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# JPFreek

ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

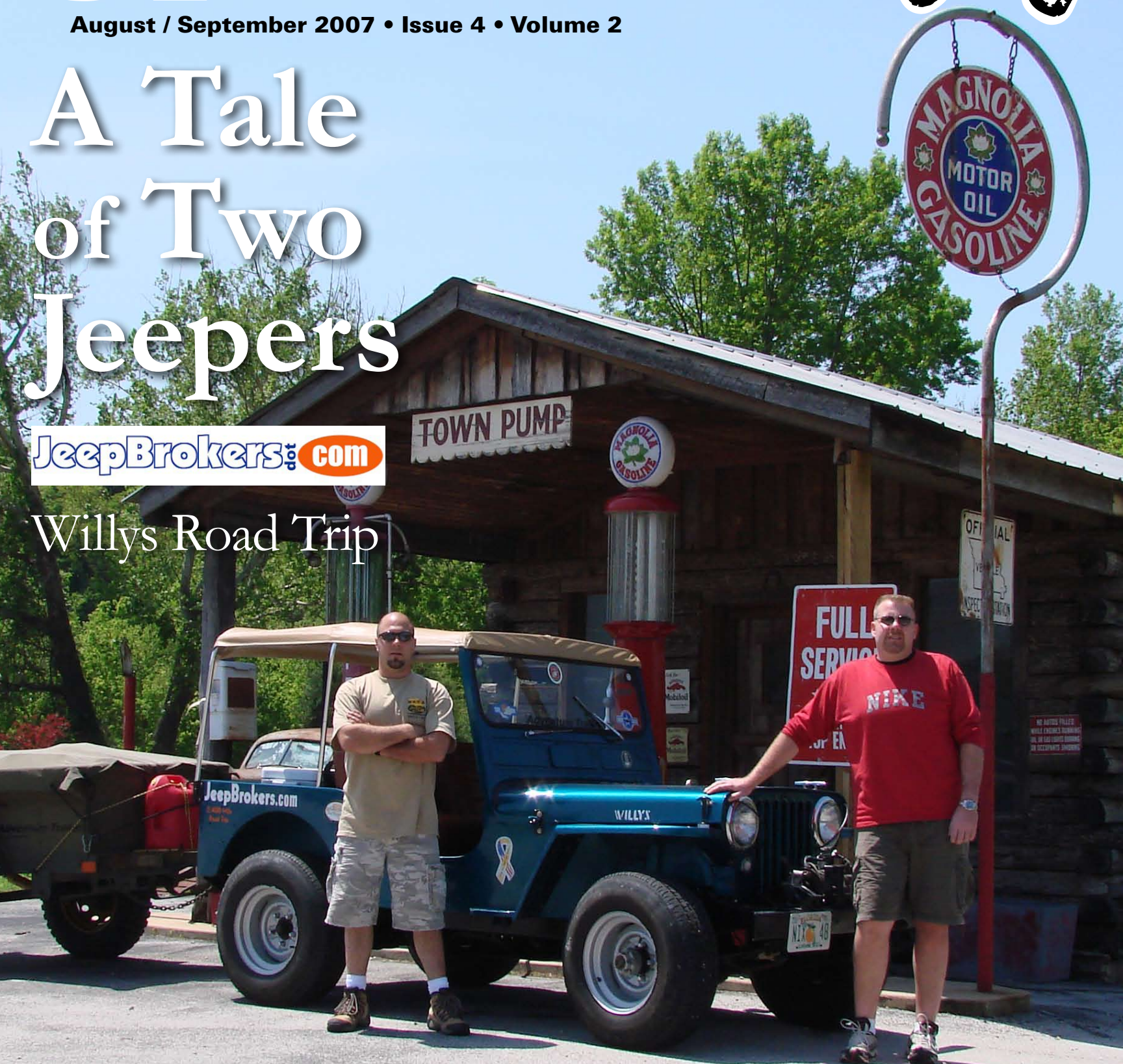


August / September 2007 • Issue 4 • Volume 2

## A Tale of Two Jeepers

JeepBrokers.com

Willys Road Trip



**CIRCUS MEXICUS: ROCK N' ROLL ROAD TRIP • CAVING IN THE WEST  
PYRAMID LAKE WITH ADVENTURE TRAILERS • CLIMBING THE CHIMNEY  
CIRCLE THE WAGONS: HISTORIC TRAILRUN**



*In wisdom gathered over time, I have found that every experience is a form of exploration. – Ansel Adams*

When I first read the above quote by one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's greatest landscape photographers, something struck me inside that brought to light a realization. The realization that all of our life experiences are the summation of our being and as such, those experiences guide us in our life-long pursuit, or exploration, for happiness. For most of us there is a happiness that comes from the exploration of the unknown. This is what our magazine continues to celebrate: the pursuit of happiness through exploration of a world that is grand in every way imaginable.

In May 2007, a two-man team, whose passion for adventure brought them together as business partners, continued a journey that began nearly 60 years ago by a World War II hero named Nick Fallier. When Nick returned home from war in the South Pacific, he celebrated by purchasing a Willys Jeep vehicle. For over a half-century, he and the vehicle experienced all that is grand about America. Nick would later pass on the wisdom of his vehicle to Will Morgan and Vance Crowder. Teetering along at 40 miles per hour for nearly 2,200 miles across the Southern United States, Will and Vance explored life in a way that many of us don't get the chance to do. By the end of their journey, a journey that began in Georgia and finished along America's legendary "Route 66", a renewed sense of freedom was had, courtesy of a vehicle that had become a "legend" in its own right.

This type of adventure encompassed the essence of exploration and pursuit of happiness. For Will and Vince, their ride across the States reiterated the fact that life truly is an adventure. The only question is this: Are you willing to take it for a ride?



Frank Ledwell  
Editor-in-Chief



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Photo used with permission from Chrysler Media Services

## The New Chrysler Moves Forward as Independent Company

Auburn Hills, Mich./Stuttgart, Germany - Chrysler announced that the sale of the majority interest in the Chrysler Group to an affiliate of Cerberus Capital Management, L.P. was completed today, creating Chrysler LLC, or "The New Chrysler" – the first major North American automotive manufacturer in more than a half century to be privately owned.

On May 14, 2007, DaimlerChrysler AG announced that an affiliate of Cerberus would acquire an 80.1 percent equity interest in the holding company of what is now legally known as Chrysler LLC. DaimlerChrysler AG, which will be renamed "Daimler AG" pending shareholder approval in the fall, will retain the remaining 19.9 percent interest. As previously stated, joint projects between the two companies will continue.

### First Day Activities

The New Chrysler will celebrate its "First Day" on Monday, August 6, at its Auburn Hills, Michigan world headquarters building and its facilities around the world. The company will continue to roll out the launch of The New Chrysler throughout the year. The Pentastar logo will also return as the company's corporate mark in an updated form, and will be unveiled Monday.

### About Chrysler

Chrysler LLC, headquartered in Auburn Hills, Michigan, produces Chrysler, Jeep®, Dodge and

Mopar® brand vehicles and products. Total sales worldwide in 2006 were 2.7 million vehicles. Sales outside of North America were the highest in a decade with an increase of 15 percent over 2005. On the heels of the company's record product launch year (Chrysler launched 10 all-new vehicles in 2006), the company plans to extend that streak with eight all-new products in 2007. Its product lineup features some of the world's most recognizable vehicles, including the Chrysler 300, Jeep Commander and Dodge Charger. The Chrysler Foundation, the company's philanthropic arm, gave \$23.6 million in grants in 2006.

### About Cerberus

Established in 1992, Cerberus Capital Management, L.P. is one of the world's leading private investment firms with approximately \$25 billion under management in funds and accounts. Through its team of more than 275 investment and operations professionals, Cerberus specializes in providing both financial resources and operational expertise to help transform undervalued companies into industry leaders for long-term success and value creation.

Cerberus is headquartered in New York City, with affiliate and/or advisory offices in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, London, Baarn, Frankfurt, Tokyo, Osaka and Taipei. More information on Cerberus can be found at

<http://www.cerberuscapital.com>.



## Biodiesel: A Clean, Renewable Fuel Made in America

### What is Biodiesel?

Biodiesel is a clean renewable diesel fuel made from vegetable oils. Most biodiesel in the U.S. is made from soybean oil, although other sources, such as canola, sunflowers or used cooking oil, also can be used to produce biodiesel fuel.

All Chrysler Group diesel vehicles are approved for use with biodiesel: the Jeep® Liberty CRD and Dodge Ram 2500/3500 heavy duty Cummins diesel are approved for B5 (5 percent biodiesel); the Dodge Sprinter van is approved for B2. In 2007, the new Jeep Grand Cherokee CRD diesel is approved for use with B5 biodiesel fuel.



Chrysler Group is working with industry partners on a national standard for B20 (20 percent biodiesel) that can be used in all diesel engines.

### The Benefits of Biodiesel

- Biodegradable and environmentally safe
- Reduces tailpipe emissions of particulates, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons
- Reduces life-cycle emissions of greenhouse gas carbon dioxide
- Renewable, replaces oil-based diesel fuel
- Reduces dependence on oil for transportation
- Made from American agricultural products, supports the U.S. economy
- High cetane rating improves lubricity, reduces engine wear
- Can be used with existing fuel infrastructure, no special pumps needed
- No major engine modifications needed

Additional information and news from Chrysler Group is available at

<http://cgmedia.daimlerchrysler.com>

**August 7 – 31: 'Planet X Winter Games'** in Thredbo, Australia. Four days of adrenalin-pumping action sees the world's best snow riders battling it out at Thredbo in the Great Dividing Range in one of extreme sport's most glamorous tournaments. For more information, visit:

<http://www.planetx.com.au/>

**August 16 - 19: '5th Annual Northern Lights Charity Trailfest'** in Minden, Ontario. Hosted by the Ontario Federation of 4WD Recreationalists. For more information, visit:

<http://www.of4wd.com>

**August 17 - 18: 'Outdoor Trophy'** in Lingenau, Austria. It's the survival of the fittest at the Outdoor Trophy, one of Austria's top extreme sport events. Hundreds of competitors in Lingenau battle it out in four grueling disciplines: mountain biking, mountain running, paragliding and white water kayaking. For more information, visit:

<http://www.outdoortrophy.com>

**August 17 - 19: '11th Annual Rubicon Trail Jeep® Jamboree'** at The Rubicon Trail, California. Join Jeep® Jamboree USA for a weekend of wheeling and adventure on the most heralded off-highway trail in the U.S. For more information, visit:

<http://jeepjamboreeusa.com/>

**August 24 – September 1: 'Australian Safari'** through Western Australia. Often referred to as "Australia's Paris to Dakar", the Australian Safari is the country's ultimate off-road adventure. After a two-year break, it returns

in 2007 with a fresh look and a new route, covering 5500km (3417 miles) cross-country through Western Australia and providing a thorough test of motoring endurance for four-wheel-drives, two-wheel-drives, motorbikes and quad bikes. For more information, visit:

<http://www.australiansafari.com.au/>

**September 1 - 2: 'The South Downs Way Lemming Trail Bikefest'** in the UK. The original UK mountain bike endurance challenge that features 2 days, 100 miles, and 9,000 feet of climbing on mountain bikes. An epic enduro with a rolling weekend bikefest. For more information, visit:

<http://www.trailbreak.co.uk/lemming/index.php>

**September 1 - 3: 'Thrill in the Hills Run'** in Hot Springs, Arkansas. A weekend of Jeep and 4x4 wheeling on Arkansas' most renowned trails. For more information, visit:

<http://www.orvpark.com>

**September 8 - 9: '2nd Annual Surplus City 4x4 Evolution Show and Competition'** in Oroville, California. For more information, call 1-800-353-3772 or visit:

<http://www.surplusjeep.com/>

**September 14 - 16: '20th Annual Ouray Jeep Jamboree'** in Ouray, Colorado. Join Jeep® Jamboree USA for a weekend of wheeling and adventure in a town known as the "Switzerland of America." For more information, visit:

<http://jeepjamboreeusa.com/>

**September 15 – 16: "Weekend with Gear Uclimb Event"** at Red River Gorge, KY. If you have ever wanted to Rock Climb then join Mountaingear.com for a weekend with professional instructors who will teach you the basics of rock climbing. For more information and to register, please visit:

<http://www.uclimb.org>

**September 15: 'Beginning Off-Road 4x4 Skills Clinic'** in Hungry Valley near Gorman, California. For more information, visit:

<http://www.4x4training.com>

**September 15: 'Intro to Outdoor Rock Climbing'** in Bear Valley, California. Mountain Adventure Seminars (MAS) introduces and reviews the basics of safe outdoor climbing while teaching good habits for future climbing adventures. No previous climbing experience is required and all climbing equipment is included. For more information, visit:

[http://www.active.com/event\\_detail.cfm?event\\_id=1435673](http://www.active.com/event_detail.cfm?event_id=1435673)

**September 21 - 23: '10th Annual Catskill Mountains Jeep Jamboree'** in Monticello, New York. Join Jeep® Jamboree USA for a weekend of wheeling and adventure in the Catskills of New York. For more information, visit:

<http://jeepjamboreeusa.com/>

**September 29: 'BMJA Jeep 101'** at Paragon Adventure Park. Learn the basics of using a Jeep® vehicle. For more information, visit:

<http://www.bmja.org/>





# CRAWL 4 A CURE HUGE SUCCESS IN MINNESOTA

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2007



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On the weekend of July 20-22, the third annual Crawl 4 a Cure was held in Gilbert, Minnesota at Iron Range Off-Road Park. The event consisted of a weekend of trail riding through some of Minnesota's most challenging and beautiful terrain, with all net proceeds benefiting the Minnesota chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. The event featured nearly 45 registered vehicles and approximately 120 people were in attendance. Trail rides, rated from easy to difficult, were offered to all participants and while several attendees dealt with breaks and bruises to their vehicles, including several broken upper link mounts as well as rear drive shafts. The event as a whole was a huge success, raising approximately \$35,000 for Multiple Sclerosis research, a chronic and debilitating disease that affects the Central Nervous System.





Dollar totals for the  
previous years  
2005- \$21,000  
2006- \$24,500  
2007- \$35,000 approx.  
Total- \$80,500

A number of sponsors helped make this a growing and successful event.  
For more information about Crawl 4 a Cure, or to organize a similar event in your area, please visit:

<http://www.crawl4cure.org/index.shtml>  
[http://www.nationalmssociety.org/site/PageServer?pagename=hom\\_gen\\_homepage](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/site/PageServer?pagename=hom_gen_homepage)

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## IN BALLENSTEDT, GERMANY

Text and Photos by Jan Liska

Take two wheeling areas, one roadbook-tour, 350 Jeeps, about 750 jeepers with kids and dogs and caravans and tow rigs and tents, a big party area, good weather and stir well – you get the annual JeepCamp, held in the small town of Ballenstedt in the middle of Germany. In 2007 it was a special event since it was held the 10<sup>th</sup> time. It's organized by the Official German Jeep Club.

It starts on Friday - the first tow rigs from all over in Germany and the Netherlands start arriving on the wheeling area "Gegensteine", an area used by the army of the former German Democratic Republic. After a short welcome the first tents and caravans were set up, the rigs are being inspected (no oil dripping and no loose steering please!) and the first fires are lit. In the evening, when even more people are arriving, the party area starts to fill and the beer starts tasting even better.

It was party, all night long – so expect to see some tired jeepers the next morning. Some of the participants have spent the night outside the Gegensteine-area in hotels in the nearby town of Ballenstedt.

At 8 o'clock there's a breakfast buffet, so with the first cup coffee we're all getting awake – more or less ;-)  
After getting awake we could take a look at the "world record Jeep Wrangler Unlimited Rubicon", which has achieved the high altitude world record in April 2007 (see Jpfreek issue 05) on the Ojos de Salado in Chile.



Saturday sees some wheeling, very different rigs are exploring the area – from stock JKs to big, bad V8-powered CJs with lockers, bidders and all the stuff. The LWB were a bit underrepresented in the last years (we've been visiting this event since 7 years), but in the last two years you can see some more built XJs and ZJs – one of the most impressive rigs these year was a Dutch ZJ on 37" tires with longarms, bumpers all around and a big sticker saying "My family car" – it was impressive to see the drivers approach on the big mud hole – where other drivers were spinning their rigs wheels and let their engines scream he just steadily crawled through the goo, AC on and his about 4 year old daughter on the passenger seat – wheeling in style ;-)



But we also saw some quite rare vehicles (don't forget, that's not the US, over here in Europe you don't see that much jeeps, most people tend to buy underpowered Japanese or overpriced German SUVs) like a CJ-6, an old RHD Wagoneer in good shape and some MJJs. It's nice to see, that these older jeeps are still around and see some offroad-use.

While we were enjoying the wheeling under a blue sky there was also a competition held in a separate area – it's part of the Jeep ClubCup, an competition series that consists of six events in whole Germany. That was the last run in this series and the winner was Harry Wolf from Munich in his mildly modified TJ 4.0.

In the evening there was a party again, some BBQs were lit and a band was playing – it was a very relaxed evening with some rain in the night.

On Sunday morning the roadbook-tour starts. It leads around 20 miles to another wheeling area in Oschersleben, an abandoned mining area. Due to the rain some of the gravel roads were covered with mud what makes the ride even more interesting – it's quite unusual in Germany that you can drive more than two or three miles on unpaved roads.

After arriving in Oschersleben some of the wheelers first had to leave their rigs (imagine that ;-)) and had to look for a GeoCache, which was hidden in one of the abandoned mining machines. Then they also attacked the different obstacles in the wheeling area, from steep descents to some wheeling on artificial obstacles and of course the above mentioned mud hole.

The mud hole was one of the main attractions of this area, so a large amount of wheelers with cameras were taking hundred of photos of others wheelers, getting stuck, getting winched out or wading through the mud. While I didn't try the mud hole myself, it seemed like a lot of fun to me.

It started to rain in the evening, but nevertheless the party in the evening was a blast, again. The winners of the Jeep ClubCup were announced and there was also a raffle in the evening.

On Monday there was again the possibility to enjoy the wheeling area "Gegensteine", but due to the bad weather most of the wheelers were already leaving the event after breakfast.

I'd like to thank all the members of the "JeepClub Deutschland" who spent much time and effort to make this event as great as it was. We've already booked a room for next year, when the 11<sup>th</sup> JeepCamp will be held.





# Euro Camp Jeep 2007 in France



Text and photos courtesy of Chrysler Media Services

Euro Camp Jeep®, Europe's largest single-brand 4x4 customer event, will once again celebrate a record attendance this year, as more than 1,500 customers and 650 Jeep vehicles gather in southern France for the ultimate celebration of all things Jeep.

To accommodate the growing number of participants at this seventh annual Euro Camp Jeep, the event will, for the first time, consist of back-to-back programs – half of the participants will take part from June 30 to July 3 and the other half from July 4 to 7. The event location is in one of Europe's most picturesque regions in France, known for its limestone caves and the Ardèche River, which is a popular destination for watersports enthusiasts.

Jeep aficionados, their families and friends will flock to Euro Camp Jeep to explore a full range of activities, including off-road driving trails, fun vehicle-related challenges, navigation and orienteering trials and invigorating regional drives through scenic countryside. Non-driving activities will include canoeing, quad biking, a Jeep clothing and merchandise shop, daily video shows, themed dinner parties and live evening concerts.

"The growing popularity of Euro Camp Jeep is not only a result of our impressive sales increase, but more a testimony to owners' passion for the Jeep brand and all it represents," said Thomas Hausch, Vice President – International Sales, Chrysler Group. "Guests will be traveling from as far as Canada, Sweden, Ukraine and China, and from a record 28 different countries. Each year the reputation of the event grows, and more customers spread the word that Euro Camp Jeep is not to be missed."







Participants will also be given a privileged look at the new Jeep Grand Cherokee, making its first appearance in Europe with a refreshed interior and exterior. The latest Grand Cherokee features an improved 4.7-liter V-8 engine that delivers improved fuel economy, as well as increased horsepower and torque compared with the engine it replaces. The Grand Cherokee also offers a host of innovative premium amenities, such as the MyGIG™ Multimedia Infotainment System, an advanced and flexible Hill Descent Control system providing more control in severe off-road hill descent, a new Hill Start Assist system that holds the vehicle automatically on steep hills for a smooth and controlled drive-away from stop signs and traffic signals, and Trailer Sway Control to minimize trailer sway during towing.

The Jeep Trailhawk Concept also makes its European debut at Euro Camp Jeep. This concept vehicle had its global premiere at the 2007 North American International Auto Show in January in Detroit. Trailhawk merges the spectrum of the Jeep brand by combining the core off-road features of the new Jeep Wrangler Unlimited with the refined sophistication of an all-new on-road, open-air concept vehicle, providing a unique and fresh expression for Jeep.



Adding to the excitement will be two Jeep Wrangler Unlimited vehicles that set a new world record by climbing 6,646 meters (21,804 feet) to the rim of the world's highest volcano, Ojos del Salado in Chile. The achievement was certified by Guinness World Records™. The pair of standard equipment Jeep Wrangler Unlimited Rubicon models maneuvered over glaciers, rock cliffs and volcanic sand, battling through thin air, hurricane-strength winds and extreme temperatures to break the altitude record for a four-wheeled vehicle.



As part of the courses at Euro Camp Jeep, off-road driving experts will offer advanced 4x4 techniques and coaching that comply with the "Tread Lightly!" philosophy of responsible off-road driving and protection of the environment. Participants can also learn much more about their vehicles by talking directly with attending Jeep engineers. A "Jeep Kids" activity area will offer adventures for younger family members.





### Customer Relationship Programs Around the World

By building on its owners' enthusiasm, the Jeep brand continues to be at the forefront of relationship marketing by offering unequaled opportunities to explore the abilities of the vehicles through various driving events. Euro Camp Jeep, the largest single-brand 4x4 customer event in Europe, is a prime example.

In markets outside North America, there are many Jeep-themed events that attract current and prospective customers to learn more about the brand and its vehicles. There are also numerous Jeep Clubs organized and run by owner-enthusiasts.

In Jeep's largest market, the United States, there are two owner-loyalty programs created by the Jeep division of Chrysler Group. Jeep Jamboree, which began in the 1950s, is the original off-highway vacation, bringing fun and adventure to owners and their families at all levels of 4x4 driving experience. Jamborees are offered around 30 times a year, in different locations across the country. In addition, there are now Jeep Jamborees in Mexico.

The success of Jeep Jamboree spawned Camp Jeep: an annual outdoor lifestyle vacation experience launched 13 years ago for U.S. customers. Camp Jeep, upon which Euro Camp Jeep was first based, is held one weekend each year and offers a variety of 4x4 and other activities to more than 7,000 participants.

### About the Jeep Brand

Last year, Jeep celebrated its 65th anniversary by announcing a host of new Jeep models, expanding from three to seven vehicles and moving into new market territories. By the end of 2007, the Jeep brand line-up will include Jeep Commander, Grand Cherokee, Cherokee (Liberty in North America) and Wrangler, plus the all-new Compass, Patriot and the four-door Wrangler Unlimited. All of these vehicles will include diesel and petrol powertrain options outside North America.

"The Jeep brand is on a product offensive and will continue to grow with new offerings that leverage Jeep's legendary 4x4 leadership," said Hausch. "No other automotive manufacturer in the world has the range of sport-utility vehicles that Jeep offers. This impressive portfolio provides Jeep dealers with an unprecedented opportunity to grow the Jeep brand by offering a variety of products that will excite our current customers and attract new ones."

In July 1941, the Willys-Overland company delivered to the U.S. Army 1,500 light reconnaissance vehicles called the Willys Quad. Improved vehicles were called the MA and MB, but eventually, those vehicles came to be known as the Jeep. More than 368,000 were built for use during World War II.

Over the years, freedom, adventure, mastery and authenticity have become the hallmarks of the Jeep brand and the basis for its SUV leadership worldwide. Today, Jeep vehicles are available in more than 125 countries around the world, and in excess of 11 million vehicles carrying the famous Jeep badge have been sold since 1946.





## Oil + Water America's TOUR Follow-up Interview with Seth Warren



**JPF:** The O+WP team has generated a lot of momentum in its goal of spreading the word about biofuels and alternative energies during the course of the America's Tour. Do you feel that the mission of the O+WP is being achieved, and how do you keep this momentum going as you begin the second phase of the World Tour?

**SW:** When we started the Oil and Water Project, we designed a big poster to help relay the many goals and ideas of the project. In the bottom corner we had a picture of a massive snowball rolling down the hill. I feel like the snowball portrays what we have accomplished with our adventure publicly, and it grew with every kilometer we made it down the road without petroleum. As we plan for the next adventure, I can only see astronomic growth.

**JPF:** Towards the latter part of the trip, you and Tyler had the opportunity to hit-up the Rio Escondido for a day of kayaking thrills. How did this portion of the trip compare to your previous kayaking experiences along the America's Tour, and what has it been like to have the opportunity to meld your passion for white-water kayaking with biofuels education?

**SW:** We knew from the start that the Patagonia was our final destination for kayaking. It is known around the world for its amazing pristine rivers. Tyler and I both dropped a 75 foot waterfall, easily the biggest either of us had ever done. The Rio Escondido is so clean, you can flip over and drink the water right out of it. Melding our passion for the environment with our passion for kayaking and the outdoors goes hand in hand. It's a great feeling to know that just by arriving at the river we can have a real life influence in protecting it.





**JPF:** Having driven the distance that you and Tyler drove en route to the "End of the World" in Ushuaia, Argentina, do you have any advice to give to those who wish to follow in those endeavors?

**SW:** If you can think it, you can do it.

**JPF:** You guys have gotten a lot of press coverage since the inception of the O+WP, including some international coverage from Reuters and ABC News. How has this coverage helped the efforts of the Biofuels Education Coalition?

**SW:** Media is the greatest tool to reach the masses. By blending environmental advocacy with cool things like adventure, travel and extreme sports, we were really able to get peoples attention. We are showing first hand that people don't have to change their lifestyles to make differences in the world. However small, it has to start with the individual. Media has aided with our goal to stimulate change...one person at a time.

**JPF:** Coupled with the press coverage you've gotten from the tour, how has your newly found celebrity status impacted you guys personally?

**SW:** We have been popular among the extreme sport/kayak crowd for nearly a decade. With our clear decision to move away from all the personal exposure and funnel it to a cause we believe in, not only has it generated way more press than we ever dreamed, but we personally receive way more respect from fans. I am a much more proud person than I used to be. When I used to see myself on TV and in the magazines, I was embarrassed. Now I'm like "oh hell yeah" because it stands for something great.

**JPF:** Now that the O+WP team has logged over 61,000 kilometers (approximately 36,600 miles) without using a "single drop of petroleum", what are the plans for the O+WP going forward?

**SW:** I want to live my life with a zero carbon footprint and encourage others to do the same.

- For more information about the Oil and Water Project or about the Biofuels Education Coalition and its efforts to educate the world about alternative energies, visit:

<http://www.oilandwaterproject.org>  
<http://www.oilandwaterproject.org/blog/index.php>



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## WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

If you're looking for engaging content about Jeep and outdoor adventure, you've come to the right place! JP'Freeks' are inspired by lifestyles off the beaten path, and we encourage anyone with a story to tell or a photograph to share to submit them to JPFreek. Who knows, we may very well use your story and/or photo(s) in an upcoming issue, and your submissions will be rewarded with some really cool JPFreek gear including decals and t-shirts. So what are you waiting for? Submit your adventures to JPFreek at:

**mystory@jpfreek.com**





# CIRCUS MEXICUS:

Rock N' Roll  
Road Trip

Text and Photos by Mark D. Stephens

*"When we talk about a Silk Road experience we don't mean a caravan traveling across the desert, but something much, much more. It's about getting people to dream and to re-imagine something they know or to discover something new."*

*- Yo-Yo Ma, Grammy Award-winning cellist*

Think about the rumble of mud terrain tires on pavement at 70 miles per hour. Hear it?

And the flap-flapping of your bikini top in the wind. You can't hear the radio, but crank the volume anyway . . . "Just how far down do you want to go?"

Enjoy the wind and the rumble. It's hot, too, almost 100 degrees on this fine May day, and it's only 9:00 a.m. Summer is near, and most of the wildlife waits to come out after dusk; except the cold-blooded rattlesnakes who sunbathe in the open on these sizzling days.

This moment is precisely why I bought a Jeep.





# TAMALES • BURRITOS • 50000\$



A different wildlife - my brother, Greg, and I - are headed across a quiet, cactus-and-tumbleweed-strewn strip of sand and rock through the Sonoran Desert that the map calls Highway 85. We're not stopping until we hit the Mexican border where we'll purchase a bag of fresh flour tortillas and a pair of cold Fantas to get us through until we locate a taco stand. This is our rock-n-roll road trip to see Roger Clyne and The Peacemakers in Puerto Peñasco (in Americano speak that incorrectly translates to Rocky Point), a little fishing village turned gringo getaway on the sea in Mexico. Twice a year the band puts together a pilgrimage of sorts: everyone who comes to this show must make a road trip into Mexico for a long night of music and drink. They call it "Circus Mexicus."



Getting into Mexico is easy. Just wave at the sweaty black-eyed *Federale* guarding his country from intruders, say, "Buenos dias," and then watch for kids running in the streets. Maybe a few will want to wash your windshield for a buck. It's a part of the adventure.

Hey, I've got a question: why is there a *gringo* rock-n-roll show in Mexico?

It's just their style, and the music reflects it:  
Mexican Moonshine!  
I fell under the spell  
when I stumbled over the line...

Or a little more recognizable to the general public, from 1996:  
Everybody knows that the world is full of stupid people  
So meet me at the mission at midnight  
Well divvy up there  
Everybody knows that the world is full of stupid people  
I got the pistol, so I keep the pesos  
Yeah, that seems fair!







It's purely coincidental that I ever learned about RCPM - Roger Clyne and The Peacemakers. A friend handed us a CD the day my wife and I left for a road trip into Mexico where we kayaked on the Sea of Cortez. "This ought to be a good sound track for your trip," he said. "Give it a listen. But I want it back."

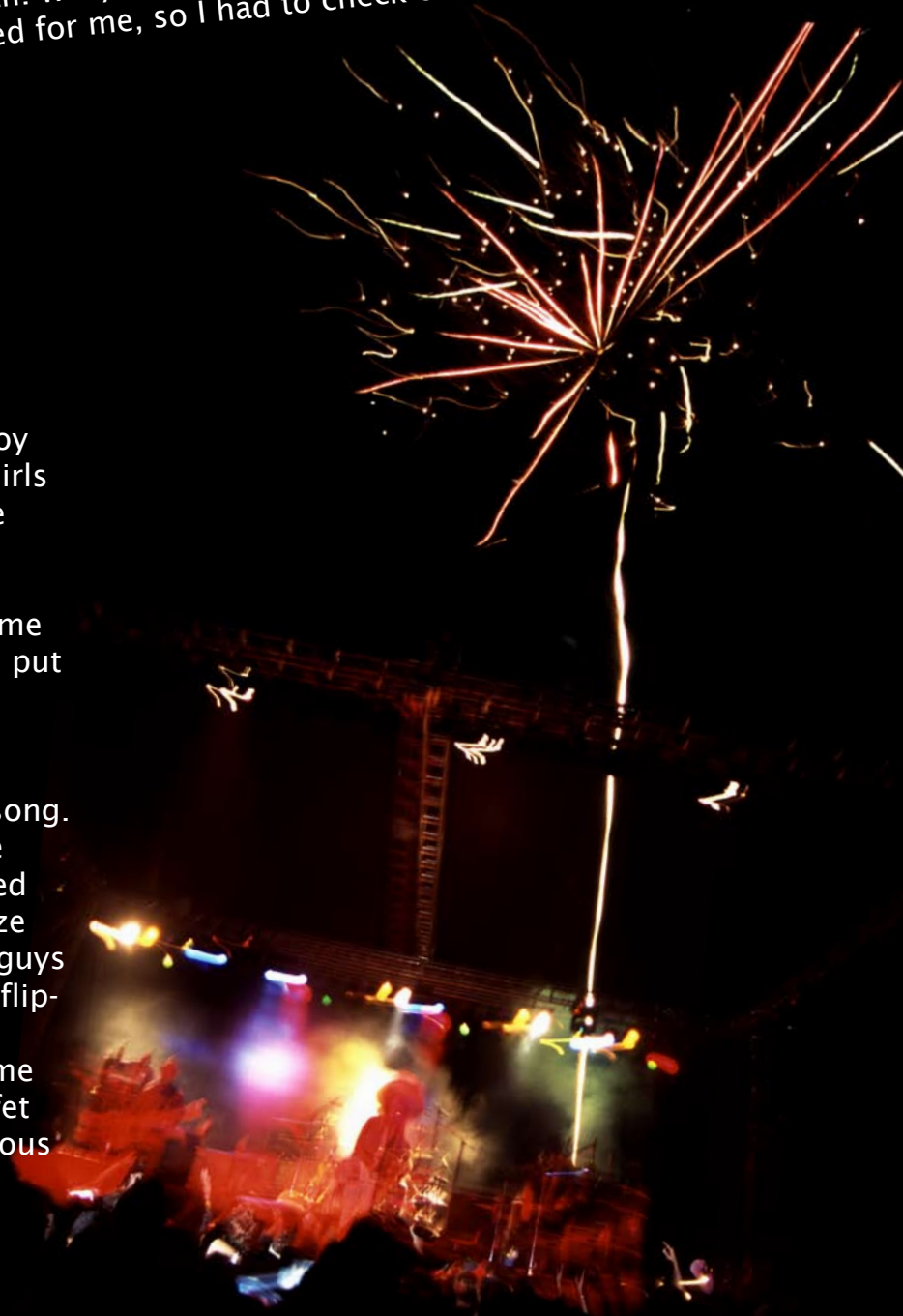
What a great friend. The music was a perfect fit, so we listened for two full days on Mexican back roads and a never-to-be-named secluded beach. Witty, fun, loaded with desert imagery . . . and, my favorite part, exceptional drum work. It worked for me, so I had to check out Circus Mexico. And buy my buddy a replacement CD.

### Meanwhile, back at the bar . . .

Greg and I had come off of a long day of driving through the desert and arrived at this not-so-little bar near the beach, Sunset Cantina. If you're a guy, you'll enjoy purchasing a brew direct from the bar - girls in tiny bikini tops and cut-off shorts serve the drinks here. Yes, they'll titter at your lousy come-ons and absurd jokes. Some gimmicks always work, don't they? Welcome to Gringolandia, but be careful where you put your pesos.

We sipped down something cold, and the band hammered through a sound check song. I enjoyed watching the fans stirring in the streets and singing along as the sky turned orange over the ocean and the salty breeze lifted the hats off of tourist's heads. The guys wear Shady Brady hats, island shirts, and flip-flops. Girls like to wear bikinis and beach wraps . . . also with Shady Bradies. To some degree, it's oddly familiar to a Jimmy Buffet show and I have to be honest: I'm suspicious of it.

Just get me to the music.





Shortly after dark, the opening band, Cross Canadian Ragweed, slid on stage and fired through their first song. The drummer pounded out solid rhythms and his *compadre* locked into the kick drum with his massive six-string bass. I liked them. No wasted air time with a speech or an introduction – we were trapped music fans subjected to paying \$4.00 for a can of lukewarm beer while standing around in a dirt lot. Cross Canadian Ragweed understood that we needed one thing only: a good song.

I raise my glass.

“We ain’t never had a hit on the radio, and we ain’t lookin’ fer one, neither . . . thanks for coming out.” There they were: the first spoken words from the singer, and after the first two songs. Nice touch, and just the right amount of edge for an independent rock show.

Halfway through the set, Roger Clyne sauntered onto the stage with drink in hand. He grinned with his entire face, infecting the crowd with positive energy, and strode towards the microphone. Lifting his glass in the air he spoke, “Buenas noches amigos!” His shirt said it all in large, old colonial lettering from shoulder to shoulder: M E X I C O.

Clyne introduced Cross Canadian Ragweed by saying, “Thanks for allowing us to share the best rock-n-roll audience with these guys. Muchas gracias.”

By the time Cross Canadian passed the stage to RCPM, the stage crew had been let out of their cages. They lit the sky with a barrage of fireworks and sent Clyne out with a giant sombrero on his head. We were missing piñatas. I couldn’t find any. But the fireworks rumbled in the sky for most of the songs and Clyne – in his typical fashion – wore any hat that landed on stage.

If Roger Clyne wears your hat, you’ve undergone a social rite of passage. At a few RCPM shows, I’ve met lively girls who giggle and declare, “See this hat? Roger Clyne wore it. Wanna smell it?”

So, wouldn’t you know it . . . someone decided to bring the most ridiculous hat he could find at the dollar store: a Viking helmet complete with horns. Not the Minnesota football team. No, not those Vikings. I mean the kind that looks like an upside down salad bowl with long, curved horns. Clyne picked him out of the crowd and stopped a song. “Okay, I need that hat up here.”

. . . and he kicked up a rock-n-roll song while wearing a plastic Viking helmet in Mexico, and fireworks blasting over the stage. I swear I can’t make this stuff up and it was worth the price of admission. I think the song went like this, if my memory hasn’t failed me:





*We can hear the bossa nova,  
we can sway the night away,  
the steps of this dance are best left up to  
chance...  
Better beautiful than perfect anyway*

Chance smiled upon the show one more time when Clyne took notice of a young girl of maybe 8 or 9 years old on her dad's shoulders right in front of the stage. She wore a pink cowgirl hat and a t-shirt that simply read, "Leaky Little Boat," the title of a crowd-pleasing RCPM song.

"Sweetheart, would you come up on stage for this song? It'll be perfect. Dad, she'll be back in a minute. C'mon up here, sweetie." Dad lifted her up onto the stage, and Clyne bent over so he could speak to her eye-to-eye. He looked like he was trying to be comforting, she had her finger in her mouth.

Clyne then said to the crowd, "Check this out. Her shirt says leaky little boat." The audience belted out laughter and raised their drinks in the air. But that promptly freaked out the little girl, so he leaned over and spoke softly to the girl for a moment.

Ultimately, she stayed but stood to the side of the stage. The crowd sang along about a leaky little boat for over five minutes and chanted for the girl when she climbed back onto her dad's shoulders.

## Music Goes On

Each Circus Mexicus show ends with the same song, *Nada*, which is Spanish for "nothing." The tune has a different energy from rowdy rock, but it's no ballad either. Nearly every fan sings along until the band stops playing and listens to the crowd sing an entire verse all by itself.

This final song of the night melted into the next day where we motored toward the U.S. boundary with the road reverberating underneath, 100-degree wind whipping through the windows.

The show was over, but half of the road trip remained. A short verse in *Nada* goes like this:

*I see the lightning from a storm down in Mexico*

*...*

*I cross the desert*

*Disappear into the tumbleweeds*

Those words repeated over and over in my head until just these four muted the others: *I cross the desert*. Then the road fizzled and the surroundings became parts: heat; granite; creosote; saguaro; palo verde; blackened volcanic rock of the Pinacate lava flow. *I cross the desert*.

It's sweltering. Perhaps lizards could liquefy on a Sonoran morning like this. Over and over the words, the sound of the crowd singing, the vision of Clyne and his Peacemakers beaming at one another, tipping drinks, sweating. Just another rock show? I drive on to the international boundary. Rock; sand; tumbleweeds; wind; coyote; border patrol checkpoint. *I cross the desert*.



See Roger Clyne and the Peacemakers at a bar near you.

Find out at [www.azpeacemakers.com](http://www.azpeacemakers.com)

Next Circus Mexicus: October 20, 2007





# A Tale of Two Jeepers

Text by Frank Ledwell, Editor-in-Chief

Photos by Will Morgan and Vance Crowder of [Jeepbrokers.com](http://Jeepbrokers.com)



At ruins with no brakes, time to wheel our way out

When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, the stage had been set for what would later become the deadliest conflict in human history. Over 60 million people lost their lives during the Second World War, including nearly 40 million civilians, and while the forces of 'good' prevailed in an Allied victory, the world would never be the same.

During the course of the war in Europe, the U.S. military desired a lightweight reconnaissance vehicle, and bids were solicited in 1940 from a number of auto manufacturers including Bantam, Willys, and Ford Motor Company. Bantam's design caught the eye of the U.S. military, but they lacked the mass production facilities to supply the government. In stepped Willys, a company that had developed a flat-headed four-cylinder engine that had parts that were interchangeable with Ford models of the time. Using mostly Bantam's design, Willys and Ford received contracts to provide the U.S. military with vehicles that would eventually become a symbol for military and civilian off-highway use.

Fast-forward to May of 2007 when a 1948 Willys Jeep vehicle began a 2,147 mile excursion across America. The vehicle was previously owned by Nick Fallier, a World War II veteran who flew 129 missions over the Pacific Ocean between January 1944 and the surrender of Japan in mid-August of 1945. Nick, who earned the rank of Captain during his 12 years in the Army, was dubbed "The Captain of the Clouds" during his service with the 39th Fighter Squadron in the Southwest Pacific. Upon his return to the States, Nick purchased his Willys Jeep vehicle and for nearly 60 years, the vehicle enjoyed the companionship of a dedicated Jeep enthusiast and war veteran before eventually beginning a new chapter in its life with Will Morgan and Vance Crowder, the two-man team from [Jeepbrokers.com](http://Jeepbrokers.com) who, until this trip, had never met each other despite having worked together via the internet for nearly a decade.



The journey began six weeks earlier when the Jeep became available for purchase through a classified posting on Will and Vance's website. Elated at the prospect of owning a one-of-a-kind vehicle, Will and Vance followed-up with the ad posting. Shortly thereafter, the purchase had been completed and the preparation for traveling the south via Georgia and Tennessee was in full swing. The next step included the purchase of an M416 military trailer that would be used to haul the gear and other items necessary for making the return trip back to Arizona. Thanks to the efforts of *Adventure Trailers*, an expedition trailer company based out of California, the trailer was transformed from a box with wheels into a functional add-on that would prove more than road-worthy throughout the course of the trip. From there, it was a matter of finalizing all of the logistics prior to meeting in Florida to join with Nick and the vehicle.



Will & Vance in Tallahassee, Florida

Once in Florida, the Jeepbrokers.com team officially kicked off their Road Trip when they met with Nick at their hotel. After exchanging cordial greetings and talking about their plans, the team headed to Nick's house where they were thrilled to view a war memorabilia collection that rivaled that of most museums. "I've flown every one of those planes", Nick said as he pointed to a collection of a dozen or so model airplanes that rested on a nearby shelf. He then told story after story about an exciting mission or close call that he had in each of those planes before progressing on to another area of his collection.



(Left top) Nick's house  
(Above) Nicks collection  
(Left bottom) Just another knick knack in Nick's house







After a number of other exciting stories and recollections by Nick, the group headed to Cairo, Georgia to view and pick-up the Jeep as it had been stored in a shed there for several years. A subsequent test of the vehicle ensured that this would be a thrilling ride home as Vance, who stands at 6'4", folded himself behind the wheel in an effort to drive the vehicle. The adventure had now begun, and with trailer in tow, the Willys Jeep began its long journey to a new home.

**(Above) Road ready in Cairo, Georgia (5/12/07)**  
**(Below left) Last shot before we began the trip**



Only 20 miles into the trip, the team noticed that the transfer case in the Jeep had leaked quite a bit of fluid, and this would be a constant reminder that driving a 60-year old vehicle cross-country would not only be a joy but also a frustration at times. They would eventually reach Columbus, Georgia later that day, and a Civil War Naval Museum caught their eye. The next morning, Will and Vance visited the museum for several hours before hitting the road once again en route to Rome, Georgia, their next stop along the way.



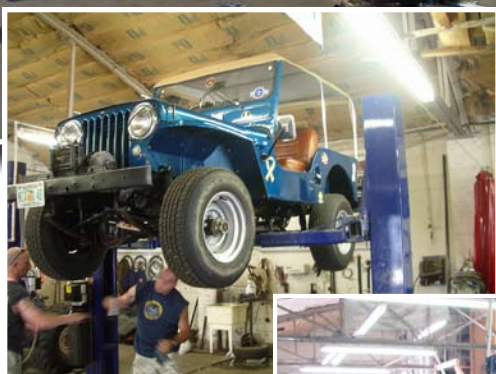
**Breakfast in Rome, Georgia.**  
**Ran into some fellow Jeeps.**

The next morning, under overcast and breezy skies, the team headed north towards Chattanooga, Tennessee for a comfortable day of driving. Along the way, they met two fellow Jeeps, one of which is the owner of a CJ-8 Scrambler and the other, a CJ-7. After chatting for a while, Will and Vance were back on the road and reached Chattanooga at around 12:30pm. Rolling hills and breathtaking views greeted the team, and after a lunch meeting with a client, they were off again en route to Columbia.



**Pulling a night shift in Rome, Georgia.**





**Hitch troubles in Columbia, Tennessee brought the guys to the Custom Window Tinting Shop where the CWT crew went to work getting the guys, the Jeep, and the trailer back on the road.**

Once in Columbia though, it was found that the pintle hitch from the trailer had torn from the frame of the Jeep. Thanks to a local off-road shop, Custom Tinting and Off-Road, the guys were back on the road in no time. Of course, the guys had reached a point where they were both physically and mentally exhausted, with long days on the road and nights that were filled with repairs to the Jeep and journal updates on their website. But on they went, continuing their travels with a zeal that matched that of Lewis and Clark during their legendary travels after the Louisiana Purchase.

Filling the transfer case was becoming a daily ritual, and before leaving Chattanooga the next morning, Will and Vance would spend their time refilling the transfer case with fluid that was so thick that it would require an IV hose and nearly 45 minutes to complete. Coupled with rain and no windshield wipers, the team headed off in less than desirable conditions. "We froze our asses off until 11am when the rain finally stopped," said Vance

Crowder. Not having windows and barely much to cover their heads, the team showed signs of fatigue. Will had even fallen asleep behind the wheel before Vance made it a point to take the reigns. Despite a lack of comfort and conditions that had been less than ideal, they finally arrived in Arkansas with the continuing chagrin of leaks from the transfer case. But alas, another top-off of the t-case and a fine meal at a Mexican restaurant brought to end a long day.





A trip to an Antique Car Museum the following morning was a nice change of pace. With an extensive collection of rare antiques, both Will and Vance agreed that Nick's collection of war memorabilia would have been a fine compliment to the artifacts in the museum. Afterwards, the trip rolled on and continued through the small town of Flippin. Other than a small church that is eloquently named the "Flippin Church of God," this portion of Arkansas didn't appear to have seen much change in 30+ years. The day would end with their arrival in Harrison, AR, which is located only 20 miles from Branson, Missouri.



They had now traveled over 1,000 miles with hopes of making their way through the remainder of Arkansas and through Oklahoma. With only 300 miles, this seemed to be a more than feasible feat. But, as had previously been the case, a slew of issues that began with a number of hills that slowed the vehicle down to nearly a stand-still (Will and Vance both suspected that they wouldn't be home by Christmas, as slow as the vehicle was moving), and continued with a major oil leak just outside of Tulsa, Oklahoma, ensured new frustrations for the two-man team. Fortunately for Will and Vance, what seemed like a major catastrophe with the vehicle turned out to be little more than a small hole in the oil pan, which was caused by a broken spot weld from a skid plate that had been previously welded to the pan. In addition to this, both guys met a gentleman inside a local grocery store who happened to be the inspiration for the movie "Good Morning Vietnam," starring Robin Williams. He also was featured in one of the Benji movies from the 1980's.

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*"Every day has started with us wondering what we are going to write about because every day begins with us planning to do nothing other than drive all day and sleep all night, which would be a pretty boring story. Luckily (or unluckily depending on how you look at it), every day so far has featured something unplanned or unexpected that has happened to make the day exciting."*

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Day 10 began with Will and Vance having made it to Enid, OK. As Vance would say: *"Every day has started with us wondering what we are going to write about because every day begins with us planning to do nothing other than drive all day and sleep all night, which would be a pretty boring story. Luckily (or unluckily depending on how you look at it), every day so far has featured something unplanned or unexpected that has happened to make the day exciting."* Ironically, that particular day would turn out to be relatively uneventful with the only newsworthy item being that they logged mile 1,500 en route to a town named Hooker.

The next morning featured the final stretch of drive in Oklahoma before crossing through north Texas and into New Mexico. Shortly after arriving in New Mexico, Will and Vance passed an old Willys Jeep in a Wal-Mart parking lot. As it turned out, the vehicle was a 1942 model and the gentleman who drove it had inherited it from his grandfather. He still drives the old Jeep around town quite regularly. Not too long after this, they stopped for gas and saw a tow truck in tow with a 1959 Willys Wagon. Will and Vance chatted with the driver for a while before continuing their journey.



By 3:40pm that day, Will and Vance had reached Route 66, where they got their kicks pretty quickly when they approached a curve with a 10 mile per hour speed limit while they were going approximately 30 mph. "Bruce Lee" reflexes and Mario Andretti driving skills saved the crew from wrecking into a concrete tunnel. Shortly thereafter, a rainstorm welcomed the two of them. Fortunately for them, they came across the Route 66 Auto Museum and made a pit stop there to admire all of the classic cars. 140 miles later, they had reached Socorro and were now only several hundred miles from Arizona.



Will and Vance had finally begun their final day of the trip. After refilling the transfer case with another round of fluid, they were back on the road and by mile 2,055, had arrived in Arizona! At that time, however, they realized that they had no brakes, and rolled right past the Arizona sign before turning around to get a photo op. With no brakes and the realization that the clutch had gone out as well, things were looking grim on their last day when luck was again on their side with the arrival of Will's father to join them on their final stretch.



The brakes go out with 150 miles to go.



The trip wouldn't be over without a few more problems.



With a new batch of brake fluid and some tinkering on the clutch, they were back on the road again and by 6pm, they were in Springerville, Arizona for their last tank of gas. 1.75 hours later, they arrived in Snowflake, AZ...their destination!

The trip officially ended the following day with Will and Vance taking the Jeep to the Anasazi Valley to view some Indian ruins. A remote site in the middle of the desert with broken pottery that dates back to approximately 500 A.D., this stretch of desert turned out to be an amazing symbol of American lore and one that Vance found to be truly inspiring.







For Will, the cross-country trip was also one of elation and happiness:

"Heading into this trip, I was filled with excitement, wonder and even some apprehension. But there was no way on this Earth that I was going to miss this opportunity to see and do so many things all in one trip. I was excited to meet Nick Fallier, and my excitement turned into amazement when we did actually get to spend some time with him. I only hope that when I am Nick's age that I am as sharp and can remember the details of my life experiences as he does...I was equally excited to spend some time with Vance, whom I had communicated with and worked with over several years to share our love of Jeeps with the world, and to create one of the most visited Jeep websites on the internet...This was truly an experience of a lifetime; there is not one mile of road, one hour of the day or even one moment that I would change of this trip...Thanks to all of you that followed along with the story; it kept us excited when we would receive new emails daily and we knew that people were truly enjoying the trip with us."



Reflecting on the trip that started out with two business partners meeting for the first time, visiting with a World War II hero, and traveling 2,147 miles across the south, Vance would later recall:

*"Trying to drive the old Jeep home was an adventure and opportunity that couldn't be resisted. I vividly remember thinking that driving a stock 60 year old vehicle, which had never been designed for highway driving, more than 2,000 miles across country would either be the best or worst decision of my life. There was no middle ground in this one, it was either going to be a once-in-a-lifetime adventure or the ultimate 'I told you so' regret of a lifetime... This trip gave me a very pleasant and positive attitude towards people and society...Last but not least, I got the opportunity to build a solid friendship with Will. Prior to this trip, we had never met and by the end of the trip, I felt as though we had known each other forever."*

For now, their legendary trip had come to an end but their appreciation for life and a newly formed friendship had been ignited. Sixty years earlier, a vehicle had been born in the shadow of a world war. Now, that same vehicle had toured the country, and in the latest chapter of its adventure, that vehicle has truly defined the heritage of America and its heroes who gave their all to ensure a future of freedom for all of us.

**UPDATE:** The pair has since decided to make the Willys road trip a yearly ritual, with the ultimate goal being to visit all fifty states within a five year timeframe, concluding in Tallahassee, Florida where it all began. Next year's trip will take place in mid-May and they will be "going coastal" through Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Utah. For more details on the 2008 trip, or to read more about this journey, please visit Will and Vance's website at:

**JeepBrokers.com**

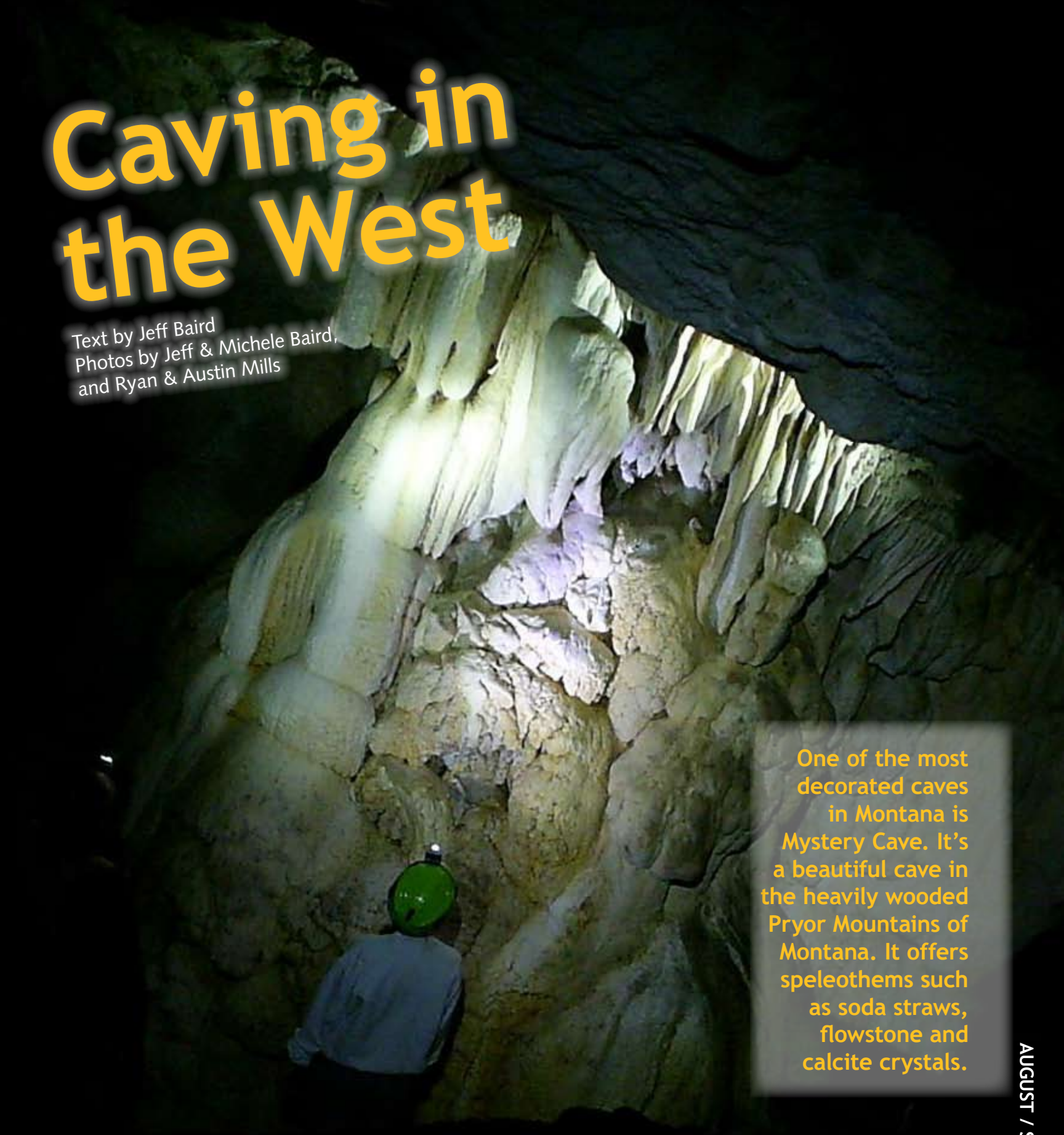
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# Caving in the West

Text by Jeff Baird  
Photos by Jeff & Michele Baird,  
and Ryan & Austin Mills



One of the most decorated caves in Montana is Mystery Cave. It's a beautiful cave in the heavily wooded Pryor Mountains of Montana. It offers speleothems such as soda straws, flowstone and calcite crystals.

While not as famous for caving as South Eastern states like Tennessee, Arkansas or Georgia, the Western states have their own caving gems and can hold their own in the interesting sport that is caving. The wide variety in geology in the West makes for equally wide and diverse caves. I started caving in Northern Wyoming 15 years ago, but have recently broadened my exploration to more and more caves in Montana, Wyoming and Utah. Caving is a great activity that offers something for people of all skill levels and interests. Looking for another great outdoor adventure? Try getting underground. To give caving a try, contact your local grotto (a caving organization) at: [www.caves.org](http://www.caves.org).





A glimpse of some soda straws in a narrow crawl in Mystery Cave



Bighorn Cavern starts out with this nearly 80 foot rappel into the cave. At the bottom, over 7 miles of caverns provide plenty of exploring.

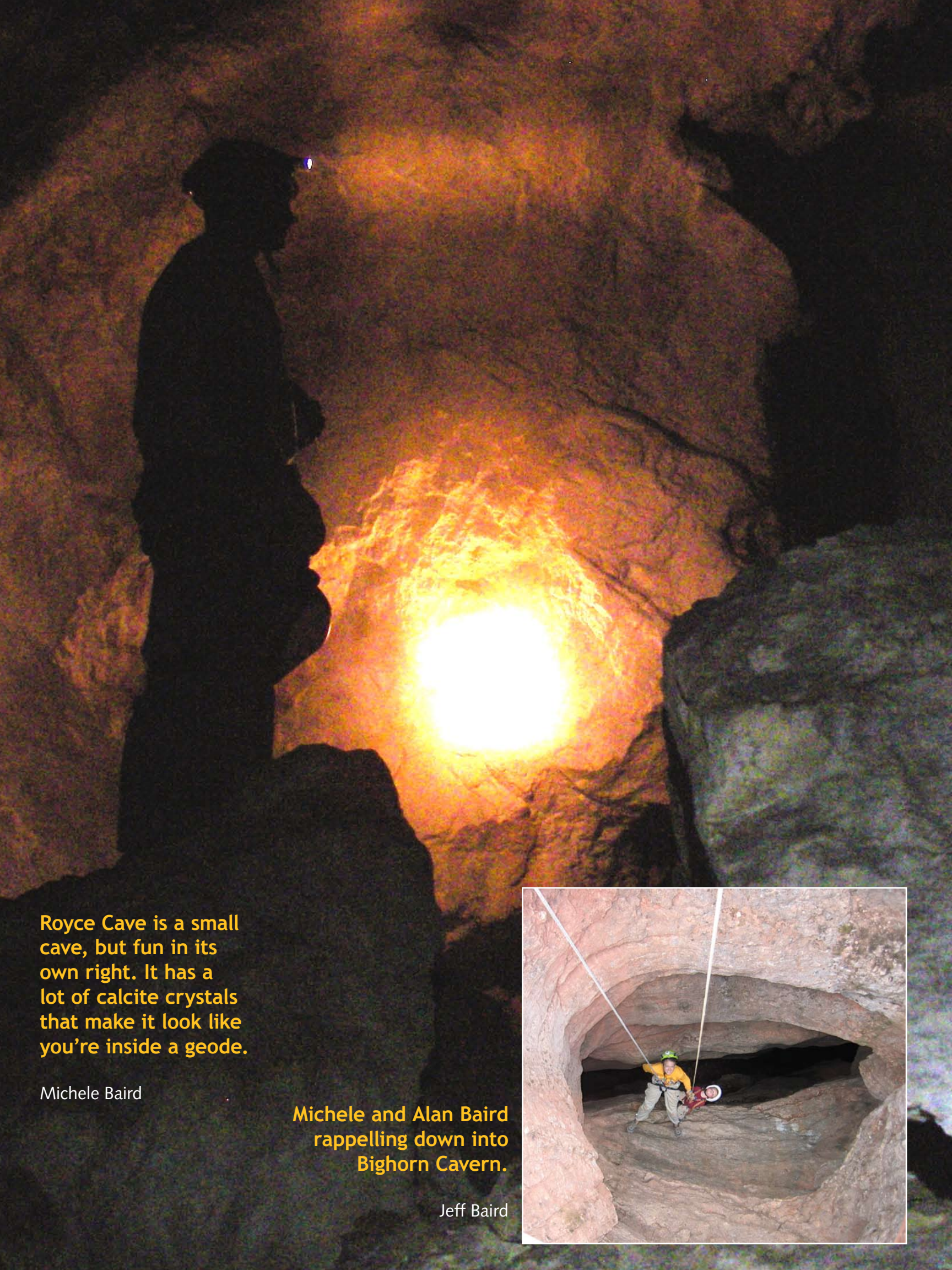
Michele Baird

Look but do not touch! The hand is here only to show scale for these gypsum flowers found in Bighorn Cavern.

Michele Baird





A large, dark silhouette of a person stands on the left side of the frame, looking towards a bright, glowing yellow and orange calcite crystal formation in the center of a cave. The cave walls are dark and textured, with some greenish-blue mineral deposits visible on the right.

Royce Cave is a small cave, but fun in its own right. It has a lot of calcite crystals that make it look like you're inside a geode.

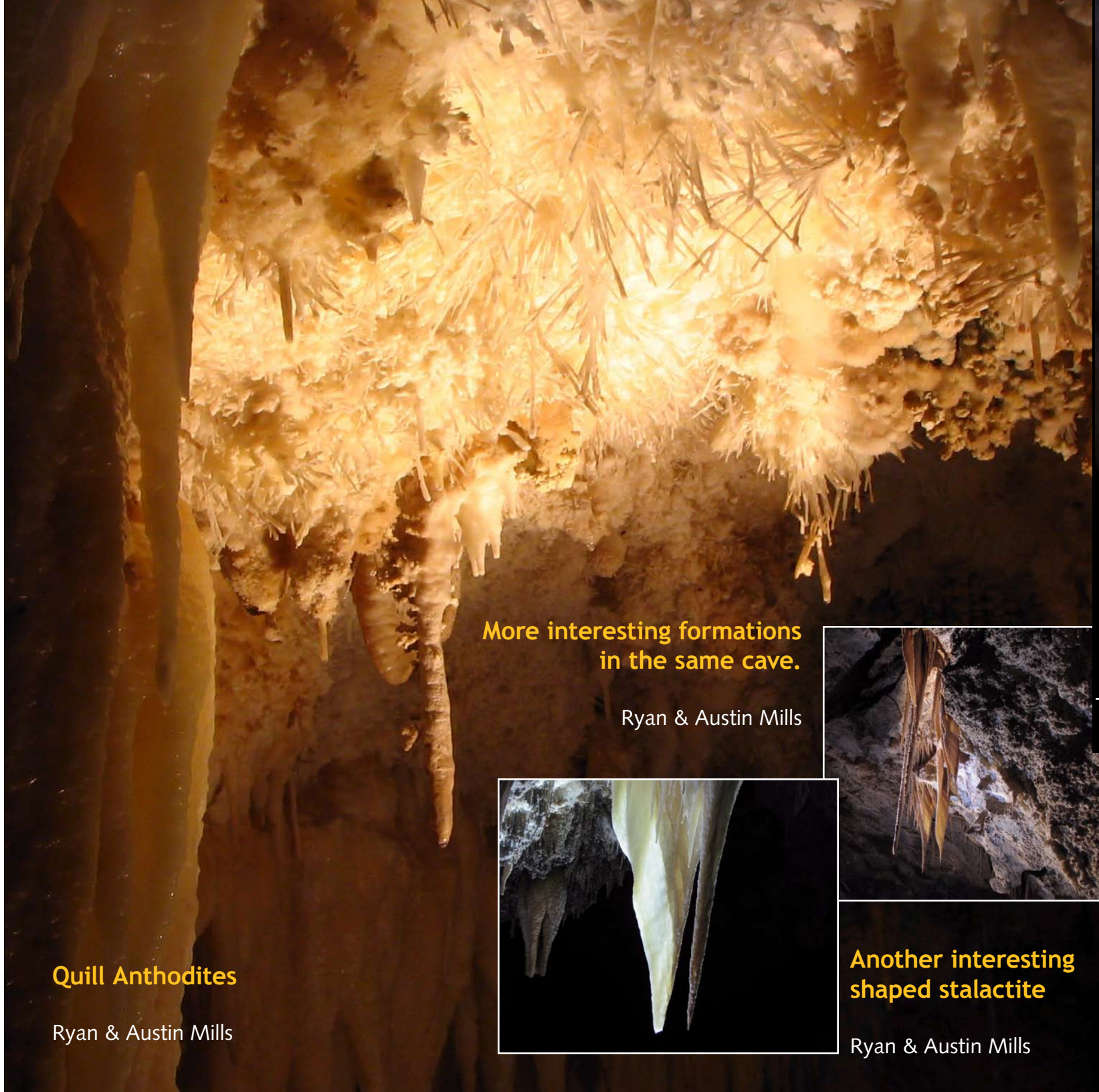
Michele Baird

Michele and Alan Baird  
rappelling down into  
Bighorn Cavern.

Jeff Baird







More interesting formations  
in the same cave.

Ryan & Austin Mills



Another interesting  
shaped stalactite

Ryan & Austin Mills

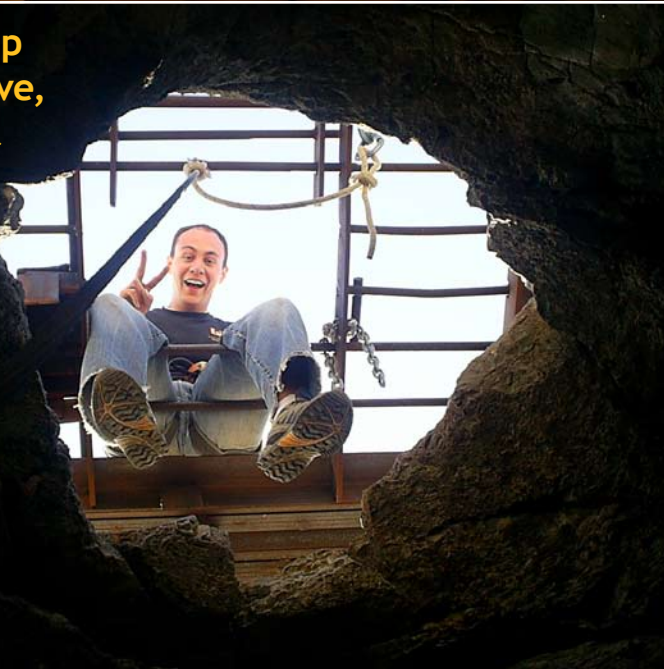


Quill Anthodites

Ryan & Austin Mills

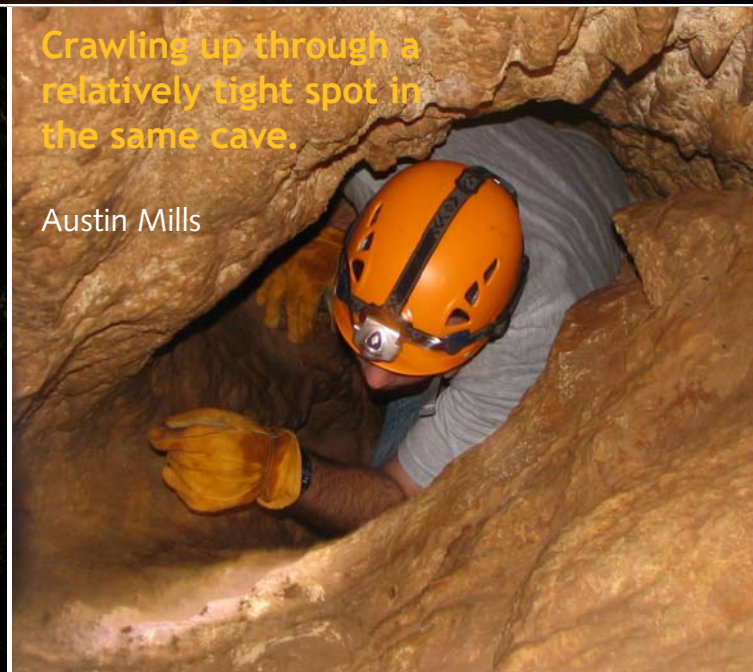
Looking up  
from a cave,  
in Central  
Utah

Jeff Baird



Crawling up through a  
relatively tight spot in  
the same cave.

Austin Mills





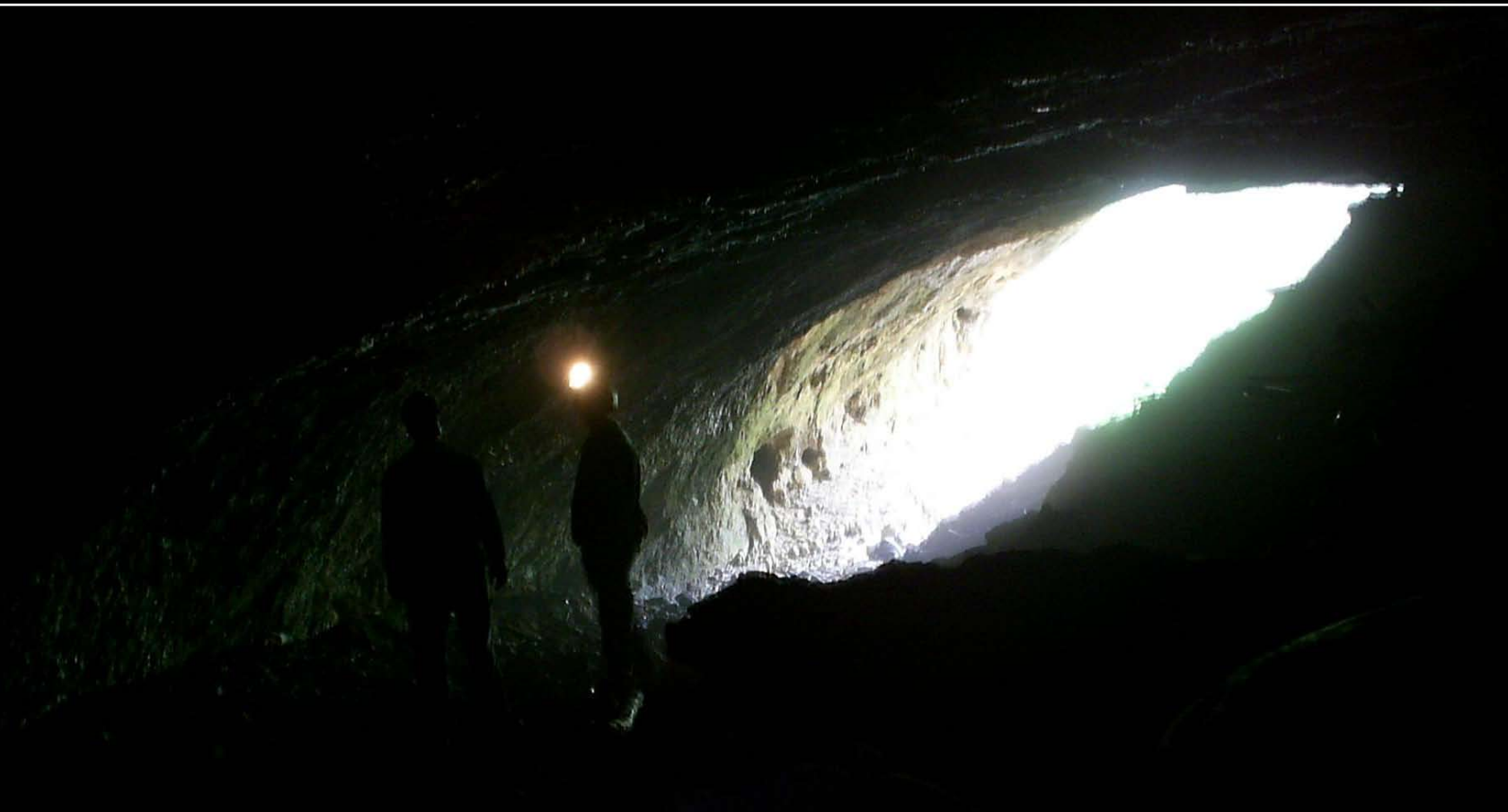


Beautiful stalactites in a cave close to home.

Ryan & Austin Mills

Right across the Montana/Wyoming border from Bighorn Cavern is Horsethief Cave. The two caves used to be joined by a small crawl that was later filled with cement making the two caves distinct. This cave also has over 7 miles of explored caves, with plenty left to discover.

Jeff Baird



Cavers at the entrance to the second longest cave in Utah. Each spring the river runs through this cave, bringing with it logs and other debris clogging up the tunnels in this cave. It often requires someone clearing the way with a chainsaw.

Jeff Baird





# PYRAMID LAKE ADVENTURE 2007

Text and Photos by Martyn Davies

Pyramid Lake is one of the world's most beautiful desert lakes. Our base camp was located next to the 400 foot rock pyramid that rises out of the lake, along a sweeping sandy beach where beautiful Tufa rock formations add shape and texture to the landscape. It's a challenge to find an ideal spot that will accommodate 70 – 100 people but we found it on this Paiute Reservation, located 40 miles northeast of Reno, Nevada.

Pyramid Lake is a remnant of the much larger Great Lahontan Lake that covered much of western Nevada, parts of California, and north into Oregon until 15,000 years ago. Lake Lahontan was 450 ft deep where Pyramid Lake now sits. Looking at the mountains that surround the lake, you can see horizontal lines showing where ancient beaches once stood. Down at your feet you'll see small white snail shells in the sand, the homes of animals that lived in Lake Lahontan 25,000 years ago.

The Paiutes are the First People of this area, with John Fremont being the first European to visit in 1844.



The Lake was once abundant with huge cutthroat trout, the largest on record caught in 1925 by Johnny Skimmerhorn weighing in at 41 pounds. Fished out by the 1940s, the lake has had to be restocked since 1950.

Across from our base camp was Anaho Island, a National Wildlife Refuge and the breeding ground for the largest colony of American White Pelicans. It also serves as a resting spot for other migratory waterfowl.





**The AT & TOR teams made sure their guests were camping in style and comfort.**

By the afternoon, the team from Nth Degree had shown up and as base camp was still quiet, it gave us a chance to go over the runs for Friday, emergency procedures, use of satellite phones, and radio communication. We also managed to relax a bit and catch up on what we'd all been doing over the past several months. By that evening, the camp had started to fill up with Adventure Trailers and rigs pulling in from all over the West.

Camped in the middle of the group was Pete Slingland, a local photographer who had come out to do some time lapse photography. Fortunately, we managed not to disturb his work and his photos came out perfectly.

**Pete Slingland, a nature photographer, was also at Pyramid lake. See more of his work online at: [www.peteslingland.com](http://www.peteslingland.com)**



Adventure Trailers (AT) and Totally Off Road (TOR) arranged for a complete beach clean up on Thursday morning prior to everyone's arrival. We also set up the amenities, Porto-potties, and Paha Que shower enclosures. It was glamorous work in 90 degree summer temperatures; however, frequent swimming breaks in the lake made it all worthwhile.

Chuck Fulkerson was the trail leader for the Black Rock trail. Chuck is a long time resident of Northern Nevada and a retired officer with the Army Rangers. He's the type of guy who scoffs at the thought of using a GPS, and he knows the backcountry like the back of his hand. In a pinch he could dust off an old compass from his glove compartment and navigate the desert in a blinding sand storm. He was just our sort of guide.

Brian from Totally Off Road, a 4X4 shop located in Sparks, NV, is a local expert on Steven's Loop and was our other trail leader. Nth Degree provided the trail expertise with spotters and fully-equipped vehicles for recovery. Brian is also our sort of guide though he uses a GPS.



**Stevens Loop was just one of a few trail ride options available to the campers at Pyramid Lake.**

We'd expected Paul May from Equipt Expedition Outfitters to make an appearance Thursday night but he was a no show. Turns out he took a short cut at 1:30am and got bogged down in soft sand a few hundred feet from camp. Being the veteran explorer that he is, he opted to switch his vehicle off, open his roof top tent, and go to sleep! Things always look better in the morning.

Most people were sleeping in roof top tents so that might explain why no one moved around camp until about 8:00am Friday morning. The material on those tents is so opaque that I think you could sleep until noon! By 10:00am, people were ready to head out on trail, enjoy an SUV run through the Smoke Creek and Black Rock Deserts, and a technical run through Steven's Loop.





**"The Black Rock Desert was a surrealistic experience. Our destination was thirty some miles ahead of us across the playa and no road! ...Such a feeling of freedom I have never experienced. Being able to punch the accelerator, and feel the super charger kick in ...and let her go".**



Those left in camp looked forward to a day of relaxation, reading, sleeping, fishing, kayaking, or just sitting around talking to old friends. Rich M. summed up the experience: *"Events that I have participated in the past were very driven. There was a clear objective to accomplish something; a trail, a crossing, a destination. AT's event was the first that I have participated in that the camp out was the destination and the side trips (Stevens Loop, Black Rock) were extras. I liked the calmer atmosphere where on any particular day I could just hang back, talk with folks, and not feel any pressure to perform".*

**(Above) The Black Rock Desert trailrun.**

**(Right) Nth Degree assisted the trailrunners on Stevens Loop with spotting advice.**



On Friday evening, Scott Brady from Expeditions West, Expeditionportal.com, and the Overland Journal, gave a wonderful slide show and talk on his expedition to the Arctic Ocean in March [http://www.expeditionswest.com/arctic\\_ocean/](http://www.expeditionswest.com/arctic_ocean/). It was a warm evening but as his talk progressed, I noticed that people began putting on sweat shirts and wrapping themselves in blankets!

After his talk, Scott introduced Jonathan Hanson from the African Conservation Fund (ACF). AT donated a Chaser trailer to ACF to be raffled off in an effort to raise funds for this great advocacy group. Some of the funds raised will be used to build a 4X4 trail through the Maasiiland, Kenya, allowing 4X4 escorted safaris to be conducted without disturbing this sensitive environment.

Saturday had a slow, and very social, start to the day. Brian somehow showed up with the air horn from a locomotive train and blew a 15 minute warning that vehicles would be underway at 10:00am. Where do people get stuff like that??

Three runs would be heading out: one to the Black Rock with Chuck, one to Steven's Loop with Totally Off Road and Nth Degree, and one with Dan Streight of the Battle Born Cruisers into the Granite Range. It would give everyone a chance to do more of the same or something different if they chose to do so.

By mid afternoon, people began pulling back into camp from a day on the trail and most of the afternoon was filled with their stories. Rich S. had been out with Chuck: *"The Black Rock Desert was a surrealistic experience. Our destination was thirty some miles ahead of us across the playa and no road! Col. Chuck told us to line up, and to stay abreast of one another. Off we went, rather slowly at first but speed certainly picked up with confidence. Such a feeling of freedom I have never experienced. Being able to punch the accelerator, and feel the super charger kick in ...and let her go".*

Steven's Loop was a great success. Asked if they had fun playing in the Rocks, they told us the rocks had fun playing with them! *"You'd work a line through the rocks",* said Andrew W, *"but as you move forward the rocks would move and change position, so the spotters would be telling you to go in the direction of a huge rock, only it had moved!"*. The Nth degree team managed to get the whole crew through Steven's Loop without any body damage, much to everyone's relief.





The friends, food, trails, and scenery couldn't have made for a more enjoyable weekend adventure.



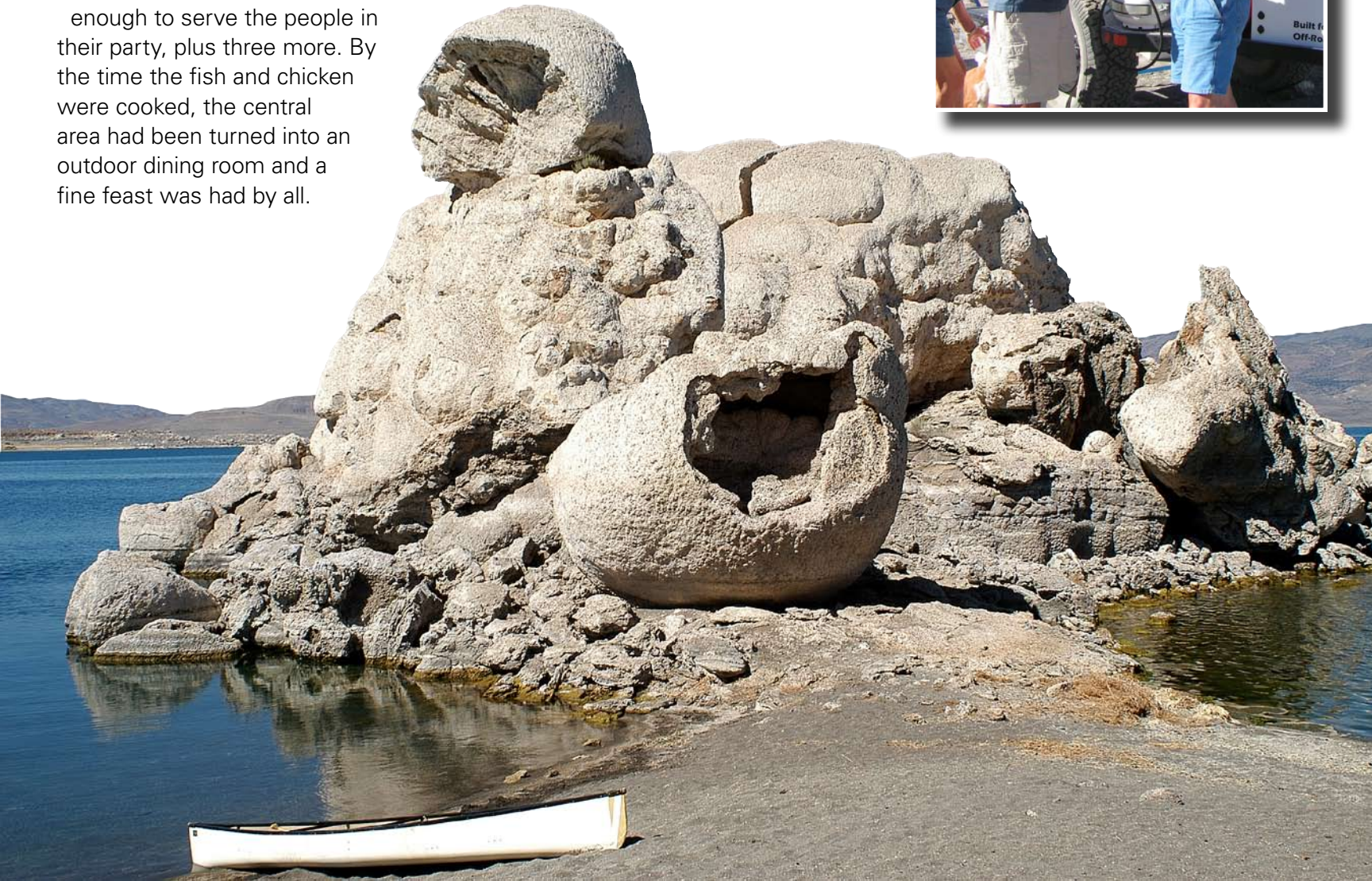
On Saturday evening, we arranged for an open pit BBQ. We started a campfire on the beach and started pulling the coals out and shoveling them under the grills to get things going. That evening we cooked salmon and chicken for 80 people! We'd asked everyone to bring a side dish to the meal that would be large

enough to serve the people in their party, plus three more. By the time the fish and chicken were cooked, the central area had been turned into an outdoor dining room and a fine feast was had by all.

After dinner, we watched an eclectic Himalayan Expedition Motorcycle film. Brian pulled out an industrial popcorn machine and served everyone popcorn. Again, where does Brian get this stuff??

Sunday morning was more relaxed than the previous mornings. People had that well-rested, content look on their faces and no one was in a hurry to much of anything. The only trail ride that morning was a short loop run by Chuck to check out some Native American Petroglyphs and sleep ledges.

The best part of the day was spent socializing and enjoying the scenery. Everyone had lots of time to look each others trailers and rigs over and see what personal modifications they had made. Who had fitted electric water pumps, how someone had leveled their trailer in the campsite using the airbags, who had a fridge on a full slide, and of course innovative places to hang the fuzzy dice!







About half of the 35 campsites packed up and were making moves to leave by the afternoon. The remainder circulated from group to group sampling each others snacks and beverages.

Kellee and Richard invited everyone over to their huge fire pit overlooking the lake for a pot luck dinner that evening. Brian put on a slide show and video of the previous two days' Steven's Loop runs. A nice, mellow way to end the weekend.

By 10:00am on Monday, the beach was deserted except for me. It was a strange experience to be standing there alone in a place that had been so recently full of friends.

For more information on expedition and adventure related parts and resources from vendor attendees, visit the following:

[www.adventuretrailers.com](http://www.adventuretrailers.com)

[www.atreport.com](http://www.atreport.com)

[www.totally-offroad.com](http://www.totally-offroad.com)

[www.pahaque.com](http://www.pahaque.com)

[www.nthdegreemobility.com](http://www.nthdegreemobility.com)

[www.peteslingland.com](http://www.peteslingland.com)

[www.equipt1.com](http://www.equipt1.com)

[www.expeditionswest.com](http://www.expeditionswest.com)

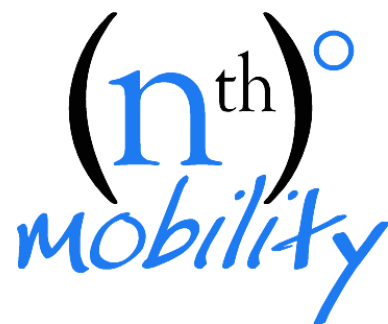
[www.expeditionportal.com](http://www.expeditionportal.com)

[www.overlandjournal.com/](http://www.overlandjournal.com/)

[www.africanconservationfund.org/](http://www.africanconservationfund.org/)

For more information on the ACF Chaser trailer raffle, visit:

[www.africanconservationfund.org/content/view/77/5/](http://www.africanconservationfund.org/content/view/77/5/)







# JPFRreek

## G A R A G E

TECH TIPS & BUILD UPS



# ZERO 2 HERO

Before: (right) Stock 2005 Rubicon Unlimited in the striking Impact Orange  
After: (left) Showing off the flex of the new long arms.

Text and Photos by Matt Adair



The Clayton kit, complete with coils, long arms, brake lines, steering components, JKS Quick Disconnects as well as the optional belly pan skid plate and shocks.

For many of us, the purchase of a Jeep is the beginning of a relationship; with the vehicle itself, with Jeep clubs, with new experiences, and with drug dealers. Okay, maybe it just *seems* like the shops we buy Jeep parts from are exploiting an addiction some of us have. Either way, the Jeep is often just the beginning of a long process of customizing it to fit our specific needs.

There are a few ways to go about this: Some of us start small and the Jeep grows over time as the addiction does. Others go whole hog and do it all at once. Whatever the case, one component that often receives the earliest and most intense effort is the suspension. Some people just like the way a lifted rig looks, and there are many options for them. However, if the vehicle is intended to be wheeled, it isn't as straightforward.

One of the best companies competing in this crowded (and rapidly growing) segment is Clayton Off Road Manufacturing. They appeal to the group who intend to use and abuse their rigs on the trail. Their tag line is even, "The only suspension meant for abuse!" Having seen their stuff in action in Moab, I can't argue.





Clayton Offroad builds a variety of kits for several Jeeps, but the one we're focusing on for this build is their Jeep Wrangler Unlimited "LJ" Front and Rear Hard Arm kit. John Mathews (owner of Auburn Car Repair & Offroad in Auburn, Washington) was nice enough to let me hang around the shop while the install was going on. Of course, my own addiction is putting his kids through college, so maybe that's why he let me.

One criticism that occasionally comes up about the Clayton kits is that it requires some welding, not a task to undertake unless you've got a pretty good idea what you're doing. The majority of other LA kits out there are of the bolt-on variety. The Clayton kit is designed with this challenge in mind, however, allowing

the Jeep to be dropped off, have the suspension brackets welded, and remain drivable. Shade tree mechanics rejoice. In this case though, the customer, Greg Enera, had ACR&O do the entire install.

If at this point you're scratching your head wondering what the length of a person's arms has to do with suspension, hold fast. As a Jeep is lifted, the stock control arms (what connects the axle to the Jeep) become more and more angled as they try to cope with the new spring height. At a certain point (exactly when this point is can be debated), the ride and performance decrease to the point of needing to replace them with longer control arms. This allows improved flex as well as moving the axle back forward to where it was stock.

The first step was to remove the stock control arm mounts on the frame; the holes were covered and made to look like they'd never been there. Next was to weld on the brackets for the longer and beefier control arms. The rear axle was also modified with a truss to accommodate the new 4-link suspension design. After relocating the control arm mounts, the belly pan was installed. This item in particular was evidence of the heavy duty nature of the Clayton kit; the shipping label told us it weighed a whopping 125 pounds and gave a comical little pictogram of the various ways not to lift it.



**Stock suspension, complete with stamped steel control arms. Yuck.**

**Jason Abbitt, ACR & O's top technician welding on the new control arm brackets.**



**The rear axle truss being welded onto the Dana 44.**





Front suspension done. Note the distinctive square long arms, a Clayton signature.



Thoughtful little details abound and the quality of the pieces are top-notch.



The super sturdy belly-pan skid plate installed.



Now that's more like it!

Though I didn't drive the completed rig, the reports were unanimous that it drove and handled amazingly well for a vehicle running 35's and 5.5" of lift. I know those who watched it come together are looking forward to seeing it on the trail soon. Thanks again to John and Jason at Auburn Car Repair & Offroad, and Greg for letting us watch his Jeep grow up.

The steering was also modified and beefed up, including a new track bar bracket and a drop pitman arm. The whole front end was capped off by a set of JKS Quick Disconnects for the sway bar. The rear was removed for increased flex, a nearly unanimous choice among Jeeps.

When it was all buttoned up, a set of 35x12.50 Interco Trxs M/Ts were mounted on black steel wheels and it was ready for the trails. Being a Rubicon, it already had Dana 44 axles with electronic lockers, and 4.10 gears. With the AW4 automatic and the 4:1 transfer case, Greg should be able to delay having to re-gear for a while. Next on his list are bumpers and rocker protection, but it should be a very capable rig as it sits.





## Practice Makes Perfect: Preparing For Your Next Off-highway Adventure



Text and Photos by Mark Filonowich

Technology is an amazing thing. I hit my high trajectory golf balls with my graphite shafted, titanium-faced driver further than I ever could have with my old woods. Unfortunately, I now have to go deeper into the woods to find the ball that I sliced out of bounds. Of course, instead of spending my money on these fancy widgets, I realize now that I would have best been served if I had spent time on the practice tee, perfecting my technique.

Off-highway travel has not been overlooked by the technology explosion. Today you can purchase a capable, selectable locked vehicle with upgraded axles and a creepy-low transfer case that comes with special tires and a factory warranty. The Rubicon is an amazing Jeep, and has more features at the showroom floor than many vehicles (including my own) which have undergone expensive transformations.

The focus of this issue's column is not technology, but practice. Good technique means being able to put a tire on a particular rock almost unconsciously. It means having the right amount of momentum to get over a steep hill easily. And it means knowing how to get through that mud hole with minimal impact and maximum grace.

Practice is something you can do most of the time you are on the trail. Focus on taking good lines through (or over) obstacles. Position yourself to put smaller, single rocks on the trail under your passenger side tire. If you are really good, roll over the rock with your passenger side rear tire only. Knowing exactly where your tires are is critical to 'wheeling' advanced trails. Using a spotter is quite often required, but easier sections of the trail can be easily traversed by a skilled driver who pays attention to taking proper lines. Teach yourself to be that skilled driver.

For hill climbing, practice momentum with small hills and work up towards bigger climbs. The key is to make it to the top (and over) without "catching air", or stalling before the crest. Our classes cover hill climbs very early on the first day because "gravity thrills and gravity kills". You can roll your vehicle over and hurt yourself (or others) on a hill much easier than on most flat trails. If you don't have enough momentum and stall before reaching the top, the technique is to quickly shift into reverse, and carefully drive backward down the hill. Because you are going backward, steering is reversed (and very twitchy). Stay off the brakes (feather them, do not stomp) or you will lock up and skid out of control. When you get to the bottom, review what just happened. Do you need to be in a different gear? Do you need more speed at the base of the hill? What can you do differently to crest the hill gracefully? Is it time to pull out a winch cable or find an alternate route altogether?

For mud holes, practice mud techniques by carefully entering the hole and making steady progress. I do not recommend "blasting" into mud because you do not know what lies beneath the surface. A large rock or stump can quickly put a damper on your day if you break something that is critical, and it's no fun fixing broken parts in the middle of the mud. As your forward progress slows, try sawing your steering wheel back and forth. Sometimes the sidewall of the tire can grab new traction and keep you moving. If that doesn't work, try backing directly out through your existing tracks. Worst case, you'll need a tow strap and a bit of help from a buddy.

After your technique is smooth enough to negotiate most trail obstacles, reach down and touch that button for the selectable lockers. There's nothing wrong with using the best technology available to make your trip enjoyable. But don't count on replacing good technique with high tech...or you might find yourself slicing out of bounds instead of staying on the fairway!

*\* The June/July issue of JPFreek unintentionally overlooked several content errors through the editorial review process of the 'Freek Technique' contribution from Mark Filonowich. We apologize for those errors.*

Iron Range Offroad offers a comprehensive training course geared toward entry level Jeepers that stresses safety and environmental responsibility. The classroom setting is the spectacular Iron Range OHV park, 3 hours north of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Trail riding is integrated with class modules covering trip preparation, vehicle maintenance and repair, driving skills for different terrain, extraction techniques, vehicle upgrades, and much more. Learn more about offroad driving classes at:

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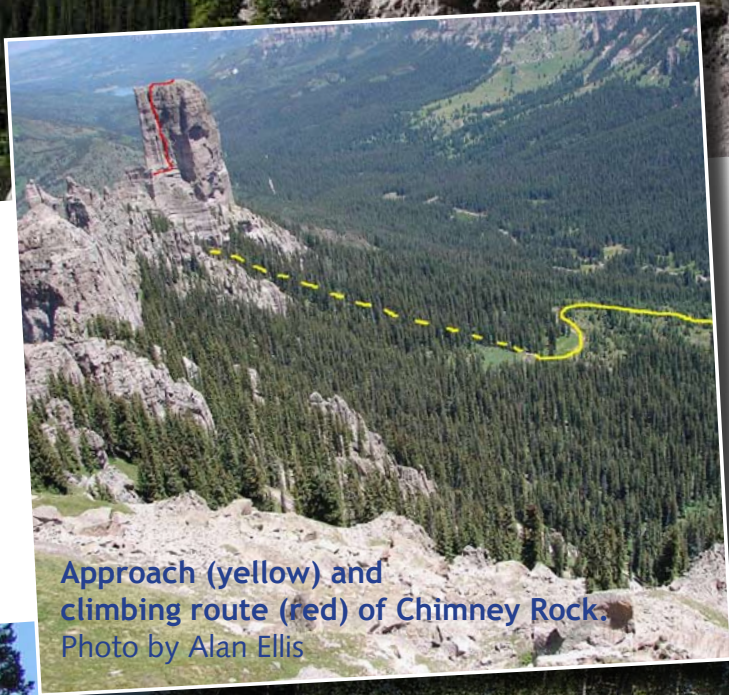
# CLIMBING THE CHIMNEY IN COLORADO'S SAN JUANS

Text by Alan Ellis

Photos by Alan Ellis and Barry Raven



In the northwest San Juan Mountains, near the little town of Ridgeway, Colorado, resides a lonely tower. Chimney Rock (also sometimes called Chimney Peak) sits among great peaks and formations such as Courthouse Mountain, Precipice Peak, and the spires of Cimarron Ridge. While driving up through the Cimarron Valley, Chimney Rock looms over the valley, guarding the entrance to Owl Creek Pass. In 2004, Alan, Jackie, and climbing partner, Barry, first noticed this spectacular mountain and vowed to return and climb it. Now in 2007, we would finally get our chance.



Approach (yellow) and climbing route (red) of Chimney Rock.  
Photo by Alan Ellis



Grand Cherokee and Chimney Rock taken from near Owl Creek Pass.  
Photo by Barry Raven



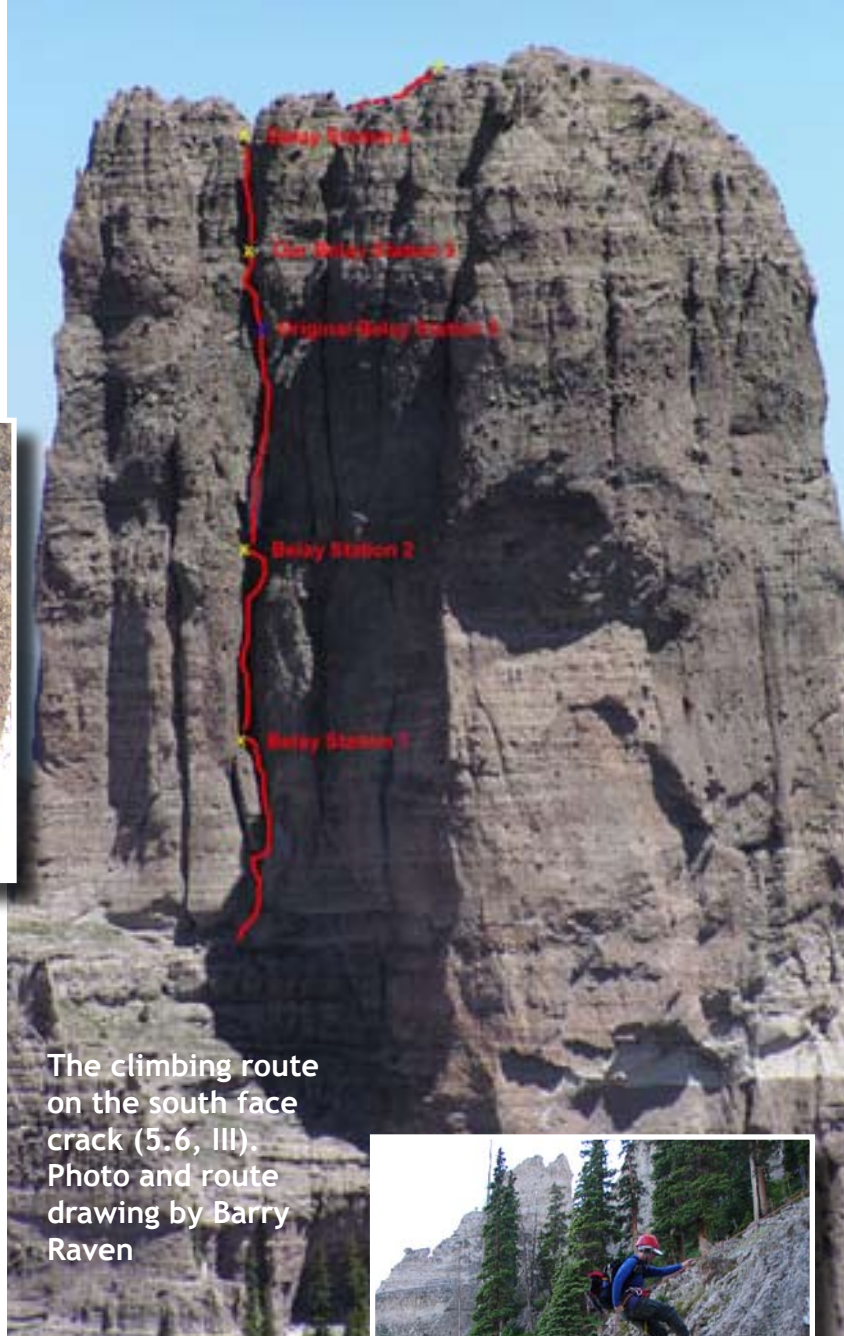


The road to Owl Creek Pass and the trailhead for Chimney Peak is a long dusty dirt road that our Grand Cherokee handled with ease. All three of us, including our camping and climbing gear, fit easily into the back of the Jeep and we parked next to the river to camp before our day of climbing the tower. Waking up early and on the approach, we bushwhacked and negotiated the nasty loose cliffs and ramparts below the base of the tower.

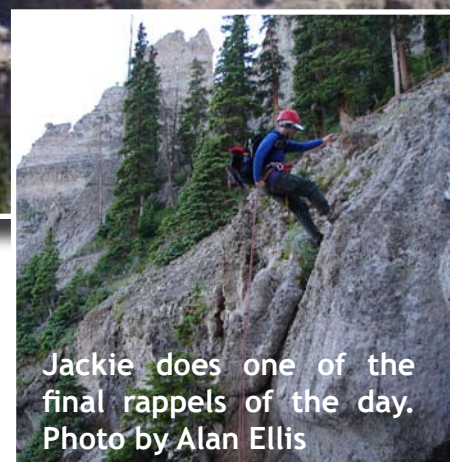


**Jackie sets up a belay at the top of the third pitch.  
Photo by Barry Raven**

Most of this section had to be done solo and was a class 5 nightmare of loose rock and sand which took almost four hours to climb. At the base of the tower, I racked up and began leading the first pitch. Technically speaking, the first pitch is probably the hardest, with a 10 ft overhanging and unprotected section of 5.6 to a ledge, then more 5.6 up and around a chock stone. After negotiating the overhang, I began moving towards the chock stone when I pulled off a loose hold and fell about 10-12 feet down to the ledge. Only Barry's quick belay reaction and a .75 Camalot saved me from falling all the way to the ground. Laying there in agony while my sprained ankle swelled up and turned purple, it was apparent that my day was over; and we all knew it.



**The climbing route on the south face crack (5.6, III).  
Photo and route drawing by Barry Raven**



**Jackie does one of the final rappels of the day.  
Photo by Alan Ellis**

After being lowered, I insisted that Barry and Jackie finish the climb. So I lay there in pain for seven hours while they completed their summit bid, and then rappelled back to the ground. They reported that the climb was one of the worst of their career with long, unprotected run-out pitches of loose rock and a constant bowling alley of rockfall. They were totally exhausted and stressed out from climbing in those conditions, and they had completely run out of food and water. After packing up our gear, we began to head back down. Luckily for us, Jackie had brought along her ankle brace which was leftover from her numerous ankle injuries over the years. With the brace, plus my high-top approach shoes, I was able to stabilize my ankle well enough to hobble down the mountain. Two rappels and a bushwhack through the spruce forest found us back to our beloved Jeep where water and food were waiting. Total time on the mountain: fourteen hours.



**Jackie stands near the summit, happy to be out of the bowling alley of loose rock.  
Photo by Barry Raven**





Chimney Rock is not a pleasant or easy mountain so climbers should take heart. The standard 5-pitch, 5.6 III, south face crack is run-out, loose, mostly unprotected, and has extreme rockfall danger. The rock quality and conditions makes this a true adventure climbing challenge. It would be a test for any seasoned alpine rock climber and gave us a new respect for the San Juan Mountain range. Because of its beauty and magnificence, Chimney Rock lures and entices, begging to be climbed. But beware; you may get more than what you bargained for!

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# Circle the Wagons!



Our wagon train at the end of the Naches Trail...getting Hot Pockets off our manifolds. Okay, so things have changed a little bit.

Text by Matt Adair

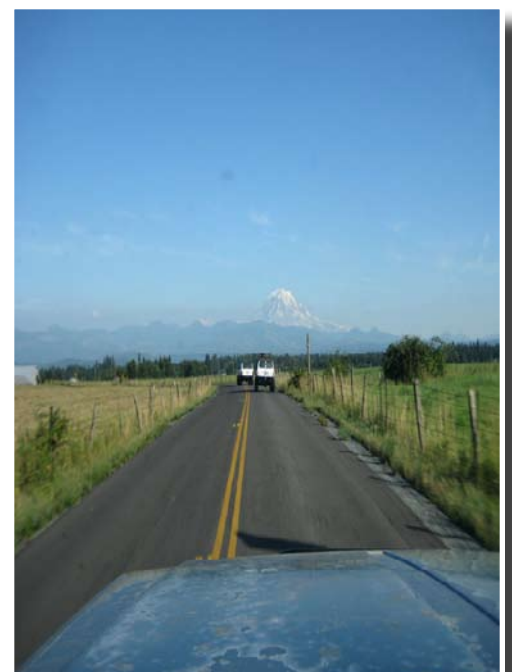
Photos by Jay Syc and John Mathews

Theodore Winthrop, a world traveler who descended from some of the earliest American families, visited the Puget Sound area in 1853. During his time in what was then the most distant outpost of American settlement, a bold group of pioneers made the very first transit of the then unexplored and foreboding Cascade Mountains. He would later say about this group:

"...that emigrants of this summer (1853) might find their way into Washington Territory direct.... Such an enterprise was an epoch in progress. It was the first effort of an infant community to assert its individuality and emancipate itself from the tutelage of Oregon."

Winthrop would later go on to write several books before gaining wider fame as being the first Union officer to be killed in the Civil War in 1861. When he referred to the "emigrants of the epoch enterprise," he was speaking of the Longmire Wagon Train. In 1953, a group of local Jeepers took a handful of Army surplus flat-fender Jeeps and traced the original Naches Wagon trail for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Longmire expedition. The trail has remained active in the intervening years, thanks to the upkeep of local off-road clubs.

It was these hallowed footsteps that our group of seven Jeeps sought to follow. We left the Seattle area on a Friday afternoon on back roads to avoid the now overwhelming congestion of the Puget Sound region. Once we got far enough away from Seattle, though, it was easier to put ourselves in the minds of those brave enough to strike out with James Longmire. The area they went through is now part of Mt. Rainier National Park, so a lot of the terrain is pretty much how it was in 1853.



(Above) Our departure from the West side of the pass. This the view Lt. Robert Johnson would have had as he embarked on the first official transit of the Washington Cascade Mountain range from West to East in 1841. That expedition paved the way for settlers like the Longmires years later.



We got to the trailhead much later than we thought (see Seattle congestion) and aired down our tires. It was interesting to see the variety of tools used for this; some had Staun deflators, others were pulling the valve core out and some were using the tried and true method of using a small stick to depress the core. The quickest by far were my Rimrock Supply Rapid Air Deflators (RAD); it's nice to kick back and relax while everyone else is still crouched worshipping their pressure gauges.

Once we were aired down and our sway bars were stowed in their full upright and locked positions, we hit the trail. The beginning of the modern day Naches Wagon Trail is located where one of the most dramatic events occurred in the first crossing. Towards the end of their trek, the expedition was faced with a seemingly insurmountable challenge; a massive cliff that had no bypass. The Indian trail bypassed the cliff, but was narrow and circuitous, not at all suited to a bunch of wagons and oxen. After careful consideration, the decision was made to lower the wagons down the face, which Longmire later described as being 300 yards high.

Two oxen were sacrificed to this end, and rawhide ropes were fabricated. They attached the ropes to trees (the evidence of which can still be seen today) and slowly lowered the wagons down. In each of these heavily burdened vehicles was everything a family owned or needed to make a new life in the furthest reaches of the Oregon Territory. The prospect of losing one is hard to imagine, and one family did indeed have to finish the trail on horseback after their wagons were lost.



A steep and deep mud hole that required lots of RPMs to get out of; when I nosed into it, the mud came over my bumper. Also note the angle of the other Jeeps in the frame.



Of the seven rigs that had assembled to retrace the route, all of them happened to be Jeep Cherokees. While this was a coincidence, the similarities with the early wagons that blazed this trail are not lost. Like the covered wagons that the early emigrants used, XJs are fairly simple, rugged machines. They maximize interior space while keeping the overall exterior dimensions compact. They even look a little bit like station wagons (in stock form); certainly in comparison to today's bloated "SUVs." While our trip was a short one, the abundance of space was appreciated; Wrangler owners would've had to be more creative.

Jesse, Eli and Dean creeping through a very tippy off-camber section. Though no longer on the actual trail, the terrain is representative of what the early expeditions would have faced.



Some of you may recognize my white 2-dr, the white 4-dr and the blue 4-dr from my Moab expedition a few months back. The white rig belongs to Jesse Connor and has recently undergone a few modifications, including a Moab 4x4 Outpost winch bumper and 33" Trxus M/Ts. The blue rig is John Mathews, a name that is becoming more and more familiar in the JPFreek community in conjunction with tech articles.

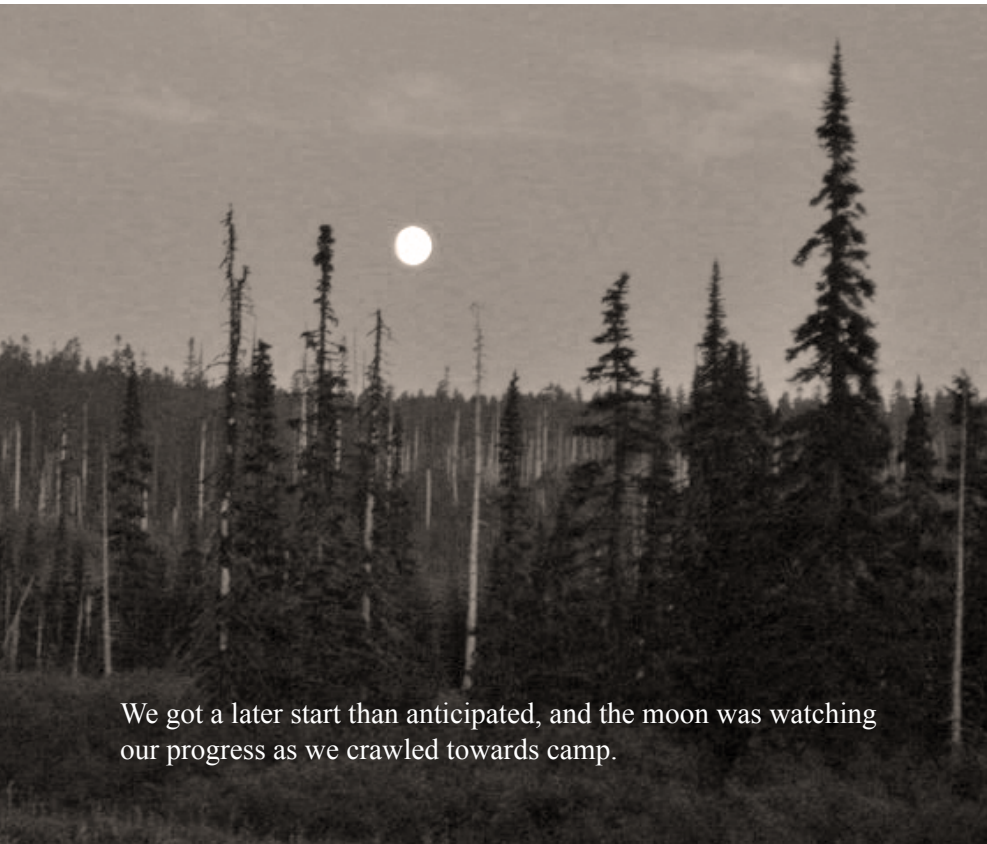
The clean black 4-dr is piloted by Ryan Barrett; while it looks straight and unmolested, Ryan isn't afraid to put the spurs to it. Dean Tanner is the driver of the other 2-dr in our group; he is in the process of transforming it from a street rig to a dedicated wheeler. The most abused rig in our convoy is Eli Celli's. With a total disregard for body damage and a heavy right foot, he's always entertaining to watch. The only late model Cherokee ('97 and newer) in the group is Jay Syc's; he's a meteorologist by profession and ensures that we never have an idea what the weather will be like on our trail runs. Jay's is the other black 4-dr, running 31" Trxus M/Ts.

Just a little way up the deeply rutted trail, I drove my left side up a steep bank and heard noises that could only be bad; metal on metal and lots of it. It seems that when I had adjusted my track bar to center the axle recently, it pushed the driveshaft too close to the long arm with catastrophic results. I looked under my Jeep to confirm my suspicions, and found my front driveshaft was hanging uselessly, the u-joint having been ripped apart. I popped a couple zip-ties on to keep it from causing any more damage and unlocked my hubs, allowing us to press on.

At first I was pissed because I hadn't thought to bring a spare driveshaft u-joint. I thought of the cool obstacles I wouldn't be able to play on and how much less fun I was going to have. It then occurred to me that 154 years ago, after something important broke, I wouldn't be thinking about missed opportunities for fun. I'd be thinking about how to keep my family alive. That's called perspective, folks.



Jesse leading the group, fording a muddy water crossing.



We got a later start than anticipated, and the moon was watching our progress as we crawled towards camp.

After my driveshaft debacle, we had another rig that refused to stay running. I can't speak for the others in our group, but visions of a very long night limping into camp all of a sudden flashed through my head. Luckily, we were able to get it running and press on though it was already much later than we'd hoped. The moon had come out to watch us and the sun was only a faint orange memory in the Western sky.

We finally stopped at a spot now called Government Meadows, just barely east of the trail's highest point of 4800 ft. In the past, this vast open plain was called Summit Prairie and the Longmire train stayed there for two days letting their oxen rest. Looking at it today, it isn't hard to imagine why they would have stayed here to "recoup." In contrast to the dense, thickly wooded forest they had been locked in for days on end, the openness of Summit Prairie must have been very welcome.

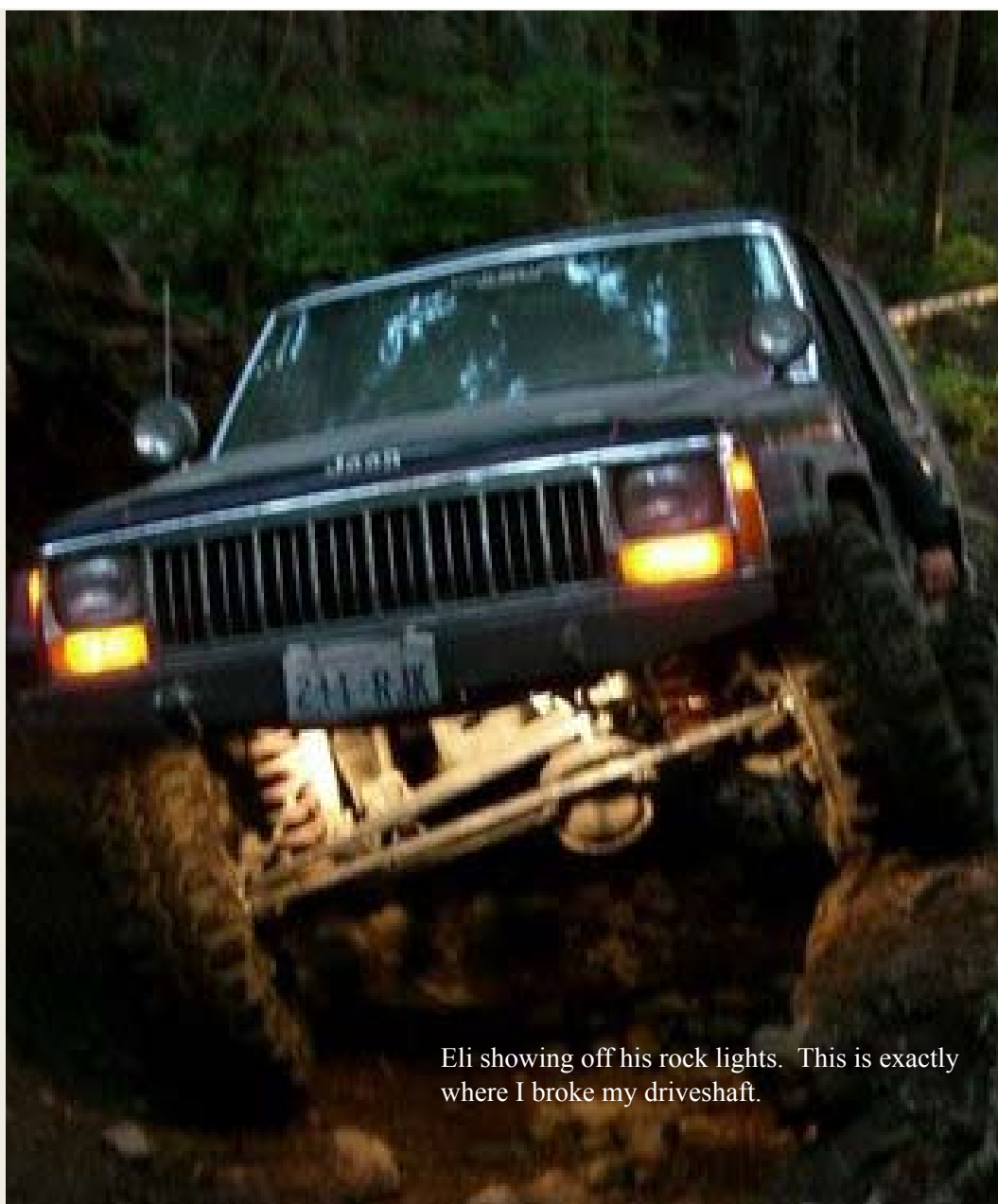


Our own trail had just enough light for people to set up their tents, or those of us without them, to get a fire ring set up. Since this is early in the Naches Trail season (the trail is closed from November 15th through July 15<sup>th</sup>), there was plenty of downed limbs and small trees. We were able to keep a nice fire roaring into the wee hours of the morning.

The next morning we all staggered out (some more wobbly than others) of our respective sleeping quarters and began the task of replacing my u-joint. Luckily, a few people carried spares and the process was relatively simple and quick. We did get a later start than anticipated, though, only getting on the trail by 11:00.

We were able to make good time, the majority of the actual Naches Trail not being all that difficult. In these conditions, that is to say mostly dry, almost any 4x4 can make it. As it was, I did almost all the trail in 2WD low-range due to the broken u-joint. There were a couple points that required more throttle than usual, but nothing too wild. In adverse conditions, however, beware.

The second part of our trip would be different, with us leaving the historic trail and picking up the Kaner Flats trail in the Naches ORV area. This trail is significantly more challenging than the actual wagon route, but no less scenic and beautiful. The trail, which is known by the number 676, winds through trees and down gravity defying hills and across water crossings. James Longmire would later recall that his party crossed the Naches River 52 times, so we didn't feel too bad.



Eli showing off his rock lights. This is exactly where I broke my driveshaft.

(Above Top) The author needing a little Hair of the Dog to stop the morning from spinning long enough to get the driveshaft u-joint replaced. I wonder if the Longmire expedition had similar problems.

(Above Bottom) Our camp site, just off the Naches Trail. Most brought tents, I Jeep camped and Eli curled up under a tarp. The weather remained pleasant all night.

As the sun arced higher overhead and the ambient temperatures raised, our temp gauges emulated. This is an unfortunately common Cherokee malady, one that everybody in the group was suffering from to one extent or another. After one particularly long and steep hill-climb, Ryan chimed in that his temp gauge was pegged firmly in the red. There was a lot of burning coolant in the air, but it was as good a spot as any to eat some lunch and toss a baseball around for a while as our engines cooled. Coupled with our later than anticipated start, though, this spelled the end of the day for part of the group.





This again rings true with stories from early pioneers. My own ancestors came across the Oregon Trail in the 1860's, and as the family legend goes, settled in Ashland, Oregon because that's where their patience ran out. The wagon they used had apparently been breaking with more and more frequency as they approached Oregon Territory, slowing down their progress. Apparently when the wheel broke for the last time, Ashland was looking like a very nice spot to build a home indeed.

While Jay and Ryan both packed it up and headed home, the rest of us pushed on up the Kaner Flats trail and eventually made our way back to the highway without incident. On October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1853, James Longmire's train made it to what passed for civilization in the Puget Sound at the time, having left Missouri on May 10<sup>th</sup> of the same year. Some of the men of the Longmire party journeyed to Olympia, the city that was to become the capitol of Washington when it became a state in 1889, where many had heard about his groundbreaking effort. After months on the trail, their appearance was in stark contrast to their hosts. Of this meeting, Longmire says,

*"But our new friends were equal to the emergency and our embarrassment was soon dispelled by copious draughts of "good old bourbon," to which we did full justice, while answering questions amidst introductions and hearty handshaking."*

To stand in the same spots, face some of the same challenges, and even camp within sight of where people like the Longmires made history, is the only way to really get a grasp for how amazing their accomplishment was. I know I was continually thinking about the ways our trip was laughably easy in comparison, and what it would have been like 154 years ago, or even 54 years ago when the trail was reopened to Jeeps. I highly recommend seeking out these kinds of experiences whenever and wherever possible. The fact that a lot of it can be done driving a Jeep is just icing on the cake.

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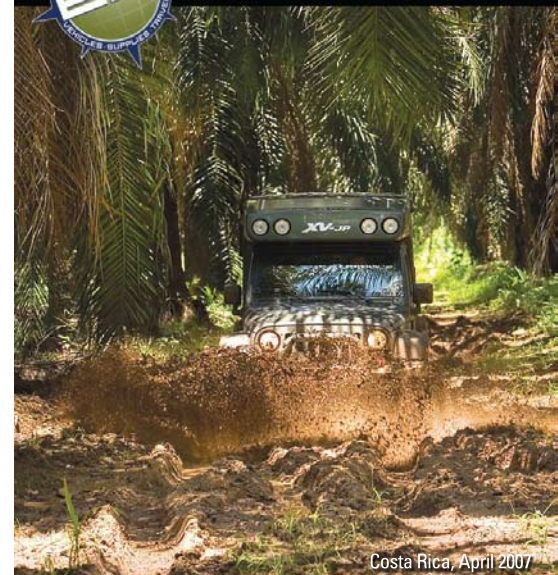
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