LOS COYOTES

There we were. Charlie, Marsha an me feeling the gentle sway of the k5 on 8 east by El Cajon, it seems to really move around the most in that particular area, as we were on the way to Los Coyote's Indian a reservation to do a day of 4 wheeling. I had made the contact with some of the Colorado k5's folks to tag along on one their adventures at the reservation. It's up north of San Isabel at miler marker 35 on highway 79.

We pulled into the campgrounds as I recognized some of the folks from the Blazer Bash at Truckhaven. There was Keith, Matt, Dan, Justin an' some new faces that I would become familiar with before the day was over. As I shook hands with my friends I looked over to see they had a 23° ramp. Hum?

"hey, do you mind if I ramp my truck?" I asked Dan as he was the closest one. Mike was helping folks with getting them up as well as tallying the totals as we waited around for the stragglers to show up. So I pulled the mostly orange thing around to see what it would ramp. Following Mike's instruction I drove up scoring a 1005. It was the best so far among the k5's. Then I backed up it. A 965. Not too bad I guess. I pulled down an' parked as we waited until the start time of 9:30. One of many new faces to me pulled in with his trailer'd k5. Chris an Chris with their '73. Man, that truck had more dents than a Tijuana Taxi cab, but he had a killer suspension system under it. He pulled his around an' ramped a 1014 nose first an' backed it up to 1223! He seemed he was gonna drive off the top of it he went o so far. The start time got closer as a cloud of dust could be seen coming down road.

"it has to Leland." I heard one of the others say.

Sure enough, when the dust settled Leland hopped out. Now we could leave. Well that's what I thought. As I sat in my truck, Rick an' Melissa, Chris an' Chris, Matt an Ashley, but Dan's truck failed to fire or even turn over. Little did I know this was a sign of what lay before us today. Upon investigation it seems the positive battery wire fried itself on the header on the way there. "okay I can fix that." Dan boasts. True to his word he fixed it. But still no startie. "hum" An ohm meter came out an it was determined he had no fire at the sparkplug. "okay. I can fix that." He claimed. Sure enough he hot wired a wire from the battery to the hot side of the HEI. As soon as he connected it turned over an' idled like a new car.

"so now we can go?" Marsha asked. "yeah, lets go play." I answered.

Off into the high desert we drove, Keith leading with Mike, me an' Chris following close. The first obstacle wasn't really bad at all but it would be for Matt. Having a small tire/lift combo I drove the easy way around the rocks, but, Chris with his extreme rock buggy disguised as a k5 drove over the trash can sized boulders making it look effortless. Matt being of sound mind an' heavy right foot tried to follow. Soon it became apparent Matt wasn't gonna make it. When his rig finally stopped he was high centered on his rear diff an' his transfer case skid plate.

"break out the winch!" Came a call from the spectators. "no, jus' give me a quick tow." He answered back. Dan was closest so he backed down an attempted to yank the

stranded rig clear. No luck. Again an again it was tried with no avail. Finally he succumbed to peer pressure an' winched him self clear in a few moments.

On we went, to the next real obstacle, El Hill. We straggled in as I pondered this hill, I had tried it two years ago with no success so I figured to give it another shot today. Charlie, Chris an' Chris were to spot me on this one as it's got real high pucker factor. Marsha climbed up to the passenger seat as we started to climb. To the left looked to be the line but the orange thing refused it like a kid an' cough syrup. Hum? I backed down an' listened the guys spotting me. They were pointing to the right. I had tried the right years ago with no success but things change so I tried it. Slowly the truck climbed, it slipped an' the front right wheel went for the sky. Higher an' higher it climbed until I just got scarit an' stopped. Chris was pointing to the left so I backed up a tad, just a tad now, an' slowly inched over. I guess when I was in the right place he waved me back to the right. Huh? Okay I turned an' pushed the skinny pedal slowly watching the wheels grip through my cut out doors. Meanwhile Marsha hadn't said a word. She just sat there quiet as a kid in the principles office. Not moving a muscle. Slowly we clawed our way up further. "okay you got it. Hit it!" Came the call from the right. I did. We had made it! Wow! Quiet exhilarating! Around he bushes an' back down to the rest of the group. Only the 6ft vertical drop caught my attention as I lowered myself into it. Chris was handy for spotting again as he directed me safely back down to the small staging spot. Whew! What a ride.

Craig an' his perfectly built cj5 was to be next, a 360 V8, Dana 44's with ARB lockers, revolvers shackles an' with a t-18/dana 20 t/c. He was truly set up for this stuff.
"anybody wanna ride up?" He called out. "hell yeah!" I called out so I jumped in the passenger seat for a truly hair raising ride. Aboot half way up he slipped to the left an' had the right front wheel in the air aboot 3 ft. This is a small rig folks, an' when it's in the air on the side of a hill, it's enough to make you pull your seat belt a little tighter. With rolling over being very a real thing, he decided to winch himself up or at least until he could get a firm grip on the slick rock.

"damn! That was close!" I thought to myself as we returned on a different return route, one that wasn't so steep. I seem to have turned to quickly an' missed the easy way down!

Next up was Chris in super flexy buggy disguised as k5. He climbed the left as I had. No luck. Backing down he attempted the right. He went up as did his front wheels. That's both of 'em folks. We're talking a wheel stand here, with only the bumper to keep his red rig from toppling over. Being a veteran of "'99 Warn Rock Crawling Championship" he brought the truck down smoothly making it look like child's play. Not to one to quit he tried again, this time it stalled, before he could recover he started backing down. Quickly . Too quickly for Charlie that was sitting next to me. As Chris's rig bounced towards the bottom, in what seemed like an out of control ride, Charlie ran for his life to the right. I sat there knowing he was gonna stop way before he even came close. Marsha was sitting on the left of me, she had brass balls also as she didn't flinch either. As Chris stopped his Mr. Toad ride, his front drive shaft spline's became separated as he ground to a halt. Aboot that time the rest of the caravan caught up with us as Chris finished fixing his rig for another attempt. He drove up the right again coming very close to flippin' his truck again. Finally he backed down an' shut his truck off.

“Not today.” He called over to us. Aboot that time Rick an’ Melissa pulled up in their 74 GMC. He was looking around to see if anyone was gonna give it a go, when no one stepped forward to volunteer, he went next. I watched him go to the right as I had done, then to the left, then a quick turn to the right an’ he was gone. No theatricals or nothin’. He made it look so easy. Well at least I was one of the guys to make it.

On we went. Weaving through the Tooth Pick Canyon an on to what I thought was the top of Bobsled. I was sorely wrong. At some time we had lost Keith, Mike an’ Leland. We waited for a while but they never did show, a radio call came through. They in the right area but it seems we made an error an’ was running everything backwards. A small series of climbs with rock formations came into view as well as another expedition of Jeeps an’ Land Rovers! As the more prepared rigs made it up an’ around the rock pile we looked on as the next rig staged at the bottom. It was Larry an’ his nice dog’s turn to negotiate it, in an exgovernment rig he did well as he climbed right up. Next was Kirby, it became apparent that his was more than Kirby an’ his family had bargained for. With a stalling engine, a clutch that wasn’t happy and a front drive shaft that was hating life he attempted the trap. He didn’t make it. Craig to the rescue with his 9k winch saving the day. By now it was looking like a k5 convention on top of the small knoll of rocks an’ no decision had been made to go on or turn back. Then the decision was made for Kirby. His front drive shaft broke so had to turn around. Larry said he was finished also so he would lend a hand to Kirby an’ his family. Chris donated an extra front drive shaft, an’ Charlie went back to give them the easiest directions out.

We were down to 6 rigs now, so on we went as the sun began it slow drop into the distant ocean. By now my k5 was making some strange grinding noises when I turned left, but I didn't worry about it too much as it kept running. The next obstacle was what they call Bigspy’s rock, it's the size of a huge house an’ you have to drive under it. Very cool. Then came the Bobsled. I should describe this, it's chute. Most likly aboot 6 or 7 feet wide. Mirrors get folded in on this one. Twisty to the right then left with trash can size rocks an’ ruts. Oh yeah, there's water seeping out of the ground half way up so add mud into the picture. Now just before the top there's a 4 ft vertical ledge with a pocket 4ft before it. The pocket’s big enough for you right rear wheel to fit in it perfectly. Then as you think it's done at the crest is another bunch of moguls. After you make that you have to turn left up another vertical wall, off camber to the right then go up a series of moguls to what looks like the top. It isn't. It continues on into oblivion. This trail was to be the nails in the coffin for our 6 interpret adventurers. Chris in super flexy buggy disguised as k5 gave it the first, second, third an’ fourth tries. No makie. Then I’ tried twice. No makie. Matt tried an’ tried then he winched himself up. Dan tried an’ got the winch so he continued to the next section. Just as he was almost up the second obstacle, his right front downhill side tire went flatter than a pane of glass. Now he's on the verge of rolling on top of Matt's truck. Out came the come-along’s, high lift jack an’ the co2. After what seems like forever he's was finally fixed. Meanwhile, while he was getting fixed Craig drove his perfectly set up Jeep up the 'sled. At the wall it died an’ wouldn't restart. His winch slowly gave out an’ then it was apparent he was going no where fast. He released himself to back down with no power but he was wedged in tighter than thong on a Pamela Andersen’s rump, to make things worse his wheels going the wrong way. I got my K5 an’ strapped him down. Dan drove down an’ finally Matt succumbed to peer pressure an also drove down. Sounds like it over eh? Well not yet. The light was completely gone now, so head lamps cast eerie shadows on Bigspy’s rock. The twisty boulder cover’d trail was a handful in the daylight an at night it was difficult to say the least.

I watched Rick an' Melissa drive up on the ledge under the rock, their back right wheel going at least 4 ft in the air as the tried to slither under the boulder. After a few attempts they backed up, moving a little to the right they made it though with no damage. My k5 is so low I just drove right under it with no anxiety as did Craig in his perfectly set up Jeep. Dan on his 36 swampers had a good go of it but Matt, well, his steering was fubr'd by now with all kinds of spring to axle problems. He got half way through it his wheels would only turn right. Unfortunately it has to go left under the rock, Matt a clever rascal, he tied his winch on to the right knuckle an' winched his wheels straight while he drove forward. Very ingenious. On we traveled. I ripped a tail light off from misjudging a corner, an' then Craig power steering belt flew off. He scurried aboot fixing it quickly as the night waned on. He drove another 20 or 30 minutes an it flew off again this time being eaten by the fan. Dan produced more belts, Craig's perfect set up Jeep continued on. Soon he was calling out another stop. This time his alternator belt went bye bye. More belts materialized as Craig once again fixed his perfectly set Jeep to continue on.

Rick an' Melissa were leading now, they had a vague map we were to use to find the camp. Hours rolled by as we had to travel all the obstacles we came in on. The stars were out an' the temperature had dropped as we continued on. At 11 in the night, 13 hours after we left we pulled into camp. Whew!

We shook hands an' headed back for 2 hour drive. I was exhausted so Charlie offered to drive. The whole time Marsha was a trooper, never a complaint or bitch dribbled out of her mouth. After a quick stop in Ramona for some grub we were once again on the road home. At 1:30 we pulled in the drive way. Hellava trip eh?

Hoser