

Two Rivers Tracker

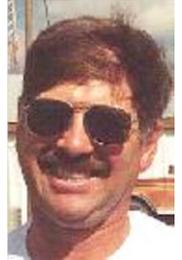
A publication of the Two Rivers Jeep Club, Pittsfield, Illinois

Volume 15 Issue 2

April 2012

The Prez Sez

From Lee Ator



It's time! In a few weeks we host our 11th annual 4x4 Safari. This, along with the Blast, are our premier events of the year and draw hundreds of wheelers and their families. Pittsfield will be alive with Jeeps and our trails will be ready! We still have openings for the Safari so please join us. And tell your friends about the Safari. Almost all the participants have heard about us through word of mouth – our best way to advertise. And, if at the last minute, you decide to attend we do allow walk in registrations but we prefer you let us know ahead of time if possible to make sure we have enough food. Join us for the best and one of the longest running Midwest Jeep events.

Upcoming Events

May 5: Quincy Dogwood Parade. We will be meeting at Baldwin School – South parking lot (off 30th St.). You can leave your tow vehicle and trailer there if you need to trailer your Jeep. Please arrive by 9 AM. The parade starts at 9:30. We'll line up exactly the same as last year. We will go out for pizza after the parade (location TBA). Bring your own candy! Please let Jen Bell know if you plan on participating. 217-779-2391. If you have never done a parade, come on! It's so much fun.

June 2: Vehicle recovery course. Class will start 9 AM at the VFW. Come an hour early for breakfast. Mark & Chief will start with some classroom discussion and then move to a trail where actual recovery techniques will be demonstrated. Once the class is done the reward for attending will be a late afternoon and early evening trail ride. Trail Guides and Helpers are strongly urged to attend as you have the primary responsibility for the safety of the folks on your trail. Members, new and old, are also urged to attend. A lot of work has gone into this course and it will be taught by professionals. You never know when this type of training will come in handy – even off the trail! Help protect yourself and others by learning safe recovery techniques. No RSVP necessary.

June 16: Father's Day Run at the TNT farm and Board meeting. The ever popular Father's Day run is again sponsored by Durrell and Syndy Miller. This is one of our most popular member-only club events. Meet at the VFW, 7:30 AM for breakfast and a Board Meeting. At 9:00 AM the convoy will leave from the VFW for the TNT farm. Bring your water pistols and prepare for a day of fun! There will be a catered evening meal so please RSVP to trjceff@yahoo.com or call the club phone by the 13th.

July 7: Fourth of July run. There will be several trails run and in the early evening there will be a cookout – food supplied by the club. Bring your own refreshments. Last year those who attended had a great time and this year will be even better! Please RSVP to trjceff@yahoo.com or call the club phone by the 5th.

Safari Report

By Lilly

Wow, we're only a few weeks away from the Safari for this year. Behind the scenes everyone has been very busy, thank you all! So far, it looks like we're on track to match or pass last year's pre-registrations! From what I'm hearing the trails are getting close to being ready! Bob was able to get the Safari a mention in Petersen's 4 Wheel & Off Road magazine.

From my end I can tell you that the t-shirt design is done and ready to go. I've been working like crazy for raffle and auction donations and we're doing pretty well. It's a tough economy, so they're down a little bit but I'm grateful for the sponsors that have come through for us. So please remember these companies first when you're looking for Jeep stuff! (If you're curious, I've been sharing some of the donations on the club's Facebook page!) I do still need someone locally that can visit the local sponsors and pick up donations. If anyone is willing, please email or call me: Lillysvintage@gmail.com or 815-218-3022 (cell).

Be sure to spread the word, talk to other Jeep owners mention it on online forums and social sites that you visit and let them know that this is the best wheeling in Illinois! See you at the Safari!!

Moab Was a Trip!

By Charlie Ater

We finally made it back to the Land of Lincoln after a week of great wheelin'! We had a few more problems than usual on the way out and on the way back, but being stubborn is not always a negative! We persevered and made it to Moab to meet up with Dave Christensen, Menlo Smith, Drew Smith, Laura Ryan, Dieter, and a little later Ray and Louise. With Lora and I, Dennis and Fran, that made eight Jeeps on the trail - most of the time.

On the first trail, Long Canyon, Dennis had some overheating problems and the fuel pump went belly-up



Eagle's Dare

on my Jeep with a hundred yards to go. Dave had to get back to a post-Safari readout meeting and nobody was carrying a spare pump (Gee, what are the odds of that!?!). Lora and I piled in with Dave and were dropped off at camp (Portal RV Resort, three lots up from Dave). I took Big Red (Lora's Ram) and chased parts with Dennis. He got a lower radiator hose (seems to have fixed his problem) and I got an inline fuel pump and wire. To shorten the story- I drove it back to camp about 10:30 or so and used the next day to redo my hasty repair to better fit where the old fuel filter was and add a small gas filter while Dave took the rest out on Kane Creek Canyon trail. I hated to miss that. Kane Creek is one of my favorite trails out there.



**Return from
Cliff Hanger**

While running Eagle's Dare (off of Golden Spike), I realized that going to 35" tires from 33" tires is a little too radical a change for some trails. I didn't have the control of slow speeds and "crawlability" needed for trails like Cliff Hanger. On the way back from Golden Spike, on Gold Bar Rim, we watched an "experienced" wheeler destroy his transfer case on a waterfall. I wonder what he was thinking when all of our crew just drove right on up like it was a Bronx pothole. So the next day while the crew was out wheelin' Cliff Hanger, I changed oil in the Jeep and replaced the alternator belt. I did a ring job just before leaving for Moab and used cheap oil because it was convenient. Never again!

That evening, Lora did dinner for eight: roast beef with the trimmings. We had a great time enjoying good food and good company- what a treat! Friday, we did Moab Rim in the morning and Hell's Revenge in the afternoon. I had some problems on the Devil's Crack and Z-Turn due to gearing. These 35" tires weren't such a bargain! Coming off of Hell's Revenge we were delayed by a kid with his first vehicle (Cherokee, stock, street tires) that was hung up on some



**Steel Bender
The Fall**

rocks. But the best was last! We did Steel Bender on Saturday and it's a woolybooger trail! We entered via a switchback trail into a beautiful canyon and ran up on a nice, easy running trail that crossed the stream several times and then it got mostly rough. The rest of it was nasty! There were a number of rocky ledges that were just rough riding, some of which were fairly challenging (gearing again!). When we came to The Wall, supposedly a major obstacle, we watched a Jeeper use up a couple of seasons worth of rubber trying to get up. Dave generously gave assistance to the guy and he popped up.

Then it was our turn. Dave went up and parked, then came back to guide us and found that we were driving right on up. The next major obstacle was The Fall, a very steep nearly vertical drop of about 8 – 10 feet with a bypass that was seat tasting steep and off camber too. Dave showed us how to do it: e-a-s-e on o-v-e-r and drop as “slowly” as possible while keeping cheeks tightly clinched when the back wheels come off the rock about two feet. Oh yeah, sign me up, I wanna do it! NOT! I opted for the bypass. After all, our 86 year old Menlo just drove down it. Easy? Let me put it this way- I can still taste the seat. A fun, challenging trail. I think I’ll have to add it to my favorites.

Sunday was the day we were supposed to leave and that’s when it snowed in the Rockies. Driving on the five and six percent grades of I-70 on snow and ice is suicidal so we waited. Lora and I went to Arches National Park for an afternoon of sightseeing. What an amazing place! Next year, we’ll do Canyonlands. The trip back had its moment, too. I pulled out to pass a semi on a downhill stretch with a long, clear shot and after I reached “the point of no return”, a garbage truck approached on a T road, ran a stop sign, and pulled into my lane. Fortunately, when the driver saw what was going on he pulled into the “acceleration lane” just as I was getting ready to slap a trailer load of Jeeps against a semi.

I must add this about our drivers and rigs. Dennis’ rig just does it all! It’s well put together and he just crawls it over what’s in the way. Menlo is amazing! Not only is he a most capable wheeler, he’s a gentleman in the old fashioned sense of the term. It’s a pleasure to be around that man. Drew is an excellent wheeler and risk-taker. With his monster 4 door JK, he made some of difficult obstacles look so easy by being smooth. Laura is Menlo’s daughter and this was her first time wheelin’. You would have thought she was quite experienced from the way she handled her rental Jeep. She learned quickly and followed in Dave’s tracks. Dieter, the man from Liechtenstein, has the competence that comes with years of wheelin’ and will always be in the thick of things. I wish we could have had Rolf join us on the trail but he’d been in an accident on the way to a trail a week earlier and was recuperating. Maybe next year. Ray and Louise were good people to wheel with and their Jeep was a beaut! They took immaculate care of it, but still wheeled it on difficult trails. And then there is Dave. I think he could be likeable if he didn’t yell at people that bounced too much and were only one bounce away from putting their Jeep on their lid. Hey, it took me by surprise too! His patience is boundless with new people that are really trying to do it right, but stupidity on the trail...well...that’s another story when he goes into his “full Dave mode” or displays the “Moses gesture”. Besides, he’s the highest paid unpaid trail guide in Moab! Thanks Dave, for a great time!

Trail of Life

By Chief

Did anyone else miss the snow this winter besides me? Now today, the northeast is getting a snow storm. I really missed the snow and all the fun problems it causes. I know now it is too late to wish for snow because the farmers already have corn poking up out of the fields and it is almost May, but I still missed it.



Okay enough for my whining. I have some Jeep stuff to report on this time. As I mentioned last time, Murph contracted some special "trail design" people to evaluate Murphy's Law and make suggestions for improvements on the existing run and possibly some new sections. I have to tell you they have done a magnificent job. We drove the additions during a work weekend in March. I will have to say the additions are going to be fun. It is no mystery as to the capability of these guys to design some awesome trail, and they lived up to their reputation. They managed to truly capture the essence of the Murphy's Law mystique. The added sections are not so difficult as to destroy vehicles, but challenging enough to keep you awake. The best part is the new sections replace some of the potentially boring driving in the pasture parts, so for those who have ran on Murphy's in the past, it now has some new twists and turns. We were told as the contractors were out on foot scouting possible trail paths they discovered an article of women's undergarment. I will not go into further detail, but this particular item of clothing has size references similar to what one would think of when ordering morning coffee. You know, cup size. Anyway because of the secrecy of the origin of the item, the section of new trail has been named Virginia's Secret.

In another section of new trail while trimming back some of the beautiful multi-floral roses and aesthetic thorn trees, we found a pair of slightly weathered but new looking work boots. Murphy didn't claim them as his own but thought they could be "neatsfooted" back into shape. We eventually talked Murph into leaving them there on the trail thinking we might have a special "trail gift" to present to the first one who happens to see them along the way. I am thinking this potential for a Mega-Millions like Boot Finder Jackpot Prize should lead to a little more excitement and effort to get in the front part of the line

While we were working on the second half of the trail that day, Dennis "Braveheart" Shoemaker demonstrated how to break a really tough front drive shaft on the hill just past the Waterfall. I think the sound of that shaft snapping is still echoing through the woods. That little hill is one of those that lets you get up just far enough the first time that you think you can get it the second, then the third and then as many attempts as needed to break something. Murphy got Dennis back to the road and civilization.

With the Safari just a couple weeks away, I really look forward to hitting the trail again. I have been passing out TRJC business cards to anyone in a Jeep I happen to encounter. It is fun to talk to others about TRJC and all we have done and continue to do. Most of the people really seem to be interested. I hope to see some of them on the trail someday.

Words of Wisdom: I don't suffer from insanity, I enjoy every minute of it.

How is it one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box of matches to start a campfire?

See Ya on the Trail,

Chief

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FIRST CLASS MAIL