

May 2007



# Trail Tales

**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ARIZONA LO-RANGERS 4WD CLUB**

## Cover Picture

Scott's 3+3 clawing its way up the steep exit from the mining area. This picture was originally in Scott's trip report but it was begging to be on the front cover.

## Meeting Minutes

Members present: Steve Smith, Ed Lyons, Steve Graham, Linda Graham, Marty Boetel and kids, Charlie Babcock, John Griffon, Lars. Guest: Markus Kuck who drives a 78 Cherokee FSJ and a 94 Cherokee as a daily driver.

Meeting started at 7:06 p.m.

Ed says we have \$4062.28 in account. Steve Smith is going to quarterly. Scott gave an excellent trip report of Tip Top Mine run. Red Creek will be run sometime in the future.

Scott talked about OHV training by combined groups. Lars is doing locksmithing now and will do work half price for members. Meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Markus Kuck

Markusk11@yahoo.com

## Calendar of Events

May 19 – Edwards Park run contact Steve Smith @ 480-838-5394

May 30 – Meeting at 7pm location La Belle Pizza

June ? – Club run

June 27 – Meeting at 7pm location La Belle Pizza

## Trip Report

Tip Top Mine April 21, 2007 (by Scott Nixon, photos by Jerome Gill and Steve Smith)

Participants:

Scott, Sydney and Steven Nixon – 1989 K3500 (aka Big Ugly)

Jerome, Zoë and Logan Gill – 2000 Denali

John Griffin and Anthony – 1997 S10 Blazer

Steve Smith – 2005 Jeep Rubicon Unlimited

Pulling into the Table Mesa parking lot I was surprised to see a big tent awning, cones, and Sandy McCullen handing out fliers. The Good Guy's Gun club was doing a cleanup in the area. All shooting east of the river was prohibited, Game and Fish was looking for State Trust land permit violations and law enforcement was out looking for vehicles (i.e. buggies) driving on the roads without proper registration. As much as I hate

getting hassled by the man when out wheeling, it's nice to see some enforcement in the area. The shooters have really made a mess of the washes and new trails seem to show up out there daily. If the free for all continues we will lose some great trails.

Since the parking lot was occupied and "off limits" according to Sandy I drove down the road some to find a wide spot. Jerome pulled in right behind me. John had called to say he was running late so I climbed out of my truck to wander around and try and keep the kids out of the road. Steve called at ten minutes after ten to ask where I was; he was up at the parking lot. I had driven right passed him and didn't even notice. John showed up with his friend Anthony; I sent him back up the road to grab Steve.

After Steve and John aired down we headed out. Unlike last time where I got lost trying to cross the river I picked all the turns correctly. Forging the Agua Fria River barely got my hubs wet, only one tire at a time was even in the water. The road was in great shape and we made good time to the corral where the trail turns left. The brush was even trimmed back from the buggy traffic that heads through here to the hardcore trail Predator. No one was on it today though, so we drove right past. I picked a nice camp site for the evening near the top of the hill and proceeded on down the other side into Boulder Creek.

The creek was pretty much dry as we bounced along the last few miles into the Tip Top town site. Right before the buildings start there is an uphill road to the main mine shaft. It starts out pretty mellow and then gets rougher. Nothing too challenging, just enough small loose rocks that you have to find that perfect balance between grinding to a halt and shaking your truck apart. With plenty of ground clearance and a locked up rear, the big K3500 climbed up no problem. Steve came up right after me in his usual nonchalant way, his Jeep's torque I6 barely above idle.

Jerome and John had a bit more fun in there open IFS front and LSD rear vehicles. Their grins once they reached the top pretty much said it all. Anthony was so pumped by the ride up he immediately started asking what type of mini-truck would be a good platform to build a wheeler out of.



John and Jerome bumping their way up to the mine



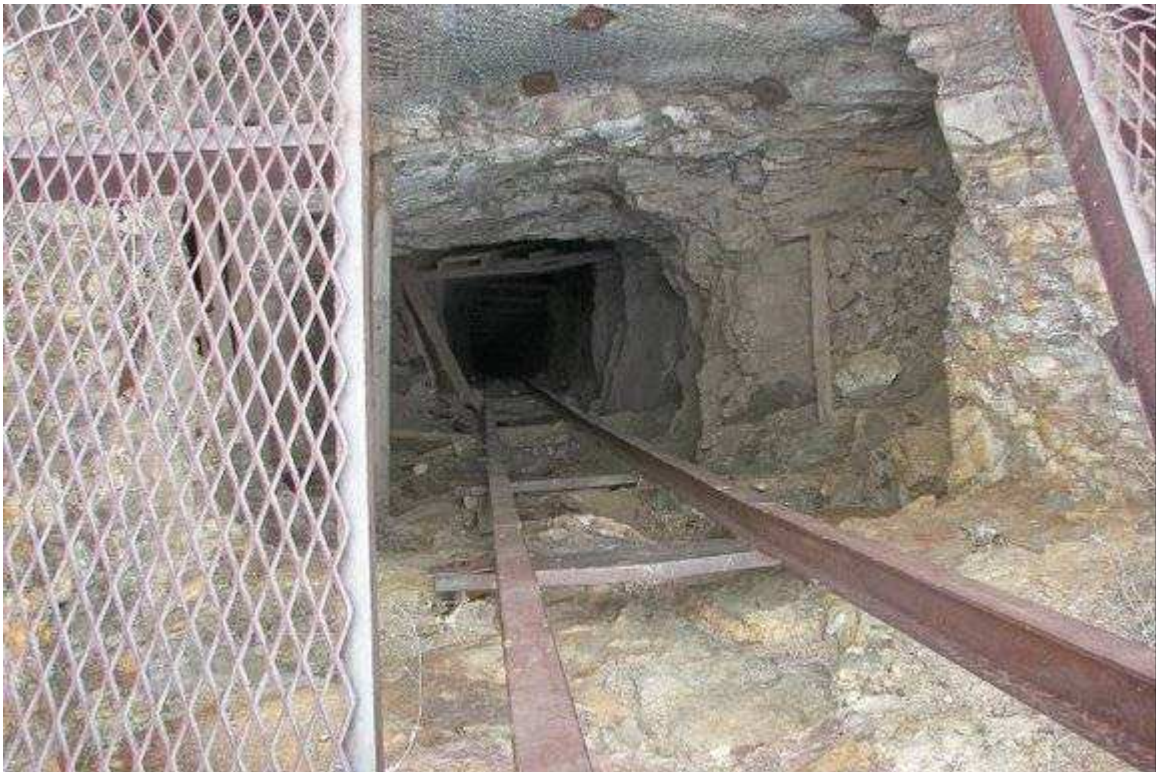
**John doing much better than the old Willy's pickup did**

We spent a while exploring the mine site. The kids always love tossing rocks down the deep mine shaft. OK, I admit it; I threw a few down there myself. The view from up here is amazing. Jerome, the kids and I hiked up an old road a ways. We found several very deep and dangerous open pit mines. I also found a real nice chunk of mica lying on the ground; it was silver and so brittle it felt like plastic. I could pull thin sheets of it off that were totally transparent. This mineral is often used to make capacitors, was sometimes used to make glass and is even found in some brands of toothpaste as an abrasive!

Sadly, one of my favorite relics from this site is now missing. An old flywheel from the steam engine that once hoisted carts out of the mine is gone. A picture of this flywheel was on the back cover of the Arizona Highways magazine issue that first directed me back to this area. It sickens me to think that someone came out here and stole something that has been resting comfortably for almost a hundred years so they can have a nice lawn ornament, or worse, melt it down for scrap.



The kids looking for more rocks near the mine shaft head frame



The bottom is a long, long way down



Old boiler that ran the steam engine for the mine hoist



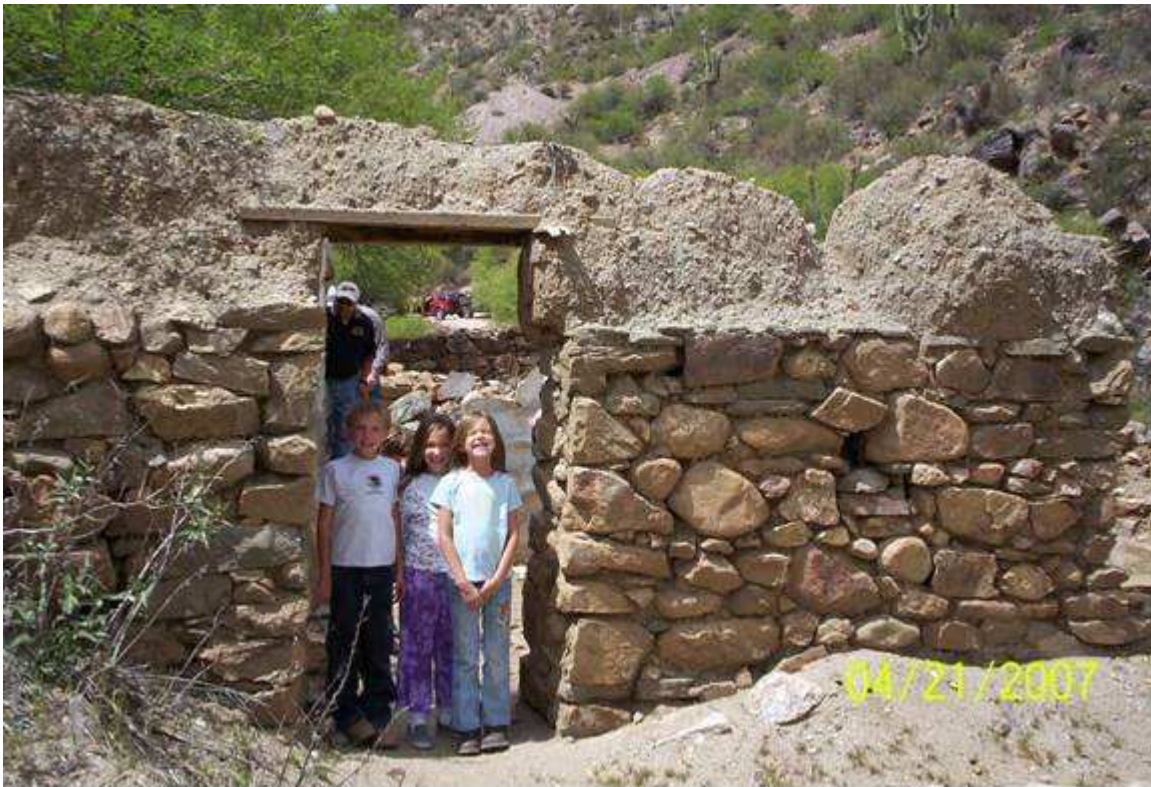
This fly wheel is now gone (photo from 2004 trip)



Steven and I hamming it up. The frame for this truck was up the hill, complete with axles!



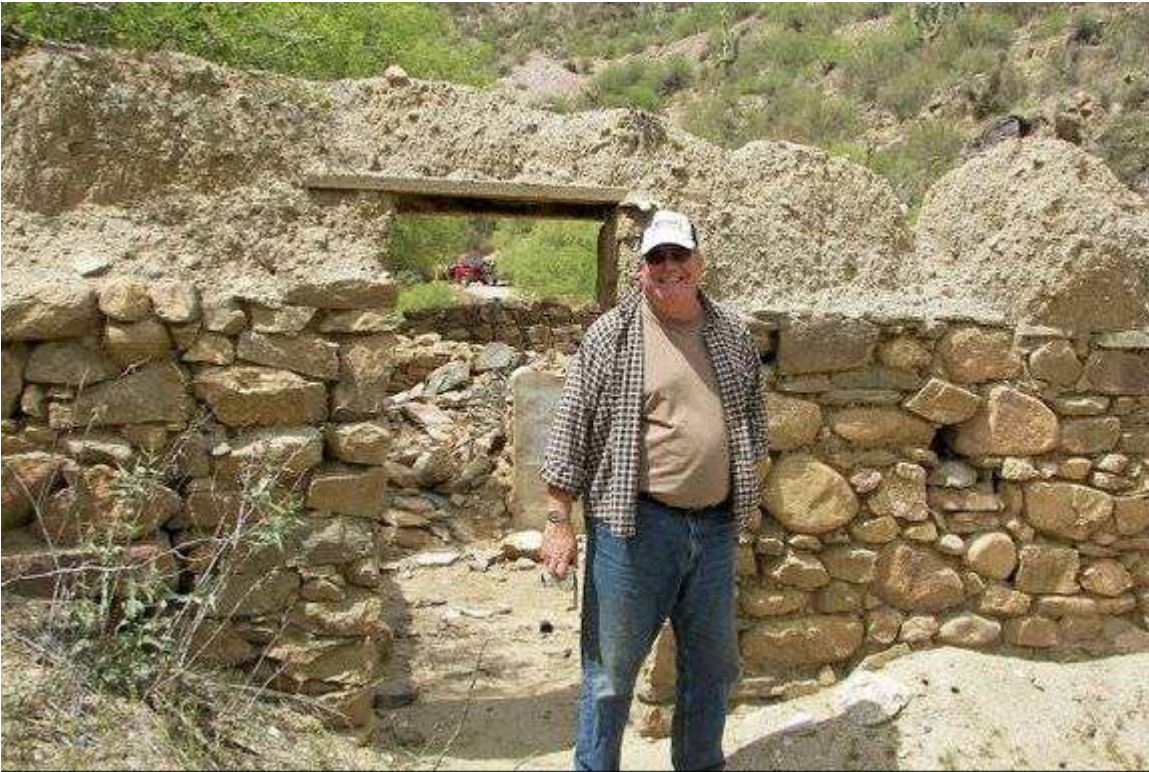
Heading down the trail from the mine to the town site.



**Check out the height of the door frame in comparison to the kids. These were not large people!**



**The house wasn't much, but it was in a great location.**



**John enjoying the sites and the beautiful weather.**



**Logan standing where a stamp mill once did.**

After we ate lunch and talked for a while we headed back down the road to explore the town site itself. The kids toured the buildings for a bit, but had a lot more fun playing in the soft,

silty sand bellow the stamp mill. Steve pointed out it was in all likelihood the dried remains for the slurry left over after the minerals were extracted. It was several feet deep and as soft as baby powder. Steven brought a half pound of it with him in his shoes.

Everyone was game for more wheeling. Well, everyone but the kids. They didn't want to leave the fantastic sand box they had found. I had never been past the town site very far, but had some directions to another site with some newer equipment that looked interesting. We dusted off the little ones best we could, strapped them in their seats and headed further along Boulder Creek.

The road was in great shape for about two miles. We passed a couple of wind mills, a corral or two and a neat old stone cabin built right into the hill side. The directions sent me uphill to the left of the wash and the trail began to get interesting. It was fairly evident this road does not see much travel. At one point I almost lost the trail as it entered a large area of trees frequented by a small herd of bored looking cattle. The brush was tight but I pressed on up the hill as the road widened back out.

After cresting the hill we passed through a gate and slowly crawled our way along a narrow shelf road over hanging a deep gorge. Zigzagging back and forth we wound our way down to a wash at the bottom. Rounding the corner to the right I wasn't sure it was even passable. Getting out verifying there actually was a road into the wash I was relieved to see that despite a few big rocks and an exposed turn, it was passable. Well, passable in the downward direction anyway. Once in the wash you had to make a hard left, drive down the wash about 30 yards, and then make a hard right back up out of it to complete a wicked "Z" turn. This is not easy in a crew cab long bed pickup!



Steve in the wash, John navigating the tricky part of the Z-turn.

Once up on the other side it was just a short drive to an old mining site from the 1950's. I couldn't get as close as Steve and John did; someone put a huge water tank right next to the road. Getting past it required squeezing through a space about ½ inch wider than my truck, then making a hard right. Oh, did I mention the deep washout waiting to suck you in if you missed the turn? I backed up, parked and waved the smaller vehicles on. Jerome wisely chose to park next to me.

This sight was packed with lots of cool old equipment. As near as I can tell from the internet it was used to process silver, gold and lead ore from the Little Joe mine; although there are so many holes, tunnels and pits in the area I'm sure numerous sources were exploited. Due to the remoteness of the location, the condition of the road to it and the fact that it's never been in Arizona Highways means it has few visitors. Steven especially liked climbing up and down the old conveyor belts. I did too until I noticed how cracked the 50 plus year old rubber was.

Jerome found a 55 gallon drum full of baseball sized iron balls. They were put in with ore and tumbled in a large drier-like drum to pulverize the rock into fine powder. A series of huge metal tanks were used to hold the slurry during chemical processing. Everywhere you looked was pipes, equipment, tanks, and other mining detritus. All the boys, big and small, were in heaven. Zoë and Sydney spent an hour or so in their respective trucks napping.



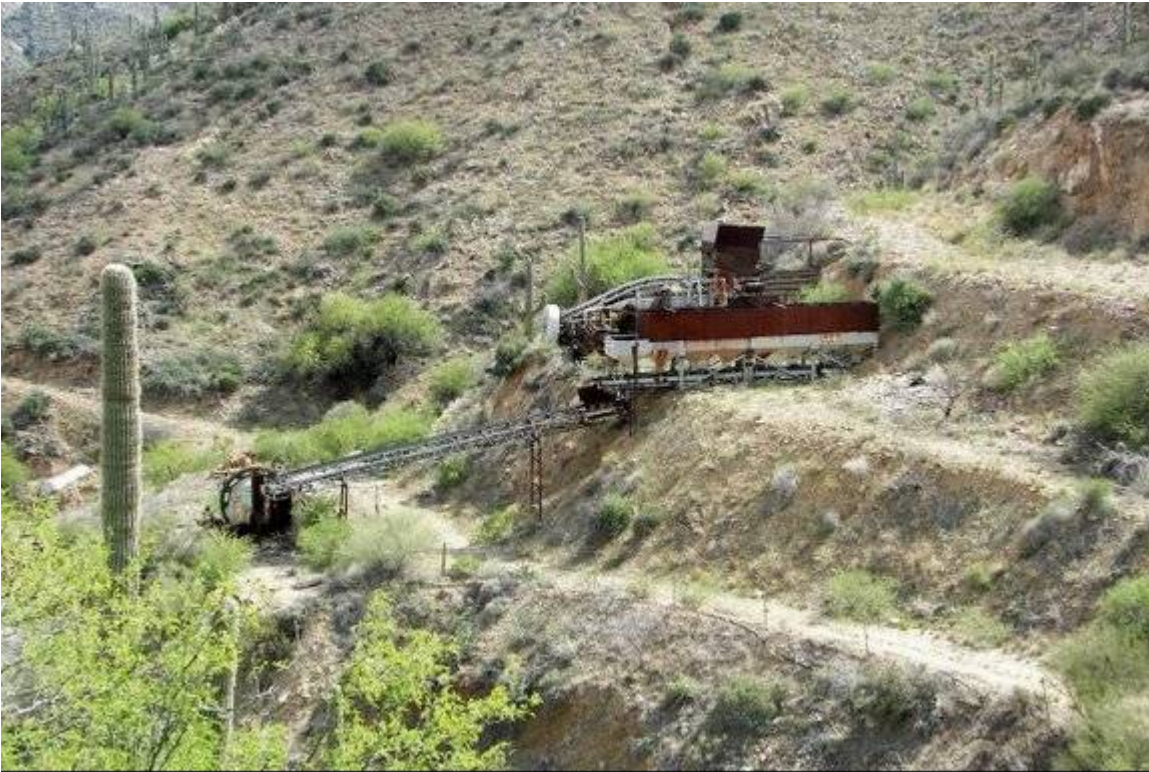
**Belt slipping? Add second. Or a third. Or a seventh!**



**Massive ore sorting mechanism.**



**CAT diesel. 5 3/4" bore, 8" stroke! 1661 cubic inches!! 27.2 liters!!!**



**A distance shot of the ore sorter. Yes, that's the road going under it!**

After rooting around the site for well over an hour I rounded everyone up so we could head out before it got much darker. I was a bit concerned about the climb up out of the wash so I put John behind Steve's Jeep and Jerome behind me. That way if either of them struggled we would have somebody with lockers in front to tow. I let Steve go first just in case his winch was needed.

Steven made it look easy with his factory low gears and locked axles. John's truck continues to amaze me; it took him a bit to find the right line to let his aggressive mud tires grab something meatier than air but then he climbed right up. I didn't even try making the turn this time; once down in the wash I just threw it in reverse and backed up until I could see the road up in my windshield. I tried to hug the wall but got a little carried away and my driver's rear tire grabbed an outcropping that stopped me. I backed up a bit, moved over about an inch and went right up.

I got out to give Jerome a spot. He started out with the "glue accelerator to floor" approach, but wound up going right dangerously close to the soft sandy drop-off back into the wash. His Denali must be a lot more stable on side hills than my truck, sitting where he was would have meant it was time for new underwear. He backed up and tried crawling it but hit low spots front and rear simultaneously, leaving him sitting in place spinning two tires and throwing dust. He backed up, moved over about a foot closer to the wall and took the corner wide. Easing into the throttle as he climbed he went right up in a truly impressive display of technical driving.



Steve climbing back up out of the “Z” turn.

**Over just a hair and up I went.**

After that it was just a matter of bumping along the road and getting the rather dim witted cows to move out of our way. We passed a couple of other Jeeps, trucks, ATV's and even a rancher working on a big dozer near a coral. Not sure how he got there! A couple of cows refused to give me the right of way; they just kept running slowly down the road. After about a ¼ mile a young bull turned around. He was about half grown with horns a foot wide on each side. Snorting once or twice I swear he scraped at the ground with his front hoof just like you see in bull fights. I wasn't worried about sheet metal damage but last time I replaced the radiator it was really expensive. I laid on the air horn and he turned tail and ran.

Just passed the town of Tip Top I spotted a crested Saguaro up on the hillside. Jerome had asked to see one a few trips ago so I pulled over and walked back to point it out to him. Anthony asked what I was pointing at; when I showed him the cactus a ½ mile up the hill he cracked up laughing. Back at the second mining site we had been standing 25 feet from a big one and nobody else noticed.

Climbing up out of Boulder Creek we soon crested the hill. The panoramic view in front of me was breathtaking, with at least five flat topped mesas stretching out across the horizon with the Bradshaw Mountains behind them. I let the kids pick which of the two camping spots they liked better while I said my good byes. Steve volunteered to take over leadership duties for there on out as I was the only one camping.

All in all it was an amazing trip. The weather was perfect, there was plenty of history and natural beauty to enjoy, and the trail was just challenging enough to keep things interesting. There is a ton more stuff to explore out in this area; next time I'd like to push on to the west and find a way to link up with the Crown King road.



Scrawny, bored, dumb and dangerous?

Submitted by Scott Nixon

### Items of Interest

Remember the club meeting is the last Wednesday of every month, 7:00pm at La Belle Pizza & Pasta, North West corner of Rural and Ray in Tempe.

May run



I saw this at <http://www.markwilliams.com/detail.aspx?ID=312> it's a yoke with a pulley to drive an oil cooling pump off of. It's used in NASCAR to cool the differential fluid.

### Land Use Issues

The 2007 Summer Edition of the ASA4WDC Wheeldust is now up on the ASA4WDC website at the following link ;  
<http://www.asa4wdc.org/content/wheeldust/current.pdf>

### Editors Stuff

Scott Nixon's done an excellent job of putting pictures up from our previous runs. Check out the webpage at: <http://www.azlorangers.org/images/index.htm>

### Things you need but didn't know it

Warn 9.5ti winch complete except for mount. Used three times  
New \$1,050; will take \$800

Back Rat hand winch; 3,500 pounds pull with snatch block.  
Never used.  
\$400 new; will take \$200

ARB Portable Air Compressor (RDCP) just rebuilt.  
\$200 new; will take \$100

Master Flow Q89 chrome dual piston compressor puts out 150 psi and 72 Liter per Minute.  
Two months old.  
\$170 new; will take \$120

One Goodyear MTR 245x75r16; less than 1,000 miles.  
\$200 new; will take \$80

E-mail [stephenssmith@msn.com](mailto:stephenssmith@msn.com) or call afternoons or evenings 480-838-5394

Free for the taking:

- \* Non-tilt steering column from a 1980 J20. It has the ignition key and GM-style wiring. The steering wheel is pretty generic. It doesn't say "Jeep" or AMG so it won't be embarrassing to put in any vehicle.

- \* A flywheel for an AMC 360 engine. Weld some legs on it to make a nice little patio or accent table. Just kidding! It's in good shape. Call Steve or Linda Graham @ 480-834-1171

### Quote

Genius may have its limitations, but stupidity is not thus handicapped.

**Elbert Hubbard (1856 - 1915)**

**Created by Charlie Babcock**