

# Colorado High Country 2002



Describing in one word Monacos in Motion's Colorado High Country Caravan (co-leaders Wade and Linda Myers and Jon and Rita Ham) is easy: Awesome.

Fifteen coaches from ten states met on 8/12/02 at Sugar Loafin' Campground in Leadville, Co. at an altitude of 10,200 ft. to begin two weeks of exploring parts of Colorado not seen from the Interstates or even from paved roads. We drove along forest roads and trails that traverse the mountains of Colorado. We stood atop some of the highest peaks of Colorado and looked down on some of the most

beautiful scenery while we devoured our picnic lunches of cheese and crackers, salmon, or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. We followed the paths that stagecoaches and covered wagons traveled before Colorado was even a state. Some were so rocky that we had to place our tires on the taller rocks so our undercarriage could clear other obstacles that lay in our path. On some trails there were vertical rock walls on the right and sheer drop-offs to the left. Some hairpin turns were so tight that it required using reverse more than once just to change direction. Of course,

we were driving our four-wheel drive toads and not our coaches since Monaco does not yet offer and all-wheel-drive coach.

Our first official event was a pizza party hosted by our co-leaders, to meet everyone and to get our instructions and daily schedule. We had five experienced four-wheelers who were to help those of us who might have a problem. We were to meet at 7:45 each morning for detailed instructions for the day and be ready to leave at 8:00am. Full gas tank, windows cleaned, chairs and small table, jacket or sweatshirt, tire air gauge, air



small town nestled in the mountains typically called “little Switzerland” because of the surrounding mountains. After four days in Ouray and the surrounding mountains, we proceeded to Silverton, where we toured an old gold mine. During our 14 days of four wheeling, we climbed eleven mountain passes ranging from 11,905 to 14,268 ft. Looking at the mountain peaks and valleys we felt we had been on the Top of the World on most every pass.

In addition to climbing mountain passes, we saw the remains of old mining towns, rode on an electric mine train to the heart of 13,700 ft. Galena Mountain for a tour of the Old Hundred Gold Mine. Panning for gold and silver was enjoyed by all. We became friends and comrades and had exciting times together. We thought John and Rita Ham and Wade and Linda Myers did a fantastic job taking so many greenhorns out in the mountains to have a good time four-wheeling.

compressor (if you have one), toilet paper for potty stops (called a 10-100, men to the left ladies to the right), bags for garbage-pack everything out. John Ham is sort of a history buff and gave us a lot of history on the area, on railroads and mines during the late 1800's and early 1900's while showing us a lot of beautiful scenery.

We were a diverse group, both in our off road driving expertise and in our vehicles. Some of us had never taken our stock four-wheel drive vehicles off road before. And some had built-up vehicles designed for off-roading and had been off-roading for years. The expert drivers willingly shared with the less experienced the tricks of off-roading. Wade and John selected trails that built our confidence by building upon the previous day's run. By the end of the two weeks, we could navigate some of the more difficult trails.

After several days of exploring trails fifteen Monaco coaches made their way to 12,118 ft over Cottonwood Pass to Taylor Park, CO. The

switchbacks were impressive, at one point; there were as many coaches above as below.

With five days of dry camping behind us, we headed for Cimarron with a stop at Gunnison for a Wal-Mart fix. At Cimarron we relaxed for a couple days with the men cooking breakfast and enjoying casual sightseeing. From Cimarron we headed for Ouray, CO whose name was taken from a Ute Chieftain. A



