

Two Rivers Tracker

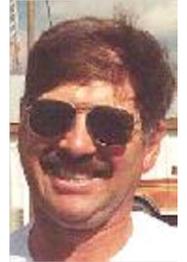
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The Prez Sez

From Lee Ator



The 2013 *BLAST* is now history and we had a good turnout of approximately 120 vehicles and over 200 people. Raffle and auction (\$4162) and ice cream sales (\$365) were good. Money from the ice cream sale goes to the Christmas Food Basket. At the next Board meeting we will decide what groups will receive the auction and raffle money. Thanks to Lilly Vittetow and all her helpers: Dave Christensen - newsletter, web site, registration forms and mailings; Doug Watret - trail coordinator; Kaye Iftner at the Pike County Chamber for registration and confirmations; to all the helpers, trail guides, and other volunteers who make these events possible. Our two big events have done well thanks to these people and their crews. At this writing we only have three dates left on the 2013 calendar. **8/31** is the Fall Festival Parade and Murphy's Last Call trail ride after the parade. **9/14** is the Annual General Meeting with election of three Board members. Please contact Jeff Sorensen if you would like to run. The meeting will be followed by the Ma Earth trail ride. On **10/12** we have the club's Back Road run and Board planning meeting for 2014. Also Jen Bell has t-shirts hats and other items for sale. Contact Jen for these or ideas for new merchandise. Thanks to Jen for taking over the club merchandising. That's all for now. Hope to see you on the trails and at the AGM!

Upcoming Events

Aug. 31: Pittsfield Fall Festival - Jeep Parade & Murphy's Last Call. Details are on the web and later in this newsletter.

Sep. 14: Annual General Meeting (8 AM), Board meeting and elections (9 AM) and Ma Earth Trail Run (10 AM).

Oct. 12: Back Road Run, last run of the year (9 AM) and 2014 Planning Meeting (6 PM). All are welcome.

Pittsfield Fall Festival Parade - August 31st.

The parade starts at 11am. Meet at Pittsfield High School parking lot to unload/set up at 10AM. Immediately following the parade we will head to Virginia Williams' home (white house just south of the Drive-In theater) for a bring your own lunch. We will then have a half day trail ride on Murphy's. This will go on – rain or shine unless the parade is canceled. Please bring candy to toss for the parade. If you plan on participating, please contact Jen Bell: call or text 217-779-2391 or email jenbell@adams.net

Merchant Corner

Jen Bell

I still have a few of the "Got Trails" shirts available. New shirt design will be available at the Safari in May! By popular demand – bottle/can koozies will be made in limited quantities. Thank you for your continued support of merchandise – money raised through sales is put back into the Pittsfield community. Look for the online store to be available before Thanksgiving!

4th of July Run

By Karl Anderson

Now I know how heroin addicts feel. I hadn't had my Murphy fix in two years and things were starting to get ugly. Ok, ugly is an ongoing condition for some of us, shut up Charlie, but you know what I mean. Shutting down my auto transport business a couple years ago and trying some new business ventures has left little time (and at times even less money) to get any Jeeping done. Last year we only made two runs: one of the early trail builders on Lakeshore and the Father's Day run at Black Oak. So far this year we hadn't been to any runs at all so when I realized last week there was a run coming up and I was home, well, I knew I had to get some quality time at my favorite Pike County farm.

When we showed up Saturday the only trails with signup sheets were County Line, Mongo and Dutch Creek. I knew Mongo was more than the missus was gonna let her daily driver be subjected to so I inquired about County Line and was told with all the soft sand and deep mud and overgrowth, Amy's purdy Jeep might not end the day quite so purdy, so we signed up for Dutch Creek. The problem was, so did about 15 other Jeeps. Having endured and hated traffic jams in 48 states, I wasn't thrilled about a slow day but when ya gotta Jeep, ya gotta Jeep.

Then we go out into the parking lot after breakfast and there stands Randy Newport. For those that don't know, he's a trail guide on Murphy's Law. He informed us that he was going out to Murph's and we were welcome to follow along if we liked. We liked, so we followed. Apparently, Murphy's personal junk...er...Jeep, was out of commission, but he'd ride around with whomever had an open seat till lunch. I offered to let him ride with us but he'd have to sit on my lap or Amy's. He declined, knowing it'd be hard for me to shift and balance his skinny butt at the same time. Kinda worries me that he never gave a reason for not riding on Amy's side.

Anyway, everybody loaded up and off we went. Having not been on Murphy's for two years we weren't familiar with the new trails Mark and Mark had cut on what is normally the EASY part of the day. The west side of the highway that we always run before lunch has normally been a good time but not anything that would cause concern about damaging our shiny LJ. Virginia's Secret changed all that.

It's a rocky, tight, twisty trail that had us re-thinking our choice to "follow" Randy. Some of the other new stuff added a lot of cool challenges also, but no major casualties. Well, nothing that won't buff out. At least that's what I told her. And trust me, I've *never* stretched the truth when it comes to my wife. I lie to you people all the time, but not her. Never. Alrighty then.



We managed to escape the day relatively unscathed but the same can't be said for the entire group. Bill and Brenda (well, ok, Bill) made a not so intelligent decision to try to crawl up through a gorge that turned out to be maybe 6 inches narrower than Bill's Jeep. But hey, it's just a turn signal. And a fender. And paint. Dennis attempted a rocky climb I'd never seen before and almost flipped over before coming to his senses and giving up. So

of course our fearless trail guide leader, overseer, honcho, or whatever his title is, Doug Watret, just had to try the same climb. I'm guessin' there's no IQ test for his position. Yup, he almost flipped too. His right front tire was on its side completely submersed in the water below. Luckily for him he wasn't driver side down or he may have become a buffet for all the snapping turtles that were swimming around below him wondering what kind of idiot tries an obstacle Dennis gave up on and ends up failing just as gloriously as he did. Have you ever heard turtles laugh? Ok, well I haven't either, but I'm pretty sure I saw a couple of them smirk.

Speaking of turtles, I added a photo I took of one I nearly ran over in the creek. I have my doubts that this particular turtle is native to Pike County, though. By the looks of the graffiti on its shell I'm guessing he moved in from Brooklyn or the Bronx.



All in all it was a great day, especially for Amy and myself since we've really missed our club buddies and getting to spend time with them. And I even got a compliment from Dennis that ended up being the highlight of my day. After making it through a particularly hairy part of the creek that had some concerned a few of us might not want to try for fear of damage, Dennis praised my driving skill. Being my usual modest self, I had to let him in on a little secret weapon our Jeep came with. There's a little light in the dash that says 4WD. When that light comes on our Jeep will go anywhere.

Sure hope that bulb never goes out.

[More of Karl's photos are online in the TRJC Gallery at <http://www.trjc.com/Gallery/index.htm>]

2013 15th Annual TRJC August Blast

Warren and Amy DeWolfe



Let me start off by saying what a successful event put on by the TRJC board, fellow members, landowners and the town of Pittsfield. I have been coming down to Pittsfield off and on since I was 6. I was fortunate enough to buy a Jeep and when I went looking for a club to join I heard many great things about this club and when I found out where it was I knew that was the one for me. A majority of my family lives here in town and I am fortunate enough to now have two reasons to come back every other weekend it seems. I love the excitement of the drive down from Aurora each

event, the four hours seem to fly by. For the larger events I love seeing the streams of Jeeps heading down for the events. And if you're lucky enough you can form a caravan. Getting into town on Thursday is like Christmas, just waiting for the events to start and re-kindle relationships, make new ones and just checking out the jeeps. This year we were all fortunate enough to check out that 1944 Jeep Willy all decked out in its finest. Sure wish I could have seen that bad boy out on the trails.



Thursday night was my first time flexing my Jeep on the ramp, didn't do too badly, but I did learn some tricks for next time☺. Amy and I got all checked in and visited with friends and family, drooled over a few Jeeps then headed out for dinner with the cousins.



Friday morning we joined a group of friends and my cousin and headed out on Lakeshore. Now that was my first time out on that trail. I was a bit nervous after hearing war stories from a few guys about tire damage but we went out open minded. We all made it out to the trail and met Tom, one of the land owners and let me tell you something he is a hoot! What a beautiful piece of land and awesome trail, we had such a "BLAST" and enjoyed the challenges. Got some great pictures of everyone heading down the trails on the rocks.

Fun to watch some of the guys try to make it back up at the end of the day. My, that rock was slick as snot but always a good show. No breakdowns or major damage which is a plus in my book.

I think I enjoy the dinners and raffle/auction as much as I do the trail rides. The guys and gals at the VFW always put out a good meal and are always so nice. Sitting down breaking bread with friends is such a plus but watching Lee beg for auction items is even better. Made me giggle to see him down on pillowed knee auctioning items for a good cause.



Was bummed after I had eaten, I overheard someone talking about the pumpkin ice cream and how good it was with the spice cake. So of course I had to loosen the belt buckle get up and try it? My goodness it was awesome!! What a way to end the night.

Saturday began another great day wheeling with friends and family, my wife and I had breakfast put on by the great folks at the VFW. Always nice to have a hot breakfast to fill you up before a day on the trails. We hit up Virginia and Gary William's trails this day, cuz you know that will make for an interesting ride. Got out to the farm after another one of Doug's doom and gloom speeches☺. We had just a bit of rain the night before to make it a bit more fun. Trying to get out to the trail this morning was a bit of an adventure as we were all sliding along the dirt road at the corn fields. Once out there we had a brief meeting with Chief and got a preview of Gary's new hairdo and then off we went.

Mudd Butt got nice and muddy and made it through all the challenges. Only one issue in the morning Charlie Ater blew a tire off the wheel, so thanks to Ghost Rider (Randy Newport) and his air tank we had him up and running in no time "flat". Lots of good mud spots to get yourself a good mud bath before lunch break.

As usual a great lunch break at Virginia's house and she was so nice to pass around a tray of homemade cookies with Kelly Stockstill-Winn acting as our waitress. What a gorgeous day to sit in the sun out in the country and enjoy lunch and get a rest in before some more fun. After lunch we headed out to Murph's trails for some more fun and mischief. We wandered in and out of trails for the afternoon. Thank goodness no major breakdowns or damage. Had a few spots where some folks got hung up, I got to break out my new winch. We got stopped on a downhill slope while someone ahead of us was getting help and all the gas ran to the front of the tank so my baby thought she was empty and Amy had turned the wheels so far right as to not slide down the hill into the Jeep in front of us. Well since "we were out of gas" Amy could not get the Jeep started to turn the wheels to roll to a flat spot. So we broke out the winch but silly me put the cord in wrong so thought the darn thing was broken! Ghost Rider gave us a jerk to the left and away we went with 40 foot of winch cable wrapped



around the bar. Later on I figured out what I had done and all was good and I even learned something. Finished out the day down in the creek where the Jeep in front of us lost the guy in front of him so we wandered around in the creek, got to see the waterfall and ended up in the "can opener" before we realized we were lost from the pack. So we got all turned around and head back to the "waterfall" again and got caught up. Low and behold we wrapped around the timber for a bit and back through the "falls" we went again! Always fun to play in the "falls" three times in one day☺. We all made it out of Murphy's Law safe and sound with no major damage or mishaps.



Made it back to town to get cleaned up and ready for our final night together. Once again always great to eat with friends and have some good ole home cooked food by the folks at the VFW. The fun part of the evening began with Lee starting off the raffles and auctions. I love it when we can get him all flustered and especially get his phone a ringin'. Such a great group of people to donate \$\$ to the local charities and folks in need. I was amazed that I paid \$80 for the last cup of chocolate ice cream, but hey it went to a great cause and it's wonderful to be fortunate enough to pass on some of what I have to others. I even got Eugene a girlfriend!!

So thank you to the folks at the VFW for their hard work in preparing good meals for us all, and THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE! Thank you to all the sponsors and donors who provided the auction and raffle prizes. Thank you to everyone at Two Rivers Jeep Club for all our hard work, time and dedication in putting on another successful event. And a big thanks you to all the land owners for allowing us the great opportunity to play on your land each and every time!

[More of Warren's photos are online in the TRJC Gallery at <http://www.trjc.com/Gallery/index.htm>]

Trail of Life

By Chief



I hope a good time was had by all during the Blast. We had a great time on Murphy's. Strangely enough we never had any major problems. A couple of tires popped off the bead which were quickly fixed by the Official Murphy's Law Emergency Pit Crew. One Jeep had shifting problems and had to leave the trail and Ghost Rider lost a couple of gears. That was near the end of the day Saturday. He still had a couple left so he could navigate. It was the first outing for his Big White TJ. I kind of missed the "Ole Silverish Cherokee" but the TJ proved to be just as unstoppable.

Friday was a great day full of fun and excitement with beautiful weather and relatively dry conditions. That was until the rain started to fall as we were heading off the trail. That little shower eventually dumped an inch of rain Friday night which made things even more fun and exciting on Saturday morning. You can always tell what you are going to get into on Murphy's while making the drive down the long lane heading back to the trail-head. Just coming off the highway and still being in two wheel drive, I find it really interesting to look back in the rear-view mirror and see all the Jeeps slipping and sliding, slinging mud and getting sideways. It sure gets their attention and we haven't even gotten to the trail yet.

Saturday definitely proved to be more of a challenge for everyone including yours truly. As I have whined about earlier, I still haven't gotten the Buggy locked yet, so I found myself in that "Open Diff" hell where you have two tires in the air spinning like the devil and the other two tires on firm ground doing absolutely nothing. I would have to say very modestly, only years of experience driving in similarly treacherous conditions on the rural roads in my area enabled me to overcome such obstacles. They used to call us the Rough Riders because the roads were so bad. Anyway, I had really been doing very well until I allowed a certain person named Devin to ride in my Jeep with me. Within 100 yards, I was stuck two times. I don't know if it was the difference of the Jeep dynamics caused by having someone in my passenger seat which caused the problem or if the distraction of trying to explain to Devin how to maneuver through the obstacles broke my concentration, but whatever, I was stuck.

Being the first in line, I had to resort to my trusty winch to save me the first time. This was good because I was able to instruct Devin on the proper way to rig a recovery operation. The best part was I was able to instruct him without me ever having to get out of the Jeep. He learned a lot. He seemed proud to be able to help someone whom he has looked up to for so long. He really did well and by following the instructions I gave him, we were on our way in no time just to get buried in the mire pit at the end of the loop. This is the same place I destroyed my steering box during the Safari. The memory of that ghastly sound still rang in my ears. Rather than take a chance of beating the Buggy to pieces, I called for Ghost Rider to make an emergency trail to get ahead of me so he could snatch me out. He accepted that challenge and within a couple of minutes he had me hooked up and strapped out of the hole. After several Jeeps made the climb with strap help, the trail began to dry out and the remaining Jeeps walked right up and out of the hole. The rest of the day went pretty smooth except for a brief delay when a few Jeeps made a wrong turn and lost the lead group. We quickly located and recovered them getting them back to the safety of the flock before the boys from the Mystery trail claimed them.

I will say the Blast was a great event. We had fun and the food was great as usual. Thank you Legion people for your hard work! I was impressed also by the generosity of those participating in the raffle and auctions. It is encouraging to see people step up and support the community that allows us to come into their area and enjoy their land and scenery. It makes me anxious for the Safari next spring.

See Ya on the Trail, *Chief*

Words of Wisdom: I used to be indecisive, now I'm not so sure.
Why don't we ever see this headline: Psychic Wins Lottery ?
Why can't women put on mascara with their mouth closed?

It was a Blast!

by Dave & Jen Bell

Dave & Taylor headed to Murphy's trail with Jen's daily driver. On Friday, Jen & Emma stayed at the hotel (Emma has medical issues). We had not planned on taking the daily driver but in the last three weeks we moved, went to Colorado, and had customer rigs to work on. Time went by without time to work on any of the other Jeeps we own. The interesting bits of the day:

Chief worked while everyone stood around and watched. While Chief was working and everyone was watching, Murphy was busy stealing tires off rigs.....



All in & all it was an fun day with a great group of people! As Dave pulled into the hotel parking lot there was a smirk on his face. Jen knew something was broken, it was just a matter of what. Jen figured out a rear fender had been ripped off and couple of new dents were added. We headed to dinner – rumor was Murphy had something to do with the missing fender – he was proud to pose for a picture with his new bottle koozie!



Since we had the daily driver, we decided we'd stick with Murphy's for the second day as well. It's a trail we know and we are comfortable with. Everyone went on day two. Emma screamed for the first 10 minutes and by the end of the day she was sleeping on the trail. Since it had rained overnight there were some tricky spots but everyone made it out with minor repairs & issues. Dave attempted to take the other rear fender off so both sides would match, he was not able to do that, but he did rip a hole in the top. Luckily Jen had just traded (a box of doughnuts) for a newer used top the day before. We now owe a second box for sure!

Charlie's Ramblin's

By Charlie Ater

Well, the BLAST is over for another year. I noticed that the weather threat had people signing up for lower rated trails than they normally would have. I guess the specter of the "Gilligan's Isle" event of a few years ago is still having an effect. My trail, Hopewell, was booked up the first day with no takers for the second. It made my landowner happy as he wanted to minimize damage to his freshly planted hay crop.

Some of you were with me when we did a run-thru the week before the BLAST. We found that the first part of the trail down the long hill with the "slide" section between the trees that drops into the "Bad Ass Turn" was impassable without winching and strapping, so it was bypassed for the BLAST. Mother Nature had washed out the stream bed another 18- 24 inches negating any possibility of a turn. We pretty basically had to go straight ahead and everyone either winched or was strapped. Interestingly, J.D.'s hydraulic winch was doing its slow but sure job when he got some traction, overdrove the winch, then lost traction. When the Jeep hit the winch cable, the accumulated momentum was too much for the 20 year old rope and it snapped! Since it was a straight line pull and there was no wildly whipping cable, and everyone was standing clear, there were no injuries. The main part of the wire rope recoiled under the front of the Jeep. No damage, no injuries, no close call equals a good day in my book!



Next spring we may build a bridge across the brook or maybe scout out another way across. Over on Hamer and Jenny's property, we ran into a lot of downed trees, including a part of the "tunnel" under the hedge trees. I'm sure that will be tough to cut through, so we'll do a work around of some sort. By the time we reached that, my chainsaw had already partially self destructed. We went around into the edge of the CRP ground and back into the trail. We winched a "widow maker" blocking the trail down and

rolled it, again with the winch, so we could drive over it- Lora's better idea! A little further along, we found a 30- 36 inch tree trunk lying across the trail and it was time to quit- the chainsaw did already.

The second day of the BLAST, I was intending to go out on Dutch Creek because it's always interesting, challenging, and doable (and Murphy's Law was full...). However!! Lora's granddaughter, Sophie came up from Edwardsville to ride along, and brought a friend, Kateland (I'm sure you guys remember them...), and Lora wanted to run Murphy's - it was full, remember? We ran Murphy's. Lora went over 'Ghost Rider's' head (Randy Newport), heck, she went over Murph's head (Gary Williams) directly to the Boss Lady herownself, Virginia! Yeah, you know where we went (Sorry, Lee, but you understand dealing with a redhead...).

Although there were too many Jeeps, most were appropriately modified and well driven, so things moved along well for the most part. There were "incidents" as we meandered along, but I'll only tell of my erro- mista- incident, yeah, that's it, it was an incident! Those of you that have been on Murphy's know of the turn out of a mudhole to climb a red clay hill obstacle (I'm sure it has a name; I just don't know it.). When my turn came, I eased through the mud until I could see the hill and pick a line to take without stopping. I picked wrong. Right up the middle in the deepest ruts with a slight kink in them. Guys, you all know ya gotta look good or fail spectacularly, right? So I'm still rollin', pick the line, hit the lockers and go "Full Toumbs". (Full Toumbs is an expression similar to WFO which means yer tryin' like a demented fool to find out if yer rev-limiter works.) This was first heard as John Toumbs was preparing for a competition at the Rockport Off Road Park. When asked his strategy for an event, he said "Full Toumbs all the way!" And WFO is an old military term for Wide Open, probably first used by the driver of a Jeffery's/Nash Quad during WW I.

Where were we- oh, yessss- while checking the function of the rev limiter, I hit the dogleg in the rut and it unseated the bead. Momentum and full throttle got me to the top, but not really lookin' good either. At least it wasn't a spectacular fail.

So, what happened? When I aired down with my auto deflators, I was sure they were set at 11- 12 psi. For some reason, they had self adjusted to 8 psi. I had good traction- Lotsa good traction, but the pressure wasn't enough to hold the bead when I smacked the dogleg at "Full Toumbs". Randy removed about 15 pounds of red clay from the tire before we resealed the bead. An additional 5-7 pounds was removed two days later when I had the tire serviced.

We occasionally have a unique vehicle show up at our events and this year was no exception. We had a beautifully restored 1944 Willys military GP that seemed to get everyone's attention. It went out on Hopewell with us and did well. Also worth mentioning was the finely crafted wooden Jeep model on a wooden tilt trailer pulled by a wooden pickup truck that was auctioned off the last day. Mark and Lilly Vittetow took it home where it now resides on their mantel. Robert Campbell of Beardstown made it, and I think that everyone that saw it would agree that he's truly an artist in wood.

A big "Thank You" to all that contributed to the success of the BLAST. See ya on the trails!

.....Not all who wander are lost

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