

PRESIDENT'S Message

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What do Jeep 101 Class and NCPA have in common? Before you turn to Page 7 for the answer to this puzzle, let me give you a few clues. Aside from the NALA Convention, Jeep 101 Class

was my big summer time event and while on the plane to Reno, I kept comparing the similarities of Jeep 101 and NCPA. (This thought process probably started because I found myself alone on Concourse A at 5:15 a.m. the morning of my departure!)

If you have attended Jeep 101 Class, please bear with this brief description. The two components of the class are the off-road driving track and the on-road driving track. The off-road course is a man made (heavy construction equipment made) dirt course with steep hills, large ruts, angled curves, and big rocks. The on-road course is a lane sectioned off by orange cones on a parking lot. The lane has a straight away, circle, "S" curves, and simulated railroad section. The object is to get a feel for how the Jeep family of vehicles maneuver over various obstacles.

I think all of you are familiar with NCPA, so I will forego briefly describing it. So what could the similarities possibly be? Well, before class, we started off with a brief orientation, similar to the NCPA orientation meeting held after the March elections. Jeep 101 described how to drive the vehicle, with caution given on how not to drive the vehicle; what you may expect over the course, but not giving everything away; and how the class would proceed throughout the day. NCPA's orientation meeting is designed to instruct officers, directors, and committee chairs on how to carry out their duties; give them a time line and calendar on what will be done over the ensuing year; and familiarize them with the

policies and procedures of NCPA.

You choose the vehicle you want to drive. Just like having your choice of positions to volunteer for in NCPA. However, NCPA has the advantage here. We have almost forty positions to choose from and Jeep 101 only has three different vehicles. You may decide to drive the large and stable Grand Cherokee and run for a directorship. You may decide you want something a little smaller and opt for the newly introduced Liberty with retro-features and choose a committee position. Or you can drive something with a little bit of spunk and choose the Wrangler and run for an officer position. You choose what is best suited for you.

Whatever vehicle you choose to drive, you have a guide with you inside the vehicle and at various points along the course. Your guide is there to answer any questions you may have and the guides along the course, wave you one way or the other if you start to veer. Do you see the similarity? The NCPA members who have been and are active in NCPA, are there for support and will answer any questions that may arise, sit in the passenger seat if asked, and direct the way if needed. The Executive Committee and the Board of Directors hold quarterly meetings to keep everyone on the right track.

Along the off-road course there are high and steep hills, one even called Sky View. It was so nicknamed because as you ascend, all you see are the sky and the hood of your vehicle. NCPA is not quite as scary, but volunteering for a new position may initially feel like Sky View for the first time - not knowing what to expect. But this is where your guides are so important. One strategically placed at the top of Sky View lets you know that, "Yes, you are still on the right course - just keep moving along nice and steady." NCPA's guides are the officers, directors and committee chairs,

both past and present.

Another section of the course was called Rocky Road. This section was comprised of large gray rocks that when driven over, would cause the onset of motion sickness, if you were sensitive to movement. This is a bit extreme, as NCPA is not that bumpy. However, ups and downs do occur in NCPA, and we manage to ride them out. We proceed as instructed, calm and controlled.

When the end of the course is in sight, and you think you will be able to enjoy the smooth ride, you still have to pass through Pothole Row, consisting of large ruts on both sides. Just as an officer, director, or committee chair knows that the end of their term is near, they still have responsibilities to take care of before they get there. They must review their records, update their section of the orientation manual, and review their files with the incoming person.

You drive through the wooden gate and successfully finish your course. Then you realize the answer to the puzzler above. And because you have experienced that answer, you are ready to get into line again and maybe even drive a different vehicle. One course is behind you now. You know what to expect and you are ready for another round.

So what vehicle do you want to drive?

DISCLOSURE: NCPA is not affiliated, associated or connected in any way with Daimler/Chrysler/Jeep or any of its affiliates. However, the author opted for the spunky ride.