



The 46th Annual **April Fool** rallye presented March 28, 2010
by **The Empire Sports Car Association**

Review by Tom Bomben

48 cars turned out for **ESCA**'s annual A-B rallye through the rural parts of Santa Rosa, including Graton, Stony Point, Liberty, Cotati and Roblar. No one can deny that rallyemaster "**Bob the Beard**" knows how to layout a scenic route, and the early spring schedule ensures lots of greenery and cool weather, an abundance of goats, cows and sheep, and even a giant metal chicken!

I ran with my sisters (Patty and Debbie), daughter-in-law (Lauren), and nieces (Megan and Sarah) to enjoy the "Sunday drive" nature and steady pacing of this event. They are First Timers and Beginners, but we ran Master Expert because of my "big brains". We rode in comfort in a monster-sized Chevy Suburban. No one thinks of an 8-passenger Suburban as a "rallye car", but when we saw that a huge classic Cadillac had also entered we felt right at home.

As a CM-Gimmick rallyist of many years, I think I'm beginning to prefer the A-B format. From the point of view of a rallyemaster, there are **no** coursemarkers to erect, which is a huge time savings. For the driver, there are very few, if any, U turns (aside from back-tracking). And for the navigator, there is less frustration since you deal with the instructions in order, without the bother of hanging instructions, a SUPP/SI page, a complicated order of precedence, and the need to look at every sign on the route.

I am very proud of my inexperienced team, each of which caught gimmicks along the route. Debbie memorized the streets we could not use (Sprauer, Orchard Station, Montgomery and Schaeffer) and got "Melita" correct. Lauren caught the STOP gimmick (side streets labeled "No Outlet" negated the intersection). Patty (a Santa Rosa native) knew where Staples was (for extra copies of stuff) and found the "Stony Point Lodge" sign which changed our RI choice. 11-year old Sarah caught the cursive writing on the "proud of it" sign (woot!), and 13-year old Megan saw the "School Xing" sign, but my "know-it-all"-ishness explained to her that it was too late to use the sign (it wasn't!).

We were all embarrassed to have missed "San Francicso". "Big brains", indeed! Sadly, it continues my recent trend of missing misspellings. Maybe I should consider attending the rallye school from now on, as sometimes they "give away" the misspellings. That would be convenient . . . err . . . convenient.

Major congratulations to Bob, **ESCA** and all the helpers for a wonderful rallye. It's a rare occasion to miss a dozen or so gimmicks on a rallye and still go home with a good feeling. We'll be back next year, and if we avoid the fiasco of Francisco it will be fantastico!

Tom's totally meaningless factoids:

RI's : 44

Coursemarkers : 0

U turns : 0

Bumpiest Road : Lowell

Smoothest road : Aaron

Longest Road : Graton

Cows we mooed at : 14

Cows that flicked their ear in response : 22

Words that looked misspelled but weren't : Blucher, Xiberta and Bahnsen

Silly complaint : Poker hands didn't count suit . . . we had a flush.

Best unused gimmick : The route CP car was on the left side of the road. ("Stop your car at the CP vehicle")

Unused reeker : The "signal" in front of Mike Brown Electric Co.

Give-aways : Magnetic dash plaque

CP phrase : "April Fool"