

**February 23:** Red Cloud (Chiriaco Summit)

**March 22:** South Folk of the San Jancinto River in conjunction with a hike. See page 1

**Scott Connelly @760.324.5001  
to reserve.**

**Great Outdoors**

## **Palm Springs**

### **4 x 4 & Camping**

**Information? Yahoo Email Group at:**

**<http://groups.yahoo.com/Groups/GOPS4X4>**

## **Death Valley Runs**

By: *Veronica Zerrer*

Eighteen members and visitors to The Great Outdoors-Palm Springs 4-wheeled through the Death Valley National Park basin during the January 8-13<sup>th</sup> adventure at Furnace Creek. Undaunted by the fickle nature of the desert's winter temperatures which seemed to fall to freezing at night, 4 x 4 explorers from throughout Southern California sought out sights seldom seen by the average Death Valley visitor. Runs of various complexities were supervised and monitored by the leaders Scott Connelly, Cliff Clue and Ed Emond.

The first run of approximately 90 miles crawled up Echo Canyon stopping to lunch at the ruins of the Inyo mine. That afternoon, the group took the Funeral Mountains Trail that ran to Lee's Camp, ending in Nevada.

Thursday's route was approximately 120 miles. We started south with stops at Badwater, past Mormon Point before traversing onto the easy, but dusty West Side Road. From there the group of seven took the Johnson Canyon Road until the Jeep trail ran out at a cottonwood stand and natural spring. The site contained the foundations of a cabin and out buildings. Wild burros were using the sight as a stable, bedding down in the tall grasses in the evening. Grass and scrub were matted down into compact beds used by the animals.

Friday's trip was the longest of the week coming in at approximately 185 miles long. Starting with a swing around Stovepipe Wells down through Emigrant pass we scouted Wild Rose Canyon before joining up with Wingate Road at the ghost town of Balarat. We entered Goler Wash, a beautiful slot canyon using the Coyote Canyon Road. Among the sites on this trip were aerial trams used by miners to transport people, supplies and ore to and from dig sites. We lunched at the Barker Ranch where Charles Manson and his clan hatched their deadly scheme to create Helter Skelter. From the ranch we traveled to the Mengel Pass taking the Butte Valley road where we intercepted the Warm Springs Canyon road.

Saturday, an easy run through Titus Canyon, capped an eventful and picturesque trip. Many took the opportunity to tour Scotty's Castle, visit the 'Racetracks', and drive through Artists Loop.

Trail difficulty ranged from three (Johnson Canyon) to six (Echo Canyon and Mengel Pass). Scott Connelly and Cliff Clue acted as trail leaders. Negotiations over dry waterfalls were assisted by Ed Emond serving as the run spotter. In addition to the trail driving, the new friends made and the old friends seen again, nightly camp fires kept all warm physically and nurtured that singular camaraderie often witnessed among the 4 x 4 set. The only mishap reported was one flat tire on the second day of the tour.

**For your safety, as well as the safety of others, here is a short list of the equipment you should have on your**

### **4x4.**

- Seat belts for all passengers
- CB radio (we use channel 20 when possible)
- Full size spare & suitable jack
- Fire extinguisher
- Tow strap (no metal hook)
- Tow attachment **FRONT** and **REAR**. Very important!
- **Reliable** 4 WD vehicle with 2 speed transfer case
- Anti-sway bar, disconnected (Trails rated 2 and above on the 4+ scale rating system and where applicable on the 10 scale.

*Photos below by Ron Gilbert*



## *The Inside Story of an Outsider's Tale or... How I Did Death Valley on a Flier*

By: *Jim Wilson*



Like the rest of you guys, I had a real nice New Year's seeing lots of friends and family. Fortunately for me, two of my friends, Gary and Patrick, informed me that they were joining Great Outdoors for their Death Valley 4x4 campout January 8<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup> and asked me to come along. Unfortunately, on New Year's Day I was packing my car in California for my return trip to my home in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Not one to be foiled with a trip to Death Valley at stake, I zipped back to New Mexico on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and quickly put together a trip on the fly.

Heavy snows stymied my January 7<sup>th</sup> departure date, pushing me back a day. It was worth the wait though, as the 8<sup>th</sup> dawned clear and crisp, albeit quite white. Making my way past rollovers, jackknifed trucks and plenty of vehicles over the side, I finally found myself sitting atop Hoover Dam-hopefully soon to become Boulder Dam once again. I marveled not at the dam nor the reservoir nor the river below but the pillars being placed above for the new US 93 bypass. I reached my destination of Furnace Creek campground at about 8pm Pacific Time, or 13 hours later.

Wednesday morning, I was invited to ride with Cliff in his jeep along with Gary and Patrick. We headed out with five other jeeps into Echo Canyon above Furnace Creek Inn. Perfect weather combined with great people and a cool lunch spot amongst abandoned mine ruins made for a primo day. The evening was spent in camaraderie around what we thought at the time was a roaring campfire. We would of course later in the week learn what a true roaring campfire was when Veronica got hold of some firewood.

Thursday, participants had a variety of sightseeing choices. Since my friend Patrick was making his first appearance at Death Valley and wanted to see the local, popular sites in the valley, we stuck around the lower elevations and ended the day enjoying the sunset at the sand dunes near Stovepipe Wells.

Friday's jeep caravan had us luncheoning on the porch of the Barker Ranch which was quite pleasant now that the previous family (Charles Manson's) which had been in residence has been evicted and currently luncheons in a prison dining room. Saturday was a diverse day like Thursday which for me meant a trip through Titus Canyon courtesy of Steve, ending again around the campfire for our final night.

Back now in Albuquerque (it didn't make it to 30 today) my mind cannot help but meander back to those balmy days and great nights around the campfire. Thanks guys for a great week in the desert. This outsider is gonna make sure he makes 2008 the Year of the Flier.

