

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

A Conversation with Dan Busey (aka Cruiser Dan)

Words: Matt Farr

Photos: From many people





John Baker, Ben Ashcraft, Greg Luer, Dan Busey, and Steve Crase at the tech inspection station at Cruise Moab 2006. Photo by Steve Crase

Dan Busey is a longtime TLCA member known to many as Cruiser Dan. For many years, he was the go-to parts guy at American Toyota in Albuquerque, who became “internet famous” because he knew more about Land Cruisers than any other parts guy in North America. He’s been generous with his knowledge of Toyota parts and maintenance, especially on ih8mud, where he’s posted 26,719 messages as of this writing. More recently, Dan has been the in-house expert at the Land Cruiser Heritage Museum in Salt Lake City. Late last year, he announced his impending retirement, and then in June, he finally stepped back and retired for good. Our team here at Toyota Trails thought the timing was right to feature him in our Member Spotlight.

I’ve known Dan since meeting him at Cruise Moab in 2001, but one thing I didn’t realize until this conversation is his amazing recall of dates and numbers. It’s no wonder he was such a legendary parts guy — he has everything committed to memory!

What was the first Toyota you owned, and when did you get it?

My association with Toyota dates back to 1965 or 1966 when my Uncle Bryce, my dad’s brother, bought an RT43 Toyota Corona.

It had a two-speed Toyoglide automatic transmission. He was in the Air Force and was a Load Master for C-130 aircraft. My dad thought it was cool, so he bought a 1968 RT43 Corona. My mom liked his car, so she bought a 1969 RT43 Corona four door sedan. That’s when my family’s association with Toyota got started. A few years later, my dad got a 1972 Corona Mark II RT72 four-door sedan, and then my mom got a ’73 Celica. These were all new cars.

In 1974, I turned 16 and I wasn’t having any of that. I wanted a truck. I had a little bit of money for a down payment. So my dad helped me buy a brand new 1974 Dodge W200, three-quarter-ton Power Wagon.

Wow!

It cost \$5,338. I had a 36-month note for \$98.33 a month. It was a really good truck. I was one of those kids in high school where everyone else was like, “How the hell did you manage to do that?” I was envied a bit, I think.

Then in 1976, when I graduated high school, I wanted to get a car that didn’t get 10 miles per gallon to go back and forth to the

*Dan's 80-series
pulling his camper
at Cruise Moab
2014. Photo by
Daniel Markofsky*



University of Utah. So my mom helped me get with Tony Hernandez and Hugh Gardner at the Toyota dealership in Murray, and on December 10, 1976, I bought a 1977 Toyota Celica GT liftback. It was 337 rust orange metallic with a saddle-colored interior, serial number RA29059563.

I can't believe you remember the serial number.

RA29059563, I'll repeat that.

That was my first Toyota. It had 210 miles on it when I bought it. Much later, I had to sell that car and my 1985 Supra to get enough money for the down payment on my 1993 FZJ80. The Celica only had 38,655 miles on it, and my Supra had about 64,000 miles on it. I had to sell them both to make the down payment for that 80.

Holy cats.

That's how much that 80 cost. In 1993, it was \$40,460. I was asking myself, What in the hell are you thinking? Why are you spending this much money and giving up two super cool cars? By God, you better never sell this truck. Well, I still have it.

You bought your 80 new in 1993? The same one I've seen you drive all these years?

Yes. It is that truck. JT3DJ81WXP0014647.

What did you see in the '93 that made you say "Yeah, I gotta get me one of those?"

We need to step back a little bit into my automotive career. I started in the car business with Toyota Murray on February 2, 1979. I went to work in the parts department. Hugh Gardner and Tony Hernandez were the owners of that dealership. A few months later, in May 1979, some guy named Larry Miller showed up in town and bought Toyota Murray from those guys. Larry retained me. He kept me as an employee in the parts department. I shifted gears from working at a sleepy mom and pop dealership to working for a guy who was very driven. I actually had started as a delivery driver, then became a counter man, and then became a parts manager in about a three month period because the parts department was cycling through people fast.

When Larry bought the store, he took me aside and said, "I have to tell you that I brought my own parts manager with me from Colorado." And I said, "Thank God. I don't know what I'm doing, and I'd really like to learn." I guess it stuck with him, because I worked for that family in the automotive operation for 37 years. When I retired in April 2016, I was the last remaining original employee.

That's amazing.

My interest in Toyota started with my 1977 Celica but it didn't end there. In 1979, I was hoping to get one of the first Toyota four-wheel drive trucks, so I sold the Dodge Power Wagon. Those

minitrucks came out in January of '79 and I wanted one really bad. But I couldn't get one because they were selling them for an enormous amount of money over list price and I couldn't afford it.

The next year, I talked Larry into selling me a four-wheel drive truck without ripping my lips off and throwing them over into the corner of the showroom like they were doing with everybody else. I was able to buy a 1980 long bed four-wheel drive pickup in 489 beige. It was a four-speed sport with the stripes and tilt wheel and power steering. I added air conditioning to it. The VIN was RN47015284 on that truck. That was my first Toyota four-wheel drive.

I owned that truck until late 1984. While I owned it, I put an Arkay turbocharger on and hauled around a 7.5- foot cab-over camper. I loved it to death, but I always kind of liked Cruisers. I had this little itch about getting a Land Cruiser. I kind of liked FJ55s because I wanted a four door wagon, like a throwback to my dad's 1960 Dodge Town Wagon, but I just couldn't wrap my head around them. I liked my 1980 truck, so that's what I stuck with.

In 1984, I traded in my 1980 pickup for a 1984 four wheel drive SR5 extra cab pickup, and I drove that until 1989. I quit caring about Toyota four wheel drive trucks when the solid front axle went away. I still cared about Land Cruisers because they still had solid axles.

I replaced my 1984 truck with a 1989 Dodge Cummins one

ton, four wheel drive pickup. 1B7KM3682KSO57741. I still own that truck today.

No kidding!

It's down at my home in Albuquerque, and that's another vehicle I will never sell because I met Sarah, my wife, because of that truck. I converted it to a crew cab about 20 years ago. That's another story.

I transitioned from the Toyota store as assistant parts manager to the Subaru store as a parts manager from '83 to '87. Then from '87 to '90, I was a parts manager at Chevrolet. These are all in Salt Lake City and are all Larry Miller dealerships, of course. I worked for the Miller family my entire career. To this day — I'm still working for Greg. More than 46 years now. It's a long haul, I haven't decided if I like it. I'm still waiting to see what happens.

[Much Laughter]. The jury is still out.

Right. In 1990, I'd had a gut-full of dealing with General Motors parts. So I pulled in a trump card that Larry promised me about changing to a different spot. I said, I'm done with this job in this store. I'll do another job in this store or I'll do this job somewhere else. And they said, well, need a parts manager at American Toyota in Albuquerque. That's exactly what I wanted to do. The day I left Toyota, I wanted to be back. So I went down there and checked it out and decided absolutely yes. I moved my life to Albuquerque, New Mexico and became the parts manager at



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American Toyota on April 1, 1990. I ran that parts department until the end of April 2016. That's 26 years!

About the time when I first started there, the first 80 series Land Cruisers showed up on the lot. These were FJ80s, not FZJ80s. I thought to myself, it's a solid front axle, which I like. It's got a nice-looking body, which I like. But it has the 3FE, which doesn't have a lot of power, and it's an automatic. And it had coil springs which was a big change. I kind of pushed it off, but I kept my eye on them.

In the fall of 1992, the FZJ80s showed up with a 4.5 liter double overhead cam, 24 valve fuel injected six cylinder engine with seven main bearings. And I thought, wow, that I want that!

I drove one of the first ones that came in. I told Mike, my general manager at the time, that I wanted to buy one. He said, that's going to be a little tough right now, because we are selling every Cruiser we get and we're getting all the money for them. I can't make a deal for anyone.

I decided to sit back and wait. I did bring one home and showed it to Sarah. She liked it just fine until she saw the window sticker and was like, screw that!

You can imagine how that would shake out.

But I really was fixated on the 80. I had to have one. I had some contacts at the Toyota Denver Regional Office, and they had an

Top left: Daniel Markofsky visiting Dan Busey at the famous American Toyota Parts counter in 2013. Photo by Daniel Markofsky

Top right: Dan Busey and Onur Azeri in the 2010 #341 Dakar Rally Land Cruiser. Photo by Onur Azeri



80 that was a pool car, a demo, that was being driven by their general manager. It was green with a leather interior. It didn't have diff locks, but it checked all of the other boxes. I really wanted diff locks, at least I thought I did. I didn't know what the hell they were, but I had to have them.

The 80 in Denver came up to be retired from demo service. Normally when they would cycle out the demos, they would auction them off to local dealers or give them to a dealer based on their earnings. Instead, the guys in the Denver region got in touch with my general manager and said, "We're going to send you this Land Cruiser, but the only reason you're getting it is because it's going to Busey. You have to sell it to him." He agreed. So it showed up at American Toyota in November 1993 with 7,147 miles on it. It had a little ding in the passenger quarter panel near the quarter window and had a bunch of M&Ms and gummy bears in between the rear seats. I was able to get it for just over \$33,000 which was a \$7,000 discount.

It was used, but it wasn't a "used car" because it was a factory demo. I was the



first retail purchaser of that vehicle. And I still have it. That was the start of my Land Cruiser journey.

***So when you wanted to modify it, what did you do?
There was no Slee Off Road back then, right?***

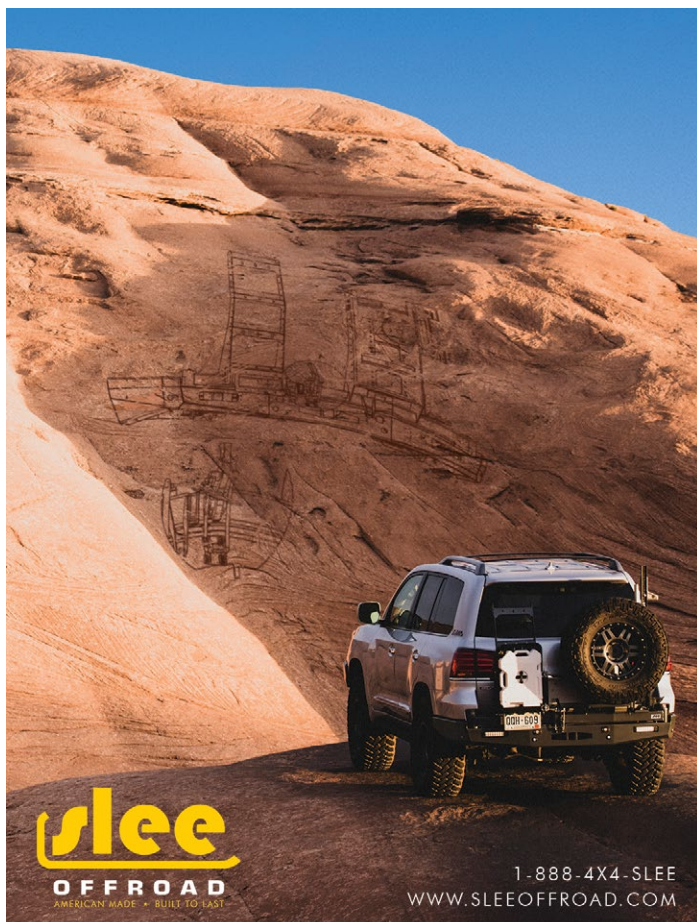
Downey Off Road and Man-A-Fre were the only outfits I knew. The first modification I did to my 80 was a suspension lift. I bought the kit from Downey in early 1994. It was only springs — no shocks, no nothing. Their kit was actually for an FJ80, not an FZJ80. The rear springs were the same length left and right because that's what they were on an FJ80. For the FZJ80, there was a spacer that went on the left side because of the differences in the axle housing, but Downey didn't say that. So I put these Downey springs on my truck and it leaned to the left. I looked in the parts catalog and found a part number for a spacer for an FJ80 with a trailering package. So I bought that 10mm metal spacer and put it on the left rear corner. The truck was level and I was happy.

You were at the very beginning of it.

I was on the front end of the curve, absolutely. I was one of the guys that did everything first.

Tell us about your engine modifications.

It is supercharged with methanol injection on top of that. TRD introduced a Land Cruiser supercharger kit in the summer of



2000. The kit was made for the later versions, '95 to '97. They called them Kazuma superchargers at that time. Kazuma was their non-factory, aftermarket, off-road racing kind of stuff. To be allowed to buy them from TRD, you had to be a Kazuma dealer. I reached out to TRD and became a Kazuma dealer in the summer of 2000. I had to buy five kits to be able to be a dealer.

I bought a kit for myself and installed it in August. It was a four day deal. It wasn't supposed to fit on my '93, but I made it work. The 1993-94 early trucks had a PAIR reed valve air injection into the exhaust manifolds that the '95 didn't have, and they had a Bosch air flapper flow meter versus a heated wire like the '95 and up. So I had a bit of a handicap because of that metering system. The way that I overcame that was by fitting methanol injection to the truck. The methanol injection is a flow jet, 90 psi demand pump with a reservoir and a 45-degree stainless steel oil-fired boiler nozzle in the intake. When the engine RPM is above 3100 and the boost in the manifold is above three and a half pounds, it kicks the pump on and injects 50% methanol and distilled water into the intake at a rate of 14 gallons per hour. That reduces the air intake temperature by about 70 degrees, and gives an octane boost so the engine won't knock and punch holes in the pistons.

You did that at the same time as the original install of the supercharger?

No, about a about a year after. It's been running just dandy for 24 years. The cylinder head has never been off on my engine.

Does anybody else run that setup? What parts are needed?

I was actually the second guy to do it. The first guy to do it was Bill Kirsopp, Photoman on ih8mud. Bill had a '97 and worked with a company called Kennedy's Dynotune in Tonawanda, New York. They modified one of Kennedy's 5-liter turbocharged Mustang kits to work on a 1FZ. I don't know if anybody else ever did the same modification. There are two vehicles, mine and Bill's.

What is the story of your Dodge pickup that was the reason you met Sarah?

When I was moving from Salt Lake to Albuquerque, a childhood friend of mine, Jack and his wife Jeanette, offered to store my furniture and a few other things in their garage. I was at their house several times with the Dodge truck.

There was a very attractive young lady that lived across the street from Jack and Jeanette. She saw my truck out in front of their house and said to them, that's a really nice truck. Is that yours? They said, no, that belongs to our friend. A light went on in Jeanette's head and she thought, we need to introduce these two kids. She was a bit of a matchmaker.

And they did, 34 years ago. Right now, I am sitting upstairs in the house that Sarah was living in that day. It's her dad's house. He's 97 now and we're taking care of him. When I retired from the car business, I came back up to Salt Lake to help look after him. That's how I got hooked up with the museum.



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Top: Dan Busey poses with Land Cruiser 300 & 250 Chief Engineer Keita Moritsu. Photo by Kurt Williams

Bottom: Dan Busey mans his battle station at the Land Cruiser Heritage Museum in SLC, Utah. Photo by Kurt Williams



Changing gears, when did you hear about TLCA?

I had to be a TLCA member to go to Cruise Moab in 2001. So I became one. I'm looking at an old card in my wallet: member since 1/22/2001. My member number is 11,332. TLCA was an avenue to get in a little deeper and go to TLCA events. I've been a member ever since.

What do you think the future looks like for Land Cruisers and for TLCA?

The new 250 has been a successful hit. I quite like 'em. From a dimensional standpoint, they're almost an 80. They have the exact same wheelbase. The 250 is a bit wider and longer. They have the same feel when you're sitting in them looking out the window as an 80. I believe Toyota USA sold more 250-series Land Cruisers in the first seven months than it sold 200-series Land Cruisers in the entire run from 2008 to 2021. The future of the Land Cruiser is alive and well.

Does the new 250 uphold the reputation of the Land Cruiser? Absolutely yes. Is it perfect? No. I'm an old school guy. I like a solid axle at both ends. Real men don't eat quiche and a real four wheel drive vehicle has a solid axle on both ends. And I like a split tailgate.

I use the tailgate on my 80 every time I take the truck out.

Ironically, one of the people that misses the tailgate is the guy who designed the truck! Jin Kim told me his original design for the truck had a split tailgate and it was nixed by the powers that be for whatever reason. My uneducated guess: it was too costly. But Jin



originally drew his design for the 250 with a split tailgate. Jin's a cool guy.

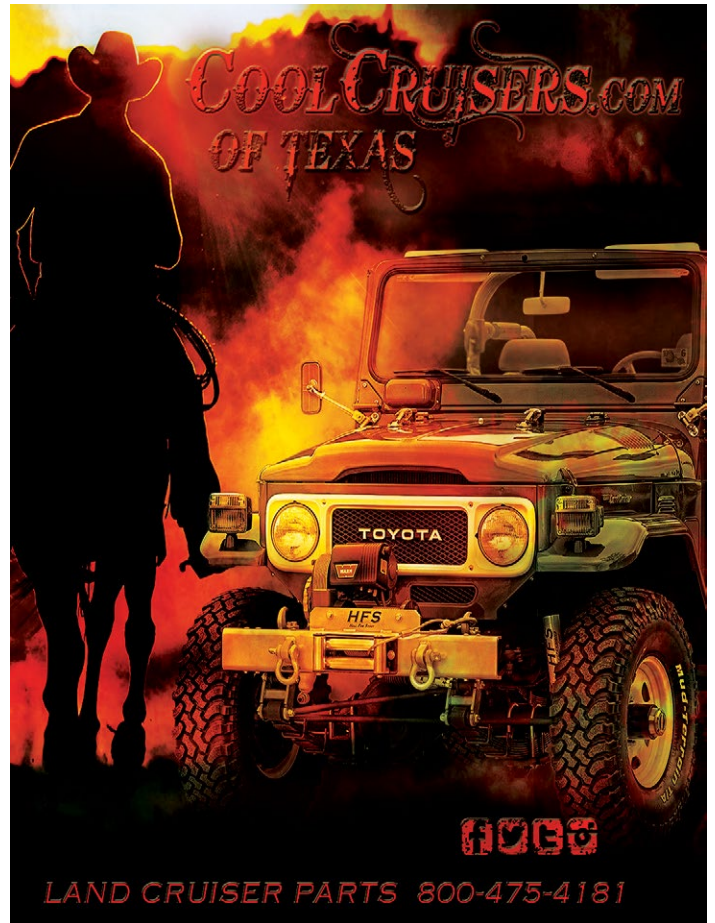
I remember you on ih8mud. Before that, were you on the Land Cruiser Mailing List?

I was not on L-Cool and I was not on the LCML, but I was on the Specter Off-Road forum. A lot of the old guys were on that forum. It was very heavily moderated and there was no advertising of any kind. I flew under the radar. Specter was trying to sell everything, right? There were inferences and innuendos that maybe I could help somebody if they needed something, but that was about it.

Then in March 2003, Specter decided to shut their forum down. They didn't want to deal with it. Some guy named Woody from an obscure thing called "I Hate Mud dot com" offered to give us a home. So our group, mostly 80 guys, moved over to mud. I've been on that forum ever since.

That's when I became familiar with you as a resource in the community.

That's when it started. I could be me, the Toyota parts guy in New Mexico that knew what you needed and what you didn't need. When you called me, if you wanted something I didn't think you needed, I would tell you.



*Praying to the
"Land Cruiser Parts
Shaman" at Cruise
Moab 2006. Photo
by Ken Romer*



If you went to your local Toyota dealership and went to the parts counter, those guys are pretty good about selling you parts, but...

Those guys aren't enthusiasts. It was a lifestyle for me. I ran parts departments for over 30 years and it's not easy. This is a six-day-of-work, retail car business. It's not easy on your personal life. It's a slog. You're in charge of a million dollars of inventory that you have to justify and chasing receivables from body shops that haven't paid. The one thing that brought me joy every single day was Land Cruiser people who needed help. That's what made it worth coming to work and unlocking the door.

On behalf of the entire community, thank you for being that guy. You helped me out a lot. I remember calling you when I needed to fix something. You would tell me "Here's what you need."

And here's what you don't need! But I also would tell you if you weren't asking for enough. It would be poor for me to sell you a water pump because that's all you asked for. The water pump didn't come with a gasket, and you can't do the job without the gasket.

A lot of people just don't have that knowledge.

Apparently, I am somewhat infamous for an analogy that I used

quite frequently. When somebody would do A without doing B and C along with it, my analogy was: "That's like taking a shower and then putting your dirty shorts back on."

How did you get hooked into the Land Cruiser Heritage Museum job?

Greg Miller is the driving force that has created this wonderful international resource. The nucleus of it started with Greg and Kurt Williams on a road trip from Salt Lake City to Wyoming to pick up a BJ70 soft top. Kurt says when the phone rings and you see the caller ID is Greg Miller, it's either going to be weird or a long road trip. On that trip Greg said, "What if we had a museum? What would we need to have?" Kurt had a legal pad, so they took notes about all the models the museum would need to have and other ancillary things. That's how it started.

Now, my association with the museum. Greg knew I was a Land Cruiser person. Ironically, decades ago, he actually reported to me as a parts driver and a shelf stocker at the Toyota store. He was a teenage kid we put to work in the parts department. Greg, as CEO, knew how much business I did selling Land Cruiser parts. I sold more Land Cruiser parts than any other dealer in the United States for many years. Almost a million dollars a year, just in Land Cruiser parts. So he knew I had that passion for them. One year at Cruise Moab, we were visiting around the campfire and he said, You know, when you get tired of pounding your head

The Land Cruiser Parts Shaman

Story by Ken Romer

In 2006, Cruise Moab was headquartered at the Spanish Trail RV Park on the south end of town. We'd been having some fun with Dan in his role as the "Land Cruiser Parts Shaman." Jeff Zepp, a longtime Rising Sun member, future TLCA president, and well-known participant on the old Land Cruiser Mailing List, was hanging out with us at the picnic tables.

I told Dan he should read Jeff's future, and since he didn't have any chicken bones, we could use bottle caps. Dan was up for the challenge. He put some bottle caps in the top lid of a cooler and shook them around.

Dan: I see a green Land Cruiser.

Jeff: I have a green Land Cruiser.

Dan shook the bottle caps some more.

Dan: I see the green Land Cruiser going up a hill in Moab.

Jeff: We are in Moab, and I am doing a trail tomorrow.

Another shake.

Dan: I see this green Land Cruiser breaking down on the trail tomorrow!

Jeff: Oh no, what should I do???

One more shake.

Dan: You should replace any aftermarket parts you have installed before the trail run.

Jeff: I will, I will! (*muttering*) I need to remember what I did.

against a parts counter, I'd really like to have you come up and help me run the museum. So that's how the seed was planted.

There are so many amazing vehicles at the museum. Are there any in particular you wish you had in your own driveway?

Oh, absolutely. My favorite vehicle in the collection is a 1983 FJ45 troop carrier from Australia that was restored by a gentleman in Perth by the name of Andras Koka. I watched Andras build that vehicle over about a two year period on ih8mud. Then after he completed it, I was able to wrestle it away from him. It's by far my favorite, hands down, no questions asked. Everything you can't see on that vehicle is every bit as nice as everything you can see: inside the frame rails, underneath the dashboard, inside the heater boxes,



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inside the AC evaporator, inside the doors, ad nauseam. And it has three extremely rare factory options: power steering, air conditioning and a digital clock all on the same truck. I recently had an opportunity to meet Andras in person at CruiserFest and spend some time with him. I just love the guy. He's awesome.

My second favorite is the Canadian 1978 FJ55 that is an unrestored, almost-perfect, 18,000 kilometer survivor. It is undoubtedly the nicest original FJ55 in the world.

The blue and white one? That's a remarkable vehicle.

Yes. Only a few parts on that vehicle have been replaced. The battery. It has a pair of Gabriel shocks on the front axle. And the exhaust: the head pipe, muffler and tail pipe rusted from the inside out because the truck was never driven far enough to dry out the exhaust. You know, FJ55s will rust when sitting still in a dry room. But there's no rust on that truck at all.

It has Dunlop Snow Cruiser H78-15 tires. That's the factory tire. The oil filter on the engine is Toyota Nippon Denso. Back in the day, filters of that generation were battleship gray with gold yellow paint markings. Toyota changed from gray filters to black filters in 1979-80. It's got a gray filter on it.

So those are my two gems.

Do you personally own any other Land Cruisers besides your 80?

I have a 1988 BJ74 turbo diesel from Japan. And Sarah has a 1995 80.

The BJ74 is the mid wheel base, removable fiberglass roof variant of the 70 series. BJ74s were sold only in Australia and Japan. They have a 13BT 3.4 liter direct injected four cylinder turbo diesel. Those were the only markets that got them as a turbo diesel. It has a full floating rear axle and factory cable locking differentials, not electric. And a factory power take-off winch. I've had it at Cruise Moab a couple years.

What other TLCA events have you been to?

Rubithon, a couple times. We went in 2008 and 2009. We bought Sarah's truck in '08 from Christo Slee to run the Rubithon. I'll tell you the story.

First, here's a joke I tell about Land Cruisers and families. I was working on my 80 one evening in the backyard on the concrete pad. I was integrating a custom trailer receiver hitch into the Slee bumper and I was laying under the truck on cardboard. Sarah came out to let me know that it was time for dinner. And she said, When are you going to be finished?

I said, I've probably got about 10 or 15 minutes.

She said, No, with the truck. When are you going to be finished with the truck?



I couldn't answer that.

I also joke that my Land Cruiser, my 80, had a noise issue. There was a whining noise coming from the passenger front area. I figured out what caused that, and I bought my wife one. She didn't like riding around. She wanted to participate. She wanted to go to Rubithon! I told her, point blank, there's no way in hell I'm running that trail with my truck because it will get banged up. She said, Well, I want to do it, so buy me a truck, build me a truck. And I'm like, okay.

Christo Slee had a 1995 80 that was out of New York. It had been tipped over on its side and had fairly substantial body work with rust underneath. It wasn't nice. She didn't want a nice one. She said, I don't want a nice one because you're going to get mad at me when I dent it — not if I dent it, but when I dent it.

So Christo had this '95 truck. It was unlocked. It had a frozen fluid coupler in the transfer case so the front drive shaft was out of it. He also had a '94 with diff locks and a blown motor. I bought both trucks for \$6,000 total. We drove up to Denver with a borrowed trailer and put the dead one on the trailer. Sarah drove the '95 back to Albuquerque. Believe it or not, a stock 80 series with a locked-up viscous coupler in the transfer case and no front drive shaft will get 17 miles to the gallon on the highway.

That's like a record.

That was the only time that truck ever did anywhere near that good.

Left: Dan and Sarah at Cruise Moab 2006. Photo by Ken Romer

Right: LCHM Curator Dan Busey, LCHM BOD members Oakley Miller, Greg Miller & Kurt Williams at the 2024 LC250 launch event. Photo by Kurt Williams



We took the axles out of the '94 and put them under her truck. Then we lifted it and built it up. And then we ran Rubithon with it. We did Rubithon two years in a row with her truck. She drove the whole time, both times. Since then, to be completely frank, she's become a better off-road driver than I am. She's done Hell's Gate, and there's no way I'm going up that thing.

You make a great team. She's the driver...

And I fix what she breaks!

Here's the funniest thing about this whole deal. She really is a super good driver, but I can't spot her.

She will not listen to me when I spot. Somebody else has to spot her.

Does she listen to other spotters?

Yes. Do you know Andy Pollack? He's one of the NorCal guys. He's an emergency room physician in Sacramento and one of the world's nicest guys. Andy historically has been the guy who led

the Rubithon wagon run. When he was the trail leader on that run, he spotted Sarah because I couldn't. He spotted her on the exact same lines I was trying to put her on. He could tell her, but I couldn't. That's okay. I came to peace with it a long time ago. The only time I'll ever spot her now is if there's only two of us and we don't have a choice.

You have successfully navigated a long term marriage.

She's the best thing that ever happened to me. It's a fact.

You've got a couple kids, don't you? Are either of them into Toyota 4x4s or Land Cruisers?

I have two sons, Ben and Patrick. We bought a '94 80 back in 2015 from Pighead with the intention to give it to Ben for school. He never warmed up to it, so we ended up giving it to my younger son, Pat. He drove it to school at New Mexico Tech down in Socorro. He liked it quite a bit.

In November 2016, Pat was coming home from school in



Socorro, which is about 75 miles south of Albuquerque. He was driving on I-25 and fell asleep. He ran it off the road and rolled it two and three-quarter times and flattened it. He got out of that with a black eye, a bruised shoulder, and a concussion. The truck saved his life.

We still have it. We kept it. It's down in Albuquerque under the carport with a flat roof. It's got a good frame and a lot of good parts on it. We kept it as a parts truck, but it's still in the family. Now Pat has a Tacoma pickup and my old 2009 Dodge Challenger SRT8.

You made the decision to step away from the Heritage Museum. What prompted your decision and what do you intend to do next?

I have been totally immersed in the car business for almost 45 years. That took a huge toll on my family. I made good money and was able to provide a roof and resources and all of that stuff to enable a family to exist. But I was not the active participant I should have been, and I want to try to make up for that while I still can. In other words, I don't want to die at my desk.

The challenge for the museum is finding someone who knows what I know. I don't just mean about the history of Land Cruisers. I mean about how to get a carburetor to come back to life, how to tow a particular kind of truck, how to control parts inventory — swag inventory. To find someone who knows everything I know is a tough thing.

When I dropped the bomb on Greg and told him I was ready to retire, he first said something about finding my replacement. Then he stopped and said, “No. You cannot be replaced. We need a successor.” I thought that was really nice.

I love the museum. It's been an honor and a privilege for me to be a part of it and to meet thousands of Land Cruiser enthusiasts from all over the world. It's an unbelievable treat to visit with these people and share their love for these vehicles... well, they're not vehicles. They are family members. My 80 is a family member. I got it the year Sarah and I got married. Both of my kids came home from the hospital in it after they were born. How do you put a value on that? It's the family photo album on wheels. Trips to Lake Powell, every year. Towing the boat with a canoe on the roof. Cruise Moab. Backcountry trips. We were in a Land Cruiser for all of it. It's irreplaceable. 🏠

Top: Dan in the driver's seat of an FJ40. Photo by Onur Azeri

Bottom: Dan and Onur's trip to Japan. Photo by Onur Azeri





Left: Dan with his other Land Cruiser, a BJ74. Photo by Onur Azeri

Right: Sarah behind the wheel of her '95 80-series that is built for the tough trails. Photo by Dominick Boucher

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CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS



Matt Farr

Matt Farr has been a member of TLCA since 1996, the same year he bought a mustard yellow 1975 FJ40 with a blown engine. He joined the Rising Sun club in Colorado in 2000 and attended his first Cruise Moab the next year. He quickly fell in love with the Utah desert and has helped organize Cruise Moab nearly every year since. Over the last 20 years, he has driven his 1996 FZJ80 all over the western U.S. including the Rubicon trail in California. Farr's writing and photography have appeared in Toyota Trails many times over the years. In addition to writing, he's created designs for Cruise Moab and TLCA shirts, stickers, dash plaques, etc., in addition to his own "Hell Yeah!" merchandise which reflects his general attitude towards most things. Regardless, he lives in the shadow of his lovely and talented bride, Karie Farr, who is TLCA's member managing director & web manager.



Chris Heron

Chris lives with his wife in Mission Viejo, CA and both have the travel bug, having been to all 50 states as well as numerous countries. Chris got interested in Land Cruisers while living in the Philippines in the 1970's and his first ride in a Land Cruiser was in a Makati Police FJ40 (not going to jail!). Chris bought an FJ40 in 1988, which he still owns. In 1989, Chris met a group from the old Ventura County TLCA chapter on a local trail. It was more Land Cruisers than he had ever seen together in one spot and was immediately interested in joining the group. They invited Chris to the annual Thanksgiving Run and he has been a TLCA member ever since. Chris has a built FJ40, a stock FJ40, and a built LX470. Long distance travel is handled mostly by the LX470 but the built FJ40 is still the favorite of the fleet.



Allison Rudd

Allison Rudd lives in Raleigh, NC, with her husband and two daughters. Her friends and family call her by her nickname, "Nissa." She is an editor, writing tutor, and stay-at-home mom. She has just recently been introduced to the world of Toyotas. She lived in Boone for two years and visits as often as she can. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, stand-up paddleboarding, and eating pasta.

