

GLLC Cruiser News

Great Lakes Land Cruisers
A Toyota Land Cruiser Association Chapter



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Upcoming Events:

- **Meeting and Swap Meet, June 30** – Ron and Sheila Maximoff’s Residence, Brighton, Michigan, 12 Noon
- **BHCC, July**
- **Ohio 4WD Nationals, July 28-29**
- **Silver Lake, August 4-5**

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Tech Talk – Jon’s Budget Hybrid FJ-40



Jon’s Goal: Good looks, easy on the budget, dependable, and an extreme wheelin’ machine – for under 3 grand, he succeeded!

Jon Darrow had a goal in mind – he wanted a good looking cruiser that was a dependable, extreme 4x4, but didn’t want to spend a lot. A simple goal, to be sure. But where does one find such a beast? Jon decided to build it from the ground up.

Jon found the start to his project in Ron Maximoff’s backyard – an old, tired 1980 TLC FJ-40. Cost was not a problem here – Jon and Ron bartered, and Jon got to take the TLC, as long as Ron got the engine and drive train back. Not too bad – the important part, the one that makes it a Toyota, was Jon’s.

Jon liked the looks of the ‘40, but like a lot of Michiganders, was more familiar with Chevy stuff. Around here, they are very cheap and plentiful. So for that reason, Jon

decided to fill in the blanks with GM components, and get the best of both worlds – good looks, inexpensive and easy-to-find parts, and of course, Jon would get to hang out with the GLLC folks, too!

Jon started by stripping what was left of the TLC down to its frame, and then sandblasting the frame. The basic parts that were required started out as a Dana 44 front axle and a GM 12-bolt rear. The engine came from a 1989 3/4 ton van – a 305 cid EFI engine. The transmission is a TH400 mated to a NP205 transfer case with PTO.

The axles were stripped, blasted, and fitted with 4.88:1 gears. Jon welded the rear spider gears, and left the front open, anticipating a Detroit Locker to be installed



Jon ramps 1000...



Close inspection by the gang at Delphi

“Budget TLC” (Continued)

later. The axles ended up being 6 inches wider than stock, which required moving the spring perches outside the frame rails. Of course, this is based on the common knowledge of any good 4-wheeler that “wider is better,” especially those who have rolled. Not in this beast! The driveshafts were custom, the front needing to be cut and lengthened, and the rear donated by a Ford Bronco with a CV joint. The chassis was finished off with a Saginaw steering conversion.

After the basics were under control, Jon fabricated a custom roll cage complete with seat mounts to hold a nice set of cloth seats from a Chevy Cavalier. Dual 5-point racing harnesses hold Jon and his lucky shotgun passengers in place. To top it all off, Jon found a set of 35x14.50R15 Swamper boggers, which should prove to make this machine virtually unstoppable. All other adapters and custom work necessary to hold the TLC together were fabricated in Jon’s garage, which also helped keep the cost down considerably.

There were a few roadblocks – after the big tires were installed, an 8’ garage door needed to be installed to get the Cruiser out of Jon’s garage! Not too bad; this provided a good excuse to get a bigger garage door. (The installation of that is good material for a later article!) If that weren’t enough, Jon assembled his own trailer out

of parts to haul his Cruiser around – 16 feet long, 101 inches wide, with 2 6000-pound torsion axles.

The first time the finished masterpiece appeared in public was Tuesday, June 19 at the Delphi Brighton picnic. (The photos in this article were taken at this event.) Jon has already had his first trail fix – his fuel pump died as soon as he got the ‘40 off the trailer. No problem! He was able to go and get one, and install it without too much trouble. Quite a showing; the truck was able to score 1000 out of a possible 1000 points on a 23 degree ramp, not too bad for the first time out!

Jon’s Cruiser was a definite success, being complete and running in a year and a half from square one, with less than \$3,000 out of pocket. An impressive job, indeed!

Jon looks forward to his debut at Silver Lake in August, and by the looks of things, he should have no problem there. We welcome Jon and his new toy to the world of Land Cruisers and to the sport of 4-wheeling in general.

Thanks to Jon for contributing the material for this article!



GLLC Quarterly Meeting Minutes – April 7, 2001

Meeting called to order at 11:32AM by President Dar Howard

Attending:

Dar and Kaelyn Howard, Ron and Sheila Maximoff, Leo Hebert, Jim and Judy Spjut, Ray Kelly, Gregory Gibbard, and Jon and Kelly Darrow (members-to-be), and guest Greg Buckley. (Let the Secretary, Mark Lott, know if he missed anyone.)

Treasurer:

There is approximately \$800 in the savings account. Craig Hughes was ill and unable to attend the meeting; Reuben Goforth will catch up with Craig later to turn over the treasurer materials and tie up loose ends in that regard.

Old Business:

It has been agreed that members will have the opportunity to submit materials to be posted on the web site, to provide a biographical summary of the membership. Members

who submit materials will be awarded incentive points, as discussed at the previous BOD and Quarterly meetings. Photos may be e-mailed or USPS mailed to Webmaster Mark Lott, along with any vehicle or personal information that is to be included with the photo. Hard copy photos will be scanned and returned! Alternately, Mark will be available to photograph members and their vehicles as desired with a digital camera. Again, contact him to set up an appointment.

Margaret Dauphin has volunteered and been chosen to represent GLLC as the delegate to TLCA. The paperwork confirming Margaret as delegate, and all other officers, was to be forwarded on to TLCA by President Dar Howard after being completed by Secretary Mark Lott.

Schedule:

Meetings will take place at runs/events through summer months.

- June 30 Swap @ Ron's/Meeting
- July Black Hills Cruiser Clasic