



*Heart of the South Cruisers, Toyota Land Cruiser Association Chapter*  
*A fellowship for all Toyota 4x4 owners and Toyota off-road enthusiasts*



## CALENDAR EVENTS

*Monthly Meeting:*

*December 8th*  
*8:30 a.m.*  
*Bill Penney Toyota*

*Scheduled Events:*

*Possible trail ride after*  
*meeting*

## Heart of the South Cruisers purpose statement:

HOT South Cruisers is a growing group with a positive attitude and desire to have fun as we help one another in skills and projects.

## **Swap Shop**

### **Parts Needed**

Set of leaf springs- Craig

1 used right rear tail light lens for a 76' FJ40- Michael B

### **Parts for Sale**

A pair of doors 72' \$75.00

Windshield frame 72' \$100.00

2 heaters 72' \$50.00 each  
– Michael B

## **Minutes from the Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> meeting**

Minutes from the October meeting were read and accepted with out corrections.

The meeting was held at Bill Penney Toyota.

There were 14 in attendance.

Introductions were made.

Topics of discussion:

Technical articles for future newsletters.

Parts discount at the parts counter of the dealership.

Newsletter format, changes, corrections and suggestions were discussed. It was suggested that minutes from the monthly meeting would be included in future editions of the newsletter.

Steve and Kyle gave a short report on the Chaos run they attended in October.

During the meeting Zack Penney, Kenneth Ellis, Mike Bellomy and Scott and Gannon Miles officially joined the club.

## After the meeting

As some of you may remember, there was an invitation extended by Kyle to anyone that wanted to go on a little trail ride after the meeting. There were three others that decided to join Kyle. So Steve with his riding buddy and BFF Ray, Kenney with his riding buddy Taylor and I with my riding buddy Josiah loaded up and headed out following Kyle's directions. We went east on 565 until we got over Chapman mountain where we stopped for fuel at the Texaco station. While fueling up, Kyle starts telling us where we are headed, stating that it is



a "county maintained road." So we are thinking "no big deal" ...an hour or so down, maybe a fire break, then back home for some work time on the rig or watching a football game. We continue east on Hwy. 72 for a few miles, turning north on Brock road. After zig zagging for about 20 minutes, Kyle stops in front of a house to ask for directions (yes, he's a Cruiser driver and no he has never been where he is taking us to....hmmmm ☺). The lady of the house referred Kyle to her husband, whom she called from inside the house. From the front door steps "Rambo," complete with camo gear and a compound bow (uh, oh this doesn't so look

good)! Kyle explains to "Rambo" where we are *trying* to go and asks for directions. "Rambo" states that the place we are looking for is called the "Stair Steps" and makes the remark that they normally start from the other side and run **DOWN** the steps. He tells Kyle how to find the entrance and then remarks that only the FJ40 will make it though. There are two FJ Cruisers, a 100, and an FJ40 in our lineup sitting in front of "Rambo's" house.

We take off with Kyle in the lead following the directions he had received. In about 5 minutes, we are at the end of the paved road where all good rides begin! We start up the trail with Kenney in the lead and it is all rock. Not even a handful of dirt on this "county road!!" We run up the trail about 100 yards, make a corner and discover why it is called the "Stair Steps." The trail is a series of rock shelves you climb like stairs. When we stopped to survey the first step, Kyle informs us that he has an "unexpected" event he has to attend with his daughter, and won't be able to run the trail with us! Yeah right (Cruiser guy)! With Kenney in the lead, me in the middle and Steve bringing up the rear, we take off up the trail (ain't skeered). Kenney clears the first step with a little maneuvering but not much trouble. I, on the other hand, struggle to get up the step. Between the street tires and limited slip differentials, it was a no go. So Kenny breaks out the strap, attaches it to my front hook and up the step we go! The ol' 40 just needed a little encouragement that's all. Steve rolls up to the step and just walks over it like an old pro (Dude!). We enjoy about an hour and a half of bouncing and pounding up the old rocky trail, taking each step/obstacle as they come.

One step was particularly tall and after some maneuvering and rock stacking, Kenney makes it



over. I took a little side trip around this obstacle, a man has to know his limits after all. Steve makes it over as well. Kenney had bottomed out as the rear axle was attempting to clear the step. This would prove to be important in just a little while. We had traveled up the trail for a bit longer when we came to a long flat spot in the trail, mind you, NOT level. Kenney stops and there is room for all of us to pull up and park. At last a little breather! Even with power steering it was a lot of work. Then Kenney informs us that he doesn't think his rear locker is working. Ray crawls under the 100 and confirms that when Kenney had hit that tall step it cut the wires to his locker solenoid. After a few minutes and some wire salvaged from a nearby FJ40 (he he he) and a little electrical tape, the locker appeared to be working. By this time it was already 1:30 (the game starts in half an hour) and Taylor consults his GPS unit to discover that we are not even at the half way mark on the trail! The decision was made to turn around and head back so we would not be out on the trail after dark. So we started our decent. When we get to the tall step Kenny eases down it with great finesse, I opt to drive around again. As I was maneuvering through the side skirt I turn the wheel and drop down about 8 inches to be greeted by the sound of air evacuating my right front tire rapidly....\*#@&!!!! Great! I've hit the rock just right and my street tire has just been knocked off its bead, or so I thought. Upon closer examination, I discovered that I have come down on the razor sharp edge of a rock nose. My tire now has a 4 inch gash in the side wall!! Even better!!!! So, I back out of the area I'm in, onto level ground. Kenney breaks out his high lift jack and I got the tire iron and started removing the spare. For any of you that have seen our spare, you know it is pitiful! This tire may have been on the truck when it was new in 76'...just sayin'! It doesn't hold air long and it is very old to say the least. We installed the spare in very short order. We looked like a NASCAR pit crew! Then we discovered there was very little air in the spare. So, with great care, we continue down the trail. Every bump I wondered is this one that's going to blow out the spare? We made it to within 100 yards of the pavement (you know where Kyle executed his retreat) and the spare let go! Ok now what do we do? The 100 has a different lug pattern and the Cruiser has 16" rims with an offset that won't work around my front caliper. We improvise! Isn't that what you do on the trail? The right rear tire has to go the front and then the Cruiser spare goes on the rear. Yeah, but the Cruiser tire is about 3" taller overall than the tires already on the FJ. SHHHHH don't tell the differential and it will never know! Yeah right! We make the swap by removing the right front tire and setting the front axle on a rock (we only had one high lift jack). We replaced the right rear tire with the spare from the Cruiser and the right rear went to the front. All of this took about 15 minutes, NASCAR ain't got nuthin' on this crew! We exited the trail with out further incident. Fortunately, I only live about 6 miles from this place so I was able to take the back roads home and keep my speed down to 40 mph or less.

Now with a good excuse to buy tires (the month before Christmas), we now have a proper set of off road tires on the FJ and they may be a little bigger than the old set (I'm just sayin' what the CFO doesn't know won't hurt her). So, with some help from my cruiser buds and some borrowed parts we all made it home safely. By the way, just a heads up, this is the same "county road" they are talking about going on after the next meeting!!!

## **Officers**

**Steve Lawrence**  
**President**

**Roma Scosyrev**  
**Vice President**

**Michael Blake**  
**Secretary**

**Kyle Massengale**  
**TLCA Rep.**

**HOT South Cruisers**  
**122 Chatham Cir**  
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## **Next Meeting Agenda**

Report from Kyle on monthly TLCA phone call

Logo discussion

Progress report on club member rigs

Possible ride after the meeting  
(contact Steve Lawrence)



It's been about 3 weeks since our first "real" meeting at Bill Penney Toyota and this month has gone by quick! I hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving!

We are still in the process of designing a suitable logo for our club. I would like for it to be simple, thus easy to have embroidered on patches, hats and shirts. As for shirts, we need some ideas thrown into the arena so we can start work on those as well. I'm thinking maybe a mechanic's type shirt from Carhart, with the club logo above the left pocket, our sponsor's name (Bill Penney Toyota) over the other pocket and a good club mantra on the back. My favorite is "It seemed like a good idea at the time" because I'm sure we tell ourselves this when we are elbow deep in grease and grime working on our "Babies," or we could just do the club name. Just a few ideas.

I have been busy rebuilding my 1989 split case transfer case because the "boss" is mad about me taking the FJ Cruiser on that "county road" Kyle led us to and also the mud and grime from the CAOS run in October (some is still on it, might need to wash that thing!!) Back to my woes with this T-case....I get it all put together with only a few finishing items to complete, when I spied a very important Thrust washer laying on my work table that is for the counter gear that resides deep in the belly of this T-case. I hated it, but I had to take it all apart again and fight with that shift fork lever that I couldn't really see but it needed to be in just the right spot to shift from high to low gear. Needless to say I am a split case Jedi master now. I've installed it twice but disassembled it about 6 times now...

I believe the next meeting is on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Till next month, Keep on Cruisin"!!!

Steve.

## Tech Tip of the month

For anyone looking to put brighter headlights on their old Toyotas, I have a solution. A company called Roundeyes (roundeyes.com) has an H4 replacement for old Land Cruisers and mini trucks. I purchased these after my deployment in 2007 and I really don't know how I drove my old Cruiser with the sealed beam headlights after seeing the difference with the Roundeyes! Much brighter and safer, check them out. They are currently at \$109.00 for the pair. I paid \$99.00 so they haven't gone up much. A very quick and easy replacement.

## Club Highlights and Spotlights

I'm still in need of suggestions on the type of information you want to see in the newsletter. Don't be bashful. I can also use ideas and material for articles on a monthly basis. I can be reached at 256-508-9282 or [michaelbb7@juno.com](mailto:michaelbb7@juno.com).

Remember to visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/176734685760612/?fref=ts> and our club page on IH8Mud's clubhouse forum <http://forum.ih8mud.com/al-hot-south-cruisers/>

## *The Land Cruiser Owners 10 most hated Phrases:*

10. J\*\*p Trail.
9. Where can I get a J\*\*p like that?
8. I think it was your axle.
7. Bir...field.
6. That part has been discontinued.
5. I think Specter is the only place that carries that.
4. This doesn't pass emissions.
3. We also have that in Chrome.
2. We don't make that for the Land Cruiser.

And the Land Cruiser Owners #1 most hated phrase:

1. Nice J\*\*p.

## Club Members

|                 |  |            |
|-----------------|--|------------|
| Mike Bellomy    | <a href="mailto:mike.bellomy@basf.com">mike.bellomy@basf.com</a>         | Scottsboro |
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## Friends / Affiliates

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Alex             | Huntsville      |
| Dan Beatty       | Huntsville      |
| Dennis Fairchild | Madison         |
| Brett Hudson     | Madison         |
| Zack Heard       | Tuscaloosa      |
| Craig Grabowsky  | Madison         |
| Tom Holton       |                 |
| Greg Kennemer    | Birmingham      |
| Bruce Mitchell   | Madison         |
| Malcolm Grimes   | Montgomery      |
| Elbert Clarke    | Cullman         |
| Dan Blackburn    | Bay Minette     |
| Taylor Jefferson | Huntsville      |
| Ray Towner       | Ft Walton Beach |