



MAY 1, 2017

INTRODUCTIONS

Hello, I'm new here. This being my first issue and all, I figured that some introductions are in order, awkward and uncomfortable though they may be. My name is Shannon Anastos, (or RedAnimalTJ on the BSJ forums). I know some of you prefer photos to words...just remember, it is a NEWSletter for a reason. 😊 Rest assured, I'll run out of material eventually...but, in the interim, I hope you enjoy what I've put together.

First, I really want to start with a shout out to Carl and his dedication to Tracks over the years.

As most of you know, Carl "McFly" McIssac has dedicated his time and energy to the Tracks Newsletter for the better part of 9 years. Now, if you've ever written, you know that's a LOT of material to cover. At first, I was intimidated by the prospect of trying my hand at this. Especially, since I'm still pretty new to the club and don't know a lot of fellow members yet. However, Carl was there, to reassure me that I wouldn't regret my decision. He's even offered to help me if I get stuck or when I have questions. And boy, did I have a LOT of questions...and he remains true to his word. 👍

Now, I also know he's spoiled all of you...with great information, uncanny humor, educational how to's, event/trail photos, and his entertaining April Fools brain teaser...which left a lot of people pretty stumped. 😊😂 I can't fill Carl's shoes, but I can continue to bring you the same level of commitment and enthusiasm as he has.

So, Carl, consider this a BIG HUG and a "Thank you" for your hard work and for giving me the opportunity to give this a try. Don't worry, readers...Carl will still be part of the Newsletter and sharing his knowledge with all of us. Here goes....hope you all enjoy!

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Go Topless Day- May 20, 2017

Weekend Away, PA- May 20-22, 2017

JEEP 101- FIRST TIME ATTENDEE

APRIL 15, 2017

WRITTEN BY, SHANNON ANASTOS

In case you missed it, Baystate hosted another year of Jeep 101. The original date had to be postponed due to weather. However, if you were one of the lucky Jeepers that attended, you know it was worth the wait. As you see here, the weather was what any Jeepers could have hoped for.



Photo courtesy of Jay Quader.

This was my first time attending the Jeep 101, so forgive me if I go a little overboard...more importantly, thank you for hosting such a unique event:

Jason Quader, Dan "Ish" Beyea, Carl "McFly" McIssac, Mark St. Germain, Cassandra Meads, Kurt Klopp, Marky, Don, Ralph T. and anyone else that I might have missed!! (Sorry, still learning names...)

The group of 40 Jeeps was split into 2 groups, alternating between the "Hands On" pre-trail fun and the informative demonstrations. Then, it was off to the trails...where even more fun was had. I'll admit that I wish I had taken more photos, but I was pretty absorbed in everything that was going on. For those of you that couldn't make it, whatever the reason, here's a recap:

HANDS ON EXPERIENCE

It was kind of like being in preschool learning to color within the lines...except lines has a different meaning if you're an off-road enthusiast. I'm sure most of you know what I'm referring to, but one of the ideas behind the Jeep 101 is to brush up on some of that wheeling "stuff" rattling around, or even learning something new. So, lines... This is very important for any Jeoper. Selecting the right lines, both for the ability of the rig and of the driver, is very important. It can be the difference between a great run and having a broken rig...or worse, someone getting hurt.

It started off pretty basic in the field demo, prior to each group getting out on the trails. The parallel log run was great practice for more than just learning how to line your tires up for an obstacle. It was also great for learning how to work with a spotter, because I'm sure we've all been there. Having a spotter that can see what you can't can be another factor between a broken Jeep and a successful run.



Don guiding attendees over the parallel logs.

I really enjoyed the next one, which I'm calling '**Brick Roll**':



It wasn't even about trying not to get a strike. But, it was a great place to learn about the dangers of low clearance parts in a safe, controllable environment. Carl M. later walked us through the "What's what" items that might have caused some brick tipping that took place.





Cassandra stood by to speak with each driver, explaining to them what parts of their Jeeps played dominos: Upper or Lower Control Arm, Track Bar, Tie Rod, or the infamous Cinderella pumpkin. She continued to reset the bricks for each Jeep, and did it all with a smile. It was fun to watch and just another example of the learning experiences offered throughout the day.



Another great station was the RTI ramp. Now, I'm pretty sure most of us know that the RTI is used to measure a rig's flex, or articulation. Thanks to Jim (Pirahnah3 on the BSJ forums) for letting me take photos of his while on the ramp...even if he didn't know I would be using them for the Newsletter.





EXPERIENCED DEMONSTRATIONS & LECTURES

The lectures given at the 101 were fun and informative. Each instructor had their own knowledge to impart. Admittedly, I missed some of them because, I squirreled and wandered away to take photos...so, I'm sorry this section won't do justice to each aspect of the demonstrations and lectures.

Although it was before everyone was split into 2 groups, Jason Q. kicked the day off with a warm greeting and moved into explaining what was planned for the day. He reviewed the importance of airing down, sway bars, and the proper use of 4 Low...where my brain just went...“To Connect or Disconnect, that is the question.” 😊 Yep, I said it.

In all seriousness, this was another fine example of Jeep 101's thoroughness. Jason brought up one of the GREATEST points! 4 Low. You know, of all the Jeep events, demonstrations, or trail runs I've been ever to, I can't recall *anyone* taking an extra minute to explain how to properly shift into 4 Low. It's strange. I think it just went left unsaid. Sure, that's fine for the more experienced, frequent wheelers...but, what about someone new to the sport? Or someone returning to the sport after hibernation?

I still consider myself a newbie to the trails. Although, I knew how to shift into 4 Low, the moment Jay's words were out, a light bulb went off. So, I thought this was an awesome reminder and one of the other reasons I found this event to be SO informative and unique! So, thanks for shifting us into the right gear...

Speaking of, shifting gears isn't the only thing involved with being out on the trails. Ish explained to everyone the importance of Tread Lightly (with an accompanying handout) and Trail Etiquette/Spotting. It's important to pick one spotter and only listen to them. Think about it...if you have 2 different people spotting and one says “turn right,” while the other says “turn left,” where does that get you? A whole lot of nowhere. I really enjoyed Ish's impromptu spotting demo later, during our trail run.

Kurt explained some of the vital gear to have on the trail...such as, any tools specific to your Jeep, gloves, first aid kit, etc. Then, Mark SG brought us to new heights with his Winching & Recovery demo. He pulled out all the stops and showed everyone how to use a Hi-Lift Jack safely and how to hook up and use the winch. Basically, you always want to handle recovery equipment with gloves...and it has nothing to do with getting dirty. Bottom line, gloves can prevent some pretty painful injuries. Carl led by example a little later on the trail...

OUT ON THE TRAILS

Shortly after the demos completed, the second group hit the trails, which I was lucky to be part of. Although, I only passengered (thanks for the seat, Carl), I still learned a lot of valuable lessons and had a blast. Sometimes being out on the trails is the best way to get to know someone, like watching Dan “Ish” guide Kathy into a safe recovery position, watching Carl get stuck (I’m sorry...but it happened) and unstuck, and watching Lisa H. successfully tackle an obstacle.



You know, when I took this photo, I didn't even notice Carl's hand sticking out.
Haha. A+ on the Jeep wave!!



The photo above is "Caption This" Contest worthy...so, email me RedAnimalTJ@yahoo.com your captions.

Winner gets a prize!



Lisa H. showing off her skills.



What you can't make out above...is the HUGE smile on Lisa's face!!



Overall, as a first time attendee to the Jeep 101, I was completely blown away!! The demos, the food, the people...everything and everyone was awesome!! So, Baystate, consider this a huge THANK YOU for putting this together, everyone for attending, instructors teaching, and everything involved in making the day a success!

JEEP 101- BEHIND THE WHEEL

APRIL 15, 2017 AN INSTRUCTORS VIEW OF THE 2017 JEEP 101
WRITTEN BY, CARL "MCFLY" MCISSAC

The 2017 Baystate Jeepers Jeep 101 is in the books and from where I sat it was a successful, fun and informative event. Thanks to everyone who attended! I love meeting new people and carving a full day out of your busy schedule probably wasn't easy. So, thanks again for taking the time to attend the 2017 Baystate Jeepers Jeep 101.

The logistics involved in a successful implementation are kind of crazy, and I have to give a lot of credit to Jay Quader for taking the lead. But what about the unsung heroes? What about the brave men and women who shed their fears of public speaking, laid their souls on the line and stood emotionally naked in front of you to impart their knowledge, giving you the basics for off-roading safely? This is the tale of one instructor.



As an off-roading novice, I remember my first Jeep 101. I learned a lot from that event, like learning that water is a lubricant. I just never thought of it that way. Not sure you believe me? Try driving (or walking) on wet rocks. There have been more than a few trail rides, wrench-fest and Jeep 101's since that memorable first '101' and while I've assisted with the logistics over the years, it was only recently that I actively got involved with the other side. Here's my take on being 'Behind the Wheel' at the 2017 Baystate Jeepers 'Jeep 101'.

I went into the 'Know Your Jeep' lecture / Show and Tell with an agenda in mind, an agenda that was promptly forgotten once I started talking (mental note for J-101, '18: PRINT OUT THE DAMN TALKING POINTS). My primary focus was on things that can hurt you ('low hanging fruit', like your pumpkin... see what I did there?) and things that can help you (skids, armor). Not having notes didn't help my wandering mind but with a little help from my friends I was able to stay quasi-focused and get across most of what I intended to cover.

After stumbling through the second presentation and a really good lunch, we gave attendees the chance to put their newfound skills to practical use: TRAIL RIDES!

As the tail gunner on the second group it was just a matter of time before I got into mischief. You see the tail gunner is, for all intents and purposes, left with no adult supervision. Factor in a propensity to wander and this led to an impromptu lesson that I dubbed, 'Recovery, 101'. It all started with a tree stump.... but in all fairness, it wasn't my fault. When I see a rock, I need to put a wheel on it. I just do. So I tried climbing what appeared to be a rock but was in fact a tree stump. It's lack of structural integrity led to my downfall - aka, I slipped.... and got stuck..... hung up on my tie rod, the exact thing I warned everyone about. Ahhhh, the irony of it all.



Fortunately, I had a recovery strap. I'm sure you heard about that in the Winching and Strapping presentation. And in what might be the best moments of the day, two things happened: First of all, people came around to bust my stones (if you can't take some mild ball-busting? You're not going to last) and second, when I asked if anyone learned anything from this, Lisa H immediately responded, "This is why you should upgrade your tie rod". Success!!! In that moment I was a proud papa, a vindicated teacher who saw a student that not only listened but understood the words that came out of my mouth. In that glorious moment, Lisa was no longer a padawan. Lisa passed the trials and was then and there, a full fledged Jedi.



A big thank you to Kathy and her bad-azz Rubi, and Ish for spotting. They paired up to give me a tug and pull me off the stump, a stump that was cleverly disguised as a sturdy rock. Pretty sure it was Kathy's first recovery but for me? It was the latest in a long line of 'whoops' moments.

ADOPT A HIGHWAY- CLEAN UP

APRIL 22, 2017



The clean-up went well and Baystate marked down another successful day. I think Ish said it best:

“We met. We picked up garbage. Put it in bags.

28 of ‘em. Ta da!”



Photos stolen from BSJ
Facebook page.

28 bags later...



Great job everyone! Thank you for all your hard work!!

N. WESTERN, MA RUN

WRITTEN BY, JIM NY

EDITED BY, SHANNON ANASTOS

I had never been to the property before, but after having talked to members at the 101 and the highway cleanup, I was excited to see what this Jeep can do after her build. I arrived on site looking forward to “a few” challenges, ready to wheel and have a great day. The day started like all BSJ days: plenty of folks around to assist with anything from airing down, to driving questions, to just talking Jeep. After a quick “required equipment” check, it was off to a driver’s meeting to review some information about the day ahead. Then, off to the trails we went!

I went off with the “High Risk” group, led by Cassandra, followed by a great group of experienced drivers and all types of rigs. After a quick stroll down the entrance trail, we took a right into a seemingly innocuous hill. Well that hill certainly tested us all. Some made it up with no problems, but a couple needed a tug over a really precarious set of stumps that was tripping up even the best of drivers. One Jeep almost flopped over. Whew! I’m glad we had some really experienced off roaders around to keep me and my tires on the ground.

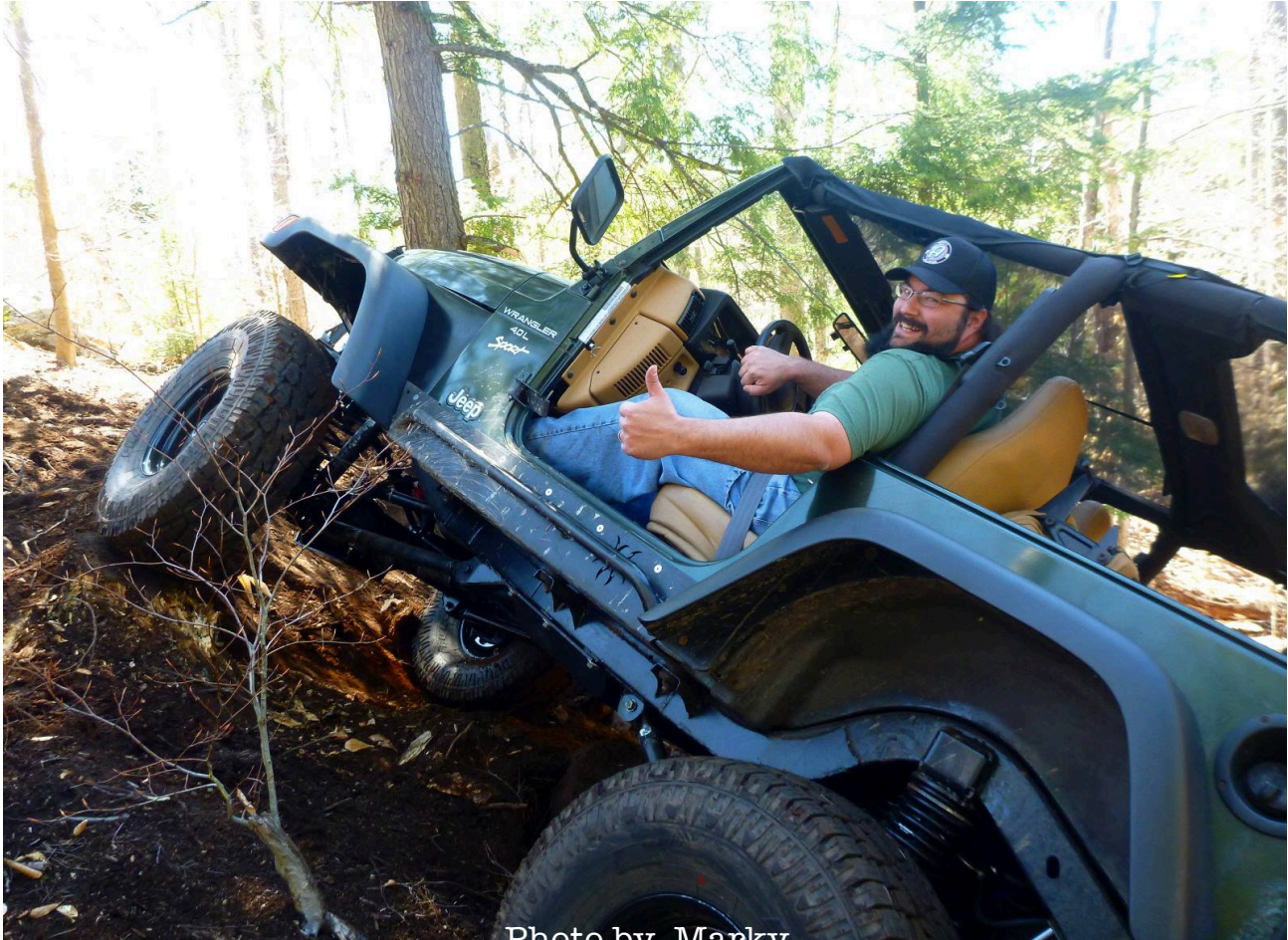


Photo by Marky

After that we found some fun rocks and fallen trees to crawl on and then even more rocks to play on. We did some of the trails in directions that folks were not used to, which presented some interesting challenges along the way. Such as a little body damage while heading through a narrow uphill, with a small undercut rock. After climbing it, we stopped at the top of the hill to put lunch on the manifolds. Then, we were off again. We headed along some more trails with some nice rock gardens and hills. We stopped for lunch and a bit of direction planning and we were off and trailing again.



Photo by, Marky



Photo by, Marky

We had some great photo ops along the way and a very willing photographer shooting all the action. We went up and over some steep hills that required a bit of finesse and a bit of willingness to use the motor. After some very technical areas, it was a tight squeeze... where we learned exactly where the cross member was on a JK. After some creative work, Don showing off his dancing legs, and Cassandra discussing her gymnastics abilities from atop a rock, we got through.

The day was completed without any major incidents or trail repairs, which is always a great thing. We had some great laughs airing up after the run, pushed some dents back out for our fearless leader, and shook hands before heading home. What a great day of wheeling!



Photos by: Aaron Perry & Kristina Botticelli





Photos by: Aaron Perry & Kristina Botticelli



AN ORIGIN TALE

WRITTEN BY, SHANNON ANASTOS

I have never met a more accepting, supportive, crazy, fun, and generous group of people than I have found within the Jeep community. Baystate Jeepers has been no different in this regard. I'll be the first to admit that there's a LOT I don't know, like many aspects of my Jeep's mechanics. However, anyone I've talked to in Baystate about my hopes and dreams for my Jeep build has never made me feel that my inexperience, or lack of mechanical knowledge, is the end of the conversation. They will continue to ask me questions I can't answer, offer their opinion, and always circle back to encouraging that my build is what **I** want.

Now, the question becomes...what do **YOU** want to read? I love writing, but that's not what this is really about. This is about furthering the connection that got us all here in the first place...and it all started with our Jeeps. Undoubtedly, Nature, friendship, fun, and our empty bank accounts enhance, even strengthen that connection. I'd really like to share my love for Jeeps with all of you. After all, this is a Jeep club Newsletter. And with so many things to love about our rigs, I want you all to take a minute and think about this...Have you ever considered your Jeep's gas 'mileage' to 'smileage' ratio? No? Not sure what the hell I mean?

Jeep Smileage. Now, don't get me wrong...I love to get great gas mileage as much as the next person. But, when you factor in that magic element "Jeep Smileage"...the world begins to turn on a new axis. At least it did for me. It's really about smiles per gallon, or should be. You know what I'm talking about now, right? That 'run to the store for a carton of milk' just went from a 5 minute trip to..."Where else can I go?" For me, every penny I've put into my Jeep has been worthwhile, simply because it has paid me back tenfold in smiles and memories. Those longer road trips became too short. Through it, more friends became family. Not to mention, my Jeep has, VERY literally, transported me. I will never forget the moment I laid eyes on it in 2010, or driving it home for the first time...

A friend went with me, since I live in MA and the Jeep was up in NH. I had seen a few photos of it on the dealership's website. But, do they ever do them justice? The moment I saw it, I knew it was MY Jeep. Picture this: Me, driving, white knuckling the steering wheel...the entire drive home which was ALL highway. And boy, was it windy!!! I'll admit, I had NO idea what I had gotten myself into at that point. My friend, sat shotgun, using the bows of my soft top as his second seat belt.

You see, my Jeep came with both tops...and the dealership couldn't figure out a way to make it fit with 2 passengers.

And...I wasn't about to repeat a trip back to them, for many reasons. So, it only took my friend and I few minutes to work it out. I had unknowingly been initiated to the Jeep mindset. "It's gonna fit." It did...and after surviving the drive home, I can reflect back on this memory and can't help but smile.

Now, if you smiled for any part of that last bit, AND you're still reading...then I did one of my jobs. I got you thinking about your Jeep, the first time you drove yours, or the fact that you also automatically crack your window before a friend gets in...because apparently having a hardtop in the Winter means some of your passengers need to close their doors twice. What non-Jeep owner knows that's really a thing?

Anyways, I'm kind of looking at the Newsletter as another way for all of us to connect and share smiles. And, in the interest of doing so, I want you to take a few minutes to think about this: What is your SPG (smile per gallon)? Really, think about it. Air down, gear up, and write about your first memory, a road trip, wheeling experience, or a funny story involving your Jeep and its SPG. Maybe you found yourself between a rock and a hard place? Tell us about it. Remember:



Part of that journey is about sharing. You're part of a club...a community of Jeepers. Why not share your story with us? It's one of the best ways to connect with each other and our mutual love for these fun, versatile vehicles. So, please give it a try. Seriously, close the browser window. Go reflect and jot down a little story about your Jeep. I don't care if you grab a pad of paper, turn some tunes on, and go sit in your Jeep. You're part of a club and we want to hear from you!



Alright everyone, that's a wrap...I hope you enjoyed this issue of Tracks. I'm already looking forward to June's issue.

Thanks,
Shannon

Please email submissions and photos (DropBox links work, too) to: RedAnimalTJ@yahoo.com

