

September/October 2015

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A Publication of the
Toyota Land Cruiser Association
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STEP #1 Type of drive shaft needed?*

*Note: Modified vehicles may require a type that is different from the original.

Double Cardan (CV)



May have flange at either end.

Conventional - 2 Joint



May have flange at either end.

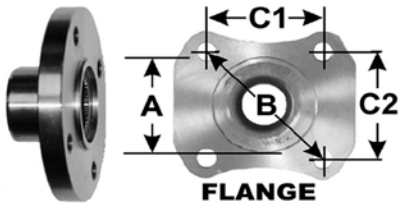
Reverse Slip



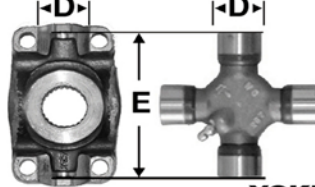
May have flange at differential end.

STEP #2 Attachment at each end?*

*Note: May not be required on many applications.

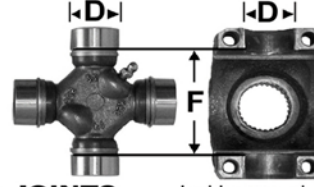


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Outside snap-rings

YOKES & JOINTS



Inside snap-rings



REVERSE SLIP

A= Pilot diameter. B= Bolt circle diameter. C1 & C2 = Chord length D= Bearing cap diameter or diameter of half-round cutout in yoke. E= Width of universal joint or span between centering lugs. F= Outside edge of universal joint snap-ring grooves or inside span of broached surfaces on yoke. G= Tooth count of splines. H= Major diameter of splines.

STEP #3 Measure for length*

*Note: Some applications may require measuring through the range of suspension travel.



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ON THE COVER: Ben Calhoun making a splash on Imogene Pass.

Photo by Stan Wright

BELOW: Tim Kurnos' 1974 FJ40.

Photo by Nick Martin

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TOYOTA

Land Cruiser

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HELLO EVERYONE.

I hope all of you are getting a chance to enjoy your Trucks, 4Runners, FJs and Land Cruisers this summer.

I'm happy to announce that we have two new board members, filling all of our open positions. Rick Root has accepted the position of Secretary. Rick is a member of the Tornado Alley Cruisers. Heather Royston has accepted the Central/Mountain Representative position. Heather is from Houston and is a regular at many TLCA events, including the Lone Star Roundup, Southern Cruiser Crawl and Rubithon.

It's been a very busy time for our family. Shortly after I sent my last column, my mother-in-law passed away. As I've shared with you in previous columns, my wife had been taking care of her for just over a year during her battle with dementia. It's certainly been a trying time for all, but there were many unintentional benefits, including having our youngest move to Napa High School, where she will soon begin her freshman year. (By the way, since when did schools start their year in mid-August?)

My son returned from his deployment to Somalia, and was able to fly out to join me on Rubithon. It was a good but short time, and everyone I spoke to enjoyed the trail. Some parts were easier, and many were harder. We had a great time at the Friday night Marauder bar, and then we did really well at the Saturday night raffle. Joel Moranton did an outstanding job working with our business members and other vendors to put together a bounty of prizes. Eric Agee has come into his own as chairman, and has a solid group of volunteers supporting him.

The PMC swap meet was just a few weeks after Rubithon. Since we will be moving soon, it was the perfect time to unload a lot of old parts (and some new) so that we won't have to find a place to store them. Plus, if I haven't used them by now, chances are I never will. Many of those in atten-

dance benefited greatly from my impromptu moving sale, but I guess I profited as well.

Hope you have safe travels, and keep the rubber side down.

ROSS WOODY

TLCA President,
Member #7,704





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TRAIL HEAD
Managing Editor

If you could get in your time machine and go back to 1968, how many Land Cruisers would you buy off the showroom floor? Imagine what that \$3,000 purchase would be worth today. Does that mean it makes sense to scoop up a few TRD Pro models and stash them away for 60 years? That's a hard pill to swallow when the price tag is already pushing the \$50,000 mark. I was lucky enough to borrow a 2015 TRD Pro 4Runner from Toyota recently. Sadly, my initial response after driving the 4Runner for a week was very lukewarm.

To be fair, I did not test it as I wanted to. I had planned on driving it to the FJ Summit, where I was scheduled to lead trails and assist nervous drivers down the infamous Black Bear Pass. After driving the 4Runner around town for a few days, I just couldn't find a comfortable seating position. I also felt as though I couldn't see well over the hood. I thought the brakes were very grabby and the position of the gas pedal was way too far off the floor. My foot was constantly slipping off the pedal. Was this Toyota's answer to the problems with pedals getting stuck in the floor mats? Speaking of floor mats, why are they made of carpet? After all, this is supposed to be the off-road model. It's meant to be driven in mud, snow, dirt and water. Where are the rubber floor mats? Do I really have to spend another \$100 on those? Maybe I'm just nit-picking. So instead of driving a brand spanking new \$50,000 4Runner, I packed my 2004, 150,000-mile, scratched and stinky 100 Series. And I loved it. I really wanted to like the 4Runner. I like the way it looks and it drives very nice, but I'm comparing that to the beat up stuff I usually drive. I just didn't feel comfortable in it. The high mountain shelf roads of southwestern Colorado are no place to drive a vehicle you're not comfortable in.

I travel a fair amount in my Land Cruiser, so I need a vehicle that feels right. I find myself searching in the opposite direction lately. Instead of looking for a new TRD 4Runner, or the natural progression to move into the 200 Series, I've been searching for an 80. I actually found a perfect candidate right here in Denver a few months

ago: 1996, 195,000 miles, factory lockers and overall very clean. It needed a few service related items but at \$4,250, it was a deal. So I bought it, right? Wrong. After driving it around the block a few times and calling fellow Rising Sun member, Mike Davidson, for advice on what to look for, I was convinced it was the right one. The asking price was right, but I decided to haggle a little bit. Starting at \$3,900, I was doubtful but hopeful. We went back and forth for about five minutes when the seller's phone rang. It was his wife saying that someone from Durango, Colorado, was looking to buy the truck sight unseen. I was a little skeptical and called Mike back with a few more questions about some of the items needed and to ask how long it would take me to rebuild the knuckles and Birfields. I upped my offer to \$4,100 and the guy said \$4,250 and he would tell the other buyer that it was sold. I was counting pennies for what I planned to be my sweet new 80. I had the build sheet ready in my head. In that five-minute time period, the guy from Durango wired the \$4,250 to the seller's wife and purchased a plane ticket for later that day. It was over. I lost the truck because I tried to save less than \$150 on a vehicle I probably would have owned for more than 10 years. I've spent \$150 on dinner with my wife without thinking twice and I only kept that for about six hours. There's a lesson to be learned from my greed but I'm still so upset about losing the truck that I don't know what that lesson is yet. To the guy in Durango with the new-to-you 80 Series, I say, "touché." Now I want a 60.

STAN WRIGHT

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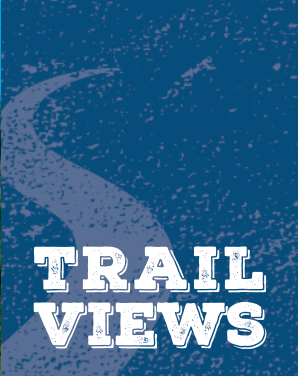
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**TRAIL
VIEWS**





Aspen locals Tim Kurnos and Steve Goff return to town after a Pearl Pass recon mission to determine the snow line

PHOTO BY STEVE GOFF



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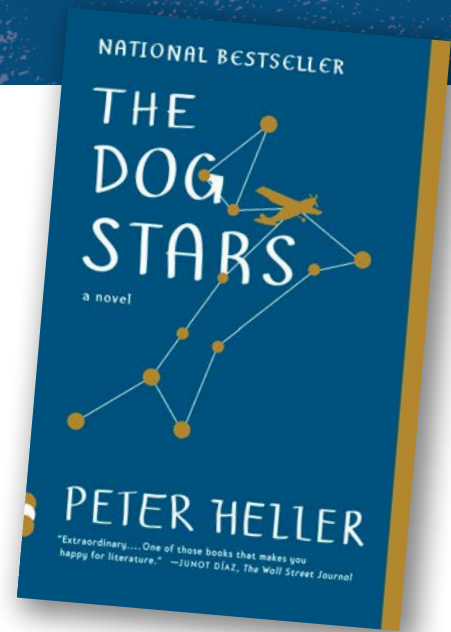
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TRAIL READS

The Dog Stars

Now that the days are getting shorter and the 2015 event season is coming to an end, it's nice to have a good book to read. *The Dog Stars*, a novel by Peter Heller, is perfect for passing the time on a fall day. Normally, I wouldn't include a novel in this section but *The Dog Stars* reads more like a true adventure story. It's an "end of days" story that takes place in Colorado. With all of his friends and family dead from the flu, Hig lives in an abandoned airport hangar with his dog and a 1956 Cessna. He has no communication with anyone other than a gun-toting neighbor until one day, while flying his Cessna, he receives a random transmission on the radio. He risks everything by flying past the point of no return to see if there is a better life than the one he has been living. If you like dogs, mountains, adventure, guns and tinkering on broken things, this is a good one. Available on Amazon or visit www.peterheller.net.



TRAIL PUZZLE

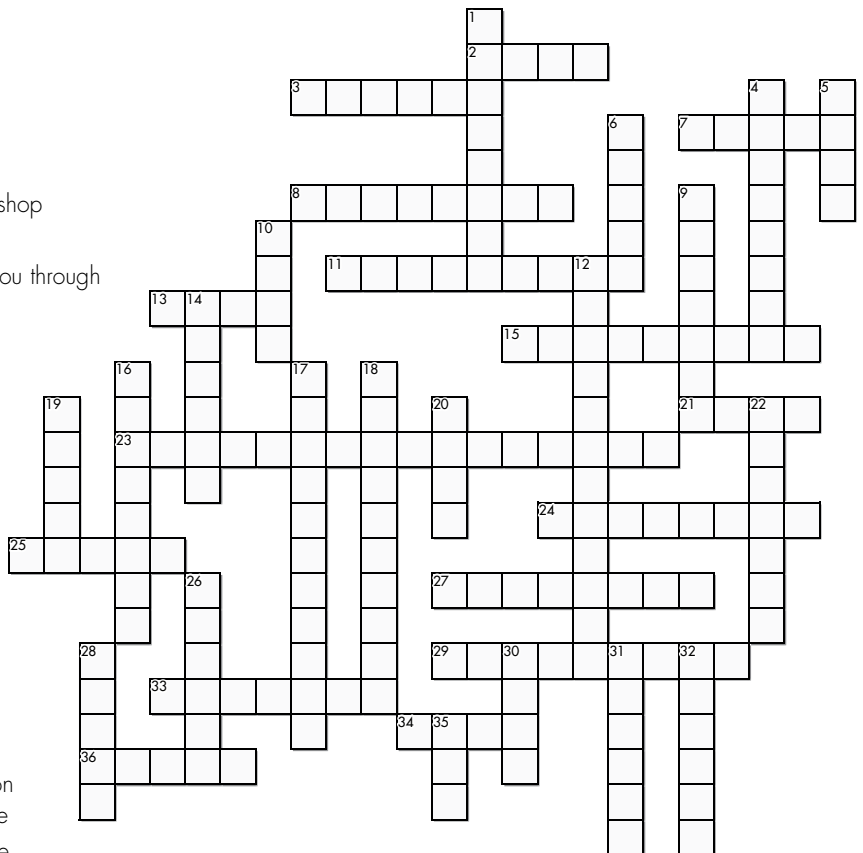
Trail Riders

Across

2. Rubithon Chair
3. Grand Junction-based Toyota specialists celebrating 10 years in service
7. Stay the...
8. TLCA clubs
11. FJ780 was the last to have it
13. Without lockers
15. Oregon-based offroad company known for their orange fleet
21. FJ55 Kryptonite
23. Long-time Trails advertiser from New Hampshire
24. FJ55 rear window power
25. Powered by sunshine
27. Top cook at Rubithon
29. Famous Moab obstacle on private property. Now closed
33. Sometimes you need them to run a wide tire
34. Long Beach, CA Toyota dealer and parts/restoration specialists
36. Rubithon run for fat bodies

Down

1. Winch line guide
4. Exit hill at Rubithon
5. Golden Colorado shop
6. Leave no...
9. Someone to help you through
10. HJ45 wheel base
12. Toyota slogan
14. FJ45 body style
16. 'Play' measurement between the ring and pinion gears
17. Color code 309
18. Up front in 1976
19. The European GX470
20. Founded in 1976
22. A stock FJ60 will have 27 of these on hub side of the axle
26. Toyota's offroad line
28. *Toyota Trails* Truck Tech Guru
30. Sprung this way for a lift
31. An alternative to the hardest lines
32. Alignment check. Caster, toe and ...
35. Atlanta area Toyota shop



Answer Key on page 49

TECH EXCHANGE

with Robbie Antonson

Send technical questions to:

Robbie Antonson,
TechEditor@tlca.org

Here in Colorado, summer is in full swing. The last couple of months have been interesting—cool and wet for the most part. In listening to NPR on my drive to work most mornings, I have gotten a whole lot of info on what is happening here in the States as far as weather and climate. Some places are warmer and have less water (California for instance). And some places had extended winters and more moisture (the Great Lakes region). There was ice on the Great Lakes that made the shipping season two weeks late this year. Really mind-boggling if you ask me. I have also recently heard that the lakes have rebounded over the last two years, almost recovering from a four- to five-year drought. Now if California can get some rain to replenish its reservoirs....

You might ask, Robbie why does this matter? It's because responsible off-roaders are being prevented from getting to some places. Politics and politicians (along with environmental groups) have used climate change and global warming as reasons to lock up and to prevent people from enjoying the great outdoors. In Colorado, some trails have not reopened after the flood of 2013 nor are they likely reopen due to the damage the flood caused. One can only hope that natural resources that should be open to all will be reopened. But that will only happen if people raise their voices in a responsible manner. Give money to organizations that will carry on the fight. Otherwise we'll get what we deserve.

On a wholly different topic, chalk up another lesson to not taking the time to fix things when you know you have a problem. I have written about my electrical issues in the past, as well as some of the body-cracking issues I have faced. And I was thinking about how to cure them as a buddy was working on my electrical problems. (The inability to use the running/headlights because it would cause

the tranny to short out and not work. Fun stuff at night.)

I took on replacing the body mount I had melted many years ago without really thinking about the outcome. I unbolted the mount and jacked up the body so it was supported. (This actually moved the body about 1 inch up, a shock to me). I had to cut the old mount off of the frame, grind and clean up the area to re-weld the bracket and the new mount because the mount can only be installed with the body off the frame by about 3 to 4 inches. I opted to cut and weld in a new bracket that I had had for about three years. (Yup, I knew I needed to do this, just resisted it till now). Yes it was a pain lying on the floor, welding and having the splatter. I got it in and welded it up, then I finished bolting the through-bolt and painted it all.

Most people who know me know I have a tire carrier and integrated bumper. Well for the first time in several years, moving the tire carrier away from the bumper to get into the back of the 80 series resulted in no body movement. In the past, the simple act of moving my tire carrier out would make the body move. The last time I did the Rubithon in 2013, I could move the tire carrier out, push it down and see the body move up and down by 2 inches. I was a dummy not to take care of this. So out of this, I had two ill-fitting rear doors, some cracking on the cross support for the lower rear quarter panel. This support also has the lower hatch bolted to it. Now that I have repaired this item, I have no body movement, neither do I have any lights flickering when I go down the trail. So many issues were resolved by just doing what I knew I needed to do. Anyhow, if you find this funny, you should. I only share this so you can laugh at me and maybe yourself if you too do not take care of your rig when you need to.

If I had taken care of this when I first found out about it—when I melted the body mount

because of my exhaust silencer being bent up and pointing the exhaust heat right on the body mount—I would not had some of my wiring issues or rear doors that are tweaked now or a cross-member to deal with. I have one of the best excuses one can have: I work day in and day out on other people's vehicles, and I get tired of it sometimes. So I put off working on my own Cruiser until I absolutely need to. But in truth, my Toyota is just as important as anyone else's. It does carry my family and me into some really righteous areas of the world for us to recreate and to renew one's soul. Anyhow learn from me, get your Cruiser taken care of before you have more issues and heaven forbid, hurt someone you care about.

Just recently, a new customer called me up. He had just bought an FJ62 from a good friend's friend. (We all know what is coming, don't we?) He had it shipped from Texas, got it home, drove it for a couple of days and the auto tranny decided not to work. On a short test drive, it was not really peppy (none of them are), and it topped out at 55 to 60 mph and would not go faster. The interior looked OK for its age, but the carpet was gone and in its place was new black rubber, custom-fitted. If the new owner had pulled it up, he would have found rust. In some places, it was rusted through.

The suspension had 10-inch homemade shackles that gave the Cruiser the appearance of typical stock height. But they made it ride rough, and the steering castor was way off. The frame had major rust, and the rust made some of the supports bulge upward (bending the metal).

The firewall had some spots that had rusted through if one cared to look closely. There was a lot of Bondo on the body, and a couple of places were patched badly as well. The engine was high-mileage, and after starting it up, water was running at a slow rate out the exhaust. There was a coolant hose

leak (most hoses looked original and were hard and brittle). Someone had done a tap dance on the roof, and it also had Bondo. This Cruiser was in really bad shape. We did a compression test, and most cylinders were close to rebuild time — 125; one was low, 85 or so. I ran a bore scope in and found coolant leaking out the head gasket (hence the water out the tailpipe).

Anyhow, this guy (a real nice guy by the way), had spent a bunch of money for worthless junk. This was largely because his friend had said his good buddy could be trusted. How many times have I heard this sad tale? I can trust most of my friends not to steer me wrong, but a buddy of a buddy is not my friend. I have said this many many times here. If you are going to spend good money, say over \$3,000 to \$4,000, have a vehicle inspected so there can be a second set of eyes on it before you plop down your greenbacks. The guy that sold this hunk of junk was not willing to deal with the owner. His words to me (he called me to see what was wrong with it), were: let the buyer beware. No amount of talking would get him to see he was scum (not what I said to him), and he had taken advantage of this person. So this new owner is out almost \$9,000 for a hunk of junk. And he has asked me to look for a 62 for him that is in good shape. So I am on the hunt for a clean one for this guy. And soon (before this comes out in print), I am sure I will find what he wants.

Anyhow, lesson learned by this gentleman, and I hope there will be a few of you that can learn from this as well. Spend the extra money on having your next purchase inspected, or contact a local chapter of the TLCA and see if someone can give it a once-over and tell you what their opinion is.

Hope the summer finds you well, and the world is not working against you too hard. God bless.

Robbie

FJ40 VIN

Hello Robbie

Hi. I sure hope you can help me. My FJ has a September 1975 production date. The VIN is FJ40 209420. Is this truck a 1975 or

1976? In California, a 1975 doesn't need to be smogged. Hope you can help. Thanks.

John Westerberg

Hello John:

The more I dig, the more confusing this is for me as well. It does not seem like there is any hard rule until the mid-80s, when the 17 digit VIN system became the standard. Unless your cruiser has been repainted or in an accident, you should have an emissions sticker under the hood. (A 1975 that I am currently working on is an October 1975 baby, and has a emission sticker for 1976.) In reading this thread on IH8MUD.com, there is some great information, but I have not found a website or page that can be used to determine the model year by using a VIN.

Anyhow you have the most reliable figure, and that is the production date. I would suspect that because it was produced in September, it may still be a 1975, as it likely landed in the States that year. But I really cannot tell you, as I was not able to find good information.

Is it currently registered as a 1975 or 1976? If it is registered as a 1975, who would there be to disagree?

Robbie

1994 FZJ80 random acts of not starting.

Hey Robbie,

I have had this 80 series for about 10 years now. It's been my automotive rock. Recently though it has been intermittently not starting. The battery tests good, there is no audible clicking, and it will eventually start and run normally. By intermittently, I mean that over the last six months it has happened five times. The first time it acted out, I cycled the key about six times over the course of 20 minutes, again no clicking, just dead. Once it started I drove about 10 minutes, shut it off and again, it would not start. I cycled the key a few times and it started and gave me no trouble for about a month. Then just as randomly it has failed to start several more times, but eventually it will start. This has shaken my traveling companions' faith in it, and they seem unwilling to go too far off the beaten path in it anymore.

It is equipped with the OEM security system if that matters.

Cheers

Todd Smith

Hello Todd:

You say the battery tests OK. Did you test on the battery terminals or the clamps? I typically will test both ways, because sometimes a buildup on the battery posts can't be seen. And by testing both on the battery posts and then on the clamps, if there is any voltage drop difference you have found one issue. So, do you carry a volt-ohm meter (VOM) with you? If so and the no start happens to you, hook up the VOM to the switched power wire (the small one on the solenoid). Yes I know this can be a bit of a problem if you have nice clothes on, but this will let you see if power is getting to this wire. If there's no power, then you may have an issue with the ignition switch. If you have power to this wire when you turn the key on to start it, then check the main power to the starter (the big wire). If there's no power, then check the battery cable or the connection at the starter. If there is power, then the ground wire or the starter solenoid is bad. Check the ground wire at the block to make sure the ground is good. If you have any signs of corrosion on the battery terminals, clean them. They may test OK with a VOM but not allow enough amps to be drawn to make the starter work. One test I do if I am looking at a battery is to hook my VOM up to the battery, take a reading, then try to start the car and see what the voltage is. If it is not staying at about 11.5 volts when cranking, then you may have a battery problem. Your battery when cranking needs to provide a minimum of 10.5 volts to run the computer. If the voltage while cranking is less than 10.5 volts, the vehicle won't start.

Typical Denso starters need contact as soon as 100,000 miles, or later depending on whether they're in a daily driver used for short trips or a weekend warrior that goes on long drives. I have rarely seen a Denso starter on a Cruiser last over 150,000 miles.

I would also make sure the fusible links are in good shape. Corrosion can build up on the ends, creating an issue like the one you are describing.

If you have more questions, write away.

Robbie

Adjustable Headlights on '94 FZJ80

Dear Robbie,

I was adjusting the headlights on my wife's '94 daily driver and I broke the adjuster. While adjusting the vertical alignment, I thought it was stuck when in actuality it was bottomed out. I wrung it out and it no longer moves. Is there a fix for this, or am I in the market for a new headlight?

Many thanks.

Bart Frazier
Capital Land Cruiser Club

Hello Bart:

It looks like the adjustment assembly (the bolt and threaded insert) is replaceable, but I have not attempted to find the parts. Try ringing up your favorite seller of parts to see if you can get this new. If not, then maybe you can find someone who has replaced the assembly because of a cracked housing and you can scavenge what you need. I guess the last resort would be to go to a junkyard and buy a broken housing that contains that

piece, clean it up and make the threaded assembly functional. Then install the used assembly into the housing. It looks like you will need to thread the bolt in from the top into the insert that is attached to the back of the housing.

Good luck with this,

Robbie

FJ62 Fuel injection

1989 FJ62. What parts would be recommended that I obtain to replace the fuel injector(s). Is it one injector or six? Are these available, or only used parts?

The engine is not running smoothly, and my mechanic suspects the fuel injection, although he has not tested or diagnosed anything. I was just looking into the parts availability and cost. I am in Hawaii and usually purchase from Spector but could not find injectors on the website, resulting in my question if they are available.

Thank you for your insight and expertise,

Michael Chun

Hi Michael:

Why are you replacing the injectors? If you have issues, maybe a diagnosis with the factory service manual will give you a better picture of what the problem is.

The FJ62 has six injectors, a fuel pressure regulator and a pulsation damper. Typically the injectors can be removed and sent out to an injector shop to be inspected and cleaned. This will allow you to know if you need to replace them. You also have a fuel injection pump that supplies fuel from the fuel tank to the engine through a fuel filter.

Your FJ62 might just need a valve adjustment. That engine needs its valves adjusted every 15,000 miles. I have seen the F-style engine go from idling rough to running smoothly with just a valve adjust.

But diagnose the problem first. If you do need injectors, I think Rock Auto has them. Buy good ones, not the cheap knockoff's that will not last.

I would guess that Hawaii is a big enough market to have an injection cleaning shop. If not and you need to send them out, I know

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of a couple of good companies where you can have them done.

Hopefully there is nothing too wrong with your engine.

Robbie

Overheating

Hello Robbie:

I have a '67 FJ40 that's been in the family since it was new. After 33 years, I had the engine replaced with a small-block Chevy and later had an aftermarket air conditioner installed. The original radiator could handle the V-8 OK, but not the addition of the A/C.

I tried two aluminum radiators from well-known suppliers, but they would not keep the engine cool even with the A/C off. I have a custom shroud and have also tried electric fans with no luck.

It's getting hot here in Moab, 105-109 this week, and I would really like to get the A/C going. A shop in town thinks we could make some changes for more room under the hood and install a larger radiator. I hate to think how much I have spent trying to fix this issue. Any ideas would be most welcome!

Thanks

Steve Brownell

Hello Steve:

Maybe you got this all figured out or read about radiator problems in the last issue of Toyota Trails. At any rate, you can get a new Toyota FJ40 radiator that is a four-row brass and copper model. Was your original radiator a three-row brass and copper? They made two versions for the 40 series.

If you do not know, then it may better to get a custom four- or five-row brass and copper radiator to handle the heat. Is the engine right up against the firewall? If it is, then this is an issue and needs to be resolved if possible. Moving the engine a couple of inches away from the firewall will allow airflow around the engine and help with the cooling.

Let's talk a bit more about the radiator. Is your custom shroud totally sealed (usually with foam) where it meets the radiator? If not, then the fan can pull the air from around the shroud instead of totally through the radiator. Is your fan fixed to the engine or does it

have a viscous clutch? If you have a viscous clutch, is it like the Toyota clutches that can be drained to add a higher viscosity fluid to pull more air through? Some Toyota viscous fan clutches can be adjusted to engage at a lower temperature as well. Does your viscous clutch do that? Maybe just raising the fluid's viscosity would help.

Are you running a good pressure cap, and running good coolant? These are important, too. A cap that holds no pressure will not allow the coolant to absorb heat much past the boiling point and thus not allow a good heat exchange between the radiator and the surrounding air.

You may need to run one of those old canvas water bags on hot days to help put moisture in the air to help with cooling. Those old guys who helped settle your area had some great tricks to help keep their engines cool.

Some last thoughts: Is the water pump in good shape? By that I mean, is it fairly new? If it isn't, it may not be functioning well. How is your thermostat? The same holds true with it. Is it opening and closing at the proper temperatures?

Anyhow, I hope one of these things will help you out.

Robbie

Restarting after a rollover

Hi Robbie,

I know of a few rollovers already this year. Most recently, a 4Runner ended up on its side at FJ Summit. What are the proper steps to get your vehicle running again after a rollover or flop?

**Stan Wright
Managing Editor TT**

Hello Stan:

Well it all depends on the seriousness of the rollover. Was the vehicle on its side for a only short time, or was it upside down for hours?

Once it is on the rubber again, and in a safe spot, open the hood and check all the fluid levels. Always do this. Check the levels of engine oil, automatic transmission fluid and power steering fluid. Take note if any of them are low. Then start thinking of where to get the fluids from the group you are with. You may or may not have a mess on the

hood. (I've seen this a couple of times). You may or may not recognize spilled fluids if they've become mixed.

If you're missing a bunch of engine oil, it could be many places: inside the valve covers, inside the cylinders, inside the intake manifold, just for starters.

If the vehicle was only on its side for a few minutes, oil probably won't have moved into the cylinders. But if it was a half-hour or more, try to rotate the engine by hand (you may have to remove the spark plugs) to make sure there are no fluids between the pistons and the cylinder heads. Once you have completed two full rotations by hand, you can use the starter to turn the engine over.

Once that is completed, you can put the spark plugs back in. Replenish all the fluids. It may run rough for a little bit, but should smooth out.

Some of the more modern Toyota SUVs and trucks have no dipstick. So look under the vehicle to see if any gear lube and tranny fluids have leaked. If you see messes in the location of the axles, or the tranny and transfer case, then I would check those fluid levels.

Coolant typically leaks out only when a hose is broken or some part of the cooling system has been broken. Sometimes with older rigs, the motor mounts have worn and the act of rolling will break a weakened mount. If that is the case, look at the engine fan shroud to see if the fan has hit the shroud before you start it. I would suspect that more modern or newer rebuilt engines would not have motor mount issues.

Anyhow, most brief episodes in which a vehicle ends up on its side result in no ill effects. More worrisome are full rollovers or incidents in which a vehicle has been on its side for a long period of time.

Hope this helps,

Robbie

LT

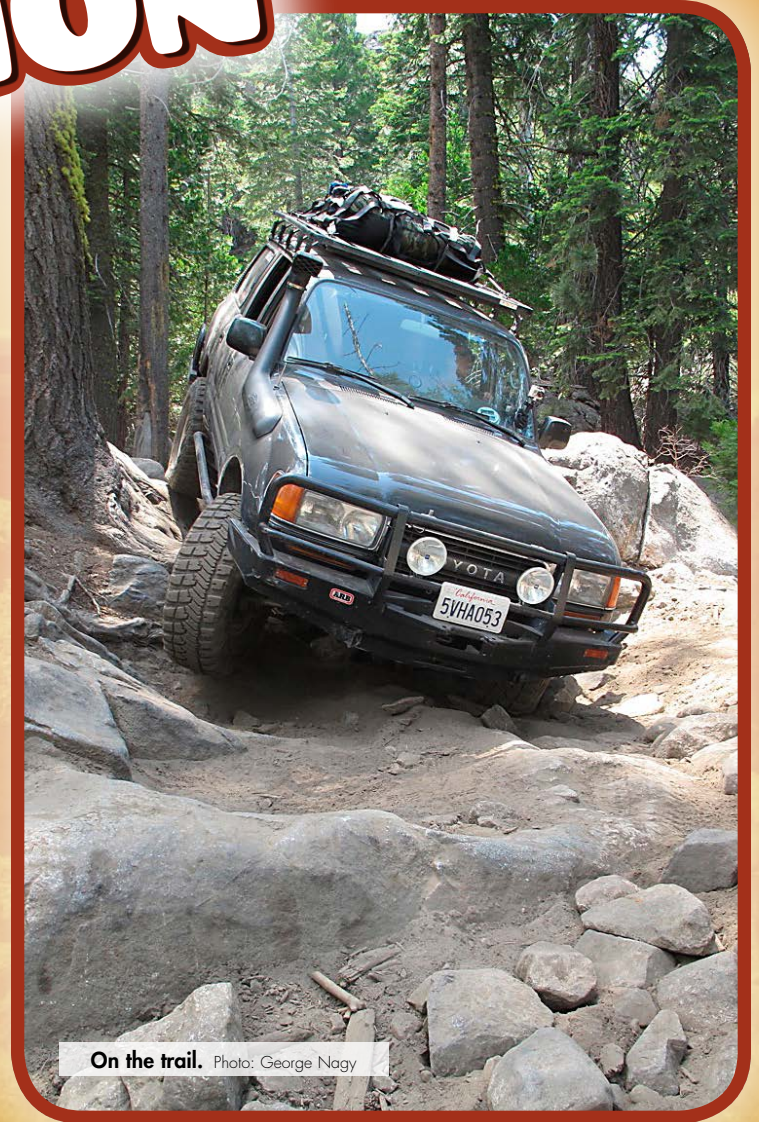
27TH ANNUAL RUBITHON

BY ERIC ACEE

Another Rubithon has come and gone, and I'm already missing friends whom I only get to visit with on the trail. The longer I have been involved with the off-road community, the more I realize just how special the people are, and the more I enjoy the time we get to spend together exploring everything nature has to offer.

This year we had only 148 vehicles registered, but there was no lack of visitors from far away. Our Farthest Traveled award winner, Peter Sadtler, visited us all the way from Germany and just barely beat out Dunkane from France. Robbie Antonson won the Iron Butt award after driving his FJ40 out from Boulder, Colorado, to help lead the Wagon Run. One of TLCA's newest BODREP's, Heather Royston—who, by the way, scored the engraved magnum of wine at the wine tasting event—joined us from Houston. Even with the lower registration numbers, we still will be able to send \$5,221 to TLCA this year!

Our camp committee, led by Robert Mutzig from Toys on the Rocks, did an incredible job getting the Springs in tip-top shape, from putting the canvas covers on the structures and setting up the bear cage to cutting and



On the trail. Photo: George Nagy

splitting all the wood for the kitchen and group campfire to prepping the Springs itself, mowing and trimming the entire area. I can't thank all of the camp committee people enough. You guys busted your rumps and did amazing work. I'm very grateful to you all!

This year we had eight organized runs led by our trail leaders: Dick Thompson, Mark Dunne, Rick Cortez, Gary "Mudrak" Kardum, Sean Comer, Pete Newell, Bob Brown, Jon Bachelder and followed up by Marlin Crawler on our sweeper run. One thing of note is that in future "non-banner" years, we will have fewer organized runs early in the week. That being said, we are in the early planning stages of adding a family run that will cater more to those traveling with younger children. We will also be adding a children's raffle right after dinner, hosted by Tony Twiddy.

Nearly half of our participants this year came in "renegade", meaning their goody bags and T-shirt orders had to be brought in by Jeff Michalak

Just an easy drive on the trail. Photo: Joel Moranton



and the Mog crew. Jeff and his crew went way above and beyond to get all the materials needed for the event safely into the Springs. But in the future, we need to try to cut back on the number of extra registration bags being brought in. We are looking into having someone stage at Loon Lake and Tahoma to pass out shirts and goody bags, so if this sounds like a position you would be interested in, please contact me at chairman@rubithon.com.

We had many mechanical failures this year, but luckily no serious injuries. With the use of ham radios and an awesome local wheeling-minded community, parts were found and brought to the trail, so no vehicles were left stranded. The winner of the Hard Luck award was Winston Hart, who managed to split his transfer case in half! Many thanks to Georg Esterer, Sean Comer, Desmond Caravella and a new Rubithon participant, Matt Hall, for making sure Winston was able to get back home safely. Matt heard the 2M call from his house and found a transfer case and hauled it all the way into the Springs. He so enjoyed the camaraderie, he and his wife will be attending next year as well.

Friday's festivities started with a committee get-together to thank all the volunteers for their hard work and to talk about improvements for future Rubithon events. At the meeting, I gave notice that the 30th Rubithon

would be my last as chairman. There was much discussion on how to improve succession planning for all aspects of Rubithon. Following the committee meeting, Rock Chef got underway. This year's Rock Chef

Ready to roll. Photo: Joel Moranton



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Saturday Night: Catered BBQ & Huge Raffle

IMPORTANT DETAILS

Registration Price - \$70
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\$30 for members of Hot Springs ORV Park
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Additional meal tickets for Sat. night - \$15.00 each

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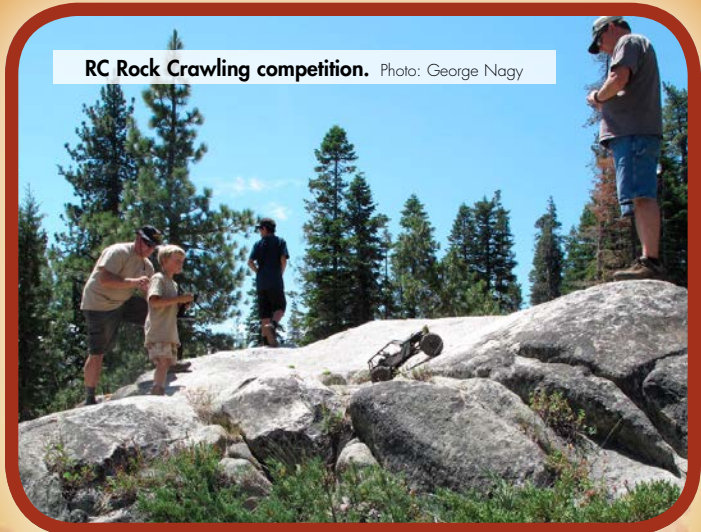
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Registration & more info. -
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All registered drivers must check in with the park and pay fees prior to tech inspection by CLC. Tech inspection will be held at the pavilion when you complete registration with CLC.

Refer to TLCA guidelines for the tech inspection requirements.



RC Rock Crawling competition. Photo: George Nagy



Marauder Bar open for business. Photo: Kathleen Thompson



Tony Twiddy is inducted into the TLCA Hall of Fame. Photo: Dave Thomas

was again put together by Alvaro Rodriguez. We had only two teams, but holy cow, the flavors presented by both teams were off the charts. In the end, team Broc Built, made up of Broc Johnson and Bryan Hall, prevailed. I'd like to thank Mark Hawley of Metal Tech 4x4 for again supporting our event and providing both this year's and last year's winners with custom Metal Tech 4x4 Rock Chef embroidered shirts. For those who are not in the know, the plan is to have a Champion of Champions battle at the 30th event, so you have only two more years to get qualified. I'm hearing custom jackets may be in the works for the winners! Right after the Rock Chef winners were announced, the Marauder Bar was open for business, and a great time was had by everyone.

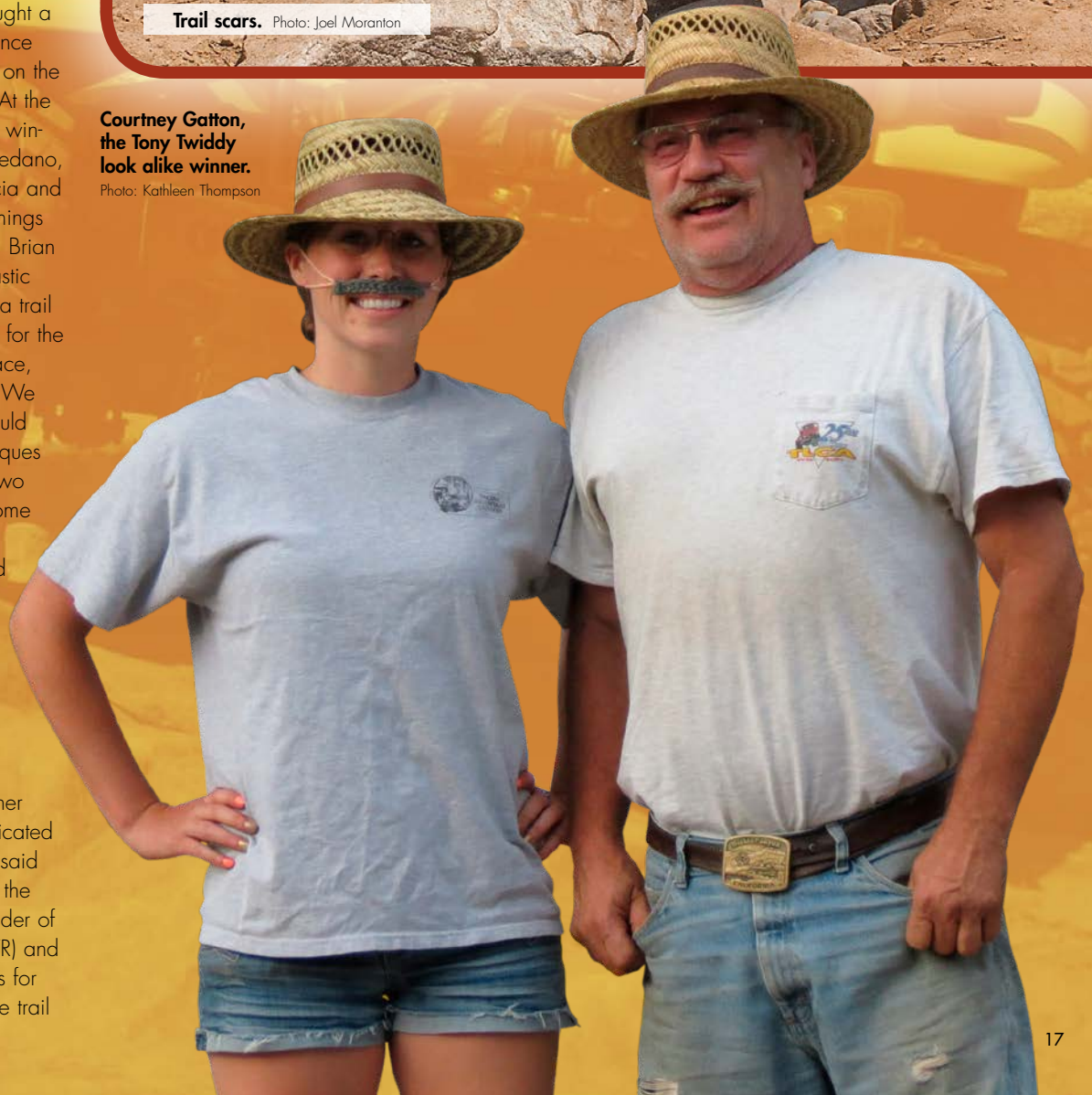


Trail scars. Photo: Joel Moranton

Saturday was another fun and event-filled day. Jeff Acquistapace taught a chain saw safety and maintenance class. Steve Morris gave a talk on the history of the Rubicon Springs. At the horseshoe tournament, both the winners, Sean Comer and Sal Agredano, and the runners-up, Eddie Garcia and Brian Kaiser, donated their winnings to the Rubicon Trail Foundation. Brian Flynn stepped in to host a fantastic RC competition that resembled a trail ride. There was a three-way tie for the Junior Class between Jacob Mace, Holly Wilson and Karl Valdez. We held a drawing to see who would take the plaque home, and plaques were later mailed to the other two winners. Alex Michalak took home the Novice Class, Scott Wilson took home the Scaler Class and Neil Wilkendorf took home the Pro Class. Jerry Schroeder from Toys on the Rocks put together a great wine tasting fundraiser, raising \$2,415 for the Rubicon Trail Foundation. Immediately following the wine tasting, Emily and Jennifer Stayner with Kevin Pekarek led the dedicated cook crew to what many have said was the best tri-tip ever had on the trail! John Briggs, the Tahoe leader of the Friends of the Rubicon (FOTR) and some of the volunteers joined us for dinner after working hard on the trail

Courtney Gatton, the Tony Twiddy look alike winner.

Photo: Kathleen Thompson



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A 60 on the trail. Photo: Joel Moranton

reinforcing work started last year by the contractors for Placer County and FOTR. Thank you all for your dedication to making our trail a better place!

After dinner, Jenelle Nilluka spoke to the crowd about the passing of her husband (and our close friend), Jeff. It was so great to be a part of sharing the event with Jenelle and her awesome young boys. I'd like to thank Matt Farley, Shannon Chard, Brian Mulhollen and January Littlejohn for helping to make this happen. Jeff will always be missed, and it was very special for all of us to see the love of the trail he fostered in his family. We're all very happy to have been able to share in that with them.

Also at the awards, Henry Brimmer, Gary Bjork and Tony Twiddy were inducted into the TLCA Hall of Fame. Karie Farr and I are working to add a tab to the TLCA website to list all Hall of Fame members with brief bios



The Marlin Crew Photo: Alvaro Rodriguez

on their contributions to both TLCA and the wheeling community. We will put the word out when it is completed. There are many that step up and help year in and year out, but I would like to especially thank this year's Go-To Award winner, Dion Mattei, for helping with not only his full workload but taking over for me while I fixed my broken rig. Your continued dedication to our trail and

TLCA—and to our friendship—mean more than you know.

Joel Moranton outdid himself as raffle chairman, once again presenting a phenomenal raffle. Joel, you're a rock star, and you never fail to impress me! I'd like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of the donors who make the raffle possible. It would be much

The Rubithon Wagon Run. Photo: Adele Mark



Texas built,
Rubithon tested.
Photo: Joel Moranton



appreciated, I'm sure, if you won something from the raffle if you'd drop a note to the company that provided it. Our hobby wouldn't be nearly as much fun without their products, and I'm sure they'd love to hear it. I was especially happy to see that a recently retired Navy physician won one of the grand prizes, an 11,500-pound Superwinch. Jay, I'm glad you won, but I'm still telling your wife that you didn't share any of the FJ40 shaped cookies with me!

On Sunday, the Tahoe Hi-Lo's once again provided the exit help on Cadillac and that was the quickest I've ever gotten out of the Springs from an event. Your help is greatly appreciated and we look forward to having you back again next year.

Be safe and have fun wheeling this year,

ERIC AGE

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— LED ZEPPELIN, "RAMBLE ON"



BY LANCE MCSWAIN

The CottonLand Cruiser
gang coming up the trail.
Photo: Amanda Downard

The Lexington, KY group drove all the way to the event in their 40's.
 Photo: Mark Reese



This year the Razorback Land Cruisers took their love of music and made it the theme for the 15th Annual Razorback Ramble, held the weekend of June 5-7 in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Holding the Ramble on the first weekend of June is a tradition, even though the weather can be hit-and-miss, alternating between rain or just being downright hot and sticky. This year was one of the hot and humid years, but we were just glad our monsoon season was over and that we didn't have to deal with a lot of rain or storms.

We were able to build on last year's momentum and ended up with about 45 rigs from six states with a nice mix of Toyota rigs. I saw Tacomas, 4Runners, 40s, 60s, 80s, both full-bodied and caged buggies. I even saw a few 100 series Land Cruisers. In addition to our Arkansas contingent, we had friends travel from



Lance McSwain coming up the Gorge.
 Photo: Andrew Nichols

Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Missouri and Kentucky. The Kentucky guys made the trek all the way from Lexington in their FJ40s with no tops. If we had an Iron Butt award, our new friends from Kentucky would have won for sure. Props to everyone who traveled long distances to join us. It was great to see everyone.

The trails at Hot Springs ORV Park were challenging this year, mostly because of the aforementioned monsoon season and the fact that there was still a lot of moisture on the ground. And while there was some carnage throughout the weekend, luckily it wasn't as bad as

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Overland



Jeff Murrah and Daryl Hornsby doing some afternoon wheelin'.
 Photo: Amanda Downard

it could have been. Any kind of carnage is bad, but everyone seemed to take it all in stride and Ramble On!

The highlight of the event—aside from seeing and visiting with old and new friends—was the live music. Razorback Land Cruisers wanted to liven up the Friday night festivities and booked Mike and Grady. These guys drove in from Fayetteville, Arkansas, and proceeded to blow the roof off the pavilion for about two and a half hours. And then they unplugged and played along with a couple of our very own for an extended jam session. I see a lot of live music and I have to say, these guys are amazing! They played cover songs of all genres that kept hands clapping and feet tapping. Mike was able to pull off some things on that Taylor Acoustic that I didn't know you could do without an electric guitar. I can't tell you how many people came up to us during and after the show to compliment us on a truly great night of music and a great time. You can find more information about Mike and Grady on Facebook under MGB. I think the Cottonland Cruisers liked them so much that they might make an appearance at the Southern Cruiser Crawl on October 8-11 right here in Hot Springs. Not much has to be said about that event, except that if it isn't on your calendar, put it there.

After a long day of wheeling on Saturday that included a lunch cooked up by our friends from Arkansas Crawlers, it was time for dinner and the raffle. Being a bunch of good ol' boys from Arkansas, we like fried catfish and all the fixins. Bubba's Catfish from Hot Springs served up around 90 meals and as usual, they did not disappoint. The raffle



Razorback Land Cruisers doing some afternoon wheelin'.
 Photo: Mark Reese

is always a staple at these events and I think there were a lot of happy people after it was over. I want to thank the sponsors and vendors that supported our raffle because without these companies, clubs and individuals, events like ours just wouldn't happen.

Thanks again to everyone involved in planning, running and participating in the 2015 Razorback Ramble. In my eyes, it will

go down as one of the best. Hope to see everyone next year, the weekend of June 2-5, 2016.

And remember: "Got no time for spreadin' roots, the time has come to be gone. And to' our health we drank a thousand times, it's time to ramble on."



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Chasing Giants

Tailing the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

By Dan Silbaugh

I was late. Because I had to work the previous day, I hadn't been able to get out as early as I had hoped. So I got up early and hit the road just before 5 a.m. to meet up with the group in Chama, New Mexico, on the first day of our run. I was driving our 1987 HJ61 (It's really a 1987 FJ60 that I had converted with a 12HT into an HJ61.) and made good time through the mountains of Colorado. I live west of Denver, and had a long drive to Chama and the start of our run. I was cruising along at 65 mph most of the way, and with the 12HT sipping fuel I wouldn't need to stop and would arrive in Chama a little after 10 a.m.



BJ42 and HJ61 getting steamed in Osier, Colorado. Photo: Dan Silbaugh





Locomotives staying warm overnight. Photo: Perry Loughridge

Getting to Chama by midmorning was crucial, because the real purpose of this run was chasing the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, which leaves Chama promptly at 10 a.m.

The Cumbres & Toltec is a 64-mile stretch of the former Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad that runs between Chama and Antonito, Colorado. The Rio Grande started in the 1870s as a narrow (3-foot) gauge railroad that originally planned to run south from Denver and eventually reach Mexico. But a series of legal battles forced it to alter its course. When rich silver deposits

were discovered in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado, the railroad veered west at Antonito, through the Toltec Gorge, over Cumbres Pass, through Chama into Durango, then north to Silverton, Colorado, and the silver mines there. In the late 19th century, the Rio Grande began converting to standard gauge to compete with railroads such as Union Pacific, Santa Fe, Great Northern and Northern Pacific. However, the narrow gauge line remained from Antonito all the way to Farmington, New Mexico, until the Rio Grande filed for abandonment in 1968. The railroad had wanted to abandon the line

for quite some time, so it was never modernized with diesel locomotives or modern rolling stock. The railroad ordered a fleet of 10 new locomotives from Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1925 and converted some older standard gauge locomotives to narrow gauge a few years later, but for decades it remained much as it was in the 1930s. When it was abandoned in 1968, it was one of the last operating steam railroads in the country.

The Rio Grande was operating the line between Durango and Silverton as a tourist railroad at the time of abandonment.

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Group shot along the tracks in Sublette, New Mexico. Photo: Perry Loughridge

Thankfully, a dedicated group of enthusiasts and locals moved to preserve the line between Chama and Antonito. Eventually, the states of Colorado and New Mexico jointly purchased the line to be operated as a tourist railroad and living museum of sorts, and in 1970 the Cumbres & Toltec operated its first tourist train using locomotive No. 483 and converted cattle cars to carry passengers.

The reasons to preserve this section of the line were varied, but chief among them is that this 64-mile section passes through incredibly varied scenery that is still almost entirely uninhabited.

That's exactly why the Rising Sun 4x4 Club of Colorado wanted to visit. We also invited our friends from New Mexico's High Desert Cruisers chapter to join us. Our plan was to follow the train on Thursday from Chama and then camp in the mountains near the line that night. Friday we would ride the train from end to end, and then chase it on the Antonito side on Saturday.

At about 9:15 a.m., I passed through Antonito, where the train was preparing to pull out of the rail yard. From there, I followed the Conejos River until the highway began the climb up La Manga Pass. The view near the top of the pass is absolutely breathtaking.

With the Conejos River valley below, you can see for miles. Eventually the highway drops into the Los Pinos valley, where the tracks rejoin the highway at a gigantic meadow with an impressively tight curve and the Los Pinos water tank. The road climbs again slightly to the 10,480 foot Cumbres Pass, where the railroad has a rather sizable yard. As I crested the pass I tried the 2-meter ham radio to see if I could reach the rest of the group, as I had a clear view of the Chama

River valley, and was only about 15 miles as the crow flies from Chama.

I received no response, but from this point on I knew there was no chance of missing the group or the train. As I got near the Lobato Trestle, I could see some wisps of coal smoke above the trees, so I again tried the ham radio, although I expected the rest of the group to be out of their vehicles taking pictures of the train. I was pleasantly



The Silbaughs old iron along the route. Photo: Perry Loughridge

HJ61 and Locomotive 484 on top of Cumbres Pass, Colorado. Photo: Dan Silbaugh



surprised when Perry Loughridge answered my call and told me that they had just departed Lobato and were heading up the road to find the next spot to photograph the train. I rounded the next curve and Perry's 1987 4Runner came into view, followed by Brian Wilson's 2014 Tacoma (accompanied by his dog Ruby), and Paul's FZJ80 (with his railfan father, Bob, as a passenger). I turned around and we charged up a hill to set up in a good spot for photographs. While we waited for the train, I was able to connect with my father, Barry, who was driving up from the Albuquerque, New Mexico, area in his Blue-Jay 42 (a 1979 FJ60 converted with a 3B, a turbo and a five-speed transmission) and learned he would be in Chama within an hour or two.

The train clawed its way up the steep grade, offering some fantastic sights and sounds, and as soon as it was past us, we got back in

the trucks to leapfrog ahead to the next photo spot. We repeated this routine all the way up Cumbres Pass, where the train stopped to take on water. We explored a little bit of the Cumbres Pass area and the historic structures there, and when the train was ready to depart we again photographed it and then set up at Tanglefoot Curve for more photos. Once the train was past, we traveled ahead to the Los Pinos water tank to have lunch and set up for photos when the train caught up to us. This would be the last place to view the train until its afternoon return unless we quickly drove on the trails to take us into the heart of the mountains near Osier, Colorado.

While we were eating, Ruby somehow found an old piece of barbed wire fence to get caught up in, and while struggling to get free cut her leg pretty badly. Brian grabbed her, put pressure on the wound and we then got out Perry's beautiful new first aid kit (a shout-

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out to Outer Limit Supply for sure) to bandage the cut. The cut was very deep, and we decided that she needed to get to a veterinarian to have the wound stitched up. The railroad had given me the phone number of a vet in Chama, as they had considered the need to accommodate pets while their owners ride the train, so with Ruby settled down to sleep in the back seat of his Tacoma, Brian headed back down the road.

We planned to go scout for campsites while he was gone, and then reconnect in a few hours once he was back up in the hills with us. So Perry, Paul, Bob and I quickly drove over La Manga Pass and east toward Antonito to get to a forest road that I knew would take us to some likely campsites. Once back in the Conejos River valley we found a spot that had phone service, so I gave Brian's phone number to my father so that they could connect. And I was able to talk to Brian, who informed me that the vet wasn't in that day. He was riding the train! So Brian and Ruby headed to the next town down the highway, Pagosa Springs, Colorado. Because Brian and Ruby were going to Pagosa Springs, my father decided to come find us.

Meanwhile, the four of us reached the ridge that the forest road roughly followed, and we spotted many promising campsites with plenty of room for a few trucks, scenic views and shelter from the wind. We also realized that we had made better time than expected, and that the trains were probably still at Osier (their lunch stop), so we decided to just head there instead.

As we turned into the gigantic meadow that Osier is situated in, the road began a series of switchbacks down to the station. Eventually we caught sight of a train still in the station, so we knew that our timing had been great. We pulled into Osier, got ready to photograph the trains and got out our lunches.

The trains whistled to get the passengers aboard, so we took our positions, snapped photos as the trains pulled out of the station (one headed to Chama, the other to Antonito) and then went back to decide on a campsite and enjoy a relaxing evening while we waited for Barry and Brian. We took our time evaluating and selecting a campsite. As we were deciding on one, we heard a very unexpected sound: a train whistle! And it

was loud. Paul and Bob walked for a couple minutes or so and saw the train at Sublette, New Mexico, below us. Turns out we had picked a campsite without realizing just how close it was to the historic section house at Sublette.

With that, we decided that we should again chase the train for a bit for photos. So we headed about a half-mile down the road, took a fork that went off toward the tracks and set up for more photos. At this spot near the tracks there was a huge pile of ballast for the railroad. And precariously leaning off the side of the pile was a front-end loader that once had been atop the ballast. After the train went past we marveled at what it might take to right the loader, and then Perry, Paul and Bob headed back to set up camp, while I drove out to connect with my father and check on Brian's progress.

My father could hear us on the 2-meter rig very clearly, and he and I connected in Antonito. I was able to talk to Brian on the phone, who was just about to leave Chama with a very tired but stitched-up Ruby sleeping in the back of the truck. I gave him directions to our campsite.

A BJ42 and HJ61 soaking in the morning sun. Photo: Dan Silbaugh



Dad and I probably were quite the sight—two diesel Cruisers racing along mountain roads toward our campsite. As soon as he heard us approaching, Perry got out his camera to capture us coming into camp. We then heard the sound of a horn on the railroad, and Perry, my Dad and I decided to go see what the commotion was. Coming around a bend we saw diesel locomotive No. 19 pushing a flat car with an excavator on it. We figured they were going to rescue the front-end loader we had seen stuck on the ballast pile, so naturally we decided to go watch the railroad workers get it unstuck. After a couple of minutes, a backhoe also arrived, and using the excavator and backhoe they used a combination of digging out the high side, and pulling the loader back onto the pile to get it righted. I remarked, “I’ve been stuck, but I’ve never been two tractors and seven guys stuck!”

As the railroad crew headed home, Brian pulled into camp right as Paul got the campfire going. We checked on a very tired Ruby, who decided to sleep instead of exploring the meadow around the campsite.

The next morning we piled into the Blue-Jay 42 and the HJ61 and headed to the Antonito station. There we boarded a bus that took us to Chama. We then boarded

the train and rode it from Chama all the way back to our Cruisers in Antonito.

For those who haven’t ridden an old steam train—especially on a mountainous narrow-gauge line—it’s very hard to describe the sights, smells and sounds. It’s an experience that most people of my generation haven’t had, and one that really drives home the sheer amount of work done by generations past building the infrastructure that shaped the United States. The world slowly passes as the train crawls along up Cumbres Pass, obviously working very, very hard to pull the train up the 4 percent grade. Coal smoke has a distinct smell, and the steam mixes with it to provide a genuinely different smell from anything else.

Because the weather was pretty nice, we spent most of the ride in the open gondola car taking in the scenery, and listening to the docent give us facts and stories about the railroad. At about 12:30 p.m. the two trains met at Osier, where the Cumbres & Toltec has built a dining hall with a cafeteria that serves a very tasty lunch. Having a hot meal in the middle of the mountains, far from any highway is one of life’s most excellent pleasures. Some of us had meatloaf, some had turkey, and some had soup and salad. All of us had dessert.

We reboarded the train, and enjoyed the leisurely trip down to Antonito, noting the trails that generally followed the railroad in the area. The docent told us that you needed “really good trucks” to drive those roads, although I’m not sure he realized that our Toyotas are all built up at least a little with locking differentials, winches and armor—and his definition of a rough trail and ours may be quite different.

Once the train dropped us off in Antonito, we headed back up to our campsite, where we were treated to a little cold rain as we built the campfire. But the rain wasn’t too heavy and quickly cleared. We sat around the campfire eating, drinking and talking, while Ruby patrolled the campground to protect us from squirrels, rabbits and small birds until the sun went down, when Perry and I decided to take Blue-Jay 42 down to Sublette for some nighttime photos. We experimented with exposure time, light painting and truck lights to get the photo just right, as a little bit of snow began to fall. The snow didn’t last long, and after a very good night’s rest we awoke to what we had planned to be a very leisurely morning.

Our plan for Saturday was to drive east and chase the train from Antonito. However the train doesn’t leave Antonito until 10 a.m.,

Driving eastbound with Blanca and Big Horn in the distance. Photo: Dan Silbaugh



so we knew we had some time to pack up camp, have breakfast and then mosey toward the train tracks farther east. Once packed up and ready to go, we followed scenic two-tracks and trails trying to find a road that overlooked a particular section of track. After airing down, we cruised along two-tracks through beautiful meadows, and once we got to an overlook, I spotted smoke from the train. We didn't want to risk missing a group shot at Big Horn Wye, so we headed back there, lined our trucks up near the tracks and waited for the train. As soon as we had the picture we wanted, and the train had passed, we hopped into the trucks to chase the train. And this time, I mean chase the train. The train was making great speed up the light grade westbound, so we would race along the tracks, passing the train as tourists in the open cars took photos of us, and the trainmen watched us get ahead to the next spot to get photos. The trainmen clearly enjoyed the spectacle of our Toyotas running along the trails, and it seemed like they poured on extra coal and made the train extra photogenic for us as we met them at each location. We had to hurry to get into Sublette before the train, and in fact only three of us did—the other two Cruisers were stuck on the other side of the tracks and didn't get to be in the same photo with the trucks at the section house as the train pulled in.

As the train took on water at Sublette, we chatted with the crew and told them we'd see them again at Osier for lunch. Once the train departed the section house at Sublette, we lined all of the trucks up for a group photo before Paul and Bob had to head back to Denver. Perry, Brian, Barry, Ruby and I decided to take a short walk along the tracks to see one of the remaining powder magazines that had been built during the railroad's construction, which provided us a little exercise and a neat peek into the construction era of the railroad.

Once that was complete, the four of us headed towards Osier where I planned to take pictures of the Blue-Jay 42 especially, as years earlier I had borrowed Dad's sky blue 40 and took photos (one of which was published in *Toyota Trails*) of the 40 with the train at Osier for lunch. We were able to beat the Antonito train by a healthy margin, which gave us ample time to prepare for the train's arrival.

As we ate lunch and snapped more photos of the train and trucks, it began to rain and looked like it would continue for quite some time, so Perry and Brian headed back early to get a good start down the hill with Brian's trailer. It was very obvious that those roads can get very, very slippery when they get a

lot of rain, so we thought it prudent to get a little head start with the trailer. So my father and I photographed the HJ61 and Blue-Jay 42 as the train departed in the rain and snow, which always makes for spectacular displays of steam and smoke.

We rejoined Perry and Brian as they pulled out of the campsite and the four of us headed down the hill back towards the highway. In Antonito, my father headed south toward home in New Mexico, and the rest of us headed north toward home in Colorado. It was a great couple days of Cruisers, trains and friends. We discussed things we will do differently next year, because one thing is certain: We will be doing this again.

The Cumbres & Toltec is a fascinating operation in a wonderfully scenic area, the trails are all very friendly for stock trucks and there is plenty to do for families. I really can't think of a much better introduction to wheeling for a new Cruiser owner, because it's well beyond what most drivers would try in a sedan, it gets to very remote areas and there's no better area for photography of Cruisers, trains and scenery that I know of. High deserts, subalpine meadows, spruce forest, ponderosa forest—it's all very close.

T



TRAIL NEWBIES

Megan & Mike Clouse

TLCA Member 23,550

The dream of owning a Land Cruiser has been in my heart for over a decade, but I cannot recall how the seed was originally planted. It's just been sitting there for years... waiting for the right time. I can tell you that when I want something, I get very specific in my vision, so when the time finally came to start searching, and with my husband totally on board with the dream, I narrowed it down to a few key qualifications: It had to be white and it had to have a manual transmission. It also must have been well cared for and loved before.

I was fortunate enough to have a few things in my corner. Gary Kardum, the Land Cruiser expert and owner of Mudrak Custom Cruisers is based here in my town of Sonoma, California. I gave Gary a call and he added my wishlist onto his watchlist. Secondly, white FJ60's are seen on the road all the time here in California so it was just a matter of finding the perfect match.

So the Craigslist stalking began. It took about 2 months of ad scrolling until one day, a new listing appeared and my heart skipped a beat! A well cared for, 1984 FJ60, white, 4 speed, with a near perfect original interior was reluctantly being sold by its 2nd owner. A move and job changes required him to let go of his prized truck and our opportunity finally arrived!

The selling process was more of an interview process, so he could ascertain if I was a worthy owner of his Cruiser. He deemed me worthy and I was happily accepted into the Land Cruiser world! With a nod to the kind man who had to say goodbye, we decided to name her Ponce, the name of the seller. Yea, kind of an odd combination for a name but hey, it's California.

We don't have any big trips planned and the thought of off-roading seems a bit daunting. We're just a regular couple that loves to hop in, crank the windows down, bee-bop around town, load friends into the back seat and have evening sunset picnics off the tailgate.

I'm so grateful for this dream of mine to come true and I'm even more excited to be welcomed and embraced into the TLCA club!

Megan & Mike Clouse
Sonoma, Calif.





VELEBIT MOUNTAINS

Discovering the Secrets of a Croatian Overland Gem



By Damjan Vrenčur

A classic mistake. For all practical purposes, the dirt road that stretches before me and vanishes into the thick pine tree forest doesn't exist at all. I stop my Land Cruiser because before me, there shines a clear road sign, communicating the prohibition of driving and camping in the area I intended to visit. Not a pleasant surprise at all, especially because to reach this point it cost me a ferry ticket and more important, half a day, a significant part of my extended weekend overland escape.



Manually dug tunnels around Ravni Dabar, Central Velebit.



Spectacular views open all around while crossing the Southern Velebit via the Sv. Rok pass.

It looked just perfect on paper, or more accurately, on the computer screen back home when I was planning this trip using Google Earth satellite imagery. A green, uninhabited peninsula with recognizable tracks that lead to remote bays with no traces of tourist infrastructure. In fact, there were almost no traces of infrastructure at all. Such a paradise of

wilderness on an island in the Adriatic Sea. Nowadays though, it's packed with quickly built, soulless houses that are rented to weekly passing visitors during the summer months.

I admit, a tempting thought passed my mind as the devil on my shoulder whispered in my ear: "The tourist season has not begun,

so there are most probably no rangers around." I could afford to break a rule or two without anybody noticing it. But fortunately, the temptation washed away as quickly as my mind had been flooded by it. No need to push my luck. After all, I'm far from out of options. Behind me and just across the sea strait that separates the island of Rab from the mainland, a mighty mountain ridge beckons through the haze of the early afternoon: Velebit. And so it happens that the evening found me boarding the last ferry, heading back to where I came from, weighing the options and rethinking my short overland adventure.

A traveller has to contribute his part to the maintenance of the lane in order to reach the abandoned JNA base at Panos.



The Mountains of Velebit and the area that surrounds them have always been my primary overland playground. The choice was an obvious one. This spectacular mountain range divides central Croatia from its Dalmatian coast, and features picturesque landscapes with limestone cliffs that penetrate deep beech and spruce forests. It's an area marked by a labyrinth of gravel roads and paths, some of them reasonably



Limestone cliffs and mountain hut in Ravni Dabar valley, Central Velebit.

maintained and regularly used as shortcuts by locals. Others are slowly deteriorating thanks to Mother Nature. It's mainly the latter that I am constantly in search of, and for almost 15 years I have never tired of discovering them.

It started in 2001, when as a young and enthusiastic correspondent for the Slovenian outdoor magazine *Grif*, I was sent to write an article about the possibility of mountain biking tours in the area. I fell in love with the landscape and each year thereafter made at least two or three weekend trips to the area. I soon switched from mountain biking to various four-wheel drive vehicles as my primary means of travel. I finally settled on a sturdy 80 series Land Cruiser that drove me to the heart of Velebit and back so many times that I stopped counting.

Now, a new road. Not new in a sense of being freshly built, but in the sense that I had spotted it today for the first time, although I must have passed this junction at least 10 times. It's probably because this year's spring is some weeks late, the trees are not fully leafed out and what in the past seemed to be nothing more than a random space between

bushes is presenting itself as the start of a perfectly usable track. It's a bit tight for my wheeled beastly but passable. It seems this is an old service road for a cableway system that was used until the late '70's for transporting logs from the Veliki Alan pass to the port of Jablanac. I carefully negotiate the bumpy track for a mile or two until suddenly, the bushes open and give way to an inviting glade. What a view! More than 3,000 feet below, the stony slopes of Northern Velebit are touch-

ing the calm Adriatic sea, which in fading light reflects the deepest hues of blue. Out on the islands, the city lights are beginning to come on. Total calmness all around. Apart from leaves rustling in a light breeze, there is no other sound. It's natural that I stop here and set up my camp for tonight. I level the vehicle by putting some stones under the wheels and erect the Maggiolina roof tent. A cup of Pu-erh tea fits nicely with watching the night slowly but steadily wrest power from the day.

Researching mountain bike tracks for my first article on the area back in 2001.





Ascending towards Veli Alan pass while contemplating the cloud formations. Bad weather incoming, the night will be stormy and wet.

I slept through most of the morning, waking a little before 10:30 a.m. This is unusual, because normally on my overland journeys I'm up before the first rays of sun touch the surrounding landscape. I vaguely remember waking earlier and hearing the light tapping of raindrops touching the roof of the tent, but then I fell back to sleep, hoping that the wet weather would pass. It hadn't. Finally, there's no other choice but to climb out of the bed, get ready for the day and fix a quick breakfast under the small shelter the lift-up rear door provides. Fortunately, the weather is more damp than rainy. The glade I chose for the night now happens to be just under the base of a thick cloud that covers the ridge some 400 feet above. Still no wind worth

mentioning, but my experience with the local weather tells me there is a real possibility that a strong bura wind will soon begin to blow. I pack and start this day's leg, driving to the top of Veli Alan pass and continuing in the direction of Štirovača. I literally drive through the clouds. The fog has completely transformed the landscape. I know this road almost by heart. I've seen these beautiful views over the mountain valleys dotted with abandoned shepherd huts so many times that they have ceased to impress me. But because of the mist, everything looks different today. The forest is enchanted, the road being molded out of the gray dampness, cast just for me. Behind me, it's dissolving. The fog creeps over the landscape, obscur-

ing parts of it and makes giant, gnarled trunks of old beech trees look like mean witches murmuring spells with the intention to detain me in their midst forever. I slow down what already is a leisurely drive and quietly enjoy the play of associations, induced by the mystical scenery.

By the time I reach Štirovača, the magic loosens its grip. The road here was freshly tarred a few years ago and this, together with the receding fog reveals ugly weekend houses, effectively canceling any romantic spells. I follow the new road for a few miles, then find a split and continue on a track that leads to one of the most spectacular areas of Velebit that is accessible with a vehicle:



Dabarski Kukovi. Limestone cliffs penetrate the landscape, forming more or less uniformly shaped structures that resemble giant loaves of bread, half buried in the land. The unpaved road that winds through the area is a marvel in itself, both from aesthetic and technical points of view. It negotiates the vertical terrain of Dalmatian Karst without changing its altitude much, passing deep sinkholes and other impressive surface features, relying heavily on retaining walls, short bridges and tunnels cut through solid limestone hills. Nothing extreme from the viewpoint of today's road-building technology, but this is an old road that was built with manual labor, each stone shaped to fit in its space, the tunnels hewn into living rock. The skill of the constructors is nothing less than awe-inspiring.

In a valley under one group of picturesque limestone cliffs, there is a lonely mountain hut. The original plan of spending the night here has to be changed because of the weather. I can descend to the Adriatic coast or turn to the east and find shelter for the night some-

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Ravni Dabar valley, Central Velebit.



Although impressively compactly built, old roads are slowly but steadily losing their battle with the tooth of time, mainly due to the lack of use and maintenance.



Remnants of a fortress that guarded access to the sea in Dark Ages. Near Starigrad.

where in the savanna-like Lika plateau. Two diametrically opposite choices, both in terms of the compass and the type of landscape. I decide in favor of the seaside. It looks like the bura wind didn't gain its usual power, so there exists a real chance that I can spend a relatively calm night on a beach and tomorrow continue with my miniexpedition on the southern part of Velebit. I reach the town of Karlobag and continue driving south, finding a perfect place just few meters from the sea line, not far from the Starigrad village.

The morning brings promises of better weather. After visiting the center of the village, buying some freshly baked bread and topping the fuel tank, I hit the road again. For starters, I make a brief stop above the canyon of the Zrmanja River. In the early 1960s, the producers of the 1963 film "Winnetou" chose this picturesque landscape as the place to shoot most outdoor scenes. The grand meandering river with its vivid turquoise color that cut deep into the stony, semidesert terrain was remembered by all who saw the film. Seeing the scenery with one's own eyes is even more breathtaking.

I continue over the ancient Sveti Rok pass, another fine example of old-school road construction that seems to have resisted the ravages of time better than most similar modern-era equivalents. The goal for today is to reach Panos, an abandoned Yugoslav National Army base that stands on a small plateau on the top ridge somewhere in South Velebit. An old supply road connects the base from the northern side of the mountain, and I've heard it is passable with a four-wheel drive vehicle. Last year I tried to find this spot, but I got lost in the labyrinth of forest roads while my GPS was telling me I was only few miles from my destination. In normal circumstances, I would not hesitate to grab my backpack and walk such a short distance cross-country. But in these forests, there are remnants of the last Balkan War (1991-1995) in the form of land mines, so there was no option but to find the right track.

Today, I'm better prepared, having done my homework, gotten some crucial coordinates and advice from other adventurers, meticulously researched Google Earth imagery and even made some prints of the areas that looked suspiciously different from their amorphous neighborhood, areas that I suspected could hide a road junction or even the base itself.



At a viewpoint above the Zrmanja river canyon.

Armed with this fresh information, I start this year's attempt. The lane that climbs uphill is in bad condition. The snow has more or less melted and that runoff, combined with wet weather over the past few weeks, has soaked the land. Big logging trucks have turned the road into a muddy, slippery track, full of potholes that no regular vehicle could use. Even driving a Toyota, I have to think from time to time how to attack some slopes. But as a counterweight to technical challenges, the navigation proves as straightforward as it could possibly be. I instantly spot the split that I happened to overlook the last time and voila, I find myself crossing an open gate to an area protected with a barbed wire fence. After the next turn, I halt at a terrace in front of an abandoned house that apparently once served as a headquarters of the base. The view is one of the most beautiful I've ever seen. The Croatian Adriatic Sea with its plethora of islands is spread out before me, almost 5,000 feet below. You can read the land below almost as on the

map. I take a peek at the abandoned and devastated headquarters house. A surprise follows: The house is a decoy. The main facility, the real bunker, is dug into the hill that protects the back of the building. I spend two hours researching the rooms, passages and emergency exits and finally climb out through a vertical tunnel that leads directly to an observation point at the very top of the hill. I'm fascinated by the sophisticated and well thought-out architecture of this base. To walk through a type of facility that usually is only seen in James Bond movies is a special kind of experience.

It's evening, the last one on this short trip. Tomorrow morning, I'll leave Velebit and drive towards my home in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Three to four hours on average, depending on which roads I choose and the traffic condition. It's been a nice trip, a good opening to this year's overlanding season. Sitting at the Panos terrace, watching the day slowly turning toward twilight, I reflect

on the path I drove during this trip. At least 80 percent of the lanes I've driven I know very well, almost by heart. Yet I was not bored for even a moment, instead I experienced the same pleasure as if it was my first time driving here.

My mind starts wandering and I find myself half-consciously speculating about the possible etymological roots of the name Velebit. I smile. Split as Vele-Bit, it could translate as something like "The Great Essence." For me, this mountain range surely means a lot. It's where my travels started. It's where I discovered the passion for overlanding, for travel journalism, for discovering and rediscovering not just unique, hidden gems of places, but more than anything else, myself. It's where I keep returning, year after year and strangely, never ever get bored.

Velebit. The Great Essence it is.



TRUCK TECH

with Roger Brown

If you are searching for, building, modifying, or maintaining a Toyota 4WD mini-truck (Pickup, Hilux, 4Runner, Surf or Tacoma), send your Truck Tech questions to Roger Brown at TruckEditor@tjca.org or r.c.brown@ieee.org. I'll try to answer your questions with authority!

Blower Switch Issues

Hello Roger,

I really appreciate the thorough write-ups on your website!

I'm having an issue with my HVAC blower in my 1994 Toyota pickup.

My symptom is that my third speed is consistently slower than my second speed. Mine is a four-speed switch.

I've checked the relay, fuses, fan and switch. I found the switch has slight melting and an indication of burning on one of the contacts. So, I replaced the switch.

This new switch worked for a few days then likely succumbed to the same melt/short issue. I haven't opened the new one up to look, because I need my vehicle for work.

Have you ever seen this? Can you point me in the right direction on troubleshooting this one? I have limited experience with automobile wiring, but I'd like to get this thing squared away while I have the dash apart as my heater core is being replaced.

Any help or advice would be greatly appreciated!

Andrew Boheler

Hi Andrew,

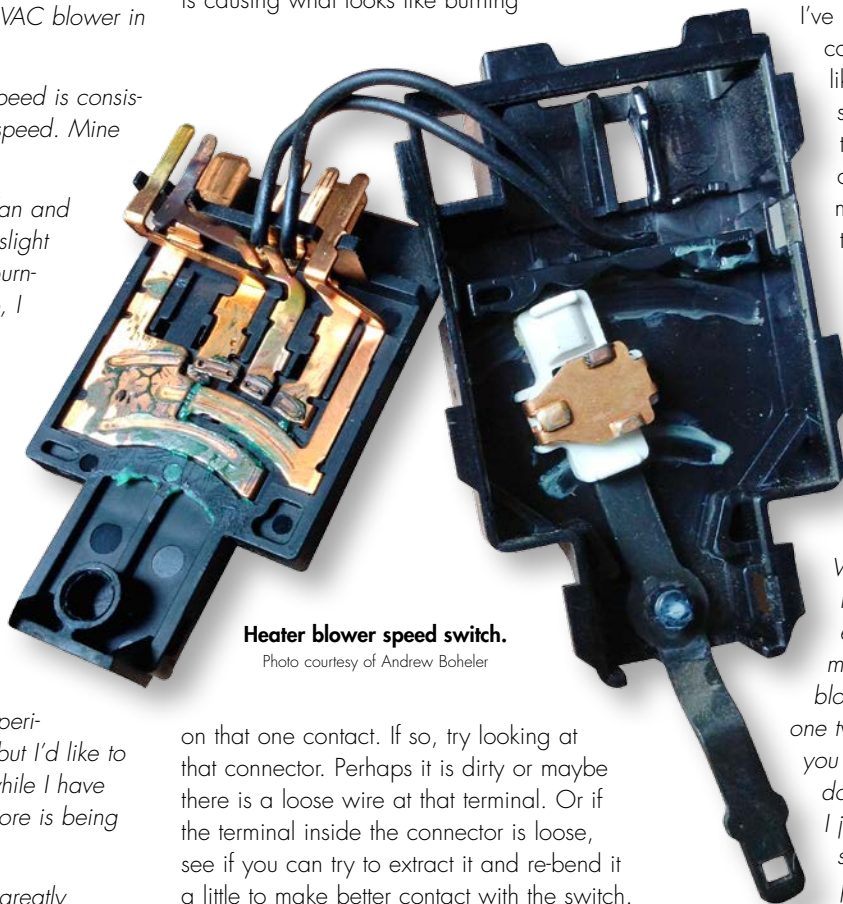
You might want to check the blower motor resistor, if you've not already done so:

<http://www.4crawler.com/4x4/CheapTricks/Blower.shtml#BlowerResistor>

It is in line with the motor to slow its speed. Maybe there is a short there. It should have

some coils of wire with a ceramic coating and the terminals should read some non-zero resistances between each one.

Otherwise, looking closer at your photo, it may be that there is a bad terminal in the dash connector that the switch plugs into that is causing what looks like burning



Heater blower speed switch.

Photo courtesy of Andrew Boheler

on that one contact. If so, try looking at that connector. Perhaps it is dirty or maybe there is a loose wire at that terminal. Or if the terminal inside the connector is loose, see if you can try to extract it and re-bend it a little to make better contact with the switch.

I think the way that switch works is that middle contact strip is what turns on the fan relay that supplies power to the fan. Then the upper row of contacts are what sets the fan speed, via the blower motor resistor. The first position runs the power from the relay through the entire resistor. Then each successive contact bypasses one segment of that resistor, thereby decreasing the overall resistance, causing the fan motor to spin faster. The final position bypasses the resistor altogether giving you full blower motor speed.

Since it appears the burned terminal on the switch is for that third speed, increased resistance due to a loose contact in the dash connector may be giving you the slower fan speed you observe. In addition, the resistive heating in the contact is causing the burning you see on the terminal itself.

I've had problems with other connectors in my 4Runner like that, and usually it is a simple matter to reshape the damaged contact in the connector so that it makes a more solid connection to the terminal.

Hope that helps.

Roger

More blower woes

Hello Roger,

While on your website I noticed that you had brushes for the heater blower motor. I have a four-speed blower and it works great on one two and three, but when you go to high it slows back down to the speed of low. I just put a new resistor in so I don't think that's my problem. Would you have any idea which direction I should go to solve this?

Thanks,

Monty

Hi Monty,

It may indeed be the brushes inside the motor. The best option there is to pull the fan and motor out. Open up the motor and have a look at the brushes. I detail the process on my web page:

<http://www.4crawler.com/4x4/CheapTricks/Blower.shtml#MotorRepair>

But typically the blower motor is located under the passenger side dash just next to where the ECU mounts under the A-pillar. It's usually held in place with three screws, and you may need to use a variety of extensions and sockets to get them all out. Separate the blower and motor and inspect both. This is a good time to clean out the squirrel cage of the blower. If the motor is amenable to disassembly, it'll be held together with a couple of long screws. If that is not the case, then a new motor may be the only option.

That will tell you two things: First is that you can actually disassemble the blower motor because some Toyota trucks have motors that are not able to be opened. And second, you'll be able to see if indeed the brushes are worn out. When new, they are approximately 1/2 inch or 13mm long. When worn, they are just a fraction of that length and are just barely able to be held by the brush holders.

The other thing to check is the voltage at the motor with the different speeds. It should gradually increase in voltage from slowest to highest speed. If you find the top speed voltage is lower than the next slower speed, it might be a burned contact in the switch or a bad wire or connection someplace. In high speed, the switch is essentially bypassing the resistor pack and sending battery voltage directly to the blower:

<http://www.4crawler.com/4x4/CheapTricks/Blower.shtml#BlowerResistor>

Roger

Hot starting problem

Hello Roger;

My 1990 4Runner sometimes won't start when the engine is hot. I replaced the starter and still have the problem. The dealer wants \$200-plus just to diagnose the issue.

Do you have any suggestions I might try?

Richard G.

Hi Richard,

I'm assuming your new starter is indeed new and not just a poor quality rebuilt unit, so we can hopefully rule that out as the problem.

If that's the case, the problem may be from the factory wiring in the starter circuit. Up until 1985, Toyota had the starter solenoid operate directly off the ignition switch. Then in 1986, they added a neutral start switch on automatics and a clutch cancel switch on manual transmissions to prevent inadvertently starting the vehicle in gear.

These add-on circuits made use of various switches for interlocks and then a relay to integrate the logic and send power to the starter solenoid. However, it seems Toyota wanted to play it extra safe and instead of having that relay directly operate the starter solenoid, they instead also kept the original circuit of running the starter solenoid current through the ignition switch as well as the relay contacts. Realize that the starter solenoid is like a big relay, it switches hundreds of amps of current from the battery to power the starter motor

while it cranks the engine over. But that solenoid itself pulls 10 to 20 amps of current. Did I mention it's a big relay?

Over the years, all those wires, connectors and switch contacts between the battery and the starter solenoid degrade, and eventually there is enough voltage drop to cause the solenoid to not operate correctly. And when the motor and starter are hot, the solenoid resistance increases and with that, the current through the solenoid is even less. It's that current that creates the magnetic field that operates the plunger in the solenoid. Less current equals less force, and if that is less than the spring force pushing back on the plunger, it won't move and all you hear are the relays clicking under the dash.

Two options to remedy this problem are listed on my web page:

<http://www.4crawler.com/4x4/CheapTricks/Starter.shtml#OtherOptions>

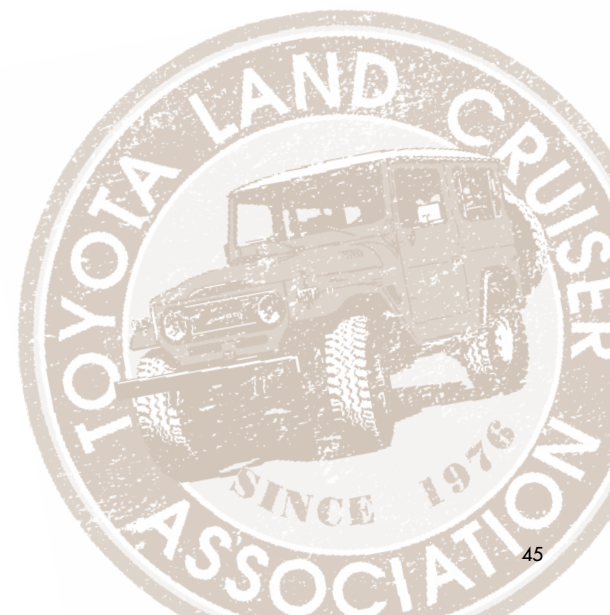
One option is to rewire the starter relay so that it's powered off the battery directly without going through the ignition switch first. The ignition switch still turns the relay on and off, but the power the relay sends to the solenoid bypasses the ignition switch. This is a simple fix in theory but hard to do as you need to locate and identify the components and wires, and the starter relay is often buried under other engine components.

The second option is to install a separate starter relay. I did this in my truck and I used the Painless Wiring hot shot starter relay kit. It was very easy to install as all you need to do is find the solenoid control wire at the starter as well as a source of 12 volts for the relay power. I chose this option instead of spending a lot of time trying to diagnose where the voltage drop was occurring in my truck's wiring. With this relay kit, the factory wiring is used to turn the hot shot relay on and off, a load of maybe 0.1 amps. Then, the added relay switches the high current on and off to the starter solenoid.

There's nothing magic about the Painless relay kit. If you're handy with electrical wiring, you could make the same thing with a spare 30 amp headlight relay, a socket and some wire. I liked the Painless kit as it was all prewired including a fuse, color-coded wires, and I picked up the version with a built-in bump start button. That is handy for working on the engine, such as setting timing. No need to have someone in the cab to turn the key over, just reach over and hit the little button next to the relay.

Roger

LT



TRAIL RIGS

TLCA Member #1431
Ige Gustavson's
1962 FJ40

“Annie”



It started out when someone posted on a forum that she needed help getting her Land Cruiser running and a friend and I went over with jumper cables, some gas and hand tools.

As soon as she opened her garage door, I was in lust. As luck would have it, she wasn't in a position to fix up Annie and every attempt by her to get rid of this classic failed until I could muster up enough in my bank account. A four-month grind of working every evening and weekend soon had my dear Annie on the road.

Starter, generator, distributor and coil still have the green coloring on them showing original from the factory, but the original 1961 plug wires have been relegated to a box while new OE plug wires replaced them. All OE parts were used when possible. The engine was opened up for inspection, the brake cylinders all rebuilt and the steering gone through. All filters and fluids were replaced. The fuel tank was sent out to be boiled and the radiator resealed.

Seats and tailgate chain covers were done in more of a maroon color by a friend for a bit of a different look. I have since gotten the canvas for an FJ25 style soft top and am working



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E-mail to: editor@tlca.org

on the bows. I also have much of the stuff for doors if I can ever find someone to fabricate them.

Left on the list is welding up the holes in the firewall from an aftermarket heater, replacing the rear sill with one I picked up from AwlTEQ fixing the rust on the inner fenders, changing the factory fiber cam gear to a steel gear and fixing the aftermarket cigarette lighter so I can use my dash fan.

Other than that, she's just a fun stock rig to play in and wheel.



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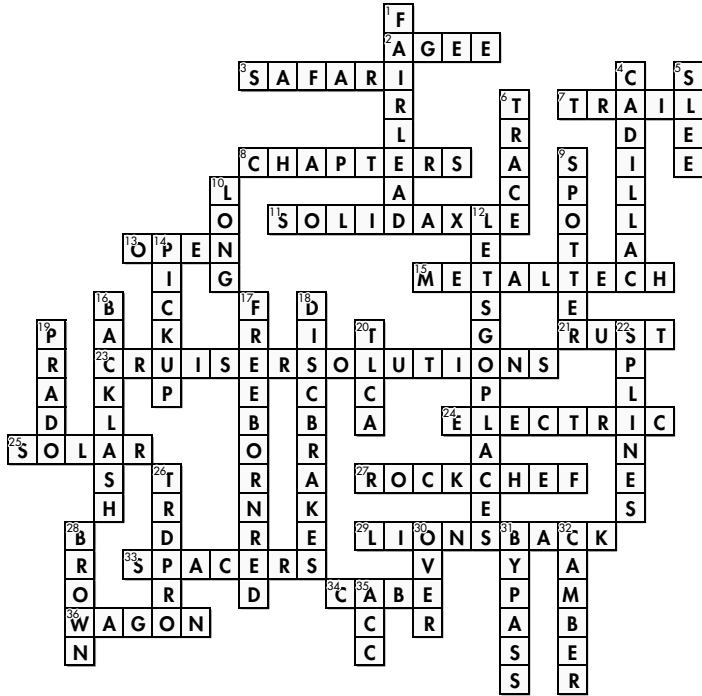
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mikaeli1@hotmail.com

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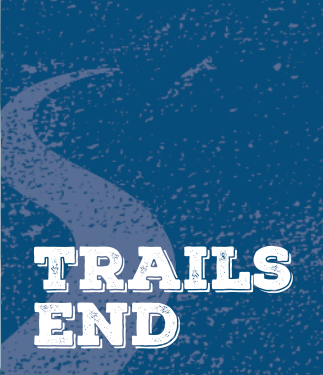
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Slee Off Road	Christo Slee	303 278-8287	700 Pine Ridge Road, Unit 2 Golden CO 80403 USA
SLOCUIERS	John Russo	805-927-8526	2181 Blythe Place Cambria, CA 93428
Specter Off-Road, Inc.	Kay Specter	818-882-1238	21600 Nordhoff St. Chatsworth CA 91311 USA
Stevinson Toyota West	Kenny Kendrick	800-613-2921	780 Indiana St Lakewood CO 80401 USA
Tom Kat Classic Car Restoration	Tom McKenna	303-221-8325	12354 E. Caley Ave #107 Centennial, CO 80111
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Toyota of Boerne	Mary-Katie Laird	210-870-1800	31205 Interstate 10 Frontage Rd, Boerne, TX 78006
Toyota of Dallas	Chris King	855-259-9535	2610 Forest lane, Dallas TX 75234
Toyota Motor Sales	Steve Reynolds	310-468-0534	
Toyota Parts Center	Tom Blackman	866-596-1970	685 N. Rawhide, Olathe, KS 66061
US Off Road	Brad Galbraith	817-736-0787	2015 S. Morgan Street, Suite 105 Granbury, TX 76048
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**TRAILS
END**



Clark White preparing to descend
the switchbacks on Black Bear Pass.

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