



Satch Carlson and Dale Kraushaar finished first overall and first in Historic in their 1969 Saab Sonnett II, scoring only 6 points on the Thunderbird Rally after 502 miles.

# You can't keep an old Saab down

## *Carlson-Kraushaar Sonnett wins Thunderbird*

**STORY AND PHOTOS  
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*Contributing editor*

MERRITT, B.C. — Rallymaster Paul Westwick and staff from the West Coast Rally Association presented the 38th running of their premier winter rally — Thunderbird, Feb. 7 and 8.

Thunderbird is the mascot of the University of British Columbia, and the rally was originally a UBCSCC event. Forty-seven teams took the start in Merritt for Round One of the BC Rally Championship. Thunderbird's reputation as a premium event drew teams and staff from three of Canada's western provinces and five western states.

Road conditions varied over the two days — dry paved, ice patches over paved, dry frozen gravel, smooth plowed snow and Saturday night deep powder under a near full moon. Cold but clear weather hovered at freezing in Merritt for the start. Patches of leftover snow and ice lined the highway, turning quickly to solid “puddles” in the gravel, then snow-covered for the first regularity, Minnie Lakes, climbing from Nicola Lake, then winding along the plateau to Douglas Lake and the return to pavement — covering 36 kms (22 miles).

Douglas Lake regularity, 44 km, left the big cattle ranch, climbing northerly, passing Chapperon Lake, Rush Lake, Salmon Lake and its re-

sort. A checkpoint and photo-op at the top of a ridge, then a gradual descent in snow along Salmon River to pavement and the farms in Westwold Valley. At Westwold, the rally turned east to a break in Falkland — most of the checkpoint crews turned west then north to Pritchard and Chase, to get ahead of the rally.

Leaving Falkland, the 43-km Chase Creek regularity followed its namesake, passed Pillar Lake and the Basalt Pillars, to China Valley Road (“Ignore Road Closed”) and the short run along Charcoal Creek before Acute Left at checkpoint (“No Thru Road”). Sounds confusing, but was all very clear. Continuing north along Chase Creek 18km to Turtle Valley and on to Squilax at the