

# Horsing Around

The Voice of the Early Bronco Registry

## EDITOR'S "BS" (Bronco Stuff)

Steve Sampson, Editor

By the time you read this we will have held Bronco Daze a Vu and been to the SEMA show and we are thinking next of touring the Bilstein Aftermarket and Motorsports Headquarters in Poway CA. This Bilstein visit would be more interesting if I can ask a number of questions on your behalf. Therefore we have an action for all of you readers... What do you want to know about Bilstein shocks for Bronco applications? Please take a minute to send you questions to me at [steve@broncdriver.com](mailto:steve@broncdriver.com). Go ahead, do it now. I'll wait while you send your questions. [drinking a cup of coffee] OK, that's long enough. It's time now for you to check out the neat trip report below!



## San Juan Mountains Trip

This two-part story is a glimpse of a July 2007 Bronco Trip to the beautiful San Juan Mountains of SW Colorado, as told by two of the ladies on our excursion. There were four vehicles from CA (Jeff & Nancy, Steve & Eileen, Bob & Karen & Gary & Linda) and several from TX (including Mike & Michelle).

### Part I - This report is created by Eileen Sampson (including photo captions):

"ledge" is a factor:

Our trip started off with a bang as we watched fireworks from a motel "ledge" overlooking Thompson Bay in Lake Havasu City AZ.

We walked out on the 4000 foot high man-made "ledge", AKA Grand Canyon West Sky Walk.

We strolled out to Guano Point on yet another "ledge" to see the Colorado River Our steam locomotive chugged along on a very steep "ledge" above the Animas River. We drove above Silverton on a high "ledge" road.

Animas Forks sits in a valley below a "ledge" of mountain passes Waterfalls blast over mountain "ledges"

### "Mother Nature" is a factor:

Heat, rain, mud, snow. Those words will never deter a great four-wheel drive trip. In fact, they make the venture worthwhile! They bring clouds, a few scary moments, FUN and adventure. Heat: you haven't lived until you've watched fireworks in a 120 degree desert! Rain brings water which makes mud! The guys love the mud and snow; the gals love the flowers. And wild flowers there were! In fact, we found the elusive Elephant Head stalk; only seen in damp meadows at high elevations, and only hangs around for three weeks. The mud and water on Black Bear Pass gave the guys an extra heart beat or two; the snow at 13,000 feet did not deter our trusty steeds. In fact, it gave them sort of a rush as it brushed their pumpkins & scraped their sides! Then there's the animals: deer, bear, marmots, chipmunks, and grunion. (Grunion? Just checking to see if you're paying attention).

I can honestly say that Colorado offers the best way to wind down from your 9-to-5. Just go wind down any of the steep trails and many passes in the San Juan 14ers/Uncompahgre National Forest: Engineer (12,800,) (and Oh Point with a 360 degree view), Black Bear (12,840.), Imogene (13,114.), Cinnamon (12,640.), Ophir (11,789.), Corkscrew Gulch (12,217.), Monarch Trail (11,983.), Animas Forks (11,160.)

### Part II - This report is created using excerpts from Linda Gayda's trip diary:

#### Grand Canyon Sky Walk, AZ:

7:10 pm. Talked to Steve Sampson via Cell, they just pulled into Meadview RV Park North

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of Las Vegas. He said it was 120 degrees. They were going to tour the new Skywalk over the Grand Canyon. Steve said, "Watching fireworks in 120 degree heat is not my kind of fun!"

**Communicating:**

At Heber we went north on Hwy 277/377 towards Holbrook, AZ where we are to meet up with our Bronco friends, Sampson's & Arthur's. I picked up my cell phone, opened it to call Steve Sampson and it started ringing! It was Steve calling us! A little ESP going on there.

As Gary was greasing the Motor home, we heard the Sampson's and Arthur's on the Ham Radio. They arrived about 30 minutes later.

**Canyon de Chelly, AZ:**

The topless [tour] Jeep that Gary & Sampson's were in kept breaking down, so the tour ended a little early. The "Bronco Mechanics" got the Jeep going enough to get back to the Hotel.

**Cortez NM:**

Arrived back in camp. Steve & Eileen had been in Cortez all day and had discovered there was going to be a Navajo Indian dance performance @ 6:30, followed by a speech from a Navajo Code Talker from WWII. It was very, very interesting. We bought a book about the code Talkers and had him autograph it.

**Silverton CO:**

We all pooled our food together for dinner and had a great BBQ feast consisting of chicken, steak, turkey sausage, salads. The Arthur's had met some other Bronco Owners [Mike and Michelle] from Texas and they came by to chat for a while. They have been coming to Silverton area for about 10 years and know the trails very well. They offered to show us some trail opportunities in the next few days, of course we accepted.

**Durango/Silverton Train:**

The train ride was fantastic! Breathtaking scenery, river rapids, old trestles, beautiful meadows, rocky mountains that stand 14,000+ ft in elevation, waterfalls, etc. etc. It was well worth the \$74 fare each.

**Above Animas Forks:**

The first stop was Treasure Mountain Mine, poked around the old buildings and took many pictures, then on the trail again for a beautiful Mountain called Eureka at about 13,000, elevation. We had lunch there. It felt like you were on top of the world with no trees but plenty of wildflowers.

**Discovering a Ham repeater:**

Turns out the mountain is called Kendall Mountain with an elevation of 13,451, and there is a Ham Radio Repeater on the top. The guys wanted to check it out. They met up with a guy named Ben from the Ham Radio Club located in Farmington, NM that maintains the Repeater.

Hiking on loose rocks in tennis shoes at over 13,000, with very little oxygen! It was brutal on my foot, harder going down that up as the loose rocks kept slipping under our feet.



Enter Silverton (at a 9000 ft elevation) from the Million Dollar Highway, and get a bird's eye view of the whole town.



Then we went up a narrow, steep trail on Kendall Mountain to an overlook 13,400' above the town. Now THAT was a bird's eye view! Er, more like a pilot's eye view!



Stage coach says Just Horsin' Around... horses get to horse around, but we prefer Broncos for horsing around.



A happy Bronco is a muddy Bronco!

### A J\*@p!?:

When we got back to camp, Jeff and Nancy had returned from their excursion to Ouray in a rented 4 door Jeep Wrangler. Jeff was sold on the Jeep with A/C, Stereo, Satellite Radio, a heater that actually works, sunroof, no dust! He actually put a For Sale sign on his Bronco! Traitor!

### Engineer Pass:

The trail up to the top was very challenging for Bob & Karen as his Bronco was experiencing "altitude sickness" and cutting out going up the steep part. Jeff cleared the trail in front of him and Bob stopped and GOOSE IT! We could hear Karen screaming all the way up! They made it ok, it was quite an "E" ticket ride. [Does everyone remember what an E-Ticket ride is?]

### Margaritas:

Upon our arrival Jeff had a Margarita Bar set up between his Camp and ours. We enjoyed the Margies and talked about the day's events.

### Black Bear Pass:

The guys (Gary, Jeff, Steve and Bob) wanted to go to Black Bear Pass... the hardest and most dangerous trail of switchbacks leading down into the town of Telluride. Many people have lost their lives on this trail. [. . . the day passes . . . ] About 3:30 Karen and I heard the guy's calling us on the FRS. They were sitting on the hillside Miner's Memorial having a beer after their 4 wheeling adventure. They had a great time on the Black Bear Pass. We heard all about it at dinner in the local Mexican Restaurant.

### Durango:

We had to go into Durango to stock up on some food supplies and get some Bronco parts. Steve needed an alternator and new battery, we needed a headlight.

### Silverton Graveyard and Museum:

We toured the Silverton Museum and Hillside Cemetery where we found a lot of graves from the 1800's. The Museum was very informative with a lot of old mining tools, household items from the Gold Rush era. One of the largest and well organized Museums we have ever been to.

### Corkscrew Gulch:

We took the Corkscrew Trail, which was very steep and narrow in some places. We stopped at the top to take some pictures and Eileen slipped and fell on her hip. She was bruised and sore for weeks.

### Governor Basin:

After shopping in Ouray we had one last chance to find the "Baby Elephant Head" wildflower and one more 4 wheeling trail...the Governor Basin Trail. Well, it was a good choice because not only was the wheeling good, the wildflowers were very prolific! AND, we found the Baby Elephant! We have never seen such a fantastic display of Mother Nature's colors! Wow!

### Conclusion:

SCENIC OVERLOAD! 🚗



The Durango-Silverton locomotive gets interestingly close to the cliffs above the Animas River.



Sometimes Bronco owners put For Sale signs in the side window. We throw them in jail.



Little girls love wheeling in the back of a Bronco!



We assist in repairing a Ham repeater at 13,400 feet.



WWII Navajo Code Talker & Native American dancers



Crunch. That can be an ominous sound. Suggestion: when giving guidance to a driver, make sure your camera is secure in its holder. Otherwise, the driver of your vehicle can make moosh out of it when it falls on a rock & you direct the tire over the rock.



Rain brings huge waterfalls and MUDDY trails. Yee Haw!



Black Bear Pass: Left turn! Right turn! U-Turn! Left turn; right turn; u-turn! Watch for those slippery, loose, shaley rocks! Go s-l-o-w on the slimy, muddy, narrow trail!



Sheep grazing & bleating hellos to us on the mountain side

