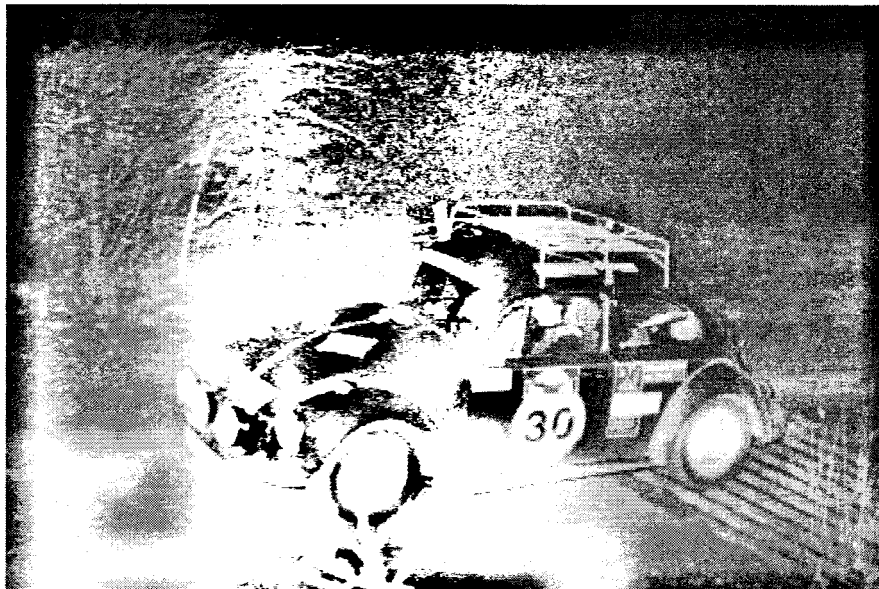


South of the Border

By Max Etak

Just across the line in Washington State, the Rainier Auto Sports Club is celebrating a 40th birthday and as part of the icing on their cake they are offering the Nor'wester Auto Rally in a format similar to it's original 1500 mile form from 1967. A TSD event open to any make, model, or vintage car OR motorcycle, it will run on open public roads. This year the rally is scheduled for August 15 -18 (Mon-Thurs) and will begin in Kirkland WA before venturing north to our patch of the planet to take advantage of the fantastic roads familiar to many BC rallyists. The route is expected to be approximately 2000km in length with about 80% challenging touring stages and 20% scenic regularities as it runs up the Fraser River to Williams Lake and out to the coast at Bella Coola before crossing by boat to Vancouver Island and the southbound run from Port Hardy to finish banquet in Victoria. For more information visit www.rainierautosports.com and look for Nor'wester!



Nor'wester, a category for all cars

Photo by Dennis Wende

Also not too far from home is the Oregon Trail performance rally. Recently held at the end of April, Round 2 of the 2005 Rally America Championship Series saw tremendous speculation as to possible results at the podium. Last year's North American Champion Pat Richard was there with his sister in the Grp N Impreza we love to watch. Local talent Paul Eklund ran an Open Class Subaru on roads he knows well. There was the Open Mitsubishi of Carl Jardevall who is very quick and rising stars Travis Pastrana and Suzuki Canada's giant slayer Bill Bacon both brought well prepared Grp N Subarus. But the big question was what would happen when the legendary Stig Blomquist was introduced to our usual favorites on an even footing? The result was spectator nirvana.

Pat and Nat hit trouble on the opening spectator stage when a halfshaft let go and they limped around losing mega time. Over the next stages, while Stig worked his way to the front of the pack with Pastrana close behind, the Richards went to maximum attack and clawed all the way back to second place over-all before the transmission failed and they retired on SS 11. From then on the top three held position to the end but WCRA honours were being well-maintained in PGT as Norm Leblanc and co-driver Keith Morrison engaged in a fierce battle with drivers Matt Johnson and Tanner Foust. Norm and the Clearcut Racing Team kept the pedal down and the brains up to fight clear of the others and finish first in class and seventh over-all! Another WCRA team, father/son Bob and Adam

Trinder finished 14th O/A and 4th in Open class in a right hand drive car that is still new to them.

Organizer Ben Bradley can revel in the knowledge that there is small chance of any other event this year generating as much excitement.

And how is the SCCA doing with their rally projects? The new CircuitRally programme was to provide two National level events in 2005 before moving into full swing in 2006. When I contacted the SCCA Rally Department representative regarding a lack of publicized schedules I was told that just two or three "proof of concept" events were being planned at present and that dates would be announced as soon as possible.

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