

1st Airstream Trip

My wife Gail and I, two of your newest members from Southern California, tired of what I lovingly called our old junk motorhome. At my urging we went to the Los Angeles RV show in October 2004 and spent about 8 hours there, 6 at the Airstream displays. We went home the proud owners of a 22' CCD.

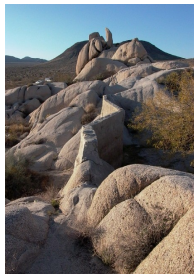
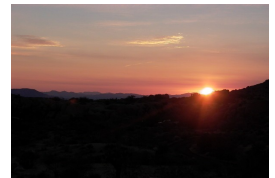
We went to Joshua Tree National Park for our first trip. Our 1996 Jeep Cherokee did well even though the Airstream maxed out its towing capacity. We maintained 55 on the freeway even with moderate head winds and the semis didn't push us around. We did well on the long grade on I-10 past Indio until that semi going 30 pulled out to pass his friend going 25. Near Chiriaco Summit we turned north into Joshua Tree. This two-lane road really made the Jeep work; water temperature was pushing 230 in the steeper slow sections.

The steep grades may have slowed the Cherokee down (isn't that what our parent had to do), but boy could it corner! I got surprised by a couple of tight turns and the CCD just followed us through. However, we pulled off at a wide turnout and what did I find when I opened the door; beers & sodas rolling around on the floor, the carton of eggs were there too and the contents of both drawers from the desk at the back. Wow, the trailer will corner much better than its contents.



By mid afternoon we were settled in a campsite immediately next to the main road through Jumbo Rocks Campground. Several people came by to look at the CCD which surprised us at first; we hadn't expect to have so much attention or people taking pictures of the Airstream.

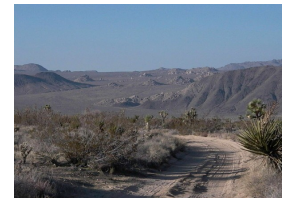
What a great sunrise on Saturday. After breakfast we visited the park Visitors Center and took the walking tour through the "29 Palms" grove. We picked up some sandwiches and headed off to the Geology Tour in Pleasant Valley. Midway through the tour we detoured down Berdoo Canyon Road (4X4) stopping for lunch on a ridge with a view. After lunch we continued down Berdoo Canyon into the Coachella Valley and filled up the Cherokee.



On the return trip we stopped to chronicle the most difficult section of road (we haven't done a lot of 4 wheeling with this Cherokee) a magnificent view of Pleasant Valley and the 100-year-old water works built by early ranchers.



The best way to close a great day with sunshine, blue skies and shirtsleeve temperatures was the ranger program on desert cougars. Temperature dropped to 43 degrees, not unusual for the desert, it foretold what was coming tomorrow.



In the morning we knew it had gotten colder, the furnace seem to run all night waking us often. About 6 AM Gail asks, "Why can't I see out through the roof vent?" "It looks like it's covered in ice," I responded and we threw open the curtains for a look at 4 to 6 inches of **SNOW**! Were we surprised? We dressed quickly, fixed breakfast and kept the heat to a minimum not knowing how long our battery would survive since our solar panel was covered with snow.



Since Jumbo Rocks is isolated from TV, radio and even amateur radio reception from the neighboring cities and towns we left the CCD, headed to 29 Palms to get a weather report and possibly buy a small Honda generator. We made a U-turn before the entrance/exit station because the Ranger was not letting people back in the park. We could see him leaning out the window trying to see why some crazy southern Californians (us) were turning back, but we weren't going to leave our new Airstream there if we couldn't get back in the park. After a couple of hours and with the snow continuing we decided to leave. We had no gloves; mittens nor parkas and we didn't think our coach batteries would last through the day. It took 40 miles of 4 wheel drive to get out of the park that day. **What A Great First Trip!**

Don & Gail, Riverside, CA

Check the trip photo gallery on the web

<http://sierranevadaairstreams.org/memories/travelogues/dwilliams/1st-trip/gallery.html>