

## 2004 SUN-Day Rallymaster Letter

Thank you all so much for running my rally. I went all out trying to make the perfect rally, and unintentionally made it a little too hard. That and the fact there was a mistake in the instructions right at the very beginning didn't make me any friends on this rally. Almost everyone stuck it out and didn't give up and made it to the end. We had 24 cars registered (5 novice, 2 groups, 5 husband/wife team). There were three checkpoints. Checkpoint 1 was ¼ of the way in, checkpoint 2 a little past the halfway point, and checkpoint 3 was the end. 19 cars (4 of them novices) made it to checkpoint 1 before it closed at 3:50. 18 cars (4 novices) made it to 2 before it closed at 5:10. 16 cars (4 novices) made it to checkpoint 3 before it closed at 7:25. There were 37 SUNNY signs posted (counting for the 4 double signs you hit in loops), and one off course SUNNY. One SUNNY was stolen and one fell over and was laying sideways ("Q") and I'm not counting those, so there were 35 valid SUNNYs.

Originally I planned on there being two checkpoints, but there were some tough instructions in the beginning and I tried to scare up some workers for a checkpoint in between the start and the middle and it worked out. WSCC rallies are known to be very challenging, and I think the novice class experiment worked. Some of the people who ran in novice class told me they would have never finished without the extra mileage markers they had (about every 2 or 3 instructions) and they enjoyed the rally and learned a LOT about how the instructions work. I spent a lot of time looking for some seriously fun roads and throwing in some nice scenery now and then as well. I think that worked out, but if I didn't have that damn error in the instructions everyone would have been a lot happier (including me).

I'm going to go over some of the hard instructions and explain how they worked. If you'd rather shoot yourself than see one of my instructions again, skip to the end. ☺ The first hard instruction was hard because it was an error. Instruction #8 (third right after image of road in from right) should have said SECOND right after image. There was a road that was private, that I missed. 4 cold runners (all of them very accomplished ralliests) missed it. So if you take away the private road, I really wanted to you turn on the second right. The road was Iris Lane and had a very small "private" under the street name. So you pass the sign you are looking for and there is a big road in from the right, then go up a large hill. Just before you crest the hill is Iris Lane on the right (what I thought was the second right). Then as you go down the hill on the other side, you hit two "No Tru Traffic" rights that you don't count, and should have turned on the next right which is Long Meadow Road. I thought that was the third right, it's really the second. Randomly asking people at the last checkpoint, a lot of people wasted time here trying to figure out my mistake, while a lot of others also didn't catch the "private" and made the turn I wanted them to turn on. Anyone who asked for a time allowance for this got it.

This is the sign (that smudge says "private"):



This is where I intended you to turn:



Next trick that caught some people was the “second left” after you turn right on 17A (the double lane separated highway) after “second right after fifth ‘40mph’ “. As you go down the two lane highway, there is a street that crosses over two lanes, allowing you to turn right onto that street or turn left which would force you to go west on 17A (basically a u-turn). A couple of people did not see or consider that a left and wound up going over the bridge over Old17 and into Harriman Park. You should have turned left onto the road that forces you onto Old17 north. After that was the left after “left after second ‘REST’ “, and the dreaded “fourth left”. From talking to ralliests at the end, a LOT of people got lost here.

When you turn left off of Old17 onto Orange Turnpike (that’s the left after second ‘REST’), you go up a short steep hill that had two houses on either side at the top. Just before the house on the left is Lilac Lane, a small dirt road. Its very easy to miss, and a lot of you did. So you wound up actually making the fifth left because you missed Lilac. I ever heard from a few ralliests who came back to Old17 to count lefts again, but when they did they made a u-turn in the parking lot of the two houses on top of the hill, missing Lilac again! I knew a lot of people would miss this, so I did two things: I went down Orange Turnpike to check what the fifth left was to make sure it didn’t mess people up too much, and I hung an offcourse SUNNY sign for people to write down and gain penalty points because I’m a bastard. The fifth left is a whopping extra 2+ miles down the road, and its East Mambasha Road. When I went down it, to check, I wound up back on Bramertown Road (the true fourth left that you SHOULD be on) facing back to Orange Turnpike. So I figured not only would it be obvious you went into a loop, but it will bring you back to where you can easily check that “fourth left” over again. Unfortunately hurricane Ivan must have flooded Mambasha and a lot of you wound up stuck at a police barrier closing the road and had to go all the way back! One ralliest told me they actually moved the barrier and drove around it, went down Mambasha (that was really no longer flooded), and made it to Bramertown and realized that was the actual fourth left just like I had intended! So that messed up a lot of people figuring that out. Lilac was one messed up road, but I went up there in my Miata to check it out a few months ago!

Here is Lilac Lane as you drive up the hill:



Here is Lilac as you pass it:



Once you finally make it down Bramertown, you’re looking for the “fifth right after second ‘SLOW’ (both SOL)”. There were a few private roads and dead ends on the right that you don’t count, and one was hard to see. A lot of people wound up counting it and actually making the fourth right and then couldn’t find “WILD GOOSE CHASE”. Fitting. What’s funny is after you find Wild Goose Chase the next 4 instructions bring you down that fourth turn back to Bramertown! Two ralliests told me they were both shocked to see other rally cars passing them in the wrong direction. One guy told me he drove around 10 miles randomly until he stumbled upon Wild Goose Chase.

Another instruction that seemed to stump a lot of ralliests while some blasted through with no problems was SUNFISH. “Keep making lefts until ‘SUNFISH’ (helper: no space...)” messed up a lot of people who could not find the Sunfish. As you perform “Left at image of road from left” you turn onto Sunfish Road. At the next intersection, you turn off Sunfish onto another street, but that intersection street sign says “Sun Fish” so you are to keep making lefts. Two lefts later you go through an intersection with a cross street. That cross street is “Sunfish” and you stop making lefts. The next intersection is a T at a stop sign, and that’s your next direction “right at T”. Then you turn right and pass a sharp right turn right at a day camp. Lots of people did not see the Sunfish. One ralliest told me he kept making lefts totally around the area until he got back to the exact same place and THEN saw the Sunfish, and continued on. A few people told me they never figured it out but came across the “Bonnie Brook” sign for 3 instructions later and continued on from there. Just in case anyone remembers this: right after the intersection with the SUNFISH you are looking for, I had a SUNNY sign with the division symbol on it. One novice told me he was pulled over trying to figure out the mileage he was at, looked out his window, and saw the SUNNY staring at him. Another car told me they stopped at the intersection a second time after not finding Sunfish, figured they would give up and turn right and look for Bonnie Brook, but they wanted to write down where they were turning, looked up, and saw “Sunfish” staring at them.



This is what the sign looked like from the passenger side of my Miata. What’s your excuse, SUV drivers??



Right after the Bonnie Brooks, I heard from multiple people there was a police roadblock setup checking cars. Some cars were waved through, some had their inspection stickers checked, and one SUV was searched in the back (Are the cops trying to say you guys don’t look normal??). Anyone who asked for a time allowance for this, got it. One of those was the yellow Miata with a flame job. I was talking to the guy in the black Celica and he asked me “Hey did that Miata guy get a ticket?? I saw him pulled over!”. Can’t get much more confirmation for a time allowance than that.



Another hard sign to find was GJ’s Schoolhouse. There was one gas station on that road. Right next to it was a Deli. This was the sign in front of it.

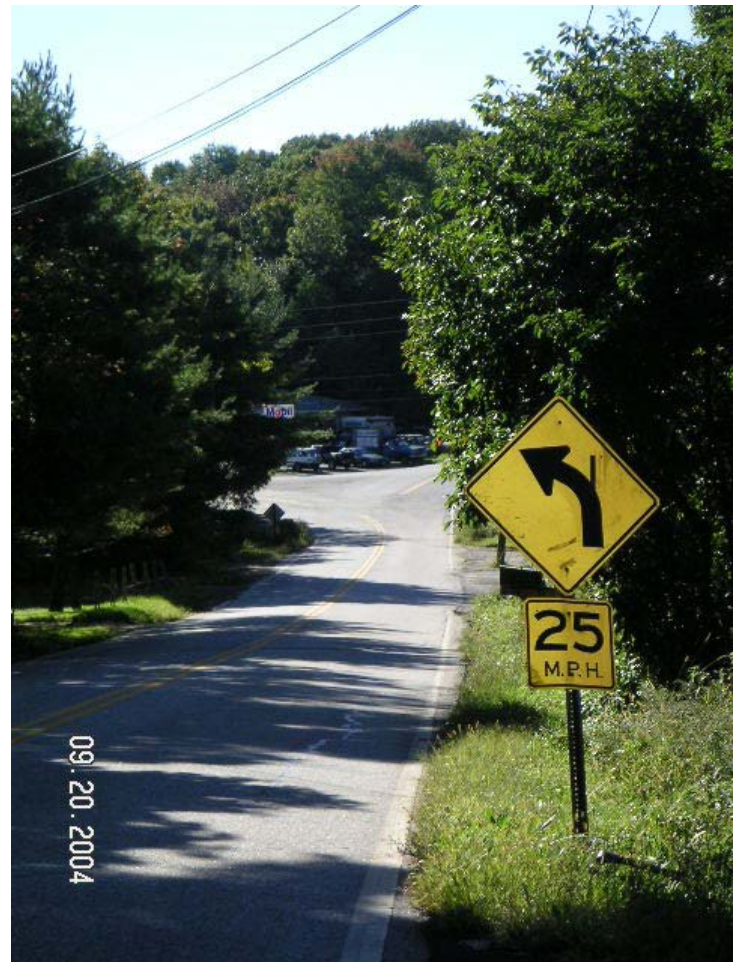
A lot of people enjoyed the “left after ‘965’” instruction. Me too! The mailbox numbers go down from 1200, so some people were looking for that. The weird orange wooden signs started at 956, one team told me they were fooled by that. Then there was a mailbox with 963 on it, but the 3 was in script and hard to read. Then you continue down the road and the mailboxes start going up again (you crossed into the next town). Turns out the 965 was another of those weird orange wooden signs.



I found it amusing that a street sign for Westbrook Ave was defective (they made the leg of the arrow coming up very short, and the arrow to the right long, it was supposed to be the other way around) making you think a parking lot was Westbrook Ave, so that made it into the rally. Right after that was Tulip. Someone commented that it was too far to look for tulip. "Tulip" was exactly 2.9 miles from the turn onto Westbrook, and the left you were to make was 3.0 miles (.1 mile after seeing "tulip"). A few ralliests said that Westbrook curved off to the left and they went straight at one point and had to turn back after not finding Westbrook. Two teams told me they saw the "road curves to left" sign and went that way and found tulip, another told me they just went down that way in process of elimination. Two teams told me they stopped for pizza and a bathroom break at the pizza place there. Too bad the pizza place was directly after the "road curves to left" sign and they didn't see it again. I remember discussing this intersection very carefully with all the cold run teams, and I'm going to repeat the conclusion:

1. the double yellow line curves off to the left, with Westbrook
2. there's is a large "road turns to left with sidestreet in from right" sign
3. the sideroad has a stop sign on it, and is marked with a street sign (different name, while Westbrook is marked to the left)
4. Westbrook has different colored pavement, as if the two roads were paved separately (that's not a big deal, but added to the above its more help to ralliests)

I think some of the WSCC teams were fooled because in previous WSCC rallies there were generals to the effect of "go as straight as possible" meaning if there is a road right in front of you, that's where you go. This rally did not have that in the generals. An argument against me is that the previous instruction should have said "and follow" on Westbrook to be more clear. Since I defined "and follow" to mean follow that road name no matter what, and without a road name follow the curve of the road, I agree that would have helped, but I don't think its necessary. Without "go as straight as possible" as a rule, then you should stay on the road you are on and not turn off it until you complete the instruction. Until you find tulip, you don't turn off the road you are on. In my opinion based on 1 to 4 above, going straight is the same as a bear right onto another street. Otherwise any bear right that's also on a curve could be interpreted as a Y anywhere else. That makes no sense. An obvious curve is the road you are on is curving and you stay on it without turning off it unless instructed to do so. After discussing adding a "bear left at Y (MBR)" or a "and follow" my cold run teams agreed it was fair the way it was, and I stuck with it. Check out the picture.



I thought the big controversy of this rally was going to be "left (helper: u)". Obviously I didn't know about instruction #8 yet, sigh. This really put bees in the bonnets of my cold run teams. One guy just hated it and said it was stupid, some said it was fair with the helper, one guy said he personally liked it but said a lot of people would not and I'd get complaints. I think they were all right. Its questionable if that's a "road" or "street". But it has its own turn lane, its own stop sign, and its own direction sign (the: "Route 17 North Next Left" sign). All its missing is a street name. My argument is this: if you were supposed to make a "left" on a street, and came to a road that was obviously marked with paint and state signs you would turn on it if it had a

street sign name or not, as long as it didn't have a DeadEnd sign or something like that. I went down the road and tested what would happen if someone skipped it, and you wind up on a short looping street that immediately goes right back to Old17. So I thought the "helper: u" would help if you took it or not. I also hung a SUNNY on the "17North Next Left" sign and the Stop sign on the jug handle to try and help out. Two people thought it was dangerous. If there wasn't a left turn lane you were supposed to stop in before you turn left, I would agree and wouldn't have done a turn there, but I felt since you have a left turn lane you can stop in (and should be) the only danger would be exiting the left turn lane back into traffic, and that's a driver decision. So I went with it.

Sorry for being long winded but I figure if you guys can make it though a rally that long and hard you'd put up with a long rallymaster letter! There are quiet a few people asking questions and bashing me on the forums at [WWW.WSCC.ORG](http://WWW.WSCC.ORG), please go on there and ask any questions you might have or comments you might have. I pretty much have the whole course memorized and would be happy to try and answer, and comments good and bad only make for better rallies in the future!

Thanks to the Westchester Sports Car Club for trusting me to come up with a rally and sort of pull it off. Thanks to my brother and nephew (checkpoint 1), dad and friend Armond (checkpoint 2), Deb&Gary (registration) and Dave&Pat (start line) for helping out! Thanks to the Mays, Frank, Val, and John for the cold runs and John for helping put up SUNNYs (I still have poison ivy!). My 14yo nephew asked me why someone called me "the jerk who got him lost for 45 miles" at checkpoint one. And to think I bought that guy a beer at McMullens!

SUN-Day Rallymaster

***Mike***

(last name withheld due to application to witness protection program)