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This issue isn't quite up to my usual standards, but I really didn't want to delay it any more. So, I hope you enjoy what I was able to put together. Be sure to check out the special announcement on page 4.

Yes, there were 2 awesome Wrenchfests that took place in May at Kurt's. However, I wanted to do them proper justice, so I will be including detailed write ups in the next issue. Who knew just how busy the end of Spring was going to get? So, Cassandra, Dan Beyea, and Dave Savard, feel free to send me a little write up on your personal projects that were wrenched. I fear that I will not do them justice, since I was having a hard time keeping up with all that was growing on mine. ☺



STURBRIDGE, MA

MAY 7, 2017

Beyond knowing that it was yet another awesome wheeling day for all involved, I don't have much for this one. By the sounds of it Aaron really enjoyed riding shotgun in his own Jeep while Kristina took the wheel. While Mark, Marky, and Jason led and held up the rear, newer members challenged themselves climbing some of the hills. Thanks for the information Ralph! ☺

GO TOPLESS DAY

MAY 20, 2017

I wasn't able to make it to this year's event. However, having been to past Go Topless Day's, I'm sure that this year was as eventful. They had food, raffles, vendors, 2 levels of trails, and the giant hill.

*The world welcomed
the newest member to Baystate
on June 2nd, 2017*

Noraleigh Ann Peters

8lbs. 8.8oz. 19.5"

*Congratulations Amanda, Scott,
Logan & Mason!!*



BAYSTATE'S LARGEST REMOTE WRENCHFEST: RAUSCH CREEK, PA

MAY 20, 2017- MAY 22, 2017

WRITTEN BY, DAVE SAVARD • EDITED BY, SHANNON ANASTOS
PHOTOS BY, KURT KLOPP & MARK ROCHELEAU

I can't even say it started off like any other Rausch Creek trip, as this was my and Beth's first one. You know you are going to be in for a special trip when you get to the meeting point in Charlton and the only other person there is Dennis. Kurt had called Dennis to let him know that the YJ was down, due to a cracked outer knuckle, but that Ryan was heading over and they would be putting Ryan's LJ in Kurt's big trailer. We were told to head on down and they would meet us there.



About 30 minutes south of Hartford, Dennis called me on the CB to let me know he was having brake issues. We pulled to the side of the road, had a look underneath, and found that a blown rear brake line was the culprit. After about an hour of trying various ways of pinching off the line, we finally resorted to pounding a section of the line flat against the frame rail and hit the road again.

As we got close to the NY state line, we found out that Kurt and Ryan were only about 20 minutes behind us now. We decided we would pull over and wait for them at a gas station, which also left time for us to fill up and grab some lunch. Even this didn't go as planned. It turns out that the first few exits, even though they say they have gas, they are miles from the highway. Eventually, we got back up to 84 and were able to get together.

I wish I could say it was clear sailing from there, but I'd be lying. Somewhere in PA, there was a pickup truck and camper that crashed and caused a multiple mile backup, as only the breakdown lane was being used to let vehicles past the scene. We sat, engines idling and crawling forward at a pace that let Ryan get out of Kurt's truck and walk up to ride and chat with Dennis for a while. After it cleared we made good time through to Scranton, where we caught the afternoon rush hour. We were almost through when I noticed that Kurt's right front trailer tire was flat. Dennis continued on, while we made a quick stop to change the tire and burn some fingers on the screaming hot rubber. We were now good to go the rest of the way to Rausch Creek. Camp was made, vehicles driven off or out of trailers, and then dinner and beers.

Thursday morning was beautiful. Jason and Mark showed up, with Chuck and his friend Jessie not far behind. After memberships and day passes were obtained, we hit the competition course area. I was watching Ryan climb a steep manmade hill when I heard the pop and he slid on back down. Diagnosis: The T-case rear yoke split and took the centering ball of the driveshaft with it, we hadn't even been out there 20 minutes yet. Less than two minutes later we hear Jason on the radio saying that he'd broken something on his rig, too. Diagnosis: the exact same thing as Ryan's, T-case rear yoke and driveshaft centering ball. We limped them back the 200 yards to camp. We attempted to locate parts, and figured we'd have an early lunch. The parts would have to be shipped in overnight.

Later that afternoon, we headed back out with everyone crammed into rigs, wherever they could fit. Mostly Blues and Blacks were run, with Dennis trying some climbs that Mark, Chuck and I weren't willing to tackle. On one of the ones that we did follow Dennis on, I heard a loud popping in the front of my LJ, the noise was coupled with a mild jerking of the steering wheel. It didn't seem to have an effect on forward progress, but I decided to take it easy from there. I thought I'd broken some teeth off the side or spider gears.

Chuck reported that whenever he restarted his rig it was running funny, like a heat soak issue. He and Jessie headed back to the camp area to let it cool and do some troubleshooting. Eventually, mine started making a little more noise, coupled with the jerking steering wheel, but only on obstacles where the tires were getting bound up. We got back to camp and made dinner, worked on rigs, and had a couple beers. It was too warm to set up Ryan's propane fire ring.

Chuck's rig was so low on coolant. There was none visible inside the radiator when peering down into it. Luckily, I had a full gallon of the correct stuff and a half gallon of a 50/50 mix too. Once it was full and purged of air it ran better. I pried on the u-joints, ball joints, and steering and I couldn't find anything externally wrong with the front axle.

Friday morning was another beautiful cloudless day. Dennis ran his tow rig down to a shop and had them replace the rotted brake line. Ryan and Jason were tracking their parts on-line and getting antsy that the delivery was showing "by close of business" instead of "early AM". The running rigs headed out onto the trails a little after lunch, but they were moving and having fun. Ryan was walking and running his RC cars around, Kurt was riding shotgun with me. Ryan buried one of his RC cars in a large mud puddle that he tried to skate it across. He'd managed to break that one, too.

My rig started to worry me and I was about to head back to park it, when the group decided to go back, have lunch, and do some more work on the Jeeps. I found that I'd pushed a C-clip on the driver side u-joint out a bit (maybe when I was prying on it the day before). Chuck found that his had the exact same thing going on, but his clip was bent. We straightened it the best we could and reinstalled it. When the parts arrived at the hotel late that afternoon, Ryan, Kurt, and I were there to greet the man in the Big Brown Truck.

Ryan had his yoke and driveshaft installed in no time flat. Jason was having a hard time getting the yoke nut to break loose and in fact broke a breaker bar in the process. Eventually, with another breaker bar, the nut was cracked loose. Then, the yoke wouldn't come off the output shaft. A parts store gear puller failed to remove the yoke. Jason put his rig up on the trailer and tied it down.

The four working Jeeps of Ryan, Mark, Dennis, and Chuck went out for an evening run (no night wheeling allowed at Rausch) and shortly after sundown they returned... with Ryan's LJ in tow behind Dennis' XJ. It was cranking, but not firing. We suspected the fuel pump must have given up, after we'd been troubleshooting as best as we could in the parking area.

Chuck's C-clip had spit itself back out again, allowing the u-joint cap to slide out and cause damage to the outer shaft ears. Mark had one of his tires throw a bead and take out the TPMS in the wheel when it did. They were able to reseal the bead and re-inflate it out on the trail.

Did I mention that Dennis didn't have a failure on his Jeep? Well, he did have the issue with his tow rig and a minor loose fuel injector connector issue. Dennis didn't break ...wow!

Friday night brought a huge downpour. We huddled around Ryan's fire ring, ate, and drank. Eventually, everyone made their ways to bed. Saturday morning, the rain didn't stop. Jason, Mark, Chuck, and Dennis decided to head back home. Kurt, Ryan, Beth, and I loaded up the two LJs and stayed, relaxed the rest of Saturday, and left fairly early Sunday morning.



The final incident of the trip occurred just after we'd crossed over the border into NY, on a long downhill fast run. The right rear tire of the trailer I was borrowing let go. No problem, right? Just pop the old one off and throw the spare on, right? Nope, the spare had the wrong bolt pattern, the wheels on the trailer needed to be 5 on 5", the spare was 5 on 4.5". It was a Sunday, early afternoon, and in the middle of Nowhere, NY. It only took 2 ½ hours to find a replacement and get it mounted on the wheel that was originally on the trailer.

With all that being said, the trip was a blast and I cannot wait to do it again! ⁸



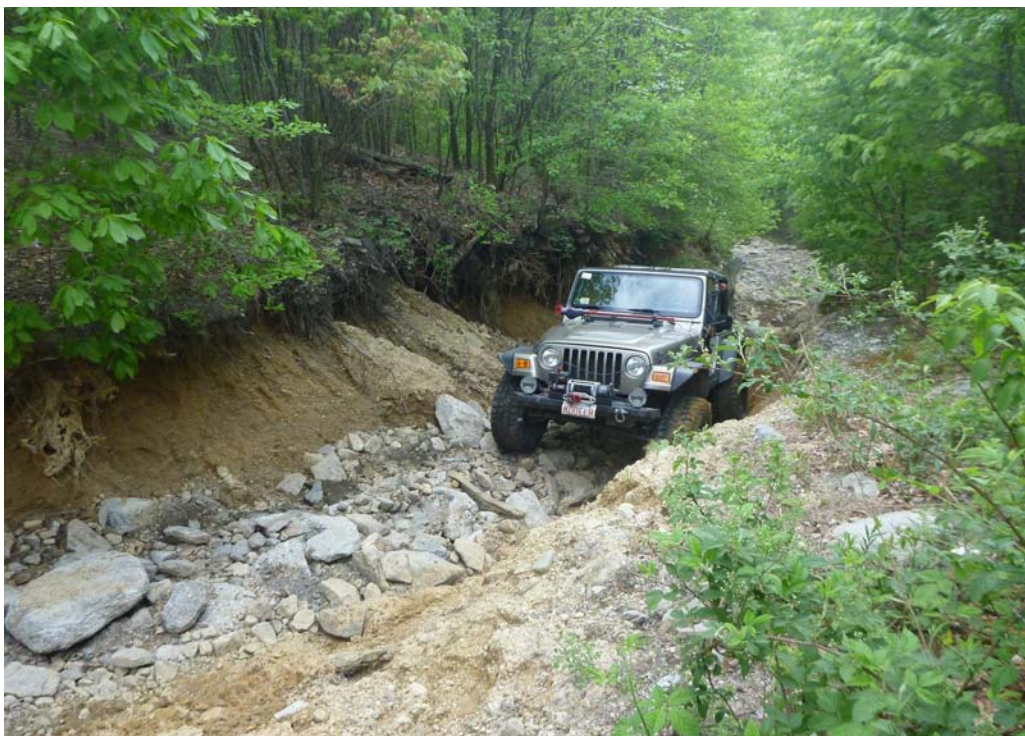












SELF-WRENCHING

MAY 8, 2017

WRITTEN BY, SHANNON ANASTOS

It took me several years of looking for the set of rock sliders I wanted to replace my original side steps. You see, my Jeep has seen the trail once prior to beginning its build. This is when I lost my factory sidesteps. It took me a long time to realize this wasn't a bad thing...even with the dent and now small rust spot. That trail taught me some valuable lessons, like how important clearance is. Haha.

So, these are some of the last photos taken of the factory side steps, which everyone kept assuring me are useless anyway. Needless to say, I now agree. ☺ Actually, this will be a great reference photo as the build continues. This is the truest "before" picture I have of the Jeep! I forgot I have as many photos of it as I do, so this was a happy find:





So, these are some of the last photos taken of the factory side steps, which everyone kept assuring me are useless anyway. I now agree. ☺

Little did I realize, lurking beneath its muddy exterior and interior, the Jeep was hiding another surprise for me (below):



This was discovered during Wrenchfest- Part I. I guess I hit that rock a little harder than I thought. ☺

Getting back to the rock sliders...I guess, when I saw that it was only a matter of removing 3 bolts per side, I figured... “This can’t be that difficult.” Right?



Yet again, the Jeep schooled me. The first problem was the lack of appropriate tools.

I had a cheap ratchet that lasted all of 2 bolts before breaking. Then, I tentatively borrowed a Craftsman ratchet from my grandfather, fearing that I would break it too. After being assured that I couldn’t/wouldn’t break it, I began the next bolt battle.



Thankfully, just about the time I was lifting the driver's side slider into position...my Uncle Joe pulled into the driveway. He took one look at my project and immediately realized that I needed a hand. I suppose it is only fitting, since he was the one that helped me remove my mangled factory side steps after my day of wheeling in 2014. His timing was perfect. We were able to finish up the driver's side pretty fast, since I had the bolts out, and we moved over to the passenger's side next.

If only these photos had audio...you could hear all the laughing. The large pipe you see him using has a technical term, which I'm sure most of you are familiar with: A Persuader. In this particular case, it was a welcome one since the smaller copper one on the ground didn't fit the larger wrench we started using.



He quickly loosened the 2 back bolts on this side for me and then let me give a go to the last bolt. How were we supposed to know what condition this bolt was in? I don't have any photos of me tackling it, but I assure you, it was entertaining. After several attempts to get the Persuader to turn, he had me put both feet on the pipe you see in the picture, while he pulled with his hands, and I pushed with my feet. This is when we broke the unbreakable. Thankfully, he has tools in his work van. So, we were finally able to get the last one out. Sort of...



Hopefully, now you can understand exactly what kind of fight we had with the last bolt. I'm going to consider this self-wrenching a fun and educational experience. I'm sure all the laughing didn't entirely help the process.

So, aside from having all the proper tools on hand...such as a can of PB Blaster and unbreakable ratchets/wrenches, my advice would be to locate an air gun. I'm kidding...that probably would have led to more than one broken bolt. Also, in this case, there really was no way to get the PB oil into the bolt threading.

It began as a simple 6 bolt removal & 6 bolt reinstallation project, became a comedic 6 bolt removal and 5 bolt reinstallation project. ☺ More importantly, it was fun, educational, and worthwhile, as always. Thanks for the help Uncle Joe! I only hope you had as much fun as I did.





I hope you enjoyed this issue of Tracks. More importantly, I hope you're looking forward to the next issue.

Thanks,
Shannon

Please email submissions and photos (Drobox links work, too) to:

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