

Montana 500 Newsletter

April 2007

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Montana Cross Country T Assn.
1004 Sioux Road
Helena, MT 59602

www.montana500.org

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About the cover:

2006 Montana 500 tour day to Bannack State Park.
Model T's and their drivers lined up in front of the
Old Hotel.

FROM THE EDITORS DESK

Well, I finally sent the last newsletter out and here it is, time for the next. I am still looking for interesting articles and anecdotes. If you have anything-send it my way. My e-mail is: n_robison@yahoo.com and my address is: 11607 E. 4th Ave. Spokane Valley, WA 99206. I look forward to hearing from you.
Your new editor-Nan Robison

Presidents Message

Oh my, how time flies when you are having fun. Thanks Nan, you produced a great newsletter. I especially like having them hand delivered?

I never realized the history of tear downs. What an interesting article. I have to agree with Tom. Tear downs only take a little effort, add a great degree of official status to the event, allow all of us to see what someone else has come up with(if we are smart enough), and removes the doubt. In my opinion, once a winner has been torn down and certified, there should be no further serious discussion of legality. Thanks Tom for a thoughtful article!

I've heard from a few of you out there. Seems engines are coming together, bodies are still being worked on, and all in all, things will be ready by June 18th. Mike Robison and I are going to rework the safety inspection checklist. I will try to finish it soon so everyone can get a copy, hopefully in the third news letter. If anyone has strong feelings on any race related issue my e-mail address is: hutchmc@comcast.net
Hutch

2007 Montana 500 Info.

Dues are due! Check your name on the address label. If it doesn't say 2007 or lifetime you are past due!

Send dues to:

**Montana Cross Country T Assn.
1004 Sioux Road
Helena, MT 59602**

The 2007 Montana 500 will be held out of Havre, Montana, June 18th-21st. The pre-run inspection will be Sunday the 17th. The run will commence Monday the 18th. The Hotel is:

Super 8

1901 Hiway 2 West

Havre Mt 59501

406-265-1411

Single \$54.77

Double \$67.29

This price includes tax. I would advise that you make your reservations as soon as possible as I made my reservations the March 22nd, and the rooms were going fast. There are 20 rooms reserved, and they will go on a first come, first serve basis. This information should be posted on the Montana 500 website. There will be an optional tour day the 21st.

Please read and be familiar with the rules. Make sure bolts are drilled! It might be a good idea to bring an extra carburetor. If the inspectors can get the gauge to go through, your carb. will be disallowed. Rain gear can be in order in June in Montana (snow gear for that matter).

2006 Montana 500

By Nan Robison

The arrival of the 500 is always an exciting time in our family. It of course starts months before the actual race, with the repairing of cars, planning of schedules, and organizing departures. Because so many of us live in the Spokane area, and we all seem to like each other, we always try to travel together if possible. It makes for an enjoyable trip, and helps if one of the tow vehicles has a problem. This year was a bit of an exception, as we had lots of graduations to work into the mix.

In preparation, Tweety Bird needed a new head gasket. She blew her gasket in 2005 and DNF. The head gasket was repaired, and Tweety was given a test run. There seemed to be a small knock, but we really couldn't pin point where it was coming from. We drove, listened, drove, and listened, but just couldn't zone in on it. She was running like a top, so we decided to just let it go. I spent the next few weeks bonding with her and she continued to run well.

Mike's car was a smoke bomb this year. He had forgotten to add oil on a local tour, and the engine had seized. He borrowed oil from his Uncle Rick, broke the engine free and away he went. But, Oh My Gosh did it burn oil. It was a smoking demon!!! To repair it right, would have meant a complete engine re-sleeve, or a new motor. Finances didn't lend themselves to that, so Mike just decided to go and run for the fun. No intentions to win, just have fun.

Pinky was rearing to go, so just a new timer for her and she was ready.

Tom had Bearmobile running well, so loaded him up. He and Mike bagged graduations, and left early Saturday morning. Rick broke his outside oil line one week before the race on a local tour and burned up his racing motor. Not having enough time to fix the good engine, he decided to put in his spare engine, cross his fingers and hope for the best.

Dave had wanted to bring his "T" for the tour, but we didn't have enough tow vehicles so he decided to leave his behind

and help with the timing and flagging instead. Heather came along to help also.

For us, trip to Montana was relatively uneventful. We weren't able to leave until early Sunday, as Heather graduated Saturday, then had her overnighiter. Rick stayed for Heather's graduation and trailerd his car along with us. Made for a late start, but no tow vehicles over-heated, or broke down, so we did o.k. Jillian and Jillian's Grandparents towed Pinky and The 1917X. They left on Saturday, after Jillian's sister graduated, so we met them in Dillon. Mike and Tom had arrived safely, and they were also there to greet us.

Vehicles were unloaded, tires were kicked, and stories told. It is always great to see everyone, and catch up on events of the past year. There's always a buzz as everyone is picking each others brain, tuning their car and trying to get the most out of them in anticipation of tomorrow's start.

It appeared the pre-race day showed a mag virus. Tom worked on his mag, and Dave Huson's. Jillian had mag issues also. I took Tweety out to warm her up, but was just not happy with that persistent knock. Seemed it was more pronounced that before. I went back to the hotel, loaded up Tom and took him out on a test drive. He also was not pleased, so when we got back, we decided to change the head gasket, thinking maybe the pistons were hitting the head. Oh the beauty of the pre-race activities. Oil, grease, and gasket sealer. Man, do I love those smells!!! The change helped a little, but still had a slight knock.

The first day of the race dawned bright. Weird for Montana. The drivers lined up in order drawn the day before. I had drawn #9. Ed Marshall was #8, and Dennis Daken #10. We started the race the first day out of the parking lot. It proved to be a bit of a problem, as some of us encountered traffic as we crested the driveway, and turned on to the on-ramp. Ed managed to squeeze in front of the car approaching, but I was not so lucky. I slowed because it wasn't possible to get in front of the car. Then the car preceded to mosey on to the freeway at a nice respectable 25mph. Ed was a mere dot in the distance,

and I was chopping at the bit. We finally strolled onto the free-way and I passed my buddy. Ed was no where to be seen, so I found Twenty's sweet spot, hunched over the steering wheel (ya get better speed that way ya know) and took off in pursuit. It wasn't long before I could see Ed in the distance and I settled in to catch him. Up and down hills I went, with Ed getting closer and closer. When I had just about caught up, I caught a glimpse of a sign off to the side of the road that mentioned something about cows. What the heck, I thought you don't have cows on the road, so I wasn't to concerned. Up over the hill I went, Ed just a few yards in front of me. I passed him going down the hill and took off in pursuit of Garret Green, who had drawn #7. But I hadn't counted on those cows. Oh my Gosh!!! In the distance you could see a sea of black. I barreled down the hill and then came upon the cows. I slowed quickly, as hitting Bossy

seemed like a poor choice. As I merged into the herd, there were cows to the left of me, cows to the right and I was stuck in the middle. I nudged my way into the herd, thinking I could just pass right on through, but the mind(?) of the cow is amazing. As



soon as I entered the fray, they closed ranks. Ed, mean while, had caught up, and he joined the party. He tried to get by me, but cowies don't move so well. They pressed in on us, lubricated the road, chewed their cud. and moved at a leisurely pace. Tex and Bubba were busy yelling at us to slow down (I thought we were going really slow) and yelling at Bossy to speed up. A bit confusing. Finally we made it out of the herd and took off. Ed hadn't been able to get past me during the drive, so I kept ahead of him. The remainder of the leg proved uneventful, and I soon arrived in Wisdom. The next leg was to

Chief Joseph, then back to Wisdom and home to Dillon. I don't remember to much about the rest of the day, as the remainder of the day seemed to pale by comparison to the cattle drive. Tom said that he had almost caught up with Jillian, but she reached Gary Ebbert first, hooked up with him, and Tom never saw them again. He lost a coil the last leg, but chose not to stop and fix it, but to ride it on in. Everyone arrived back in Dillon, and the results were tabulated. Gary Ebbert was in first, Garrett Green-second, Doug Langel-third, and Tom Carnegie fourth.

Day two started out uneventful. The run was from Dillon to Rocker, then from Rocker to Montana City, back to Rocker and on to Dillon. We flagged out a bit differently so as to not have to buck traffic. We positioned ourselves directly on the road before the on-ramp to the freeway. This allowed us to get on the freeway without having to merge into traffic. Seemed to work much better.

Tweety Bird had developed a different knock and it had become worse. I added more oil also in an attempt to keep things well lubricated. She was still running fast, so I also tried adjusting the spark to minimize the knock. Seemed to work O.K. the first leg. While in Rocker, we got word that there was a large, slow moving tanker like thing on I-90. It was almost totally blocking the freeway, and backing up traffic. We decided to get ahead of it and flag out on I-15. We didn't anticipate that the tanker would also head up 15, so we all rushed ahead so we could flag out in front of it. Everyone got around it and the flaggers sent us out in 15 sec. intervals instead of the usual minute. Worked great, except for the last 3 or 4 cars. We were unable to get out ahead of the tanker. I was sent out just as the tanker passed. I had to ride behind it for about 2 or 3 miles. It was only going about 25 mph or so, so it was pretty frustrating. Oh well, cowies or tankers, all part of the game. I finally was able to pass it and continue on. Tweety was still knocking and sounding worse by the mile. We arrived in Montana City, where we had our lunch break. Garrett Green had

his T off in a ditch, and was tearing it down. I'm not sure what the actual problem was, but he had it back together just minutes before he had to flag out. Tweety was knocking like crazy, so I added gobs of oil, said a prayer and



Garrett Green works on his T

away we went. Back to Rocker for the last leg of the day. Tweety was sounding terrible when I arrived in Rocker. I conferred with Tom and we decided that if I took it easy with Tweety, really retarded the spark, and moseyed along, I should be able to get Tweety back to Dillon and not have to trailer in. I nursed her up to the flag out spot and oozed out at a rip roaring 25 mph. I was very intent on listening to my engine, and making sure that I had the spark retarded enough to keep the engine running as quiet as possible. I was also adjusting the choke to be as efficient as possible, and just tooling along. I kept expecting Tony to catch up, and was pleased to see that it was taking him longer than I had expected. I kept watching and waiting. No Tony. It was a fairly nice afternoon, the sun was shining and I was thinking how nice the weather had been so far. Still puzzling why Tony hadn't caught me yet, when it dawned on me that the sun was in the wrong place. It should have been on my right, but it was on the left. OH CRAP!!! I was heading to Missoula. I had been so intent on adjusting my car, that I drove right on past the turn off of I-90 onto I-15. My family will tell you that I have the worst sense of direction in the world. I agree! I have taught myself to tell direction by the position on the sun, because I **really do not** have any sense of direction. I'm one of those people who would circle for hours if lost in the woods. And here I was, going the wrong way, with an ailing car, and had been for about half an hour. GREAT!! What a doof. I found a turn around and headed back. Thank

fully, Tweety is a sturdy car. We made it back to I-15, where I called for help. Deciding it would be better to trailer in and receive slow time than to try to make it in on my own, I waited for the trailer. Mark and Janice Hutchinson came out and got me, and hanging my head in embarrassment, I arrived back in Dillon. I received my fair share of razing, but it was all in good fun. I have a great capacity to laugh at myself, so I felt no heartburn about it. Rick immediately took the pan off Tweety to find the problem. It turned out that the #2 piston had lost it's dipper, and no oil was getting to the piston. Rick looked for the old dipper, but couldn't find it. Was a bit of a concern, as I don't like to have spare metal rattling around in my engine. Decided it must be stuck in the outside oil line, so he tightened the rods and put the pan on and took her for a test drive. Still had the slight knock that had always been there, but not the rod knock. That ended the day with the results for day two as: Tom-1st, Jillian Caples-2nd, Mike Robison 3rd, and Rick Carnegie-4th. Added to day one, that put the overall times as: Tom-1st, Mike-2nd, Gary Ebbert-3rd, and Doug Langel-4th. Day three dawned clear and sunny. I needed to take Tweety out to gas up, so I piled in and started her up. As soon as I stepped on the starter, I heard this weird rattle. Sounded like pennies in a pop can. I had lost a magnet anchor bolt one year and had seized my magneto. Brings your car to a screeching stop. At 55 mph that is slightly hairy! Before it seized, that bolt flying around in my transmission sounded like someone running over pop cans, so I am a bit leery of that sound. I analyzed it for a minute and asked Tom if it could possibly be the dipper. He said might be, so I took the cover off my bendix, and voilà-there it was-one smashed dipper. I replaced the cover and felt a lot better knowing that there was no stray metal where it shouldn't be.

The last day was from Dillon to the Idaho border and back to Lima for the first stop. The last leg was from Lima to Dillon. The first leg contained one of the very popular turn-arounds. They are great fun. You are able to see where everyone is, and what position they are in. Also gives you a bit of socialization time as you can wave and give the thumbs up to everyone.

We flagged out in appropriate order, and away we went. I soon caught Ed Marshall, as he was 9th and I was 11th. Garret Green was 10th, but he was nowhere to be seen. I passed Ed, but was unable to pull away. Latching on to Tweety Bird, we became one. After a bit he edged around me and was able to get by. We jockeyed for position for quite a while. I pulled ahead as we came to the turn-around. I'm not a big fan of spinning out, so I slowed down a lot for the turn. Even with that, I skidded out of the turn, with Ed close behind. I took off the other direction and managed to shake of Ed. I figured that he would be right back behind me, but he never caught up. Later found out that he had coil trouble. Earlier, Mike had caught Tom and they were drafting along when one of Montana's finest came upon them. They got a visual finger shaking and a motion to back off each other. They promptly complied. I don't think anyone else got a warning, but I know that lots of us were drafting that last day. We gassed up in Lima and flagged out for the last leg. Everyone arrived back in Dillon in one piece. The final standing for 2006 was Tom-1st, Mike-2nd, Gary-3rd and Doug-4th. When I asked Tom about his win, he said he felt that Gary, Doug and Garrett all had faster cars, but he ran steadier and that seemed to make the difference.

Our last day was a tour to Bannack St. Park. Again it was a

(Continued on page 12)



Tom Carnegie-1st: Mens



Jillian Caples-1st: Womens

beautiful day as we toured to Bannack. For those who don't know, Bannack is the best preserved of all Montana's ghost towns. It has been preserved rather than restored and this makes it unique. On July 28, 1862, Montana first major gold strike was here. Bannack's population swelled to over 3,000 by 1863 because of this massive gold rush. Bannack's bustling population was slowly snuffed out as the value of gold steadily dwindled. There are over 50 buildings that line Main Street with their historic log and frame structures that recall Montana's formative years. The authorities allowed us to park our cars along the main street and have a photo shoot. This was rather special, as motor vehicles are not allowed beyond the town limits. Mike, Jillian and Dave had taken their manifold cookers with the plan to cook hot dogs along the way, and eat lunch at the park. Hot dogs by themselves are not terribly inspiring, but put them in a manifold cooker and go on a tour, and they are the best tasting food around. Add a turtledeck party and the day is complete. We brought enough hotdogs for anyone who wanted to partake, and many others brought food to share. It was a great lunch and a fitting end to a wonderful 2006 Montana 500.



Janet Cervoski has a bite to eat at the Turtledeck party