

#37_2022_August_Newsletter

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Thank you for signing up to receive my newsletters. I hope you've found the previous editions informative and helpful for your vehicle-supported adventures. I trust you will enjoy this month's newsletter. If you have comments, please email me: Bob.Wohlers@discoveroffroading.com. You can access, download, and read previous newsletters on my website by clicking [HERE](#). Look through the Newsletter Reference for a topic that may interest you, or download them all!



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An Apology, then a Thank You

I've not published a newsletter for many months. My apologies. Here's my "reason" for the hiatus, however I

don't offer the following as an "excuse." I say shame on me. I enjoy staying connected with my almost 2,000 subscribers.

This year has been the busiest since the inception of Off-Road Safety Academy sixteen years ago. The following is what has made my days and months disappear.



2022 Northwest Overland Rally

- Government contracted 4WD courses
- Corporate contracted 4WD courses
- Recreational 4WD courses
- The most backcountry adventure tours of any year in our history
- Attendance at several off-road and overland shows, rallies, and expos
- Finishing the fourth book in my series (It will happen!)
- Preparing our ranch to move from California (The work on this is overwhelming, but one step to a long journey.)
- Paying attention to my lovely wife and our extended family

I am very honored and humbled by the agencies and companies that trust my 4WD training to help their employees stay safe while off-roading, keep their vehicles from being damaged, while at the same time helping them preserve the environment. To those recreational off-roaders and overlanders that take my courses, read my books, and go on my tours I want to express my deepest appreciation for choosing my company to assist you with your adventure pursuits. Thank you all. Getting to know each of you has been a privilege.

Open Spots – Last 4WD Recovery

Course for 2022

This course has been full since March. Two recent cancellations have opened spots in this very popular course.

No other trainer on the planet has written an entire book on the topic of recreational Off-Road Recovery.

Take your course from the person that quite literally “wrote the book” on the topic.



This course teaches you the primary skills from my book "The Total Approach to Getting Unstuck Off Road - 4WD Self Recovery & Vehicle-Assisted Recovery." Prerequisite. None, except reading and owning the book "The Total Approach to Getting Unstuck Off Road - 4WD Self Recovery & Vehicle-Assisted Recovery." The book is not included in the tuition, you need to order the book [HERE](#) and read it beginning to end prior to the start of the course

Length of Course: Two days.

Target Audience: All off-roaders.

It is recommended (not required) that enrollees complete the Discovery course prior to taking this course. If you are an experienced off-roader and know your vehicle well, you may attend this course without completing my beginning 4WD training program.

Vehicle Requirements: Any reliable 4WD vehicle with a 2-speed 4WD transfer case (must have 4-Low gearing). Street legal vehicle in excellent working condition, no fluid leaks. Frame-mounted recovery points front and rear. Full-size spare tire.

It's helpful to have your own winch for this course, but not required. I have

vehicles with winches to practice with.



If you can't recognize all the recovery best practices in this photo, you need to take this course.

[Click Here To Reserve and Pay For This Course](#)

Open Spots – Backcountry Adventure Tours for 2022

Like the 4WD courses, my adventure tours have been full since the beginning of the year. A few recent cancellations however



Black Rock Desert Geothermal Spring

have opened some spots. Click [HERE](#) to read more information about my backcountry adventure tours. Click [HERE](#) to take you to reservations and payment.

Applegate/Lassen Trail Adventure – Black Rock Desert. (Sept. 22 – Sept. 24: Four Wheel Camper Owners ONLY)

As of this time, there are three spots remaining on this tour. The Applegate-Lassen Trail is a 130-mile-long portion of the larger California/Oregon Trails. Our route travels through the Black Rock Desert in northwestern Nevada, ending near California. This three-day/three-night tour follows a portion of the famous historic trail and is an introduction to the larger Black Rock Desert area. This tour visits the Black Rock Playa (location of Burning Man event), Soldier Meadows, various hot springs, and High Rock Canyon. Cost: \$520.00 per vehicle.

Overland Through Death Valley National Park. (Oct. 27 – Oct. 29: Four Wheel Camper Owners ONLY)

As of this time, there are three spots



Saline Valley

remaining on this tour. Three days and three nights of overlanding, exploring the largest National Park in the lower 48 States. Over 80 percent of this beautiful park can't be seen from the pavement – you must venture off-road to see most of Death Valley National Park. Sand dunes, canyons, hot springs, playas, craters,

mines, and high-altitude trails are all part of this adventure tour. This tour visits Saline Valley, Hunter Mountain, Hidden Valley, Tea Kettle Junction, Racetrack, Ubehebe Crater, and portions of Panamint Valley. Cost: \$520.00 per vehicle.



All Tours Include Vehicle and Terrain Specific 4WD Instruction and Coaching

If you are new to driving off-road, have no fear. My tours all include some basic, but important, 4WD instruction. On each tour I cover: 1) Proper airing down and up tires, 2) How and when to shift into 4WD high and

low, 3) Using the Manual Mode of your automatic transmission, and 4) Specifics on driving the terrain we encounter on each tour - sand, snow, mud, rocks, gullies, side-slopes.

[Click Here To Reserve and Pay For These Tours](#)

Waves or Lions...

Perhaps Both, but Probably Only One in 2023

For me, thoughts about future unfulfilled adventures sometimes originate during early morning drives on easy backcountry trails or long stretches of lonely highway. I find these musings invigorating whether the future adventure comes true or not. Let's call these quiet thoughts while I'm driving what they really are – therapy.

While driving home from this year's BC Overland Rally I again turned my thoughts to returning to Africa and/or the West Indies via Sailboat. Allow me to share.



I'd love to get back to my offshore sailing roots by purchasing a sailboat. If we do purchase a sailboat, my wife and I have no real ambition to sail around the world.

However, sailing the West Indies aboard a nice cruiser would be lovely. Exploring the lower Caribbean between St. Vincent and Trinidad, my old stomping grounds, could fill our days for many years. I miss my past sailing adventures. Due to some important priorities however, this adventure is probably not feasible in 2023.

As my summer has progressed, thoughts of African adventures have started to take shape. My wife was in the airline industry, so we have low-cost flying privileges on several airlines. Since we can fly back and forth rather inexpensively, I've been thinking about shipping my Jeep JK to South Africa and storing it in Cape Town. I've not been on the African Continent for some time, so I'm overdue for a return journey. There's so much in Africa I've not seen or experienced. Plus, my wife has never been.

To minorly upgrade my Jeep JK for adventures in Africa or simply make it a better backup vehicle for my stateside overland tours, I wanted to make a few changes. These upgrades are not actually necessary, but I say, "Why not?" Like many of you, I love to tinker with my 4WD vehicles, making them more comfortable and capable for long term overlanding adventures.

In summary, here are the changes I've made to my Jeep this summer:

- New Clam-Shell Roof Top Tent
- LiFePO4 Battery
- DC/DC charger
- Mounted Solar Panel with Solar Controller
- New Yokohama Geolander MT Tires
- Security Locks

My first order of business was to dump my ARB Simpson III roof top tent (RTT). Honestly, I never liked this RTT. Like so many foldout RTT's (and awnings), ARB made the cover for this tent way too small. It always felt like I was



trying to stuff “ten pounds of potatoes into a two pound bag.” And then there’s the awful zipper that secures the cover. Manufacturers of anything for off-roading and overlanding should avoid zippers like the plague. First the zipper clogs with dirt and grit, but then there’s the

corners. Zippers are mostly okay with traveling in straight lines, but they hate turning corners. In my opinion, this RTT always took way too long to put away (which is a patience problem I personally have). Another drawback with this tent and other soft-cover RTTs is that you can’t permanently mount a solar panel on top of its soft cover.

Enter my new Alu-Cab Gen 3.1 Expedition Roof Top Tent. Yes, these clamshell tents are a bit pricy. About double the price of my ARB tent. But after looking at many makes and models at overland shows for the past couple of years, I believe the Alu-Cab RTTs are some of the best.





175 Watt Renogy Flexible Solar Panel Glued on Insulation Pad and Tent Roof



Water Tight Entries of Solar Cables



Next up was the vehicle's house battery system. I wanted this vehicle to be as well-appointed and bullet-proof electrically as my Four Wheel Camper. (See my newsletters 33 and 34 [HERE](#).) Since upgrading my camper to LiFePO4 batteries and accompanying electrical system, I had to do the same with this vehicle. Yes, I'm spoiled. I want the same stress free feeling electrically with the Jeep as with my Four Wheel Camper on my PowerWagon.

I began the Jeep's electrical upgrades by replacing my

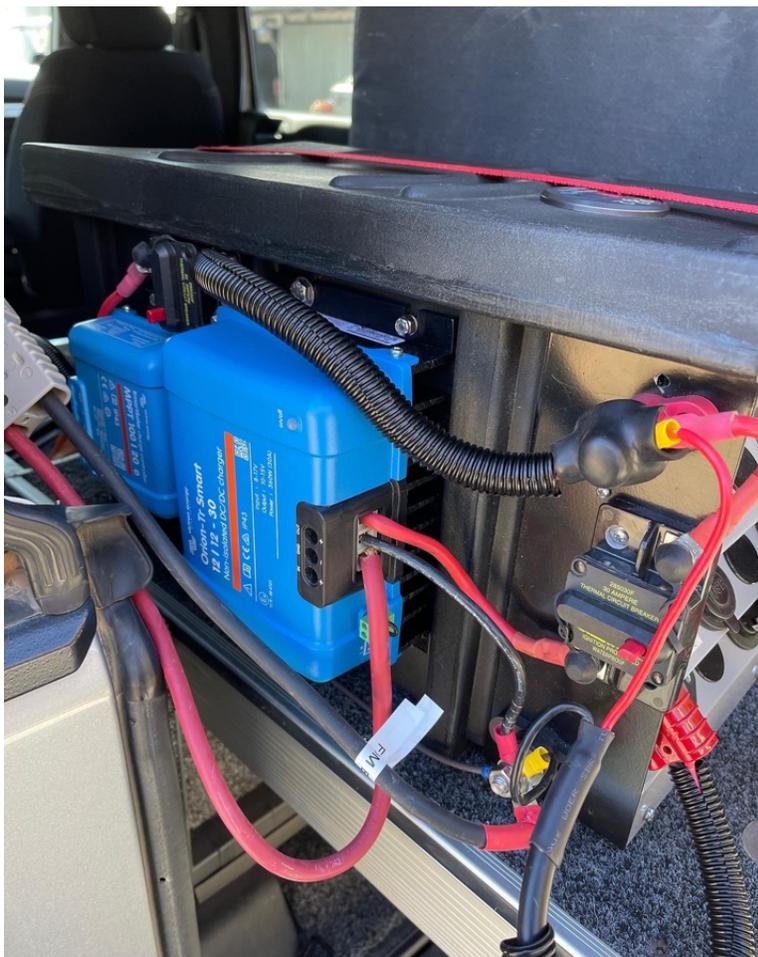
ground-mounted suitcase solar panel and mounting a 175 watt Renogy solar panel to the roof of the Alu-Cab.

I've mastered the use of Victron products in my camper, so I added the same components to this vehicle – a solar controller, smart shunt, and DC/DC charger. I've had zero problems with the Victron equipment installed in my Four Wheel Camper.

As you can see in the photos, I used a

National Luna Power Pack box from Equipt Expedition Outfitters (click [HERE](#)). I simply attached all my Victron items and circuitry to National Luna box. In the box I placed a Battle Born 100 AH LiFePO4 battery.

Similar to the electrical system in my PowerWagon and camper, I plumbed a positive and negative 6 gauge cable from the starter battery in the engine compartment to the house battery in the rear of my Jeep.



This wiring ended at the DC/DC charger mounted on the National Luna battery box. This circuit allows the vehicle's alternator to charge the house battery while I drive.

To purchase all the needed pieces/parts, get advice on wiring, and secure a circuit schematic I turned to my friend KP Pauley at Zero Declination in Reno, Nevada. Click [HERE](#) to see their website.

One phone call and a credit card helped me secure the parts and advice I needed. After a long evening of construction and assembly, my new Jeep house battery system was complete.



As many of you know, I'm a

Yokohama Geolandar tire fan. Currently, there are several folks I trust (like Dan Grec of “The Road Choose Me” fame) touring the planet with these tires on their vehicles. I have found Yokohama Geolandars to be tough off-road, plus quiet on the highway, and long lasting. I’m putting Geolander MT tires on my Jeep JK with American Expedition Vehicle rims.



Yokohama Geolandar MT Tires

For those of us that have traveled out of the United States (and inner cities IN the USA), we know how important it is to lock every important tool or item that is mounted to the outside of our vehicle. This includes shovels, gas cans, engine hoods, traction boards, spare tires and the like.

To conveniently accomplish this security, I use BOLT locks, not only on my Jeep, but also on my PowerWagon. Click [HERE](#) to see their website.



Bolt Spare Tire Lock

BOLT locks aren’t sold with a key since they operate with your vehicle’s starter key. When you purchase a new BOLT lock, you “program” the lock by inserting your starter key. From then on, the BOLT product will unlock with your existing vehicle’s starter key. Very handy. I dislike collections of keys in my vehicles.

On the Jeep JK, I'm using a variety of security items. From BOLT I use their Spare Tire Lock, a Receiver Lock (to secure my Factor 55 HitchLink), plus two Cable Locks – one on my traction boards and the other to lock my shovel.



Bolt Cable Lock

Besides the BOLT products, I've also installed a Tuffy Jeep Hood Lock to secure my engine compartment and a Tuffy Front Passenger Under Seat Security Drawer. I will keep money, my passport, and other very important items in this lockable drawer.



See Tuffy's website by clicking [HERE](#).

Tuffy Hood Lock



Tuffy Front Passenger Under Seat Security Drawer



Tuffy Front Passenger Under Seat Security Drawer

For Future Newsletters...

In future newsletters, I'll update my progress and decisions about shipping my Jeep to Cape Town South Africa. We can learn how to do this together. If any of you have shipped a vehicle to Africa, I'm very interested in talking to you. I'd love to hear about your experience and take counsel from you to make my adventure easier and more



IMHO This is a Really Bad Winch-Capable Front Bumper

enlightened.

Soon I'll share with you my disgust for a majority of winch-ready OEM and aftermarket front bumpers for off-roaders and overlanders. (Yes, the manufacturers of these bumpers will dislike me for telling you the truth, but I don't work for them - I work for you.)

I'm tired of front bumper designers that have obviously never winched a day in their life or don't bloody care about recovery best practices. My opinions on this topic have been brewing for about 6 years now. I can stay silent no longer. I don't want you to purchase the wrong front bumper for your vehicle. See if you can identify the problems with the bumper shown in the attached photo.

Also, I'm still field testing a variety of Hawse Fairleads for winches and different makes and models of traction boards. Once my evaluations are complete, I'll share with you my thoughts and findings in a future newsletter.

Safe Travels,
Bob Wohlers



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