

Rally News



Webster/Harer won with 36 points (Photo by Kevin Barrows)

* 2012 Nor'Wester is Done -by Roy Ward

A hearty 'Thank You' to everyone who came out to participate in the 2012 Nor'Wester! The weather cooperated, the wildfires left us alone (although the smoky haze evident almost everywhere we went reminded us that there were fires elsewhere), and the roads were still there. Everyone at the finish seemed to have had a good time, which is, after all, the whole point. As advertised, there was gravel, switchbacks, and hillclimbs. We also had the opportunity to explore the differences between Washington state washboard and Idaho washboard (Idaho having a more subtle, mature ambience in contrast to the brash, bold, youthful exuberance of Washington's road ripple).

As Ron and I were driving through our first measured section, our hearts sank as we heard over the radio that our route had the dreaded "Road Closed" sign blocking our way. Yakima County had decided to squeeze in one more construction project in for the Fall, and it was right in our path! Fortunately, it was near the end of our TSD, and rerouting was simple enough: Continue straight until I-82, follow I-82 to Milepost 31, and resume course. Whew! If we had to have a problem, this was the kind to have: Easy to fix.

We then headed to Mabton, where we started a marathon TSD section in Horse Heaven Hills. The majorly long section finally ended on the outskirts of Tri-Cities. The smoky haze from the numerous forest fires in the Eastern half of the state was still with us, but didn't completely obscure the views from the heights we traversed.

After Tri-Cities (and a brief stop for lunch), we headed east to Prescott, where we ran the famous Skyrocket Road, this time south-to-north. The hillclimb can be seen from downtown Prescott, and looks rather daunting. The section continued all the way through Marengo, and the old SR126 twisty hillclimb, to finish just a wee bit west of Pomeroy.

At Pomeroy we made a brief stop at the city park, where earlier the same day a Porsche club met for a "show and shine". We then went up into the northern edge of the Blue Mountains, varying the route from rallies past at Knotgrass Road, heading back onto US12. Instead of driving straight into Clarkston/Lewiston, we took a right up Silcott Grade, climbing up to the top of the ridge, then headed toward Clarkston. But again, instead of the hotel and relaxation, we forged on to one more measured section. Sherry Grade and Weissenfels Grade awaited us as the sun sank below the western horizon. This brought the rally down Weissenfels Grade in the dark and dust, which resulted in some confusion and some very hot brakes. After the time decs were sorted out, scores were posted at the Red Lion in Lewiston, where the rally took some hard-earned rest.

Sunday morning found us running some 26 miles east of Lewiston on an odd section to one of the nicest rest areas known to man. Huge, with multiple facilities, we had to include this on our route, because the next three sections had no potty breaks and there was hill climbing to do. After running up Angel Grade then down into Peck, Idaho, we climbed south on Central Ridge to Idaho SR62.



Guerin/Herrera-Guerin won Novice class with a huge score. Waving at the CP crews was a tradition. (Photo by Sally DeVore)

We drove through Craigmont, Idaho, then took the rally to lovely downtown Winchester, where we started out on a meandering 50 mph country road, only to encounter a very twisty downhill posted at 25. Normally the slow speed would have been offset by the spectacular scenery. But the section gave us the opportunity to move checkpoint crews past the competitors. The things we gotta do....

After descending Winchester Grade (encountering US95 at the Idaho town of Culdesac...yes, really), the rally returned to the Clarkston area, and from there to Howell Grade off of US12, traveling north of Pomeroy, and transiting across the Snake River at Central Ferry. From there a sharp left onto Big Alkalai Road took us to the Hammer Grade TSD, through the teeming metropolis of Hooper, and finally to SR26. A short

transit that gave us a stop at Washtucna (where the service was lackadaisical to say the least), and back onto SR26 to a right onto Sage Road. A TSD of several coulees to Lind, where we had a brief transit to the Lind-Schrag TSD. Finally the transit from Schrag to the finish at Chico's Pizza in Moses Lake.

Thanks to our team of amazing and skilled checkpoint workers, and cudos to our Chief of Controls, Steve Perret, whose daunting task of creating the behind-the-scenes subrally of moving workers efficiently was handled beautifully. Thanks also to Kathryn Hansen, our thorough and accurate scoring expert, who dealt with the multitude of issues that came up in a terrific and professional manner. 63 checkpoints were scored. Hats off!

Thanks also to our start, overnight, and finish facilities, The Hampton Inn Ellensburg, the Red Lion Lewiston, and Chico's Pizza in Moses Lake. Nothing like a flash mob of rallyists to test the hospitality industry.

Most of all, I would like to personally acknowledge the *real* Rallymaster of the 45th Anniversary Nor'Wester, Ron Sorem. His experience, knowledge, patience, and amazing thoroughness is what brought together the dizzying components of a two-day endurance rally. The results of his many hours of hard work were reflected in the smiling faces and enthusiastic stories that filled the room at the finish. Well done, my friend. Well done.

Again, many thanks to:

Chief of Controls and checkpoints: Steve Parrot
Scoring and checkpoints: Kathryn Hansen
Registrar and checkpoints: Eric Horst
Jim and Cristy Breazeale – Course Checkout and checkpoints
Jerry Hines – checkpoints
Kelly Brown (learning about this rally stuff from old-friend Jerry Hines)
Steve Brown – checkpoints
Kevin Tower – checkpoints
Max Vaysburd and Danya Kelberg – checkpoints
Kevin Barrows and Leah Cooper – checkpoints and sweep
Ken and Sue Lingbloom – checkpoints
Mark Nolte and Sally DeVore – checkpoints
Joe and Shirley Gardner - checkpoints and sweep
Glyn Trafford and Bart Vogelzang – checkpoints
Joel Wright – checkpoints

The numbers: TSDs alternated with Transits. 11 Sections on Saturday: 11 hours, 399 miles. 15 sections on Sunday, 8-1/2 hours: 705 miles for the weekend. TSDs made up 56% of the time, 58% of the miles. The 61 scored checkpoints averages out to about one every 6.79 miles. - MN



The AmPup team passes Wenas Lake. The Curta is cranking. (Photo by Sally DeVore)

The 45th Anniversary Nor'Wester

The AmPup Rally Fugitives team of S. Richards and G. Reid were not the only ones to have also competed in the legendary Nor'Westers of the previous century, but they were among the oldest of the geezers at this year's event. And plenty of young pups showed up too, eager for their chance to drive the fine gravel roads of eastern Washington and central Idaho. Route Books were available Friday evening, along with two bars of Nor'Wester soap. Was this a comment by the organizers? Anyway, the soap expunged the minor errors in the route books, and everything was cleaned up by the Saturday morning, September 15th start.

Departing from Ellensburg, we expected some familiar roads as we headed for the overnight in Lewiston, Idaho. However, the very first TSD appeared to be new to the Pup, but it could just be that he's forgotten more than he ever knew. Anyway, he cranked the Curta and S power-slid Walter, the faithful Suby, up and over Ellensburg Pass, not even noticing half of the cleverly hidden checkpoints along the way. All the better for the NaviPup, who barely had time to admire the view.



Recent familiarity should have given Comden/Crippen an edge to expecting CP's. Nope, 6th in UnLimited (Photo by Sally DeVore)

The long TSDs of 30 to 70 miles were plenty challenging for the team, but the roads were super,

and, as always, the driver was having way too much fun. Quiet zones through farmyards and a plethora of 6 to 12 second pauses kept them busy, but also gave them frequent chances to catch up on time. (Not that it helped their scores very much.)

Somehow in the gasfood transit through the exotic Tri-Cities, they lollygagged a bit too much and were greatly chagrined to have to take a 9:30 time dec at the next start. The names of the roads rang some bells, but everything looked different to the Old Pup. More twisty gravel took them by the road to Peola, Pataha Creek, and the Silcott Wye, all of which sounded familiar, but for a navigator the recognizable landmarks don't show up very often, and when they do, it's usually a place where they or one of their colleagues had an Off day.



The September hills of the Palouse are uniformly brown. Am-Pups claim they saw new roads despite many tours in the area. (Photo by Sally DeVore)

I do remember a particularly challenging hillclimb before darkness set in, with impressive views out the RH side and Lingblooms waiting at a very tight hairpin to catch them with a 2L. Coulda been worse. The downhill hairpins were even tougher, and all the Pup could do was deliver the news of increasing lateness to the very busy driver, NEVER with an urging of "Faster, faster." The transit into Lewiston along Lake Sacajawea (the dammed Snake River) was welcomed, and their arrival at the Red Lion was even better. A long day indeed.



Bob & Phillis Chandler trumped 2 other teams to win SOP class. (Photo by Sally DeVore)

Sunday was an early 8 ayem departure, with a nice trip along the lake/river and a factor adjustment. Hmmm? Rural Idaho appeared to be

a nest for backcountry survivalists living down almost hidden driveways. They did have wonderful views, all the better to see the black helicopters and World Government types coming to take away their freedoms. The first hillclimb again would have given a flatlander fits, but the Pups took it all in a good morning's drive. The Central Ridge TSD was another spectacular climb, leveling out to a drive into Winchester, so proud of its heritage that the world's largest rifle was slung above the street.



A scant 4 seconds kept the Carlson/Kraushaar from winning in the BMW 325ix. (Photo by Kevin Barrows)

The descent out of Winchester was a wonderfully snakey bit of pavement, but was spoiled by a 25mph speed limit, which I'm sure not a single local resident has ever obeyed. The road fairly begged for one of the Rapid Transit Zones of the old Nor'Westers. But the times, they are a changin'. Sunday's route had generally shorter TSDs, which were greatly welcomed, but still fabulous gravel twisties, upsies, downsies, but fortunately no oopsies. Checkpoints abounded, and very few (almost none) were visible until it was too late to make any kind of adjustment. Uphill wheelspin often counteracted apparent earliness for better scores than the NaviPup thought they were getting.

The TSD of the Seven Coulees took them into Lind, home of the Combine Demolition Derby. Those farm boys really know how to have a good time. The Lind-Shrag (sic) TSD was the last chance to add to their score, and they took full advantage, garnering a 4E on the very last control, cleverly placed soon enough after a 12-second pause in Schrag (spelled correctly this time) that the Pup was overwhelmed with clicking and cranking, even though his driver was very aptly pleading for a call of some sort. "There's the checkpoint!" he called out, just as they passed it.

Chico's Pizza in Moses Lake was first rate, and the home brew was very good for quenching their thirst. Scoring took a bit long, as there were sooo many Time Decs to reconcile. Even though we finally had to take one on Saturday to make up for

the tour through Tri-Cities, I still have mixed feelings about the liberal, no-fault declarations. (See above about changing times.) But our heroes lucked out again, mostly due to the misfortune of the team that had trounced them on Day One, and they were the proud recipients of First Equipped, but only 8th overall. Those Computer guys have it way too easy. They probably even get to look at the roads from time to time.

Still, a great event by RASC, and our thanks to Roy and Ron for driving 10,000 miles and corraling dozens of workers and providing us with another great fun-filled adventure. Hope we're around for the 50th Anniversary.

the american pup



Saab 96's keep appearing on Nor'Westers. This one belonged to Robert Gobright, Navigated by Brian Cary. It matches (roughly) from side-to-side. (Photo by Kevin Barrows)

* Olympus (Sept 22-23) turned out rather well. The great ambitions diminished when fire danger dictated that no one be in the forest during the hot hours of 1 to 6 PM. Even then, the dust combined with still air to call for 3-minute intervals, which would send the rally into the really wee hours of Sunday morning. A lost car on the Dayton Peak stage invoked the "20-minute" rule: a stage that was cold for 20 minutes has to be re-paced. It was decided to call it a night, and the cars already lined up to run two more stages were turned around and sent back to the Ridge for MTC.

No spectators were allowed into the forest stage areas -period. The posters printed to promote the event never got distributed.

The near-record 70-car field concluded the weekend with just the single stage on Sunday, although it was the 20 mile-long, technical, Nahwatzel stage. Ron Barker said he planned it this way since keeping the workers up all night, and then expecting them to be out on the stages too early on Sunday would be asking too much. The workers for the first stage on Saturday gathered at 4:30 AM! The Nahwatzel stages of each day were scheduled to finish before the 1PM limit, and made it, just barely.

There was grumbling about Rally America, repeating complaints that go back to the NARRA/SCCA days.

Ed Rachner checked cars in at the very busy new Ridge Motorsports Park. It was interesting to mix the rally cars with the Porsche club's track day, but not really a conflict. He mentions that the Higgs/Drew Subaru arrived looking torn up after a tire disintegrated and "flapped" the bodywork apart. Given the 6 hour layover, the car was able to be remade to finish 2nd.

He also appreciated the Team Fugawi pace cars, who seemed to be on top of everything and kept it running on schedule. Steve Perret had Denny Pell in the right seat as the 000 car. They set clocks, and trained the timing crews with their very first "hands-on" with timing cards. Ron Sorem, with Jim Breazeale followed. Ron commented that the dust was still hanging 10 minutes after 000 preceded him! Nolte achieved his goal of being a road guard, splitting times as each car passed. The 0 car, Lee Sorenson/Norma Woods, were as fast as the mid-field runners, despite all the duties of pacing that should have slowed him down. He was far off the pace of the 5 front-runners, who also raised the biggest dust clouds.

Ken Block/Alex Gelsomino won the shebang by 4 minutes. Pat Richards was out early with transmission problems. The Sweep Crews were busy, but there were no notable DNF's, just "visits" off the nice gravel roads.

RASC member Kathryn Hansen co-drove with Matt Tabor to top the Production class both days, about 17th O'all in Regional rankings.

-MN

Club News

*September meeting notes, by MN President Marvin convened the meeting at 7:33. Secretary Eric Horst's reading of the August meeting minutes was the most entertaining event of the evening- it all went downhill from there. Treasurer Cristy (no H) Breazeale reported large numbers in the club's accounts, inflated by Nor'Wester registration and few payments at that point.

The Nor'Wester report was hindered on details because so many entrants were in attendance. The fire danger appeared to be low along the route, while the rest of the state seems to be in flames. Jim Hogan and Robert Gobright volunteered to do CP's if we were short, and were told that there were enough volunteers, so they were off the hook. Stickers and T-shirts would be available; the trophies were done.

The Friday Niter (November) is on track. No mention of careful evaluation and testing of potential Finish locations.

There was news of Alcan (summer of 2014) with a plan for 2 days in Fairbanks rather than some lesser city. Motorcycle entries are par with car entries. Jerry was visiting from Nevada to do CP's on Nor'Wester, and probably something with a car sale. He did mention that

he has BMW for sale, which has a few issues. And a ex-Alcan Forester with high mileage is affordable.

Roy Ward, Mark Nolte and Jim Breazeale will make up the Nominating Committee for 2013 elections. Roy got a list of paid-up members from Cristy (no H) who had the list ready!

Jeff McMillan asked if anyone wanted to be his service crew for PFR. No head count of who is headed to Merritt, B.C for their National on October 12-13.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Trivia

* Auto light bulbs used to be easy- besides headlights; the rest had different numbers meaning different candlepower. A set of spares could be carried in the car.

When the Subaru dealership pointed out that a side-marker and both license plate bulbs were burned out, your editor decided to delve into LED replacements. This after finding the large accumulation of bayonet-base bulbs were antiques. Wedge-base has taken over.

e-Bay had a lot to choose from, all deliciously cheap. As they arrived, disappointment grew. While the LED "emitters" themselves are solid-state and are predicted to last forever, there are little electric bits on a tiny circuit board that may not hold up to vibration.

Even though ostensibly a same-size replacement, one set proved too long for the confines of the license plate housing. Barely fit the side-marker.

And they are polarized- if the dang thing doesn't work, flip it 180°. Reminded me of the poor souls who didn't notice that the pins on the bayonet base brake bulbs are offset, so that following at night showed brake light-bright until the brakes were applied, and the bright taillight dimmed instead.

The Tacoma has a bright front turn signal, sometimes used as the Daytime Running Lights (DRL). My order for a pair of these amber LEDs weren't the surface-mount emitters, but rather the domed items somehow soldered in a tight array. Hmm, a lot of opportunity for vibration problems. Seeing no way to properly fit for polarity, the first insertion into the base blew the fuse. Having a huge collection of now-antique fuses, the next try was after cobbling up a way to use one of those. It blew. I marked the LED bulb so I wouldn't plug it in reverse again, and tried it with a new fuse. It lit up! But not as bright as the OEM bulb. Bummer. The final straw was when the diameter of the assembly was larger than would fit into the housing. How could they get that wrong???

The visit to my O'Reilly's parts outlet was further revealing. The clerk pointed at a \$15 gizmo and said that many cars were sensitive to the low current draw of LEDs, so it was wise to fit the additional box while converting.

He'd been there, and said that from his experience, "What's the point?" I have to agree with him.

* The downside of all-wheel-drive cars is reluctance of the dealers to sell only one replacement. To keep the rolling diameter the same, preserving the differentials, this is their excuse to sell four at a time.

A WRX owner blew out a sidewall when the slip angle was miscalculated and the left front had a conflict with the curb at a freeway exit. The left rear followed, but only developed a bulge. Sunday visits to three shops open on Sunday got the same answer: "4 or nuttin".

A return to the Discount Tire store (where they were purchased) on Monday was much better. After measuring the tread wear, the salesman concluded that only the 2 were needed. After all, differentials deal with tires rotating at different rates every moment. Sure, thought the owner, with unfond memories of driving a stage-rally car with the "poor man's locked differential"- welded spider gears. It was hard to drive straight. Anywhere.

Even more pleasant was that there was a warrantee on the tires. Prorated for the slight wear, two new rubbers were fitted for \$80, rather than \$800 for all new!

Cristy (no H) Breazeale suffered a cut sidewall on Olympus, miles before reaching the fearful gravel. The usually helpful guys at the Shelton Les Schwab store repeated the "need all new, we can't sell just one" story. The car managed to survive on the space saver for the weekend.

* Jeff McMillen, fresh from Amsterdam and Turkey, will be one of the few US entries at Pacific Forest Rally, with Kathryn Hansen co-driving.

*Ed Rachner describes his ailment as colon cancer, with bi-weekly chemotherapy. (Good luck Ed.) He says he can work, just gets fatigued rather quickly.

* Jerry Hines still has his Washington car dealer's license; he says he can buy cars at the dealer -only auctions, but can only sell under Washington rules.

As to the weather in Henderson, he hasn't worn long pants -or socks- since arrival. And it does rain- about 1" one night.

RASC Calendar:

Oct 5 - Friday Niter Series, Milwaukie

Oct 6-7 - Oregon 1000, Wilsonville, OR, overnight at Coos Bay, finish Albany. \$225

Oct 12 - NWRC Friday Niter by ORCA

Oct. 12-13 - Pacific Forest Rally (stage), Merritt, BC
Volunteers requested. Recce on Friday, rally on Saturday.

October 19-20 - Mt Hood stage rally, Mt. Hood, OR. Recce on Friday, rally on Saturday. Volunteer at RallyData.com

Nov 9 - NWRC Friday Niter by RASC, Bellevue

Nov 10 - Midnight Rally by Island Rallysport Club, Vancouver Island, B.C.

Nov 17-18- Totem (TSD) Cache Creek, B.C. (Not Merritt)

Dec 8-9 - Big White (stage) Kelowna, B.C.

Rainier Auto Sports Club will meet this coming Monday, September 10, 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 *usually* the second Monday of each month. Past Members, visitors, and spectators are welcomed.

Agenda: Fresh news from the weekend's Oregon 1000. Eric may or may not be rushing preparation for the Friday Niter. The 2013 club election moves into high gear, with the list of candidates submitted. Nominations from the floor accepted. Backslapping, maneuvering, and politician' to commence immediately.

"We still have a very limited supply of the 45th Anniversary Nor'Wester tee shirts. Size XL only, \$15 toward gas fund. Contact Ron"

2012 Board Members:

President: Marvin Crippen, mandos@gmail.com

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

Secretary, Eric Horst - erich@quavy.com

Treasurer, Cristy Breazeale, 360-318-3320

At Large, Jim Breazeale, blackholeracing@yahoo.com

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

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The Wishbone Alley Gazette

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