



# TRAILS & TALES

Nov./Dec 2014

GEAR GRINDERS 4WD CLUB, INC.

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## ***PANAMINT VALLEY DAYS***

*By: Mary Grimsley*

Wednesday, November 5, George & Linda Graham and Bill & Kathy Martin laid claim to our usual campsite in the Panamint Valley along the Slate Range road. The rest of us trickled in sometime between Wednesday and Friday night: Ben Brockwell bunking with Jack Brown; Richard Cooper and his brother Warren; Bill & Samela Dorey; Matt Gardepe; Jerry & Mary Grimsley; Randy & Karen Schortzmann & Carol Newton; Gary Luckeroth & Suzette Kurtovich; and guests, Carl & Jamie Dorey; Day trippers were: Al Green; Jim & Donna Kenney; Steve & Penny Kline; Dick & Cindy Sims; Mike Stone;

This year the Gear Grinders were in charge of organizing the runs going out, which included trail descriptions, sign-ups, and the camp board. Our club members lead 3 runs on Friday, 3 runs on Saturday, and an unofficial run up Jail Canyon on Sunday. Each trail boss submitted a summary of their trail run, which follows:

## **FRIDAY RUNS:**

### **Pleasant Canyon**, *By Jerry Grimsley*

We departed the PVD camp area with Bill & Samela Dorey and Mike Stone & Belinda Miner as trail crew at about 0800. Being Friday, the group was small with only 5 visitors. The good news was that this was the first trip ever up Pleasant Canyon for all five families. We aired down in Ballarat then made our way slowly up the canyon. We stopped at Clair Camp, drove thru the Rita's Cabin area, and stopped up at Roger's Pass, and then we had lunch at the upper end of South Park Canyon at the Striped Butte Valley overlook. After lunch, we made a short stop at the petroglyphs then looped back rejoining Pleasant Canyon at Rita's Cabin. No one had any problems and we were finished with the run by about 3:00pm.



**Bill Martin being towed into camp.**  
*Photo by Jerry Grimsley*



**The ore chute & track at the mine in Jail Canyon.**  
*Photo by Jerry Grimsley*

### **Defense Mine, By: George Graham**

I didn't sign up to lead any runs but I got stuck with the Defense Mine on Friday because they scheduled the run without a leader. It was a perfect run on a perfect day. There were 9 vehicles, but we had a couple of drop outs. One guy in a black XJ had some fuel delivery problems and Bill Martins TJ started acting up with an intermittent electrical problem that prevented it from starting. As it turned out the XJ and the TJ went back together with the XJ towing Bill. Right after we left them at Fall Zero they started down the hill and Bill decided to try a bump start and it work so he was able to drive back to camp. It was a very good trip and everybody had a great time.

### **Jail Canyon, By: Jack Brown**

Departed camp at 10:00 am with approximately 12 vehicles and with Jack Brown as trail boss and Al Green riding tail gunner. We journeyed our way to the Jail Canyon road and started moving up the canyon (we had aired down back at camp). Jail Canyon trail is considered moderate.

After stopping at the big rock for a short break we moved on up the canyon, arriving at the mine with no difficulties.

Many of the participants explored the mine and surrounding area while others decided to relax at the parking area, it was nice and cool and a good place to sit, eat, and chat. We stayed in the shaded parking area for over 2 hours until the decision was made to go back to camp before it got dark.

We arrived back at the PVD camping area at around 3:30 pm. It was a relaxing and enjoyable trip.

### **Snow Canyon, By Dick Sims**

There were 23 vehicles ranging from a stock Jeep Liberty to a nicely built, 2-dr Jeep. We aired down at the meeting spot and then left on time at 10 AM and followed the Nadeau Road north to the Snow Canyon Road. Jim Kenney from Gear Grinders took the Tail End duties. Matt Gardepe from Gear Grinders and Buck Brazile from the Low Range 4x4 Club comprised the Trail Crew. The trip was uneventful and apparently the only real excitement was when the guy in the nicely built red Jeep ignored the by-pass on Nadeau Road around the 3-4' washout ledge; jumped off and proceeded straight across the rocky wash. I think he was the guy that had a display of Power Tanks near the registration trailer. I didn't witness it, but he told me later that he had done it and thought it was "no big deal!"

We arrived at the mill site for the St. George mine about 11 AM and got everyone squeezed in and parked on top. We took 30 minutes to wander, climb around and check it out. We then went down to the Golden Lady Mine mill site for lunch. Saw a few burros on the hillside and were entertained by Ben Brockwell with his Quad copter.

We started back at 12:50 PM and officially ended the run at 1:30 at the Snow Canyon and Nadeau Roads intersection in order to allow some vehicles to head over to wait for the Sunset Run to Lookout City.

Several vehicles opted to go south on Nadeau, but the rest followed on down to Panamint Valley Road and back to camp.

### **SATURDAY RUNS:**

#### **Goler/Mingle Pass, By Gary Luckeroth**

The run through Goler Wash to Striped Butte Valley was led by Suzette & myself, with Randy & Karen Schortzmann and Bill & Samela as the trail crew. We had about 17 rigs and left at 8:00 am. We went to Ballarat to air down and headed for Goler Wash; the water fall at the entrance was gone, all filled in and no water.

We went to Barker Ranch, which was our first stop, and then from there we went to Mengel Pass, where we stopped and let the group catch up and looked out over Striped Butte Valley.

We then traveled down Mengle pass to the Geologist Cabin where we had lunch. After lunch, some headed back early and after an hour or so we headed back. Going up Mengel Pass was the only challenging spot and that was not bad. We went back to Ballarat and aired up and then back to camp; we were back in camp around 4:00 which I think was not bad for such a long trip, with the only problems being a flat tire and a couple that were low on gas. Overall it was a great trip.

#### **Jackpot Canyon, By Jim Kenney**

Jim Kenney, leader; Jerry Grimsley, trail hand; and Dick Sims tail gunner. This was an all vehicle run with a wide variety of rigs. From a CJ that carried a bit of everything to various TJ's, JK's, Toyota's, Liberty's, a Suzuki, and a Mercedes SUV; 25 vehicles in all. We stopped at Ballarat to air down. Driver experience was from a total newbie to 40+ years' experience, which led to many different ways to make it up the canyon.

To reach upper Jackpot Canyon, you have to make a large loop north and east out of the canyon, climbing the alluvial fan with steep, slow undulating climbs on loose rocks and shelf roads, and then dropping back into the canyon near the top. We lost one Jeep quickly, as he was sputtering, going uphill and didn't want to chance having a problem on the climb.

We headed up the long winding loop with a few stops for pics and to regroup. Some expressed a bit of apprehension about the steepness and the narrow road, but all seemed to like the overview of Panamint Valley. The Suzuki tended to overheat on long slow climbs, and some had to retry their lines, but overall all made it up to the mine for lunch. Several of our group explored the mining area and the debris field on up the canyon wall. We also had a family of burros; 3 adults and a young one; they were not happy with our being there! They were quite bold about showing us their displeasure by moving in closer and standing just above where we were parked and giving us dirty looks! This led to multiple photo opps.

After lunch, a group of 7 decided to head back down ahead of the rest of us to explore another area. We headed down; some deciding the road didn't seem as steep or as long as when we climbed up. Others didn't

readily agree to that! One driver said she didn't have any problems with the road but she wasn't thrilled about the heights and one of our group ran out of gas on the way down, slowing us a bit.

Near the bottom the group split, some electing to head back to camp, and I led the rest of us to the lower Jackpot mine area, which was just a short distance back up the canyon. We spent about a half hour exploring this area and finding many pomegranates that grow wild with all the water in the area. I sense an episode of pomegranate jelly happening. There is a big fig tree there also, but alas, no figs this time of year!

We headed back down to Ballarat where some aired up and some just headed back to camp. Everybody had a good time, good company, the weather was beautiful, and nobody got left behind! A very good day.

### **JACKPOT CANYON RUN – Dick Sims – Tail Sweep**

This run was fairly uneventful as well. On the way up we had to wait for a Samurai's overheating automatic transmission to cool down for about 15 minutes. He said it was the long hill climbs that caused it to overheat.

During that time another fellow decided to turn back stating that his throttle position sensor was acting up, and that he was having trouble pulling the hills.

There was a stock Mercedes SL 320 that had traction problems when trying to maneuver around rocks, but either Jerry or I would spot him through it.

The only other hang-up was the guy with the "nicely built red Jeep" stopped on the way down and fooled around under the hood for about 10 minutes before we could get underway again. Never did hear what the problem was.

### **Defense Mine, By Jack Brown**

We departed camp and journeyed to Minnietta road where we aired down. Trail Boss was Jack Brown; Trail Hands were Matt Gardepe, Richard Cooper, and George Graham (tail gunner). The trail to Defense mine is considered difficult with lots of obstacles.

After airing down we journeyed up to the sand wash turnoff (with George's directions) and dropped down and made our way through the wash. One vehicle (an almost stock XJ) had some difficulties, but Matt G. positioned himself in front of it and spotted the driver of the XJ through the entire run with no strap use (great job Matt). Two vehicles in front of George were having problems, one overheating and the other having engine problems, but George worked them through.

We stopped at Water Fall 0 so some could play a little and then moved on. We arrived at the Defense Mine just in time for lunch. A lot of people explored the mine and tunnels and seemed to enjoy the outing. We had to move on because the Cummins Cutoff group caught up to us and we got out of their way; time to go anyway.

With George Graham leading and myself, Jack Brown, riding tail gunner, we made our way back down to the Minnietta road where we aired up and went back to camp. A good day and a good run.

## **SUNDAY RUN:**

### **Jail Canyon, By Jack Brown**

On Sunday morning we departed camp at 0900 with approximately 12 vehicles. Trail Boss was Jack Brown with Carol Newton riding shot-gun; Trail Hands were Ben Brockwell; Richard & Warren Cooper; George & Linda Graham; Jerry & Mary Grimsley; and Gary Luckerth & Suzette. We made our way down to the Jail turnoff and headed up the canyon. We stopped at the big rock where Ben B. flew his Quad copter and took some photos of the group and surrounding area.

We then made our way on up to the mine where we ate lunch and some went exploring and Ben flew his Quad copter some more, taking more pictures. After exploring and relaxing in the cool shade, we left the mine and made our way back down to Indian Ranch Road, arriving at around 1:30 pm.

Some decided to go back to camp, while others (myself & Carol, Gary L. & Suzetta, Richard & Warren Cooper, and a group from Yucaipa decided to go down to Ballarat and go up to Jack Pot mine. Just before arriving at Ballarat I noticed a clanging from under my jeep so we stopped to investigate. It was discovered that the bolt holding the forward end of the driver side control arm had mysteriously taken leave and the arm was dragging on the ground. In an all hands effort, we jacked the jeep up, moved the arm back into position and, with a bolt that Gary L. had in his kit, we put her back together.

We then headed on up toward Jack Pot mine. The trail into Jack Pot is a 4 wheel drive, slightly difficult run and quiet enjoyable; we all made it in with no difficulty. Everyone went exploring and looking over the mine and area. After explorations were complete, we decided to wait until the sun had set before departing because we would be looking directly into the sun and blinded. After the sun had gone down, we made our way back down to Ballarat and journeyed back to camp, arriving well after dark. We discovered, to our delight, that Mary and Linda had made dinner for us (chili, mac n cheese and burritos). Very much appreciated ladies, thank you! A great run with good friends, new and old!



**The mill at the mine in Jail Canyon. There is a lot to see there and is mostly in tact (far enough off the beaten path and hidden back behind the camp in the canyon).  
Photo by Jerry Grimsley**



January's **Pizza Night** will be January 9th  
the first NON-FLEX FRIDAY of the month,  
**6:00pm** at the Pizza Factory.

So come join us for some pizza and refreshment,  
while talking 4X4 stuff, swappin' stories, or  
sharing what you got for Christmas.



## Calico 2015

**WHEN:** Saturday, January 24, 2015, 7:00am

**WHERE:** Depart from the USA gas station @ 7:30am

OR Camp in the Calico Ghost Town Campground (reservations can be made @  
[http://www.sbcountyparks.com/reservations/flash/flashreservations.asp?park\\_idno=2](http://www.sbcountyparks.com/reservations/flash/flashreservations.asp?park_idno=2)  
or you can camp on public land @ the mouth of Duran or Odessa Canyons.

**ITINERARY:** Running the Duran/Odessa Canyons loop.

**VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS:** 31" tires; some skid protection & sliders;  
Lockers not required, but they do help.

**WHAT TO BRING:** 4X4 vehicle; food & drink for the day (weekend);  
suitable clothing; camera; and enthusiasm.

**TRAILBOSS:** Joe Rodriguez can be reached  
@760-977-7922 or jrodri@msn.com



*Happy  
New Year!*

**2015**

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## November Meeting HILITES

The meeting was called to order by President Randy Schortzmann.

We welcomed new guests: Matt & Deverell Heckerson, Mark & Frank Kuttur, Dawn Robens, James Weeks, and Lenny & Kathy Winterly.

The minutes from the October meeting were read by Vanessa Zurn and approved as read.

Mail included a Certificate of Appreciation from the Sequoia National Forest for our trail maintenance work and info on the upcoming CA4WDC Convention in Feb. 2015.

Jim Kenney gave the Treasurer's report.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS: Public Lands Roundtable:**

At the October a slide show of the pre-draft of the DRECP was presented by Randy Banis. Very informative.

### **TRIP REPORTS:**

PVD was discussed by the various trail bosses; Matt Shaw reported on the prerun of Isham prior to PVD; Matt also reported on the Parker Splash, a run over in the Colorado River area; Curtis Martin reported on a Friday run to the El Paso's where they saved 2 emergency vehicles and found part of the space ship that had gone down,

**50/50 Drawing:** \$106 was taken in and \$53.00 was won by Suzette Kurtovich, which she donated back to the club.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Business cards were discussed and a motion made to have printed the "yellow" version.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Christmas Parade is Dec 13; motion made to participate. Leslie Brown brought a sign-up sheet to Ring the Bell for the Salvation Army. Christmas Party was discussed briefly. Nominations were taken from the floor and we had our yearly election. New officers are: Pres.: Jack Brown; VP: Joe Rodriguez; Recording Sec.: Vanessa Zurn; Corresponding Sec.: Mary Grimsley; Treasurer: Ciegi Shaw; BofD: Jeff McKnight and Curtis Martin with the past President filling in the 3<sup>rd</sup> board member.

## CLUB CALENDAR at a GLANCE

Jan 9	Pizza Night, 6:00pm @ Pizza Factory
Jan 22	BLM Round Table meeting, 6:30pm at 300 S. Richmond Road
Jan 24	Calico – trail boss is Joe Rodriguez
Jan 28	Club meeting, 6:00 PM dinner, 7:00 PM meeting at The Grape Leaf, 901 N. Heritage Dr., Ridgecrest.
Feb 6	Pizza Night, 6:00pm @ Pizza Factory
Feb 25	Club meeting, 6:00 PM dinner, 7:00 PM meeting at The Grape Leaf, 901 N. Heritage Dr., Ridgecrest.
Feb 26	BLM Round Table meeting, 6:30pm at 300 S. Richmond Road
Mar 6-8	TDS Desert Safari

2015 – 2015 – 2015 – 2015 – 2015

### **2015 TRAIL BOSSES NEEDED**

<u>JAN</u>	24 – Calico – Joe Rodriguez
<u>FEB</u>	
<u>MAR</u>	6-8 - TDS Desert Safari
<u>APR</u>	
<u>MAY</u>	
<u>JUN</u>	

### **DON'T FORGET TO CONTACT**

Joe Rodriguez to volunteer to lead a run at:  
[jrodri@msn.com](mailto:jrodri@msn.com) Or: 760-977-7922

## ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRONT

### **National Public Lands News**

Get updates & info at: <http://nplnews.com/>

Office located at: 941 E. Ridgecrest Blvd or call @ 760-371-1073

## CLUB WEBSITE

Please check the club Face Book page or our website for the latest information regarding meetings & runs at:  
[www.geargrinders4wdclub.org/](http://www.geargrinders4wdclub.org/)

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