This year marked the 278th birthday of the first President of the United States of America, George Washington. To commemorate this occasion, EDTC put on quite a birthday party, complete with delicious cupcakes at the finish.

"George's 278th" marked the second EDTC rallye starting in Concord, following their "Elvis Lives" rallye last year and proving once again that they know how to keep us rallyists confused and entertained all at the same time.

The rallye featured some new and some familiar gimmicks, but even an old standby can trip you up pretty easily when you're focused on the new stuff. The ax man from "Things That Go Bump in the Night" made a cameo on one of the crosswalk signs, this time donning a 3-corner hat. Perhaps George did cut down that infamous cherry tree after all.

In typical form for EDTC, the rallye packets were incredibly detailed. At the starting Checkpoint, rallyists received "new orders" from the Continental Congress, on neatly folded parchment, complete with a wax seal. The orders were puzzles in and of themselves; the included phrases were missing some letters that could be filled in as you discovered the matching coursemarkers along the route. Of course solving the orders also provided an additional instruction and a groaner about the Man of the Hour's supposed past shenanigans.

An old favorite gimmick of mine returned which resulted in a few government erected signs being considered coursemarkers. The trickiest one of the three showed up just before the checkpoint, but the light bulb went on above my head about 6 turns early. Coursemarkers needed to be a sign with something red, something white, and something blue, and they needed a letter or letters and a number. All the street naming signs were blue and white, but there HAD to be a trick. A few turns early, it dawned on me: "WOOD" was removed from all signs, so what would happen if there was a street named Redwood? Sure enough there was. A blue and white sign, and with the word wood gone, Redwood became Red. Bingo!

This daytime rallye proved to be a quick one for some of the cars, so in more than one case, I heard of teams re-running the rally after they finished. There was a great new addition on the Route Instructions this time that showed what time we should have completed certain RI's. This Driver and Navigator repeated segments along the way, knowing we were ahead of schedule. This is a new addition that I hope to see on future rallyes, as it was very helpful to know when we had time to think and when needed to step it up a bit.

Concord rallyes are starting to happen more frequently, and I love it. They start early enough that all the coursemarkers and street signs are visible along the whole route, and they're close enough to home that I've managed to get my friends and extended family involved. Here's hoping for more bad directions and good gimmicks from EDTC in the coming months.

Thanks EDTC!