

Two Rivers Tracker

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

Volume 20 Issue 1

February 2017

Upcoming Events

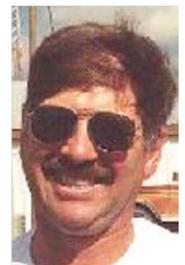
Check the website for details. All events are subject to change due to the weather. For the April 1 dinner, please RSVP to the club phone or email warrendewolfe@gmail.com

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|---------------|----|---|---------|
| Mar 2017 | 4 | Registration opens for the Safari (open to the public) | |
| | | Trail Builder | 9:00 AM |
| | 18 | Trail Builder | 9:00 AM |
| April 2017 | | Board Meeting #2 | 7:30 AM |
| | 1 | Member and Legion Veteran's Trail Ride | 9:00 AM |
| | | Member and Legion Veteran's Appreciation Dinner (catered) | 5:00 PM |
| | 29 | Board Meeting #3 | 7:30 AM |
| | | Trail Builder | 9:00 AM |

The Prez Sez

Lee Ator

This past weekend we had our first trail builder. The weather was nice, cool but not cold. We ran two trails, Pokey's and Dutch Creek. Karl has a good write up of Pokey's. Dutch had great traction. We had to stop and clear the trail a few times but mostly the trail was in good shape. We even went to a section I hadn't used in a long time. So come on out. Trail Builders are a great time and are nice social events. Check the web or facebook for updates to the events. Don't forget to tell all the four wheelers you know about our public events in May and August. Safari registration will open March 1 so don't be left out. This event fills up. Hope to see you on the trail soon!



20 Years of the Tracker!

by Dave Christensen

Happy Birthday! Our club's newsletter is 20 years old. Except for a few of the old-timers left, probably few know that. 20 issues, 6 times a year, that's 120 newsletters and hundreds and hundreds of articles. Back when we started there was a lot more involvement from members in writing articles. In fact, the writing from members was so good that we won a national award after only 3 years. But now, with the advent of social media, the interest in writing for the newsletter has dwindled to only a few dedicated and consistent writers or providing important club notices to those members who do not have (or want) electronic communication.

20 years ago was long before Facebook and other social media. Jeez, back then the newsletter *WAS* our club's social media! Over the years the newsletter has continued to provide an important way to communicate information and stories about our members and the club. At the newsletter's inception less than 30% of our members had email addresses. And now, 80% have email addresses but that still leaves 20% that don't. We've already implemented a newsletter/notice electronic distribution system for 2017 (Constant Contact) for those that want the information electronically but less than 25% of our members have signed up for it. So it seems that most of our members still want a paper newsletter.

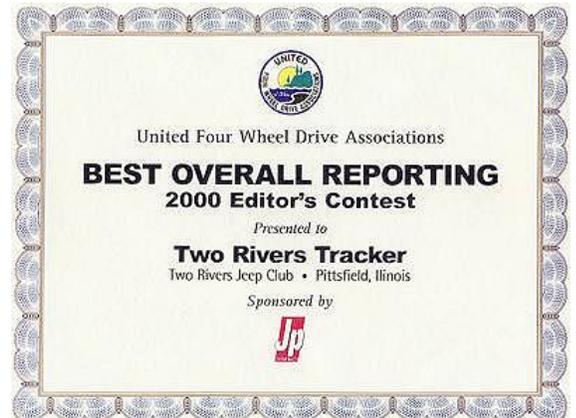
We'll see how future newsletters go and if we get new people writing articles. Any member can write an article and send it to trjc1@trjc.com. Looking ahead, club members and the Board will need to decide if we want to continue the newsletter in its present form or modify it. We also need to decide how often it should get published. We need your thoughts on this via email, phone calls, or comments at Board meetings.

For me personally, after 20 years of effort, I'm looking for someone to pick up the newsletter responsibility. I started with the first issue when I was 50 years old, now I'm 70+ and don't have the energy. And interests change also. Sadly it's been years since I've been down to Pittsfield to go wheeling. Since retirement (and years before that) I've saved the fuel money that I used to go to Pittsfield 6 - 7 times a year. Instead I take that money, add a little to it, and go on multiple 2 to 3 month long trips out West to go wheeling and exploring; seeing how much damage I can do to the Jeep, the RV, the trailer and myself (and I am unusually successful in doing significant damage to all four on my yearly trips)! For me, it's a continuation of 35+ years of wheeling and exploring out West before our government closes more public land to the public.

No, I'm not leaving TRJC or any of the other work that I do for the club but there comes a time when one reevaluates life and wonders how much more I can enjoy and do in the next 10 years or so before I get "old". Given that, there are a couple of decisions the Board needs to make. One is the fate of the newsletter and the other is who will publish it. For some of you folks that have been with the club a few years or more, volunteering for the newsletter is a way to give back for some of the good times you've had.

If anyone is seriously willing to take on a significant task (the newsletter ain't easy), please contact Lee or any Board member. I'll gladly work on the transition and as a consultant.

The canyons are calling...and I must go.....



A New Jeep Season

By Karl Anderson

At 53 years old I got my first deer this past fall. (Besides the countless ones I've nailed on the highways). Thanksgiving dinner was awesome. The annual 30 viewings of Christmas Vacation were as thrilling as ever. New Year's Eve... Well, I don't remember much about that... From what I hear though I had a good time. The NFL playoffs were a disappointment. Gonna find out today who wins the Super Bowl. January 20th the screeching queen of pant suits climbed aboard her broom and led her flying monkeys off to Never Never Land. On a personal note, I submitted an article to a national trucking publication that ended up in print and apparently impressed the owners enough that they asked me to be a regular contributor, including sending me to truck shows to take photos and write articles. (Now my twisted sense of humor can annoy people on several continents!) All in all, not a bad fall and winter.



But yesterday,... Ah yesterday.... Life began anew. Jeep season roared back to life again in full force!

We had a pretty good turnout with around 20 Jeeps or so. A bunch went out on Dutch and 11 of us went to Pokey's. I've only been to Pokey's once before and that was the day the Missus decided we needed to sell her nice TJ Unlimited and get an older trail Jeep. There had been 6+ inches of rain that week and sliding towards trees at warp speed had her glaring at me and using somewhat questionable language all day. Actually, that's pretty much a normal day for us but that day everything just seemed a little louder than usual. For those of you who've been on Pokey's you know how steep some of those hills are and a lot of rain and mud takes it from a 3 rated trail to, oh, I'd say a good solid 20.



Fortunately for us yesterday, the trails were pretty dry and the hill climbing was much easier. In most spots. Throw in some rock ledges and deep gorges and things tend to get a little more interesting. On one particular hill with a nice little gorge to straddle Steve Hembrough decided to give us a nice view of the undercarriage of his white JK two door and stood it up almost completely upright on its tail. Heck, I was scared and I was just standing there taking pictures!

Of course Roger Myers was putting on his usual hammer down, tires in the air, "who cares if I break it, Donna will pay for it" show.

The absolute highlight of the day had to be Luke Armstrong and his 42 Willys CJ-2A. Flatfenders are just naturally cool, but this one was extra special. In front of the stock tranny, transfer case and axles sat a Nissan diesel engine. 2.2 liter, I believe. The whole Jeep was covered in red bedliner, inside and out. It was Luke's first outing in his unique ride and boy oh boy did he put on a show. Even though he had a spring over conversion in the suspension, he was running smallish mud terrains of some sort but still hit every obstacle and hill like he owned the place. And at a mere 1800 lbs, that little red oil burner really flew up the hills! Of course, the harder he was hammering it the more black smoke poured out. More than once the guy behind him on a hill climb had to wait a minute or two for the smoke to clear before making their attempt. The only traction aid he had was a welded rear end, but he still conquered more obstacles than most of us would have guessed. And he made it all the way through the day without breaking. Wish I could say the same.



Oh yeah, I failed to make it through yet another day without mechanical carnage. Turns out my laziness is getting pretty friggin expensive. The front of my Jeep has been acting a little funny for a while. It had got to the point where I couldn't steer it worth a hoot if the hubs were locked in, even in 2wd. I just figured I'd run with the right hub unlocked most of the time and it should be alright. I, however, am an idiot. During one minor ditch crossing the front end got really ugly sounding and the front tires refused to turn. Apparently the front Aussie lunchbox locker had given way and the pins knocked some teeth off the ring and pinion. For those

of you who don't understand all the mechanical jargon, well, the front differential is now a big steaming pile of crap. Nothing about \$500 won't take care of though. If only I can get Amy to give me a large advance on my allowance. Ever get the feeling that Jeep wives must know what the inside of their skulls look like from all the eye rolling they do?

Oh well... For the most part, Jeep season is off to a good start. And I'd like to thank all the members who have taken on different responsibilities this year. Everyone seems to be doing their jobs really well and making everything run as smoothly as possible.

Here's hoping we all get to run as often and trouble free as we'd like this year.

Trail of Life

By Chief



We finally got a little bit of snow, finally, and it nearly did me in. I was called to a town northeast of my area for some of the extra fire stuff I do. It was about an 80 mile trip one way. We had just gotten back to our station from two wrecks before I had to leave so I knew it was slick and speed this trip would not be my friend. I decided to add 45 minutes to my driving time to give myself enough time to drive a little slower and safer. The trip would be all on interstate except for about ten miles so I was sure they would be clearer than the roads we had been working the accidents on. That assumption was good for the first thirty miles and then it got interesting.

While driving at what I felt was a safe speed, all of a sudden for no apparent reason the Big Red Ram was going sideways and I found myself watching the southbound traffic for a while and then the right hand ditch for a while and then the southbound lane again. Thank goodness for the training and experience I have received dealing with the slick Pike County mud as I instinctively reacted and managed to get control of the truck and by God's grace there was not any other traffic around me to bounce off of. The benefit of all the excitement was I did not have to do my daily workout later as my heart rate was in my target cardio range for the next 50 miles. I know that because my firemen provided funds for me to buy a fitbit Blaze for Christmas and it was flashing my heart rate like a cheap neon beer sign. As I traveled further there were vehicles not as well trained as myself sitting along the roadway in various positions of distress. I thought to myself, "If I was in the Buggy, and not on a mission I would assist them in their distress" but I guess that is what wreckers are for.

There was one event that was maybe disturbingly satisfying. I am not trying to offend anyone, but it seems that in my area car salesmen seem to think the speed limits don't apply to them. I often observe automobiles with dealer license plates driving at high rates of speed and sometimes they exhibit some rude behavior while doing so. Such was the case tonight. This little black car with dealer plates passed several of us, who were demonstrating responsible driving, like we were standing still. I thought at the time he might be miss-judging the road conditions just a little. I must have been correct as a few miles down the road he decided to adjust some guardrail and the bumpers of his vehicle. The driver was standing outside his car with his cell phone up to his ear. I am sure it was an interesting conversation.

I made it to my destination and completed my task no worse for the wear. My heart rate eventually returned to normal and the trip home was uneventful. That's all I got. I hope to make some work weekend in the near future so I can write about something Jeep. Until then you will just have to bear with me.

Be safe out there-----

See Ya on the Trail

Naps Are Not Good

Scribbled by Jay Ater

Got home from work, got my belly full and promptly fell asleep on the floor with help from various dogs. Since I don't get to bed till omigod:30 in the AM anyway, I'll be up till the sun comes up so you guys get to suffer thru another one of my attempts to write.

A lot has happened since we closed the trails. First and foremost, my Brat and that Guy she's hooked up with made a baby. That makes me a Grandpa. Her name is Skylar Grace and she's doing fine. The first driving lesson didn't work out as planned but we are still working on it. I hope it gets better now that she can hold her head up on her own. I wish that Pops were here to meet her, I think he'd be in hog heaven. For those of you that are keeping track, she's the first 4th generation club member and the 4th generation in the same Jeep, Pop's little YJ now has added more to its legacy.

What else has happened... lessee here, I found out I don't like Dana 30's very much. Pops wheeled them with a lot of success, that or he didn't tell me when he broke them. I seem to be able to break them by smiling at them. For the record, Motive Gear stuff is not my favorite either. Sent me a bad gear which they warranted but the replacement was from the same batch. It broke pretty fast too. Got a deal on a new Yukon, let's see how long it takes me to kill that one. I picked up an HP 44 for the front and will be swapping in a 9" in the rear. I've got way more practice at changing gears than I need and that combo should be bullet-proof, or at least Jay-proof. I hope.

I went and played at the Badlands twice in the off season, WOW. Love that place, If you're planning a trip over that way just let me know and I'll make every attempt to meet you there. The second trip over was bad for just about everyone. We only broke an axle u-joint and a ring and pinion over there. All in all 2 transfer cases, an alternator, 3 axle shafts and a ring and pinion bit the dust on that trip. We were supposed to stay for the night wheel but everyone was used up or broken by then. We may or may not have been doing stupid stuff. Kerry made it out unscathed. All the broken stuff was his fault; I'll have to make up the facts to back this up later. I screwed up and got all respectable and responsible in the last week, I am orficially a Hi Skewl Teacher now, welding and metals. Another thing I wish Dad was here for. So far it's been a blast, I have a great bunch of kids and there's only a couple that I would like to strangle.

Now for the tech and safety portion of this ramble. During the first run of the season there may have been an issue with a cage and how it was constructed. If you are running a cage that so short that your head is above the main hoop you should rethink your design. In that situation your "cage" is useless. It is not of proper design and will not pass muster for future use.

I know sometimes it seems that I can be a bit overbearing and hard to take with safety and the rules we run by but unfortunately all safety rules are written in blood and I would prefer that the next rule is not written in yours. Bad things can happen under the best of circumstances, why take a chance by running with substandard equipment.

Speaking of the first run, I had a blast. Not all that cold, good traction, not a lot of downed trees on Dutch Creek, the trail guide wasn't very grouchy and a bunch of well matched Jeeps that got over almost everything unassisted. One Grand Cherokee without lockers got hung up but it didn't take long to get him out. Nothing got broken and there was one flat tire.

Oh yeah, Dennis has hair and eyebrows! I'd say looking good but, well, its Dennis.. (Luv ya Man!)
Can't wait till the next run, hope to see ya there! Shazbot/Nanu Nanu!