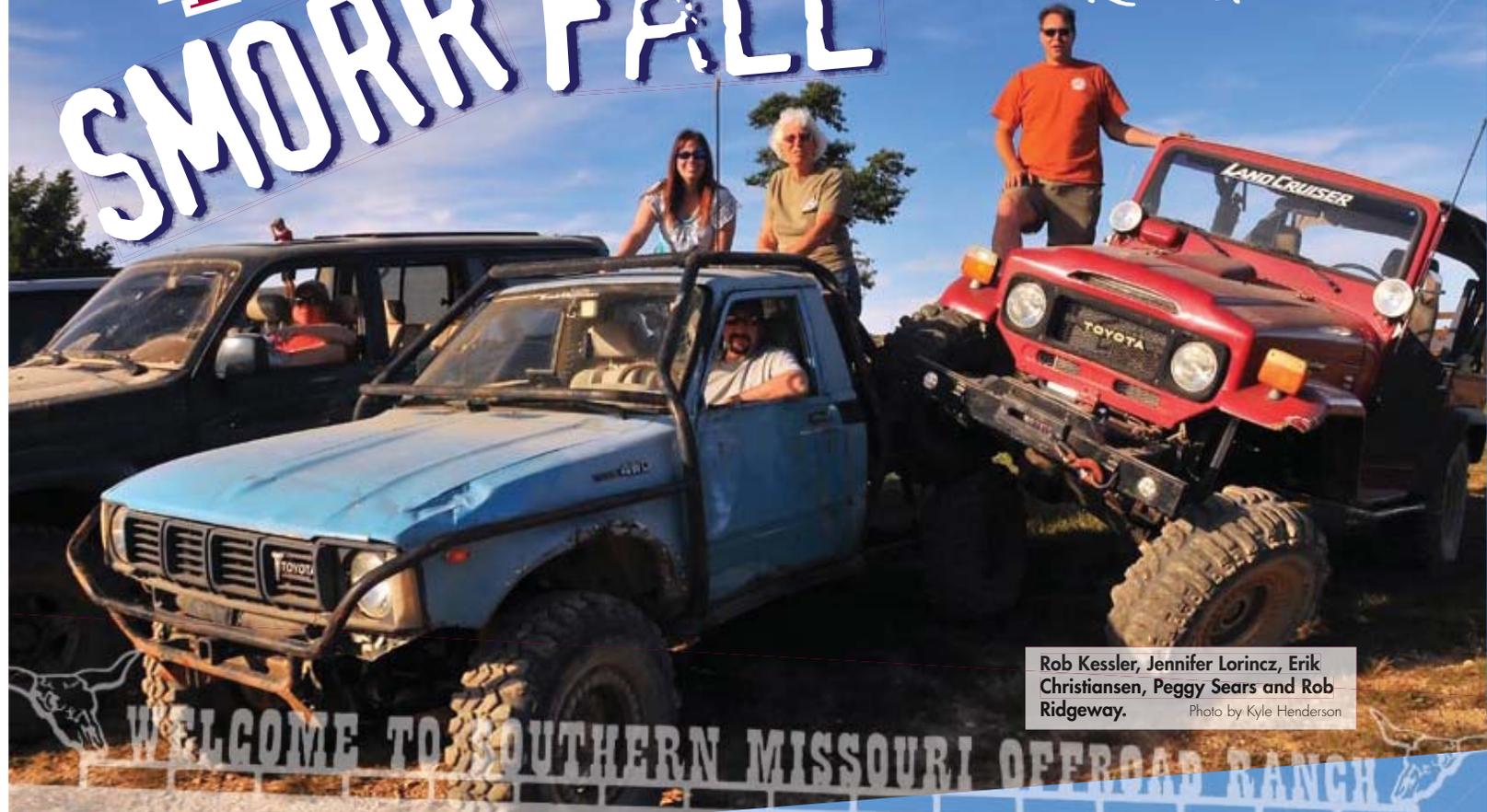


TORNADO ALLEY CRUISERS



4th Annual SMORR FALL CRAWL'N

BY KELLY HOLLOWAY

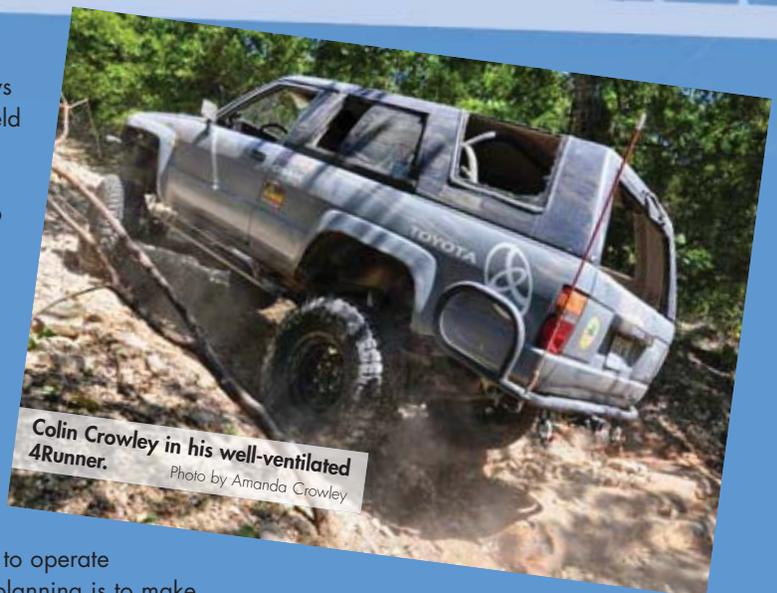


Rob Kessler, Jennifer Lorincz, Erik Christiansen, Peggy Sears and Rob Ridgeway. Photo by Kyle Henderson

Late summer in the Midwest is known for sweltering hot days worthy of frying eggs on the blacktop and melting windshield wiper blades. In 2013, Mother Nature delivered with ten days above 90-degrees in September—definitely not the optimal climate for camping and off-roading in an open top rig (or one with the windows busted out).

As if it was ordered off a roadside diner menu, the hot weather broke just before the Tornado Alley Cruisers' SMORR Fall Crawl'n event in mid-September, with high temperatures in the 70's and cool evenings to enjoy sitting by the campfire.

I like to think that the Tornado Alley Cruisers (TAC) community takes many of the TLCA goals and twists them into something a little different. Of course, our main goal is to operate our vehicles off the pavement. However, paramount to our planning is to make the Crawl'n a family friendly event. Don't misunderstand. We are definitely



Colin Crowley in his well-ventilated 4Runner. Photo by Amanda Crowley



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not making this into a church social. We all like to have a fun time. However, those with younger children understand that there have to be some lines drawn in the sand. We want to encourage wheeling into the next generation and that goal can be seen throughout our event, from the Kids Run to the Movie Night and various other kid-specific events. 2013 was the first year that we rented the entire Southern Missouri Off Road Ranch for our event, which eliminated rowdy, inappropriate behavior from others who came to the facility.

We believe that SMORR is one of the premier off-road locations in our region—and arguably nationwide. Amenities and diversity of trails are what make SMORR such a great place to wheel. So why is it called an Off Road Ranch? First off, it is a working Ranch, with a herd of horses that welcome you at the entrance to the facility. It is also so much more than the typical off-road park, with numerous amenities and easy access to the campground and trails. The facility is a mere 500 feet down a flat level driveway, just off a winding Missouri highway. A few seconds after arrival, your rig or toy hauler can be parked in one of the forty-five electric slots along the tree lined camping area. The slightly rolling hills feature plenty of camping areas for those with tents. Firewood is available for folks who want to utilize their open campfire cooking skills. Otherwise, you can walk a few steps over to the food bar that will keep your belly full and happy. Turn to the left and you find a heated and air conditioned bath house, sure to knock off the dust from a long day on the trails and get you ready for night wheeling.

One of the great things about SMORR is how the steep, rolling hills and continually meandering trails give you a sense of solitude and you find yourself lost in the beauty of what Mother Nature created. In early 2013, Mother Nature decided to put her “designer touch” on the Ranch. In four days, it rained thirty-seven



Rob Kessler emerges from the woods. Photo by Kyle Henderson

inches. The onslaught of flash floods quickly eroded the trails and stripped creek beds of decades of materials. Literally overnight, the entire trail system was changed. It took two days of track hoe work to make the main roads accessible, while the trails were minimally altered from the erosion created adaptations. If you look at the excellent trail map, you will see trails rated from #1 to #5, referencing the level of difficulty. With the recent changes, SMORR added a #6 trail labeled, “Insane.” If you have had the privilege of wheeling here before, forget what you remember as every trail is very different, creating an entirely new experience.

SMORR is located just outside of Seymour, Missouri. Southern Missouri is home to the Mark Twain National Forest, known for dense woods and never-ending hills, which are perfect for our off-road fun. Diversity in the trails is one of the things that make the 754 feet of elevation change fun. You can find challenging trails that are mainly slate rock, while others are comprised of sandstone. There are



loose rocks and shale, V-groove trails, limestone ledges and even river rock wet creek beds. For those who just want to get their daily driver off the pavement, the main trail (Ranch Road) is suitable for any stock rig to get home without any scratches.

As Secretary of the Tornado Alley Cruisers, one of my self-appointed roles is to assist with the Technical Inspections—a role I thoroughly enjoy. From fifth generation, supercharged 4Runners and new FJ Cruisers to near stock FJ40s, FJ60s and locked and loaded 80 series rigs, there is an endless supply of eye candy. These modified and well-equipped trucks make my Christmas list too lengthy and the long term planning for my next build gets amended again—and again.

The cool factor this year was raised to an entirely new level when Peter Brown showed up with a 1989, cable locked BJ74. He had just recently received the rig and this was the first time out to play. I tried to act cool when doing the inspection. However, when I opened the door to test the brake lights, it was crystal clear to all that I was not thinking clearly. After getting out of the passenger seat and walking around to the left hand driver seat, I attempted to test the turn signals, only to turn on the wipers. I talked to Peter after the weekend of wheeling and he reported that he was very happy with the capabilities of the rig.

Rob Kessler easing the big rig off the rocks. Photo by Kyle Henderson



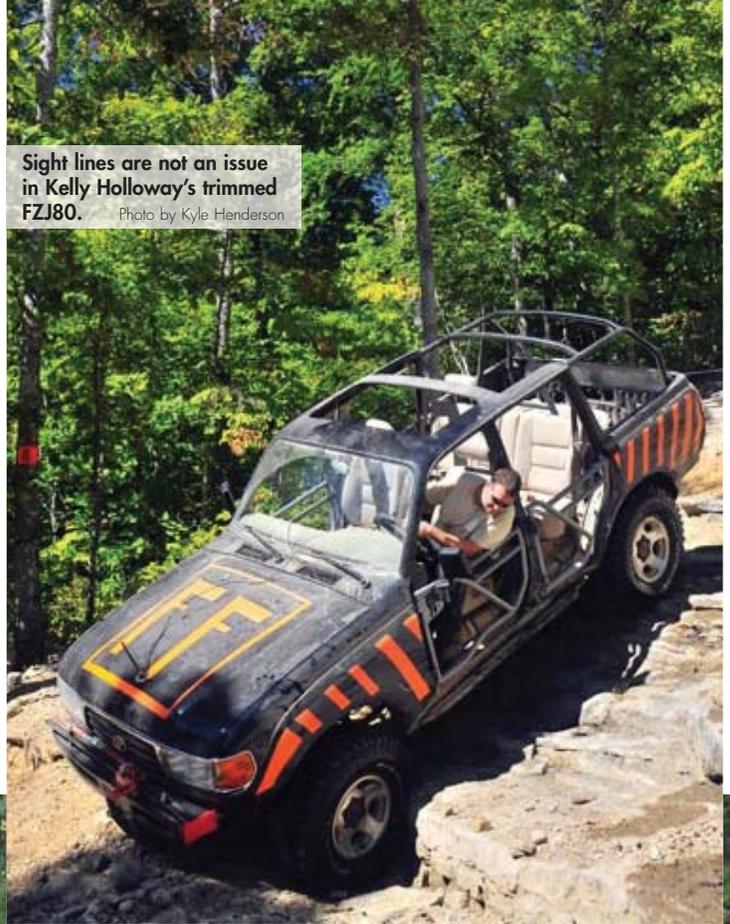
Eric Butler and his wife Jennifer—family time in the FJ40. Photo by Amanda Crowley

TOYOTA TRAILS

Not only did we experience change to the trail system in 2013, we also saw changes to the demographics of the event. Most notably was the presence of FJ Cruisers. There were three beauties at the event that took part in the Newbie Run, including one that was only a few months old. "Lexi" and "Foo" (both lifted 80s) led them down a creek bed that loops all the way to the back of the 1,200-acre facility. These FJ Cruisers are very capable rigs that show the strong off-road Toyota lineage still lives today. The only real concern we found was the rear departure angle was compromised by some of the OEM bumper's trim pieces. Nick McClelland's white FJ Cruiser's rear bumper got smashed and after the first day of wheeling, he had the lead for the 2013 Carnage Award. A highlight of this particular trail ride was when the familiar grill of an FJ40 appeared from around a bend in the creek bed, piloted by Charles Casteel and his daughter Rosemary. They had driven three hours from Kansas City in their near stock 1978 rig shortly after adding a 3" Black Diamond lift.

The other notable change was the strong presence of 80 series rigs, from mild to wild. I personally crisscrossed the Ranch in my

Sight lines are not an issue in Kelly Holloway's trimmed FZJ80. Photo by Kyle Henderson



A first generation 4Runner works its way up a rocky ledge. Photo by Jim Trunnell

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The Rubicon Trail is one of the most challenging and threatened trails in the US. It will test your nerve, your driving skill and your vehicle. One thing you can do to enhance a great Rubicon experience is to ensure your vehicle is safe, well maintained, and any known issues are corrected **BEFORE** you arrive at the trailhead. The potential for body damage and breakage is high, and there are no parts stores within a reasonable distance of the trail. With that in mind, your trail spares should travel with you.

Each organized run will meet at the trailhead listed for a pre-run safety check, proof of insurance, and registration check-in. You will then be led in by a Trail Leader, an experienced wheeler that will help you navigate your way through the trail and help with any issues. In addition, you will have committee members on your run that will help with any problems you may encounter along the way.

Once in the Springs, please come to Registration after you get your camp set up. There you will be given your shirts, meal tickets, your Grand Prize raffle ticket and a schedule of events for Friday and Saturday. While in the Springs, feel free to explore the area, check out the stone cabin, hike, fish or swim in the beautiful Rubicon River, compete in the horseshoe tournament, the RC Rock Crawler competition, show your culinary skills at the "Rock Chef" cook-off, or just be lazy and enjoy the beauty of the Sierras. **Drinking and driving is prohibited and illegal on the trail!**

Please apply by May 15th to ensure we have enough food, T-shirts and to save yourself the \$25 late fee!

For much more information and a printable registration form, check out our website at Rubithon.com and the Official 26th Rubithon Thread 2014 on IH8MUD.com.

Name: _____ TLCA # _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Home Club: _____

Type of Vehicle: _____ Wheeled Rubicon Before? _____

Special Skills: (EMT, Ham, Etc.) _____

Indicate run preference (1st, 2nd, 3rd.) Arrive minimum 1 hour prior to departure time noted!

- 1) _____ Tue., 8 AM from Loon Lake; straight to the Springs (Dick Thompson)
- 2) _____ Wed., 7 AM from Wentworth Springs; straight to springs (Mark Dunne's **40's Only** Run)
- 3) _____ Wed., 8 AM from Loon, with a camp at Buck (Andy Pollock's Norcal **Wagons** Run)
- 4) _____ Wed., 2 PM from Little Sluice (Mudrak's Double Locker Run [**contact 1st: 707-292-3509**])
- 5) _____ Thurs., 7 AM from Loon; straight to the Springs (Big Jim Adam's PMC Run)
- 6) _____ Thurs., 8 AM from Icehouse Resort; with a camp at Buck (Pete Newel's TOTR Breakfast Run)
- 7) _____ Thurs., 8 AM from Loon; with a camp at Buck (Mark Hawley, Metal Tech 4x4 **FJ Cruiser** Run)
- 8) _____ Thurs., 10 AM from Tahoma; straight to the springs (Bob Brown's Toys on the Rocks Run)
- 9) _____ Fri., 7 AM from Loon; straight to the Springs (Jon Bachelder)
- 10) _____ Fri., Marlin's Sweeper Run; (**must contact Big Mike 1st at: bigmike@marlincrawler.com**)
- 11) _____ Renegade Run (list details) _____

_____ **Basic Registration** (includes Dash Plaque and 1 Grand Prize Raffle Ticket) \$110

_____ **Wheel Deal Package** (as above + 2 dinners + 2 event T-shirts) \$170

_____ **Premier** (as above + TLCA 1st class membership + CalStar + Extra Grand Prize Ticket!) \$240

T-shirt size for all but Basic Registration: (**circle type & indicate sizes**) M/W/C _____ M/W/C _____

Dinner Choices for all but Basic Registration: # Beef _____ # Chicken _____ Included

Extra Saturday Dinners: # Beef _____ # Chicken _____ \$15/ea. _____

Saturday Pancake Breakfast: (includes pancakes, OJ, Coffee) Qty _____ \$5/ea. _____

Wine Tasting for RTF: Limited openings (Must be 21, Special Raffle and Glass) \$25/ea. _____

TLCA membership with 1st class postage: (new or renewal for existing members) \$45 _____

CalStar Air Ambulance family membership: (**can't recommend strongly enough!**) \$35 _____

Event T-Shirts: (**indicate quantity**)

Men's: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ 2XL _____ 3XL _____ 4XL _____ \$20/ea. _____

Women's: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ 2XL _____ 3XL _____ 4XL _____ \$20/ea. _____

Children's: S _____ M _____ L _____ \$20/ea. _____

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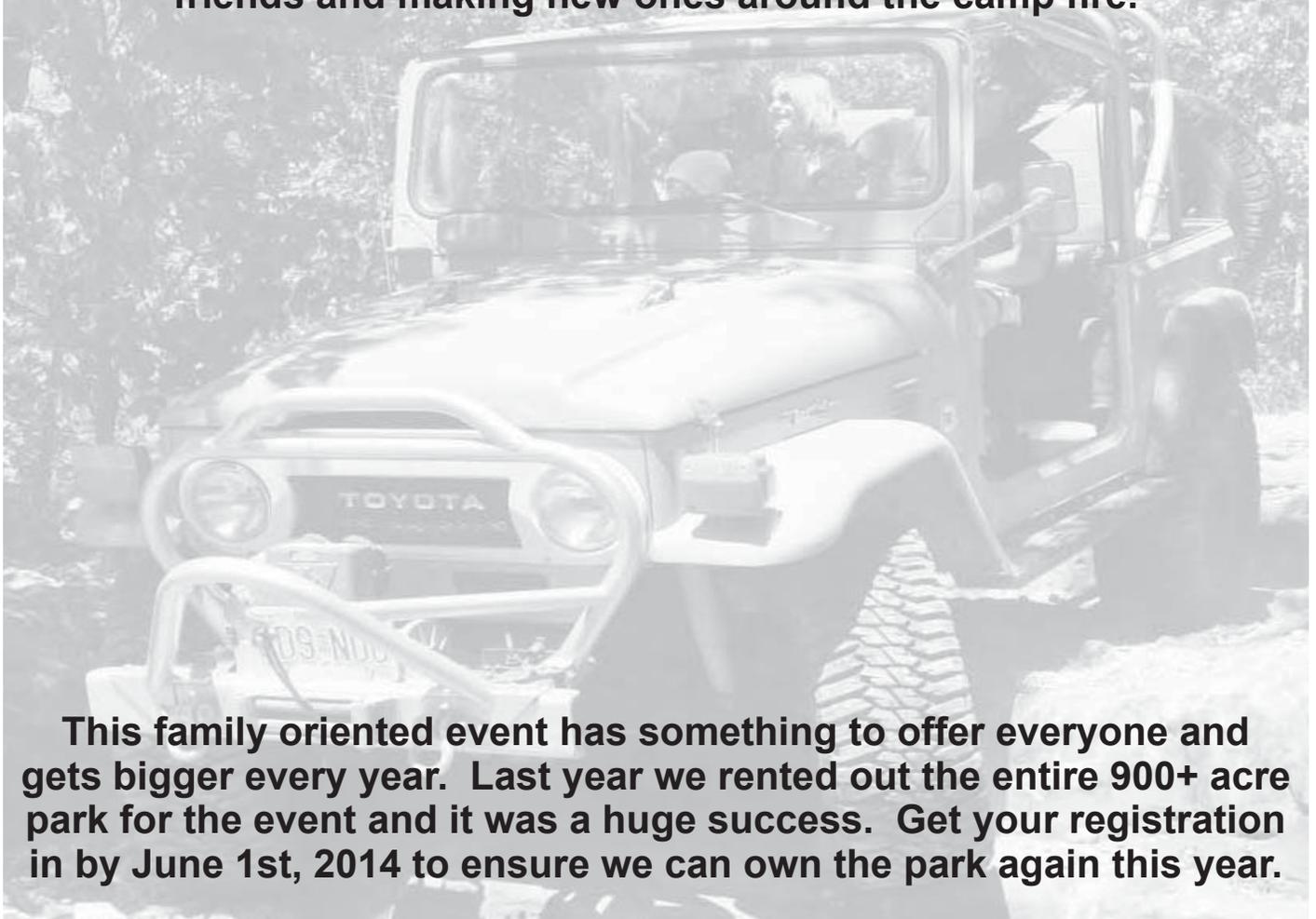
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SMORR Fall Crawl'n with Tornado Alley Cruisers



September 18th – 20th, 2014

Come join the Tornado Alley Cruisers at the Southern Missouri Off Road Ranch near Seymour, Missouri for a weekend of wheeling, camping, dining, raffle, trophies, awards, and catching up with old friends and making new ones around the camp fire.



This family oriented event has something to offer everyone and gets bigger every year. Last year we rented out the entire 900+ acre park for the event and it was a huge success. Get your registration in by June 1st, 2014 to ensure we can own the park again this year.

For more information and to register visit
www.tornadoalleycruisers.org

topless 80 series, which was built with the help of family and friends. We had ten 80 series rigs at the event, including several Lexus and 40th Anniversary vehicles. We are not exactly sure how but the most confusing 80 series carnage went to Springfield local Marty Hurst, who was wheeling some big ledges when the rig behind him started seeing some oil left on the rocks. They looked under the rigs and could not find any oil leaking, so they kept going until Marty went up a steep ledge and smoke billowed up and oil streamed out of his transfer case. Somehow a hole was punched out of the top of the transfer case, so when the rig went up the ledge, the oil from the case gathered to the back and flowed through the point of least resistance. Marty's rig found its way back to camp and onto the trailer without any other assistance, giving him a solid entry into the Carnage Award competition.

On Saturday, Colin Crowley buckled everyone into rigs and led the Kids Run in his lifted 1985 4Runner (with Marlin dual cases and 5.29 locked axles with Longfields up front). The rig sported a freshly rebuilt 22RE

and ice-cold air conditioning that tried as hard as it could to compensate for the two rear windows that were destroyed while going down Red Bull Trail. When we got back to camp, the kids raced over to the playground area, which is close to the campsites, between the event pavilion and the bathhouses. There is always a group of kids playing together there, until the sun dips below the horizon and the movie projector fires up. Five-hundred feet away from the swing set is the older kids playground, with a series of tubes, culverts, ramps and other obstacles to challenge the latest rig modifications.

The weekend's main event is Saturday night, when we hold our annual dinner, raffle and awards. Sponsors including All-Pro, Trail Gear, Husqvarna, C&V Hydrographics and

SMORR came in large this year and one happy wheeler went home with the grand prize, a beautiful ARB fridge.

Erik Butler's diesel powered, 1977 dune beige FJ40 won the Best Rig Award, with only one vote more than Aaron Grady's beautiful, recently painted white mini truck. Erik's rig sports a fresh Isuzu diesel engine with 33" tires on FJ Cruiser steel rims.



Charles Casteel and daughter Rosemary are spotted up an off-camber shelf.

Photo by Kyle Henderson



Nick McClelland's FJ Cruiser scrambling over loose rocks.

Photo by Kyle Henderson

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For the Carnage Award, we were not able to hand it out during the event because at that very time, it was reported that there was a late entry into the competition. Johnie DeLong had found himself broken down with a non-repairable vehicle at the Murphy's Law section on Snow Trail, where it intersects FUBAR in the middle of a long trail, at the bottom of two very steep hills. Several hours of winching and recovery vehicles helped the rig limp back to camp and the Carnage Award was placed in his deserving hands. After finding enough parts to fix the front axle and with a blown rear pinion shaft, they taped a two-liter bottle to the rear differential and drove all the way home with front axle power only. We learned later that even the award did not make it home without some additional damage, so we know we found the proper recipient. Johnie also won the Iron Butt Award for driving his FJ40 from Kentucky, the longest drive by a non-trailer rig.

After the festivities, we gathered around the campfire and told tales of how the trails were tortured by our rigs (or vice-versa). As they say in Washington, never let a few facts get in the way of a good story. The night faded away as we had a moment of silence for those that could not be with us.

One of my favorite activities comes right after dinner. No, not desert—night wheeling. We had several groups depart camp for fun on the trails, destined to return before the gate is locked at midnight. For those of you that have not had the opportunity, night wheeling presents all sorts of new challenges to drivers. My personal rig was made barely trail worthy just before the event, so it did not have any additional rock lights. However, we were equipped with two arms and flashlights, which provided a Fred Flintstone looking effect with pilot and copilot searching in the dark for the next obstacle. Our





Amanda Crowley at the wheel of the family crawler. Photo by Colin Crowley

first night of wheeling was led by the TAC President, Rob Ridgeway, in his lifted 1979 FJ40 350 Chevota, sporting a brand new four-link setup and new to him TBI Chevy (and a freshly installed campsite fix slave cylinder). We typically instruct newbies to not follow Rob on trail rides because they usually return with new damage....

Saturday night, Rob Kessler led the way down the wet creek bed in his 1997 locked and loaded, Slee'd and ARB armored Lexus LX450, sitting on 33" KM2's. It is always nice to wash off the rigs in the creek bed before another day of wheeling!

On Sunday, most folks packed up and headed home; the hardcore few threw the kids in back and hit the trails, looking for a couple more hours of pleasure before getting back to reality. We took the opportunity to do a run to the far corners of the Ranch. My daughter found a benefit to my new build that I had not anticipated—she could pick a bouquet of flowers sitting in the back seat with tube doors on my 80 series.

With some major help from Mother Nature and the volunteers of Tornado Alley Cruisers, the 2013 SMORR Fall Crawl'n event was

a huge success. Our goal is to get you to join us there next year. Pull out your calendar and block off the weekend of September 19, 2014.

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For additional coverage of this TLCA event, please visit www.tlca.org and read Michael McCartney's online article, **SMORR Fall Crawl'n—The Newbie Perspective.**



The SMORR Fall Crawl'n lineup. Photo by Kyle Henderson