

## **TRAIL BYTES:**

**A Hooligan's Holiday: What I did on my summer vacation 2008.**

By: ColoJpChef

Well summer started off with watching the graduation of yet another group of aspiring young adults ready to face the wonders of life and career amongst other things I'm sure. Off to play for four days in Moab followed by business travel. Summer break starts yet again, certainly one of the perks of being an educator! I must be candid this summer had not been as fruitful as years past, however all in all it was easy going for the most part. Moab was an absolute BLAST and one of the most memorable visits ever!

### **MAY: Moab: 5.20.08 – 5.24.08**

Well off on yet another adventure/expedition with my good friend/co-pilot Adam Sacks to meet our southwest "homiez" from Arizona and California once again, the folks from [www.JeepExpeditions.org](http://www.JeepExpeditions.org). The J.E. group came up to Moab as part of a seven day expedition. Back in October of 2007 we rolled across 120 miles of the Mojave Desert Trail with them.

Jeep Grille Adventures hosted one of the Moab evenings Chuck-Wagon dinners which turned out to be a great hit.

#### ARCHVIEW CAMPGROUND MOAB MENU

All recipes can be found at:

<http://jeepgrilleadventures.com/recipes.aspx>

Garden Salad

Grilled Margarita Torpedo Farms Pork Chops

Southwest Blackened Chicken

Grilled Lime and Cilantro Summer Squashes

Roasted Garlic, Three Onion and Goat Cheese Smashed Potatoes

Various Fruit Pies

Vegetarian Plate: Grilled and Marinated Tofu

What an evening, probably one of the best memories that will stick around when I'm in the nursing home God willing! Carbonated high octane beverages were available as well as other milder versions as well my new found summer favorite Vodka & Amp on-the-rocks. A great time was had by all and Jim Brightly freelance writer of [www.OffRoad.com](http://www.OffRoad.com) amongst other publications provided the slammin-boogie-down tunes. D.J. Juke Jammin' Jimmy B was in-the-hiz-ouse and in-full-effect representing everything from golden oldies to the latest heavy metal and everything in between. In attendance I would say was about twenty-two folks in all. Chef Sacks was a tremendous help, he played an integral role in the final planning and execution of the JGA dinner alongside a couple other outstanding helpers.

Trail rides were broken up into two group options; Easy Scenic and Locked and Lifted. Obviously I decided to roll with the locked and lifted group.

**Hell hath its fury, fortunately not fully!:** Our first trip out yielded a broken brake line on my TJ about midway through the Hell's Revenge trail. We did a quick trail fix by crimping the hard line off with a pair of vice grips. Kudos to the Land Rover guys on the same trail that day. They loaned me a much stronger pair of vice grips (note to self...buy stronger vice grips). Juke Jammin' Jimmy B and his wife followed me off the trail back into town. It was fortunate they did as their CJ was having fuel pump issues. I ended up towing them up the last mile back to the campground. I would say it was one of the cheapest fixes ever, a quick stop at the local NAPA for fluids, steel brake line and other doodads to complete the fix we were on our way. It took just a little over an hour or so to completely repair.

If you know anything at all about Hell's Revenge trail, you'll know that it is not a trail to have brake failure on. The trail is mostly long and very steep climbs and descents. The rest of the folks ventured onward through Hell's Revenge to completion, almost without incident! Member Number 7 (George and Diane) from Arizona almost rolled it on Hell's Gate obstacle which can be viewed here <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMX7HaeU&feature=related> on YouTube.

I had been mildly nervous about my rear upper control arms holding up. This past spring I was bored stiff one weekend so I decided to cut, lengthen with a sleeve and weld them back together. The intent was to get three inches of additional wheelbase stretch. I will say not only did they hold up through my infamous throttle heavy right foot the wheelbase stretch made for newfound characteristics of on trail travel. I was able to approach some of the same lines as well as a host of more challenging lines than in previous years with ease. I will be looking to stretch another two to three inches as well this fall. I'm looking to hit the sweet spot of the one hundred inch wheelbase.

Our next trip out the following day was a mix of very scenic overlooks with moderate obstacles, the trail is known as Seven Mile Rim. It turned out to be a very slow moving day across a long and scenic trail. It was a unique experience while stopped along the cliff's edge to drop stones down into drilled dynamite holes, something to the extent of 1000 feet deep. I rode shotgun for awhile with Don Pryor of [www.savagesun4x4.com](http://www.savagesun4x4.com) in his, "big-as-Texas" built TJ. He has a huge hearty, Texas friendly, attitude and a ton of general Jeep and Moab knowledge. Adam drove the JGA rig through a good portion of the trail that day, he really just needs to break down and go get his own Jeep. Get one already will you, I know you're reading this!!! Oi-vey!

Later that evening I decided to show Adam the enjoyment and thrill of running a trail at night. My favorite trail to run anytime, especially at night, is Poison Spider. It seemed that nobody from the JE.org crew was up to following along on a night run with the boys from Colorado, "was it something I said"?! Without ruin or carnage we ran the Poison Spider trail in the typical full throttle fashion, up to the through the Wedgie to the little dome just to the left. The little dome above the Wedgie is a wonderful spot to kick back, view the universe and ponder life's mysteries. Most of the photos unfortunately were taken with my cheesy little camera phone which yielded very fuzzy photos. (Note to self...invest in a decent camera for these trips).

The next day we decided to hang loose and not run the Moab Rim Trail. It began to get stormy and rain, knowing how the slickrock can change with those elements I was glad I decided against running that trail that day. During the trip though, Russ a member from California, in his very mildly modified Jeep TJ almost, “gave up the ghost”. He wheels like I had and still do (even with a locker), being that he is open in both front and rear differentials, he has a seriously heavy right foot! He ended up sliding down a hillside and ultimately his Jeep was stopped by a rock and shrub. Otherwise had that shrub not stopped his vehicle he would have dropped off a 500 foot cliff. All I can say is, WOW I bet that was one pair of Fruit-of-the-Looms that didn’t make it back to Cali.

Rather than head out on Moab Rim trail, we headed downtown for breakfast at the Moab Diner check out our thoughts about it at The D.I.R.T. on the JGA website here <http://jeepgrilleadventures.com/thedirt.aspx> scroll down to Utah.

The downside of the whole Moab trip, outside of having to leave of course, was rolling into Denver. Coming down I-25 about 5 minutes from Adam’s house my Ford Expedition blew out number three sparkplug. Evidently this has been a common problem for 1997 – 2004 Ford 5.4 motors. At least it wasn’t the Jeep that was broken. After hours of attempting to do it myself ultimately researching the issue I found [www.BlowOutSparkplug.com](http://www.BlowOutSparkplug.com). They were about four times less than the dealership would have charged and could do it the following week as they had three other Ford sparkplug jobs scheduled in Colorado the same weekend.

**JUNE: not much to report at all!:** Usually by about the second week into June my wife asks “when is it that school starts back up?!” June turned out to be a very weak month for off-road adventures for me. I did however hang out at the CrawlerTech4x4 shop in Denver a good bit to assist with some very general shop and wrenching work. Mostly it is an opportunity for me to learn and gain experience about all things Jeep, more so just a chance to be around good friends. When school starts back up a good portion of our students talk about how they worked at various restaurants to gain experience, I tell them I did something similar rather I was tearing down axles, doing very basic axle preparation with a couple dashes of welding.

**JULY: New opportunities for JGA, the end of wheeling for awhile and the death of a hamster.**

**Opportunities: JpFreek.com:** I had been discussing some Jeep style food things with the team over at JpFreek.com when the announcement came out in July that [www.JpFreek.com](http://www.JpFreek.com) was now the official digital publication for Jeep Jamboree USA [http://www.jpfreek.com/news\\_events/press\\_room/jeep-jamboree.html](http://www.jpfreek.com/news_events/press_room/jeep-jamboree.html) Within an hour after the announcement the team at JpFreek asked if I would be interested in being more closely involved with the 7 Bar Grill <http://7bargrille.wordpress.com/> portion of JpFreek, “But of course!!” I said with one of those hearty French accents, because all chefs talk like that you know.....NOT! Look for something really cool to come down the trail in 2009 with JGA and JpFreek, that’s all I’m saying!

**End of Wheeling for awhile, a hamster dies. Trails: Bill Moore Lake, Bill Moore Loop, Red Elephant Hill:** Russ one of the members from JeepExpeditions.org came out from California to attend a business meeting in Keystone, CO. He drove his Jeep out for the occasion, yes the same one that almost careened off a cliff in Moab. He wanted to run some local trails with me, I figured we could run the Bill Moore area as it was easy by most anybody's standards and wouldn't leave Russ or anyone else broken down, sort of. Bill Moore is one of the easiest trails anywhere just north of Empire Colorado, easily accessible off of I-70. All I can say is it turned out to be the absolute cluster fluff and the worst day ever in my off-road history. I had multiple breakages, blown cylinder, steering hose blowout, bent front track-bar, sidewall puncture, broken and bent lug studs, shredded rear e-brake line leading ultimately to a nasty three to four hour winching stuck fest. Hey at least I wasn't broken down. Yes all of that happened to my Jeep in the same day. What I thought was going to be a simple and scenic day took several turns for the worse. Within all the bad there was some good that came out of it all. I was able to drive it back home and...yet again may I say not broken down.

The bad and well really good when you think about it, my Jeep now sits quietly awaiting a full 8-hamster replacement. Shoulda...no I think I'll have a V-8: Not just Veggie PiMp Juice anymore! See the V-8 story in the Trail Bytes section of the Jeep Grille Adventures website.

#### **Other Summer Fun and Events:**

- YouTube Video of the Crane Hi Clearance friends released:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAmRT2Yn3gQ>
- Crawl Magazine Issue #16: Hangers and Bangers four page article with my great friend Josh Lowenstien of [www.CraneHiClearance.com](http://www.CraneHiClearance.com) and [www.CrawlerTech4x4.com](http://www.CrawlerTech4x4.com) and the rest of the gang. The JGA Rig and yours truly pictured "Chef Mark DeNittis has a seriously heavy right foot at times...." Article author Tim Magee of Crawl and his photo business [www.TimMageePhoto.com](http://www.TimMageePhoto.com) couldn't have nailed that statement any better. As well the first time four wheeler, fellow business associate and great friend Ali Williams, was navigating the big Yellow and Green Tube monster. What a way to break in a noobie! What are you waiting for, go get your subscription at [www.CrawlMag.com](http://www.CrawlMag.com) and read all about it in Crawl Magazine issue #16.

That just about sums it all up folks!

"The world is your oystah...put some hot sauce on it and chug it down!" Life is too short to do anything but!

Thanks to [www.CraneHiClearance.com](http://www.CraneHiClearance.com) for the use of the trailer to tow my junk out and back from Moab.

The fall and winter adventures are already in process, being planned and soon to be in print. Remember...Eat well, wheel well and of course responsibly! See you on the trails if you don't see me first!