

**FRONT BUMPER  
COMPARISON**

Athena is ...  
Survival **MOM!**

**EXPEDITION MEDIC**

Aluminess  
Front Bumper  
Review

**DIY: Roof Top Tent**

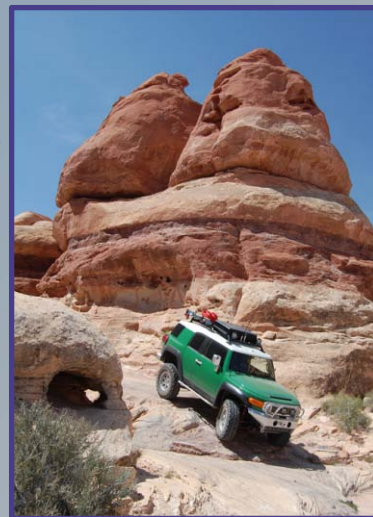




# FJC Magazine

July 2009 - Volume II Issue 3

**On The Cover:**  
A custom green FJ  
Cruiser on Elephant Hill  
at Cruise Moab 2009



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## Disabled Explorers

Adapt Overcome Explore

It is said that "what doesn't kill me makes me stronger", but that doesn't mean it leaves you happier or able to do everything you once could. However, we at Disabled Explorers believe that there is a peace and joy to be found in the wilderness, and regardless of physical mobility issues we want to help get you out there!

Our goal is to create a resource for vehicle based back country access by the disabled. Our motto is Adapt, Overcome, Explore and we are working to live up to that motto in the following ways:

**Adapt:** Vehicle modifications, equipment reviews, recovery methods, driver training, and more.

**Overcome:** Feature stories of those who are out there already, from amputees to those with spinal cord injuries

**Explore:** Trail ride-along events to introduce the disabled to the outdoors, presenting at land meetings to fight against trail closure, adapted trail guides and more.

For those of you who are currently able bodied, we could use your help with many of our activities while providing you with a chance to learn how to wheel with the disabled. Our desire is not to change the trails that already exist, but to keep them open so that people with mobility impairment can enjoy the same wilderness access that the able bodied have.

To find out how we can help you, or how you can help us, go to our website ([www.disabledexplorers.com](http://www.disabledexplorers.com)), email us at [info@disabledexplorers.com](mailto:info@disabledexplorers.com), or call 602-451-6079.



## From The Editor

It's been a little over four years since the first FJ Cruisers started showing up at dealerships. I've been driving an FJ since August of 2006, so I've been an enthusiast since nearly the beginning. One thing occurred to me last weekend when I was helping work on a couple of the very first FJ's to arrive in Colorado: we've come a long way!

From the beginning, Toyota designed the FJ Cruiser to be very aftermarket friendly. From the OEM holes for rock rails to easily replaceable skid plates, they've always had upgrades and mods in mind. Today there are so many modifications and upgrades available for the FJ, we have a hard time picking the which ones to write about. The only vehicle I can think of that has more aftermarket parts & accessories available is the Jeep Wrangler family, and they've been around for decades.

Off the top of my head I can think of at least five businesses that owe their inspiration and success to the FJ Cruiser. This vehicle really does inspire great people to do great things. Nearly every Toyota aftermarket manufacturer & vendor has multiple products available for the FJ, and the list keeps growing!

When it comes to participation, the FJ Cruiser community is second to none. We meet new FJ people at every event we go to, and every online community has thousands of owners & enthusiasts sharing their know how and knowledge. The annual FJ Summit is one of the largest Toyota gatherings in the country, and it's comprised nearly 100% of FJ Cruisers. It truly is remarkable that we have such an amazing vehicle to use in any way imaginable.

**So it's my sincere hope that Toyota sees the value in our dedicated group. I expect that if we continue to voice our admiration for the most unique and well equipped 4x4 on the market, they will continue to evolve for years to come. In about 6 years I'll be looking to add another FJ to the family, hopefully it'll be a 2015 model!**



**For FJ Cruiser Owners & Enthusiasts**

Colorado Springs, CO 80915

[www.fjc-mag.com](http://www.fjc-mag.com)

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# CRUISE MOAB '09

*By Shane Williams*

*Photography: Angie Williams*

Nearly every off road enthusiast dreams of visiting the 4x4 'mecca' of the US – Moab, UT. Although we've been wheeling for years, we never were able to find the time to make the 7 hour trek over the mountains until this year for Cruise Moab 2009.

There are many 4x4 events held in Moab every year, and many others around the country. For a Toyota enthusiast, it just doesn't get any better than Cruise Moab (CM). People come from all corners of North America to participate in this annual event sponsored by Rising Sun 4x4 Club, and they all bring their toys.

Unlike the FJ Summit, most of the rigs at CM were older, hard core, trail ready trucks. While there were many FJ Cruisers, the great part of the event was running with everything from a nearly stock FJ-40 to complete custom 4Runner buggies. We even got to hit the trail with a classic FJ-45 truck!



We were not able to arrive until Wednesday night, so we missed out on some of the pre-running, but made up for it in a hurry. Early Thursday morning after registering, we hit US-191 south toward Canyonlands National Park, and Elephant Hill. This trail is rated a 4/10 by the Cruise Moab Committee, but is not like a 'normal' Easy (4) that we run in Colorado (see more on trail ratings in the sidebar). This trail has some very tricky obstacles, including a portion that you have to back down (or up on the way out) that proved to be a little confusing at first.

Luckily our Toytec lift, new BudBuilt skids and Aluminess front bumper provided all the clearance and protection we needed. We had no issues at all with the trail or the way our TRD performed. The group we were with was quite large, at over 20 Toyota trucks. About halfway through the run, Angie & I decided we needed to get our two dogs back on BLM land (they're not allowed to roam the National Park), so we split from the group & headed out. As soon as we did 4 other FJ's decided to roll out with us, so we ended up finishing the trail as an FJ only run. It reminded us of the Summit :)









Friday started pretty early as well, but we were excited to finally run Fins N' Things. We had heard so much about it and how this trail really defines the 'slick rock' that Moab is famous for. This time we only had 3 FJ's total: our TRD; Bill & Athena's BC; and Justin & Julie in another TRD. We were lucky to run right behind the FJ-45, and our trail leader was in a FJ-40. The day again went without any major issues. Angie drove over half the trail and did an amazing job. There was one obstacle that we 'could' have made, but opted out of it since there was a bypass. We had a great time playing on several of the obstacles and challenging our driving skills. Toward the end of the second leg of the trail (near the turn-around spot) I really learned what good traction on slick rock can do. The TRD idled right up Kenny's Climb, chirping the tires just a little.

By Friday night a storm moved in, and it was raining and dreary all day Saturday. We decided to head out on our own for a little exploration. We ended up staring up Rose Garden Hill in the rain, pondering our chances of making it up. Since we were alone, without a winch, and in the rain, we decided to take a rain check on the hill this time. We have plenty of reason to go back now.

On the way out Saturday morning, we decided to head over the La Sal Mountains, through Castle Valley, and up 128 to I-70. We found a couple of 'mountain' style trails that are very similar to the trails we're used to, so that was a nice treat. Despite the clouds we were able to get some great pics of Castle Valley below. We are definitely looking forward to spending more time in this area.



If you've never been to Moab, I definitely recommend you plan a trip. Heading out for Cruise Moab is great if you're looking for the camaraderie of a large event. If you'd rather take plenty of time on the trails and move at more of a leisurely pace, maybe get a couple of fellow FJ enthusiasts together & plan your own trip. Either way, you won't be disappointed!



**MORE PICS @ FJC-MAG.COM**

## FJ Cruiser Roll-top Console Cover

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This Labor Day weekend (Sept. 4th-7th) we will be host the Third Annual Thrill on the Hill FJ Rally. It's a great weekend to come out and have fun with wonderful entertainment, all new

having the event this year in Cloudcroft, NM which is only about 20 minutes drive from Ruidoso. We'll be camping at Camp of the Tall Pines outside of Cloudcroft. They have 17 + cabins for rent and plenty of room for campers and RV's.

To register and get more information, you can visit our website at [www.nmfjrally.com](http://www.nmfjrally.com). Another reason that we moved the dates to September is moisture. There is typically more rain this time of year which ensures the forest trails will be open. We hope to see all of you out here this year for the rally. You will enjoy yourself!

trails and great prizes. We have some great raffle prizes again this year from vendors such as All-Pro, Demelo, Metal-Tech, Toytec and lots more! Many of the vendors will be joining us for this event as well.

We've decided to change the location a little bit to the south where there are more and better trails and a better camping facility to accommodate all of us. We will be



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# Front Bumper Comparision

One of the best ways to change the look and off road performance of your FJ Cruiser is to install an aftermarket bumper. The choices for this upgrade are so varied that it would be impossible to cover every option, but we'll cover as many as we can. The major factors that go into choosing a front bumper include cost, style, features, clearance, winch compatibility, and weight. Once all of these items are addressed, it becomes clear which bumper is right one to fit your needs.

For our comparison run, we had 6 FJ's with a total of 4 different bumpers (2 were ARB bumpers). In addition to the ARB, we tested the All Pro (original 1 piece version), Road Armor, Aluminess, and Land Cruisers North West (LCNW) bumpers. The LCNW was the only tube bumper tested, but there are nearly as many tube bumper options for the FJ as any other style (See page 20 for a list of most front bumper options for the FJ). The All Pro, Road Armor, and ARB bumpers are all made of high-grade steel, while the Aluminess bumper is made of 6061 aluminum. The pros and cons of steel vs. aluminum have to be weighed on an individual basis.

The first part of our comparison involved taking photos of some of the various feature of each bumper. Ground clearance is always one of the first questions asked, so we measured each bumper while we were in a paved, level parking lot.

Of course each vehicle has a different setup and configuration, so the amount of ground clearance measured depends upon the amount of lift, tire size, and cargo in the vehicle. Since measuring from the ground gives a 1"-2" margin of error, we also photographed the front of each FJ to show how the bumper relates to the frame. The tow points on the frame will be the same for every FJ, so showing how these relate to the bumper is a great way to gauge the amount of clearance you'll gain.



**ARB**



**Aluminess**



**All Pro**



**Road Armor**



**Land Cruisers North West**



As you can see, several of the bumpers sit very high on the frame, which will mean more ground clearance in the front, and a better approach angle. Regardless of which bumper you choose, you'll see MUCH better clearance and approach angles than the stock bumper. Most aftermarket bumpers also eliminate the overhang near your front tires, that also enhances the capability of your FJ.

We took an in-depth look at all the bumpers in our test group. Below are the highlights of each one:

### ARB (MSRP \$1,499.99)

-Style: Boxed Steel

-Features: Brush guard, heavy duty frame plate, integrated Hi-Lift points, 2X integrated light mounts, heavy duty design, includes frame bracket.

-Clearance: Approx 17-20 inches (with 2.5" lift)

-Winch Compatibility: Front mount, Warn M8000 or compatible

-Weight: ~150lbs w/brush guard

-Installation: Moderate, 4-5 hours for an experienced team of 3



### All Pro (MSRP \$799.99 ++)

-Style: Boxed steel (1 piece pictured, current model is a 3 piece)

-Features: Integrated recovery points, Available bolt On bull bar/brush guard, fits tightly to the FJ body.



-Clearance: Approx 18.5-20 inches (with 3" lift)

-Winch Compatibility: Bottom mount, Warn 9.5ti or compatible

-Weight: 76lbs without bull bar/brush guard

-Installation: Moderate, 3-4 hours for an experienced team of 3



### Aluminess (MSRP \$1,200 ++)

-Style: Boxed Aluminum

-Features: Locking winch access door, integrated recovery points, 2X integrated light mounts, available bull bar/brush guard, flat

top design, includes frame bracket.

-Clearance: Approx 18-20 inches (with 2.5" lift)

-Winch Compatibility: Bottom mount, Warn XD9000 or compatible

-Weight: 43 lbs without bull bar/brush guard

-Installation: Moderate, 3-4 hours for an experienced team of 2

### LCNW (MSRP \$1,195 ++)

-Style: Steel tube

-Features: Close fitting tube design, multiple light mounting options, includes frame bracket.

-Clearance: Approx 20-22 inches (with 3" lift)

-Winch Compatibility: Bottom mount, Various compatible winches.

-Weight: 75lbs with brush guard hoops

-Installation: Moderate, 2-3 hours for an experienced team of 2. Some bracket modification may be necessary.



### Road Armor (MSRP \$1,661 ++)

-Style: Boxed Steel

-Features: Available Bull Bar / Brush Guard, 4" light pods, integrated recovery points, Lifetime guaranty against breakage, includes frame bracket.

-Clearance: Approx 18-20 inches (with 3" lift)

-Winch Compatibility: Front mount, up to 9,000lb capacity

-Weight: 73lbs without bull bar / brush guard

-Installation: Moderate, 4-5 hours for an experienced team of 4. Requires some special hardware to offset width of bumper on frame.

Continued on Page 20 . . .





# Expedition

# MEDIC

By Lance Blair

<http://www.disabledexplorers.com>



**Adventure Medical Kits has the tools and the book to help settle your nerves and make it all ok.**

I see that gleam in your eye, that desire to read about how to stab a ball point pen into someone's chest to save their life or how to use your Hi-Lift jack handle to splint that broken leg as the helicopter descends in a whirlwind of dust and noise. But before we get to those juicy details, and trust me we will, I want you to go practice the single most important bit of back country medicine (and front country for that matter) there is. Please go wash your hands, right now, yes I said wash your hands! Those things are stomach churning, infection imparting, death dealing monsters!

In all seriousness, thinking like an Expedition Medic is all about prevention over treatment. A well stocked first aid kit pales in importance to a well trained mind. Knowledge is a candle in front of a searchlight compared to not having to deal with illness or injury in the back country. So from now on, your role as Expedition Medic will flow from Perception to Prevention to Treatment to Evacuation.



**Name the risk in this photo, hotcoals, fire, falling and more**

The first component, Perception, deals with your time at home where you are thinking about taking that Wilderness First Aid class. It also covers making sure you have a well stocked Medic Kit, as well as thinking about all the hazards that could be faced on your upcoming trip (especially those related to terrain and weather). Once you are on the trail, your Powers of Perception will be focused on the hazards of your current and future activities. For example, tire changing could crush a hand, cooking a hot dog could cause a blister. Even a quick dash behind a bush to pee could be very interesting if that bush is poisonous or thorny.

Prevention is the active result of your perception. It is the sunblock applied in the desert, the water forced into the hand of a buddy while he is rigging winch cable, and the hand washing everyone does before eating (those things are killers, remember!), and even the yell that moves a kid out of the way during a dynamic recovery. Prevention requires that you be a part of the action and be willing to deal with small problems before they become emergencies. And while you may feel like a nag, trust me, that is far better than being regarded a Hero for something you knew deep down inside should have never happened. And I am serious about that hand washing, either with soap and water or gel hand sanitizer. Either way, your hands go everywhere and touch everything on their way to bringing food to your mouth. Clean them first and your stomach will thank you.



Since you have managed to hang on this long and I haven't scared you out of your next back country adventure, I guess we should get down to the nitty gritty fun of gear and how to use it. Personally as an Intensive Care RN, Wilderness First Responder and Scout Leader, I love cool stuff to play with and I actually know how to use most of it. However one thing I really like about my Adventure Medical Kits Guide pack is the Wilderness Medicine Book. This book is more than a little folded paper with some tiny print. It's a small format book that gives honest, solid instructions in an easy to read style. Even if you are putting your own kit together, please place this book or something like it in a waterproof bag for future reference.

Reference material aside, you do need some basics in your kit since you are in a vehicle and often with other people. Please make sure you have quality goods in a quality container. Really you will have to deal with only a few groups of injuries. Internal vs external, broken skin vs unbroken and treatable vs evacuation. Internal are the aches of muscles, gut, bones, tendon and such that are usually painful but not trip ending, your biggest concern would be something with the gut that doesn't improve within 24hrs, that equals seeking medical help. External include problems you can see so you know how severe they are and what should be done. Broken skin vs unbroken divides your wound care between things that require lots of water, washing and clean bandages



**You can improvise anything if you have the knowledge & training, wound washing is just one example.**

or blisters, sunburns and such that require watching. Lastly, treatable vs evacuation is that tough call you have to make that ends someone's trip, maybe even your own but that leaves you alive to travel again

someday. As someone who has called in a helicopter, I can tell you that the fuss over ending a trip is nothing compared to the guilt you could live with if death or dismemberment occurs.

As for the actual gear you should have, well think back over your problem groups and you will need something for internal (water, pain killers, stomach meds), something for external (water to wash a wound and a roll of gauze) and something most people don't think of as part of a first aid kit, you need a way to call for help. Personally I really like the Spot Global Messenger for this 911 button that works almost anywhere on the planet! Even as someone who works in the medical field

and has access to anything I could want I still like to buy my kits so that I get a nice assortment in an easy to transport and well organized pack. But please check

your kit frequently and restock it as time goes by. Adventure Medical kits sells refills on their website that are great for any brand setup.

And for all of you who read every word waiting in anticipation for the part about the ball point pen chest tube or hi-lift jack leg splint, well take a Wilderness Medical Course! I told you I would mention them again and that is only to say that just like I didn't cover how to treat a blister, a crushed hand or a stomach ache, I won't talk about the more exciting stuff either. You need training, and this article is not long enough and you aren't in front of me to demonstrate your knowledge, so get to a class, even a 1 day affair will help you learn to use a t-shirt to hold a broken arm or how to know if a stomach ache is just bad chili or a perf'd colon. Your life and your family & friends are counting on you as the Expedition Medic, because if not you then who?

**Lance Blair is an overlanding enthusiast, expedition leader, and Tread Lightly trainer. He's also the founder of Disabled Explorers, a non-profit group dedicated to helping mobility impaired outdoor enthusiasts gain access to the backcountry. He's a regular contributor to FJCruiserForums.com, the Expedition Portal, and of course FJC Magazine. Lance can be contacted through the Disabled Explorers website.**



**Cooking presents risk from poor hygiene and lazy cleanup, keep it clean and safe**







## Front Bumper

### Initial Review

By Shane Williams

When Aluminess announced their new front bumper, we got excited very quickly. Not only does it look great (very similar to some of our other favorite bumpers), but aluminum is so much lighter than steel. Once the specs were announced, we knew this was the front bumper for us.

When it arrived, we were not shocked to see that it could very easily be lifted into the back of the FJ. After getting the bumper out of the box & unwrapped, it was clear that we had made the right choice. This bumper is stout! The lower & rear plates measure  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick, the shackle mounts are MUCH thicker than others we've seen and go all the way through the bumper to the frame mount, and the rest of the bumper is  $\frac{3}{16}$ " thick. The entire bumper (we ordered ours without the brush guard) weighs in at only 43lbs! That's 8lbs more than the stock bumper, which is not even noticeable when driving the FJ

The fit & finish of this bumper is great as well. The entire thing is powder coated and very smooth. It actually performs like a non-stick coating, so getting mud/dirt/bugs off the bumper super easy. There's a great access door in the top of the bumper for the winch, and it comes with an Aluminess aluminum fairlead as well. The bumper matches the lines of the FJ nearly perfectly, and it sits about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the front bezel all the way around. Some aftermarket bumpers have been known to rub on the front of the FJ, this one will not have any issues with that.

Installation was very straightforward. It ships with all the grade 10 hardware to bolt right on to the FJ using stock holes. There's only one hole you'll need to bore out a little for the bracket to go on properly. The rear support bracket gives the bumper extra strength when bolted to the frame, so you won't have to worry about anything shearing off during a hard winch pull. While the instructions didn't specify any torque values, we used the same as the stock bumper, which was 48 ft/lbs. for the all bolts.

#### Details:

**Weight: 35lbs**

**Price: \$1,200 MSRP**

**Install Time: 2-3 hours**

**Install Difficulty: Moderate**



Boring out the frame



An easy install





After getting the bumper installed and trimming the inner fender flap, we were ready to hit the road. During our first month with the bumper we got to head to Moab for Cruise Moab 2009 (see page 6). It performed flawlessly and everyone was very excited to see this new offering for the FJ. Several FJ owners at the event were talking about selling their current aftermarket bumpers so they could upgrade to the lightweight aluminum. The approach angle is much better than the stock bumper, and will exceed the need of nearly every style of wheeling. We only 'tested' the strength of the bumper one time. We managed to bury the front end in about 6 inches of dirt coming down an obstacle on Fins N' Things. The entire weight of the FJ was on the front of the bumper as we bounced in to and out of the dirt, the Aluminess bumper didn't miss a beat. Apart from dirt caked in the shackle holes, there wasn't a scratch on it and it held up great.

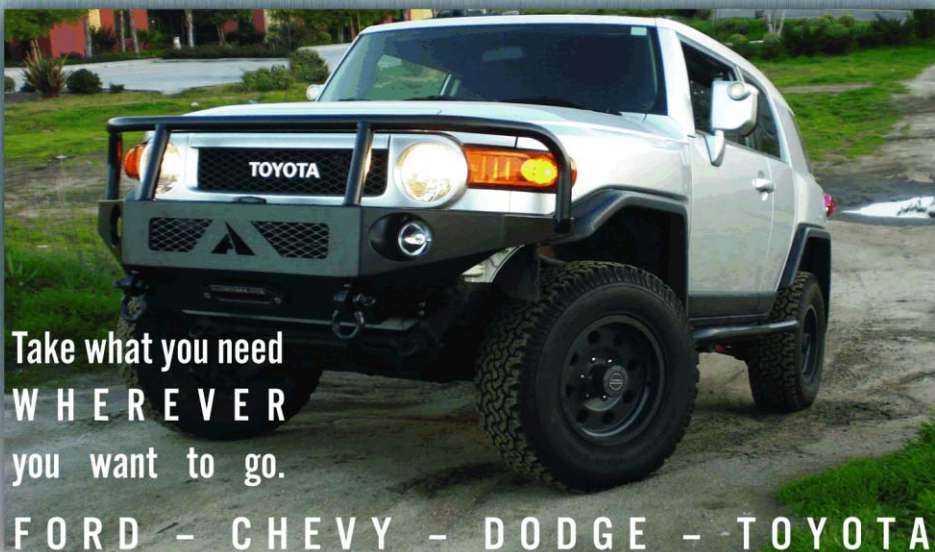
Despite the fact aluminum is more expensive and more difficult to machine than steel, the Aluminess bumper is priced competitively. The version we have (without the brush guard) retails for \$1,200, but Aluminess has offered it as low as \$1,080. This price is very competitive with some steel bumpers that weigh two or three times as much, so it really is a good investment.

If you're going to the 2009 FJ Summit in Ouray, look for our TRD & the Aluminess front bumper for an up close look. While the pictures look great, seeing it in person makes all the difference.



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# Featured Rig

You've seen her on our cover, you've seen her in Ouray and Moab, you may have even had a chance to wheel with her. Fa-Jay-Jay (FJJ) is her name, and she's one of the most unique FJ's you'll ever see. Bill & Athena Innis, from Idaho Springs, Colorado have spent countless hours and plenty of pennies making FJJ an amazing off road machine.

We'll start with the basics, this '07 Black Cherry FJ sports a 3" OME lift and rolls on 35" Super Swamper SSR tires. In the armor department, FJJ uses very well tested Rasta Aluminum skids as well as Outrider Suspension Armor. Up front is a new LCNW bumper (See page 10 for the full comparison) with a custom winch mount, and they added a Fab Fours bumper to the rear. Other suspension mods include Icon LCA's in the back, and front UCA's from Toytec. To keep things cool & give a better view of the trail, FJJ almost always rolls with the Metal Tech tubes doors installed. For trail side repairs, Bill & Athena carry a full set of power tools that can be run from their PowerTank, or the Viar onboard air system. They threw the spare tire on the roof and added a nice leather saddle bag to the back door to help carry their gear.



For entertainment, Bill & Athena installed a Kenwood DNX-8120 NAV/DVD system that includes a custom set of topo maps covering all of Colorado & the Moab area of Utah. This unit drives three 10" sub woofers in a custom yellow box, as well as additional speakers in near the back seat. Other interior mods include Wet Okle seat covers, a useful storage bag on the passenger side dash, and a large storage bag inside the back door.

The two most unique mods so far on FJJ are really what sets her apart. The Bushwacker fender flares have been customized with steel spikes to help keep the riff raff away from the truck. Our favorite mod was created to help get the dust out of FJJ after a long day with the tube doors on. Bill ran an air line into the glove box, and fitted it with a spray nozzle. A clean dash is now just a few air bursts away.

We definitely see something like this going in our TRD in the near future.

If you happen to see Bill, Athena, the kids & Fa-Jay-Jay on the trail, don't be intimidated by the spikes, they're mostly for show. Give an FJ Wave & maybe they'll show you how far your FJ can really go!





# First Annual Fun Run

We originally planned to run Bill Moore Lake, but all the snow on that trail wasn't quite gone yet. Our backup was the quite fun Yankee Hill. Despite such a large group, we were able to run the trail relatively quickly. We also got a chance to use our recovery skills when Andy got his front LCA hung up on a rock, so that slowed us down by about 20 minutes while we worked a little Hi-Lift magic. Yankee hill also includes an optional gravel pit climb that a few decided to try. Doug from Toytec flew right up it with his new front locker on the 4Runner. Bill spotted Athena up it with a little work, and Andy managed to power his way up the climb with just a rear locker.

We stopped for a BBQ and give aways at a clearing near the top of the trail. Angie did an amazing job grilling brats, burgers, chicken & hot dogs for the kids. Toytec hooked everyone up with every type of BBQ side you could think of. Despite the wind we were able to get everyone fed & ready to roll in about an hour. After watching a couple of FJ's play in the giant mud puddle, it was time for give aways. We gave out one of each of our four FJ Cruiser posters, and also an OtterBox coupon that they graciously donated. Toytec gave away t-shirts and a set of their new LCA skids.

The day ended perfectly on an overlook at the top of the hill. We were able to get a great group shot as the afternoon sun was just overhead. All 12 trucks lined up with the mountains in the background really got us excited for the FJ Summit in a couple of weeks.

If you're planning a trip to Colorado next summer, watch FJC-Mag.com for the dates for next years Fun Run. You won't want to miss it!



**SEE MORE PICS ONLINE  
@ FJC-MAG.COM**

In late June we had the opportunity to co-sponsor the First Annual Fun Run with Toytec Lifts & Otterbox. This one day event was open to anyone with a 4x4, but nearly all the trucks were Toyota's. In fact, we ended up running with seven 4Runners, four FJ Cruisers, and one Nissan Xterra.

## Dreaming of your next adventure?



### We sure are.

The Toyota Land Cruiser Association is a club dedicated to bringing Toyota 4-Wheel Drive enthusiasts together. Visit us at [www.tlca.org](http://www.tlca.org) to learn more.



TLCA membership includes a subscription to **Toyota Trails** magazine, featuring in-depth tech and trail articles, event listings, TLCA merchandise and Land Cruiser classifieds.

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July 09



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# Don's SuFu "WikidFJ"

Hometown: Queen Creek AZ  
Home Club: azfj.org  
Year: 2007  
Color: Sun Fusion  
Trans: AT  
Tires: 285/70/17 BF Goodrich KM2's  
Wheels: Stock Steelies  
Lift: Toytec 3"  
Shocks: Bilsteins

Front Bumper: Road Armor Bull Bar  
Rear Bumper: Metal Tech Tube  
Skids: Bud Builts  
Rails: Stock  
Winch: Bulldog 9500#  
Air/Co2: Portable compressor  
Rack: Baja Rack Expedition Style  
Custom Baja Camera System from  
Total Visions Products

**MUCH MORE! See [www.fjc-mag.com](http://www.fjc-mag.com) for all Don's mods!**

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# Jon's VooDooBlue



Hometown: Queen Creek AZ  
 Home Club: Bayou State Land Cruisers  
 Year: 2007  
 Color: VDB  
 Tires: 33" MT ATZ  
 Wheels: 18" XD Addict  
 Lift: 4" Rough Country Lift

Shocks: Adjustable Bilstein  
 Front Bumper: Metal Tech  
 Rear Bumper: OEM  
 Skids: Custom T-Case & Trans  
 Rails: Metal Tech  
 Winch: Smitty Built xrc8 w/Amsteel  
 Rack: OEM w/4X HID & custom light bar



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On the following list we've tried to include all major bumper options that are currently in stock and available. There are custom, low volume, and one-off bumper options also available as well. Please visit [www.fjc-mag.com](http://www.fjc-mag.com) for information on new bumper options as they become available.

### Box Steel Bumpers

#### **All Pro, ARB, Road Armor (See above) Demello (MSRP \$689 ++)**

-Features: Integrated recovery points, 2X integrated light mounts, available bull bar / brush guard, flat top design

-Winch Compatibility: Warn M8000 or compatible

-Weight: 75lb without bull bar / brush guard

#### **Expedition One (MSRP \$949.98 ++)**

-Features: Integrated recovery points, 2X integrated light mounts, several bull bar/brush guard options

-Winch Compatibility: Several winch options

-Weight: 105lb with bull bar



#### **Fab Fours (MSRP \$1,357 ++)**

-Features: 2X Integrated lights/side marker lights, integrated recovery points, available brush guard

-Winch Compatibility: Several winch options

-Weight: 106lb without brush guard

#### **Warn (MSRP \$1,060.23 ++)**

-Features: Auxiliary light brackets, integrated brush guard, lower fog light mounts

-Winch

Compatibility:  
Up to 12,000lb

Warn winch

-Weight: 150lb



### Aluminum Bumpers

#### **Aluminess (See above)**

#### **Body Armor (MSRP \$1,257.72 ++)**

-Features: Integrated recovery points, includes shackles, light mounting options

-Winch Compatibility: Up to 9,000lb winch

-Weight: 78lb





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### WRENCH SESSIONS





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ARTWORK BY JOSH WALSH - KOLIN



## Tube Bumpers

### LCNW (See above)

#### **Demello Pre-Runner Lightweight Bumper (MSRP \$950 ++)**

- Features: 4x light tabs, works with winch or bash plate
- Winch Compatibility: Several winch options
- Weight: 65lbs

#### **Metal Tech (MSRP \$899.95 ++)**

- Features: 4x light brackets, independent winch mount, pre-cut holes for wiring lights
- Winch Compatibility: Several winch options
- Weight: 54lbs



#### **The TOY Outfitters (MSRP \$875 ++)**

- Features: Integrated light mounts, available recovery points, integrated receiver hitch, available bull bar / brush guard
- Winch Compatibility: Several winch options
- Weight: 91lbs



## Upgrades to OEM FJ Cruiser Bumper

### **Lucrum Winch Mount (MSRP \$599.99 ++)**

- Features: Integrated recovery points, available bull bar w/light tabs, lifetime warranty
- Winch Compatibility: Several winch options
- Weight: 50lbs (plus remaining parts of stock bumper)



When it comes time to upgrade your front bumper, the reality is that most people choose the style that fits their situation. All the specifications in the world won't matter if you personally don't like the way a bumper looks on your rig. If you are torn between one bumper or another, it is our hope that this information will help make your decision easier.

July 09



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# Off Road 101

## FJ Cruiser Storage

Once your FJ Cruiser is outfitted with proper wheels, tires, suspension upgrades, and trail armor – it's time to hit the road. You'll need to pack enough gear and supplies in the FJ to get where you're going and back. Simple day trips don't require very much in the way of supplies, but you'll still need to find somewhere to keep your recovery gear, tools, and emergency equipment. For longer trips, finding enough storage in your truck can be quite a challenge.

Luckily there are a multitude of storage options available for the FJ Cruiser. Your imagination really is the limit when it comes to deciding how to store your gear. Do you opt for a commercial solution or build something yourself? We've seen plenty of great DIY storage projects, and many vendors have innovative products to help you organize your gear. In this installment Off Road 101, we'll cover some of the best options we've seen from vendors as well as DIY projects.

### Vendor Options

From roof racks to cargo boxes, several vendors have really great products to organize your stuff. The options available really depend on your budget. If you're willing to spend a little money, you can do just about anything you want.

If you have a stock FJ Cruiser roof rack, by far the best choice to add more storage area is the WAAG XS Rack (see WAAG XS Basket, July 2008 issue). This basket insert maintains your stock rack while adding a heavy duty storage option. The one piece welded steel construction provides more than enough strength to hold just about anything you need. It's a great inexpensive way to upgrade your OEM rack.

There are plenty of other rack products available as well. From the inexpensive yet sturdy Baja Rack to the heavy duty ARB rack, you have plenty of options for storing gear on your roof.



Once your rack is in place, a cargo bag is the least expensive way to protect it all. Rola manufactures many different cargo bags to keep your gear clean & dry. The Platypus expandable roof top bag will add 10 to 15 cubic feet of storage to your rack and is weatherproof. It features a unique cinching system to keep all of your gear secure.

The Tuffy Aluminum roof rack lock box is a great (but not inexpensive) solution to hauling gear on your roof. It's lightweight construction is weatherproof and very secure. This box mounts to the stock FJ roof rack, and may not be compatible with aftermarket racks.

The most popular commercial internal cargo box also comes from Tuffy. Their FJ Security Cargo Drawer is a heavy duty steel drawer that mounts in the rear cargo area of the FJ. When mounted, side flaps allow access to jack storage and additional side storage. The drawer can be mounted up to 4" off the floor to allow more storage room underneath.

Springtail Solutions has a few great options for storing items inside your FJ. They've engineered two different rack options that use MOLLE style bags to store nearly anything you need. The M-PAC Rack mounts securely to the rear door, and provides approximately 40" x 10" of mounting surface. Springtail sells a combo for this rack that includes 7 bags (including front door pouches & a hidden compartment bag). If you need a heavy duty rack



for either side of your cargo area, the Side Rack HD is a great solution as well. This rack is great for securing CO2 tanks, fire extinguishers, or anything else you need to the sides of your cargo area.



## DIY Projects

Your imagination is really the only thing limiting you for DIY storage options. We've seen dozens of different box, rack, and platform designs for FJ Cruisers. Below are just a few of our favorites to help inspire you for your own creation.

### Jock's Custom Storage Box/Platform



Our friend Jock from Colorado built a spectacular custom box & platform. Features of this design include a removable extension that extends the sleeping area and integrated axe & shovel storage, as well as a platform for his CO2 tank & fire extinguisher.

### "The Box", by Steve Bolander (LandCruiserSeve)



Considered by some to be the "ultimate" box, Steve put a lot of forethought in to his custom solution. This box includes two large rear drawers in the rear cargo area and another large box where the rear seats used to be. Steve then added an additional platform right behind the front seats that extends the sleeping area 19". He fits a full queen size airbed in the back, which makes this a great solution for FJ campers.

### Rear storage rack from Don

Don's total cost on his rear door storage setup was a scant \$20. That puts this mod on our 'ultra' inexpensive list. It's a simple setup that allows him to carry several MOLLE style bags.



### Athena's Saddlebag Storage

Since Bill & Athena chose to mount their spare tire on the roof, there was a great mounting point on the back of their BC that could be put to use. They started with a generic backpack, but very recently moved to a saddle bag setup. Not only does this setup give them more room, the leather & chrome matches the style of their very custom FJ to a tee.



These few examples are just a taste of what can be accomplished with a little imagination. We're sure there are plenty of great solutions we haven't seen as well. So if you have a great storage solution, let us know about it! Send a description and a few pictures to [fjc@fjc-mag.com](mailto:fjc@fjc-mag.com) and we'll add them to the FJC Magazine website.



# D.I.Y. RTT

(Roof Top Tent)

By Al  
aka SwiCago

My Family and I decided we'd join the Kokopelli Expedition this year, but heard that the desert has snakes and scorpions. This concerned me a bit, since my son is 2.5yrs old and my wife was 13weeks pregnant and the nearest hospital was easily 60miles away. I thought long and hard about buying a roof top tent. My wife even approved it, like she does all my mods (cracks whip). However, the least expensive RTT I knew of was \$850, excluding shipping. Some can even go for as much as \$3,000 . . . ouch. Knowing that we'd probably only use such a tent 2-3 times year, I could not justify such an expense. I told my wife "I can do this...I'll do it myself". She just gave me that look, you know, the one where she is thinking "mmm hmmm".

I started thinking about my options and then I came across a unique Roof rack, The African Outback. It's main unique feature is an integrated channel system. The rack comes with a hefty price tag of about \$1100, but it is made of aluminum, so less weight on the roof. However the channel system gives endless add on options.



DIY lock box, DIY slideable light tabs, DIY jerry can holder and no...drilling...ever!

Not knowing exactly how I would mount a DIY RTT, I ordered the rack anyway. A week later, it was in my garage waiting to be mounted. I leaned it against my FJ...Yes, I leaned it against my FJ, those that know me, know why ;).

I gave it a good look over and

then noticed it not only had a channel system on the top, but on the bottom as well. I grinned, because I knew this was going to be super easy and cheap to do. So off to the hardware store I went. I Spent the next day fabricating my DIY RTT and got my wife's approval once finished and setup. She was really surprised at the outcome and how fast I got it done. I was glad too, and super happy that my kid loved it.



So here it is...Behold the Ghetto RTT.

## What You'll Need

Mounting Materials List:

8x 3"x5/16" carriage bolts

4x 2"x5/16" eye bolts

12x washers

10x 5/16" wing nuts

2x square 5/16" nuts

2x hex nuts 5/16"

7' x 7' Tent

Price estimate = ~\$80, depending on tent quality

Slide out and platform Materials List:

4x 4'x 1"x 1" steel or aluminum tubing

40x 1" 5/16" bolts

40x 5/16" plastic washers

40x square 5/16" nuts

Loctite

Silicon

4' x 7' Plywood or HDPE

Price estimate = ~\$60, depending on source and if plywood is used or HDPE

All parts to build Ghetto RTT cost ~\$100.- + \$39 tent = \$139 RTT

The rack however is \$1100, but is super versatile and 100% Aluminum.

The finished product setup. Setup takes about 8-12 minutes :)



# SETUP . . .



1) Park the FJ .. Duh



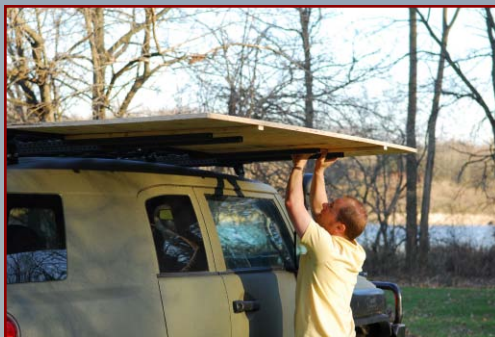
2) Hidden Slide Outs



3) Pull the Slide Outs out



4) A piece of plywood is shifted from the rack onto the slide outs



5) Furring Strips are used as shims to level plywood with rack



6) 8x Carriage Bolts and wing nuts are used to secure, 4x EyeBolts used to secure tent on each corner



7) Cheap \$39 7ft x 7ft tent



8) Throw tent onto platform and enjoy!

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# UPDATE

## Off Road Lighting

Since we covered the off road lighting options in January there have been plenty of changes to our setup. First though, let me tell you how our LightForce Striker lights are holding up.

After about 8,000 miles on the truck, Cruise Moab 2009, and several other off road trips I'm happy to say that the lights work perfectly. All the wiring has held up just fine, the Colorado Winter and very wet Spring have not gotten past the water tight hole in the roof, and all 4 fire right up at the push of a button. These lights are rock solid and we couldn't be more impressed. Now, on to the upgrades.

When we ordered the Aluminess front bumper (see page 14), we also opted for the Eagle

Eye lights that they sell for it. While the bumper supports nearly any driving or fog light, we decided to go with what the manufacturer uses. The lights were installed at the same time as the bumper, and while you could possibly install them later, we recommend doing it at the same time to keep things simple. Since these are essentially fog lights (although they're very useful on the trail), we chose to use a Tacoma fog light switch mounted on the left side of the steering wheel. This allows easy access when the lights are needed, and leaves extra space on the switch panel for future mods. When it comes to lighting up the road or trail, the 100W 5" Eagle Eye Halogen lights work great. They're very secure on the bumper, and we expect them to last a long time.

The last lighting upgrade we just completed is a new product being sold by Toytec Lifts. It's called the Brite Box, and it nearly doubles the output from your OEM headlights. The 5 minute install (including photos) couldn't be easier. In fact, the hardest part of the install was finding a suitable place for the box itself. This is a straight plug & play solution that really works as advertised. As you can see in our quick comparison pics,

*By Shane Williams*

before you install the Brite Box switching your high beams on results in your low beams being deactivated. The special circuitry in Brite Box allows your low beams to stay on when you switch to your brights, so you get long range light from your brights as well as short range light from your low beams. Originally we planned on upgrading our lamps to high output versions, but Brite Box recommends keeping the OEM bulbs so you don't overload the wiring. That's probably a safe bet, and with the Brite Box, you shouldn't need expensive bulbs.

The only issue with our setup at this point is the draw on our battery when all the lights are on. We have 4x 100W LightForce plus another 200W from the Eagle Eye lights. While this theoretically only draws 50amps at 12 volts, it definitely is a drain on the charging system. When turning all the lights on, the engine idle's noticeably slower. Due to this, one of our very near future upgrades will be a dual battery system. Look for that article in an upcoming issue of FJC Magazine.

These two upgrades in addition to our previous LightForce setup really meets our needs for nighttime visibility. We have no issues at all now during night runs, and the chances of not seeing an animal or other obstacle on the trail are very low. If you plan on running trails at night, you'll definitely want to look in to some type of lighting upgrade.



**All lights on: 4X LightForce, 2X Eagle Eye,  
Brite Box Installed**



**Standard FJ headlights, for comparison**



# New Products

**Toytec Lifts is now offering a new product to help brighten up your nights. It's called the BriteBox and it's function is very simple. Once installed, this little device allows your low-beam headlights to stay on when you switch to high-beams. The result is significantly more light on the trail, throwing a much wider beam.**

**The install takes literally 3 minutes, and is a complete plug & play setup.**

**There is no wiring knowledge needed at all, just unplug your headlight and insert the BriteBox plugs inline. That's it!**



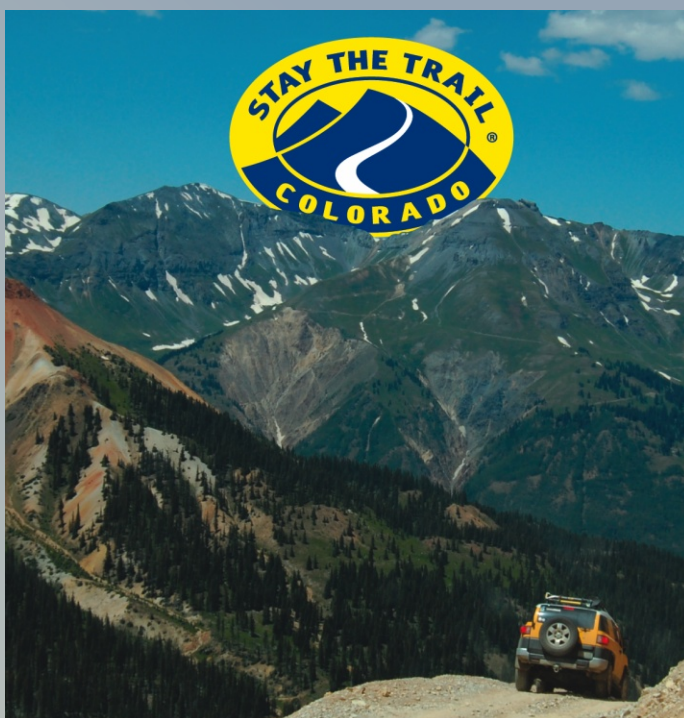
**The BriteBox is available right now through Toytec Lifts at [www.toyteclifts.com](http://www.toyteclifts.com). It retails for \$119.99, but they often run specials for an even better deal.**



**Before BriteBox Install**



**After BriteBox Install**



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**Shovel and axe? Check.**

**Metric nuts and bolts? Check.**

**Recovery gear? Check.**

# Athena is . . . Survival MOM!

Everybody goes through the checklist as they prepare to go on a trail. A simple trail can go bad quickly and you don't want to be caught unprepared. But how do you do it with kids on the trail without packing the whole house? Many people have asked me this in the past. Having my 3 children out on a trail with me is probably one of the best outdoor activities I can do with my famil. I'll admit, it takes a lot of work to prepare the minimal, yet crutial items in case you run into a catastrophe on the trail.

A busted rear differential? No, not that type of catastrophe. I'm talking about running out of diapers on a 12 hour trail. Take it from me, for as many times I've been out on the trail with 3 children, now 7,5, and 3; I've come across quite a few emergencies. We did the Triple in Moab, Utah and prepared for the 12 hour day it's supposed to be. Unfortunately, we gave the baby too much Gatorade (I'll touch on that subject in a little bit), and went through 2x more diapers than I had planned for. Ten hours into the trail and on the very last diaper, I waited until the diaper could burst with a pin prick. One of the hardest decisions to make, I pondered about what I had in our vehicle that would make for a good diaper to last for 2 more hours. While everyone was approaching and getting through the Golden Crack I busted out my MacGyver Mom skills and grabbed a bandana, a couple of pieces of paper towel, a maxi pad, and duct tape and in a matter of a few minutes I whipped together a diaper. We still tell this story and laugh about it. At the time it wasn't all that funny but looking back, it shows how a simple emergency can be handled quickly with things just lying around in your FJ. (Editor: See Page 22 for great FJ Storage ideas), Granted, you may be a maxi pad short.

Following a few guidelines that are simple, practical and not hard to accomplish can get you through the unexpected. One thing I do not recommend is giving a child Gatorade out on the trail. Even though it sounds like a good idea to give your child electrolytes while out in the desert, you'll regret it when it comes out the other end. Carrying more water than you need is always a good idea. You never know when you might need to wash your hands or clean a boo-boo, I've often considered carrying our collapsible water tub/sink. Even though having a store bought first aid kit is a good idea, after having a child, you have a pretty good idea of the things you need and the things you don't. Having a personalized first aid kit and knowing where you put the contents makes for a quicker response. In our first aid kit we carry tweezers, (after a cactus experience) hand sanitizer, band aids, bandage tape, baby Tylenol (or what ever pain reliever/fever reducer you prefer), balmex, (that's good for diaper rashes or a chapped face) a snake bite kit, (something we have never used but may come in handy considering where we travel) and maxi pads, just to list a few. I know guys, for the single men or fathers out there, maxi pads are something that probably isn't going to be floating around in your FJ. Nor do you want it floating in your truck if you're looking to date, but it is probably one of the most useful things to have. They are absorbent and can be used for many applications, whether it's a profusely bleeding wound or soaking up spilled liquids so keep it in mind. We also try to keep bandanas in the car so we have a source of cover for our necks or heads if we're out in the hot sun for too long.



**Improvisation is everything!**

**A plastic bag makes a perfect waterproof cover for a cast.**



We tend to carry foods that are not too quick to expire but easy to pack, like chips, granola bars, or any other types of snacks your kids may like. Even though it's always a good idea to bring a lunch even if it is a short trail, it's always great to have these types of foods in the vehicle in case your caught on the trail with a break down. Bring some non-refrigerated drinks like Capri Sun, they always seem to be a hit and a nice treat after a hot day. Always pack an extra set of clothes, there's nothing worse than sitting in wet or dirty clothes. We also try to bring extra blankets even if it's the hottest day out, you never know if you'll get stuck out later in the evening after it's cooled off. Blankets also make for a comfortable pillow or head support if the child is an infant. These are a few things I have thought of off the top of my head, and each family has different needs. Be mindful of the elements and your surroundings, always plan for the worse scenario, expect the best and enjoy the outdoors with your family!

#### Athena's DIY Diaper How-To:

Hand made diaper, consists of bandana, 2 pieces of paper towel, maxi pad, and duct tape. Considering the size of the child you'll have to fold the bandana accordingly. Fold the bandana to make a triangle, place the two pieces of paper towel down in the middle and affix the paper towels (if you feel it's necessary) with some duct tape on the outer corners. Next grab a piece of duct tape, loop it and put it on the back side of the maxi pad and adhere it to the paper towels to keep it in place. Once that is done lay the child on the diaper, with the lower middle section of the triangle cover the baby and make sure the maxi pad is in the right place to absorb any elimination. Grab the two sides of the bandanas triangle and tie them over the middle section of the bandana. Once it is in place duct tape it in front to keep the whole diaper secured.

**Athena Innis is an avid 4x4 & rock crawling enthusiast. Her and her husband Bill can be found on the most challenging trails throughout Colorado & Moab on most weekends. To keep up with Athena, check out her profile on [fjcruiserforums.com](http://fjcruiserforums.com) & [coloradofjs.com](http://coloradofjs.com)**



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## **FJ Bruisers**

<http://www.fjbruisers.org>

## **Sin City Wicked FJ's**

<http://www.sincitywickedfjs.com/>

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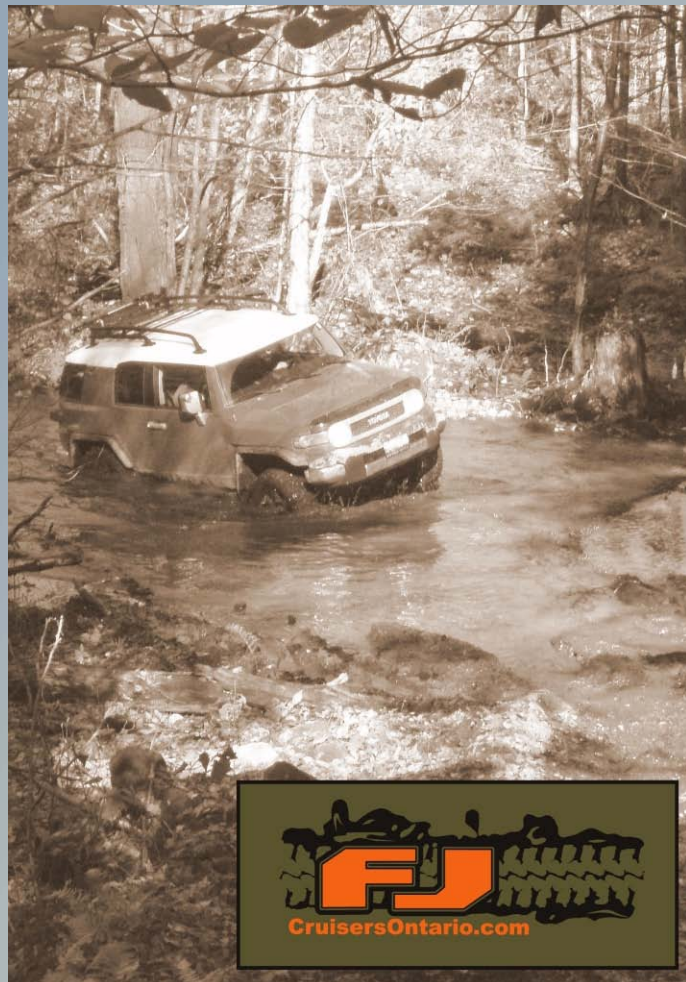
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# FJ Cruiser Events

## Coal Mine Cruiser Classic

Dates: Jul 9-11 2009

Location: Rausch Creek ORP

Contact: Gotham City Land Cruisers

## 2009 FJ Summit

Dates: July 15-19 2009

Location: Ouray, CO

Contact: FJ Summit, <http://www.fjsummit.org>

## Black Hills Cruiser Classic

Dates: Jul 15-18 2009

Location: Deadwood, South Dakota

Contact: Dakota Territory Cruisers

## 3rd Annual Thrill on the Hill

Dates: Sep 4-7 2009 (Labor Day Weekend)

Location: Cloudcroft, NM

Contact: <http://www.nmfjrally.com>

## Tall Corn Cruiser Classic

Dates: Sept 4-6 2009

Location: Knoxville, Iowa

Contact: Tall Corn Cruisers

## Great American Toyota Off Road Rally (GATOR 2009)

Dates: Sept 24-27 2009

Location: Seymour, Missouri

Contact: <http://www.gatorevent.com>

## Southern Cruiser Crawl

Dates: Oct 16-18 2009

Location: Gardendale, Alabama

Contact: Cottonland Cruisers

**FOR THE LATEST**

**INFORMATION,**

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**AND CLICK ON**

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# FJ Nation

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