



Tales from the Trail

JANUARY 2009



More great trips for 2009 and beyond !

Our 1st full year as an incorporated club and our 2nd full year as a group of explorers with a mission is now behind us. I look back at some of the exceptional trips we had this year like our Sea of Cortez trip and our 2nd trip to Canyon De Chelly.

A number of our members heard the call and became trip leaders, many of them for the 1st time. We saw both AZWillys and Curly plan and lead several new trips and both are planning more. I would like to thank all of our trip leaders for 2008 for their contribution and to all of those who have volunteered to lead trips in 2009 for their tireless efforts. Planning a trip is not always an easy task and takes many hours of research, planning, "dry runs" and organization. The rewards are priceless, just ask anyone who has been a trip leader.

Some 2nd time trips by popular demand are Grand Canyon N. Rim, Monument Valley, Sea of Cortez.....

And always looking to the future we are adding trips for 2010 and beyond including another Canyon De Chelly trip in 2010 due to overwhelming requests and the Rubicon in 2010 led by Tonto.



Upcoming Expeditions thru June:

Devils Highway Anniversary Run Feb 28-Mar 1 ** Death Valley March 21-28
** 32nd 4x4 Jambo April 17-19 ** Baja MX April 19-May 2 ** Monument Valley
May 9-10 ** Magruder Trail and more June 12-20 ** with day trips and wild
cat runs scheduled in-between.

Send articles and suggestions for the newsletter to: Newsletter@JeepExpeditions.org



.....**from the Founder and Chairman of the Board**

It is hard to believe that our 1st full year as an incorporated non-profit organization is behind us. 2008 gave us over 10 successful trips including our 1st Expedition to Mexico and our 2nd to Canyon De Chelly. Members organized several “wildcat” runs and day trips which included the Yuma area where trails and history are plentiful. And as with any new organization, we had a few tests and challenges which made us a stronger and more resolute group of Jeepers.

The calendar for 2009 looks to have 11 trips scheduled with talks of several wildcat runs. The Schedule for 2010 will pretty much take shape in the next 90 days and more planned trips in 2011 will be added. The word of “wrenching parties” where members help members install lift kits and do other modifications to their Jeeps is spreading. Who could ask for more? We could that’s who!

As we see the need, we continue to make changes and improve the members forum. We continue to improve our website which received 400K hits per month, every month in 2008! Our new partnership with SPOT Satellite Tracker will give us more exposure and utility with our website. I get emails from all over complimenting us on a great club and a great website. I continue to get complaints from the non-Jeep owners who want to belong to a group like ours who feel left out (I tell them to buy a Jeep and join us). Jeep Expeditions is growing and for many of us becoming a 2nd family more than a club. It has become for many a family weekend or even week long getaway. I see more and more wives, girlfriends, boyfriends and children participating in our events. I get PMs and emails from new members quite often saying how much they love the club and are glad they found us. The bottom line is if you can’t find what you are looking for off-road with this club, you probably won’t find it elsewhere.

We continue to sign on suppliers/sponsors because of our broad appeal and our presence in the Jeep/OHV community. The money you can save with just one discount can more than pay for your membership.

And we continue to try to plan new and exciting trips that appeal to a broad spectrum of our group. Yes You will notice several week long trips scheduled in the future but there are plenty of weekend trips too. While we aren’t going to be one of those very few and very small groups that make Expeditions from Alaska to the tip of South America, from the top to the bottom of Africa or from Paris to Hong Kong, we are going to be the group that the average person can join and still get that “Expedition” feeling without spending many weeks and a small fortune to do so. And we are going to continue to do that driving the best 4x4 ever made, the Jeep!

Look for more articles about our Expeditions in JP Freek, 4 Wheel Drive & Sport Utility and other magazines plus in-depth equipment reviews in the coming months and year!

Our members are from every state in the US Southwest and even Holland (that’s in Europe for you Greenhorns out there)! We don’t want to be the biggest club, we want to be the best!

(And I had to hi-jack the picture of Jim in the TJ until I can get one of me driving it somewhere ☺)

Mike



.....from Lance “Moondust” Wilson-Vice Chairman

Well here we are, one year later and it's been a great year in my opinion. by the end of this year we have had nearly 100 members join our club, we've had 11 fantastic expeditions, as well as a few one day "wildcat runs". We have added at least a half dozen sponsors, and our website is the most popular one on the Internet as far as number of "hits" for a group of our type. Not too shabby for our very first year as a club, we should be very proud of these accomplishments, I know I am! We have also experienced some growing pains along the way, as all newly formed clubs do, but we have learned from these growing pains and have become

stronger from these learning experiences. As we enter into our second year, I want to talk about the "core values" of our Jeep Expeditions Group. These "core values" are what your Board of Directors promised to uphold as we helped guide our club through it's first two years of existence. Our "core values" are simply to get together in our Jeeps as a club and explore the geographical, archeological, and historical areas of interest to all of us. To spend from a few days, up to a week or more together exploring and camping to help build a strong and cohesive network of avid Jeep enthusiasts all committed to the same "core values". But most of all to have fun and develop friendships and a group camaraderie dedicated to helping one another as well. And for the most part we have done all of that, and we have an awesome club for it! There was an incident this year when camping together as a club was ignored and it caused our club to be split up for the expedition which was not in keeping with our "core values". There was also an incident where a vehicle that was not a Jeep joined one of our expeditions. This was just not in keeping with our "core values", but a violation of our club bylaws as well. Now maybe some of you think that by being a Jeep only club we are elitist in nature. Well guess what, we are elitist by being a Jeep only club, so what, there are many other elite vehicular clubs out there, and I know for a fact that a Corvette Club would not allow a Ford Mustang to join their club or join in on their functions. Let's face it, we are who we are because first and foremost we love our Jeeps and what they can do, and secondly we all love to sit around a campfire at the end of the day in some remote area, drink a cold one and talk about the days expedition. Now I know there will be times when camping all together may not be a viable option, and during those times we can be flexible. But when it comes down to a choice of camping together as a club or staying in a motel only because it's convenient, our "core value" to camp together as a club should always take precedent. So as you get ready to renew your dues for another great year of expeditions, I also ask you to please renew your commitment to our clubs "core values" for the coming year.

Thanks to everyone for making Jeep Expeditions the "Best damn Jeep club in the country!"

Lance "Moondust" *Wilson*



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.....from Director Michael Bethel – the Logo Guru !

There it goes, a full year in the rear view mirror of the Expeditions group. And ahead, a whole line up of trails for the experiencing. Like many things in life the experience of our expeditions can be enhanced by sharing them with others.

Not just the others who are members of the group but others in our lives who might otherwise have never wandered out of the shelter of their own little worlds to experience something more.

While leading the Cochise run this last September I had along with me a friend of mine from England. I guarantee this was an experience that he has been able to take back with him to share with his friends and coworkers and leave them shaking their heads at his tails from the trail.

In fact the very first run I went on was the original Devil’s Highway run two years ago and along for the ride with me was a coworker of mine who still talks of that experience.

I would encourage every one in the group to extend invitations to others in your lives to come along with you to share in the experience.

At a minimum you will expand their life’s experiences.

You may convince them you’re crazy.

Or you just may make a new convert to the world of Jeep Expeditions.

Why not make that a goal for 2009? Share an expedition with at least one other person.

God’s blessings to you all in this coming year.

See ya on the trails

Michael “azwillys”



.....from Director Mark Engdahl – Transrock

With our annual El Camino Del Diablo trip quickly approaching I wanted to encourage all of our members that have not had the opportunity to go on the El Camino Del to think about it this year.

If you have held off on going in the past for safety reasons this is best time in 30 years to go as the US border patrol has more agents on the job now and the reported number of unauthorized crossings was at a 30 year low this year.

With all the pressure to close public land this may also be one of the last opportunities to visit this vast unspoiled area.

Lance and I will be leading this trip and have both spent several days in this area and will have some new surprises for all this year. So if you have not yet signed up please do so.

I have attached some good reading on the area, although some if it is dated.

Please enjoy and I look forward to seeing you on the trail, Mark

Your Friend, *Mark*

*****MEMBER OF THE QUARTER*****



The Member of the Quarter for the third quarter is Russ Chung. We asked Russ to tell us a little about himself.

Thank you for the honor of being voted Member of the Quarter.

My 2005 Jeep Wrangler X is my first Jeep. Most men who go through their mid-life crisis usually get a Corvette, but since I couldn't afford one, I got a Jeep instead. Before I got my Jeep, my only off-road experience was in a U.S. Army M151A1, but the Army wouldn't give me a driver's license (I think that the Army knew that helicopter pilots didn't make good drivers), so I had to ride in

the right seat of my Jeep and let my company clerk and First Sergeant drive me around.

Four years ago I wasn't sure if I would like four wheeling, so I got a basic plain-vanilla Jeep. I planned to keep it pretty much stock. I figured that if I liked wheeling, I would trade it in for a Rubicon and if I didn't like wheeling, I'd get something else. I quickly learned that I love to go wheeling and to hang out with the great people that I've met in the Jeeping community. By the time the '07 JKs came out, I was ready to trade it in for a Rubicon, but then I decided to wait until Jeep begins to sell a diesel JK in the US. I'm STILL waiting. Meanwhile, I've done a "few" minor modifications to my Jeep (remember I planned to keep it pretty much stock). I put some armor on the oil pan, rockers, rear corners, steering gearbox, tranny, and front diff. I installed a 2.5" OME left kit, Canyon wheels and 31" MTRs. I have a CB, ham radio, GPS, rock lights and a sPOD power distribution system to control them. When I "tweaked" my tie rod, I upgraded to a Currie HD steering system. I have a soft top, but most of the year I prefer to run with the doors off and a safari top. I do most of the maintenance on my Jeep. Since I wheel two or three times a month, I change the oil every 3000 miles, so I'm a very familiar customer at the local AutoZone store. My '05 Jeep now has a little over 105,000 miles on it.

Although I'm based in Los Angeles, my daughter lives in Scottsdale, and I find every excuse I can to visit her so I can go wheeling in Arizona. I joined the AzVJC, went on the Devils Highway run, became a charter member of JEO, and the rest is history...

CONGRATS TO RUSS FOR A WELL DESERVED HONOR !



.....from outgoing Director Jim Pribbeno – “ScramblinJim”

Happy Anniversary to us, happy anniversary to us . . .

Wow it’s been a whole year for Jeep Expeditions. We certainly have accomplished a lot as a club. Membership growth shows that this type of club format is what people like. We have sponsors seeking us out as further evidence that we are a serious entity.

As I look back over the 2008 year, I see the leadership of the club as the primary reason for our success. The Board of Directors (BoD) has stayed on top of issues, pruning and expanding, making corrections and looking forward with vision. With “family” as big as this group, it is not an easy task to keep everyone happy. But your BoD has worked behind the scenes to keep us moving forward and improving. Jeep Expeditions has a very dedicated and sincere group of club members seeking only the best for this club.

It has been an honor to be part of the BoD’s this past year, serving to help get us formed and unified. I look forward to our original BoD members Mike (JeepExpeditions), Lance (Moondust), Mark (Transrock2), and Michael (AZ Willys) to continue to work tirelessly and for the best of this club. They are a unified group, with wisdom and courage to make the correct and sometimes difficult decisions. While personal reasons have caused me to leave the BoD’s, it is not because of policy or vision differences, but because I felt I was occupying a space on the board that could be more effectively administered by someone with more time to dedicate to the club. And what better choice than Tim (Curly) Lewis! While I have known Curly only a short time, his acts of kindness, knowledge of Jeep mechanics, and willingness to lead makes my full endorsement of Tim an easy decision. Congratulations Curly!!!

I look forward to seeing each of you this coming year on the trail. May you find health, happiness, and prosperity in 2009!

See you on the trail.
Scramblin_Jim
Come and “Live the Adventure”!

Jim Pribbeno “Scramblin’ Jim” a/k/a “The Reverend”
ScramblinJim@JeepExpeditions.org

****PICTURE OF THE QUARTER****



This was taken by Ob1Jeeper I believe on one of the recent Yuma day trips. Titled “Jeeps at sunset” it doesn’t get much better than this.



.....from **NEW Director Tim Lewis – Curly**

January 2009 already! Seems like '08 went pretty fast. I would like to thank everyone for their support in my selection as a member of the Board of Directors.

When I bought my Jeep, I started looking for a club to join. I tried a few local clubs, but the fit wasn't good for me. I joined AZVJ, and tried doing some activities with them. They are a good club, and I am still a member there, but they don't have what I was looking for.

Jeep Expeditions has a sense of community or family that I find lacking in other clubs. Perhaps it is the fact that we only number about 100 members or so, but I think it is just the quality of the people here.

The other night while taking a walk with Devon, we were discussing the upcoming Yuma Day run. Devon made a comment that I thought captured what I am trying to say here. Her comment "You know, this club has become a big part of our lives, we talk about it in some way everyday" describes what JE means to us.

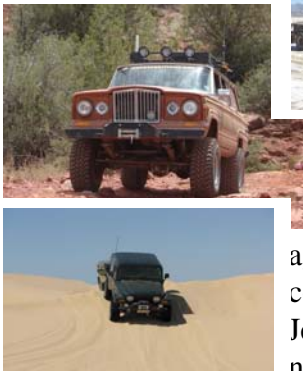
We have made some good friends here, and had lots of fun on the trips we have taken.

If you are a new member, or haven't yet gone on one of the Expeditions, I urge you to find the time to do so. We have been having a great time going places we never would have gone, meeting new friends and spending time together.

I wish everyone a Happy New Year. See you on the trails

Curly

*******MEMBER OF THE YEAR*******



Congratulations to the Jeep Expeditions first Member of the Year, Mike "Stinger" Fissel. Mike received the most votes from our Members, and a more fitting honor could not have been chosen

for the Founder and Chairman of our club. Mike has spent hundreds of hours shaping and molding our club in all of its capacities into what we have become today. From organizing our very first Devils Highway expedition almost 2 years ago to spearheading our clubs involvement in the 32nd ASA4WD Jamboree this coming April, Mike has worked tirelessly and unselfishly behind the scenes to bring Jeep Expeditions into prominence as the fastest growing and most dynamic Jeep club not only here in Arizona, but the whole Southwestern area of the United States. From a small core group of 30 strangers, our club grew in the space of 20 months to nearly 100 members who have become friends and "family members" as well.. Our Jeep Expeditions website is the most popular website of its type on the internet, and Mike was a big part of bringing that into existence as well. Mike has served as Trip Leader on many of our expeditions, including some of our most popular ones such as Canyon de Chelly and Monument Valley. All of this has not come easy and without some heartache, frustrations, and disappointments, not to mention much sacrifice on Mike's part. Mike's unwavering commitment to Jeep Expeditions has won him many friends and admirers, and even a few critics not familiar with Mike's "in your face" style. But beneath a sometimes gruff exterior beats a heart of gold and a softer side of Mike that many people do not see. The love Mike has for this club, its success and it's members, even in the face of controversy is undeniable.

There are many others in this club whose personal contributions and sacrifices were worthy of the title of Member of the Year and to those who garnered the votes for the honor, congratulations and a heartfelt Thank you are in order as well. A successful club is not the work of only one person, but of many whose ideas helped the club to grow and expand into what it has become, and with more commitment from the great members who comprise our club even greater things will be realized in the future of the "Best Damn Jeep Club" in the country, the Jeep Expeditions Group.

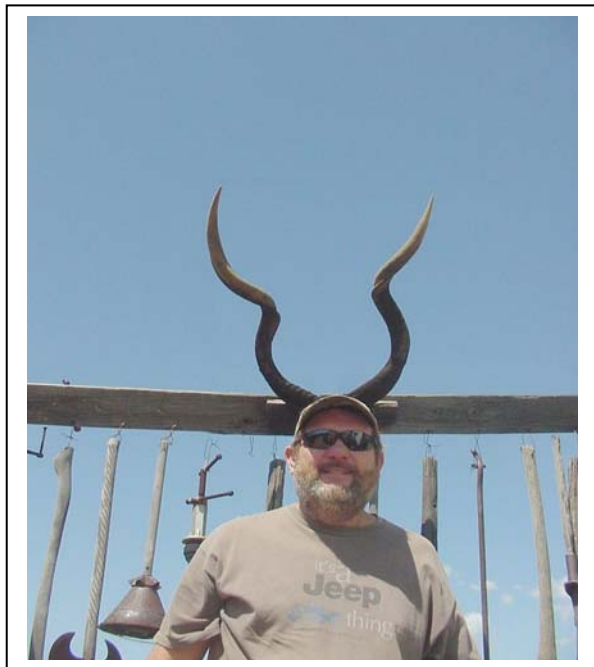
Let's all congratulate Michael on a job well done, a job deserving of the Member of the Quarter.

Lance "Moondust" Wilson

LOOKING BACK.....



I am so happy to shower I could Sing !



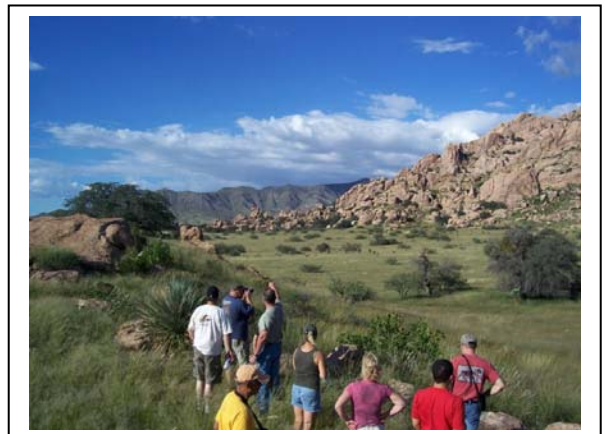
Expeditions make me HORNY !



An expedition long before the Jeep !



Marshmallow stuffing contest winner



Mike Bethel gives a history lesson under nothing but beautiful blue skies

Membership renewal raffle winners: GPS-Moondust, JE Business Cards- ZJ Woody, Grunt, In-aRut, Neocortex8, Mynr1 - Congrats to the winners !