



# JPF

# reek

Lifestyles Off the Beaten Path

**PREMIERE ISSUE**

April / May 2006



JPFreek features interactive elements throughout the publication to help you get where you want to go most. Try it!

### Who the...is JPFreek?

JPFreek was created to celebrate, encourage, and enhance the adventure lifestyle of Jeep enthusiasts. Contrary to how it may sound, you don't have to be a Jeep owner to enjoy JPFreek. I'm not, and while it's not something I'm happy about, I'll admit it. Maybe you're like me though: Just a Jeep enthusiast who, along with hiking, biking, climbing, and kayaking, also enjoys tearing up a rough Jeep trail with your buddies to get to that obscure, remote location of your next great adventure.

### What the...is JPFreek?

JPFreek is an Ezine, or an online magazine. Six times a year we will notify you through email to visit the JPFreek website to download the latest issue. Each issue will be packed with our regular columns covering hiking, cycling, climbing, and environmental news. In addition we are excited to bring you an incredible mind blowing top story featuring the most adventurous expeditions happening around the world today.

### When:

By publishing a bi-monthly online publication, we hope to revive the anticipation you used to feel waiting for the day your favorite magazine came in the mail. In today's world we have lost that anticipation because we can jump online and look up anything we please, or pick up our favorite mag at the bookstore, supermarket, or gas station. Our website will feature an archive of adventure photography, past issues and coming soon...freekast... our adventure podcast featuring interviews with adventure athletes and music reviews with top artists.

### Where:

JP 'freaks' are found everywhere: Whether tearing up a Jeep trail or climbing in the Rocky Mountains, JPFreek celebrates the adventures of our fellow enthusiasts anywhere and everywhere.

### How:

JPFreek's PDF format is easier than opening your locking beaver. On top of that...we've made it interactive. *Something catch your eye?* Click on it and you'll jump right to that article.

### Why:

Because we're enthusiasts. We love the outdoors, Jeeps, and adventure.



**Richard Tinnell**  
EDITOR / ART DIRECTOR  
rtinnell@jpfreek.com

*"If you aren't living on the edge, then you're taking up too much space".*



# ARE YOU A FReeK?

On top of our regular awesome columns covering various adventure and Jeep activities, and in addition to our top story each month, we will post three of the story summaries on our website for readers to vote which story they would like to read about the most.

The author with the most votes will have their story published in the preceding issue and will receive a giftcard to LiveDownloads.com, our featured friends in the music biz. LiveDownloads offers live concert audio and video downloads of your favorite artists!

**Send a summary of your best adventure to: [info@jpfreek.com](mailto:info@jpfreek.com) or make submit your entry on our website for your chance to share your greatest adventure with the world.**



## Features

**AMERICAN EXPEDITION VEHICLES  
ICELAND EXPEDITION** ..... 6

**JPFreek Music:** **nugs.net**  
An Interview with Brad Serling, innovative  
Founder of live music mecha Nugs.net ..... 14

## Columns

**From the Editor** ..... 2

**JPF Crew & Contributors** ..... 4

**Above Tree Line:**  
The Conquest of Colorado's Fourteeners ..... 11

**The Beginning of the End:**  
Trails and Trials of a New Jeep Owner ..... 12

**Have An 'Ice' Day:**  
A new way to get through winter ..... 16

## Extras

**Tshirts 2 Make** ..... 5



PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANK LEDWELL





## **Richard Tinnell** – Editor/Art Director, San Antonio, TX

The JPFreek founder and the proud spouse of a Jeep owner. (Richard does not actually have his own Jeep...yet) He and his daughter Mazilyn are practicing Jeep 'Freaks' constantly pointing them out and looking forward to the day that they each have their own.



## **Ray Schindler** – Hiking Correspondent, Colorado Springs, CO

Ray was not born in Colorado but moved to the mountains as soon as possible. He enjoys every outdoor sport besides bocce ball since he doesn't know what it is. In his free time he is trying to climb all 54 of Colorado's 14ers. Ray's first vehicle was a Jeep Wrangler and now drives a Jeep Cherokee, XJ.



## **Frank Ledwell** – Cycling Correspondent, Houston, TX

When he's not busy crunching numbers as an oil/gas accountant, he's outside exploring the great state of Texas in his Jeep, on his bike, or in his hiking boots. Frank is an avid rock climber who loves jazz music, is a new Jeep owner, and is also the only bachelor on staff at JPFreek.



## **Jeff "Jeep" Haley** – Climbing Correspondent, Colorado Springs, CO

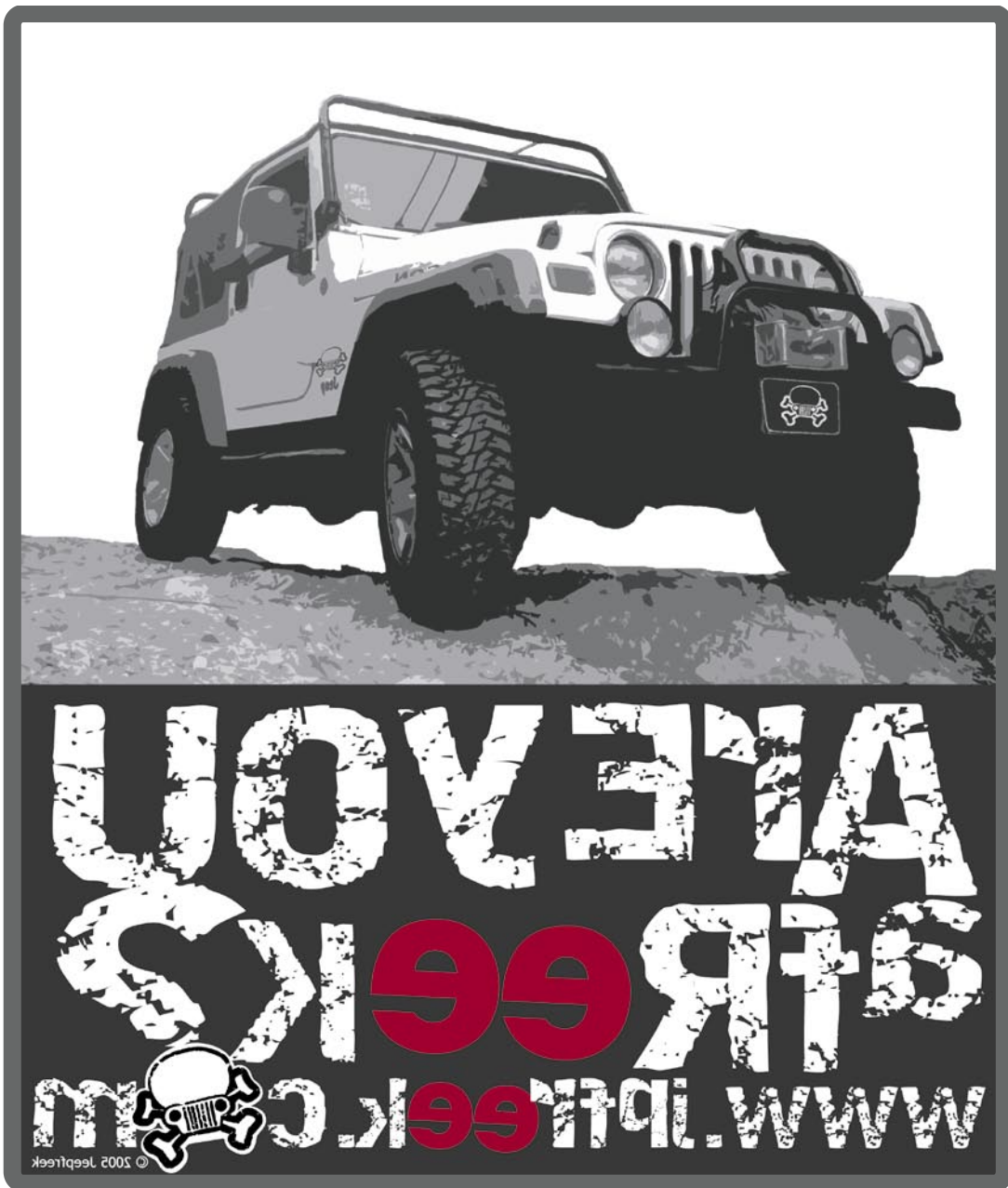
When it comes to adventure sports Jeff has ADHD. We can count on Jeff to keep surprising us with his ever changing adventure pasttimes. Jeff "Jeep" Haley drives a 95' Jeep Wrangler YJ with over 100K miles of pure enjoyment. He has currently climbed 48 of Colorado's 54 peaks above 14,000 feet.



## **JPF GEAR**

The Official JPF decal  
6" tall x 5" wide  
Reinforced vinyl  
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**MORE GREAT JPF GEAR IS IN DEVELOPMENT. LOOK FOR NEW ITEMS IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF JPFREEK MAGAZINE.**





# AMERICAN EXPEDITION VEHICLES ICELAND EXPEDITION

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF AMERICAN EXPEDITION VEHICLES

## Expedition Mission and Background

The primary mission of American Expedition Vehicles is to provide transportation and support for a team of the worlds best expedition kayakers and film makers while they descend the largest river in Iceland. The kayakers will rappel 300 feet (using the Jeeps as anchors) into a series of caves within the Vatnajokull Glacier to the very headwaters of the Jokulsa River. Found virtually no where else on the planet, it's a geothermal heated "hot river" that flows under the glacier. From here the team will kayak out from under the Glacier and proceed across Iceland, navigating extreme rapids (one of which is Europe's most powerful waterfall, the deadly 300 ft Deaden Foss). From here they will continue all the way across the country to the ocean.

A team of the world's best kayakers will use Jeeps to access remote areas of Iceland for spectacular first descents.

A similar expedition was tried in the mid-eighties with National Geographic. Instead of 4WDs they used a combination of snowcats, ultralight aircraft, snowmobiles and 4WDs. The expedition was not a complete failure, but was plagued by malfunctioning equipment and inexperienced kayakers (Kayaking was in

**"A team of the world's best kayakers will use Jeeps to access remote areas of Iceland for spectacular first descents."**



its infancy at the time). With today's specially prepared vehicles and some of the world's best kayakers, the expedition has excellent chances of succeeding while providing spectacular film footage and still photos. The Jeeps will provide transportation across the Vatnajökull Glacier to the put-in for the river; the vehicles will then complete the mission across the arctic desert providing support for the team, transportation for the film crew and emergency services if needed. The visual scenery in Iceland is fantastic, everything from lush green waterfalls, to huge ice fields.

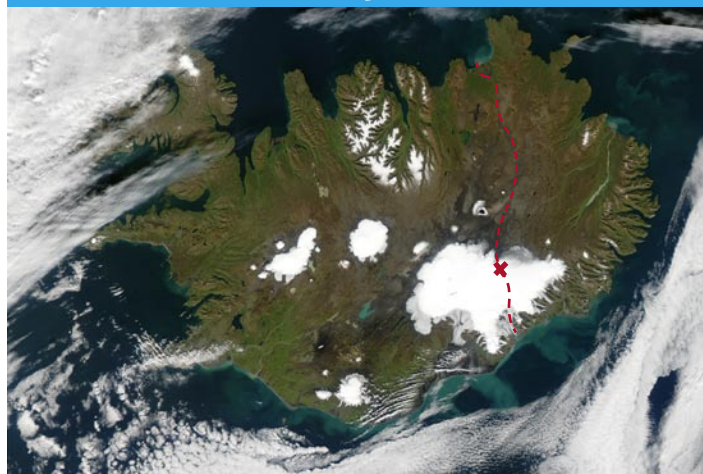
## THE BUILD

### No sleep for three weeks

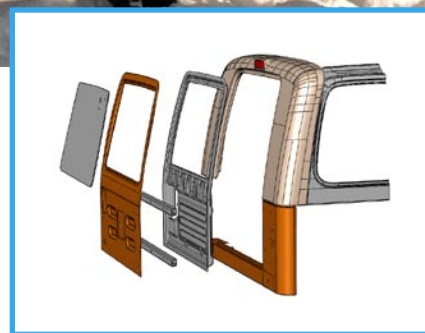
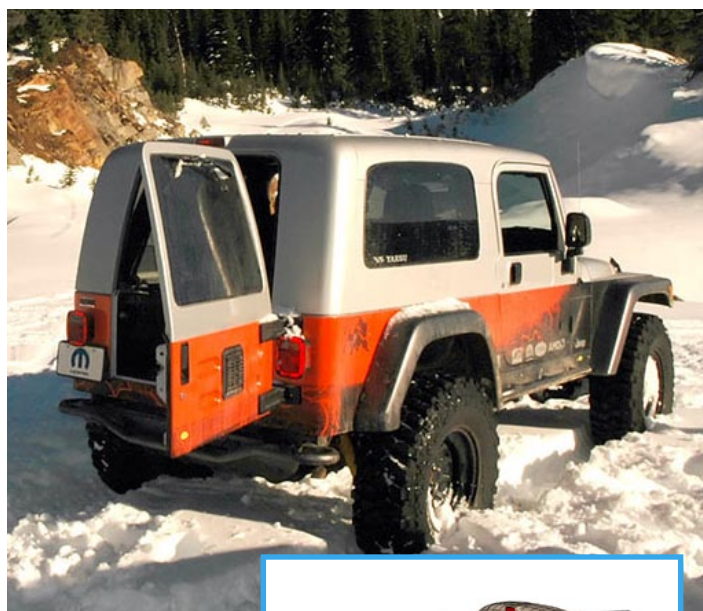
This year AEV received the Commander three weeks before SEMA. At the same time, AEV was informed, there needed to be a Wrangler Unlimited ready as well. For the Wrangler, AEV literally went out back and picked out a frame and body...and started assembling the vehicle quickly. To add to the confusion, there was a three person camera crew following every move of the AEV team, documenting for cable TV, what goes on all around the country every year before SEMA. AEV knew what the plan was for the Commander and the Wrangler, but its still a lot of work in a short period of time. Everything but the Commander suspension and the fabrication of the Wrangler hood and fenders was done in house. The Flares and the rear door on the Wrangler took the most amount of time, as AEV had to design and surface (actually generating the math data for the cnc mill) those very complicated parts in a very small amount of time. The cnc mill was running for about two weeks straight, allowing about two days to build and paint the fiberglass parts. The flares on the TJ and the XK were painted at about 2am the morning AEV left for SEMA (at 7am).

**"Everything but the Commander suspension and the fabrication of the Wrangler hood and fenders was done in house."**

## Iceland/Vatnajökull Glacier



The 1983 National Geographic expedition attempted to cross the Vatnajökull Glacier to reach the mouth of the Jokul River but had to circumvent the glacier due to troubling weather conditions.





# WRANGLER UNLIMITED RUBICON

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF AMERICAN EXPEDITION VEHICLES

## Powertrain -

AEV HEMI Conversion (345Hp, 375lb/ft), 5-45 Transmission, 241OR Transference (4:1), Rubicon Dana 44s with TFS air locker differentials and 4.11 gears.

## Body modifications -

AEV Highline fender kit. The kit consists of new steel fenders, steel hood with AEV's heat reduction features, and new fender flares. The fenders are raised ~3", the hood is shortened 3", the front wheel opening is stretched backwards 2" and the Fender flares are 3" taller, 2" longer, and 1.5" wider than Rubicon flares. The rear door is a one pc expedition style rear door, intended to make it easier and faster to access the rear of the vehicle. Since this vehicle's intended use is for long trips in cold weather, the removable top feature wasn't a concern.

## Wheels & Tires -

Interco SuperSwamper IROK's in 37x13.5R16 mounted on custom 16x8 AEV alloy wheels with Champion Beadlocks.

## Suspension -

2" Old Man Emu Suspension with a JKS 1" body lift. AEV CV Driveshaft.

## Skidplates -

AEV Rocker Guards for the Highline Fender package. (Special Length)

## Bumpers -

Mopar RockCrawler (designed by AEV) with Warn XD9500ti winch. IPF 900 lights, IPF H4 Headlights. Mopar rear bumper (designed by AEV).

## Communications -

Yesu 8900R radio provides radio communications for vehicle to vehicle and vehicle to base operations. The navigator sits in the passenger seat using a GPS enabled Panasonic ToughBook mounted on a modified GamberJohnson laptop mount and docking station. Garmin provided top of the line MapSource software and their impressive GPS10 antennas.

## Paint and Vinyl -

All the paint was applied by House of Color in Missoula, MT using Standox premium paint. The graphics and logo design was done by Russ Fry of Russ Fry design located in Bozeman, MT.





# COMMANDER

## AEV / Superlift 4" Suspension -

A combined effort of design, engineering and marketing between the two companies for the WK and XK suspension. This particular car is lifted 4" front and rear. In the rear the suspension was modified to push the rear axle back 5" (127mm) so that the body could be cut out without affecting the rear doors. This also took care of the rear overhang on the Commander.

## Wheels & Tires -

Operating at 2-5 psi requires specialized wheels and tires. Interco provided super flexible 39.5x13.50R17 SuperSwamper IROK tires to the expedition. Wheels were of special concern, not only does the Commander have an odd fitment, but the wheels also had to be a double beadlock design. AEV decided to work with Hutchinson Wheels, a company best known for manufacturing military wheels. AEV issued the oddball specs and in no time Hutchinson came through with a one of a kind set of two piece wheels with an internal beadlock to fit the Commander perfectly. The really good news is that these wheels will now be an available option on all AEV Grand Cherokee and Commander conversions.

## Body Modifications -

Quite a bit of trimming and fabricating was required to fit the 39.5" tires on the vehicle with only a 4" lift. In the front, the rear of the wheel opening was cut out and rebuilt to clear the tires at full lock and at full compression. Remarkably this didn't noticeably intrude into the passenger compartment foot area at all. In the rear, the body was cut out to make room for the tires, in order not to interfere with the rear doors, the rear axle was pushed back 5" (127mm) extending the wheelbase to 114.5" (2908.3mm). Custom fender flares were designed and fabricated in house using AEV's CNC mill and fiberglass facilities. The six piece flare set provides an additional 5.5" (139mm) of clearance and creates a proportional look with the oversized tires.

## AEV Winch Mount -

The winch mount is fabricated from 1/4" (6mm) steel with 1" thick clevis mounts. The Warn 9500XP winch and mount are hidden under the stock fascia with a modified Mopar steel center overlay which includes the custom light mounts for the IPF 900 lights.

## Communications -

Yeasu 8900R radios provide radio communications for vehicle to vehicle and vehicle to base operations. The navigator sits in the rear using a GPS enabled Panasonic ToughBook mounted on a modified GamberJohnson laptop mount and docking station in the rear of the vehicle. The driver can view what's on the laptop using a Panasonic wireless display in the front which also has a wireless mouse and keyboard. Garmin provided top of the line MapSource software and their impressive GPS10 antennas.





## Diagnostics -

Due to the remote nature of the expedition and the complex electronic system on the Commander, the ToughBook is tied into the CAN bus system on the vehicle to keep an eye on critical functions of the vehicle, in effect a very high-powered scan tool tied into the vehicle diagnostic system.

## Paint and Vinyl -

All the paint was applied by House of Color in Missoula, MT using Standox premium paint. The graphics and logo design was done by Russ Fry of Russ Fry design located in Bozeman, MT.

## Interview with David Harrinton. Founder of American Expedition Vehicles.

### JPF: What inspired the Iceland Expedition?

**AEV:** I have some friends that produce extreme sport videos, pretty much most of the whitewater kayaking and free skiing you see on TV. They mentioned how there were so many epic waterfalls and rapids in Iceland, but they just couldn't access it without some serious 4WDs. For me it was a great fit, we could do a really great 4wd and kayaking trip and in return it would be a great marketing exercise with the opportunity to take some very dramatic photos and video segments.

### JPF: The Commander and Wrangler conversions appear to have been built specifically for the challenges of the Arctic Expedition. Have there been other conversion projects built for specific expeditions or is this a glimpse into the future of AEV projects?

**AEV:** One thing you'll start seeing from AEV in the future, is more of the vehicles out in their element. Not necessarily the places that are shot all the time like Moab, Tellico and the Hammers, mostly in areas like the Northwest Territories in Canada, South America, and Siberia. As well, you're going to see a change in the parts we produce. We're aiming more at the customer who is looking to use the Jeep as a tool to access remote areas, more than an activity by itself. We've always looked at the normal OHV areas as good training, but if you can't count on your vehicle to drive to the areas you want to explore and get you home safely, you might as well buy some quads. A Jeep that has to be on a trailer makes no sense to me, a dirt bike will out perform it any day off road. The new AEV Highline fender kit is a great example of our new product mentality. It allows you to run the big tires, while still keeping it low and stable on and off road. It also keeps the frontal area down, improving mileage for when you're on road. The fact that we're doing it in steel with new flares is because we know it will be like an OE part in terms of finish, durability and function.

### JPF: Will the Expedition door on the Wrangler conversion be an option available to the public?

**AEV:** The World Door was never intended to be a saleable item. It was done just to set the Iceland Jeep off a little more from the norm. The door pretty much negates the convertible feature of the Jeep, so I don't think it would go over that well as a product. We figured we wouldn't be taking the top down in Iceland.

### JPF: Are there any current plans in the works for future expeditions?

**AEV:** We're working on some, but right now we want to see how the Iceland Expedition goes. Setting these things up is a huge expense in terms of time.

### JPF: There are some intriguing new Jeep production vehicles to be released this year. Does AEV have their eye on the Patriot or Compass for conversion projects?

**AEV:** The JK Wrangler will be huge for AEV, there is a ton of aftermarket opportunity for that vehicle. As for the Patriot or Compass, no plans yet, I don't think the new Jeeps really work with our customer base. We'll see what the interest is like when they are released, but I don't think we've had a single inquiry yet.

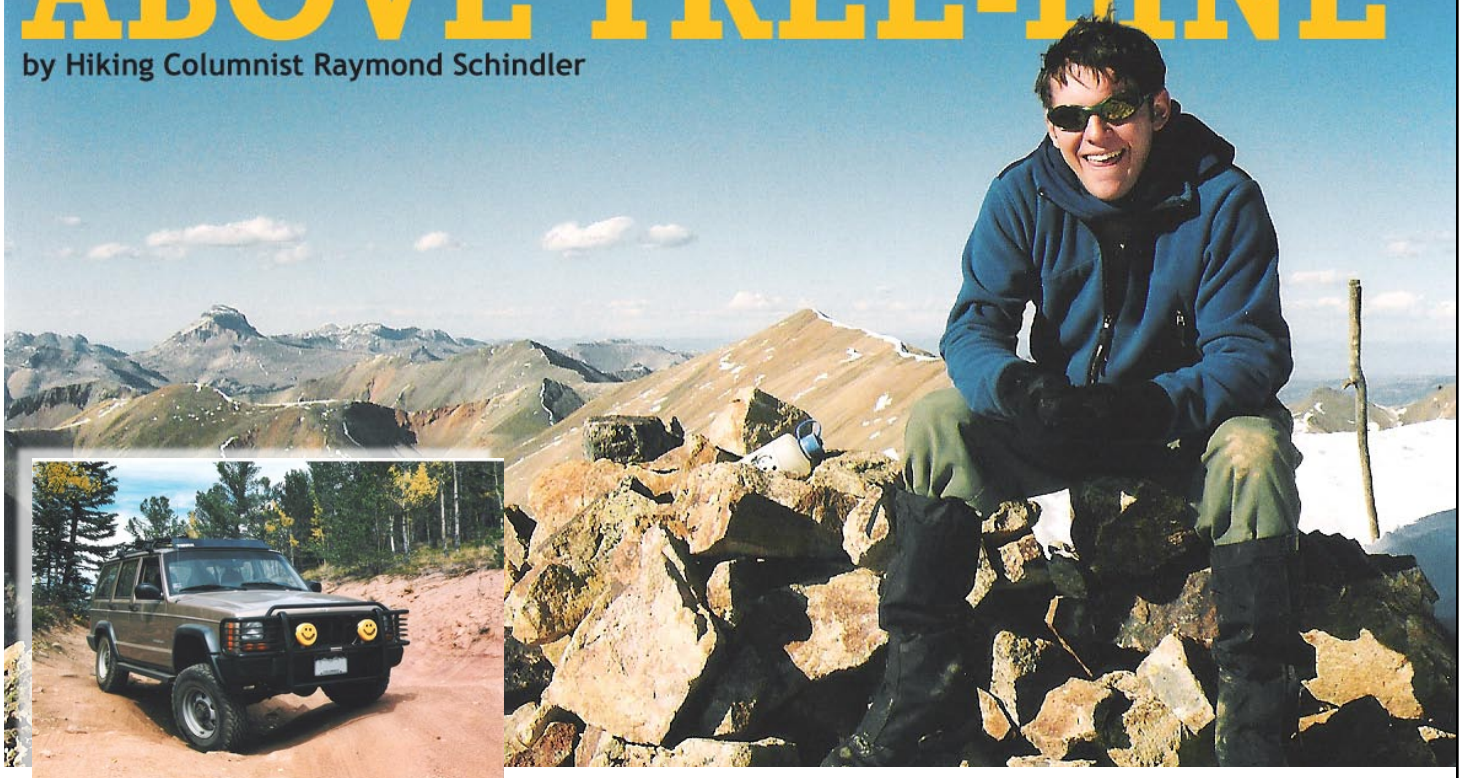
### JPF: Where can the public see AEV vehicles up close and personal in the near future?

**AEV:** Moab EJS is always a great place to see the vehicles up close. We normally arrange to deliver customer cars there, so typically we'll load up two large semi truck car haulers and have about 20 new vehicles down there. We set up a small booth and everyone is available to talk to. Its really nice for us to get out and meet customers and prospective customers and not have the phone ringing every two seconds.



# ABOVE TREE-LINE

by Hiking Columnist Raymond Schindler



Shortly after moving to Colorado in the Fall of 2001, I decided a formidable challenge would be to climb all of Colorado's 14ers. A "14er" is a mountain whose peak is at least 14,000 feet above sea level. Colorado is home to 54 of these mountains, which is the highest concentration of any state. There are different lists varying from how elevation gain is calculated, to what season the climb takes place in. For me, the most realistic and obtainable goal was to get up each 14er under my own power in any season.

The nice thing about taking on a list is planning the climbs based on their difficulty in different seasons. Naturally, the progression started with non-technical ascents and saving the harder climbs for when I had more experience. The first winter was great because it was a mild snow year and I had plenty of easy

14ers left on the lists to attempt as snow climbs. However, after a tough winter driving around with a two wheel drive SUV, I thought it was time for a new vehicle.

My shopping started without any brand in mind but with a requirement of capable four wheel drive. After looking at just about every SUV on the market, the Jeep was the only one with a manual four wheel drive lever. It seems that all of the auto makers are trying to make everything work by pushing a button. I was looking for something with a dependable and trustworthy drivetrain. The Jeep's wheel base and width made them ideal for driving up forest access roads which is where most of the 14er trail heads are. I am not saying only Jeeps can make it up these roads...I am often amazed by seeing a Honda Accord or Subaru that made it through

some difficult terrain. However, I would hate to look under those vehicles!

My Jeep Cherokee (XJ) has taken me to all corners of Colorado in my quest to climb the 14er's. I have been satisfied with the capabilities; although a few modifications to a Jeep will make it an off road monster and still a comfortable daily driver. In my opinion, the best modification for the dollar is sway bar disconnects. The sway bars in a Jeep serve an important function for most owners, but severely limits it's off road potential. In Colorado, it is also important to have skid plates to save the more expensive parts from being torn open on rocks.

In future articles I will talk about some of my favorite "Jeep" roads in Colorado whether it is for the views, hikes, natural appeal or all three.

# THE BEGINNING OF THE END

by Frank Ledwell



Imagine waking up on a bright, sunny morning and thinking to yourself, 'I sure wish I had a Jeep' and then going out later that day to purchase one! To most people, the rationale behind such an impulse decision might be considered short of lunacy; however, to a Jeep enthusiast who grew up with a passion for cars and the outdoors and who



**The Rubicon test drive at a *Camp Jeep On-The-Road®* event only tempted Frank's palette. The cravings followed soon after until he finally gave in and bought his first Jeep.**

was inspired just months earlier while testing the mettle of a Jeep Rubicon at a *Camp Jeep On-The-Road®* event, the decision only made sense...and thus marked the beginning of the end.

Outdoor adventuring has always been a passion of mine: Whether cycling across the state of Texas in various charitable events, summiting 14000 foot peaks in the Rockies, getting lost in the snow-capped mountains of the Austrian Alps, or skiing (rather tumbling) down the slopes of Ruidoso, Mother Nature has presented me with plenty of thrills. Nothing, however, would prepare me for the excitement I would garner from testing my off-road skills in my new Jeep while visiting a friend who was home from Colorado on Christmas vacation.

My adventure began in the small town of Willis, Texas, located

north of Houston. Willis, a lumbering and agricultural market town nestled in the thickets of east Texas, was actually founded from a land grant to the Great Northern Railroad by two landowners from Galveston, Texas in 1870. During the late nineteenth century, the Willis area became the leading tobacco growing region in the state before the lifting of the tariff on Cuban tobacco killed the boom in the early twentieth century. Fast-forward to 2005 and Willis has become a thriving community caught up in urban expansion, as well as a great place to take your Jeep when one might be inclined to get it a little muddy. And that's exactly what I did.

Upon my arrival in Willis, I instantly began to yearn for the chance to explore my friend's one hundred and fifty plus acres of land ensconced in tall pines and rolling hills. As luck would have it, my





stuck again



...and again



...and again

friend and I approached a small creek bed that would provide the perfect opportunity for me to kick it into four-wheel drive for the first time. Of course, our 'luck' soon turned into my humiliation as I managed to get stuck in this wanna-be raging waterway on my first pass while my friend, his wife, and his parents watched! It was at this point that it became glaringly obvious that I needed to 'learn the ropes' of four-wheeling, and in this case, it was literal, as a rope was exactly what I needed. Fortunately my 9000 lb Warn winch did the trick, and after finally being freed from this muddy rampage, I gave it another run and ecstatically made it across to the other side, this time without the humiliation and laughter that was received from my previous attempt.

This, of course, merely whet my appetite for a new challenge. At

that moment, as if the air and trees had waltzed into my mind and sensed my desires, the next test presented itself. This time it was in the form of a dugout of clay, water, and rock that teased and taunted me to dare an attempt at crossing it. So, as my friend and his wife stood by, I cranked it into four-wheel drive, dropped it into second gear, shot forward and low and behold, I got stuck...again. This was starting to get a little too familiar, but at the same time pretty humorous. After once again being saved by the towing power of the pine trees in Willis, I considered my options and decided I couldn't quit here, so I gave it another shot. This time, the choice was third gear and it was just what I needed as my tires churned out red clay, water, and rock as I made it across unscathed. For the next forty-five minutes, I continued plowing through this mud hole

with howls of excitement! It finally came to an end when my overconfidence got the best of me and I got stuck one last time right before sundown. Go figure.

After heading back to my friend's house for a remarkable meal prepared by his mother, the evening passed by and it was time to say my good-byes. As I began my long trek back home, I reflected on my first four-wheeling experience and the new passion that had been spawned by the clay, water, and rock that only hours earlier had teased and taunted me. It also brought to mind the decision I had made only weeks before on that bright, sunny morning to go and purchase my Jeep. At that moment it occurred to me that, for better or worse, my love for adventuring had gotten the best of me once again...and thus marked the beginning of the end.

# nugs.net

## Can I Score Some 'Nug'?

A Look at the Future of the Internet Music Revolution

It has often been said that a society's progress can only be achieved through the innovation and creativity of those who are motivated to push its boundaries. True innovators, such as Benjamin Franklin, Henry Ford, and even William Gates, have all played integral roles in the creation of technologies that have progressed society forward. Of the many technologies we enjoy, the Internet has become a defining and integral part of our society and one that, from the standpoint of musical expression, has made the talents of musicians much more readily available. Of course, with the instant availability of practically any and all musical content,

new innovators are helping shape the future of how we access and appreciate the talents of today's musicians. One of those innovators, Brad Serling, has become synonymous with the advancement of the 'digital media space', and the Internet's musical future has never looked more promising.

nugs.net, a turn-key service that provides a solution for online music distribution, was created by Serling in an effort to make recording artists' live music affordable and readily available to their fans via online

download. Serling's innovation has caught the eye of many major recording artists, and the nugs.net network currently delivers music downloads for over 100 artists including; Dave Matthews Band, Metallica, Phish, the Grateful Dead, Widespread Panic, and many others. Serling's enthusiasm about the future of the nugs.net network is justifiable as his Live Phish downloads service has set the standard for private label, direct band-to-fan online live music distribution. With the addition of concert video downloads, live concert ring tones, and more single concert tracks which will be available to create one's own downloadable compilation, the nugs.net family of services continues to look promising. As a matter of fact, Serling is currently working with the members of the band Phish to contribute airtime to their popular online radio station (available through the Live Phish website [www.livephish.com](http://www.livephish.com)) with commentary and background info into past tours and other Phish 'trivia'.

PHOTO BY JEFF KRAVIT

PHOTO BY JEFF KRAVIT





PHOTO BY LARRY FOX

Of course, Serling's innovations definitely carry perks in their own right. As part of keeping a good inside track on what is happening in the musical world and applying that intel into the future success of nugs.net, Serling keeps up with numerous bands by catching various tour stops for recording live shows and actually meeting with the artists themselves. One of the artists that Serling is quite excited about is Umphrey's McGee. "Umphrey's McGee is showing a lot of potential to be big this year when you consider the 'energy' of their latest shows", said Serling. He also anticipates String Cheese Incident (SCI) doing some cool things on their tour this summer, along with another summer tour from Trey Anastasio of Phish.

As far as Serling's own musical preferences, he is a diehard Phish fan who admitted that most of the music on his iPods (he has three that are full)

are not single tracks but rather full concert recordings. He embellished a little more to say that he is currently listening to a Greatful Dead concert from June 1991 that is available to download at [www.gdstore.com](http://www.gdstore.com), as well as Widespread Panic, and a new favorite outside of the Jamband realm, Supergrass, who are from England.

The future of the internet and its continued impact on the music industry has never been more apparent. Brad Serling's innovative talents in bringing a banner of services to music fans the world over are certainly being recognized, and that is why Serling, in his own right, is helping to play an integral role in the technologies that are moving society forward. The internet music revolution is here, and nugs.net promises to lead the way in how we appreciate the talents of today and tomorrows musicians.

## HERE'S JUST A SMALL HIT OF WHAT [nugs.net](http://nugs.net) HAS TO OFFER:

### [www.nugs.net](http://www.nugs.net)

This is definitely the place to start. On top of all that nugs.net offers, this site serves as a launching pad to the other sites on the nugs.network. While you're visiting nugs.net be sure to check out the *Free Stash*. You will find an enormous archive of live concert shows to download for free, courtesy of the artists and Brad Serling. A nugs.net *must* is the monthly nugscast (podcast) featuring live concert selections with light but informative commentary about the events and bands.

### [www.livedownloads.com](http://www.livedownloads.com)

With the enormity of the live show selections on the nugs.net *Free Stash*, you still won't find all that your heart desires until you visit the live downloads archive. This is where you will find the full length recordings taped at the show from that tour that was so awesome even though you don't remember being there. Go to [livedownloads.com](http://livedownloads.com), download the MP3, and get lost in that memory once again.

## ONLINE RADIO

### [nugs.net](http://nugs.net) radio [livephish](http://livephish.com) radio

Check out nugs.net radio to hear live recordings from all of your favorite jambands or go to live Phish radio for nonstop Phish concert tracks.

# Have An 'Ice' Day

by Jeff Haley

In Colorado, the splendor and beauty of the outdoors is what makes it a haven for those who live for outdoor adventure. For most folks though, the winter months entail days and evenings by a cozy fire rather than an opportunity for exploration. Now, you may be wondering, "What is there to do when all the Jeep trails are covered in snow?" Well, I've got just the sport for you...ice climbing! Yes, that's right: Ice isn't just something you put in your drink to keep it cold; it's an unlimited adventure just waiting for you to sink your crampons into.

Colorado's mountain Jeep trails are packed with areas nestled near amazing waterfalls that are absolutely breathtaking. During the winter months, when the temperature drops and the snow starts falling, those very same waterfalls turn to ice and can be several hundred feet tall. As a matter of fact, in most mountain areas throughout the country, ice forms as

**"In winter, the mountain landscape transforms to a snow and ice covered playground just waiting to be explored."**

early as October and can last well into April making for a long season of ice climbing fun that's easily enjoyed with the proper equipment and technique.

In recent years, ice climbing has become very popular in areas that were once only known for their amazing summer time rock climbing. Ouray, Colorado, known for its outdoor adventuring, is now world renowned for its amazing ice park. The Uncompahgre Gorge, which cuts through the south end of town and is within the San Juan Mountains, has several naturally occurring waterfalls that provide unlimited ice routes during the winter. Recently, these waterfalls have been supplemented by "farmed" ice, which is a process of pumping water through hoses and pipes and then spilling it over the rim to form icefalls. Some of these icefalls can be close to two hundred feet tall and overhanging in spots to accommodate even the most experienced of climbers. Every year, Ouray hosts an annual Ice Festival in which climbers come from all over the world to compete in various events and participate in demonstrations.





## Gear to Succeed

Just like any sport, there are several essential items of gear that are needed to make your ice climbing experience safe and enjoyable. In addition to the typical climbing gear such as a rope, harness, and belay device, ice climbing requires special boots, crampons, ice tools, and possibly ice screws (depending on the type and difficulty of ice climbing you plan to do). Many people argue that ice climbing is too expensive to get into, but if you are a good shopper and learn about the appropriate gear, you can get started for less than \$500.00.

First off, the most important piece of gear for safe climbing is an adequate mountaineering helmet. As you can guess, ice breaks very easily and can become lethal if it falls on you. Choose a helmet that's light in weight yet, sturdy and comfortable. By choosing the right helmet, you'll be climbing safely and without headache...literally!

Next, you'll need a comfortable pair of mountaineering boots that are insulated and crampon compatible. Many specialty outdoor stores, and online catalogs, sell boots that range from \$100.00 to \$400.00 depending on the brand and materials.

Once you have boots, you will need a set of rigid crampons that have front points for vertical ice. There are several different types of crampons for various situations, ranging from standard glacier travel to difficult mixed climbing conditions that can involve rock and ice climbing. Most crampons, however, will have a front and back bail that will attach to the boot for a secure fit while climbing. Be sure to choose the crampon that's most comfortable and appropriate for the type of climbing you plan to do and if you're still unsure, don't be afraid to ask.

Now that your feet are ready for the ice, you will need something for your hands. The answer for this is ice tools. Ice tools basically look like medieval weapons and are what one uses to climb the ice. Ice tools come in various shapes and sizes depending on the type of climbing you plan to do. A standard ice tool will have a bent shaft for better swinging efficiency, and a hammer or adze attached to the back of the pick.

Lastly, the more advanced ice climber will need ice screws to lead climb. Basically, a climber can secure the rope while climbing by placing a specially designed screw into the ice with a carabiner on the end to clip the rope into. This type of climbing is more advanced and requires a high level of confidence to minimize the chance of falling. With some smart shopping and knowledge of gear, you will be well on your way towards being ready for your first ice adventure.



## Now For The Fun

In winter, the mountain landscape transforms to a snow and ice covered playground just waiting to be explored. In Colorado, it's not unusual to have a nice sunny day and temperatures around 30 degrees; conditions that are perfect to get out and play without feeling like you are going to freeze to death. Many mountain areas also offer reasonably priced lodging and climbing guide services that will not only allow you to stay warm at night and enjoy the mountains by day, but also accommodate you on your first climbing experience, providing for the perfect weekend getaway! So next winter when your Jeep is sitting in the garage waiting to get its tires in some snow, why not drive to the mountains and do some ice climbing? You and your Jeep will both be happy that you did.

**Editors note:** Due to the technical aspects of ice climbing, many dangers are involved with the sport such as falling ice, falling tools, and falling climbers. Consult an experienced guide service when ice climbing for the first time, and be sure to use the appropriate safety equipment at all times.