

JPFreeek

LIFESTYLES OFF THE BEATEN PATH



October/November 2006 • Issue 4 • Vol.1

JPfreeek Rocks da' Rockies

**JPFreeek Roadtrip
to Colorado**

Expedition Confessions:

Ready your Wrangler
for a Multi-day Adventure

Freakin' Out About Climbing

Rock Climbing 101

Summiting 'Weather' Peak

What is an Expedition Anyway?

(The question we want **YOU** to answer)

Everyone Has That List

Reader's Submission by Saulo Bomfim
of northtrails.com

**JPFOTO
CONTEST
WINNER**



FROM THE EDITOR

It has been a fun and busy time for us on the JPFreek staff since the release of our last issue. We recently announced the unveiling of our newly designed website and we are extremely proud of the efforts placed there. We also announced the winner of the first JPFreek reader photo contest after having received an exceptional number of great photos. The month of September also featured JPFreek's first major event as an official sponsor as we teamed up with The Great American Jeep Rally in Connecticut, a new partnership with Tread Lightly!, as well as our first official excursion to Colorful Colorado which you can read about in our current issue. Also, in several weeks we will be attending the largest canoe and kayaking race in the state of Texas as an official sponsor and media member, and in November we will be providing media coverage of the Off-Road Expo in Houston. Our growth continues to exceed expectations and it would not have happened without our readers. Thanks to all of you!

For October / November, JPFreek has packed this issue with plenty of adventure. We have also added a new section that includes JPFreek-sponsored events, and we plan to begin gear reviews in our next issue to provide you with useful insight on top gear while using it in the field. Our current issue also features Part One of an extended series on planning an expedition and we hope this will interest our readers in providing feedback on their own expeditions, adventures, and related commentary on this subject.

Again, thanks to all of you for your continued support of JPFreek Adventure magazine. As always, we encourage our readers to share their stories and photos with us and we look forward to sharing our passion with you over the remainder of 2006.

Happy adventures,



Frank Ledwell
Editor-in-Chief



Sampling Colorado's fresh mountain air while four-wheeling near Mt. Blanca and after mountain biking in Breckenridge, Colorado.





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Photo submitted by Brian Cale taken by his wife, "dirtygirl"



Events

FREEK OR NERD?

Which is it? Nobody likes to be called a nerd. Are you a nerd because you're feverishly passionate about your Jeep and your adventure lifestyle. I dare say NOT! You're a FREEK! We were recently made aware of an honorable, or maybe not-so honorable mention, in a Delaware paper column entitled, "Revving Up for a Jeep Nerd Smackdown". The article is actually very entertaining and well written, questioning the habits of Jeep owners. Be sure to read this article.

READ THE ARTICLE:

<http://www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2006609270304>

Holly Norton (Non-jeep owner)
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Kelly Housen (possible JPFreek)
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Holly Norton (pink top) is in front of the Rav4 and Kelly Housen (black top) is in front of her Jeep.
Photo by Jessica Bratton

2006 BUFFALO BAYOU REGATTA

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21

JPFreek is proud to sponsor Texas' largest canoe and kayak race: The Buffalo Bayou Regatta. Houstonians of all ages are encouraged to participate in the 15-mile USCA-sanctioned race along the scenic Buffalo Bayou. New this year is the Challenge Cup, geared toward university students, military personnel, Boy and Girl Scout Troops.

For more information on individual canoe and kayak divisions visit

www.buffalobayou.org

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In Memoriam CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF 'THE CROCODILE HUNTER'

On September 4, 2006 the world lost a true adventurer, passionate conservationist, and loving family man in Steve Irwin, also known as 'The Crocodile Hunter', while snorkeling in the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Queensland. Irwin epitomized one's love for adventure, and his passion for conserving and sharing the joys that Mother Nature has to offer are attributes that will live on through his zoo in Australia and in his fans throughout the world. We at JPFreek Publications mourn this great loss but strive to continue his philosophy of conservation and adventure in all that we do. Thank you, Steve, for all the inspiration you have given us, and thank you for sharing your passions in an exciting and sincere way that truly touched the lives of all of us.

Cheers and 'Crikey' to you!



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KILBY



WE ALL HAVE THAT LIST

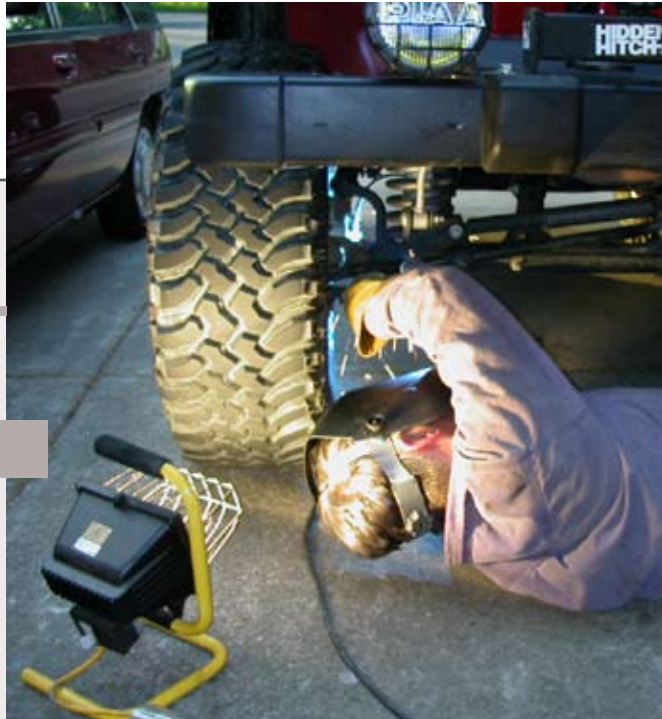
Editorial & Photos by Saulo Bomfim of northtrails.com

We all have that list, in one way or another, the list of things we want to do or accomplish in our lifetimes. Well, some items on the list are long term and have deeper meaning, things like seeing your children grow-up healthy and happy. Others with lesser levels of complexity, but also with meaning - items like parachuting out of a plane, bungee jumping from great heights, visiting Paris, hiking the Grand Canyon, and the list goes on.

There are also categories of things that we tend to group as a set of activities that we want to associate our lives with; camping, boating, sight seeing, or any activity type that aligns ourselves with a certain lifestyle or activity level.

This is where my interest in Jeeps comes in. I own and work (with friends) on a few jeeps that are designed to get me outside as frequently as I can manage with my busy family and work schedules. I keep adding items to my own list of things to do that are almost always aligned with the use of a Jeep. My list has grown to signify or reflect an active and outdoorsy side for both myself and my family.

Our Jeeps will take us camping to remote areas, rock crawling on difficult trails, trail riding on beautiful sceneries, and sometimes the most basic of outings such as family drives to the local ice cream shop on Sundays.



Working on one's Jeep is almost as fun as getting it on the trails. Just ask Saulo!

I try organizing a simple and short term "Get Out There" list based on seasons, work and family schedules that usually read something like this:

- ✓ The Rubicon trail (at least twice a year)
- ✓ Fordyce Trail during summer
- ✓ Moab trails in the springtime
- ✓ Sierra Nevada Trails (at least 4 times a year)
- ✓ Snow run





Sometimes I get many more trips in the schedule, sometimes I miss months at a time. The only constant activity, no matter how much I get out, is that there is always something to do on the Jeeps.

When I am able to get to most of my "Get Out There" list, I end up creating a whole other separate "Jeep to-do" list made up of upgrades and fixes required to keep the Jeeps in good shape. The list goes like this:

- ☒ Fix leaking air line
- ☒ Upgrade front sway bar
- ☒ Replace rear ring and pinion
- ☒ Replace/fix bent tie rod
- ☒ Build full cage and hood loop
- ☒ Fix everything else discovered while working on previous items...

Both lists require time and devotion only understood by those that own Jeeps and enjoy being outside whenever possible. This gets me to my third list, combining my interests in Jeeps and being outside. We all need to support organization that help keep 4x4 trail open, here are a few to check out:

- ☒ **United Four Wheel Drive Association**
- ☒ **California Association of 4 Wheel Drive**
- ☒ **BlueRibbon Coalition**
- ☒ **Tread Lightly**

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Expedition Confessions:

Ready Your Wrangler for a Multi-Day Adventure



Editorial & Photography by Mark D. Stephens

So, you wanna hit the trails for more than a day, huh? Call it an expedition, even? Good for you. I've been doing so for several years now, despite all the mistakes I've made along the way. And maybe you have a nice long list of things to take: a big heap of recovery gear, all sorts of spare hoses, belts, tie rod ends, and

other parts along with some oil, a tool kit, assorted topographical maps, a GPS, a guide book, cooking equipment, a tent and sleeping bags, plenty of food for each day and night, 10 gallons of water, extra clothing, a change of shoes, a fishing pole and tackle, and don't forget the kitchen sink. Take a deep breath, and think: Where are you going to put all that stuff in a Wrangler? In that little shoebox-sized hole between the rear door and backseat?

For my first multi-day trip, I called my friend Russ and told him that we were going to do a long trip on Forest Road 1 in the Tonto National Forest and spend three days exploring the area. He'd just bought his Rubicon, and most people remind me that I was



(Top of page) The 2002 TJ owned by Mark Stephens puts the Mountaineer rack and Garvin Wilderness swing out system to good use on every adventure.

(Left) The Adventure Trailers, Chaser trailer

"Dude!" He yelled, giving me a thumbs up.
"That thing is friggin' cool. Where'd you get it?"



just a maniacal kid without a single shred of experience. We piled equipment and food on top of my back seat with no organization at all: it turned into a delicate mound of incomplete gear that plopped over as we turned onto the

trail. Russ had to remove the backseat in his Rubicon to make room for firewood, and he simply put his food on the passenger seat. Doritos on top, 24 cans of Mountain Dew on the bottom.

"What? It's not like I have a woman coming along" he defended.

I couldn't resist: "You could at least tempt the universe, dude!"

We had one beer-stained map between the two of us. We didn't bring a single spare hose or belt, let alone a single tool beyond a screwdriver...which was somewhere. And we didn't have a clue where the road would go. But I think we did have a tow strap. "This," we declared, "is adventure!" Oh the fine line between adventure and youthful idiocy...this, my first foray into expedition travel.

Good news: since then I've undertaken countless other multi-day off road adventures and I've learned a thing or two. Over these years, I've come across some fantastic storage and organizational solutions from other Wrangler owners. Here are some solid ideas for getting the most out of the OEM space, and gaining some more for the gear and equipment you want to haul on a multi-day trip:

Racks – this is obvious. See my own Jeep here. I have two aftermarket products: a Mountaineer rack by Olympic 4x4, and a trail rack mounted on the tire swing out bumper system by Garvin. After installing the Mountaineer rack, I was rather concerned about not having the backseat for the times I wasn't hauling gear. However, my worries were buried when a guy in an XJ at a stop light rolled down his window, turned off Metallica on his radio and waved at me.

"Dude!" He yelled, giving me a thumbs up. "That thing is friggin' cool. Where'd you get it?"

So, if one person had such emphatic approval about that rack I figured there has to be others. So long backseat. The rack is cool.

More importantly, though, it's helped streamline our packing process. Our ice chest and a large lidded bin for the camping equipment fits perfectly under the rack, with a little space between for a small tool kit. Then the rack provides a nice shelf to stack other equipment and bins, and it also has 6 eyebolts for securing everything down. It's a very clever system.

The Adventure Trailers team showing off their newly designed fuel can carriers on the AT rig



Photos by Steve Bisig at www.pnwadventures.com

On our single-day trips and trail rides, we often have the top down and the bikini on. Since we don't need as much stuff with us, the rack is perfect for the ice chest where we can get to it without opening the back door, or unloading anything else. Time and time again, the rack demonstrates one of the single best improvements I've made to the Jeep.

The other rack option is attached to my spare tire gate, which is a part of the aftermarket bumper made by Garvin. This system won the debate in my head between a roof rack or a trail rack for its killing-two-birds-with-one-stone aspect: one stone got me an upgraded bumper with receiver and clevis mounts, and another storage rack.

While the rack is small, it does the job just right. Too much weight up there could be problematic anyway. Most often, we just load it with the camping chairs, which are kind of awkwardly shaped and one of the last things we remember to load. And this rack is just the right size and anything loaded in it is easy to access.

The swing gate incorporates mounting positions for an ax, a shovel, and spare gas/water cans – other items that are smart to carry on an extended trail.

One friend, Steve Bisig of www.pnwadventures.com, went a step further with his organization on the inside of his YJ. He built a fantastic box with a large subdivided drawer. He made sure to construct a rigid top that's protected with industrial carpet so he could load other items on top and also secure them down with strong stainless steel eyebolts. The craftsmanship is unmatched and the design is well thought out to include heavy-duty drawer slides and compartments on the side that get accessed through hinged panels. See how he neatly organizes his Jeep for a long weekend of adventure and trail driving.

The nice thing about the drawer system is that when he opens the rear door, he can access anything in box without unloading a single thing – he simply opens the rear door and slides the drawers out. Additionally, he can pack tools, jumper cables,



1. The heavy duty drawer slides outward, and without having to unload anything from the top of the box.
2. Packed and ready to go. Notice the box is secured with a padlock as well.
3. This awesome box has two compartments that are accessed through the hinged lids at either end. 6 eyebolts allow Steve to strap everything down firmly.

extra hoses and belts in these drawers and leave them in there all the time due to the secure nature of his box. Steve's arrangement is slick and smart.

Now that I've shown you several methods that come at the price of the backseat, here is one of the latest crazes that allows you to keep it: trailers. Uh, yeah, seriously...I'm not kidding. For the disbelieving reader, I had a chance to rap out with two friends (Justin Pitcairn of Southern California and Steven Curren of Tuscon, Arizona) who each own a Chaser trailer made by Adventure Trailers. You ought to be impressed by what they had to say.

JPFreek: Why did you choose to get a trailer instead of something else? Such as a roof rack?

Justin Pitcairn: Several reasons

- 1) I have an incredible roof rack right now but it just will not carry all of my gear because of reason number two.
- 2) I now have two young boys ages 1 and 3.
- 3) As far as other vehicles I enjoy the open experience too much to be confined.
- 4) The Adventure Trailers Chaser is incredible. Once I took all of the weight out of the Jeep my ride quality went up 10 fold. I no longer bottom out the rear springs.

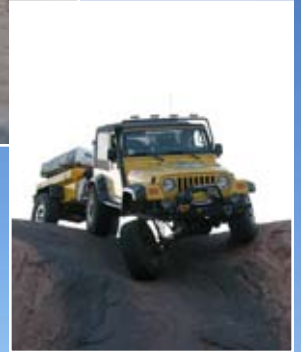
Steven Curren:

I purchased the Chaser for a couple of reasons. Firstly, I wanted a vehicle I could pack and leave in the garage ready to go out when I wanted and not take the time to load up. Secondly, I wanted to have a vehicle I could leave in camp while I took the Jeep out exploring and doing trails. Also, the height of a rooftop tent was a negative because of tree branches on the trail and wind resistance on the highway.



(Above) Thanks to Justin Pitcairn's Chaser trailer attached to his '03 Rubicon he can haul his 2 kids and set up a comfy camp.
Photo by Miles Pitcairn

(Left) Roof tent with a view: Camped at the stunning views of Point Sublime on the Grand Canyon's north rim
Photo by Steve Curren



The guys at Adventure Trailers know how to plan for an expedition with tent systems, refrigerated coolers, and off-road versatility in their Chaser trailer system. Photos by Mike Tinnell

JPFreek: How do you like pulling it over technical terrain? How well have you adapted to pulling it on trails?

Justin Pitcarn: Well first off let me say this: I have never pulled a trailer in my life. This is a new experience. As for pulling the Adventure Trailers Chaser it is a dream. Hook it up and forget it. 40 mph down a corrugated road? No problem. Technical stuff? Just look back and enjoy the view...this trailer will do it. Learning to back it up took me a couple of tries. This Chaser has made easy trails interesting again. Plus you have the bonus of pulling over and having a king size bed and a cold refrigerator.

Steven Curren: The Chaser pulled very well over the rough trails we were on. I did have the Jeep in low range for the Point Sublime trail at Grand Canyon and did not really notice the Chaser behind me. This is the first trailer I have owned or pulled and I find it easy to pull as well as back up. I had never backed up a trailer

before I picked up the Chaser from Adventure Trailers and I found it easy to do so. I feel very confident in pulling the trailer off road and look forward to more trails and outings with the Chaser.

JPFreek: Where have you taken it, and what other trips do you have in mind for the future with the Jeep/trailer combo?

Justin Pitcarn: So far the Jeep/trailer combo has been on 2 trips to Anza Borrego Desert. I have pulled it through everything I can find out there in the Bad Lands. Next trips include Mexico, Baja 1000 to watch, and I am sure we will be back to the desert soon.

Steven Curren: Other than a quick trip to the local mountains, the North Rim of the Grand Canyon is the only place the Chaser has been so far. I am taking it out to the area near Blythe, California next month and I am planning with a few others to do trips in California and Arizona.

JPFreek: What Jeep do you have, and why did you purchase it instead of something else?

Justin Pitcarn: I am currently driving a 2003 Jeep Wrangler Rubicon with a 2006 Adventure Trailer Chaser. Well, like many have said before it is a Jeep Thing. I love the ability to change up the vehicle; meaning I can remove the doors, top, and lower the windshield. This has always kept me interested in my Jeep. I also take full advantage of the open-air environment when ever possible. There is really no other vehicle that can compare. Past vehicles have included a 1997 Jeep TJ and a 1998 Hummer H1. The previous Jeep was sold after 6 years primarily to build up the new and improved Rubicon. The Hummer was an outstanding vehicle to drive and the Hummer club had incredible people. The 2 problems with the Hummer for me was the lack of visibility and the constant maintenance. Sold the Hummer 4 years later after the warranty was up.

Steven Curren: I have a 2005 Rubicon Unlimited with a number of modifications. I had an H-2 but soon found it a bit large for the trails here as well as for my garage, I have owned a Jeep in the past and liked the off road performance. On my current one, I have a 3" Terra Flex lift with 5100 Bilstein shocks, 33x12.5 BF Goodrich MTs, sliders from Nth Mobility front and rear and custom made sliders. A Body Armor front bumper with an 8000 lb winch and a 4WD rear bumper and tire swing, 7" fender flares, sway bar disconnects, bikini top and half doors. I also have two Sparco seats and full harnesses with a sport cage and a Gibson cat back system. I am in the progress of installing a Terra Flex belly up skid as well as a 1" body lift.

JPFreek: Finally guys, what are your impressions about the trailer and Jeep combination?

Justin Pitcarn: It just works. With the trailer you can now put people in the back seat, you can keep the Jeep free of clutter (safety issue), and you can carry way more than you should be allowed in the trailer.

Steven Curren: I can say that I really like the Chaser and would recommend it to anyone who was thinking of owning one, the Jeep pulled it with ease and I was able to sleep at night on a mattress that was so good I got a full night's sleep. Also I would like to say that dealing with Mario was a pleasure, he was concerned about me as a person as well as a customer and he has followed up with me to make sure that I am a satisfied customer, I sure am.

These trailers have some key features that make them viable for towing over tough trails: adjustable air suspension, 31"-37" tires to match your Jeep, and a long trailing arm. But they are more than just a big box on a high-clearance chassis: depending on the configuration, a trailer can sport a kitchen set-up that's fired by propane, retractable awning, comfortable roof top tent, electric braked axle, 12-volt battery system, specialized and fully articulating coupler, refrigerator, storage for nearly 20 gallons of fresh water and extra fuel. Justin and Steve are impressed with the whole package.

Things have come a long way since that first trip I made with Russ and our beer-stained map. I've been asked what I think the perfect expedition vehicle is, since the Wrangler is so short on space. These days, though, I wouldn't shy away from the Unlimited and the new 2007 4 door versions. While I'd love to get behind the wheel of a Commander for an expedition, the aftermarket racks, custom boxes, and trailers available for Wranglers sweetens the pot again for going out on multi-day ventures into the wild with the short wheelbase rag-top wonder.

Interested in the products I mentioned?

Mountaineer rack and Garvin bumper systems are available through: www.4x4rockshop.com

Find out more about Chaser Trailers: www.adventuretrailers.com



Be sure to tell Mark what you think? Contact him at:
mstephens@jpfreek.com

ex-pe-di-tion (ĕk'spĭ-dĭsh'On) n.

A journey undertaken by a group of people with a definite objective: an expedition against the enemy stronghold; a scientific expedition to the South Pole. The group undertaking such a journey.

A definition is the enclosing a wilderness of idea within a wall of words.

- Samuel Butler

A while ago, and after an excursion into a desert area of volcanic rock spires and rough roads, I stopped for gas. At the station, a man in a pick-up truck approached me.

"Hey man," he started, "what kinda axle you go in that thing?"

"The original Dana 35. Why do you ask?"

"Aw, you look all rockin' and I thought you gotta have something better in it than that. Dana 35? Hell man, I broke like three of 'em in my day. So you got a locker in it, then?"

"No, no lockers. Limited slip, though."

"Damn! No lockers! You must not go too many places then."

Not too many places? He got me thinking about Jeeps, and why I do this stuff. I've heard the old saying, "If you didn't break something then you didn't try hard enough." Well, I always thought that was crap.



Then someone once used the word "expedition" to describe a trip we made into the desert. Expedition? These days, we're certainly not talking about navigating the Northwest Passage for the first time, making the first footprints at the South Pole, or trekking to the Pacific Ocean with Lewis and Clark. And I really don't think an expedition is determined by the kind of axle you have or whether or not you have a locking differential. I do think, though, that it's highly dependent on your intentions.

So many of us who take off for a few days, or weeks, are often just looking for a great campsite with a nice view. A place to let kids and the dogs run around. See an historical haunt perhaps. Cast in a remote fly-fishing site. Camp, cook, and laugh with some friends. These are all excellent reasons for a trip; and also "definite objectives." Sorely needed ones, too, on some intangible personal level. Lockers or no lockers.

Through nostalgia, we might be tempted to believe that embarking on an expedition is to be totally self-sufficient in a remote land for weeks, months, or years on end. Yet, I see a conflict: we're talking about doing so in a vehicle that can travel quickly, and

So, What is an Expedition, Anyway?

on roads that actually go somewhere for a purpose. Eventually, you'll run into a ranch, a town, a paved road, or another group of adventurers. If not, you'll run out of fuel anyway. Today's expedition drive is something different, perhaps. Could it be something that incorporates these things into a trip?

As I've learned in Mexico and in several remote slices of Arizona, getting assistance from the local folk tends to be a highlight in any trip, so the notion of being alone and isolated is not my gauge of what an expedition is. In Mexico, we've been invited to eat meals with families and we've been given gifts. A rancher on the Blue River once sheltered my wife and me because we'd broken down and spent two days walking for help – in the rain and hail, of course. And as odd as this may sound, in the southwest you can spend a day or two on a barren road and come upon an operating saloon in the middle of nowhere.

If this is today's vehicle-based expedition? Encounters with the culture and the land? It seems there is often a road that connects unique and remote parts of our country and culture – we try to find and travel these roads...because it's fun. Lockers or no lockers.

Regarding the definition of the term expedition, Scott Brady of Expeditions West, a pioneer in modern vehicle-dependent voyages, says, "One thing I am becoming more aware of though, is the INTENT of the trip. Am I giving anything back to the country I

am exploring? Have I helped improve the place or the quality of life of its residence? What is the purpose of the trip? What has been explored? What makes your effort unique?"

The dictionary's definition lines right up with Brady's question, what is the intent of your trip? "Let's see if we can get through The Hammers today on one set of axle shafts." There's an intent. "An expedition to cross the Darien Gap." Yet another definite objective.

Then again, why bother with such a loaded word? Expedition? Yikes. Sometimes the intent doesn't need to be so weighed down by doing something dangerous, going somewhere remote, or conducting a trip along a road that's rarely driven. We can just go travel some good roads, see some neat sights, and camp in some cool places. You in? I don't really want to enclose the wild idea of expedition into a wall of words. What do you think it ought to be?

What are your thoughts about the definition of an expedition?

We'd like to hear from you, send your comments to:

feedback@jpfreek.com

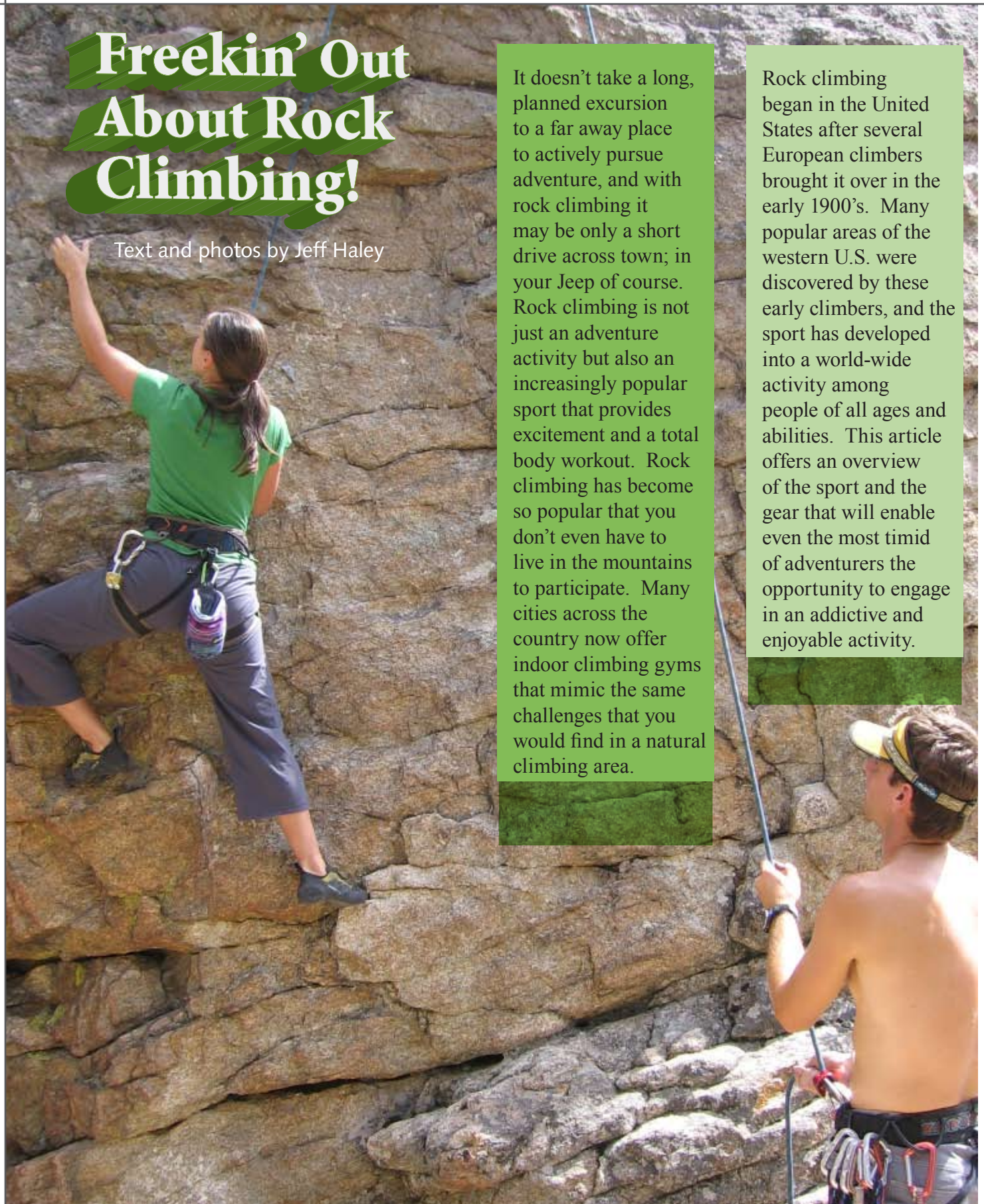


Freekin' Out About Rock Climbing!

Text and photos by Jeff Haley

It doesn't take a long, planned excursion to a far away place to actively pursue adventure, and with rock climbing it may be only a short drive across town; in your Jeep of course. Rock climbing is not just an adventure activity but also an increasingly popular sport that provides excitement and a total body workout. Rock climbing has become so popular that you don't even have to live in the mountains to participate. Many cities across the country now offer indoor climbing gyms that mimic the same challenges that you would find in a natural climbing area.

Rock climbing began in the United States after several European climbers brought it over in the early 1900's. Many popular areas of the western U.S. were discovered by these early climbers, and the sport has developed into a world-wide activity among people of all ages and abilities. This article offers an overview of the sport and the gear that will enable even the most timid of adventurers the opportunity to engage in an addictive and enjoyable activity.



First of all, most people associate climbing with images of vertical walls of rock with thousands of feet of air below a climber, hanging by a tiny rope. However, with the proper gear and knowledge of essential safety measures, the sport offers a controlled and challenging workout with rewarding benefits. Just like any sport, you must learn about the gear and practice the techniques to have a truly enjoyable experience; one that will definitely have you crawling the walls.

LEARNING THE BASICS

One of the fundamentals of climbing is that it isn't just about strength. In fact, I would dare to say that climbing is about fifty percent strength and fifty percent flexibility and balance. I explain to people that typically if you can climb a ladder then you can climb a rock. You just simply move one hand up and one foot up at a time while balancing your body in the proper position. Of course, upper body strength plays a huge role in climbing but most of the time you want to focus your strength in your legs and use your hands for balance and movement across the rock. Once a climber begins to learn technique and establishes natural balance, he or she will be able to accomplish more difficult routes that start to use more upper body strength. Most beginner to intermediate routes focus on movement and use of lower body strength to increase balance and flexibility. A majority of indoor gyms across the country provide trainers on staff that offer lessons and instruction to climbers to increase technique and ability.

In terms of rating the difficulty of a climb, most gyms in the U.S. follow the Yosemite Decimal System which was developed in the early days of climbing by assigning a numerical rating to a route based on the difficulty of the climb. The first number ranges from 1 to 5 assuming that a 1 would be like walking down a flat sidewalk with no obstacles. The numbers 2 or 3 would indicate that a person is on a standard hiking trail and walking across uneven ground. A 5 on the other hand means that a person is experiencing a vertical obstruction and will have to use hands and feet to continue momentum and upward progress. Once the climber is in the class 5 category, a decimal is assigned to indicate the steepness and the features (handholds and

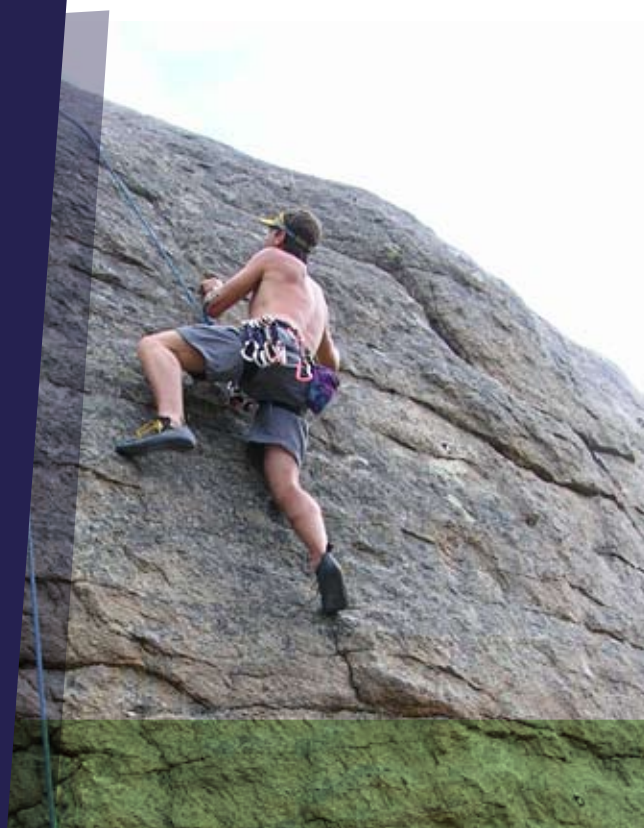
footholds) that are available to continue progress. A beginner climbing route is typically a 5.5 to 5.6 where an intermediate route would range from 5.8 to 5.10. Most difficult routes range from 5.11 and up. I must mention also that once a climb is in the 5.10 category, it may also be assigned the letter a through d which is based on other variables of difficulty.

THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

I must emphasize with extreme importance that there is nothing more important about climbing than using approved gear and equipment to uphold the strictest safety precautions. In fact, most retailers will not accept any returns or exchanges on climbing gear due to the strict regulations in the industry and the potential for safety issues. Nonetheless, it only takes a few pieces of essential gear to be climbing your way to a new adventure.

In this article, I will assume the climber is beginning in an indoor gym so I won't discuss all the aspects of necessary gear for outdoor climbing. The most important item, regardless of indoor or outdoor climbing, is a rope. Rope is usually furnished by the climbing gym and already anchored in at the top of the climb. However, I should mention that there are two main types of rope: static and dynamic. The static rope is as the name implies; static and not very flexible. Static ropes are used for rappelling and rescue operations due to the strength and lack of stretching. On the other hand, a dynamic rope performs similar to a bungee cord in that it will flex and stretch as the climber applies weight to the rope. This is primarily used in climbing so that if a climber falls, the rope will stretch and offer shock absorption from the fall.

The next essential item of gear is a harness which the climber wears around the waist and legs. Harnesses are basically set up like a diaper in that the waist belt is tightened above the hips and the leg loops attach around each leg to act like a seat when the climber is hanging by the rope. Most climbers will want a sport climbing harness that offers padding and small straps to increase comfort and range of motion.



Jeff cleans up a route while climbing in Colorado

The next most important item of gear is a pair of climbing shoes. Climbing shoes make your feet work like magic as they stick to any surface you put your toes on. They tend to resemble very tight slippers that are covered in a sticky rubber material that allows the climber to have precise use of their toes and heels while climbing. One of the first lessons learned while climbing is to trust your shoes and believe that the shoes will stick to the rock.



Jeff and Ray prepare to lead a climbing route by cinching up their harnesses and checking their gear for safety

Finally, a beginning climber may want to purchase a chalk bag with climbing chalk and a carabiner with a belay device. Carabiners are a “D” shaped device that are used to attach the rope to the belay through the belay device. Belay is the French word for “hold fast” that was used in the early days of climbing in Europe. In a climbing situation, there is a belayer who holds the rope for the climber and takes up slack as the climber moves upward. As the climber ascends, the belayer continues taking up the slack in the rope produced from the climber’s upward movement and in turn eliminates the distance a climber will fall should he or she come off the wall. The belay device allows the belayer to stop the rope from running through the carabiner through the use of friction which keeps the climber from falling to the ground. As mentioned, a beginner will learn all the techniques and terminology from an instructor at the climbing gym or guide service.

CLIMBING? CLIMB ON!

Now that you have had the abbreviated version of everything you need to know about rock climbing, it’s time to get started. As I mentioned earlier, climbing is a technical sport that requires instruction and knowledge of essential gear before you attempt any routes indoor or outdoor. Once you have received instruction and have obtained the proper gear, you will be able to get started at your local gym or climbing area and climb your way to a good time. As you can imagine, the internet is full of resources about climbing and listings of gyms and guide services. Be sure to research as much as possible about the best gear for your specific needs, as well as where to get started. In the meantime, grab a friend and find some rock. You never know, your next great adventure might just be a vertical slab away.

Editor’s Note: Due to the technical aspects of climbing, there are dangers involved with the sport including falling rock and falling climbers. Consult an experienced guide service or instructor when climbing for the first time, and be sure to use the appropriate safety equipment at all times.

To learn more about rock climbing, check out the following resources:

<http://www.rockclimbing.com>
<http://climbing.about.com>
<http://www.safeclimbing.org/index.htm>

For a list of climbing gyms in your area, visit:

<http://www.indoorclimbing.com>



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JPFreek Rocks da' Rockies

Text & Photography by Frank Ledwell – Executive Editor

“Adventure is Worthwhile” – Aristotle

Few things are relished less than hopping in a car and traveling for seventeen plus hours, but when the trip is expressly to enjoy ten days of mountain bliss, adventure, and good times with friends and fellow ‘freaks’, a full day in the bucket seat of a TJ Rubicon makes it all worthwhile.

JPFreek’s first ‘official’ road trip had all the ingredients for a killer time: plenty of mountain biking, rock climbing, hiking, four wheeling, and overall adventure. As it turned out, the trip was beyond my expectations.

Seventeen hours and eleven hundred miles of terrain ranging from concrete structures to rolling hills to eventually arid deserts and finally mountainous precipices made for a long day. Having gotten sleepy between Austin and Lampasas, I took a short nap but once revived, the drive was clockwork and quite enjoyable until I reached the manure-stained air of Lubbock and West Texas. Yikes, what a

rude awakening! Imagine yourself savoring a tasty bowl of cereal when all of a sudden the milk you’re drinking turns sour. For miles upon miles, I reflected on memories past as an undergrad at Texas Tech University, all the while suffocating on the insipid air en route to the Panhandle.

Just when it seemed like I was going to be permanently traumatized from asphyxiation, I approached the Texas-New Mexico border. From there, it wasn’t long before I had finally reached the border of Colorado and even though it was now dark and the mountains were no longer visible, their magnetism drew me in and let me know of their presence. Shortly thereafter, I was in Colorado Springs having accomplished the mission of day one: Arrive in Colorado. After a welcome greeting from Jeff ‘Jeep’ Haley and his wife, Lynda, it was time to hit the sack and recover for our upcoming weekend excursion.



What was once an old mining trail has now become a rocky playground of pure adventure

Adventure # 1: Four-wheeling in Colorado Springs

Originally, we had planned to climb Mt. Sneffels and Wetterhorn Peak, both located in the San Juan range, but had to cancel those plans due to inclement weather. Instead, we decided to spend Saturday enjoying a full-day of four wheel adventure along Old Stage Road just outside Colorado Springs. The trail, tricky in spots but overall pretty moderate, leads up to Mt. Baldy, a mountain appropriately named for its bare summit. Armed with two Jeeps and a video camera, the JPFreek crew along with their wives, traversed the breathtaking trail lined with aspen and pine trees. As Jeff would explain, Old Stage Road had once been a stagecoach road that had lead to/from the gold mines once abundant in this region. Now it serves as a four-wheel adventure haven with miles upon miles of trail and numerous side trails that offer both adventure and adrenaline rush.

The trail itself is breathtaking with views of the Front Range and surrounding canyons. Along the way, several challenges present themselves but overall, the trail was relatively moderate. Once at the summit, there were plenty of vistas overlooking Colorado Springs that served as great spots to take photos, admire the scenery, and devour a relaxing lunch. Being near tree line (the boundary at which tree growth subsides due to the elevation and cold) certainly made a difference in the temperature as the wind roared through relentlessly.

After lunch, the crew hiked to Mt. Baldy's summit (a few hundred yards from the end of the trail), took in the fresh mountain air, and enjoyed the view of Pikes Peak to the north. The crew then headed back to the main trail along the top of a dam, took more photos, and enjoyed the second half of our four-wheel excursion.

The drive down Old Stage Road was just as entrancing as it was driving up. The rough terrain, the smell of aspen and pine, and the satisfaction of finally getting my Rubicon in the mountains had made this day worthwhile. Coupled with Jeff's enthusiasm while operating the video camera, the drive down to the trailhead provided thrills and plenty of laughs. In the end, the whole trip took about 5-6 hours and is one I highly recommend.





Enjoying a pit stop at the Sallie Berber Mine above French Gulch Road

We started out by heading east of town along Wellington Road before reaching the French Gulch Road that continued for approximately three miles. After following a gradual incline to the main trail, we finally reached the top where we chanced upon the Sallie Berber Mine. All the old remnants of this long but forgotten mine laid testament to a history long past, and the shards of gold that had been left behind laid glistening against the dark background of dirt and rock and provided a sort-of light show that was pleasing to the senses. After enjoying the light show for a few minutes, we decided to get on our way.

Adventure #2: Mountain Biking in Breckenridge

After having delighted in a fun-packed Saturday on the trails of Colorado Springs in our Jeeps, it was now time to hit the trails of Breckenridge on our mountain bikes.

Breckenridge is predominately a resort ski town located about two hours west of Colorado Springs and about an hour northeast of Buena Vista. The town is ensconced between the majesty of Quandary Peak and the Mosquito Range, and the thick aspen and pines along its north and east borders. Breckenridge is an awesome mountain town set in an area that is breathtaking in the early autumn months when the aspen trees begin to change their color. Aspens glisten along the slopes of the mountains, giving the impression that the mountains are on fire with their bright luminescence of yellow, orange, and red leaves. It is quite an awesome sight.

When we finally arrived in Breckenridge, everything I had heard and seen was as expected. Breckenridge is a resort town that doesn't necessarily feel like a resort town. Sure, the shops nestled along the Blue River certainly gave Breckenridge the presence of a resort town but the atmosphere and people made it feel more homely. Anyways, once we had arrived it meant one thing: unload so we could start biking in the mountains!

Struggling uphill on a bike follows the same principal as Newton's Law: What goes up, must come down which meant the ride down this mountain was anything short of awesome! Winding down the trail, I made one small mistake and took a remarkable spill to the ground. It's funny how ones misfortune can bring such joy to others as Jeff and Lynda shared a few laughs. Once at the bottom, we reached a singletrack trailhead that was a true highlight of this trip. Singletrack is a term used to describe a trail that is only wide enough for one person or mountain biker at a time. It is the most popular or sought after type of mountain bike trail, and provides thrills similar to that of skiing or snowboarding.



Frank winds his way down a single track trail outside Breckenridge

Adventure # 3: Rock Climbing at Red Rock Canyon



Mt. Quandary dominates the background after a thrill-packed day of mountain biking

The trail we arrived at was nestled along the eastern slope of one of Breckenridge's protective mountains, between tall aspen and pine trees. The trail wound up, down, and all around for several miles at a slight decline which meant we practically floated through the trees, over tree stumps, and across rocky jumps that made me howl. Finally, after several more miles, we reached a crossroad, took a break, and continued through the twists and turns until we were back in town.

Once in town, we ate lunch and then stopped by several shops to check out the local clearances on summer gear. After strolling around town for awhile, we headed back to the Jeep just as it began to rain, loaded our bikes up, and began the journey back to Colorado Springs.

Red Rock Canyon glistens in the early evening of a beautiful Colorado day



One of my true passions is rock climbing, and on my previous visit to Colorado Springs (nearly two years before) the open space at Red Rock Canyon had not yet been made available to the general public. Fortunately for fellow climbers and the citizens of Colorado Springs, Red Rock Canyon Open Space was unanimously accepted by the city government and a phenomenal continuation to the Garden of the Gods has a future to be enjoyed by all.

Rock climbing at Red Rock Canyon is unique as the formations are comprised of bright red sandstone that requires careful attention when choosing your next hand hold. I would later test this once I began my ascent of a one hundred foot vertical crag that Jeff provided belay on. Along my ascent, the peacefulness and focus that comes from rock climbing really began to set in, and as I climbed this fiery red wall of sand and dirt, my mind was at last free as if having entered into a virtual Elysium.

We spent several hours climbing, resetting several routes on Red Rock's wondrous crags, until the daylight subsided and brought an end to our day. The crew would head out to Red Rock Canyon once more before my return to Texas, and again we would each continue to relish the freshness of the air, the grit of sand and dirt, and the focused attention to detail that rock climbing in the canyon would provide each of us.



Adventure # 4: Summiting Pikes Peak and Touring the Garden of the Gods

It was already mid-week and I was now fully acclimatized and ready for a real test of endurance and adventure. Unfortunately, I didn't feel that climbing Pikes Peak alone while everyone else had to work would be a good idea. Because of this, I wound up doing the next best thing: summiting Pikes Peak via the Pikes Peak Highway. As a mountaineer and adventurer, this almost seems sacrilegious but it is one of the most scenic of drives and is something everyone should do at least once while visiting Colorado.

Pikes Peak Highway costs \$10 but goes towards the good cause of maintaining the highway that stretches nineteen miles to 14,110 feet at the summit of Pikes Peak. Along the way, the aspen continued the trend of luminescence, providing an array of bright colors that would have lit the highway even at night. As the highway wound towards tree line, the road narrowed and became a little bumpy, but once at the summit, the views were so spectacular that the mountain truly lived up to its billing as 'America's Mountain'. Driving back down, one can't help but be awe-struck by the beauty that is Colorado, and once I completed the two hour roundtrip drive, my sadness for not climbing the mountain was erased with the joy of having enjoyed the drive to its summit.



Fresh snow adorns the rocky terrain atop the summit of Pike's Peak in Colorado Springs



Natural rock formations provide breathtaking views while touring Garden of the Gods park

After the trek up Pikes Peak Highway, my next visit was to the Garden of the Gods. On previous trips, the Garden of the Gods has been a haven for the JPFreek crew to rock climb. On this trip, however, it was a chance for me to appreciate and tour the park as a spectator. Not only is the Garden of the Gods a magnificent study in Geology, it is also a remarkable testament to the Earth's history and the role that this region has had in creating the ecosystem of today.

The grandest physical attraction at the Garden is Balanced Rock, arguably called the Eight Wonder of the World and one of the world's most photographed rocks. Balanced Rock got its name by its unique formation that gives the impression that the base, which is smaller than its top, is balancing the rock in its position. Other formations in the Garden include the Gateway Rocks, a natural occurring entrance to the park, and Cathedral Rock which provides some excellent single and multi-pitch free climbing.

After my tour of the Garden concluded, it was off to Jeff and Lynda's house for a nice, home cooked meal that included preparation of the largest zucchini I've ever seen! Their garden must be on steroids!

Adventure # 5: Camping en route to Medano Pass, Hiking the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, and Four-wheeling on Mt. Blanca Trail

As the week drew towards an end, Ray, Jeff, and I packed our bags and drove our Jeeps to southern Colorado for a final mountain excursion before my return to Texas. Our campsite was about twenty miles from Medano Pass, a scenic off-highway trail that passes through the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve and takes approximately three hours to drive, and we fancied a good evening by talking about the old times and enjoying a warm campfire.

The next morning, we awoke to a crisp, clear day and began our trek towards Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve via Medano Pass. As we continued along Medano Pass and its moderate rocky terrain, we finally approached the backside entrance to Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. Great Sand Dunes is a truly phenomenal place. Not only is the park the largest sand dune preserve in the United States, it is also home to a diverse and fragile ecosystem that was formed through an incredible process of wind and water erosion. Seeing the terrain change so drastically, from talus rock to fine sand, was a truly remarkable experience and driving through the loose sand was a blast!

Once at the park's visitor center, we decided to take a break from our four-wheeling antics to hike the summit of the Sand Dunes. The sandy, soft terrain made it extra



Jeff and Ray push forward while bidding for the summit at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Monument

(Left) Millions of years worth of wind and water erosion provide the modern-day masterpiece that is the Great Sand Dunes in southern Colorado

work with each step, and add to that the searing wind gusts blasting sand across your face and legs, and you're left wondering if you're in the mountains or in grating machine. In due time though, we approached the summit and admired the outlying views with the flat plains to the south and the Sangre de Cristo range, with its towering 14,000 foot peaks, to the north and east.

After a few pictures and time to reflect, we headed back to our Jeeps and began the ascent up Mt. Blanca Trail to prep our campsite. This was, by far, the most awesome and extreme off-highway trail that

I have ever driven. Jeff's YJ and my TJ Rubicon were truly in their element, grabbing slabs of rock and scoffing at the Earth's attempts at slowing us down. In all seriousness though, this trail was so fun that it was actually scary in sections. A few spots actually gave the impression that our center of gravity wouldn't be enough to keep us from toppling over but fortunately our trusty Jeeps did the job.

As we prodded forward, we reached a point that had finally forced us to turn around as it was too difficult for us to pass without destroying our vehicles. So we turned around and made way to a campsite that featured great views of the mountains, plenty of tree shelter from wind, and a fire that burned as brightly as the sun in the sky.

The next morning, it was finally time to start making my way back towards Texas, and just as I had arrived in Colorado with the chagrin of being in the mountains, I was now saddened by the thought of leaving such majestic beauty. Jeff led the way down Mt. Blanca Trail, and as we began to reach the base of the trail, Jeff's usual antics (i.e. driving down the trail



**Frank, Ray, and Jeff
...true Freaks**

while standing on top of, and alongside, his Jeep) kept Ray and I entertained. From there, we drove towards Walsenburg, cordially said our goodbyes, and off I was back to Texas, reflecting on the excellent adventure I had enjoyed over my previous ten days in Colorado.

Adventure #6: Driving to Texas via Capuline Volcano National Monument and Palo Duro State Park

As the mountains vanished in my rear view mirror, I crossed into New Mexico and continued along towards Clayton and Dalhart. Along the way, I approached Capuline Volcano National Monument and decided to check it out. A hike to the crater provided insight into the volcano's metamorphic presence, and as I left the park I could once again see the faint outline of mountains in the horizon to the west.



Once back on the road, the drive continued in routine fashion as I approached the Texas border. The amazing thing about this part of Texas is that it is completely flat, with the plains stretching as far as the eye can see. Remarkably though, Palo Duro Canyon appears from out of nowhere and dominates the landscape. The park was a welcome rest stop for me, and as I found my way to the campsite, the only thing on my mind was my desperate need for a shower.

Back in Houston, the normalcy of my day to day routine commenced and I began to reflect on my innate desire for adventure. I concluded that there is value in seeking adventure and the parallels between what we seek and what we are truly bring us in tune with our surroundings. I also recognized that my journey to the Rocky Mountains took me to a place where both its vastness and beauty have lured me in much the same way that a magnet becomes drawn to metal: once placed together, it's difficult to escape. I will always yearn for adventure, and that is why Aristotle's wisdom will be as true to me tomorrow as it was in his time. Adventure, in all its facets, is truly worthwhile.

Summiting the San Juan's Snow-Capped 'Weather' Peak



Text by Raymond Schindler

Wetterhorn Peak comes from the German word 'weather' and I think it's safe to say why this mountain was named as such. I had been trying to climb this mountain for the past two years but had been turned down three times by the possibility of rain and bad weather. However, with the fall months having finally approached and the weather looking perfect for the weekend, I figured my luck couldn't be bad forever and thus decided to give the 'weather peak' another shot.



Ray traverses a rocky ledge leading to Wetterhorn Peak's summit

Wetterhorn is located in the San Juan range of Colorado and is the 50th highest peak in the state. It is approximately two hundred miles from Colorado Springs and takes about five hours to drive to. The hike itself is only six miles round trip and takes approximately four hours or so to hike, assuming you are in decent shape. The bottom line about Wetterhorn is that you are going to be in the

car longer than on the trail and while this isn't an exciting prospect, it had to be done in order for me to accomplish my goal of hiking all of Colorado's fifty-four 14ers. A good plan would be to spend the entire weekend in the mountains to enjoy not just the climbing but also the Jeep trails. The area of Lake City is scattered with high mountain passes and roads leading to ghost towns. As a matter of fact, the road to Wetterhorn's trailhead is located near Engineer Pass for those who enjoy some nice four-wheel adventure. Unfortunately, our trip was limited to twenty-four hours so our time in the area was limited to camping at the trailhead, hiking, and then driving back home.

We left Colorado Springs after work on a Friday in September and buckled down for the long drive. Late September usually rewards the lucky high country visitor with a treat of yellow mountains. Unfortunately, most of our drive was at night so we were on the prowl for stray deer rather than color-changing aspen. To get to Wetterhorn Peak, head west from Lake City for about eleven miles on a dirt road to



the trailhead. The last half mile is a bit rough and requires a high clearance four-wheel drive vehicle.

Our camp was located in a grassy field near the four-wheel drive cutoff and once we had

arrived, the darkness put us right to sleep. I chose to sleep in my Cherokee since it was late and I didn't feel like setting up a tent which worked out well since I awoke at 6am to what I thought were foggy conditions but was instead iced-over windows. My breath had condensed on the windows and froze due to the low temperatures. The sky itself was blue and it promised to be a beautiful day. Why would I ever doubt the weatherman?



We quickly broke camp and drove to the trailhead. According to the register, we were the first climbers to arrive on the trail in the two days. Not great news since we knew that the area had received several feet of snow recently and we might be breaking trail all day. Fortunately, the trail to the top is only three miles and most of

it faces the south! Our planned route was the Class 3 Southeast Ridge. The first mile went by quickly as we flirted with breaking above treeline. As we came out of the trees, the sun rose over the horizon and began to thaw out our cold hands and feet. Along the way, we crossed several frozen streams and were careful not to slip on the ice. Once we had reached the South basin, we managed to view the rest of the route. I was relieved to find that my concerns about deep snow were unfounded as we would only experience snow to our knees which was more than manageable.

Our next goal, after the basin, was to reach the 13,000 foot saddle on Wetterhorn's southeast flank. This turned out to be the toughest part of the hike since the snow had engulfed the boulder field and provided many opportunities to posthole between rocks (postholing is when you step on snow and sink up to your waist, thus creating a posthole). We then took turns trying to follow where the snow-covered trail was supposed to be but we wound up breaking trail for anyone else planning an ascent on the trail that day. No complaints though as it is well worth the effort to be the first person on a freshly snow covered mountain. To me, it adds a sense of remoteness and achievement by giving the feeling that we were the first ones to conquer the mountain. It's almost like feeling as if you are the first ones in history to climb the peak.



(Top Left) An old mine dwelling provides a foreground for color-changing Aspen in the San Juan range

(Top Right) Rough terrain provides plenty of four-wheel fun en route to the trailhead of Wetterhorn Peak

(Middle Left) A cathedral of stone leads the way to Wetterhorn's summit

(Bottom Right) Winter wonderland! Ray takes in the view of the surrounding San Juan range while contemplating his successful snow-packed summit bid of Wetterhorn Peak.



After reaching the saddle and reacquainting ourselves with our snow tools after the long summer, we could see the remaining 1,000 feet to the summit. From here, the trail is much steeper and involves some class 3 scrambling. Class 3 scrambling is not for everyone as it requires the use of your hands for balance and security. It generally is not difficult to find handholds though and provides an extra element of challenge. Down climbing on class 3 terrains usually requires the climber to face the wall while lowering their feet. I was looking forward to this part and was excited to reach the more vertical area of the mountain. The first three quarters of the ridge was relatively easy class 2 hiking but was made a more difficult by the snow. The last quarter of the route is class 3 and was fortunately not covered with snow. We managed to scramble up to the top, the first in days to set foot on the snow capped summit. Only our footprints existed in what seemed to be a winter wilderness.

We were lucky to have a perfect autumn day in Colorado with a clear blue sky, no clouds, and minimal wind. Days like this are what make me ecstatic about living in Colorado and having the physical ability to hike these mountains is a real blessing. On the drive home we were rewarded once again with a number of breathtaking vistas illuminated by golden aspen. After five hours on the road, we were back in Colorado Springs wondering 'Wow, what just happened in the past 24 hours?' and thanking the 'Weather Peak' for finally affording us the opportunity to enjoy its grandeur.



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JPFOTO CONTEST WINNER

JPFreek is proud to announce that the winner of the first JPFoto Contest is Todd Ockert, owner of tnt-jeeping.com. JPFreek received a number of amazing photos that truly captured the essence of Jeep adventure, and while the submissions made our decision that much more difficult, we finally chose our winner. Todd's prize included an official JPFreek t-shirt, a pair of JPFreek masthead decals, and a gift card at www.4x4rockshop.com. Thanks again to all of you for participating in JPFreek's first Photo Contest, and be sure to check future issues for more contests and even cooler prizes. Happy Adventuring!

COMING UP IN ISSUE No.5:

- Weekend excursion to Big Bend National Park
- How to plan an expedition: Part II
- Climbing Mt Whitney
- Buffalo Bayou Regatta Kayak Race
- Expedition Trophy 2006 in AZ
- Adventure Trailers fuel can and Mountain Hardware gear reviews
- plus much more!