train) and across the Fraser. Mostly muddy roads, a little frost, then climb to the next Regularity. Zero the odo and follow Ken and Sue to our reverse course shortcut.

Paul asks where we are, and mentions he might want to have me go further into the section. Ken asks if I want to go ahead of him and I make the pass safely. Ahead is a turn, THE TURN, with a change in surface from slushy gravel to sheer ice. Not certain IF this road was on the GPS, but I didn't notice... Driver failed to read the surface change in time... Navigator states Driver said: "We're not going to make this corner..." And we didn't!

First couple of car lengths "we were really flying", then wheels down, manage to miss the big and the BIG trees, then airborne again, landing at the edge of the creek. OUCH!!! Ken had told Sue he thought I was pretty fast, but didn't know how I could be that far out of sight already... (I took a shortcut) Then "We're Off", followed by Ken's "Is that you down THERE?" (aren't radios fun?)

We were seriously off, maybe a bit over 100 feet from where we left the road. We assessed any pains or pangs... I recovered a Tim Horton muffin from the dash -- it had been in the back seat. Coats on now, and shut down everything in the car. "OK we're headed up the hill" was the call everyone had been waiting for -- a huge collective exhale. It was steep, loose, snow-covered. The young guy made it up the grade fairly easily. The old guy went a slightly different route, with very little success. After several minutes climbing, and by now, several cars' arrival after their long loop, the fat ole elf propped himself up

against a tree and stated: "I'm done! You guys figure out how to get me the rest of the way up". This was solved by several tow straps linked and lowered to me at the tree.

Once at the top, hurried into a warm car, and plied with some of Ken and Sue's hot coffee, plans began for the return to Williams Lake and warmth. By now, Jeff McMillen and Marvin Crippen were there asking if we were OK. Dan Comden and Hans Andomeit were checking us out. Robert Gobrigh and Jim Breazeale and several other cars were waving as they passed. All the recovery gear (mostly tow straps) was repacked and we were headed back. (Unfortunately the checkpoint log remained in the car).

At the Fraser Inn, dinner, the start of the epic tales, accounts of the other offs, hugs and concerns from dozens... Thanks Nicki, Melissa, Renee... Then some well deserved rest!

Sunday dawned with several folks looking for tow truck services in Williams Lake -- there aren't many.

I made arrangements to retrieve the car, we were first on the road, and by 9AM I was looking down the hill and wondering how I'd missed all that stuff in the dark. The tow driver walked around the corner, assessing the options -- "It's not coming out the way it went in..." and decided on a smoother, steeper, less obstructed path of about 85 feet. Within 30 minutes it was up to the road, but not quite ON the road. The truck kept slipping, I kept slipping trying to get out of the way, and eventually he had to install chains to move the truck, after tying off the car to a small tree -- just tough enough -- I had visions of its return to the creek.

Back to Williams Lake, change rigs, drive to Cache Creek to meet the rally. We were only a few minutes late! They were happy to get the checkpoint log.

At the Bear's Claw restaurant, I was amazed at the outpouring of support. "What can we do to help?" seemed to be the line of the day. David Fox made room in his car for Dave Glassman since Steve Brown would be taking Max and I home. All the "non-replaceable" items from the car were distributed among friends' cars (Ken & Sue, Steve & Kathryn, and Steve Brown). Jim Bowie reminded me he was "Only an hour away" if I needed anything. Robert & Jim offered any help on Monday getting the car home. And many others that I've lost the memory.

The ride home was good, with lots of radio conversation.

Monday the call was made to the Bear's Claw, confirming a date to pick up the car. Pat is used to this from the ice racers in town. Pat and Sandy are gracious hosts in the restaurant and the lodge. If you have a chance to stop in, other than on Totem or Thunderbird, please do so.

Two weeks pass, and Steve Perret and I go north. The car is fine and lunch is fine. The wind is just short of gale force and the wind chill is easily in the minus Fahrenheit

range. The border went smoothly. "Anything to declare...?"

Initial assessment from under the car is a lower control arm... core support "just a bit further back than normal". Several bent wheels and the control arm have been replaced. It will return...

Thanks again to anyone I missed!
--Ron

*** Press release: Ken Block's Monster World Rally Team is go!**

American rally star Ken Block will compete in the World Rally Championship in 2010 and 2011 as part of the newly formed 'Monster World Rally Team', backed by the American energy drink company and Ford.

Block is a seasoned competitor in the Rally America national series, and has tackled a handful of WRC rallies in the Group N class, however he is best known around the globe for his wildly successful viral internet videos featuring his stunt driving expertise in a rally car.

A statement from the Monster World Rally Team confirmed Block, 42, will compete in 'selected rounds' of this year's championship with an emphasis on 'developing his ability for a successful future in the WRC'. His move to the WRC is a historic one - and makes him the first American to enter the WRC as part of a multi-year programme.

"Racing in the World Rally Championship has always been a dream of mine but I'd still be dreaming if I promised podiums in the near future," said Block. "I will be going head-to-head with the greatest drivers on the planet. And sure, I will be giving it my all but my main objective for 2010 is to develop into a competitive driver for 2011 and beyond."

In the WRC, Block will be driving a Focus RS WRC prepared by M-Sport, the company responsible for handling Ford's World Rally programme. M-Sport's Managing Director, Malcolm Wilson said: "It is great news that Ken will be joining the WRC and even better that it will be with Ford! Ken has been instrumental in elevating the public awareness of rallying throughout the world with his multimedia exploits, particularly in the U.S. which is a key global market and an area where WRC has yet to reach its full potential."

"Ken's appearance in the WRC and his desire to compete toe-to-toe at the highest level is indicative of the determination and drive that he has exhibited in all areas of his life to date - be it in business or personal targets. Ken is a colourful character with a huge international fan base and his decision to appear in the WRC is warmly welcomed," he added.

In addition to his WRC programme, Block will continue to compete in the Rally America series, as well as in X-Games XVI, in another Ford - a Fiesta prepared by Olsbergs MSE. "I am stoked to be rallying in a Ford," said Block. "They are an impressive force in the sport."

From the days of the 1970s Escorts to the Group B RS200, to the modern-day Focus and now the Fiesta, Ford has an excellent history within rally. I couldn't be happier to be part of this amazing heritage. Not to mention my dad would be proud. He was a true Ford guy."

The Monster World Rally Team developed as a result of Ken Block's existing relationship with the energy drink company. "A radically extreme form of motorsport with supremely talented drivers who compete on gravel, asphalt, snow and ice really mirrors everything we are about," explained Monster Energy President Mark Hall.

"For that reason Monster Energy is pleased to join Ken Block in the formation of the Monster Energy World Rally Team. Not only is Ken a cult hero to our consumers through his gymkhana videos and other stunts, the fact that he will be the first American racer to compete in the 38-year history of the World Rally Championship is truly impressive. Factoring in that Ken will be chasing the 2010 Rally America Championship Series, a Gold Medal at X Games XVI while continuing to scheme-up new videos and mind-altering stunts, Monster couldn't have a finer ambassador in our new venture into rally."

The skateboard footwear company Block co-founded, DC Shoes, will also support the team, along with the video game title, Dirt2, in which Block had a starring role.

There is no word yet about a possible partner for Block at the team, although his friend, former Subaru driver Chris Atkinson was linked to the team last year.

Further details about this, and the number of rallies Ken and the team will tackle in 2011, are expected shortly.

###

Club News

Many thanks to Dan and Louise Comden for hosting the RASC Christmas party. As expected, the tables were bountiful. A good bird was sacrificed to make many members and guests happy.

Membership dues remain \$30 for family and \$25 for single. Checks gladly accepted at meetings or by mail. Don't send cash in the mail.

Trivia

* The WAG staff is researching cordless impact wrenches. While the pneumatic rattle guns justify having an air compressor, not having to drag the hose around has appeal, plus a cordless can be used far away from a garage (or anything else). Downside of also carrying a torque wrench removes all hope of a lightweight "kit".

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)
- * 1987 Subaru GL Turbo Wagon pushbutton 4wd, \$990 flexible.....
E-mail Ron Sorem: ronsorem@gmail.com
- * We need to sell the 2001 Audi Allroad we bought from Jerry. All the luxury and bells and whistles have become boring. Waterpump and timing belt done, comes on studded Hakkas. Fire sale pricing at \$8500, more details at blackholeracing@gmail.com
- * '02 Saab S60, 250 hp, new tires, 21 gal. tank and 23 mpg in town! \$6800 Jerry Hines, 206-227-6343
- * For Rent, Las Vegas house, \$400 week. Car available. Jerry or Colleen Hines, 206-227-6343.
- *FREE: 12mm x1.25 lug nuts. Fits Subaru. Unreasonable vast quantity available.
- * Also special one-time deal (this century) on flexible plastic nipples to protect the wire coming out of an odometer probe. Originally intended to trap moisture in corrosion-prone F-connectors for CATV applications. -Mark Nolte

RASC Calendar

Rally America 2010:

January 29 – 30 Sno*Drift Rally, Atlanta, MI
February 26 – 27 100 Acre Wood, Salem, MO
April 24 - 25: Olympus Rally, Olympia, WA
May 14 – 1: Oregon Trail Rally, Portland, OR
June 4 – 5: Susquehannock Trail, Wellsboro, PA
July 16 – 17: New England Forest, Bethel, ME

RASC event dates have been chosen for 2010:

Raindrop: April 18
No Alibi: June 5-6
Alcan 5000: August 16-24

British Columbia & Washington TSD

Feb 6-7: Thunderbird, Merritt, B.C. (Date not confirmed)

Rainier Auto Sports Club will meet this coming Monday, January 11 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: The 2010 Board, as elected at the Christmas Party, will reveal itself. Attendees will once again witness the emotional and touching "Passing of the Gavel" ceremony. Followed closely by arm-twisting to get members to pay 2010 dues. (\$25 individual, \$30 family).

2009 Board Members:

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

Vice-President: Steve Richards, smrdcatman@comcast.net, 425-337-0232

Secretary: Dan Comden, dan@comdens.com,

Treasurer: Steve Willey: willey@selby.com

At Large: Jeff McMillen, jeff@somepants.com

At Large: Roy Ward, roy.ward@verizon.net

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>

Contributions and paid/unpaid advertisements eagerly sought: e-mail: mnolte@blarg.net

Rainier Auto Sports Club, P.O Box 25574, Seattle, WA 98165



The Wishbone Alley Gazette

% Mark Nolte

2108 NE 12Th St.

Renton, WA 98056-2916