

Wendolowski (Salem, Ore.) ran the Impreza 2.5 wagon as “00” (trading stage times with the RX-7, so not exactly “slow pace”). I ran with Walt’s wife Zoe (as in Zoh, not Zo-ee) in the Legacy Sport as “000,” pulling double duty as “advance” and “find someplace to do a HAM relay.” Since Wild West chief of operations, John Nispel, was a stage captain for this event, banner guard was placed, but little of the banner could be set before I got there as “000,” and even more had been blown down by the persistent wind. Unfortunately, course opening cars didn’t get any spectating time on either day.

Radio communication was troublesome in the steep, narrow, coulees in this new venue. There was always a good spot for “Mountain Top” Lee Chambers, but he couldn’t bend it over the ridge into the bottom, to reach both start and finish. Saturday morning was just northeast of the fairgrounds, so radio was good, with “Mountain Top” actually on the mountain top, in the middle of one stage, with nearly line of sight to the fairgrounds and service. Saturday afternoon was another story.

The first stage, “New York,” anticipated needing a relay and he was in place. “Relay One” could hit start but couldn’t hit finish, an extra “sweep” Ham was sent into the stage to find a high spot, while I went on along the route, retying banner guard, and doing a radio check every half mile... I lost the first relay, lost the second relay, couldn’t hear Finish. I continued to Finish, where Jeff switched over to his hand-held (his mobile wouldn’t get beyond the bumper) then backtracked into the stage a couple of miles, to get the second relay, and get him to move further along the stage to hit Finish, and Relay One. Viola! Two relays, and another HAM at spectator, for good measure. It worked, and with that experience, it wasn’t too surprising that the same thing happened on the next stage, “Willow Gulch,” and again on the last, “Heaton.” All three stages operated with two relays.

Sunday Communication wasn’t quite as challenging, but we needed two relays on Oliphant, one relay on Linville. The shortened Tatman had radio communication from Start to Finish, with “spectator” along for the ride. “Mountain Top” couldn’t hit Service, so they sent a radio up the hill north of Highway 12, who could hit Tatman Mountain, setting up a relay for Service.

Attrition is a relative term. There were



Ron Sorem photo

The Wild West Rally has been invited to return next year to Pomeroy in Garfield County.

two big offs on the first stage Saturday... “K” right, through a stop sign, don’t cut because of mailboxes, small crest... probable air. The Subaru Impreza of Erik Lyden and Kathryn Hansen hit the berm VERY hard with left front tire (pushed nearly into firewall) and launched into field — 60 feet without tracks! Did I mention this was a fast stage? Did not roll, but very hard compression. Driver was very sore later in the day. Co-driver cut her chin on the helmet strap somehow and the HANS worked.

Next car at the same intersection, Steve Greer and Kelly Greer in another Impreza, came upon the scene. Both driver and co-driver were apparently distracted by the first off and missed the turn, tank slapped rear corner, spun into berm, snap rolled and landed on hood, then came to rest on driver door. The Greers were OK, but at this point there were apparently still no “OK” signs or triangles out, although road marshals were on the scene.

Both crews indicated they were all right, and both cars were well off into the field, away from the road. There were now two cars, four crew, no red

cross, don’t know about “OK” signs... Stage was never stopped. After last car, Sweep went in per usual, and about the same time one of the “non-injured” decided she was injured, and then full E-crew, sheriff, fire department and ambulance responded — eventually to town, then to Lewiston (and back for dinner).

Saturday started with 23; down to 19 by mid afternoon; finished with 14 — the two big offs, one minor off and the rest were mechanical. Sunday started 18 and finished 16, both due to mechanical problems — one axle, one unknown power issue.

Overall acceptance by the town, the county, the Palouse Economic Development Council, law enforcement, fire and rescue, eateries, etc. was very enthusiastic. Wild West 2008 will happen again in Pomeroy, one week earlier, and with a RallyX at the Fairgrounds the preceding weekend, during the Garfield County Fair. (Rally will be the weekend following the Fair, so plan ahead.)

Complete results, photos and links at www.wildwestrally.org.

View the gallery of Cody Crane’s photos at www.wildwestrally.org/cgal.html