



TRAILS & TALES

APRIL 2007 GEAR GRINDERS 4WD CLUB, INC. Volume XXI, No. 4

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

George Graham

VICE-PRESIDENT

Gary Luckeroth

RECORDING SECRETARY

Samela Dorey

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Mary Grimsley

TREASURER

Jim Kenney

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andy Couch

Bill Maddux

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

BLM STEERING COMMITTEE

Bill Maddux

Mary Grimsley, alternate

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Bill Maddux

HDMUC REPRESENTATIVE

Mary Grimsley

HISTORIAN

Karen Schortzmann

SAFETY

Dan Burkhart

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Mary Grimsley

CLUB ADDRESS

P.O. BOX 32

Ridgecrest, CA 93556

IN THIS ISSUE

Dumont Dunes 2007

TDS Desert Safari

Goler & Death Valley

February Meeting Hilites

TDS Desert Safari *By Jerry Grimsley*

We arrived in camp Ocotillo Wells at about 2:00pm on Thursday to find the Graham's and the Martin's already in place. Bill Maddux came in shortly after us and Terry arrived before dark to complete Thursday's contingent.

Friday morning we decided to do a trail ride in the Fish Creek Wash area. After several miles on the pavement we turned off in Fish Creek Wash trail to air down. That was when Terry discovered that his brake actuation rod was bent. We tried our best to straighten it, even removing the brake booster. Well, we did get the rod straightened, but damaged the booster in the process, so now he had no brakes.

During this procedure, George brought to our attention that Terry could be given the cow bell for this, so within 30 seconds, it was off of our Jeep and attached firmly to his. I followed Terry slowly back to camp while the others continued on the trail.

Terry placed a couple of calls, and by some miracle, the company he bought the booster from had a booth at TDS. Not only that, but they had a replacement booster. So he was fully repaired within 2 hours.

As Friday proceeded on, Gary Luckeroth and guests Marty, Becky & _____ McGoo moved into our camp, and, more TDS participants began to arrive along with the motorcycle and quad crowd. None of us had realized ahead of time what a popular area Ocotillo Wells is for motorcycles. Pretty soon our camp was surrounded by motorcycle and quad camps, and bless their hearts, they find it much more satisfying to spin doughnuts, do figure-8s, and race around in camp than to actually subject themselves to the rigors of a trail ride. Bike riders have to be the most inconsiderate people on the face of the earth. By the end of the day, Scot, Denise, Abby, & Jesse Bart and guests Ralph Wight & his step-kids Tula & Alan had arrived to complete our group.

Saturday morning Terry got us a spot in line only 10 vehicles back from the leader. We headed out in anticipation of what they were going to be able to put together in this new area. Let's just say right up front that this is not the Truckhaven Hills. They did have a few good notches, but overall the trail was very easy,



This 'photo op' presented itself early in the day on Friday.



George, Terry & Bill Martin crawling up a rocky hill.

although from radio traffic it sounded like there were some big problems behind us. In fairness to Tierra Del Sol, we do not know what restrictions were imposed by the State Park who had to approve the route. Maddog did inherit the cowbell for ripping a fender by getting too close to a gully wall.

We were back in camp by 2:00pm. Terry volunteered to take our raffle ticket to the drawing and once again he turned out to be very lucky for Mary and I. We won a package worth over \$1200 that included an OX-Locker installation (Terry subsequently sold the OX-Locker for me on the web since they do not have an application for either one of my CJ's. Thanks son!).

Sunday morning part of the group went to visit the Shell Reef while a few of us did some of the rock crawling trails near camp (I mostly watched, but did get to serve as a winch anchor when Terry got hung up in the rocks). Sunday afternoon people began to trickle out toward home until it was just the Graham's, Martin's, and us. We tried to take a trailride Sunday afternoon, but were stymied time and again by road closures. Sunday night was gloriously quiet.

Monday morning the Graham's and Martin's headed out early, while Mary & I wanted to see Sandstone Canyon and look for some pictographs along Fish Creek Wash. We found both. Sandstone Canyon is very pretty and is highly recommended if you are in the area. We were back in camp by noon and were on our way home by 1:00pm.

Except for the annoying quads, it was a pretty good weekend. However, if TDS is required to continue using this area for the Safari, I think this was probably our last, after 37 years of attending.



The group parked at Russell Camp, Death Valley National Park back country.

Goler & DEATH VALLEY

...OR BUST *By Warner Fellows*

The weather was pretty close to perfect when we left the parking area for Goler Wash. Along for the adventure were Bill Dorey; Randy & Karen Schortzmann; Scott & Lynn Wood; and your Trail Boss Warner Fellows. Prospective Members in attendance were Matt & Nikki Gardepe; Carl Dorey; and Bruce Berger.

We pulled off the highway at the Valley Sand & Gravel road and aired down. Soon we were off to cross the Slates via Fish Canyon and the trip had begun in earnest. The trip across the Slates was uneventful and soon we were descending the alluvial fan at the mouth of Fish Canyon with its infamous rocky road, everyone's favorite part of this route. Once around the end of Panamint Dry Lake we began our ascent into Goler Wash.

The road up Goler is still in fine shape from the last grading and we made great time to Newman's Cabin; where we made a brief stop. From Newman's we headed for Barker Ranch and lunch.

Barker Ranch has fallen on hard times and is in pretty rough shape; although someone has placed some new chairs on the porch and in the cabin. Upon leaving Barker's we took the "alternate" route out through the junk yard. The steep downhill at the exit has been worn pretty badly near the top and Bruce put all of our hearts in our throats as he lofted his right rear tire as he turned downhill. He handled it superbly and drove right out of what I thought to be a sure rollover. Way to go Bruce! The rest of the group handled the obstacle with relative ease.

From there we headed for Mengel Pass, but not before encountering some rock obstacles. All challenges were met and conquered with ease. Carl Dorey and the Gardepe's are driving basically stock Jeeps and some of the rocks presented a problem but nothing that wasn't overcome in short order.

Upon reaching Mengel Pass, those vehicles equipped with traction devices ferried the folks that wanted up to the overlook for stunning views of the Striped Butte. Once again Bruce displayed nerves of steel (or was he just oblivious?) and lofted a tire high on the ascent to the lookout. With pictures taken and legs stretched we descended from the hill and began the climb down into Butte Valley.

The road down the far side of Mengel Pass has suffered some erosion and some pretty large rocks are exposed in a few places. With skillful driving and pretty good spotting we got everyone down without incident. We then headed over to Russell Camp.

GG WEB SITE NEW ADDRESS: <http://www.geargrinders4wdclub.org/>

This would be my first stop at this particular cabin and I was pretty impressed. It is very well maintained and in great condition, ready to move in! From Russell Camp we headed across Butte Valley and into Warm Springs Canyon.

Driving down the canyon we came upon Warm Springs Camp, so we stopped to have a look. Considerable work has been done on this area and it is beginning to look like something worth having again. Hmmmm... a guest ranch maybe, or a back country bed and breakfast, yeah that would work. The pool has been drained, mostly, and is in need of cleaning but otherwise in good shape. We left Warm Springs Camp and continued down the canyon passed several talc mines. You could just imagine all the work that was done in the area during its heyday.

After a long drive we finally arrived at paved road again and while inflating our tires we discussed dinner options. Furnace Creek Ranch



Bruce drives a Pingauger – so you all know that when he catches some air – it is something to get excited about.



The group winding their way up the hill.

was decided on and off we went. Once we passed Badwater we started noticing many bicycles on the road. It dawned on me that we had come to Death Valley on the weekend that the bike race was being held, again. Jim and Donna, Pamela and I had done this a couple of years ago at the same time of year. Duh! We arrived at Furnace Creek Ranch and parked the vehicles. Checking out the crowds at the "Saloon" we decided to eat at the Wrangler Steakhouse, a bit more expensive but a lot less crowded. We had arrived in time for the early bird specials and enjoyed a fabulous meal at reasonable prices.

We left the Ranch and headed back to Ridgecrest via Stovepipe Wells and Towne Pass. The weather remained near perfect for our drive back and we made it back to town around 9 o'clock or so; all in all a fantastic day. I hope that the participants enjoyed the trip as much as I did.

March MEETING HILITES

We welcomed returning & new guests and conducted the usual business: minutes, treasurers report, committee reports, etc.

Mary read a resolution to adopt a new land designation called: Motorized semi-primitive access. It was motioned & 2nd and passed to adopt the resolution.

Trip reports were given and we voted in our newest members, Matt & Nikkie Gardepe. Welcome.

Jerry suggested that the time was here to reinstate our Show 'n Shine night each month, so see Club Calendar on back page.

Several volunteered to lead runs. Mary announced that the Death Valley MOU for the Saline/Eureka Corridor is coming. Just making the rounds around the Park for approval.

DON'T FORGET to check out the club forum under our
Members Only page and to add your 2-cents worth.

GEAR GRINDERS 4WD
CLUB
P.O. BOX 32
RIDGECREST, CA 93556

PROMOTING PUBLIC LANDS FOR RESPONSIBLE MULTIPLE USE