

From Fred Cochran: The RallyMaster replies...

The most common question about this last PBX – '09 – was **WHY ? WHY** did the RI's Contain 4 bad Tulip drawings? **WHY** was the end of the TZ through Tabernacle a mile short at the end (Inst #191) and **WHY** was the next Inst a mile longer. If the Tulip for Inst #86 was wrong and two previous incorrect Tulips had Course Markers to correct them, **WHY** not Inst #86 ? **WHY** were 2 Checkpoints in the wrong place ? (That's common, but **WHY** ? anyway). Weren't the RI's checked out ? If not, **WHY** ? **WHY** were the roads so bad ? **WHY** so many problems ?

Every poor performance has reasons for the problems. People speak of excuses, but excuses fit for being late to work, being absent from class in school and other single person non-performances. When a war, a motion picture or play, an entire project or a major rally fails to live up to its 10 year past, excuses don't cut it.

As Rallymaster of the 2009 PBX, the last of its kind, it should have been better. And if it weren't for numerous problems which no one person could foresee, the final PBX would have been flawless (or at least the Route Instructions (RI's) would have been). Again, **WHY ?**

Let's look at the duties of the Rallymaster for just the PBX of this year. 1<sup>st</sup>- Make a Flyer and post it on Club website with all pertinent data incl date, cost, location, etc. Then:

- 1- Find a route (includes mileages set to a measured mile to the thousandth.
- 2- Notify every government agency where that route passes through.
- 3- File for permits (permission) to go through every Town, Township, Borough, City, County, State Forest(s), State EPA, Federal EPA, State Police and this past year, The U S Army, Fort Dix. Set up files for all documents, data, and related information as to who, where, when, why, and HOW.
- 4- Send out these missives return receipt and keep receipts for every expense authorized by the Club.
- 5- Make up a master set of Routes that meet Club & SCCA General Instructions (GI's). A Master set with special columns for TSD data, Mileages to the thousandth (set at a measured mile), Checkpoint locations and a column for Rallymaster (RM) notes, **plus** a contestant set of route with hundredth reading mileages, Delta mileage column, Tulips column, Remarks about the route column,
- 6- Make up maps (a master map with Checkpoint locations, Odometer Leg in one color, Rest Point locations, Lunch and/or Dinner breaks and Section points, each section's route in a different color and the route after the last Checkpoint where the Competitive portion of the rally ends and then goes to the ending location (maybe another color again), smaller maps for every group that requires one (local Police, State Police, government agencies, private property owners and Checkpoint coordinator).
- 7- Make up route instructions (with mileages measured each time to a measure mile), speeds, obstacles with add times, Tulips with clues (if existent), multiple Checkpoint locations (the excesses to be deleted in advance within reasonable worker expectancy), Time of day times for each instruction column along with

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- 8- Delta Mileage column, Break locations with descriptions, mileages and time for
- 9- the break. To start & Rally to Restart. Separating events in Sections, usually with rest breaks inserted.
- 10- Check the route after bad weather for blockages, flooding, barricading, etc.
- 11- Check the mail for certified return receipts to be files with copies of original letters asking permission.
- 12- Set up Route checks of different Classes (Equipped and SOP minimum) with a master set of routes and contestant set of routes where Checkpoints and TSD data are absent, along with RM special notes also absent.
- 13- Make up charts for registration of contestants for each Class (Equipped, Limited, Stock and Novice).
- 14- Make sure all relevant information is required on Entry Forms Date of event. Name of event, location of Start & Finish, Cost of event with registration cutoff date & extra cost. To whom registration will be sent with name address, telephone & e-mail, check (no cash) payment with entry. Contestants name, address, (incl zip code), emergency telephone #, e-mail address (of Driver & Navigator), Club affiliation (if SCCA, then Region # and membership #), Class entered (EQ, LIMITED, STOCK, NOVICE), Make, Model, Year & Color of car to be used with Plate # & State. Have auto insurance requirements to enter the event.
- 15- Make up folders for different forms to be put in contestant envelope.
- 16- Make copies of different forms for Checkpoint envelopes.
- 17- Get weekend SCCA membership forms from Topeka, minor contestant permission forms and insurance forms for event.
- 18- Check General Instructions (GI's) for missing requirements, definitions and explanations. Print GI's for contestant's envelopes.
- 19- Check magnetic car numbers for continuity & arrange for missing number replacements. Clean dirty numbers and arrange in strict numerical order.
- 20- Make sure to order enough materials (food, etc) for workers. Arrange for trophies for event and work up percentages for each Class and Novice. Arrange for cash to be used for making change and get cash box "loaded".
- 21- Arrange for final Contestant and Master RI's to be made for final Route Check at least 2 weeks before event. Make necessary changes to RI's and have 2 different checkouts of the master copies checked instruction by instruction and then arrange to print RI's. Make final Checkout of Route & pick up key to Starting location Thursday or Friday before event. Put all necessary forms and RI's in appropriate envelopes at least a week before the Rally. A week before, pack Contestant, Checkpoint and other (Lead car, Sweep car(s), pre-registration forms in envelopes by class with notations on payment & amount of payment for each Contestant Registration Form. Make blank Registration forms with a Registration instruction sheet in a separate envelope. Put all readied forms in cartons for shipment to Rally HQ, including all necessary forms, Car numbers & RI's in Contestant envelopes by number. Make sure that Checkpoint coordinators have all Checkpoint data, forms for timing & scoring (for Checkpoint workers), and all timing clocks, Checkpoint signs, Rally permit copies and any others forms.

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23- Carry all needed materials, including food on the morning of the Rally plus Lead Car tools, Course Marker pie plates, duct tape, wooden stakes, computer installed & operating (w/spare computer). Go to Rally start & distribute needed materials to appointed officials & workers. Get Ready to run Lead a half hour before Contestants.

There you have the duties of the RM for this year's (2009) PBX.

Now, there were other people working in concert with the RM. Donal McNally was doing the assembly of the RI's. Arna Cochran checking the RI's as edited & updated. Fred Cochran usually did the updating on paper and then handed them to Arna for actual changes in the computer program. Arna also did copying of forms. Fred did the envelope stuffing. Joe Kwiatek & Mark Lees did a partial Route Check as did Wendell Newsome & Sherry Morse. Everything seemed to be working out after a very bad spell of weather during the Spring, Summer & early Fall. Rain forced a number of route changes and made it necessary to do road repair ourselves. **WHY** did we do road repairs ? Enter the economy....

Every year, starting in 1998, I was told of budget cuts of mostly 10% with a few 15% cuts here and there. In the later 2000's, personnel retired and weren't replaced. Then 2008 there were layoffs. That same year there was no money to run all of the State Forests, so at least 4 would have to be closed. But, after lots of complaints, some haggling was done and it was decided to shut down the Beach commission and use those 12 million dollars to keep all of the forests open. But, although open, more Forest layoffs hit, further reducing personnel. The weather worsened, and I saw the entrance road to Godfrey Bridge campsites graded and one week later it was potholed as bad as it had been before it was graded. Rain never seemed to stop. Waterholes got deeper. The potholes worsened. They multiplied. Lake Fred deepened almost daily. And the situation could not improve because the water table rose with each storm. And even if the water were pumped out of the waterholes, the holes would fill rapidly because the waterholes were lower than the water table. A bypass was needed. Lake Fred was on the only North-South road from Batona Campsites to Route 532, unless a 16-mile bypass went through Tabernacle Twp.

2 weeks before the Rally, on a Thursday, Linda Louie Drown down from way up North Jersey down to Lakehurst, to find a bypass around Lake Fred. This was accomplished and another trip would have to be made to re-mileage the route. There were a few waterholes on this bypass, but no water in them. There were numerous yumps that would have to be reduced in height. But by whom ? Pete Temperino, one of our contestants from previous years volunteered to go out with me and fix some of the trouble spots on the route. We went out and removed tree roots across the roads, leveled a few bad potholes, reduced a few yumps and discovered a 2-foot diameter tree across the route near Buckingham. If you ran the 1<sup>st</sup> section, you got to see it, and fortunately, go under it. It's still there and may be there for some time to come. There are a few pictures of it on this website.

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But more work was needed and Pete was about to get married. He recommended a friend, also a former contestant, Jacob Gogats. Jack was enthusiastic and showed up to work on the route with all kinds of tools, his brother Justin and a friend Andrew. That was Oct 27<sup>th</sup>. We drained 2 very deep waterholes in Penn State Forest and leveled a lot of Yumps on the new Lake Fred bypass in Wharton State Forest (near the Batona campsites near the Carranza Memorial. But we discovered 3 waterholes that had been dry 10 days before were now full of water. But, they were passable. While Jake and Andrew were unemployed, they were still busy with other things and Justin had to go to work by 2 PM. So we arranged another date, Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup>. Swell. Dr McNally and I would run final mileages, check all tulips and other things, do some CAS changes and add time revelations. Then Tuesday, the road crew would fix up the yumps on the bypass. Wednesday the Routes would be updated and Thursday the route would be run again with Steve Mauger for a final check. Friday, Fred would arrange for the RIs to be printed. All of the rally envelopes had been packed except for the RI's and Fred would go out with Course Markers, pick up the key to the Rally Start and come back Friday evening, pick-up The RI's and pack them into the envelopes. The Food had been ordered for the workers' dinner to be picked up Saturday morning. Everything for registration had been taken care of. Again, enter Mother Nature. The Thursday evening before the final week, Tropical Storm Ida blew into town and dumped up to 5 inches of rain in the Pine Barrens. Monday at 6 AM, Dr McNally took the 72-mile trip to Lakehurst and began the final mileage, tulip and RI checkout. We got as far as the new bypass and made it past the 1<sup>st</sup> two waterholes. The Subaru WRX sank in the 3<sup>rd</sup> waterhole and thus ended the checkout. A 3 mile trek down White Horse Rd to Carranza Rd get us to hook up with Arna who drove Dr McNally to his car at my house in Bridgewater. I was towed out of the water hole by Jake Gogats (who rushed to the bypass with his wife and kids to get me out ASAP). I won't go into further details. But everything, especially my car, *died* that night. Tuesday my car was being dried out and waiting for a new engine computer, which drowned with the Suby. I would not get the Suby back till Friday AM where a new bypass had to be remeasured and the data rushed back to redo the RI's. Friday the new bypass was added to the RI's and other items checked. Friday evening the RI's were rushed to Staples to be readied by 10 AM Saturday (the 21<sup>st</sup> of November). The food was picked up at (9am) and then the master copy of the RI's being printed was checked again and errors were found. A Quick call to Staples was made to dump the 80 sets just printed and a new set of masters would be delivered soon. The errors were corrected and by 10 AM the newest RI's were rushed to Staples to be printed again. This time it was done immediately by the manager of the print shop and by 11 AM the routes were on their way via Arna Cochran (who was supposed to be at a family get-together by 9am that day). These new RI's were not closely scrutinized before delivery to contestants. Had they been, two major errors would have been found and the results would have been far different.

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So, work that should have been completed at least a week before, ended up being done less than 3 hours before the 1<sup>st</sup> car left on the Rally route. (My car – Lead). The first 2 errors (Tulips) I caught and Course Markers (CM's) were put up to correct them. The next bad tulip was not noticed and that led to the big off course run that lost many of the Novices and an unfortunate number of other contestants.

So, those are the answers to **WHY ?** The Thursday before the event we explored the possibility of *postponing* the event. If so, **When ?** It was agreed that the event had to be put on a Saturday. But the next weekend was Thanksgiving Saturday Football.

The weekend after that was Black Friday & Saturday. December was out – Christmas Parties, shopping, decorating, Christmas and then New Years weekend was equally out. We'd have to be out of our minds after such a wet Spring, Summer & Fall to consider January or February (especially if the roads froze, snowed on, thawed to mud, etc). That left highly unreliable March (weatherwise) which freezes, thaws and becomes super-rutted almost daily. Next – April – equally unreliable – lots more rain. Roads would be far more damaged from last Fall and the likelihood of major repairs & grading would be almost non-existent. May might be better (but last year it rained almost constantly). Also, the chance of repairs to the roads would be less than likely with less money in the budget and the use needed by so many State Forests of their only road-grader. June would put us halfway into the 2010 season (too late). The only viable answer was “go for it”!! However, this couldn't take into account the

Incorrect RI's (which weren't known until Saturday morning).

My personal apologies to all the folks who ran the rally. Equally, I owe apologies to those who worked it, especially Checkpoint, Sweep Cars and most of all to those who had to score the event.

The decisions made for requests and protests were the purview of the Scoring Committee. As Rallymaster I had to support their views, which were **more than reasonable**. Some people involved in the PBX (myself included) thought “*Maybe a short event, about 80 miles, during June or July, might be possible, rather than a big blow-out like The PBX*”. After more thought we decided that the economy would not likely be better than now. A number of State Forests stand a good chance to be closed or limited. There might be more layoffs (everywhere). And we might have another year of El Nino (which is more than likely), which means lots more rain in the mid-Atlantic/North-Atlantic States.

If you're willing to wait for the economy to revive, and the State of New Jersey to sink much more money into the Forests, Maybe five years from now it might be possible. Of course, at my age, I might not last that long and I'm about the only individual who would probably be willing to do those 24 different jobs for another Rally in the Pinelands. So you have it: **WHY, WHO, WHAT & WHY NOT!** Thanks for reading.

