



Two Rivers Tracker

A publication of the Two Rivers Jeep Club, Pittsfield, Illinois

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Upcoming Events

We're winding down our wheeling season and soon our trails will be closed for use by hunters. We only have two wheeling events left so come join us for a great way to end the 2008 wheelin' year.

September 20

Better Late Than Never 4th of July Run sponsored by Doug Watret and the Suhres. There will be food out at Gary William's pond that evening along with some fun activities **and a night run on the front part of Murphy's Law**. We will probably have the Board meeting there also. RSVP Doug at watret4@royell.org or call the club no later than September 14....please! Meet at the VFW for breakfast from 7 to 8 or so and the trails will leave from there at 9 AM. We don't have the trails lined up yet, but when we do, they will be posted on the website.

October 11

Annual General Meeting and Ma Earth Run. Breakfast at the VFW starting at 7 AM followed by **the Annual General Meeting and Board Elections at 8 AM**. We'll try to get through all the business and be out on the trails by 10 AM. Again, check the web site for more details. This is an important meeting and we hope many of you can attend. And, as an added bonus, on Sunday, October 12, TRJC will be one of the sponsors for the Top Shop Challenge at Hannibal Rocks. Come on out and watch some of our own TRJC members compete in this awesome event!

November 1

Board Meeting and Planning for 2009 events, 1 PM at the VFW. This 4 or 5 hour working meeting is open to all members. We'll have a proposal for the 2009 events and for any changes to the Safari and Blast as we go into the meeting. There will be discussions around reducing our fixed costs for the Safari and Blast as well as perhaps a rate increase or some of idea to ensure we can continue these two popular events.

The 10th Annual 4x4 *BLAST*

By Lee Ator, President

Ten years ago we started this event, on our own, with no help from any outside organization and look what we've done! Between the Blast and Safari, we've now hosted 17 events and donated thousands and thousands of dollars to the community and kept all other proceeds within the community also – and most important – we have a heck of a fun time wheelin'! And what a way to celebrate our 10 anniversary! The weather was perfect and the trails were great. Two sets of tires were given away. It takes of team of over 50 people to make this all happen. I'd like to thank everyone who helped and a personal thanks to Rick for coordinating this year's events. Next year Lisa Catt has stepped up as coordinator and we look forward to her continuing the tradition of a great set of events. She'll be asking for your help soon. Please consider giving a little of your time to help keep our events alive and fun.



Summer's coming to and end and we've had a good summer and a good year. We're getting some new people to come and help with our club and events. But we still need the word out by all members to help advertise the club to keep our events going. We offer a wide range of trails and a heck of a better deal for the Safari and Blast than any other event in the Midwest.

Moving on, there are three Board seats up for election October 11. It's not an election if there are no candidates so here's your chance to help shape the future of our club. If you can help, place your name in the hat by calling our Secretary, Jeff Sorensen. We need new blood and new ideas on the Board. You can make a difference in our club!

Check out the last two runs we have. Night runs are always a lot of fun. We have few of them so sign up for that one now.

Thanks, Lisa, for coordinating the Ladies Day Run and Night at the Movies. Lisa has run this increasingly popular event for a couple years and if the success of those two is an indication, she'll do a great job for the Blast and Safari. Thanks Lisa!

Finally, a special thanks to Durrell and Syndy Miller for the very popular Father's Day run. They have been sponsoring this for many years and it's our most popular event outside the Safari and Blast due to the energy that Durrell and Syndy put into it to making sure members have fun. Next time you see them, please thank them for their generosity and willingness to help make TRJC the best 4WD club in the Midwest!

Rick's Thoughts on 5 Years as Coordinator

By Rick Culberson



Five years have gone by, sometimes fast, and other times it drug by. This is the fourth year I have coordinated the Safari and Blast. I took a year out there to have some health problems, but free of it now, or taking care of it. Anyway five years, and as I look back, boy do I see a lot of changes. I guess it really all started around six years ago. Shelley and I had just been on the Father's Day Run and we were at Durrell and Syndy Miller's TNT farm having a great time. If I'm not mistaken that was the year that Willy's man (Carl Redecker) rolled with two young boys in the backseat and Tim Miller gave a dime for every Cheeto that could be stuffed into Screaming's mouth.



Someplace during all of the festivities Tom Wombles said Rick, why don't you take over the Safari and the Blast? And with all the fun and games and a few beers I looked at my wife and said "What do you think?" She of course said, "It's all yours", and here we are. Tom, I don't know whether to thank you or hit you, but hey, it's been a good five years and I have sure met an awful lot of good people. I can't believe how many of you have stepped up with no warning and did the work that needed to be done and I thank every one of you. I guess I even have to thank Tom and Debbie for getting me into this, and boy were there a lot of questions and calls to them when I started.

Anyway, I have now found someone to take this job over. And I hope all club members support her as much as you have supported me. Lisa Catt is now going to be our coordinator and as I said before, I sure hope you all help her as you have helped me. It's been a great five years, and I probably will miss the job but I think it is time for me to step down and get new ideas. I told her that I would not just walk away but I will be there to help with anything she asked. Well almost! After watching Jim drive out at Pokey's, not sure I want him to drive my Jeep, but that's later, and we all know she needs a Jeep. She's doing pretty good in the RRock events.

OK, on to the Blast. It all started out great. We had 12 trails. 2 we did not run during the Safari, but we lost 2 also. Anybody with land or knows of some land that will make a good trail needs to contact Doug Watret so we can look at it. But back to the Blast. Signup went really good. Deb Sorensen, Lilly and Joie Vittetow, and Jeff Shuck did a very good job with registration. Outside the tech crew had a great time. The weather was just fine and very little trouble was had by Jim Catt, Rick Miller, Dave Koenig, and Jeff Vickery. A big "Thank You" for all the work these guys do, checking every Jeep or whatever they bring that some people call off road vehicles.

Also outside in great weather was Jim Smith, with Kim Curly, Dave Bell, Lisa Catt, and Josh and Nathan Miller, who all helped with the rodeo and from the smiles I saw they must of really had a great time. Then there was Andy and Sonya Bottrell with Greg Wood getting local support and Jim Vanderborg, and Mark Schumacher with the national support. And did they get some nice prizes! Kathleen Ball with husband Heyward, Kern Dixon, Rick Miller and Rob Lortz sold and pulled raffle tickets till I bet they don't even one to see one now. But they did great, bringing in over \$3000.00. Don Maxheimer helped the

Christmas Basket fund with over \$500 worth of ice cream during the 3 nights. And the biggest thanks to all you that attended the Blast. If it was not for you guys we could not put the events on so again a BIG THANKS to all you that attended.

Lee Ator and O.R. Freesen also did a great job MCing the events and doing the introductions of landowners. I also made it two days 4 wheeling without breaking anything. I did have to go to Neal Tire and have my Jeep welded Friday night and a lot of pictures were taken of me replacing a fuse but I ran both days on Dutch Creek and Pokey's and had a Blast. Friday, Lee broke an axle on the way to town and Trent's Jeep was broken so I volunteered to help trail guide on Dutch Creek. It was pretty good going until one of the Jeeps broke a brake line. We all gathered around to fix it as I did have a double flaring tool with me, but it did not good. The new Jeeps have stainless steel brake lines and my tool would not flare it. So we pinched it off and sent him to town for a fix so he could at least run on Saturday but he got it fixed and was back out on the trail in an hour or two.

With him came Lee with his Jeep running but made you dizzy if you watched the back tire for very long. We ran an hour or two and a CJ-5 had brake trouble. Could not find a leak but she was losing brake fluid. By then it was around 3:30 or 4:00 and I said I would follow them back to town as I needed to get to the Legion and help set up. I thought I had heard something banging all day under my Jeep but I could not find anything moving under it. As we were coming to town, every time I would shift I would feel something bump. So we get to the motel and find that the master cylinder cap is leaking on the CJ-5, an easy fix, and I'm looking under mine and still do not see anything. As I am getting out from under it, I see that the frame and the plate for the long arms are moving. Now 7 or 8 years ago GDS told me I needed to weld that and I am still going to get to it but now I do not have to as Neal Tire did the trick Friday afternoon. Now that banging noise I have been hearing is gone.

On Saturday, Pokey and I led the group of around 15 Jeeps out to the trail. So we were in Time first, but also out of Time first. After a fine driver talk we started for the trail, me still in the lead, going backward, so I get lost right of the bat. Next thing I know is we are in a lot of downed trees. Now Pokey always told me you get 3 tries to get over it then the saws come out. Me with no saw - I had to get over it. Someplace in that mess my Jeep lost a few of the blades off the fan. The bad part was one was broken but stuck so it blew a fuse. Never seen so many pictures taken. Now I say a blown fuse is not a break down Jim and Kim, so with the fine guidance from Pokey I get the fan going and off to find the rest of the group. We got to see Jim Catt lose not one, but two u-joints on what was to be called Jim's Hill. But I wonder about it now?



After that we got to watch a great show at Lid Dakota. One of the guys has tried it three times in three different Jeeps. Maybe you should go with a stock one next time and he can probably crawl right thought it. With that, Jim Smith decided to hit something with his tie-rod and broke it so he strapped it together and off to town we go. The rest of the group went for some more 4-wheeling. Jim, I'm sure it was just a little stick that broke that tie-rod, like the small twig that broke my clutch on Lakeshore. And that will teach you to take all the pictures you took of my little blown fuse. With that, back in town and off to the Legion for dinner. Another great time had by all. See you all at the club runs and for you, who are not members, see you at next year's Safari and Blast.

The 2008 *BLAST*

By Mark & Chris Schumacher

Chris and I really enjoyed the 2008 4X4 Blast. Great weather, good people, fun times on the trails, and good food were again the norm. As we again assisted Doug and Don Maxheimer trail guiding on New Salem we met a lot of new people and enjoyed both days. Although not as muddy as during the Safari, there were a couple of spots on New Salem that were still mud holes and we winched and strapped quite a few Jeeps.

I don't think that everyone expected to find that much mud on a 2 rated trail. Not all tow straps and winch controls were hooked up when we aired down and this led to some fun both days, at least for everyone watching. Being stuck in the mud, having to climb through the driver's window onto the roof of your Cherokee, opening the tailgate and then dropping your new tow strap into the deepest mud around while laughing through it all made for a good time and a few good photos. I think that everyone thought this and the extra mud added to the event rather than being some type of problem.



Chris and I did not finish with everyone on Friday as we lost the front driveshaft from Rubi 2 and headed out at 2:30 looking for parts. We were unable to make repairs so on Saturday I ran the trails in two wheel drive with Dave Koenig of DK Four Wheel in Moline, Illinois riding with me. Chris rode with our daughter Adrienne in our 81 CJ7. I thought that our son in law Shawn was bored with trail riding so I got him a seat in Dan Reineking's Jeep and he went to Atlas. I figured that if he was bored there then he needed to find another hobby. Our friend, the infamous Charlie Ater stayed ahead of me, offering his strap a couple of times when I didn't make it through the mud.

It seemed that things went quicker on Saturday, possible because some of the mud had dried for another 24 hours and we didn't pull as many Jeeps. We were ahead of schedule on the trail so Doug ran some of it backwards. This was really fun when we got to the worst mud hole on the trail. As everyone tried to make it through it got deeper and harder with every attempt, some made it and many didn't. Third to the last was Charlie and he made it look easy as he almost idled through it. I guess that Jeepin for 40 or 50 years gives a guy some experience, rumor has it that he purchased a new Willey's at one time. Our daughter made it with ease after having the Jeep stall in the deepest mud on her first attempt. She loves borrowing our carbureted Jeep, it only stalls when you need it the most. I was the last to attempt it and I have to say that trying to

get through with two wheel drive was interesting. After filling the interior with mud everyone got to see how slow a hydraulic winch works as I had to winch myself out.

At the end of the day Doug offered to continue trail riding with those that wanted to stay and I understand that they went right back to the biggest mud hole on the trail where they spent another hour or more winching and strapping Jeeps out of the mud. Mud is fun, all trails need a good mud hole or two no matter what the rating!

I tried to get photos of everyone that rode with us during the two days so that I could get them on the web site. It was kind of hard when you are the last Jeep of 13 or 14 so if you don't see your Jeep in the photos I submitted I apologize. Also, I've turned the date feature of my camera off as I can't seem to get the right date on my photos.



We'd like to thank everyone that worked so hard to make this event possible, and also the landowners that allow us to have so much fun on their property.

2008 Blast - Murphy's Law

By Mike and Julie

We really don't have squat for pictures this time except for three shots of Randy Newport on a climb at the end of the day on Murphy's Law. The shale/sandstone/rocky stuff was about 5-6 feet tall and a lot steeper than it looked in the pictures, got close to vertical. There would have been four pictures, but someone (no, not me) walked in front of the camera at a very inopportune moment. But the three make a good sequence. You would have to ask Randy or Gary Williams or the Chief if it had a name (they had mentioned something about a 'can opener', don't know if that was it).

The three of them were the trail guides on Murphy's and it was Randy that did most all of the work changing my axle. He was fast and experienced at it.



First TRJC Event

By Terry Cochran



The 2008 4X4 Blast was my first opportunity to attend a TRJC event. My brother Scott and I had an absolutely fantastic time. Every one was very friendly and helpful. The entire event was very well organized and managed. The weather couldn't have been better.

We spent Friday on Pokey's with Cliff, Billy and Jim. If I get any of the names wrong I apologize. Billy was very entertaining in his Cherokee. Whatever the XJ lacked in lift, tires or flex, Billy made up for with the skinny pedal. All three were excellent trail guides and spotters. I included some photos of Jim putting his Wrangler on it's side. His serious look on his face turned to a smile when his Jeep is finally winched back on all fours.

On Saturday we were on County Line with Pete and a couple other great trail guides whose names I don't remember. There were lots of hills, some nearly vertical, to climb and many creek crossings. ***All in all these were the best two days of wheeling I've had in many years.*** I will definitely be back.

I've attached a few pictures. I would have had more but I was having such a great time I kept forgetting to take pictures. My Cherokee is to the right. If anyone else has photos and/or video of my Jeep I would greatly appreciate having them sent to me at jeepn61@comcast.net. I am a club member and will definitely promote TRJC in Springfield and the surrounding area.



Thanks for the Fantastic 2 days

Terry Cochran
Springfield, IL

Scott Cochran
Hamilton, IL

Here are this year's sponsors for the *BLAST*

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Suspension
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Thoughts from Our New Blast and Safari Coordinator

Never in my wildest dreams, would I have ever thought I would be addicted to wheeling. My husband Jim has been a member since 2000 and enjoys wheeling whenever he can. I on the other hand, had never been wheeling in my entire life, but got invited to tag along to the Ma Earth event that was held in October 2002. Yes, that is how this whole thing got started and yes...ended up in a marriage ceremony the following May 2003 Safari event!

Over the past five years, thanks to my wonderful husband giving me the chance to drive (his???) Jeep, I have become addicted to wheeling and rock crawling. I've had the opportunity to organize the "Ladies Day Event" for 2007 and 2008 and enjoyed being a participant in watching TRJC's women members get the chance to experience being the driver, instead of just the passenger on the trails. While being a TRJC member, I gladly volunteered my time to assist in registration and for the past several years, assisted Jim Smith in the organization and running of the Tire Toss for the Rodeo. Jim (my husband) has volunteered his time as a trail leader for Suzy's Knob, as well as organizing and running the Tech Inspection.

In the past five years of being a club member, I've had the chance to meet many new faces and make new friendships. During this time, I don't believe that anyone could have ever found a nicer bunch of Jeeping buddies to call Friends. While on Pokey's trail during the Blast Event, I was approached by Rick Culberson and asked if I would like the opportunity to be his replacement of Event Coordinator. As I just stood there in awe, not ever thinking this moment could happen on a trail, I looked into his pleading face, (just kidding Rick).....and replied, "Sure, why not." I figured it was time for Rick to have a much needed break, since he had handled and organized this position for the past five years. All I asked in return was that he show me the ropes so that I could be as great of an Event Coordinator as he has been.

It will be a challenge, but I am looking forward to handling the huge task. I am hoping that all of the club members that have lent their assistance to Rick in the past, will be willing to stay and offer their assistance for me as well. If so, please email me at riddle01@comcast.net or contact me on my cell at 815-823-6653.

I am very thankful that we have such gracious land-owners who allow us the chance and opportunity to jeep on their properties. Taking on the task of Event Coordinator is just a small token of my appreciation and my way of giving back to our club and its members. I look forward to next year and hope to see many new faces and old friends on the trails. Just remember when having fun Jeeping..... keep it on all fours.

Lisa Catt

Ladies Day Run

by Chris Schumacher with introduction and photos by Mark



It was the weekend all of Pike County dreads, Ladies Day at TRJC. Responsible parents kept their children home behind closed doors when they found out that the women were going to drive. Everyone.....yes dear, I'll shut up and you can handle the article for this run, thank you for letting me ride along with you.

I finally got to drive my Jeep! And you know what? It's a lot more fun driving and being in CONTROL than being a helpless, hapless passenger. I have Lisa Catt to thank for this opportunity as she is the

driving force (pun intended) behind the Ladies Day Run and Night at the Movies. As usual, it was another great jeeping day. The rain held off till 3:00 p.m. which gave us plenty of time to experience the trails. As I am a novice, we (hubby and I) decided to forego Susie's Knob for the gentler, kinder Ridge Rambler. However, the heavy rain the night before, and the ongoing pipeline project on Hamer's trail gave us all a challenge on those slippery, muddy hills. I enjoyed every minute of it. And I think my husband did, too, even though he had to be the helpless passenger. I don't think he closed his eyes once, which is more that I can say when I'm riding with him. He didn't even yell or make snide comments when I forgot to down shift or got a little too close (ok, I admit it, I ran into it) to a fallen tree. Actually I didn't even see it until we bounced off. (Oops!) And best of all, he even washed the Jeep before we went to dinner and the Drive-In.

The evening turned out clear and beautiful. Those of us who went to the drive-in got to see a great family movie, WALL-E. Hubby and I only made it through the first picture. So we were back to the motel and in bed by midnight. I don't know if the jeepers with children lasted the second show or not, but I maintain it was all the fresh air that wore Mark and I out, not our age!

I was happy to see several other women driving the trails. And they all did a great job,. I hope they had as much fun as I did. The Two Rivers Jeep Club is just a great group of people. Getting to know the other club members, trail guides and land owners is as enjoyable as the actual jeeping. We go to the breakfasts at the VFW as soon as it opens so we can talk to all the folks there and admire everybody's jeeps prior to hitting the trail. The work days are as much fun as the club events



So to all of the TRJC members and their families, trail guides and land owners, a big thank you for making mine and my husband's retirement so much fun. Thanks to Lisa Catt for putting together the Ladies Day Run (and for all the work she does at the Safari and Blast). Also to Hamer and Jenny Tate for their hospitality (who not only allow but welcomes muddy jeepers into their home) and use of their property.

Ladies Day Run

by Lisa Catt

Even though Mother Nature drenched Pittsfield and the surrounding areas of our trails a few weeks prior to our event, we still ended up with a great turnout of club members (female and male) ready to tackle any obstacle that came their way.

Designated trails assigned for this event; County Line, Ridge Rambler and Suzy's Knob. Despite the additional rain showers that hit our trailing areas the night before; Suzy's Knob had 7 jeeps sign up to tackle its trails, along with the assistance of our Trail Leaders, John Toumbs and Mark Tweedell. Ridge Rambler; guided by Hamer Tate and John Hubner took on the remaining 16 jeeps.

The sun was shining brightly as our convoy of jeeps drove to our chosen site. After our driver's meeting and airing down the tires, we were ready for fun. Due to the previous day's rain conditions, our trail leaders decided we would take the obstacles easy and just enjoy the day with as little breakage as possible. Warn's Revenge would be the first obstacle that we tackle. Instead of going up the waterfall, we came down the waterfall. Not too bad, considering all the muddy areas we had to track through. Some spots just needed a little more pedal to the metal to get up, but coming down was not a problem at all.



As we drove through the creek bed, (that was higher than I had ever seen) we spotted the Knob which couldn't be attempted, due to a huge downed tree in the path of the backside. That would be on the list for removal on the next Trail building. As we crept through the creek, the water seemed to become a bit deeper than usual. Our trail leader, John Toumbs, started to drive in, just to test the waters (so to speak) and before we knew it, his jeep had sunk deep into the sandy water. So deep, that his tires were completely submerged. Jim pulled our jeep close to his so that we could hook up our tow strap. As we backed up to pull their jeep free, our tires started sinking deep into the sandy water too. With the help from a new JK, another tow strap and some additional pulling and tugging, we finally had Toumbs and Catt out of the muddy creek waters.

The day went by fairly fast. More down trees brought out the chain saw to remove debris to clear a trail for us to travel further on. Up hills, down hills, through muddy and slippery sections, we all got a chance to either assist or be assisted in having a tow strap yank us out of a wet and muddy spot. Some of us even ended up getting mud baths. Just ask Mark Tweedell. He got totally drenched with muddy creek water after Toumbs pulled his jeep out of slippery creek bed incline.

As we found our way to more trail riding, the skies started looking a little dark. Our fellow JK rig had a GPS on board and informed our group that heavy rain showers were on their way. By this time it was around 3pm and we all elected to call it a day. As we all said our farewells, I thanked our group and trail guides for coming out and making this event a success and looked forward to seeing everyone next year.

As we drove back into town, the rain started falling. Just a little trickle at first, then a downpour. Since we didn't have the top on and the drivers' side had fabricated metal over the top section, the passenger got a little drenched. As many of you know, I compete in R-rock, so Jim never gets to drive his jeep anymore. Even though this was a Ladies Day Event, I compromised and let Jim do the driving. The passenger, you see was me. Which was okay, because I just wrapped myself with the tarp we had from the back of the jeep and held on till we made it back to the Pike Motel. Wet and muddy, I still felt content from our day of trailing fun.



Before.....and after!

Father's Day Run

by Mark and Chris Schumacher



Although the timing of the Father's Day Run at the TNT Ranch was a bit off it was well worth the wait. Great weather and one of the most fun days we've had with the TRJC. Durrell and Rooster are great hosts and guides and certainly work hard to make sure that everyone is enjoying themselves. There's everything from squirt guns, water balloons, and bags of peanuts to lots of cool trails and you don't know what is going to happen next.

Durrell has a great piece of property with everything that a Jeep could want. There is water, creeks, rock, sand, hills, valleys, and tight "v" notches. Did I mention water? If it wasn't under the Jeep it was coming over the Jeep because everyone had plenty of squirt guns and water to reload

with. There were lots of smiling faces all day. There were two young boys in the back of a Jeep that each had a Hanson weed sprayer full of water that let them squirt anyone and everyone all day long.

About an hour into the morning a rear driveshaft was lost and it took two Jeeps to tow the Jeep out. With some help that Jeep was back on the trail right after lunch.

Right before lunch we had a roll over that luckily turned out not to be too bad. Paul suffered a laceration to his head and was checked and cleaned up at the scene while Rooster directed the recovery. The Jeep was safely put back onto it's wheels, winched onto level ground, and towed to the workshop. It was then that we learned what caused the injuries to the driver. Although it had been secured, a receiver ball assembly had come loose and acted like a missile striking Paul on the arm and head. While he was being taken to the hospital several people pitched in to straighten a fender, pull the plugs and dry out the cylinders, and check the Jeep for safety. When he returned he found his Jeep was running and drivable. In the end, a pretty lucky day for Paul. A little damage to the Jeep, a quick trip to the hospital, some crazy glue to the head, and he came back to finish the rest of the day riding with a friend. After supper he drove home to the relief of his wife and everyone else.



Hopefully there is a lesson to be learned here for everyone. Securing and storing items in a Jeep are two different things. Securing means that they cannot come loose in a rollover while storing items means that they probably will. In law enforcement we tried hard to teach the difference between cover and concealment, and we hoped it would sink in. Cover stops bullets, concealment doesn't. Think about it, where would you and your children want to be when the loose items/bullets start flying. That receiver ball assembly could have been just as deadly as a bullet, so could a pop can.

After the morning excitement the afternoon was pretty uneventful as far as accidents and breakage go, it was just a lot of fun. Lot's of good trails, water flying everywhere, and the biggest kid of all leading us and laughing the most. About 4:00 Rooster gave us a choice of getting cleaned up before dinner or continuing on the trails, most people chose to continue. We stopped with just enough time to air back up, secure winch controls, and get out the chairs before supper was served. There was lots of tasty chicken and fixins for dinner and the lies were flying while everyone sat around enjoying the meal and the fire.

If you are going to show up for only a few of the club events during the year this has to be the one that you cannot miss.

Email received from a Father's Day Attendee (we LIKE this kind of email!)

My name is Joe Lawson. I would like to take this time to thank you for allowing us the use of your land. This was my first event with the club. I had a great time and am extremely hooked on Jeeping now. I saw nothing but great people and good food. I can not say enough how much fun I really had. I feel privileged to have come across such a nice group of people. Thank you again. Joe

The Trail of Life

by Chief



Another one in the books. The Blast is past!! Could we have bought any better weather for August? I think not. Murphy's Law provided the usual twists and turns and carnage. For such an "easy" and enjoyable trail, it can sure provide some challenges with both obstacles and broken Jeeps. Friday saw a full signup sheet of 15 Jeeps with additional late add on Jeeps making the ending total of 21 jeeps. This includes the crew from Myers Mayhem who joined us at lunch time. As Gary "Murph" Williams, Tail Gunner Randy Newport and I began the line of Jeeps snaking through the morning section, we found several areas which presented some exciting moments. The rain from the previous days provided just enough mud to test some of the Jeeps on the slick hill climbs and the drop-offs provided some of the longer wheelbase Jeeps the opportunity to get high centered. Yes Rick, someone other than myself got stuck going downhill.

Murph the "trail scout" went ahead to check out some areas as is his usual method of operation. I soon heard a cry of distress from one of his passengers on the CB, "Gary is broke down, we are leaking gas!!" Heading in his direction as quickly as possible, we found Murph sitting on the rocks with his fuel pump and gas line being separated from his fuel tank. Murphy's Law resident mechanic and broken Jeep Fixer, Randy Newport came to the rescue as he always does. He got Murph back to his mom's place and took Murph to town to get parts. I took the rest of the group and we headed to "Fuzzy's Folly". That proved to be a really bad decision on my part, as the "Folly" began to eat Jeeps. On one of the off camber hill climbs, Chief's Buggy managed to slam sideways into one of those infamous thorn trees breaking off my brand new CB antenna and impaling thorns in the soft top making it look like a porcupine with thorns sticking out of it.

Realizing I had made a tactical error (poor choice) of trying to get that many Jeeps through the difficult section by myself, I began a strategic retreat, turning the remaining string of Jeeps around before they got to the hills and headed them to the high ground by a safer route. On top of the hill, after a quick count of tires and dividing by four, I concluded we had not lost anyone and we headed to the final section before lunch. (Murph later informed me if I just count the front tires and divide by 2 it is much easier.) We stopped at Virginia William's house as usual for lunch, running a little behind schedule. Virginia is always gracious and allows us to settle in her yard for lunch, and she allows us to use her real bathroom!! A real treat for the ladies. Gary and Randy had the "Murphmoblie" up and running and ready to go. After lunch, everything settled down and we managed to finish the day with no major problems.

Saturday found us with a total of five Jeeps, three of those being Murph, Randy and me. Talk about individual attention!! We managed for the first time that I can remember, to run every inch of trail Murphy's Law has. We even went through "Fuzzy's Folly" with no problems. Mike and Julie did have a little trouble when a front axle felt abused and broke giving "Rescue Randy" an opportunity to show his expertise in changing axles. After completing the repair, Randy demonstrated his Monster Grand Cherokee's capabilities by making short work of the "Can Opener", a special option for Jeeps who are a little above the stock variety. I was honored to have Virginia Williams ride with me in the morning on Saturday. Virginia is a real buddy, and sometimes, (though neither of us smoke on a regular basis), we smoke little cigars together on her front porch after lunch.

Hey, the Blast really was a Blast. If you had a good time, tell someone and invite them to come and enjoy the fun, friendship and Jeepin. It's All Good!!

See Ya on the Trail
Chief

2008 Board Members and Responsibilities

Board Members

President	Lee Ator		217-437-5221
Vice President	Gary Williams	gwilliam@adams.net	217-285-4750
Secretary	Jeff Sorensen	jeffsorensen@mchsi.com	815-943-3163
Treasurer	Hamer Tate		217-833-2861
Board Member	Charlie Ater	c8r3@irtc.net	217-742-3275
	Jim Catt	riddle01@comcast.net	815-469-1484
	Rick Culberson	rick1@consolidated.net	217-562-4145
	Walt Gilbert	waltpj@big-river.net	573-324-6464
	Alan Grady	cgrady5600@sbcglobal.net	815-838-8611
Club Founder	Tom Wombles	twombles@adams.net	217-437-4361

Coordinators

Illini 4x4 Safari & <i>BLAST</i>	Lisa Catt	riddle01@comcast.net	815-469-1484
Trail Leadership & Maintenance	Doug Watret	watret4@royell.org	217-435-7931
Public Relations, Newsletter, Web	Dave Christensen	davec@millenicom.com	630-393-3314

TRJC Web Page: <http://www.trjc.com/>

Club e-mail: trjc1@trjc.com

Club phone: 630-717-5337 (JEEP) or 866-483-3982 (toll free)

Membership: Dues are \$60.00 per year for a family membership. Yearly membership runs from January 1 through December 31. Dues are to be paid by November 1st each year with a 30 day grace period. First time memberships accepted after June 1 will be \$30 for the balance of the year. Landowners, Board Members, Trail Guides, and major Committee Chairs receive complimentary membership.

Newsletter Deadlines: This newsletter is published 6 times a year (**February, April, June, August, October, and December.**) All articles and photos are due by the 15th of the month before the newsletter will be published.

Newsletter Article Submission

All articles and photos should be submitted to the newsletter coordinator. The preferred method to send articles and photos is email but hard copies of photos and typed or handwritten articles will also be accepted. If you need assistance in writing an article, we can help proof it and correct spelling errors. Photos can be black and white or color with a description of what, where and when. Scanned photos may be in any reasonable graphics format (medium to high-resolution.) Low resolution photos do not print well. Hard copy photos will be returned to the owner.

Next Newsletter Deadline: October 15

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PO Box 47
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