



TRAILS & TALES

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GEAR GRINDERS 4WD CLUB, INC.

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New Year's Day Snow Run, *By: Warner Fellows*

We met; well most of us, at the parking lot at Denny's and departed at about 9:30. We swung by the triangle parking lot to see if some had waited there. I was told that old habits die hard so maybe I should meet at the regular spots next time. On the way the Ambrechts joined our caravan and off to the trailhead we went.

At the trailhead we expected to meet Gary Luckeroth but he wasn't there. We proceeded to air down and get underway, with Myself & my son Nat in my Jeep, Pamela & our other son Warner III (we call him Trey) in Pam's TJ, the Ambrechts in the Mount Mauler, Curtis Martin in his XJ, George & Linda Graham in the YJ, and Reid Wackermann in his WJ. With Curtis in the lead we began our search of snow, real snow, and lots of it. Well, it didn't take us long to find it, about the 3,000 ft. level I'd say. Soon we were into it for sure. On the first switch-back, my son Trey, had a bit of trouble and had to take a strap from dad. Trey is a new driver and he's still learning, so we'll lay off, for now. Reid, having seen the trouble that Trey had, went at it with brute force and lots of horsepower and took it with ease. The rest of our happy troop had no trouble at all with that tight climbing turn.

We continued towards the next switch-back and ever deeper snow. Our fearsome leader decided that he had too much air pressure in his tires and stopped to air down some more, we followed suit. Just beyond the next turn we heard a familiar voice on the CB radio. Gary showed up after all and he brought Bill Maddux with him!

Onward and upward, ever higher we climbed into deeper snow. Again Curtis stopped to air down; soon he'll be on the rims! We climbed higher, the snow got deeper, the drifts bigger. This snow that we found was not "normal" snow, it was neither fluffy powder, nor was it wet and slushy. It wouldn't pack, like powder but it was very slippery, like the wet slushy stuff. It made for some pretty tough going for our leader breaking trail. Breaking and backing and breaking again, countless times he pressed on. About the 5,000 ft. level was a short stretch of snow that wasn't very deep as it was sheltered by a tree, but it sure was slick. Curtis had to back up until he was out of it before attempting the next break through.



Wackermann, Graham, Ambrecht, Maddux, & Luckeroth.



Reid Wackermann's Grand Cherokee negotiating a turn.

Then, as luck would have it, Trey was stopped on that very spot waiting for the next advance. Well that slick spot really gave Trey fits and he needed a little help to get through it. A short distance for most of us, for Curtis it was a couple of miles at least, we made to the saddle at the Scodie trailhead and parked for a little fun in the snow.

Once in the parking lot I learned that Gary had a little trouble and decided to head back down and with little to no room for turning around he BACKED down (WOW!). I'm not sure what sent Gary down, I'll have to ask him. Having made the saddle and knowing that we would go no further today, Bill headed down to make sure that Gary made it down O. K.

Meanwhile, back at the saddle some of us had some lunch, some of us horsed around in the snow and all of us had a good time. We all know that "what goes up, must come down" and it was time to head back down. The road up Horse Canyon is long and narrow

and pretty steep in places. Normally, it's a pretty fun drive down, today isn't normally. Climbing up, we worked against gravity, worked hard too. Going down, gravity would work with us which isn't always a good thing. With judicious use of our low gears and just a touch on the brakes every now and again, we all made it down with our nerves intact. On the way down we encountered some quads on their way up. Boy, are they in for some fun!

We caught up with Gary and Bill at the bottom and found that they too, had made it down without incident. We then proceeded to the trailhead and aired up our tires. For our post run celebration we chose Nickoletti's, based on the fact that they were open on New Year's Day and the number was in Curtis' cell phone. So much for hard decisions. All in all we had a great time and I want to thank everyone that turned out for some fun in the snow.

SNOW RUN UP CHIMNEY PEAK *By: Warner Fellows*

On January 15, 2005, 16 Gear Grinders and their guests in 9 vehicles gathered at the Triangle to go "play in the snow" up on the Chimney Peak Scenic Byway on Sunday, Jan. 16th. Following a brief driver's meeting we left at 8:30am. In attendance were: Andy & Lisa Couch; Warner Fellows; George & Linda Graham; Jim & Donna Kenney; Bill Maddux; Curtis Martin; Mark Pahuta; Bill & Samela Dorey with their guests Larry & Claudia Carlson. We met Gary Luckerth and his guest Bob McManis in Pearsonville and we were on our way.

We climbed up Nine mile Canyon Road to the Scenic Byway entrance. The road crew that plowed the road didn't clear much of it so we were forced to air down in the road, luckily there wasn't much traffic. The crew also left us a nice bank of about 3ft. of snow that we had to climb over just to start our adventure. Most of us made it over the bank with little difficulty and we were on the move again, or so we thought.

My Jeep is a little light in the horsepower department, so I wheeled first Curtis, then Andy into breaking trail. Due to several thawing and freezing cycles since the last snowfall, the snow was covered with a layer of ice. Once you broke through, you were pretty much stopped. Several experiments were conducted to establish the best method for maintaining momentum. After much trial and error, we found that creeping along at idle was the best method for continued progress. Even then when you could feel your tires start to slip you had to back up and go at it again.

We stopped to air down several times until most of us were running 5-6lbs. Nearly everyone had to "take a strap" a time or two. Jim even unseated a tire bead, but we were able to re-seat it in no time. All this strapping and tire re-seating compounded our slow

Progress, so our goal of making it through to the south end of the road was in serious doubt. As the day wore on the snow melted a little and we found that it would now pack down, improving traction tremendously.

We stopped at the top of a hill for lunch and to swap stories of our struggle to this point. Well most of us had lunch; George left his and Linda's at home. Jim & Donna came to their rescue and shared lunch with them.

Following lunch we set out again to find the snow was really sticky now, but we were confident that the hard part was over. Then, 200 yards down the trail, we encountered the "**snow drift from hell!**" Several attempts were made at it, but we could not find a way through. Considering that the first mile took us 4 hours, we decided that it was time to turn around and call it a day.

Turning around proved surprisingly easy, so wondered why we were having such trouble going forward. The trip back to the road was as easy as expected and we were back on pavement in no time at all. We were again forced to park in the road to air up and there was more traffic this time than on the way in, but I don't think that we were too much of a nuisance. We then began our trip down Nine mile Canyon Road with dinner at Nickoletti's.

Oh well, maybe I should have scheduled a southerly approach, as my wife suggested. Those of us without snow boots went home with cold and wet feet, but other than a cut on Curtis' finger, no injuries were reported. The trip turned out much shorter than I hoped and we had to work hard for every inch, but I had fun doing it. I hope that everyone else did too. I would like to do this again sometime, hopefully with much less shoveling. Thanks to all who came along.

See photos of this run on the next page.



SNOW, & MORE SNOW

What a beautiful sky!!
The Kenney's Jeep
brings out the
blue in the
sky.

George Graham
watches as Bill Maddux
pulls Gary Luckerth.



**WANT TO ATTEND THE
TDS DESERT SAFARI???**

Never been before, and need a
form to register? Go to:

http://www.tds4x4.com/tds_safari/safari.htm

GEAR GRINDERS WEB SITE

Trey Fellows has been working hard on creating
our new website. A preview can be seen at:

<http://www.fozzcorp.com/geargrinders/home.html>

This is a temporary address, until we decide where
we want to go with it at the meeting.

Don't forget to send Trey your vehicle info and
pictures.

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