

Montana 500 Newsletter

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

www.montana500.org

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Vice President: Mike Stormo
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Tom Carnegie 2014

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Correspondence: Tom Carnegie

Membership dues \$10.00
Touring class: \$35.00
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Cover photos:

Top: Tom Carnegie's car in 1976. This is actually the car that would later become Nan Robison's Tweety Bird. Bottom: Flag out in 1976, Helena, I believe. Ed Hencz's car is behind Tom's car. This car now belongs to Tony Cerovski.

If you have a photo that you would like to see on the cover of the Montana 500 newsletter, please send it to: montana500@antiqueautoranch.com



Pres Talk

Mike Cuffe

Almost time for the 500, and I'm **Behind the 8 BALL**. Got the old buggy running pretty good, have now decided to try for a little bit better. Don't be surprised if she has wings on this year, including Ford Script, of course.

Just a word to trophy class drivers wanting to avoid embarrassment, leave things like this at home:

1. ***Your e-timer.***
2. ***Hot gasoline and additives.***
3. ***Other funny go fast stuff that gives a competitive edge outside the Montana 500 rules.***
4. ***Any wings without Ford Script.***

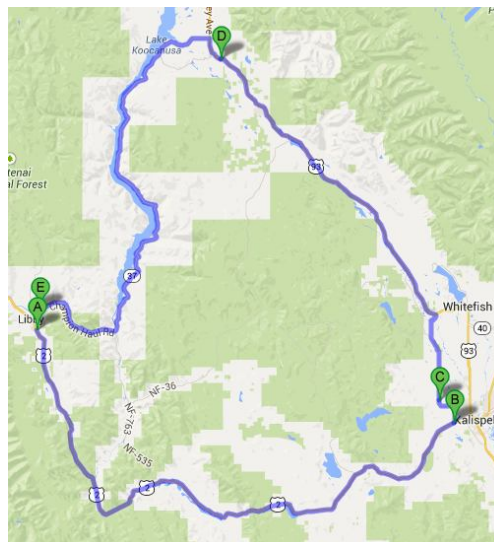
Do have your cars highway legal with fenders, windshields, horns, and lights. Also remember to bring registration and proof of insurance. Be loaded with expectations of great fun, take a couple deep breaths of common sense, and plan to drive with safety in mind.

Try to be in Libby for check in and safety inspection by noon or soon after on Sunday, June 15. Let me know if you have helpers on board for things like safety inspection, timers, picnic planners, etc. That group will include my good friend, Abe VanBemmel, who began turning wrenches on his first Model T to deliver newspapers around Eureka 63 years ago. I am just old enough to remember jumping out of the road for Abe and his late brother, Joe. Seems like you never could tell if they had brakes or not.

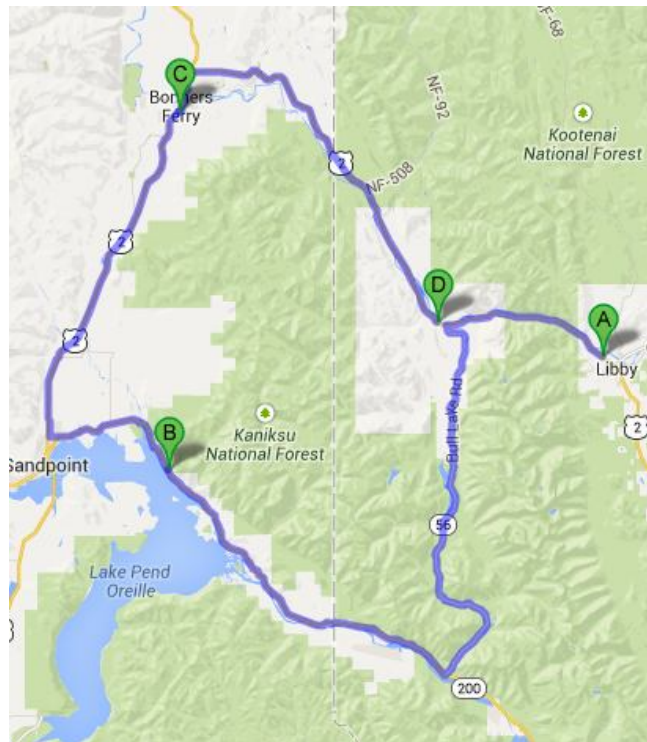
Sounds like Libby will have the Montana 500 welcome mat out, and an open invitation has been made for drivers to stop by the local nursing home and Heritage Museum. Folks will be tickled to see your Model T Fords driving around town, but remember to be polite guests, observe speed limits, stop signs, etc.... There are a couple auto parts stores, a couple Tin Lizzies at the museum, and thank Timberline Ford for tear down space (also a great place to have your rig serviced), lots of places to eat including our headquarters The Venture Inn.

There is a car show Saturday in my hometown of Eureka including the Cruise to the Bridge Friday night, June 13, with a burger fry at Montana's highest, longest bridge, thanks to Koocanusa Kruisers.

My apologies for getting runs finalized so late, and thank you for showing patience.



One day, we will drive to Kalispell on U.S. 2. Then take the Farm to Market road to 93, then to Eureka. Then 37 back to Libby, or maybe we'll run this route in reverse. This is about 220 miles.



The next planned route will run west from Libby on U.S. 2, south on Montana 56, west on Montana 200 to Sandpoint Idaho, then north to Bonners Ferry, Idaho, and back to Libby on U.S. 2, about 170 miles.

Another alternate route is to turn east on Montana 200 to Plains, then turn left on state highways to Flathead lake, then north on U.S. 93 to Kalispell, and back to Libby.

The short run on Wednesday will likely be to Yaak, Montana.

A good turnout of both cars running under time and touring class is anticipated. We have heard about some 27 drivers planning to seek the Montana 500 traveling trophy, and indications are that a good field will show up for the touring class. Normally the touring class will head out in advance of the cars running under time. We always space out at least one minute apart, and slower cars yield to faster cars catching up to them.

Wednesday run will finish by noon with lead cars going to Timberline Ford for inspection. Concluding awards picnic will be at a local park, perhaps at the newly dedicated Veterans Memorial. Thursday we have lots of options for the leisurely tour. Some of us may bring parts to start up a long dormant T recently donated to Heritage Museum.

Stay a few extra days to drive into isolated pockets of Montana, hike the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness, fish the Kootenai River from shore or boat, ride the range, take my pontoon boat out on Lake Koocanusa, boost our ailing economy with a few dollars. Or just kick back to enjoy our mountain hospitality.

Toll free number for the Venture Inn and Restaurant is 800-221-0166.

Questions? Call 406-293-1247 or email mcuffe@interbel.net

Editor's Propaganda
Tom Carnegie

I've been out of touch with a lot of the folks from out of town (Spokane), so I don't have a good idea of what is going on right now. I've heard of three possible T's from western Washington coming to Libby. Maybe four from Montana. Three from Iowa possible. Several from California. From the Spokane area:

Jamie Allen - Haven't seen much of him lately, but his car has been ready for months as far as I know.

Skeeter Carlson - His car may show up, he probably won't.

Donald Carnegie - Likely will be ready. Might have wire wheels.

Rick Carnegie - No motor at this time. Usually slaps something together at the last minute.

Tom Carnegie - Put my T in a shed nearly two years ago and it hasn't turned a wheel since. I replaced the timing gear after Butte so it should run.

Mark Hutchinson - Just got his motor put in a few days ago. Should be ready to go.

Bill Mullins - Says he won't get his T done in time. We'll see.

Jillian Robison - Can't get off work. Won't attend.

Mike Robison - No rear end in his car. Should be able to get it going in time.

Nan Robison - Unable to attend.

Mike Stormo - Hasn't touched his car since the last run, as far as I know, but it was running when he parked it, so it should be ok.

I have decided to keep putting myself or my car onto the front cover until someone sends me some different pictures. I have no pictures from 2013. It would be nice to have some pictures from the last few runs to put on the internet too. Lots of folks have them. Just send them to me, or bring them to Libby.

Please email:

montana500@antiqueautoranch.com and ask to receive the newsletter electronically if you are not already.

My Most Memorable Montana Meet (Tom Carnegie)

I was having a conversation with other Montana 500 drivers. We got onto the subject of our most memorable Montana 500 that we had attended. Most of the drivers clearly could name a certain one. This is the case for me too. I think it might be fun to capture some of these stories and print them in this newsletter. I will go first.

The 2006 Montana 500 I think is most memorable for me. My first (1975), my first win (1977) the time I drove my coupe (2013) and the cross-state run (2010) would receive honorable mention.

In 2006 my wife and I were planning to tour the lower forty-eight states in my Model T coupe. I was planning to leave for this trip on the 4th of July. My wife had gotten the time off. This trip was to take six weeks. Even though I was taking six weeks off to take this trip, I still planned to do the Montana 500, but my wife couldn't take that much time off from work, so I attended the 500 without her. This is the first memorable thing about this run, not necessarily a pleasant memory. The next thing to happen wasn't terribly pleasant either. Shortly before the run I had to get my gallbladder removed. The doctors did a really lousy job and the incision ran from my left ear to my right hip (or nearly so). I was not anywhere close to being healed up by the time the 500 started.

The 2006 Montana 500 was held in Dillon. It was the first time I had been to Dillon. Dillon is a great place to hold an endurance run in my book. We wound up crossing the Continental Divide a half-dozen times or so. We drove through a cattle drive. For the life of me I don't see why they have to march the cows right down the middle of the

highway when there is five miles of clear space on either side of the road. When we got to Dillon there was a freeway on-ramp right by the hotel. If you went south, you could go about a mile and then take the next off-ramp and turn around and come back. This worked well for test driving your T. Some of the folks for reasons unknown would test their T's by driving the other direction. There was no off-ramp for many miles in this direction, so they would flip a U-turn in the freeway median and come back to the hotel. At some point in time this annoyed the cops who came to the hotel and put the kibosh on this activity. In the course of testing and adjusting my T the day before the run, my mag up and quit. Not totally, but almost. So, when I got back to the hotel (on battery) I borrowed a pile of car batteries and jumper cables and recharged my mag in the parking lot. It worked! I wasn't sure it would hold for the entire run, but it did. Gary Ebbert was having trouble with his timer and had pretty much decided to pack it in. Mike Robison suggested that he put in a stronger flapper spring, which Gary did. It transformed his car. It turned out that Gary had the fastest car that year (in my opinion). By the end of the first day Gary had over four minutes on the next closest car (Garrett Green), but fate had other plans for Gary (and Garrett too). I was car number 11 and Doug Langel was car 12. It wasn't too long on the first day before I noticed a T approaching me from behind. As it got closer, I realized that it was Doug. Soon he caught me and passed me. Rats! I knew then that I didn't have the fastest car. In fact, at the end of day one, I had the fourth best time. I was running steady, but not terribly fast. Throughout the course of the run I was beaten on individual legs by Gary Ebbert, Garrett Green, Doug Langel, Mike Robison, Jillian Caples (Robison) and Dennis Dakan. I had the best time on only one out of the nine legs.

The second day was when everything changed. Gary Ebbert broke his flapper. Garrett Green pulled his oil pan to tighten up bearings and took an hour penalty. Doug Langel had prob-

lems (I don't recall for sure, coil perhaps?) and lost a lot of time. That put me into first, Mike Robison into second, Gary Ebbert into third and Doug Langel into fourth. The thing I remember most about the second day was the terribly rough freeway through Butte. I thought I was going to bust all my stitches on that road.

Gary was only a minute or so behind Mike on day three, and Gary had a faster car. So Mike and I conspired to allow Mike to hold his position. The plan was for me to wait for Mike (who flagged out right behind me) and draft the whole leg. In those days, drafting was the name of the game. Often two T's would hook up for part of a leg, usually toward the end of the leg and then draft together for ten or twenty miles. What Mike and I decided to do was to draft the entire leg. So, I waited at the start of the leg. I literally pulled over, stopped and waited one minute for Mike to show up. I never realized what two fairly fast cars drafting for that long would do, but we blew everybody away on that leg. We only got yelled at by the Montana Highway Patrol once. He got onto his bull-horn and told Mike to back off. Which he did until the MHP was out of sight, then back together we went! Mike picked up several minutes on the next fastest car. Even after waiting a full minute along side of the road I still had a better time for that leg than every other T except Mike.

After it was all said and done, I won. It was my third win and kind of special. Special from the bad things, such as my wife not being there and being in a lot of pain from my recent surgery, but also good things, like winning without having the fastest car and help that I got from my friends, especially Mark Hutchinson that even allowed me to attend.

The Philosophy of Rules.
Tom Carnegie

Mike Cuffe and I were talking the other night about rules and the interpretation thereof. I was saying how I had a hard time coming to grips with folks who seemingly ignored the rules, presumably hoping that they will win and not get caught. I decided that to these folks the rules were there just as a means to punish those who couldn't hide their not following the rules. Maybe they thought it was sort of like bluffing in poker. It isn't cheating in poker to lie about your hand. It is how you play the game. To these Montana 500 rule breakers, it isn't cheating, its just how you play the Montana 500 game. I think once you understand this philosophy you can plan for it. On the other end of the spectrum are folks who feel that anytime there is a question you should take the most conservative or restrictive course of action. This may be honorable on some level, but I doubt you'll win many races this way. In the middle is the group that follows the rules, but may interpret the rules liberally. They would never purposely break any rule. At least *their interpretation of the rules*. The example I gave to Mike was valves. I said if there was a rule that allowed two piece keepers, that that meant to me that any valve with two piece keepers would be legal and anything required to make them work (such as adjustable tappets) would also be allowed. Some folks might say that this rule only means that only original Ford valves modified to use two piece keepers would be allowed.

Who is right? I don't know, but I think I know which philosophy seems to win the most races. Also the restrictive philosophy doesn't seem pragmatic to me. Who would modify stock valves just so you could use two piece keepers? The drivers at tear down time seem to tend toward the liberal interpretation.

Then there is the host of things people do that the rules don't address. Such as, what can be repaired, and in what manner? Is it ok to fix something that has broken to be better than it was originally? Is it ok to fix something at all? Or, what about the use of modern materials to replace era materials. E.G. polyester capacitors, plastic coated wire, synthetic rubber tires etc., etc. My philosophy on this is that anything that doesn't give a significant unfair speed or endurance advantage is allowed. This is especially true if the modification is safer.

I am going to look at some specific areas of the rules. Since we were talking about valves, I'll start there. I might follow up with different rules in future newsletters.

Rule 1. in the first (1961) rules says: All participants must be stock Model T Fords in accordance with the following requirements and permitted modifications. Rule 7. then says that the size of the valve ports is not to be altered to accommodate oversize valves. The implication, to me, is that a T motor is still stock with oversized valves and ports, so rule 7 is needed. Or maybe this rule is for

emphasis. The rule remained in 1962. In 1963 it was reworded to: Standard Head size valve and 45 degree valves and seats. This remained until 1965 when "Pin or two piece keepers O.K." was added. In 1966 a rule was added that said "Adjustable valve lifters not allowed." In 1967 the keeper rule was changed to "pin or two piece keepers optional". In 1968 this was changed to: "pin or two piece keepers and valve setting optional." Adjust-



Swirl polished valve on left, regular valve on right. This is done ostensibly to increase the flow characteristics of the valve. I think the results are dubious at best and short lived, as the valves carbon up in a few miles, obliterating the swirl finish.

able tappets also became optional this year and are still allowed in 2014. In 2002 to address a cam issue, lifter dimensions were added to the rules. In 1988 this rule was added: "Valve head diameter not to exceed 1.5". Minimum stem diameter

5/16".” In 2000 the valve rule was rewritten to: “Stainless steel and swirl polished valves are optional. For all valves use a minimum stem diameter of 5/16", a maximum head diameter of 1.500" and seating face of 45 degrees. Use either pins or two piece keepers. Hardened valve seats are optional. Radiused, 45 degree or three angle seat grinds allowable.” This is still the rule in 2014. I was running seats and swirl polished valves prior to this rule, under the rubric that since two piece keepers were allowed, any valve with them was allowed. I considered seats to be a legitimate way to repair a damaged block. I was torn down with an engine with seats and swirl polished stainless valves. There was no heartburn as far as I knew from anyone at that time. I think the 2000 rule was to unequivocally bring the rules into line with what was the standard practice of the time and what had been the standard practice for many years. The 2011 rules address valve springs. Some folks may have thought that since the retainers could be modified, any spring that fit those retainers would be allowed. The 2011 rule says: “Only stock Model T Ford and Model A Ford valve springs are allowed.”

Next newsletter I will pick apart another rule or two. I might change the name from “Philosophy of Rules” to “History of Rules”.

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