

Trip through the soft soft sand

It was a warm, dry summers day in the great bowl of Nevada's desert when I made my grave error. We learn from our errors, so in some cases it doesn't hurt to make them provided there is not a permanent repercussion from your mistake. I have a rock that reminds me of this incident and I would like to tell you how this rock resembles my experience.

Jamie(my girlfriend) and I were returning on a Sunday afternoon from a very successful and safe caving trip to the Great Basin National Park. The weather was just right for traveling and we were reminiscing about all of the beautiful natural formations we saw underground.

Caving is a very exciting sport, upon entering a cave you leave the mundane world behind and enter a wonderful wonderland. From the commonly known stalactites and stalagmites to the lesser known soda straws and cave bacon.

After a few days of exploring caves in the park we were ready to head home. With tired muscles and dusty bodies we were ready for warm showers and soft beds.

Upon exiting the park and traveling along the long strait path of the highway home we spotted a dark hole in a rock formation along the side of the road. Being true cavers and adventurous types we decided we had to poke our heads in to take a look around. I veered off the road in started heading in the direction of the rock formation. Unfortunately although driving along what seemed to be tracks I was getting myself deeper and deeper into very soft sand. This was my mistake, traveling along a path that was untested and the whereabouts of the destination unknown.

"Are you sure you know what you are doing" said Jamie as the tires began to spin more and more in the soft particles of sand.

"Sure, don't you see the tracks in the sand? Others have been this way, and hey, if they can do it, why can't we?" I said this half heatedly based on the fact that I was moving slower and slower as we progressed.

Seeing that we were close enough to the precipice I stooped the car next to a great looking desert bush. Jamie and I got out, adorned some light caving gear and made the trek through the soft sand to the rock formation. What seemed to be glorious holes from the highway turned out to be simple shadows and nothing much to look into. However we did have a fun time climbing the rocks and soaking in the view that the rock provided of the valley around us.

Coming back to reality, realizing it was getting late and our achy bodies catching up to us we decided to get back on the long trail back. Starting up the car, determined to get back on the highway I put the car in gear and not so surprisingly we didn't go anywhere except DOWN! Spinning the wheels did not have any positive effect. In fact all it accomplished was putting the car flush with the ground. In one feeble attempt to get un-stuck I put my floor mats from my little car that could(Toyota Cellica 1980 hatchback) under the tires. This accomplished nothing aside from being the proud owner of designer melted floor mats.

Realizing the situation was hopeless we decided we needed help, so we made the trek back to the highway through what we realized was softer sand then we had guessed driving on it. Upon reaching the highway we started flagging down all of the four wheel drive vehicles that we could find. One young couple from Oregon decided to give us a hand, being confident that they could seeing as they had a

nice high four wheel drive truck.

Sacrificing one of my shorter caving ropes used for rappelling into pits, we connected the two vehicles. After a couple pulls from their truck my car came right out of the lovely pit I had dug for it with my tires, and we were on our way.

The rock I have that remembers me of this incident has a surface that is cracked and separated much like the cracked and separated platelets that can be found on the desert surface we so willingly drove over. The cracks almost seem to draw a map for me of the highway that we strayed from, the small path that we followed to the rock formation, and a differently colored portion on the rock symbolizing the cave lacking rock formation that we explored. The hardness reminds me in a way of the hardness of my resolve to get to the supposed hole in the rock, and my unwillingness to listen to the wise advice of my partner.