

# Summary of 2001 Montana 500 Endurance Run

by Tom Carnegie

Sunday was inspection day. Somehow the local newspaper had printed an article saying that the run proper began on Sunday, a misapprehension shared by some of the T drivers. Better too early than too late I guess. After we had inspected all the cars, we had our evening meeting and drew numbers. Rick Carnegie, last year's winner was number one, and Rob Flesner, a newcomer this year, was the last car (a position he held the entire way) with number 18. We had four more or less touring cars. Peter Proschold from Las Vegas with his brass touring car, David Lingle with the roadster his dad Melvin drove, Keith Painter from Bountiful, Utah and Simon Nickol with his touring car. David and Simon had a little trouble, and didn't tour with us too much, but Keith and especially Peter drove a lot of miles. I wouldn't be surprised to see Peter back next year with a racer. Simon helped out with the trouble unit throughout the run.

Monday morning in the rain, we headed out for Whitefish to flag out. The first leg saw the first T break down. It was Ted Ballard with rear axle troubles. Ted was driving a car that used to belong to Orrin Culross of Culver City, California. Orrin used to race in the mid '70's. The next casualty was on leg three when Tom Carnegie's crankshaft broke. Tom was in second place at the time. The rest of the first day was uneventful, until after the last leg, Nan Robison's rear axle started making funny noises. Since Tom's car was dead in the water it was decided to cannibalize it. The rear axle assembly got put into Nan's car, the radiator was put into Mike Robison's car, as he had had radiator trouble all day, and the coils went into Rob Flesner's car, as he had had coil trouble.

Day two saw the next catastrophe. Nan Robison's car lost a magnet, which seized up the motor, just as she was attempting to pass a truck. Josh Billmeyer was right on her tail, but managed to somehow avoid hitting her as she skidded to a stop along side of the road. Nan was in sixth place at the time. About noon, the crew from ESPN showed up and began to record the action. They stayed and taped until the end of day three. At the end of day two, Ron Miller was out in front followed by Doug Langel, then Steve Coniff.

Day three saw the last break down. Mike Robison's borrowed radiator couldn't take the stress, and blew up. Mike had to quit with just two legs of the run left to go. Mike was in tenth place at the time. Also on the third day, Harold Mann withdrew to tour Glacier Park. Harold was in fourteenth place at the time. During the course of day three, Steve Coniff and Doug Langel swapped places. After all the times were compiled, we had a driver's meeting where we decided against having a post-race tear down. President Sam Nickol presented Ron Miller with the first place trophy. Dave Huson generously donated a trophy for the best place finish by a female. It was awarded to Anna Marx. Anna finished tenth overall. All in all, it was a great run, with good weather, a superb route and excellent timing and flagging. We had more entrants this year than we've had since the 1980's. Next year we look forward to an even better Montana 500!