

MOTORSPORTS

Thrill of winning exceeded only by

Tri-state driving instructor, Webb, notches fifth Alcan 5000 victory

By DANIEL McKILLOP

THE DAILY NEWS

BULLHEAD CITY — For Tri-state driving instructor Gary Webb, competing in the Alcan 5000 is always an eye-opening experience — no matter how often he does it.

Webb, who owns and is an instructor for Atlantic Driving School Traffic Survival School, has competed in the Alcan 5000 for 20 years and he won the event — once again — on Aug. 27.

“I won Alcan 5000 for fifth time in the past 20 years,” Webb said.

The race began in Kirkland, Wash., where the weather was normal, light rain and 65 degrees on Aug. 18 and it concluded in Anchorage, Alaska, on Aug. 27, 4,300 miles later, Webb said.

“We only had one team to worry about,” Webb said.

That team was Frank McKinnon, of Portland, Ore., and John Putnam, of Forest Grove, Ore., in their Turbo Subaru Forrester, he added. They were very good and finished second in the 2012 Alcan 5000 winter event behind Webb’s team.

The Oregon team’s car had an engine problem during the second day and could not continue, Webb added.

“We did better than them on the first day,” Webb said. “After that, we had no trouble winning every day — the closest competitor was Steve Alley, (of Mount Shasta, Calif., on his KTM 990 Adventure motorcycle), he was very competitive.”

The summer events had extreme controls on the third day, Webb said. “We had to drive on a very dangerous road, which was Telegraph Creek, in Dease Lake, B.C.,” he added.

It is a narrow, 150-mile steep, with drop-offs on both sides of the road, Webb said. There were many places where going 10 mph was very fast, and only half of the teams made it down and



A LITTLE DOWN TIME: Alcan 5000 competitors pose for a photograph, from left to right: Frank McKinnon, of Portland, B.C., and Bill Colisch, of Grants Pass, Ore., first-place winners, stand next to their Subaru Forrester. Hansen, Friday Harbor, Wash., stands next to her first-place BMW F650GS motorcycle. Schneider, of Long Valley, N.J., and Gary Webb, of Mohave Valley, stand next to their Subaru Forrester in Fairbanks, Alaska, on Aug. 26.

back to the main road on that day — and on the fifth day.

Webb said he traversed a road known as Top of the World Highway in Dawson City, Yukon, to Tok, Alaska, with 195 miles of dirt road that is only open for a few months of the year.

There were “breathtaking views,” Webb said. “We had to ferry crossing into very bad fog for approximately 10 miles before it cleared up.”

During the sixth day, Webb said he drove to the Artic Circle for another extreme control, that again was a 400-mile dirt road trip, and there were a lot of oil field trucks on this road.

“The Subaru (Impreza) had no problems the entire race,” Webb said.

Steve Perret, of Bellingham, Wash., was the same mechanic who Webb used

for past winter races, and he prepared Webb’s car for this summer’s event, he added. The weather was agreeable.

It was August, so the coldest morning was 28 degrees and the daytime temperatures were between 65 and 70 degrees — the only bad weather was rain and fog, Webb said.

Every year the adventure is about the stories of helping others, where the competitors go, and who is new to the event, Webb said. “Change and the winning was not anywhere as neat as the adventure this year,” he added.

There was a father and his 17-year-old son team, Mark and Evan Joslyn, of Cross Plains, Wis., who competed and participated in the adventure, Webb said.

“They will have a lifetime of stories,”

Winning exceeded only by adventure



Contributed

A LITTLE DOWN TIME: Alcan 5000 competitors pose for a photograph, from left to right are: Keith Barke, of North Saanich, B.C., and Bill Colisch, of Grants Pass, Ore., first-place winners, stand next to their Vintage Class Audi UR Quattro; Kathryn Hansen, Friday Harbor, Wash., stands next to her first-place BMW F650GS motorcycle in the Motorcycle Class, and Peter Schneider, of Long Valley, N.J., and Gary Webb, of Mohave Valley, stand next to their first-place overall Subaru Impreza in Fairbanks, Alaska, on Aug. 26.

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There was a husband-and-wife team from the East coast in their 20s, Seth and Joanna Cohen, of Barre, Vt., Webb said. “They bought everything possible to do rescues for them, yet they rescued others every day,” he added. “They towed a triumph TR-4 300 miles on a dirt road to get back to town, they fixed motorcycles, they rescued tourists with fuel, and they fixed flat bike tires — they (also will) have a lifetime of stories.”

Webb said he uses this car three times per year doing weekend events in Canada, so it’s 90 percent ready all of the time.

“Peter Schneider of Long Valley, New Jersey, was my co-pilot 10 years ago when I won the 2004 winter event in a BMW,” Webb said. “This was his first time back for this adventure.”