



TRAILS & TALES

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GEAR GRINDERS 4WD CLUB, INC.

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MOONLIGHT MADNESS *By Jerry Grimsley*

We met the Graham's for dinner at Jack-n-the-Box at 7:00pm and by the time we finished and went out to the parking lot, there were a bunch of vehicles there waiting for us. In attendance were Warner Fellows; Matt & Nikki Gardepe and guests; George & Linda Graham; Al & Eva Green and guest; Jim & Donna Kenney; Gary Luckerth; Bill & Kathy Martin; Randy & Karen Schortzmann; and guests were: Jim & Mary Ellen Adams; and Carl Dorey.

We left the meeting area at 8:00pm sharp and headed over toward the El Paso Mountains. The objective was to work our way thru the El Paso's in the dark ending up at the rock house at the head of Last Chance Canyon for a nice moonlight stop-over before returning home. I have done this route many times before, but always in the daytime, so I marked a few key intersections on the GPS just to be cautious.

We headed out South China Lake Blvd to old Brown Road where we picked up the power-line road. That was our air-down stop. It was dark twilight and the moon was just starting to rise. We went thru Turtle Canyon and dropped into the upper end of Goler Gulch.

After a short distance we climbed up to Holland Flat. By this time it was very dark and that's where things started to go bad. It was obvious that I should have marked more intersections. Missing turns became the order of the evening. We were never completely lost, I was always able to figure out where we needed to be, but time was marching on and we were still a long way from the rock house. Also since I had never been on some of the routes we ended up on, the pucker factor was elevated a couple of times.

The short version is that it took much longer than anticipated to get to the rock house. We arrived about 11:00pm. The good news is that Linda & George had brought along cheesecake for everyone to snack on. It was delicious and they deserve a big "Thank You". After the snack, it was time to head home via the Red Rock-Inyokern Road. I pulled in my driveway at 1:00am, about 2 hours later than I had planned.

Thanks to everyone who came along.



Moonrise over by Laurel Mtn.



Pitch-black night in the El Paso's.

INYO CREST TRAIL *By: Warner Fellows*

It all started with a friend and co-worker asking me if there were any trails nearby that wouldn't kill his rental Jeep Liberty. After some consideration I thought of the Inyo Crest interesting and scenic but not too tough. Well, only in places. I spoke to VP Gary Luckeroth and the trip became a club run. It's just that easy.

The day, Saturday, July 7, arrived and we gathered at the triangle parking lot and left more or less on time. We had a pretty good group too: Carl Dorey with Michelle & Shelbea; the Gardape's; the Grahams; the Grimsley's; Jim Kenney with his daughter and son-in-law; Gary Luckeroth and his guest Kim; Bill Maddux; myself and guest of honor, Tom Steele in his rental Liberty. All in all, 19 people and 9 vehicles. We met Gary and his friend at Pearsonville and headed north to Olancha for a scheduled comfort and fuel stop. From there we headed off to the trailhead and aired down the tires. While airing down the kids (of all ages) got to visit with a genuine wild burro.

Climbing the grade proved to be a bit of a test for the Libby but Tom made it to the top without assistance. As we headed for the Burgess Mine we had to pull to the side as Gary was again having trouble with his Jeep. Once Gary's Jeep was mobile again we pressed on to the mine where we waited for our first timers to visit and photograph the site.

With the delays we were a little pressed for time so we hustled on to the summit station. Again the last four vehicles

First breakdown for Gary. He barely made it up the "extra credit" just before this.



Maddog installs the newly earned bell, which would be won thrice over.



Airing down at Swansea.



James Brady, who was "once" a wild burro.



were plagued with another stop. This time George had a flat, which was repaired quickly and we joined the rest of the group in about 10 minutes.

Upon arriving at the station we spent quite a bit of time there as there is so much to see and photograph. We noticed that some renovations have been done to the station and the tender's cabin; the place is really looking good.

The restored tender's cabin



Now the trip begins in earnest. Once we were in the canyon I let the participants try for some "Bonus Points" at the extra credit dry wash. Everyone that made the attempt succeeded in collecting the bonus points; however Matt gets double points for grabbing some serious air coming out of the wash. Good onya! It was just a little beyond the extra credit wash that Gary reported a little trouble keeping his CJ running, it seemed to be fuel starved. The group pulled to the side of the road and waited while the problem was investigated. Once the problem was isolated and solved we continued on towards Swansea Grade.

We were moving again, but not too much further down the trail, Gary experience yet another starved for fuel problem. Different things were tried or replaced, and we moved on.



The Cross-over Tower looking down into Saline Valley.

Now it was time to move on to Cerro Gordo. The road from the summit station and cabin through Boiler Canyon and on to Cerro Gordo was in remarkably good shape and we made good time. Even the Libby had no trouble.

We finally arrived at Cerro Gordo and had a great visit with Mike. Jerry led us on a fantastic tour of the ghost town and Mary put together a fantastic potluck dinner for those staying until after dark. Some of us, however, turn into pumpkins when the sun goes down, so we left the party to the partygoers. We headed back to town, an end to a pretty good day ready for the next



The American Hotel at Cerro Gordo.

MAY MEETING HILITES

Jim Kenney called the meeting to order. Not to much news to report, as there were no Committee reports. The only real news was that Carl Dorey & Michelle Perry were voted in as our newest members. Welcome.

Other earth-shattering news at the meeting: Samela Dorey won the 50/50 drawing. Surprise, Surprise.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm.

EDITOR'S CONTRIBUTION or

THE REST OF THE STORY

George & Linda, Gary & Kim, Bill Maddux, Carl, Michelle, & Shelbea, and Matt & Nikki stayed and had dinner. Right after dinner the Dorey & Gardepe groups departed for home.

The 4 vehicles left on the mountain, who had been the ones holding up the group all day, stayed on to harass Mike a bit more and tell a few more lies. We finally left town around 8:10 thinking we would be down the hill before dark. Of course that did not happen. As we crossed Humboldt Flat and drove out onto the first shelf road, we encountered an oil streak, or liquid of some kind, streaming down the middle of the road in front of us. We were immediately on the CB and we could see Gary below us come to a screeching halt. He was just getting a whiff of transmission fluid when we called. He had blown a transmission line and spewed tranny fluid all over the ground. He really knows how to impress a girl, I'll tell you. So by the time we got it back together and he tried driving it, to see if there was enough fluid to go on, it was dark.

He did drive it on down the hill, but at the pavement Bill Maddux put a towrope on him and towed him into Olancha. Maddog just loves to tow Jeeps.

As we were going across the south end of Owens Lake on 190, we noticed that there was no traffic on 395 going either direction. Because of the fire outside of Independence, the highway had been closed at Big Pine going south and at Pearsonville going north. Just before we stopped to go south on 395, the traffic had been allowed to go. So when we pulled into Olancha to go to the gas station, it appeared to be closed. Why be open when the highway is closed, right? We were getting ready to head on down to Gill's Station towing Gary, when the owner of the station opened the door and yelled, "I'm open, I guess". Five yes 5 quarts of tranny fluid later, Gary was ready to go.

We all made it to the 395/14 split, where Gary & Kim left us, now all on their own. He was to call when he got home, approximately at 12:30am, or we would call George and head out looking for him with the trailer. Luckily, he called. He still has the bell, by the way.

JUNE MEETING HILITES

George Graham called the meeting to order this month. We welcomed 2 new guests: Ed Ashby and Laura Golembeski & returning guests.

Again, not much to report.

Jerry reported last month that the fees at Dumont were going up, but found out later it is just a proposal.

Dues were due at this meeting, and everyone rejoined (**EDITOR'S NOTE:** except for Curtis, who no longer has a 4X4. Of course his Jeep is still a member.)

The 50/50 drawing was won by Mary Ellen Adams. Again, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm. Hmmm

News Release

For Release: June 26, 2007

Contact: Debra Hein at (760) 872-5057

Fire Restrictions Go Into Effect for Eastern Sierra

Inyo National Forest Supervisor Jeff Bailey and Bureau of Land Management Bishop Field Office Manager Bill Dunkelberger have signed fire restriction orders that go into effect Friday, June 29, at 12:01 a.m. The restrictions cover all Inyo National Forest lands and all BLM lands managed by the Bishop Field Office. Areas above 9,000 feet in elevation and wilderness areas (except where campfires are prohibited by existing orders) are exempt from this order. Campfires, briquette barbeques and smoking will be restricted due to increased fire danger brought on by hot, dry weather and extremely dry conditions.

The following restrictions will be in effect until further notice:

- **NO CAMPFIRES** or briquette barbeques allowed outside of developed recreation sites and specifically posted campsites or areas, and resorts, pack stations, recreation residences and other sites operated under special use permits with the Forest Service or BLM. Portable stoves using gas, jellied petroleum, or pressurized liquid fuel are exempt from this restriction (with valid campfire permit).
- **NO SMOKING** except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material.
- **NO WELDING** or operating an acetylene torch with open flames, except by permit.
- **NO USE OF EXPLOSIVES**, except by permit.

The restrictions will suspend open campfires except in designated campgrounds throughout the Forest and BLM lands. A list of designated campgrounds is available at any Inyo National Forest Ranger Station or Interagency Visitor Center. If hot, dry weather conditions continue, the restriction on campfires could be extended to include all of the wilderness areas.

For further information, please call Inyo National Forest Public Affairs Officer Nancy Upham at (760) 873-2427 or Interagency Fire Mitigation Specialist Debra Hein at (760) 872-5057.