



Photos by Ron Sorem

Satch Carlson and Russ Krushaar overcame steering problems in their 1969 Saab Sonnet to take the overall victory in the 2007 running of the Thunderbird Rally.

Two anniversaries in one for Thunderbird Rally 2007

BY RON SOREM
Contributing editor

MERRITT, B.C. — This was the 50th Anniversary Thunderbird Winter Rally, presented by the West Coast Rally Association, continuing the event originated by the University of British Columbia Sports Car Club, whose mascot is the namesake for the rally. The 2007 event also marked the 20th Anniversary of the “modern” Thunderbird and for Rallymaster Paul Westwick who brought back Thunderbird in 1987 after its TSD retirement in 1973. Paul has been the only Rallymaster since the 1987 return.

Saturday morning, Feb. 17, 48 cars set

out for their two-day adventure on gravel, wet gravel, mud, frozen mud, snow over mud, and some deep snow, and the possibility of deep water!

Odo check ran south toward Aspen Grove. The 17-km Kentucky-Alleyne Regularity traveled eastward through the provincial park. Last year this section saw deep snow, cars “off” and a moose. This year, no wildlife encounters, and most of the snowbanks survived.

A short freeway transit brought Marsh Lake Regularity for a great mix of road surfaces over its 66.5 kilometers (longest of the event); 55 kmh, wet gravel in bright sunlight, every shaded cor-

ner presented frozen surfaces. 65 kmh, a mix of bare gravel and frozen mud. Pennask Lake Road, 60 kmh early, dropping to 50 kmh — simply white, tree lined, and not much wider than the mirrors in places. Marsh Lake continued, twisting and narrow through the forest, then wider, softer, muddier and riverlike as the route emerged onto the rolling range land. Drivers found the deep mud disconcerting. Further into the section was the first BIG water splash, in full view of a checkpoint. The remainder of the regularity followed the wide ranch access out to Nicola Lake.

The brief lakeside transit and climb up the plateau again brought the Peter