



# Two Rivers Tracker

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

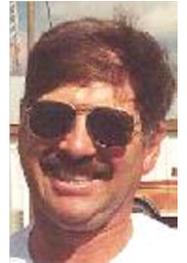
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## The Prez Sez

From Lee Ator

The 2013 Safari is now past and it went great. We had a good turnout of 155 Jeeps plus a Toyota and a Ford that I saw headed to the trail. There are so many people to thank for this success. Thanks to all that donated to the raffle and auction. The raffle proceeds alone were over \$4,000 which will be put back into the community as donations to charitable causes. Also thanks to former club member Ray Coleman who donated a large Jeep sign. We sold 100 special tickets for this sign at 10 dollars each. All these funds will also be given to local charities this fall.



Thanks to all who helped with these raffles. I also want to thank Dave and Lona Chandler who have purchased Don Maxheimer's ice cream makers. They came and continued Don's tradition. The ice cream profits, \$800, will be used for the Pike County Christmas Food Basket program. Also thanks to Doug Watret, our trail coordinator and his guides for their work. And a special **big thanks** goes to Event Coordinator Lilly Vittelow for her hard work and the staff that makes the Safari and Blast all happen. I know I surely forgot someone so thanks to all who helped.

As I write this I have just returned home from Memorial Day services - which reminds me of why the first Jeeps were built. The US military Jeeps were used all over the world in WWII and for 30 years after by US troops all over the world. So the next time you're out in a Jeep let's remember why they were first built and the men and women who used them to protect our freedoms. When you see a service man or woman, former or present, take time to thank them for their service and sacrifices to keep us free.

## Upcoming Events

This summer we have an outstanding series of events planned. Get your Jeeps ready, get out on the trails and have a great time.

*All events take place at the VFW unless otherwise noted.*

*Breakfast is available at all trail events starting about 7:00 AM. Trails leave at 9 AM.*

*Always check the website for trails to be run or any last minute changes.*

**June 15:** TNT Farm Father's Day Run and Catered Dinner. This is one of our most popular member's runs. Bring your Jeep, water pistols and yourselves. Prepare to get wet. This is a MOST fun event followed by a free catered evening meal and campfire. Thanks to Durrell and Syndy for their support of this event for well over 15 years!

**July 13:** 4<sup>th</sup> of July Run. We open up a few trails and go wheeling! Check the web site for more details but this is a nice way to get out in the middle of the summer and perhaps even support your local car wash, depending on the weather!

**July 27:** Trail Builder. This is our last work weekend before the Blast. Sure, we do some “work” but these are mostly way more fun than work. If you haven’t been to one of these, try to attend. They’re usually small groups and provide a chance to play and talk with other members.

**Aug. 1-3:** This is our 15<sup>th</sup> annual 4x4 Blast. What more can we say. Sign up now. Registrations have been mailed. Invite your friends. We run almost all the trails and it’s a nice way to meet new people and have a great time wheeling. Sign up today.

**Aug 17:** Member’s Run. No work, just a set of fun trails. This is one of our last events before the trails are closed for hunting so come join us for a day of fun.

**Aug. 31:** Pittsfield Fall Festival - Jeep Parade & Murphy's Last Call. More details will be on the web but this is becoming more and more popular. The Fall Festival is great fun, the parade is awesome and Murphy always has a great bash planned.

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## What A Safari We Had!

by Lilly Vittetow, Event Chairperson

We had over 155 Jeeps attend this year! Before going over our days on the trails there are a couple of “thank yous” that need to be made. First I want to give a huge thank you to Kaye with the Pike Chamber of Commerce. Kaye does a lot of paper work for us in getting ready for the 2 big events. Second is to Dave Christensen, who does a lot of behind the scenes work for the whole club in general and especially these events. And of course a huge “thank you” to all of the volunteers and attendees!

Our first day of the Safari we decided to go out to Mongo. It has been years since we've been out there and I thought it was because it is quite the drive to the trail head. That was probably part of it but when I got home to wash my Jeep is when I remembered the real reason. That mud is like cement once it dries! I don't like too much mud as I do wash my own Jeep. The day started off with some fun hill climbs, creek and woods. The trail was going along at a pretty good pace, so not many pictures were being taken. Until Seth (trail guide) got into a position that we couldn't quite figure out how he did it. Trying to go up a hill he somehow managed to get his Jeep pretty much on its tail gate, back tires about buried in mud and a large tree right in front of his front bumper. (Pictures on the internet). I think the only casualties that day was Ryan breaking a front axle on his XJ (with the really cool exo-skeleton) and Mark burning up an alternator pulling Ryan out with the winch. Both of which were fixed in the parking lot that night and ready for the next day of fun. It was a great day on the trails with some great friends!

Saturday, we decided to do Atlas again. For being Atlas, we had a pretty big group of 10 or 11 Jeeps.

Ready for being a long day, we head out. Everything was going along at a great pace. First the loops around the hill sides, a few ravines, big hill climbs and slippery long down hills. Not many pictures as we were going along fairly quickly. Until we got to a fairly new obstacle: a ravine with a steep hill climb out. Mark always says "we didn't drive this far to use the bypass",



so of course I was going to try it! The first couple people got hung up in there pretty good, so watching them I picked my line. My turn, I kept my Jeep mostly upright and made it to the out!

Couldn't quite make the out, so listening to the trail guide (and friend), Alan, I backed up to get a better line and run at it. Not realizing he was messing with me, he had me on my side in no time and making it worse with every instruction. After a while, Mark hooked his winch to my cage and up-righted my Jeep for me and I backed the rest of the way out. Then Mark & Dan made it look easy (videos on the internet).



After lunch we continued on to more hill climbs. I didn't get too far as I broke my front axle on a hill climb, but I did make the hill!!! As Jeff and Greg took the thing apart Mark headed to town to get our spare parts for a trail fix! Now I was able to get a few pictures of the rest of the trail when they were passing by and a salamander that was watching to make sure the guys were taking it apart right.

Mark got back with no parts. We left it by the shop door back home. So they put it back together and I drove off the trail in 3 wheel drive and back to town we went. I was fine with that as I've

done Atlas many times and I figured that I have not broken my Jeep in the 3 years I've been wheeling it, that it was bound to happen.

We had a great weekend with great friends and that is really what it is all about! See you at the Blast and bring a friend or two! Don't forget to send in your registrations early so that we get an accurate count for the food without the last minute panic attacks for the Legion!

Our pictures are here...<http://tinyurl.com/o4pbe4e> and the videos are here...  
<http://tinyurl.com/pbzqjuv>

# Trail of Life

By Chief



Another Safari in the books. Isn't it amazing how long it seems to take those three days to get here and then they are gone in a flash? The days on Murphy's Law were definitely a tale of Two Trails. Friday, Day One, we managed to overbook again and ended up with 21 vehicles on the trail. It was not a major crisis as nearly all were experienced trail drivers and had very good vehicles. Actually the "Chief's Buggy" was probably the weakest link in the chain. Not saying it is not capable, just not as "built" as some. I still have not got all the modifications completed I have planned to do since I went to the CB 2.0 version going from a YJ to a TJ. I am still impressed with the ability of the nearly stock, open diff, TJ compared to my locked and raised YJ.

Anyway, Friday was a total surprise because the trail was nearly bone dry. We always have a few "always muddy" sections, but even they were dry enough and we walked right through them. With all the rain this spring I had prepared myself for a mud fest and it wasn't there. Friday went off without a hitch. I began to question in my mind whether we had finally beaten the curse of Murphy's Law. Nothing broke, no one buried themselves in the quicksand-like mud. It was just a pleasant drive through the country. One driver even commented as to how relaxing the drive was. WHAT? This is Murphy's Law, a trail which always lives up to its name. There's no relaxing on the Murphy's, it is constant white knuckle frustration. Not necessarily because it is so difficult, it is because of the unexpected carnage it dishes out. We might have torn off a fender flare or two but nothing metal broke. Come to think of it, it was kind of relaxing. There is no question Murphy's has some of the most beautiful scenery you will find. The creek was running peacefully and the deer were running ahead of us flashing through the timber. The new sections we opened up this year were a spectacular addition to the aesthetics of the trail. Murphy's Law could have been a Norman Rockwell painting on Friday. Then as we were leaving the trail-head a gentle little shower began to fall, just enough to settle the dust and wash off the vehicles or so we thought, as we headed back to town for the magnificent dinner provided by the crew at the American Legion. (Here is a side note: I got tired of Jeepin' a long time ago, I really just come for the food nowadays).

Now for the rest of the story: Saturday, Day Duce!! Remember that gentle shower I mentioned as we left the trail Friday evening. Well Murphy swears he only had 3 tenths of an inch of rain in his rain gauge but from the minute we hit the trail head till we came off the trail, the mud was a flingin'. Get out the straps boys and girls, Murphy's Law is back!! Yes it might have taken a day off but it came back with a vengeance. Being first in line, yours truly being the gracious host and trail guide that I am, I tried my best to clear off the mud as I went along to ensure smooth passage and an enjoyable ride for the paying customers. But as you all know sometimes it is best to be first in line and sometimes not. I was able to clear the trail for some on occasion but sometimes I might have been bringing more mud and water with me making it a little more difficult for those following behind me. Yes, I love that smell in the morning of the special Murphy's Mud as it hits the exhaust, the sound of winch motors whining, the snap sound of the recovery strap doing its job. Maybe I haven't gotten tired of Jeepin' after all.

Day two was nothing like day one for sure. Norman would have gotten his cardigan a little muddy and probably coughed out his pipe. Friday as I got out of my Jeep I could hardly tell I

had been on a trail. On Saturday I brought a lot of trail back with me. From all the dirt I have collected over the years of TRJC activity I actually have more Pike County dirt at home in my yard than I do Macon County dirt. Saturday even saw Ghost Rider's (Trail Guide Randy Newport) Silver Phantom Cherokee suffer day ending damage as the steering box decided it didn't want to play anymore. Murphy, while scouting ahead checking out trail sections, had to perform an emergency trail evacuation maneuver as his Jeep refused to continue on the designated path and forced Murph to take evasive action to avoid certain calamity. I, myself realized the terrifying aspect of facing the wrong way down the crevice of the Double Dips, facing certain catastrophe if not for superb driving skills apparently absent when I got into that predicament in the first place. I know there are hundreds of individual stories from that day waiting to be told but those stories for those who lived them to tell. All I know for sure is we did not leave anyone on the trail.....to the best of my knowledge. If we did I am sure we will find them in August during the Blast. Murph assures me there is plenty enough food to eat off the land to sustain a lost Jeeper for several months.

Words of Wisdom: 1. The first rule of holes: If you are in one, stop digging.  
2. It was all so different before everything changed.

See Ya on the Trail, *Chief*

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## Charlie's Ramblin's

By Charlie Ater

We had a wonderful SAFARI! According to my sources (who will go unnamed because I'll probably misquote them) we had 155+ 4wds and upwards of 250 people, which raised more than \$5300. The ice cream was back with a new owner/operator and he raised a big chunk of cash- almost as good as Don- almost. We had a lot of rain prior to the event but our fears of another "Gilligan's Island" didn't materialize. There were a large number of first time participants, including a gentleman from Taiwan.

The Hopewell Heritage trail was only run on Saturday and all who signed up were warned about potential work that might be needed. We ended up with about eight Jeeps to run a shortened version. Since I had not been able to get on the trail any time prior to the SAFARI due to a "perfect storm" of circumstances, we bypassed the first section over fears that this two rated trail would become a four. Refer back to a prior newsletter and the discussion of "the BadA/Ess Turn". Once again, a lot of water went down that gully making that turn even more stressful for spotters trying to keep the wheels on the dirt side of the Jeep instead of on the side or top. Even the slider, slope that one comes down just before the turn would have let fenders get friendly with trees- yeah, we were better off trying to keep it a two.

To be completely honest, it was really an uneventful tour thru a wild part of Pike County. The view from the Hopewell Indian mound was spectacular even with haze partially limiting the sighting of Louisiana. There were a number of places that copious amounts of running water had created a deeper crossing or a deeper rut to straddle The JK Squeeze managed to loosen a fender flare on Sterling's JK (last year, it was a light scrape). Maybe the trees grew significantly, yeah, that's my alibi!

We started into the Creek Trail, but decided not to after some thought. There was an ash tree lying across the trail, and after we cut a path thru, realized that this trail had the potential to be

an all day affair with potential for major problems. Due to crop plantings, we would have to run the trail then run it backward. Getting back out of the creek would be a real trip - much more than a two rated trail.

After running the Hopewell land, we headed down some back roads to a "short" trail on some of Hamer and Jenny's property. We had our first 'stuck' when a small gully made a little deeper and slicker by the rains claimed a victim. A quick deployment of the winch and he self recovered quite nicely. The following Jeeps were encouraged to use the skinny pedal, which was done with great enthusiasm- we'll have to work on that crossing before the next event! We had a few times when we stopped to throw some brush off the trail, and things went well on the "Short Loop". Since we had a lot of time, but not enough for the whole trail, I was volunteered to run another section of trail as a loop. You know, "volunteered" as in coerced or manipulated. So, in the spirit of things, I bravely led off on another section of trail- backward. Did I mention that on the Hopewell part of the day, I got los.. - er, bewildered? It seems that there was a lot of bulldozing that went on and my "landmarks" were gone to be replaced with wheat, grass, or weeds. Why spoil a reputation - I got bewildered again. This was a whole different trail going backwards! Nevertheless, we proceeded cautiously and made it thru leaving enough time to run over to the Seven Crossing road. Then it was back to town in time for a quick cleanup before dinner and the raffle.

On Friday, I went out on New Salem trail for the first time in several years. I was somewhat apprehensive because of its reputation when wet. It was challenging for an "easy" two rated trail. It should be mentioned that most trails have a challenge or two or three that exceeds the trail rating and New Salem is no exception - 'specially when it has been raining. Lockers and airing down really help a lot but I still needed to be winched twice (I don't have my winch bumper on yet). Various and sundry climbs that would normally be a fun blip of the throttle became a serious challenge with the wet weather this area has had this spring. Many times we had drivers finding out just where the rev limiter was set while they skated around, vainly seeking traction.

You have to give recognition to Don and Doug for guiding a trail efficiently with a minimum of fuss. Their spotting skills are well refined and their patience is to be applauded. This is a great trail for new off roaders to expand their skill sets on- especially when it hasn't been raining for a month ahead of time.

BLAST! Registrations are being mailed as I write this. We had a great turnout for the SAFARI, so get your entries returned quickly to assure you can get in.

And here are MY words of Wisdom. You might be a hardcore off roader if.....

You've ever done bodywork with a winch, a tree, a come-along, and a big hammer.

You've had a time when you wondered briefly why the world was upside down.

You turned a 5 minute grocery run into a 3 hour debacle because you took "the scenic route..."

If yer significant other was along and said, "That was FUN!", then you'd better keep her!!

# What's going on in Quincy???

By Jen Bell

We have never had issues with putting rigs in the mall. This year we had two casualties. The first, Andrew Bauer broke his rear wiper on his XJ. It was stuck vertical so he tried to push it down and it broke off. Then, after the weekend in the mall, Dave (my husband) was driving home with me following. All of a sudden there was a white cloud, a loud pop, and then screeching tires and a dead stop going 40mph. From what I understand, bearing seized and the transmission needs replaced. Dave blames Ford because had our truck been running we would have trailered the rig to the mall and avoided the break.

The mall wasn't all bad though, we had three new members join the club! Did I mention that one of them just so happened to be about 2 minutes behind us when Dave's rig locked up? I told Ryan Frericks "welcome to the club, we all help each other when we need it". He was cool with following Dave home at 10mph, luckily he lives just around the corner from us. Dave Bowen was also quick to respond to a "we're on the side of the road, in the grass, bring tools" phone call.

I've come to realize with parades, if you cancel because of rain, it won't rain. If you plow through with plans, it will rain. Thankfully by the time the parade started the rain had stopped. Thanks to everyone that came out. No Jeep issues in the parade this year!

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## Safari Sponsors

*Thanks to all who donated. Without their help we'd not have had such a successful event. Please do business with our sponsors and also thank them for their ongoing support of our two events!*

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Two Rivers Jeep Club  
PO Box 47  
Pittsfield IL 62363-0047



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