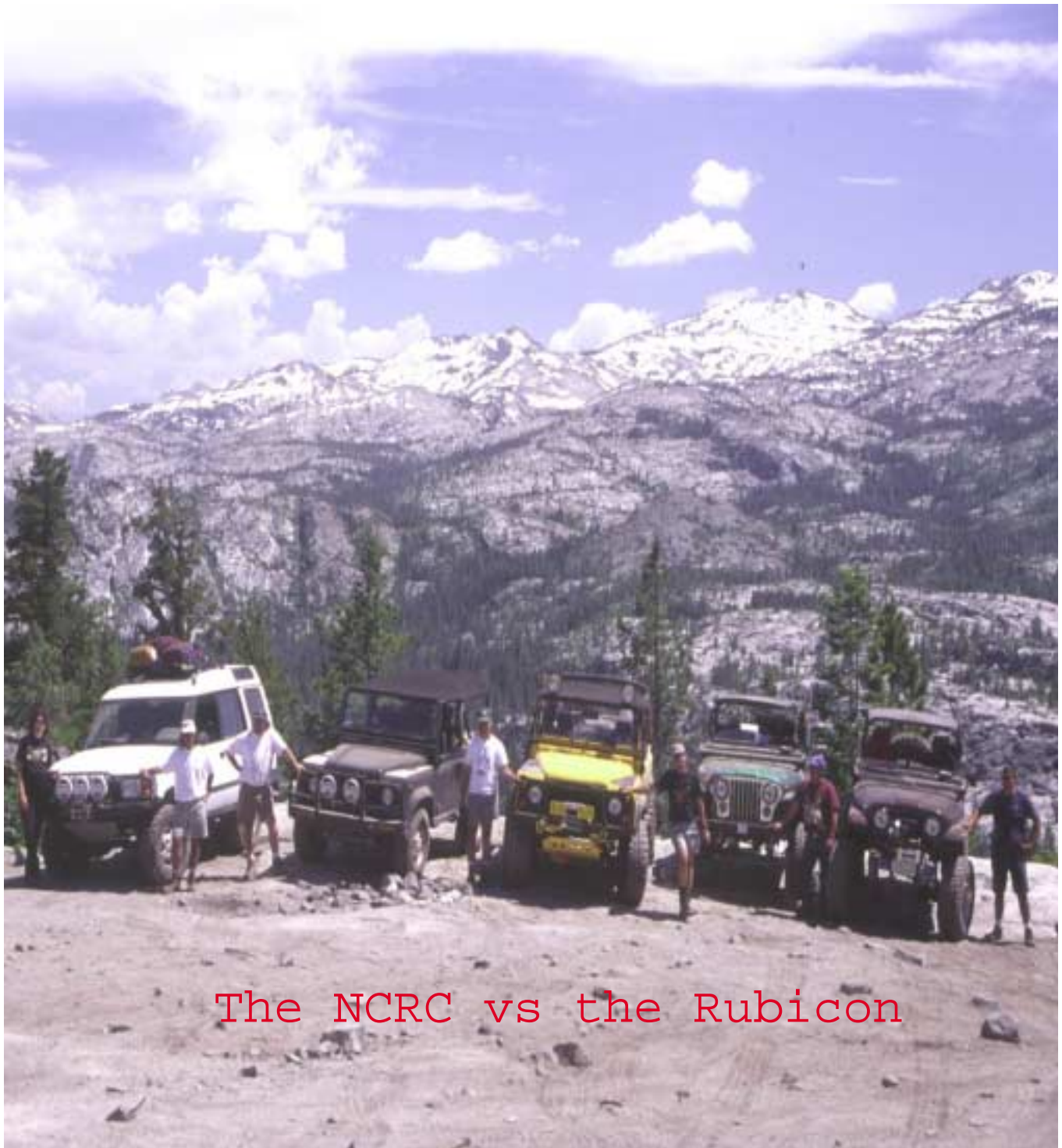




# ***Newsletter***

March/April/May/June 2000

Issue 17



The NCRC vs the Rubicon

# News, Clues and Rumors

2

## Club Decals

Additional club decals are currently available for \$4 each. The decals are approximately 2 inches by 4 inches and bear the club logo as it appears on the newsletter cover. To obtain additional decals please forward a letter with a mailing address, number of decals desired and a check for the appropriate sum to the club address.

## Newsletter Back Issues and Submissions

Newsletter back issues may be obtained on an as available basis for \$2 each. The \$2 includes postage. Submission deadlines for the next few issue is August 15. Submissions can be emailed to [leslie@thelen.org](mailto:leslie@thelen.org) or [ben@mittchellfamily.com](mailto:ben@mittchellfamily.com)

## Membership Application

A membership application form is located on the rear page of each newsletter. Please feel free to copy this form for anyone you may know who is interested in joining the Northern California Rover Club.

## NEXT NCRC MEETING

The next NCRC meeting will be Wednesday, August 16th at 7 P.M. at F.W. Spencer in Brisbane. This meeting will include a demonstration program on welding. Club meetings are usually during the third week of alternating months (even months). Location will rotate. Contact Bruce 415-468-5000 x3009 or Jeremy 510-233-3167 for meeting locations and details.

## Meeting Minutes:

NCRC Meeting Minutes - 6/16/00

6:55 - Meeting called to order by President Bonar. Attendees: Bruce Bonar (Pres) Ben Mitchell (Sec) Tony McCauley, Jeff Rogers (Probable President Elect - running unopposed) Alexander Cooper, Casey McMailen, Peter Brofey, TeriAnne Wakeman and Joe Mulqueen

First item for discussion was meeting days and times. The floor was opened to comments regarding good days of the week for meetings, and times for meeting. A significant discussion ensued which varied widely in pertinence to the topic at hand, and in the end we decided that (1) it would be worth trying a weeknight meeting, and (2) that far more important than the day or time itself was that the day and time were better publicized than they had been for this meeting. There was general agreement on both points.

TeriAnne pointed out that we have a new member in Bishop who sent in his money and hasn't yet received

a newsletter. Ben Mitchell explained that this was probably because due to a lack of content, the last newsletter had been canceled and the next edition would be double sized, but that meant there was a four month interval without a mailing. In the ensuing discussion, we agreed that in such instances we should make a concerted effort to send a calendar, and that this could be done quite inexpensively if it were published on a postcard. Further discussion on the topic of the newsletter included a suggestion by Ben Mitchell that we query the membership to see whether there are any members that would prefer to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter in PDF form via email, than the traditional paper version. This would save the club money and speed distribution. The officers agreed that this question should be posed when the membership was next being presented with an opportunity to send return mail.

The subject of scheduling meetings was again raised and we agreed to hold our next meeting on Wednesday, August 16th at F.W. Spencer in Brisbane. This meeting will include a demonstration program on welding. The next meeting will be the on the club trip on the 21st and 22nd of October, and the following will be the Christmas party, currently planned for December 1st.

The group then discussed potential future programs and agreed that the membership should be encouraged to suggest topics it would find interesting.

Some time was then spent discussing a rather amusing problem. The Club's bylaws currently include no provision for amending the Club's bylaws, and of

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## Cover Photo

Here is the lineup from the First Annual NCRC Rubicon Run posing at the top of Cadillac Hill! From right to left we have Smiley, Livvy, Killer Bee and the Baker Boys Jeeps.

course, adding that provision would require an amendment, a process for which there is clearly no provision. Neat problem. This came up because there has been some discussion of renaming one of the Club's offices, and doing so would require an amendment. Provisional language is going to be developed and put to the membership for approval. To save postage, it is likely that the same mailer will contain a question about renaming the office, with the validity of vote on that question being contingent upon the approval of the amendment process question. The office change will be to rename Member at large to Public Affairs Officer.

Jeff Rogers proposed putting together a trip leader packet to make it easier for members to sponsor and plan trips. This was passed without much debate.

We finished with a brief discussion of the printing of new T-Shirts, and some long term calendaring to try to resolve potential schedule conflicts between the 2001 Moab Trip, and the 2001 Pacific Northwest Team Trophy Challenge.

## NCRC CLUB EVENTS

**August 4-5-6 Dusey-Ershim Trail** Imagine a trail tougher than the Rubicon and three times longer. That's the Dusey Ershim Trail in the Sierra National Forest. South of Yosemite, not far out of Fresno this trail bisects the two Wilderness Areas using a 600 foot OHV corridor. Spectacular scenery, extremely difficult four wheeling. Bring all your spare parts and tools to join Eric Cope and Bubba on an adventure that may last more than 3 days.

**September 23-24 Fall Colors** Join Jeff Rodgers for the annual trip with the whole family to enjoy the Sierra Fall Color. Jeff will be leading the group to the Pine Grove area. Details to follow in a later issue or contact Jeff.

**October 21-22 Party in Truckee.** Jeff leads us again. This time to Prosser OHV park near Truckee and then into Truckee for a party Saturday night. Bring the family and friends.

**November 4-5 NCRC Rally** This is your year to win. Defending 2 time champs Gerry Mugule and John Hess have volunteered to help out with the Rally so the competition is wide open. Sharpen up your analytical and driving skills, find a navigator, and join the fun. See Jeremy Bartlett for information on how to enter.

**Last week May or first week of June 2001 MOAB, Utah.** Rick Larson has made arrangements with Dan Mick a famous backcountry guide from Moab to lead the NCRC on a don't miss trip to the ULTIMATE 4x4 playground. The first 3 nights Dan will lead the group on a camping tour of areas near Moab you'll never see on your own. We will then return to stay in Moab, either camping or in motels at your option, to take day trips for the next two days. There will be a fee for this trip to pay for guide services. If you've never been to Moab you can't imagine how great it is. If you don't want to run hard 4+ trails take a day trip to Arches NP, Canyonlands, or other slick rock destinations. Bring the mountain bike and enjoy some world class single tracks or graded roads. There is something for everyone.

Participation in NCRC events is open to all members, their guests, and prospective members. Everyone is required to sign a liability waiver and all vehicles must pass a basic tech inspection.

## NON CLUB EVENTS

**April 28,29, & 30 Joe Lucas Mendo Not-a-Rally** The largest gathering of Land Rovers in Northern California. Don't miss it, no one else does. Usually a big pot luck Saturday night. Contact Joe Lucas for details.

**July 21-23 Paradise Lost Not-A-Rallye** Bob & Sue Bernard lead LR's into the High Lakes south of Lassen. Don't miss the pot luck Saturday night. email to Bob & Sue Bernard bobnsueb@saber.net for details.

Calendar items should be sent to Bruce Bonar at least 2 months before the event. brbonar@wenet.net  
415-468-5000 x3009



**Bubba during the 2000 Snow run... just can't have too many pictures of 101FC's!**



# Member Tales

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## Moving Days

by Benjamin Smith

You only have to move when all of your Rovers are misbehaving or dead, right? Do to a change in employment I relocated this Spring from Pasadena, California to Austin, TX. So far all had gone well, I had already flat towed my dead (only resting) 72 SIII 88" behind my ailing 94 Discovery. The moving company had come and moved all of my belongings (they had grumbled about spare 88" frame, 2.25 L block and 101" axle cases). And they had winched the dead 101 (twisted and cracked frame along with seized engine) onto a car carrier and trucked it to Austin. All that was left were minor things to pack and Laz, my 73 RHD 101 GS.

I had only purchased Laz in May 1999. She had spent most of the last 10 years as a non-runner being rained on near Portland, OR. Starting in September 1999 I had pulled her seized engine and swapped in the unseized one from the rolled 101. Both carbs had been rebuilt, a new core was put in the radiator, all of the clutch and brake hydraulics had been rebuilt, the fuel tank had been replaced along with the fuel pump and alternator. The wheel bearings had been pulled, inspected and greased. And as with any Lucas electrical system, most of wiring harness had been inspected and portions replaced. The previous weekend eight college students and I had put 500 miles on Laz hitting

all 22 of a specific type of burger stand in the greater Los Angeles area. So I felt that I had good odds of making it from Pasadena to Austin.

Except that I wasn't taking the direct 1400 mile route. The weekend of the drive was the 6th Annual Joe Lucas Mendocino Not-a-rallye. This event is the big Land Rover gatherin' for California Rovers. All of them had only heard of Laz and here I was about to abandon them. That and fellow 101 owner Tom Walsh was about to lend me Rubery-Owen power trailer #3. This is the trailer that left the factory with Laz.

I was on the road by 0530 on Friday morning. It was a quick 400 mile run from Pasadena to the San Francisco Bay area to meet Tom. Laz performed perfectly. I arrived at his place around 1 P.M.. The first fun part was how to mount the trailer. If you look in the 101 user manual in the back there is a drawing of the mounting system. Since the driven part passes through the frame crossmember PTO hole, the mount is a sprocket chain that wraps around a disk mounted on the 101 and one from the trailer. Tom was keeping his trailer drive (which had been removed from my 101 years previously by a different owner). So I had come up with the idea of using 2" by 3/8" pieces of strap steel and clamping the trailer to the frame. As usually my first idea didn't work, so I had to use an angle grinder on

my mounting pieces to make things work. By P.M. we were ready to hit the road (along with the Bay Area's horrendous Friday night traffic).



Tom, Ben and Rudy intrepid 101 owners sitting in Toms trailer behind Laz.

The first issue that I had was after we had made maybe 30 miles. We had just gotten off I-680

and gotten on I-80. I had thought my fuel state was OK. Suddenly Laz started stumbling and backfiring like she was fuel starved. I looked down and saw that the fuel was well below 1/8 of a tank. Damn. I radioed ahead to Tom he pulled over. On the side of the freeway I pulled my only full jerry can (american style) and couldn't find a pour spout. Drat! I poured it (mostly) into the jerry can extender. At least this would be enough fuel to get to a gas station.

The next fun bit was merging with heavy traffic. And as you all know a laden 101 isn't exactly a Porsche 911. Ten miles later an exit came up. The whole time Laz had a maximum speed of about 45 mph. Since Tom didn't need fuel he waited in a parking lot while I refueled. We tried to time meeting up when I exited the gas station. But that turned into a disaster. I needed to find a parking lot to wait for him. Then the one that I selected was a dead end. Backing a GS in the dark is interesting. With that trailer is worse. By the time I got it all straightened out Tom was beyond me and getting on the freeway. I made my way to the on ramp, but just as I got there, Laz started stumbling again. I aborted and found a parking lot. I radioed on ahead for Tom to just go directly to the Land Rover event and that I'd get there eventually.

My next guess was that the fuel filter had clogged again. I re-arranged the cargo so that I could get down to the access covers. The tranny cover was pulled up and I pulled the sediment bowl and its filter. Instead of just trying to clean up the filter, I replaced it with a new one that had come out of a Series fuel pump. The new plastic part didn't fit, but a little carving with a pocket knife made it fit. Test driving around the parking lot showed that all seemed to be well again. So I set out for the freeway. Within a few miles the problem was back again. That and I could barely read the instruments in the dark as they were really dim. The thought struck me that maybe there is a short with the 6 way convoy switch. I had rebuild the switch and sometimes you have to jiggle it to make the headlamps turn on. So I juggled the switch until the head lights (and everything else) turned off...and Laz got better. The engine was back to normal. I turned the headlamps on and she immediately started stumbling. So if I turn off the head lights, the 101 will go faster??? The next exit came up (I was on the I-505 by now) and I took it. I knew my flashlight was dead, so I couldn't do much in the dark. Oh and the parking brake didn't work the adjuster is jammed and I hadn't gotten

around to pulling the parking brake drum and fixing it. So I had to find a flat stop to stop since I didn't want to turn the engine off. A little experimentation showed that the problem was in the trailer. Off came the NATO electrical cord. I'd risk driving dark with the reflectors until I got to a gas station where I could purchase flashlight batteries. Within 10 miles I found a gas station. The nice thing about the Rubery-Owen trailer is that there are bullet connects for each wire. I was able to quickly isolate the problem down to the left rear tail light. This showed signs of a previous owner attempt to fix it. The quick solution was just to leave that light unconnected. By now it was about 11 pm. All was running well and I could get the 70 miles into camp, right?

I made about 20 miles when my lack of sleep for the previous few nights caught up with me. Sadly I pulled into the Dunnigan Rest Area and caught an hour nap in back of the 101. Refreshed I was able to get back going and pulled into the campsite with all of the other Rovers around 3am. 950 km (594 miles) of driving for the day.

Saturday proved to be a lot of fun driving Laz (sans trailer) for the first time with lots of extending off roading. The event had good turnout 42 Land Rovers including 4 101s! I also got to look closely for the first time at a 101 VAMPIRE. What an interesting beast. While on the trail people commented on how Laz would raise a tire in the bumps and keep on going. Well that proves that the diff lock is working a question up to that point. But on the trail Laz started acting up again. This time a new problem the starter motor. Turn the key click-click-click the sound of gear teeth not quite engaging. I was about to roll start her, but she decided to start on my last try. She did this a few times on the way back to camp and also the next morning. Each time she ended up starting in the end.

Sunday morning I made my good-byes and hit the road. Not long after I had made it back to I-5, the engine temperature started going up to 100 C. I slowed down from 60 mph to 55 then to 50. The temp still kept rising, so I pulled over and stopped on the on-ramp which had a hill (in case I needed to roll start), let the 101 cool off while idling and then shut her down. The heater fan hadn't worked since there is a short somewhere in that circuit. The heater being a non-critical

accessory it hadn't been looked at yet. In the 90 degree F (35 C) temperatures I decided that I needed to use the heater radiator for additional cooling. So I pulled out a piece of thin sheet steel that I had with me out of one of the boxes in the back of the 101. I cut it down to size with some tin snips and bent it into the shape of an air scoop. Off camp the dead heater fan. I used a nail punch to put holes in the about the correct places and bolted the scoop over the air intake for the heater. At least air would be forced over the heater core.

I started off apprehensively. As long as I kept the

speed down to 55 mph, she would stay around 90 C. I could live with that. I drove down to Sacramento and got on I-80. Next up was Donner Pass but before that was a fuel stop near Colfax, CA. A young fellow stopped to talk. It seems that he has a Series IIA 88" in pieces. He had only seen 101s in books before. I encouraged him to join one of the local clubs and pointed him to some of the part stores. Back on the freeway, as it started climbing steeply Laz would slow down and the temp would come up. Sometimes the temperature would get close to 100 C, but then a down slope would allow me to drop the temperature. Then came the final long stretch up to the pass. The temp rose to 100 and then to 105 C. I made a silent prayer and encouraged Laz not to warp a head or blow a head gasket. The temp stayed around 105 C. and when the pass finally came into view I sighed a sigh of relief. Night fell as Laz drove into Nevada. I made it halfway across the state before I had to find a rest area near Winnemucca to sleep

in. A short day of only 670 km (415 miles).

I awoke Monday with a long worrisome day ahead of me. In Utah was a 100 miles flat section of the Great Salt Desert. A year previous when driving that section with the Black Watch ( 94 Discovery) I

had blown a front wheel bearing and had to be towed 100 miles back to Salt Lake City. And if Laz had problems with Donner Pass, I worried about the desert. That morning I topped off the radiator fluid and found it to be very low. So at least the 101 is only overheating due to a



*The Vampire!!!*

lack of coolant. Less coolant limits that amount of space in the radiator can dump heat with. That can be monitored. Laz performed well throughout the remainder of Nevada. In the Great Salt Desert she drove perfectly at 60 mph at 90 C. The next problem was that the speedometer started to make noises and the needle would bounce from zero to the other side of the zero stop needle (what is that 140 mph??). Before I could do anything the speedometer stopped completely. In looking later the speedometer cable had severed when the speedometer had seized. I switched to using the GPS as an odometer and speedometer and pressed on. Going over the pass east of Salt Lake City brought the temperature back up to 100 C again, but night was falling and Wyoming proved to be flat enough to keep the temperature down. While getting dinner and refueling in Green River, Wyoming and ambulance came up to me. Out hopped the driver. How did you get a 101 into the US?? He had owned a Series IIA 109 diesel which

someone in town was still driving. He claimed to once have crank started that 109 at 40 below zero. He climbed into the 101 driver's seat and a big grin spread over his face. His wife got out of the ambulance, saw him in the 101 and said, Oh great. Now you'll need a pry bar to get him out of the Land Rover. We chatted for awhile and then I was on my way again. I finally found a rest area to sleep in between Rawlins and Laramie, Wyoming. 1150 km (720 miles) driven that day.

Tuesday started with an hour of vehicle maintenance. All of the fluids were checked and topped off. So far the lack of starting problem had always been annoying, but the 101 always started. Twice I had to roll start her, but I had always parked at the top of a hill. Early on in the day I stopped for fuel and lunch in Wellington, Colorado. I filled the tank and then Laz refused to start. Then on flat ground I tried to push start her. Now push starting a normal Land Rover isn't that bad by yourself they are easy to jump into. The 101, with the floorboards about a meter off the ground, is another story. You can't use the step as a tyre is spinning. You have to grab the steering wheel and leap in. The first and second tries didn't work. The third, and last possible, attempt worked on the very last cylinder compression. I drove to the high point of the parking lot and shut down the 101. With no parking brake, I couldn't leave it running. However after eating Laz did start up, but not after clicking on the first 3 attempts. All I wanted was to make it to Texas before I had to deal with the starter motor. That wasn't to be.

In southern Colorado south of Pueblo, I was in dire need of a bathroom break. I pulled into the rest area. It looked like if I pulled into the truck section if I pulled around and faced the wrong way that I'd have a slight downhill to roll start with. (It was flat). When I came back to start Laz she stoutly refused. Click-Click-Click. I tried to push start her. No luck. Now I was blocking any truck that tried to get into a parking space or even exit without parking. An older fellow offered to help me push. And she started! With a look of triumph I pulled around into a proper parking spot and waited to thank the fellow. And Laz died! What?!!! I looked down at the instrument panel and found my fatal error. When I first got Laz running this spring I found that wiring for the oil pressure switch had a short. The previous owner had bypassed this and used a switch to power the fuel pump. All I did was replace the switch and wires.

But now I knew my error I had push started Laz with the switch off. She had happily drained the carbs and died. And now wouldn't start. I cursed the goddess of automotive repair as well as Laz. Out came the tools. I was about to undo the nut that holds the positive lead on the starter and realized that I was about to do something really stupid. Go around to the other side and remove the battery leads first, then pull the starter no OVLRLugnut award for me this year. I oiled up the bendix (throw out) gear and re-installed everything. I held my breath and turned the key. The starter motor turned over much quicker and started right up. The starter ground must have been loose and had some resistance thus not letting the starter turn as fast as it should have. One problem solved. And I was back on the road. The rest of the day went smoothly. I made it just across the Texas border before needing finding a place to sleep by the side of the road. 833 km (520 miles) for the day.

Wednesday was long and hot driving in Texas. Nothing went wrong. The only interesting bit was near Abilene, TX (Dyess Air Force Base). A number of B-1 bombers were shooting touch and go landings. The upwind leg they were flying at maybe 500 feet going slow with their wings fully extended. As I was about to exit I-20 I looked out the window and saw a B-1 exactly lined up with me heading at 90 degrees to my path. I exited into US Route 83 and he turned to track me. Every time I shifted direction, he corrected to air right for me. The B-1 ended up passing exactly overhead. Not something that happens every day. Wednesday was 978 km (611 miles) of driving. I pulled into my new home around 8pm that night.

Overall the trip was 4700 km (2940) miles of driving. Laz averaged 13.1 km/US gallon (8.1 mile/gallon or 3.46 km/l). One thing to note is that after that trip my behind was sore and bruised from so much time in the 101 seat. Now I've driven across the US in normal cars, my Discovery and my Series III 88 many times. The 101 was the least comfortable. Many people in the US comment on how coil spring Land Rovers are plush mobiles, especially when compared to Series Land Rovers. Well, I've got to say that the Series seems pretty plushy compared to the 101. Don't get me wrong, I love my 101 and I'd do the trip again. Next time I'd budget more time for getting out and stretching my legs.



# Rover Events

## Top Truck Challenge 2000

by John Hong

The annual Top Truck Challenge (TTC) is held in high regard by several hardcore and incorrigible NCRC members as evidenced by the high recidivism rate.

I flew into Portland on Friday morning, May 19 and got to see Doug Shipman's shop, Ship's Mechanical Services. Then I rode out to the Tillamook Forest site with Mike Lendvoyi. Mike works for Doug and has a very nice Series/Range Rover Hybrid which he used to tow the teeter totter and several other top secret items out to the event site. Just like Jeremy Bartlett, Mike switched careers from Environmental Science to LandRoverology.

At the event site, many highly modified jeeps were present but soon the Rover teams started to arrive. It was a pleasure to meet some of the local LR people like Ed Sanman, John Jones and Chip Miller. It was also good to see former Bay area resident Don Morton and his aptly named and colored Series Rover, Tangerine. He was at the TTC helping out as a course marshal.

Soon the familiar faces of the 2 NCRC teams arrived: Jeremy Gimp Bartlett, Bruce Lane Duck Bonar, Eric Bubba Cope and Morgan Mo Hannaford in a D90 and a Forward Control and Chris PubHo Dow, Rick No comment Larson, Ben Absolutely no comment Mitchell and Ben Tex Smith in 2 D90s

As a sign of the times, the trend of trailering and towing Rovers is increasing as all 4 competing NCRC Rovers were trailered up. Amidst all the pickup trucks, was Rick Larson's tow vehicle, his brand new Quigley 4x4 Van. It is a very impressive vehicle with many creature comforts, with sleeping and food storage/preparation facilities, 2 LCD tv panels and a stereo. I wonder what these Quigley folks could do to a 109 or 101 ambulance?

Doug took me on a prerun of some of the trails in

his Series/Range Rover hybrid and does this guy drive fast! Since I had heard the stories about Shipman putting the pedal to the metal, I knew to just sit down, shut up and hang on. Still, it soon



This tent is believed to have been in the Mitchell family since their westward migration through the Donner Pass over a 150 years ago.

became obvious that the man's speed was in direct proportion to his skill and familiarity with the terrain so it was actually quite fun.

**Start your Engines!**

This was the largest TTC ever with 33 two vehicle-4 person teams. Besides the 2 NCRC teams there were 3 other Land Rover teams: From Seattle in 2 SWB Series Rovers, Chris Carden, Cynthia Peterson, Gordon Perrott and Stefani Cushing. From Vancouver, BC in 2 diesel equipped D90s, Phil Armstrong, David Tebbutt, and brothers Kris and Mark Maksymiuk. From Portland, with 2 D90s, last year's winning team, Doug Hoblitt, Ed Hudson, Rick No Hope and Steven Shuback

On Saturday morning, Doug Shipman, the man behind the TTC and the master of ceremonies, kicked things off at the drivers meeting. Doug used his pleasantly sarcastic wit and deadpan humor to effectively remind us that all offroaders have to get involved to help keep trails open. He





*Ben Mitchell gives the thumbs up after completing the virtual sheer cliff event and approving the use of his tent picture.*

On one of the course segments, the teams would have to drive backwards through a very steep and twisty course - they could be spotted through by team members but would lose points for stopping or straying out of bounds. This was followed by a short but very steep, crumbly and delightfully eyepopping downhill. It was concluded with a special task that required one of the team vehicles to traverse a sideslope with a ribbon marking the lower edge as an imaginary sheer cliff. The team was free to use a combination of ground anchor points, crew weight distribution and the other vehicle as a winch point to get across in minimal time. Seeing Bubba, the 101 Forward Control, come down the steep downhill was quite the sight but it was definitely surpassed by the expression on Eric Cope's face as he nosed the 101 to the edge at the top and then looked at the slope. This expression was in turn eclipsed by the one on the way down!

then emphasized the role of personal responsibility to ensure a challenging yet safe event and then explained the TTC rules and schedule while mixing in a wee bit of disinformation.

With that done, the starting sequence was posted and the competitors lined up for the staggered starts that would spread them out across 3 course segments. Now one special aspect of the TTC is the thought that goes into the design of the course and special tasks. Some of the course checkpoints are unmanned and the teams verify they were there by locating an Orange and White fabric flag like those used in Orienteering and then marking their score card with a unique paper punch attached to the flag. The liberties taken in the placement of these flags, the course layout and the intent of the special tasks have been described by participants with words such as cunning, clever, cruel, cool, devious, insightful, sadistic, tricky, twisted and my favorite, Plain downright rotten & mean!

Another segment involved a tettertoter or seesaw.



*Eric lines up Bubba for what must have been quite the ride given the no nose perspective of a 101.*



*Bruce takes Spot for his turn down the hill.*

Always a crowd pleaser, the objective is to drive the rover onto the ramp and get it to balance. The teams had the option of trying to balance each vehicle (not at the same time!) with each successful attempt worth 50% of the total or of putting all their eggs in one basket and trying with just one vehicle for an all or nothing attempt. A majority of the teams picked the all or nothing and attempted to use the body weight of 3 team members to balance. A hint for next time people, the seesaw veterans were unanimous that people moving back and forth to get the vehicle to balance is a waste of time. It seems the word to live by is gently does the job. The companion task on this segment was to drive a course that had 3 slim plastic T-ball poles that the first vehicle would drive by and place tennis balls on top of the poles. Then the 2nd vehicle would drive the course and retrieve the balls.

The third segment required the teams to interpret the provided directional tulip diagrams, often terse and ambiguous, to navigate from here to there. There was also a closed course high speed section where the objective was to minimize time but also to have the lap time of the 2 vehicles in a team be as close together as possible.

There was a nighttime event that involved navigation to a destination and then a special

task of carrying one team member on a stretcher while balancing a full bucket of water on their chest. I m not sure if wearing a waterproof jacket would be considered displaying a lack of confidence or a strong degree of pragmatism.

It seems that Jeremy Bartlett got to be the bucket bearer which prompts the question why as the other team members, Bruce, Eric, Morgan, would appear to be lighter, easier stretcher fodder. Some discrete probing prompted the quote oh, we re used to carrying him although from now on I think we ll keep it figurative. (Seriously, Jeremy injured his foot recently, hence the suboptimal relegation to cargo status.)

In late morning the teams trickled in and turned in score cards for tabulation. Less than 20 teams out of the 33

starting had managed to complete the TTC 2000. Unfortunately, Rick Larsen s D90 had to drop out as it suffered a front shock failure at the upper mounting point (weld failure) which in turn punctured the coolant reservoir.



*While not the most flattering camera angle, Jeremy simultaneously models TTC2000 official actionwear while spotting Bubba through the virtual cliff.*



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And the Winner is

Having dispensed a variety of splendid prizes in the raffle with donations from Warn.com and RecoveryGear.com, Doug Shipman announced that there was a tie for first place between last year's winners and the Jeep Team from Warn and that the honourable finalists were to assemble for a Tie Breaker.

With the vehicles poised on the edge of the TeeBall course, the task was announced - each team would have to swap a front tire with its diagonal rear opposite without using any jacks or lifting devices on one of its vehicles. First one to finish would be the TTC 2000 champion.

Both teams leapt into action pulling out straps, chains and tools to limit axle articulation and simultaneously examining the course terrain for a good spot to position their vehicles. The ideal spot would have diagonally opposed humps and dips so the vehicle could be rocked to raise the desired corners to slip tires off and on. It was lug nut to lug nut, rim to rim for a while but then the Rover team hit a snag getting the second tire back on and the Warn Team won by a nut. Alas, lightning did not strike in the same place this year.

And the Winner is

Having dispensed a variety of splendid prizes in the raffle with donations from Warn.com and RecoveryGear.com,



*Something old, something new, something red, something blue and look bidders too! Timm Cooper isn't clowning around with this most eclectic Rover.*

Doug Shipman announced that there was a tie for first place between last year's winners and the Jeep Team from Warn and that the honourable finalists were to assemble for a Tie Breaker.

With the vehicles poised on the edge of the TeeBall course, the task was announced - each team would have to swap a front tire with its diagonal rear opposite without using any jacks or lifting devices on one of its vehicles. First one to finish would be the TTC 2000 champion.

Both teams leapt into action pulling out straps, chains and tools to limit axle articulation and simultaneously examining the course terrain for a good spot to position their vehicles. The ideal spot would have diagonally opposed humps and dips so the vehicle could be rocked to raise the desired corners to slip tires off and on. It was lug nut to lug nut, rim to rim for a while but then the Rover team hit a snag getting the second tire back on and the Warn Team won by a nut. Alas, lightning did not strike in the same place this year.



# Trip Report

## The Five Stages of the Rubicon Trail

A trip report of the NCRC Rubicon trip on 22-23 June 2000

By Chris Dow

Participants	
Occupants	Vehicle
Laurel & John Baudendistel, Alexander Cooper	1996 Discovery (Smiley)
Tom Walsh & Sean A. Murphy	1997 D90 (Killer Bee)
Ken Baker	19?? Jeep CJ?
Kenny Baker	19?? Jeep CJ?
Leslie & Chris Dow	1997 D90 (Livvy)

### Prelude

I received an e-mail message from John Baudendistel asking me if I'd like to join him on a recce of the Rubicon Trail on the coming weekend. I had spent the previous weekend away from the family at the Pacific Northwest Team Trophy Challenge, and knew that I would be traveling on business in the near future, so I declined. I did, however, give John a description of the trail from memory, and put together a map based on my recollections and some waypoints I'd taken on the last trip. I e-mailed the former to him, and snail mailed the latter.

The plan for the main trip was to meet up at the campground just after the first dam over

Loon Lake on Thursday, 22 June 2000, head out from there early the next morning (Friday), make it to Buck Island Lake, take a day off on Saturday to relax and deal with any vehicle issues, then roll out on Sunday. We (Leslie & Chris) arrived at about

11:00 PM (within five minutes of when the trusty Garmin GPS III+ told us we would!). John & Laurel Baudendistel and Ken & Kenny Baker were already there. When Leslie started to set up our tent, she found that somehow the poles hadn't joined us on the trip, so we filled the air mattress and slept under the stars. Tom Walsh and Sean Murphy arrived just as we were drifting off to sleep.

It's useful for the reader to know what the vehicles were like, so here is a description of them:

### Smiley

Smiley is the Baudendistel's 1996 Discovery SE7. Here is a list of the modifications:

- Safarigard Suspension
- Safarigard front bumper & integral skid plate sporting Hella 3000 lamps
- Safarigard rear bumpers
- Warn winch

- Safarigard Rock Sliders
- ARB
- Air Lockers front and rear
- Differential protectors

- Safarigard steering stabilizer

- Safarigard strengthened tie rod

### The Killer Bee

Tom's D90 is a testament to what he learned from his ownership of the Light

Brigade. The modifications are very well thought-out and the vehicle got through the Rubicon with one little ding, the provenance of which eluded him. Through the NCRC and the Mendo mailing list, the author has



John airs down Smiley's tires before entering the Loon Lake Trail head.



seen quite a few well-kitted D90s. These vehicles are usually modified over time based on the hard knocks of the owners. This vehicle, however, started out pristine just a couple of months ago, and it's owner has put four years of knowledge from Land Rover ownership and a significant amount of scratch into it, and the result is what this author thinks is the most balanced D90 he's seen (and that is truly saying something in this crowd!). It seems like the Light Brigade took all the hard knocks that went into fitting out the Killer Bee!

#### **Here's the modification list:**

- RockWare bumper holding Warn winch, shackles, hoist rings, and Hella fog lamps.**
- British Pacific skid plate**
- Safarigard rear quarter panel protectors**
- Rockware rock sliders**
- Rockware suspension**
- Differential protectors**
- Hub clutches that slip at a preset torque (intended to reduce the risk of breaking an axle).**
- Safargard spare tyre/jerry can holder**

#### **Livvy**

Livvy (a.k.a. Olivia) is very close to a stock vehicle. There are no suspension or drive-line modifications at all. Here is the list of extras:

- Desert Rover sill panel protectors
- Desert Rover quarter panel protectors
- British Pacific differential protectors
- TJM Bull Bar (**much** worse for the wear from this

trip, and the author does not recommend this product) sporting Hella 3000 lamps.

#### **Ken Baker's Jeep**

- Chevy 350 engine
- Shortened Dana 60 Axles
- Detroit Lockers front and rear

#### **Kenny Baker's Jeep**

- 8-inch total spring and body lift
- 35-inch tires

## **Stage 1: Whoo-hooo! We're gonna do the Rubicon!**

Friday morning, the author awoke to the sound of a D90 door slamming just above his head, and Leslie saying "Chris, coffee's ready". That's one way to get him out of bed. Tom & Sean were roused out of bed (they got the least sleep of the Rover people), and the group was rolling pretty close to the planned time. We knew that the Toyota Land Cruiser Association was having a jamboree that weekend, and we didn't want to get stuck in a long line of those people, so we were feeling some pressure to get on the trail.

Since the Dows were the only other people who'd run the trail from that entrance before, and it is a little ambiguous at the Loon Lake trail head, Chris was doing trail finding. He set out correctly, but misinterpreted some tire tracks as indicating that there was a dead end, so we backtracked the wrong direction for a while. Once we eliminated that branch, we were back on track and made it to the first obstacle.

#### **The First Obstacle & the Granite Bowl**

This part of the Rubicon starts with a sharp 90-degree left turn in a fairly narrow and deep v-channel, which is strewn with boulders. Everyone got through with a minimum of rock stacking. This was a good omen, as that is one of the most



*Ken navigating the first obstacle.*

difficult obstacles on the trail. We were all in high spirits as we moved forward from there.

## Stage 2: Was it this hard last time?

The Dows have always done the Rubicon after the Jeep Jamboree and Jeepers Jamboree (the difference being one of those things which has always mystified the

author). Since they bring so many vehicles through (rumor indicates 600 in one week-end), they have to smooth out the trail or there is no way it would work.

Since this trip was before that event, there were some differences on the trail.

About fifty feet down the trail from the first obstacle the trail turns to the left after the Jamborees. Before the Jamborees, the trail goes right through some serious Disco-squeezing boulders which do not even appear to be part of the trail after the Jamborees. John and Laurel managed to work Smiley through them, but the trail drew first blood on Smiley in that section. Just past that point is a brief, steep, rocky, crawl up to the rim of the granite bowl section of the trail. The only difficult part of the granite bowl is climbing out the far side. There are some fissures in the slab, and most vehicles have to line up on them a couple of times. The trick for most rigs is to cross them at an angle bearing left.

## Walker's Rock

From the granite bowl, the trail is smooth until you reach two sluice-like channels that lead to Walker's Rock. The channels start with smooth granite followed by boulder fields. At the end, Walker's Rock is a steep, smooth slope about six feet high rising up out of the channel. The highlights of this section were some tippy moments for Smiley and Livvy needing a tug based on poor communication between driver and spotter.

From Walker's Rock, the trail is fairly smooth up to the Little Sluice.



Tom coming through the two trees that mark the way from the Little Sluice bypass.

## Stage 3: You're the worst &@\*!ing spotter in the world!

### The Little Sluice

The Little Sluice Box is a channel in the granite about ten feet wide, forty feet long, with six-to ten-foot-high walls that top off in slabs that slope at about 30 degrees. At one end there is a large (i.e. VW Beetle-sized)

boulder at the end. When the author first saw it, he thought, "why would anyone think they could drive a vehicle through that?"

On past Rubicon trips, the author has observed that the strategy for getting through the Little Sluice is to bang the vehicle against the rocks until it fits. By August each year, the popularity of this approach is evidenced by the abundance of smashed auto parts amongst the rocks on the ground in the Little Sluice. On this trip, however, there was a gentleman in a Toyota Land Cruiser FJ-40 who was trying very hard to maneuver through the obstacle with a minimum of damage to his rig. However, this is a tall order, and he became quite frustrated with his spotter. This inspired the title of this section and the name for the Third Stage.

The group felt some pressure to move on

before being overtaken by the TLCA vehicles, so lunch was wolfed down and they headed over the slabs that constitute the bypass around the Little Sluice. This section is probably the most scenic section of the trail, although it does not contain the most scenic location.

## Mud Lake

The next noteworthy obstacle after the Little Sluice is a section of trail near Mud Lake that has two forks. The left track is very steep (the steepest part of the trail according to the guide book), and the other is less steep, but strewn with many boulders. The former can be likened to pulling the band-aid off quickly, while the latter was more like pulling it off slowly. The whole group elected for the fast pull. An exciting moment at this point was where Leslie hit the brakes, and for a moment it looked like Livvy might do an end-over. However, she laid off the brakes soon enough to avoid that scenario. Smiley also provided some interesting tilts as Laurel navigated him down the slope.

After about half a mile on the slab bypass around the Little Sluice, the group encountered a long and deep mud puddle. It was so long and deep, in fact, that muddy water was starting to flood the floor panels of Livvy. It's nice that the Rubicon offers more than just rock crawling. Just after the mud puddle was the trail that leads to the Old Sluice Box, and the Bakers broke off to take that leg of the trail. The author has never done this section, but Ken and Kenny said that it is a lot of fun. Kenny broke a bead on his tire in there and it

was reseated with help from a FJ-40 driver named Ron (the same gentleman who inspired the name for this section of the story--evidently, he made it through the Little Sluice). Ron's technique is to spray ether into the tire and light it, then immediately begin pumping air into it. While this may seem like a silly thing to do, the author has seen this same technique on the Discovery channel, where it was employed by an Icelandic team crossing Antarctica in Toyota FJ-80 Land Cruisers.

## The Old Sluice Box

The Old Sluice bypass group continued across the slabs, which end in a rather interesting series of drop-offs that lead to the fairly smooth trail into Buck Island Lake. The order at that point was Killer Bee, Livvy, then Smiley. While on the trail to Buck Island Lake, the Bakers caught up to Smiley in their Jeeps.

## Buck Island Lake

The plan was to meet at a camp site well along the trail around Buck Island Lake and stay there for two nights. The intended camp site must be one of the best in Northern California. It has fantastic views, privacy for bathing,

two fire rings, plenty of room for eight rigs and twenty people, and it's mostly hidden from the trail. This plan was fouled by two factors. The first was that Kenny's fan blade ate the bottom core of his radiator, requiring the services of Mr. Murphy to fix. This resulted in the Baudendistels, Alexander, and the Bakers stopping just before Buck Island Lake and making camp there. The second factor was the TLCA trip. They were planning on rolling up Cadillac Hill (the last hard section of the trail) on Sunday. The group didn't want to risk being stuck behind them, so they agreed meet at the original



*The View of Buck Island Lake from the Granite Slab.*



camp site at 9:00 AM on Saturday and finish the trail.

The Bakers, Baudendistels, and Alexander Cooper showed up about fifty minutes early on Saturday morning, and the mornings entertainment was watching the rest pack. Then at 9:00 sharp, the vehicles rolled out.

The trail up from Buck Island Lake is mostly moderate with a difficult spot thrown in occasionally for punctuation. There was at least one spot where several attempts were needed to get Livvy through an obstacle. After half a mile of this, the trail tops out, then begins a steep descent into the Big Sluice Box.

**Stage 4:**  
**I don't**  
**care**  
**what**  
**that**  
**noise**  
**was.**

## **The Big Sluice Box**

At the top of the Big Sluice, there is a twenty-foot section with several large boulders followed by a ninety-degree turn

and drop over a five-foot drop. This drop is almost sheer on the right and sloping on the left. The Jeeps and the Killer Bee went left, while Smiley went center left, and Livvy went far left (last year the author went far left quite easily, so it is his opinion that this is the best way for a D90 with stock suspension, stock tyres, and open differentials).

After the drop down into the Big Sluice, there follows a moderately steep slope which is strewn with boulders ranging in diameter from one foot to three feet. This section lasts about 100 yards. The Jeeps and the Killer Bee had little difficulty navigating this section. Smiley did fine, too, but Livvy's spotter ignored two years of Rubicon experience and spotted her right instead of

left. For a short-wheel-base vehicle, the right can be enticing, but the left is the One True Way in the Big Sluice. Thus, when a Toyota pickup winched himself into the left side to repair an axle, the spotter (who is also the author) presented the other people on the trail with an opportunity to exercise their tolerance skills. After observation, he concluded that the trail was different this year, and at least for one fifteen-foot section, the right really was easier this time. Then he apologized for his errant behavior.

One the Sluice Box section is completed, the trail continues to descend steeply, but is now punctuated by the occasional off-camber tilt down a steep slope. At the bottom of this section of the trail, the driver and spotter are truly initiated into the Rubicon. Often the spotting beyond this point is more pointing to which rocks make the best line rather than explicit instructions on precisely how to turn the wheels. All this over obstacles that are harder than the most difficult sections of many other

trails. At the bottom of this section, the trail crosses the Rubicon River on a cantilevered bridge. The historical reference is silly here, because the point of no return is actually about a mile into the trail.

## **Rubicon Springs**

Just across the bridge is a good spot for lunch (assuming there was not too much traffic at the Big Sluice, and you got out of camp early enough). From there, it's either a smooth or difficult trail into Rubicon Springs. The Jeeps and Livvy took the latter, while the more sensible and observant drivers of the Killer Bee and Smiley took the former. Once through



**The best camping spot at buck Island Lake...IMHO.**



Rubicon Springs, some mud was encountered, and Livvy needed a tug to get unstuck (the author noted the

poor form to run the trail backwards on a weekend. It is suggested that a weekday is more proper. Since the author had been driving Livvy since lunch at the Rubicon River, Leslie and Alexander volunteered to walk up to a good spot for the backwards traffic to stop and convince them to do so. Since the number of vehicles moving in the forwards direction had grown to around thirty, this proved to be the key factor in avoiding any serious incidents along the way. Once all the vehicles were on the same CB channel, an amazing thing happened. Everyone decided to cooperate and a consensus was reached that the groups would break up into sixes and switch off between forward and backwards traffic. This between people who had never met, and were just faceless voices on the radio. After that,



**Laurel in Smiley lines up for the Big Sluice....**

lockers engaged on the Jeep in front in the same spot and was therefore not surprised by this event). After the mud there is a mock grave on the side of the road. It's called Sid's Grave, after Sid Mainwaring, who was a Forest Service employee and jamboree committeeman. A short way of up the trail from there is the firewall of an old LaSalle, which has been confused by many for a Cadillac and is the source of the name Cadillac Hill.

Cadillac Hill is a section of trail that rises 1200 feet over 1.5 miles, is strewn with boulders ranging from one to four feet in diameter, and offers some excellent vertical exposure while the car is off-camber leaning down hill. When the group got to the LaSalle, they discovered that there were some vehicles descending the hill. On the Rubicon, etiquette indicates that backwards (Tahoe to Georgetown or Loon Lake) traffic yields to forward traffic. Further, many consider it extremely

everything progressed quite smoothly and everyone was able to keep his temper.

## **Stage 5: That was fun! When are we coming back?**

We topped out at Cadillac Hill and were met by a



**...and makes it!**



***This picture of Tom in Killer Bee really shows the full extent of the obstacle at the top of the Big Sluice.***

Jeeps. Two were TJs and were therefore coil-sprung from the factory. The other was a YJ with the Warn Black Diamond coil conversion. All were very nicely kitted, and the drivers were quite friendly. The group decided to try to camp at Meek's Bay and fall back to a hotel room should that fail. What they didn't realize was the Reno Air Show was happening that weekend, and finding a place to stay for the night (even a camp site) would be almost as challenging as the Rubicon Trail itself.

flushed and thirsty Leslie. She had hiked the entire twelve-hundred-foot ascent and managed to keep the situation from devolving into an MCF (if you don't know what that is, it means a situation which has gone horribly awry). At the top of the hill, the group was presented with the best view of the trip. This view is simply beyond description.

One is often lulled into a sense of accomplishment at reaching the top of Cadillac Hill, but this is actually quite premature, as the trail out is four miles long, contains just enough boulders to wear out both driver and passenger, and is punctuated by obstacles that would be the crux of many other trails.

The group stopped at Miller Lake to stretch and air up to tyre pressures more suitable to road driving. While there, they met and chatted with a group of three

The group found the Meek's Bay campground and an empty spot. Unfortunately it was reserved and paid



**Our final camp .. a condo in Northstar at Tahoe!**



# Trip Report cont...

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for. Since empty camp sites generate less trouble for the staff than full ones, they were unable to convince the camp supervisor to let them stay there. At this point the cell phones were deployed in search of a place to stay. Leslie was the first to score with a reservation at Harvey's in Reno. The group set out for Reno thinking it was better than driving home. On the way to Reno, the author called Harvey's to make sure it was Harvey's Reno and not Harvey's in South Lake Tahoe. After a couple of phone calls, it was discovered that it was neither, and American Express Travel Services had failed.

The group gathered in the parking lot of a strip mall in Truckee to determine what to do. Leslie got back on the phone with American Express Travel Services, and the recording indicated it would be a forty-five-minute wait. After hanging up and calling again, the recording indicated that it would be a seven minute wait touching off a discussion among the geeks present concerning flawed time prediction algorithms. That call resulted in a reservation for a condo in the Aspen

Grove at NorthStar at Tahoe. That was the way to end the trip. A dinner of stone was consumed after showers and all settled in for a long sleep after trading a few stories over a few after-dinner drinks.

The next morning, began at a very civilized eight o'clock and the group consumed the breakfast version of stone soup, then packed and began a leisurely drive home.



# The NCRC Top Ten....

## **Ensuring domestic bliss on the trail!**

*Ever wondered about the view from the other side of the rover? You know what is that person in the passenger/drivers seat really thinking? Here we present the top ten list from the two halves of a rover couple when asked what can your partner do to make your life easier and more fun on the trail.....*

by Leslie Dow

Have you ever attended an NCRC offroad event and noticed how many unaccompanied gentlemen there are? Many of these fine fellows have Wives and Significant Others at home who just simply refuse to come and enjoy the great outdoors along with their roving men! Believe it or not these fine capable women do not enjoy the feel of 90 weight mixed with dirt ground into their skin! They even might not delight in kissing a cheek that is covered with 3 days of greasy stubble! Not to mention the endless joys of dealing with testy small (medium and large) children who have tired of sitting in the rover all day long!

So, I one-time Rover-widow [who embraced the if you can't spend time with them any other way join 'em strategy] humbly submit my advice on the top ten things that the typical male roverholic can do to keep his woman happy (or at least present) on the trail.

10.....bring her breakfast in the tent

9.....pitch the tent far far away from aspiring bagpipers

8.....you make the potluck dish and clean the dishes!

7.....tell her she is the most amazing spotter....then follow her instructions!

6.....remember...its diamonds *not* diamond-plate that are a girl's best friend

5.....don't argue.....just don't....she is right and you are wrong...deal with it.

4.....give her her own set of tools...then when you use them (and you will) put them back where \*she\* says they belong.. then see #5.

3.....ask her advice...then see #5.

2.....tell her she's beautiful, brilliant and amazing even when she is covered with 2" of trail dust, has just crabbed at you for no reason and smells like a goat.

1.....Let her drive!

by Chris Dow

Some men are lucky enough to have partners who also enjoy their Rovers.

However, problems can arise if there is a mixture of coil- and leaf-sprung Rovers in a family. Here are the Top Ten things the female can do in that situation to allow for a smooth voyage to a Rover event.

10.) Let him drive to the event by himself in the Series. He can't keep up with you in your Disco/Rangie/90/Expedition/Tundra/whatever.

9.) If you do convoy with him in his Series, let him go first. See # 10.

8.) \*When\* he breaks down on the way to the event, be patient.

7.) Even though the cause of the breakdown was the same part that was making that "funny noise" you mentioned the last time you drove the IIA to work (because you love the looks you get while driving it), don't remind him of that while he's lying under the vehicle on the side of the road fixing it.

6.) Do not mention that the best trail fix is done in the driveway.

5.) Tell him he's a mechanical genius when the Series is back on the road.

4.) Please don't talk about not being able to stay above 60 MPH on that steep hill.

3.) No sentence should ever start with "If you drove a normal car..."

2.) "If we had less Rovers, maybe the ones he had would run better" are fighting words.

1.) Just show up.





# Northern California Rover Club

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## Membership Application Form

The Northern California Rover Club is a new club dedicated to providing communication between owners of Land Rover and Range Rover vehicles. We aim to provide a venue for the enjoyment of the vehicles including off road activities and their maintenance by focussing on providing a means of connecting fellow owners. The Club will be holding meetings on alternating months and aiming at producing a newsletter covering issues of interest and providing a forum for communication.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Northern California Rover Club send this form and a check for \$20 made out to Northern California Rover Club to the following address:

**Northern California Rover Club  
P.O. Box 14961  
Berkeley, CA 94712-5961**

The \$20 covers membership dues for one year with all the rights of membership outlined in the club bylaws; members will receive an initial membership card and club decal, all newsletters mailed in that period, and an annual directory of club members.

Please provide the following information and indicate if any of it should not be included in the club directory which will be distributed only to other members. The NCRC will assume that all information provided is to be distributed unless indicated otherwise. Please note that members must be over 18 years of age and have a valid driver's licence.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. number (day): \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. number (eve): \_\_\_\_\_

Types of Land Rover/Range Rover owned: \_\_\_\_\_

Rover related interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_