

# JPFreeek

LIFESTYLES OFF THE BEATEN PATH



June/July 2006 • Issue 2 • Vol.1



**RODNEY  
BRANIGAN**

**El Camino  
del  
Diablo**

**HIKE**



**CYCLE**



**4X4**



**EXPLORING THE  
ORPHAN  
BOY  
FISH**

**SHINER  
BASH**

**EASTER  
JEEP  
SAFARI**



First off, I would like to thank all of you for the overwhelming success that JPFreek has enjoyed since the release of our premier issue in April. The response to JPFreek has been dramatically positive, and we hope to continue that momentum as we strive to become the most engaging outdoor adventure publication available on the web.

For our June/July issue, JPFreek is introducing a new member to our writing staff: Mark D. Stephens from Arizona. We were so excited with the addition of Mark to JPFreek that we thought what better way to welcome him than to give him the cover story for our June/July issue! We think it's safe to say that Mark managed to handle this task with a riveting story, and we're glad to have him on board.

As JPFreek plows forward, we ask that all of our readers take a few minutes to answer a relatively short survey that will be available on our website (<http://www.jpfreek.com>) within a week or so from the release of our current issue. This survey was created in an effort for JPFreek to better understand who our readers are, as well

as the variety of content you would like to see in future editions of JPFreek. Also, please be sure to visit our website for JPFreek gear, and look for future layout revisions to the site that we hope will enhance your experience while visiting us.

JPFreek hopes that all of our stories will inspire you to plan your own outdoor adventure, and as we continue our successful path, we look forward to sharing our passion for the outdoors with you and hope that we can help you enjoy a 'lifestyle off the beaten path'.

Happy Adventuring,



Frank Ledwell  
Editor-in-Chief /  
Business Development  
JPFreek Publications



# ARE YOU A FReeK?

If you're looking for engaging content about Jeep and outdoor adventure, you've come to the right place! JP'Freeks' are inspired by lifestyles off the beaten path, and we encourage anyone with a story to tell or a photograph to share to submit them to JPFreek. Who knows, we may very well use your story and/or photo(s) in an upcoming issue, and your submissions will be rewarded with some really cool JPFreek gear including decals and t-shirts. So what are you waiting for? Submit your adventures to JPFreek at [mystory@jpfreek.com](mailto:mystory@jpfreek.com) today, and become a true 'freak'.



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# A DAY TO REMEMBER

## COMMEMORATING THOSE WHO PERISHED IN THE 1996 EVEREST DISASTER

On **May 10, 1996** nine climbers, including experienced climbing guides Rob Hall and Scott Fischer, perished while attempting an ascent to the 'Top of the World' at 29,035 feet. That day would later be realized as the single deadliest date in the history of climbing Mt. Everest, and one in which those who survived this tragedy will never forget. We at JPFreek commemorate those who perished in this tragedy, and we wish the families of those who lost their loved ones all the very best as we remember the ten year anniversary of their loss.

The following are those we remember:

**Andy Harris**  
**Doug Hansen**  
**Rob Hall**  
**Yasuko Namba**  
**Scott Fischer**  
**Ngawang Topche Sherpa**  
**Chen Yu-Nan**  
**Bruce Herrod**  
**Lopsang Janbu Sherpa**

For more information about the Everest disaster in May 1996, several accounts have been written by survivors of this tragedy including Jon Krakauer and his book 'Into Thin Air', Anatoli Boukreev and his written account 'The Climb', Makalu Gau's account at <http://classic.mountainzone.com/climbing/misc/gau/> as well as countless sources via the Internet.





# EL CAMINO DEL DIABLO

Adventuring Along the Mexico-U.S. Border



**Editorial and photography by –  
Mark D. Stephens**

**The palpable sense of mystery  
in the desert air breeds fables,  
chiefly of lost treasure.  
- Mary Austin, The Land of Little  
Rain (1903)**

*Allow me take you to El Camino del Diablo.*

If your Spanish is rusty, it translates to this creepy name: The Devil's Highway. Fierce, rocky, and isolated desert of granite mountains, stunted trees and plants that don't need a drink for months are the markers of this place. With the daytime temperatures in the winter being nearly 90 degrees, you'd think this very well could be a road into hell. Nah...it's just the Sonoran Desert.

Once upon a time the trail started somewhere near Caborca, Sonora, Mexico and streamlined its way to Yuma, Arizona. With such ghostly scenes



**Sights along El Camino del Diablo include old pioneer dwellings (such as at Tule Well and Bates Ranch) and impressive granite mountains. Some portions of the trail run so close to the international border that you can sometimes see traffic along Mexico Highway 2.**



like the black Pinacate lava flows and the random grave sites near Christmas Pass, we'll wonder: why in the hell is this road here?

The simple answer: it was a shortcut.

If it was not a shortcut to the grave, then it was one to California. In the 1700s, missionaries out of Mexico found it quicker, safer, and more economical than sailing around the Baja Peninsula of Mexico. It also cut off nearly one hundred and fifty miles for people traveling westward in attempt at fortune in the Gold Rush of the mid-1800s.

This expedience came at a price, for travelers staked their lives by using this trail. People need water to survive and the only source for water along the route is located at the Tinajas Altas Mountains. By some miracle of nature, a narrow and steep channel in the mountains has nine deep holes that collect rainwater. Trekkers in the pioneering ages knew this much: hydrate here, or die.

Welcome to El Camino del Diablo, which is one of the most dangerous trails in the Continental U.S. based on statistics alone. Historians say between 400 and 500 people died of thirst here. There is no one with whom to talk, unless you come with some people of your own. Since you can clock in over 120 miles in some of the most remote and unforgiving desert, you don't necessarily want to try this alone.



No locals exist, save the rattlesnakes, rodents, hawks, big horn sheep...

So each time I've traveled El Camino, it's been with a group of other civilization-weary friends who preferred to visit this dusty land free of coffee shops, mainstream radio, and TV commercials. I want to say it's because we really just want to sit around a campfire. But we also

love the desert; the more remote the better. I don't really know why I like the desert so much, but I do know why I like campfires. This is the place where you can get to know somebody and spit your peanut shells at once. Give me a campfire in the desert, and we will cook up some fables and tales of lost treasure for sure – some true, and yet all real.

Most of the time I'm with people who teach me things if I take notice. And this is why we do this thing – expedition adventure travel - in groups.

Let's start with Mario: he fixed an air suspension on a

Land Rover before we'd reached the first camp by employing a clever combination of 2x4 pine blocks and a ratchet strap. Vince, a pseudo-vagabond who rarely crawls out of Baja (and if he does, he'll be wearing a Mexican poncho and a cowboy hat) noticed me chopping a log for the fire.

**Above: At 3 years old, little Samantha has traveled this trail 3 times. Here she motors down an expedition-size bowl of Cheerios and a sippy cup of juice before bed. She's a trooper.**







The collections of water at Tinajas Altas are dark, old, and still used by wildlife. To approach them, these natural pools require a certain level of skill to scramble and climb up several steep slabs.

"Mark, lay it parallel to the others. It'll burn hotter that way."

Al, a gentle 65 year-old spirit (who seemed to know the name of every peak and wash on the map) quietly set up a small camp table, placed several bottles on it along with a stack of cups. He grinned at me and said, "The bar is open."

As you might expect would be inevitable when camping this close to the U.S.-Mexico border, we discussed the growing problem of illegal immigration. But not in such direct terms.

"Did you guys notice the tall flags every once in while back there."

"Yeah, I think I saw two or three. What were those all about?"

"They mark tubs of water. I heard that they weren't put there by Border Patrol, but by some humanitarian groups. They think it's worse to just allow people to die out here. So they set up some water stations."

### **"Whether crossing the desert as an illegal immigrant or an adventurer, you have placed your bet. "**

"Yeah, but don't you think that's just inviting more illegals to cross out here?"

"It's like the idea of handing out condoms to high school kids, I think. You know that people are going to try to cross the border out here anyway. Besides, they aren't going to cross because there happens to be some water. They cross because their lives are so piss poor back home. Know what I mean?"

Some one across the fire mentioned, "Back at the Marine base, the guy giving me my permit made some comment about what to do if – and I ain't kidding you about this – if your pistol happens to 'misfire' while it's coincidentally pointed at a Mexican trying to cross the desert."

I see two truths about this desert:

One: For it's remoteness, it's beautiful. You can stand still and only hear the wind. The mountains glow with red and purple at dusk. The animals come out at night to scratch around and look for food. Before the sun goes down, you can see the silhouette of several big horn sheep at Tinajas Altas.

Two: For it's remoteness – despite it's beauty

- it still happens to be a place where people trade their lives for an opportunity. A Border Patrol agent knows how to read foot tracks, and they know what elongated depressions in the sand mean: someone was crawling. A matter of yards away they'll find a dead body of someone who crawled across the desert for the final minutes of his or her life.

Alex changed the topic. "You guys want to watch the documentary about the crossing of the Darien Gap? It's really cool." He said he had his laptop computer and a copy of the

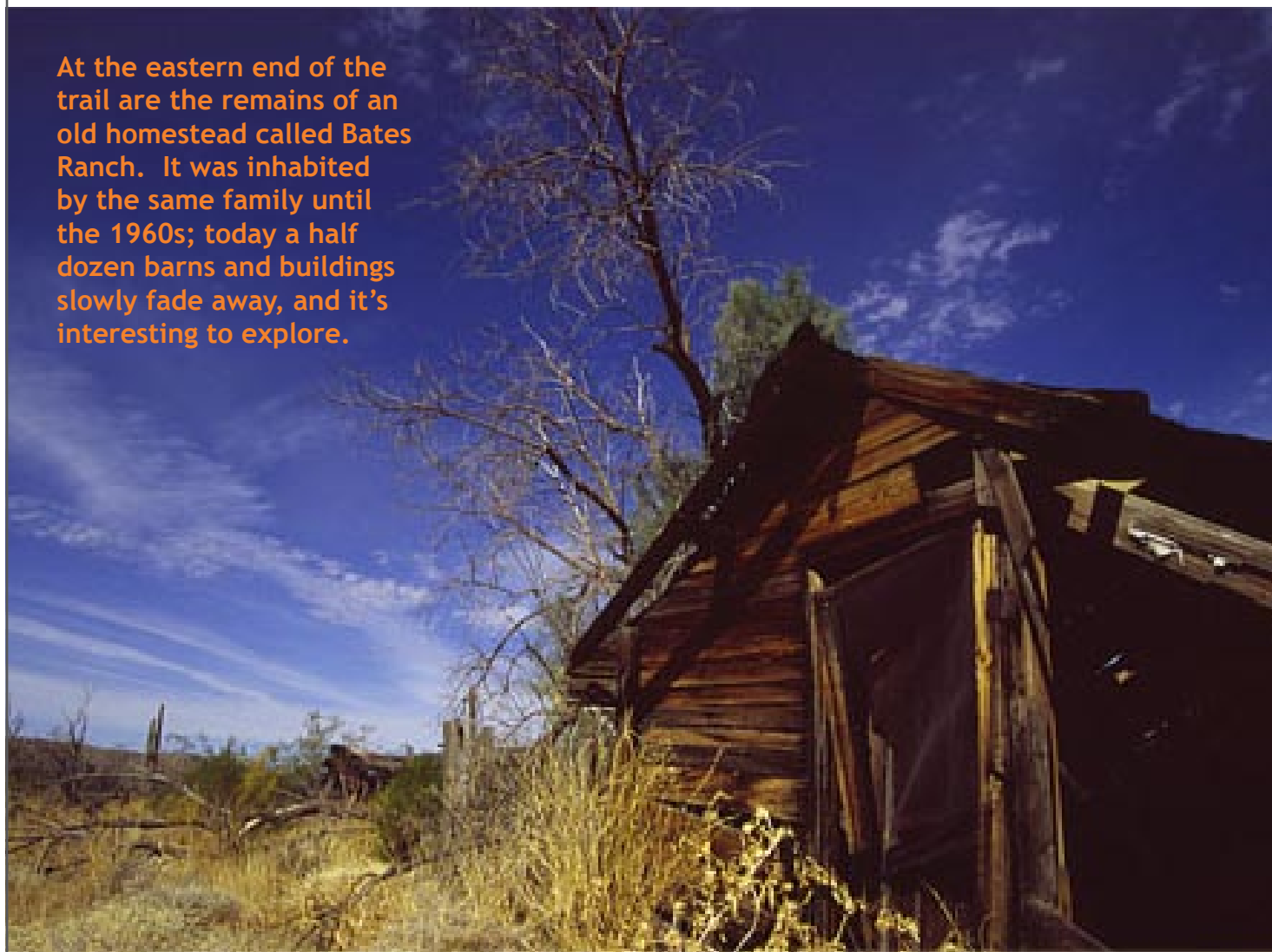
Mark A. Smith Jeep Expedition de las Americas of 1979.

We gathered our chairs around his camp table, fixed up some shots of tequila, and watched - with total attention - how a group of guys in Jeeps drove 20,000 miles and spent 120 days driving from Tierra del Fuego to Prudoe Bay. The highlight was where they plowed their way through the section of swamp-jungle that extends from Colombia to Panama and still remains the unfinished stretch of the Trans-American Highway. Called the Darien Gap, it - like El Camino

del Diablo - is isolated and brutal but for different reasons.

Whether crossing the desert as an illegal immigrant or an adventurer, you have placed your bet. I like what Saint-Exupery wrote, "What makes the desert beautiful is that somewhere it hides a well." Immigrants and adventurers alike bet on finding that well. The one that I keep stumbling upon contains new friendships and wide open vistas rich in history that is still being written. One day, historians will say that people traveled this road simply for the fun of it.

**At the eastern end of the trail are the remains of an old homestead called Bates Ranch. It was inhabited by the same family until the 1960s; today a half dozen barns and buildings slowly fade away, and it's interesting to explore.**





# WWW.MARKDSTEPHENS.COM

## Introducing Mark D. Stephens: JPFreek's newest crew member

These three simple events should exhibit who I think I am:

1. I've been propelled from the desert only twice in my life. Well, other than for vacations. The big one was for college - an obscure one in Virginia actually. One night I was hanging out in a downtown coffee shop with some friends when a cute little thing from North Carolina asked me without flinching, "So, how do y'all git around out there in them sand dunes? Is Arizona where they use camels 'n stuff?" And she wasn't kidding. So I said, "Yeah, that's right."
2. When I was in the third grade, I had to write a paragraph for the first time. I came home from school that day and declared to my parents that I was going to "be an author" when I grew up.
3. In high school, my friend Russ and I would tinker on our respective cars and talk about the bright future: when we'd both own Jeeps, keep the doors off during Spring, and spend the weekends camping together. We're still friends today, and we both have Jeeps.



**Mark D. Stephens and  
his wife Brooke**

### Here I am: desert rat, writer, and all-around Jeep 'freek'.

Here I am: desert rat, writer, and all-around Jeep 'freek'. A darker soul has never needed God's mercy more. And this combination equates to a solid vow of poverty, depending on how it's calculated.

However, John Denver sings, "You know he's be a poorer man if he'd never seen an eagle fly." According to John, I'm pretty rich.

I developed my website to celebrate the desert, adventuring, and the photography of both. And I hope that Jeep enthusiasts and adventurers are entertained by it all.



**My tool for adventure is a 2002 Jeep Wrangler. Freed of it's backseat in favor of a cargo rack, sitting comfortably on an Old Man Emu suspension system, and sporting 31" tall BF Goodrich Mud Terrain tires for maximum traction. The safari snorkel gives the motor clean air to breathe on the dusty trails of Arizona and Mexico while also providing a little more security for remote river crossings. The top tends to remain down.**

**CHECK OUT MORE OF MARK'S  
JEEP EXPEDITIONS AND  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
@ WWW.MARKDSTEPHENS.COM**





# A BALLYHOO OF BIKES AND BEER FOR CHARITY

Text by Frank Ledwell, Cycling Correspondent. Photos supplied by Spoetzl Brewery.



Larger than life. There's simply no better way to describe the state of Texas, and when it comes to cycling this adage is more than applicable. Home to some of the country's most significant charitable cycling events, as well as the home of seven-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong, Texas' rich cycling tradition knows no bounds. Throw into this mix the savory hand-crafted brews from the Spoetzl Brewery in Shiner, Texas, as well as live music festivities by premier Texas Americana recording artists, and you've got all the ingredients for one of the most unique and enjoyable cycling tours around: The annual Shiner B.A.S.H.

The Shiner B.A.S.H. first began in the mid 1980's by a few loyal Shiner Bock fans from Austin, Texas who called the ride G.A.S.P., an acronym for Great Austin to Shiner Pedal. As the annual

pilgrimage to the Spoetzl Brewery in Shiner grew in popularity, the ride was replaced in 1998 with the name B.A.S.H., an acronym for Bike Austin San Antonio Houston,

**"With the help of our experienced partners, we hope to build on the success we've enjoyed and take this unique Texas event to the next level."**

and the addition of starting points in San Antonio and Houston attracted more riders to the 90 mile (approximately 150 kilometers) patronage to Texas' oldest independent brewery. Additionally,

the ride became more than just a patronage to Shiner for fine brew: It also became an event focused on raising funds for various charitable organizations, including the American Lung Association. The 2006 version of the Shiner B.A.S.H. was no different as the primary beneficiary for the ride was the Lance Armstrong Foundation, founded in 1997 by cancer survivor and seven-time Tour de France champion cyclist Lance Armstrong to inspire and empower people affected by cancer. A new partner, OP3, was also brought on board with the task of focusing on improvement of routes and polishing finish line logistics for the riders. "Shiner Beers and the Spoetzl Brewery are proud to welcome the LAF and OP3 to the Shiner B.A.S.H. team," said Shamus Hanlon, Shiner's Brand Group Director of Marketing. "With the help of our experienced partners, we hope to build on the success we've enjoyed and take this unique Texas event to the next level."



Hoping to stave off any significant kinks that Mother Nature might throw towards cyclists in this year's tour, the Shiner B.A.S.H. Committee chose May 6, 2006 as the official date for the tour. Of course, Mother Nature would have different plans as torrential downpours, and an overall dreary and overcast setting in Houston, kicked off the cycling tour and left the 1,500 cyclists who participated in the tour questioning their devotion to brew and charity. Nonetheless, the ride went on and after what seemed like a gloomy and unfavorable start, the weather cleared up and the patronage supporting fine brew and cancer survivor-ship continued on. Rest stops and SAG wagons provided excellent support to all cyclists as they traveled through small towns and scenic byways en route to Shiner.

Upon arrival in Shiner, cyclists were greeted by massage therapists, showers, lunch and cold Shiner beer. The party kicked into high gear at Green Dickson Park, the central location for all festivities with over 3,500 spectators in attendance. An outdoor Texas music celebration by Platinum recording artist Gary Allan, as well as other bands including The Randy Rogers Band, Reckless Kelly, The Stragglers, Jason Boland and Darryl Lee Rush, kept thousands of cyclists and spectators entertained. Cyclists and Spectators also enjoyed the opportunity to tour the Spoetzl Brewery, which many folks considered the real highlight of a long day in the saddle, to sample Shiner's fine brews. The event concluded with camping at Green Dickson Park and of course, plenty of Shiner brew.

The 8th annual Shiner B.A.S.H. was a huge success and continued its tradition of providing cyclists with a unique and certainly adventure-packed day of riding. As the tour continues its growth, its mission of providing a fun-filled ride and supporting important causes such as the Lance Armstrong Foundation will continue. In the meantime, if you're looking for a rewarding ballyhoo of bikes and beer for charity, look no further than next year's Shiner B.A.S.H., an event that will most certainly live up to its billing as a 'larger than life' Texas tradition.



**Cyclists braved the elements early on en route to Shiner but were rewarded with live music and plenty of brew at the finish line**





### About Spoetzl Brewery

The Spoetzl Brewery is the oldest independent brewery in Texas and boasts a world-class, award-winning reputation. The historic 'little brewery' offers four year-round brews and two very popular season beers. The Spoetzl Brewery brews Shiner Bock, an American-style Bock beer that is Texas' #1 selling Specialty beer and the nation's #4 selling Specialty beer; Shiner Blonde, a Bohemian-inspired natural golden lager brewed from the original Shiner recipe just as it was in 1909; Shiner Hefeweizen, a bottle and keg-conditioned, unfiltered Bavarian-style wheat beer brewed with orange and lemon peels and pure Texas clover honey; Shiner Dunkelweizen, a Bavarian-style dark wheat winter seasonal beer and Shiner's most critically acclaimed brew; Shiner Kolsch, a German-style Kolsch summer seasonal bier, and Shiner Light, a full-flavored amber light beer. During the past two years, Shiner beers have won 13 awards at major worldwide beer competitions, including the Great American Beer Festival and the World Beer Cup. For more information on the Spoetzl Brewery or the Shiner family of beers, please visit the brewery on the Web site at [www.shiner.com](http://www.shiner.com), or call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-5-SHINER.



(Courtesy of Spoetzl Brewery in Shiner, Texas)

# L I V E S T R O N G™

## LANCE ARMSTRONG FOUNDATION

### About Lance Armstrong Foundation

The Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) inspires and empowers people affected by cancer. LAF helps people with cancer focus on living; LAF believes that unity is strength, knowledge is power and attitude is everything. From the moment of diagnosis, the LAF provides the practical information and tools people with cancer need to live life on their own terms. The LAF serves its mission through advocacy, public health and research. Founded in 1997 by cancer survivor and champion cyclist Lance Armstrong, the LAF is located in Austin, Texas. For more information, visit [livestrong.org](http://livestrong.org).

(Courtesy of The Lance Armstrong Foundation in Austin, Texas)



# COLORADO'S 'ORPHAN BOY' OASIS

Text and photography by Raymond Schindler, Hiking Correspondent

In the high alpine desert of southwestern Colorado lies an oasis that is home to Mt. Lindsey. This beautiful locale, known as Huerfano Valley, is truly heaven on earth;

one of those places that you wish you could build a cabin, kick up your feet, and spend the rest of your life. A

fortunate few are lucky enough to have this as a reality, operating "dude" ranches in the summer to share in the experience. The thriving grassy fields here are backed with thick aspen groves and of course, a winding Jeep trail.

Huerfano Valley and Mt. Lindsey exist in the Sangre de Cristo range, which rises from the San Luis Valley in a very abrupt way with few foothills. The Sangre de Cristo range contains ten of Colorado's Fourteeners and all of New Mexico's 13,000 ft. peaks. Winds from the southwest carry sand throughout the region but due to the sand's inability to cross over the mountains, enormous sand dunes now known as Great Sand Dunes National

Park has been created along their edge. Obviously, the scientific reason for the dunes is a little more involved and much more interesting than I can get

into. Nonetheless, the dunes are the tallest in North America and stand at over 750 feet tall. The immensity and awkwardness of the dunes deserves

much attention, but since the subject of this editorial is Mt. Lindsey, I had better move on.

Mt. Lindsey is the 43rd highest mountain in the state, rising to 14,042 feet above sea level. It was my 23rd Fourteener and one of the mountains that I would truly enjoy climbing again. The driving approach to the trail head requires quite a bit of navigation but is approximately 22 miles down a dirt road. The last few miles are a little rough but are passable in most any Jeep. Would I be writing about it if a little four wheelin' wasn't involved? Anyway, Blanca Peak (14,345 feet) dominates the view at the end of the valley, and a photo here with the right

**The Sangre de Cristo range contains  
ten of Colorado's fourteeners and all  
of New Mexico's 13,000 ft peaks**



light and aspen color in the fall would rival any photo of the famed Maroon Bells. Of course, my photo does not do the area any justice.

Camp sites abound in the area but watch out for private property. There are a few guest ranches with ranch hands that enjoy tossing back a few tall boys and driving their trucks up and down the road. A few of these guys warned us that there was a bear in the area and they were kind enough to drive up and down the road shooting their gun all night; most likely in an effort to scare off this wayward animal. All in all, the area is pretty remote so be sure to fill up with gas and plenty of brew to keep the locals at bay.

Due to private land, the standard route on Lindsey is along the mountain's North Face. The rating is class 2+ (with nice summer conditions), which means that you can expect to use your hands but not have to search too hard for hand-holds. The round trip distance is approximately eight miles with an elevation gain of approximately 3,400 feet (assuming your Jeep makes it to the trailhead).

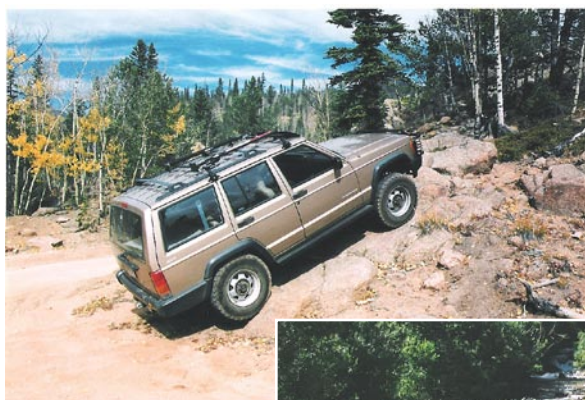
The hike itself begins relatively flat with Blanca towering over the valley. Mt. Lindsey is hidden from sight for the first 1.5 miles. After you cross a stream and approach Lindsey's northwest ridge (Lindsey/Iron Nipple saddle), the upper slopes come into focus. The view of Blanca and Ellingwood (14,042) to the west is quite inspiring. After your eyes clear up from such an inspirational view, it's time to navigate Lindsey's North Face. This is where you will most likely need to start using your hands along with your feet. The first goal is to make it up a loose scree chute (scree is deposited rock the



**Mission accomplished! Standing atop the summit of Mt. Lindsey, the crisp Colorado air and company of wayward Marmots provide a peaceful end to a scenic climb**

size of coarse sand up to several inches across). Once on top of the chute, climbing to the summit is still pretty loose but more of a talus consistency (talus is larger scree that is still loose). Lindsey's summit, once it has been accomplished, is pretty large and plenty comfortable to lounge on...especially with its colony of marmots scrounging around aimlessly.

Huerfano is Spanish for "orphan boy" while Sangre de Cristo is Spanish for "blood of Christ." The remoteness of the Huerfano Valley and the comfort of the Sangre de Cristo range fit their namesakes well. Alas, vaya con Dios!



**Editor's Note: This article is not intended to be comprehensive in its coverage of driving and climbing routes. Climbing is dangerous due to lightning/weather and rock/snow fall, to name a few. Make sure you have adequate training and experience before venturing out.**



# The Trip That Changed My Life:

Jeepin' at Moab during Easter Jeep Safari 2006



Have you ever heard of Moab, Utah? Until just a few months ago, I didn't know the difference between Moab and the Mojave. Fortunately for me, a friend recently introduced me to Moab, and I haven't been the same since.





It all started when Olaf, a friend in the real estate business, told me about a little piece of land that he and five of his friends purchased for 'dirt cheap' out at Moab. Olaf had told me about how much he loved it out there, and how I should go to Moab and check it out with him. Of course, the first time he asked me to go, I did that thing in my mind that all of us do when we come to a crossroad of little opportunity: I said, "Sure, sounds like fun" without any real intention of actually going. When he mentioned it again, and as the weeks went by and I spent more time out on the trails in Orange County, CA, I thought to myself, "Hey, that might be pretty fun". In the meantime, I had told all of my friends that I was hoping to go but with the prospect of not having anyone to drive to Utah with, and gasoline at \$3.15 per gallon, I was confident that my sub-conscious intention to back out would most likely become reality. Even up until the day before I left, I still thought that I was going to make that flaky phone call and cancel on the trip. As it turns out, that would have been one of my biggest regrets.

**The entrance to Area BFE, Moab's newest off-road adventure park**

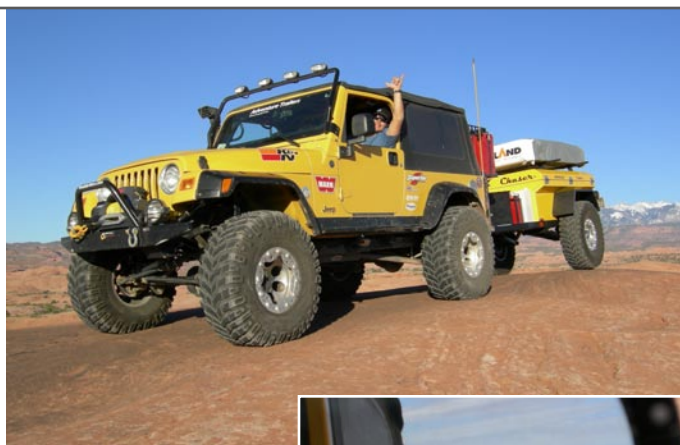


When the day to head out finally came, my girlfriend was heading out of town and she agreed to let me borrow her Civic for the drive to Moab. I packed her trunk full of all my survival road gear, and I was on the road by 6pm. I had no idea what a long drive this was going to be, and as I hit a windy section of narrow freeway, I decided it was best to pull over and take a nap. Forty-five minutes later I awoke, re-charged and ready to rock. I could tell that by the winding road and elevation changes that I was missing a lot of scenery, so I decided to turn off my headlights and let the half moon guide me on my way. As my navigation



system guided my way, I eventually rolled into Moab at about 2:45am. Fully expecting my buddy Olaf to come to the door half asleep, wrapped in a blanket and telling me, "There's the floor, see you in the morning", I was surprised to find the lights were on and there were a few people there, still very much wide-awake. As it turns out, I spent the next two hours helping them install speakers and a flat panel TV. The next morning I woke up at 9 or so, and as I walked outside to get my stuff out of the car, I found myself surrounded by majestic red rock walls and trees. I had no idea Moab was this beautiful as I had rolled into Moab in the dark, following the shadows of a half-moon.

One of the guys I met that first night was a guy named Alex Carvalho from Adventure Trailers. What a great guy! Alex drives a Jeep Unlimited, has a huge lift, 37" Mickey Thompson crawlers, front Warn winch, beadlock rims, snorkel breather, air lockers by ARB, and a lot more. Alex offered me a seat in his rig that morning, and he took my four-wheeling experience to a whole new level. Driving through town at 10am, I noticed the most peculiar thing: Jeeps, rock crawlers, and trucks that were all highly modified to the point of not even being street legal completely ruled the landscape. I saw more off-road vehicles at the gas station and on the



road than I had ever seen in my twenty-eight years of breathing. All I could ask myself was, "What the hell is this place? Moab what? Did I die and go to heaven?" I was so shocked and amazed that I just sat there and looked around for twenty

minutes, not even talking much to Alex as I sat mesmerized by this four-wheel haven. I finally told Alex, "Wow, there are a lot of Jeeps here". He looked at me and said, "Well yeah, it's Easter Jeep Safari and there are over 1,500 Jeeps here and all the off road vendors are here for all the events". At that point I thought I would jump out of the Jeep doing 50 miles per hour and land on the hard pavement

in lieu of pinching myself from this remarkable, heavenly dream. Then I thought, "Have I died, am I in heaven, and is Alex God?" I was still pretty confused yet excited in a way that I had never quite felt before. I could feel the adrenaline picking up in anticipation, and when we finally arrived at Area BFE, an off-road park within Moab, I was stoked!



**Top: Alex Carvalho from ADVENTURETRAILERS**  
**Middle-right/left: Caravan entering Area BFE**  
**Bottom: A buggy sits waiting for someone to feed her a healthy dose of rock and dirt**



Once there, I decided that it would be best to talk to as many people about this new sport I was becoming quite passionate about, as well as have

fun because I knew I would never get to experience this for the first time again. From that point forward, I spent the next four days (approximately six to eight hours per day) on the trails driving over terrain that I would not attempt to even repel down, including miles of rocky, frame-twisting, axle-popping descents and hill climbs. It also helped that everyone in attendance was super cool and extremely nice, offering advice on vehicle selection and just about everything four-wheelin' related.

Moab as a whole has it all: Great people, great food, great trails, and of course world-class biking and hiking to be done if wheelin' just isn't your thing. I experienced things in Moab I never thought I would ever get to do, and I learned of a place that I dream of going back to.



**What time is it? Whether crawlin' by day or by night, the challenging terrain in Moab provides plenty of thrills**





After my time there was done, I packed up my girlfriend's Civic, said my goodbyes, and started the long drive home. I couldn't wait to tell my friends about the fun I had. More importantly though, I saved my poor Tahoe from the destiny she was cursed with from day one - the curse of being a vehicle owned by Mike Tinnell. No vehicle has ever survived me and after that trip to Moab, I realized her potential, or lack thereof, and naturally decided that the only answer would be for me to buy a Jeep. So sure enough, I purchased a 1989 Jeep Cherokee XJ to compliment my Tahoe, all courtesy of a friend's invitation to visit a piece of investment property in a land I had previously known nothing about, and a land that changed my life during one very awesome week at Easter Jeep Safari 2006.



**Buy yourself a Jeep  
and give it a bath...  
In mud of course.**



**Check out the AREA BFE offroad adventure ranch and AREA BFE Films for a sick dose of creepin' crawlin', & booty haulin' in one of the best offroading locales in the world.**

**[WWW.AREABFE.COM](http://WWW.AREABFE.COM)**



# EXPEDITION CHECKLIST

**Planning an expedition?** The following list details all the items suggested for a successful time on the trails, courtesy of 'the phantom' @ [LINKS4JEEPS.COM](http://LINKS4JEEPS.COM)

## ESSENTIALS

Below are requirements for vehicles on trail rides. This list is by no means complete, but they are the MINIMUM items that should be carried on a trail.

1. Valid Driver's License and Proof of Insurance.
2. Fire Extinguisher (1A10BC Dry Chemical).
3. Roll Bar or Steel Unitized Factory Roll Protection Structure. (If you have a Jeep, you're set.)
4. Basic First Aid Kit.
5. Tow rope, strap, or chain
6. Safety belts (one for each occupant).
7. Jack, lug wrench and full size spare tire (no donuts).
8. Front and Rear, frame mounted tow points.
9. A FUNCTIONING 4x4 system.
10. H2O and extra gas- at least 2 gallons of each.

## RECOMMENDED

Below are recommended items for vehicles on trail rides. Again, this list is by no means complete, but is recommended items that will make your trail ride more safe and enjoyable.

### Vehicle

Armor - Skid plates, rock rails, etc.  
Lift  
Lockers  
Winch - rated 8000lb or higher

### Radios

CB or Digital (i.e. Motorola  
Talkabouts or other FRS)

**Trash bags** (Everyone should be "packing it out" as well as picking up any garbage they see on the trail.)

**Camera** Ultra high speed \$2000 cameras are discouraged. You will break it. Digital cameras and disposals are encouraged. Bring extra film/disks/batteries with you.

### Navigation & Communication

GPS  
Maps - Road & TOPO  
Compass  
CB & Digital Radios  
Cell Phone

### Tools

Maglite  
Various tools - full socket/wrench sets in standard and metric, screwdrivers, etc.  
Hydraulic floor jack  
Bottle Jack  
Bailing Wire  
Duct Tape  
Zip ties  
Hatchet or Axe  
Shovel  
PB Blaster  
GOJO  
Safety Glasses  
Various Bungee cords  
Saw  
Rope - Small gauge (550 parachute cord) and Heavy (For massive Jeep repair)

### Electrical

Power Inverter  
Fuses & Relays  
Wire - various gauges  
Wire Stripper  
Electrical Connectors  
Electrical Tape





### **Recovery Gear**

Snatch Block  
Straps - tow & snatch  
Extra Clevis style shackles  
HD Work Gloves  
Spotter Line  
Pull-Pal

### **Spare Parts**

Belts, hoses, spark plugs, wires, etc.  
Spare Tie rod assembly  
U-joints  
Spare light bulbs  
Fluids - Oil, Tranny, Diff, Coolant, Starting  
Filters - Air, Oil, etc.  
RTV

### **Emergency**

First Aid kit  
Spare Fire Extinguisher  
Waterproof matches  
Fire starter  
Emergency Flares  
Sun block

### **Clothing**

Change of clothes, including spare boots and socks Very Important !  
Foul Weather Gear - Gore-Tex and Fleece with gloves. Pack for the worst weather you can imagine.  
Mechanics Gloves

### **Cooler**

Bottled water, Gatorade, food, etc.

### **Assorted**

Tire Deflators  
OBA (Compressor or CO2)  
Toilet Paper (you should be burying your waste or packing it out)  
Paper towels  
Rags



## **JPF GEAR**

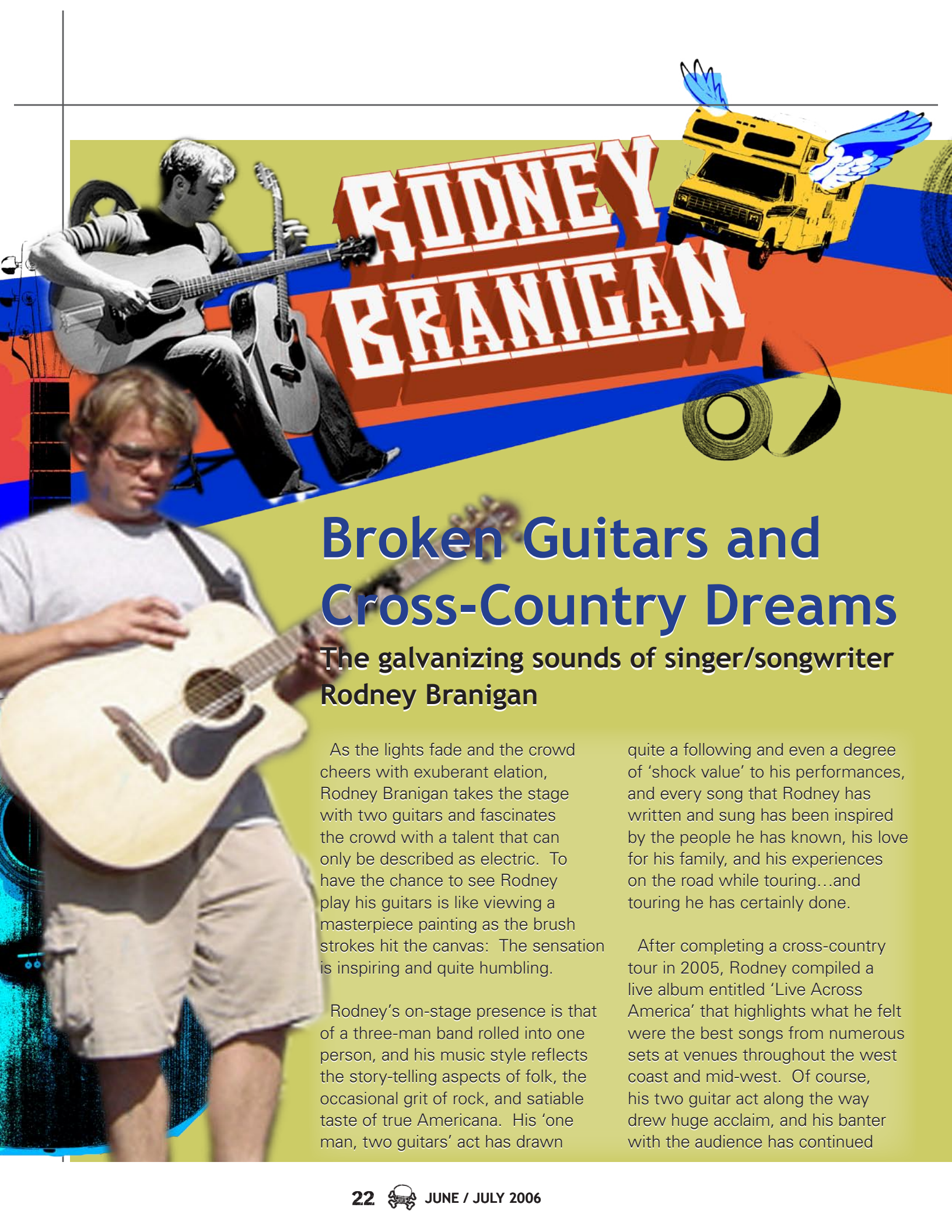
**6" tall x 5" wide**  
**Reinforced vinyl**  
**BLACK & WHITE only**  
**\$5.00 ea.**

**VISIT OUR ONLINE STORE NOW AND DON'T FORGET  
TO GET TWO. ONE FOR EACH SIDE OF YOUR JEEP.**

**TAKE ME  
THERE**







# RODNEY BRANIGAN

## Broken Guitars and Cross-Country Dreams

The galvanizing sounds of singer/songwriter  
Rodney Branigan

As the lights fade and the crowd cheers with exuberant elation, Rodney Branigan takes the stage with two guitars and fascinates the crowd with a talent that can only be described as electric. To have the chance to see Rodney play his guitars is like viewing a masterpiece painting as the brush strokes hit the canvas: The sensation is inspiring and quite humbling.

Rodney's on-stage presence is that of a three-man band rolled into one person, and his music style reflects the story-telling aspects of folk, the occasional grit of rock, and satiable taste of true Americana. His 'one man, two guitars' act has drawn

quite a following and even a degree of 'shock value' to his performances, and every song that Rodney has written and sung has been inspired by the people he has known, his love for his family, and his experiences on the road while touring...and touring he has certainly done.

After completing a cross-country tour in 2005, Rodney compiled a live album entitled 'Live Across America' that highlights what he felt were the best songs from numerous sets at venues throughout the west coast and mid-west. Of course, his two guitar act along the way drew huge acclaim, and his banter with the audience has continued





**CHECK OUT 2 AMAZING VIDEOS  
OF RODNEY'S PERFORMANCE ON HIS WEBSITE  
[www.rodneybraniganmusic.com](http://www.rodneybraniganmusic.com)**

to help Rodney not only build a significant following, but has also created plenty of new friendships along the way. His wife Erin, and 'the magnificent' singing dog Asta, joined Rodney while he made this cross-country excursion and Rodney will tell you that having his two loves with him has made all the difference throughout his touring career.

As far as Rodney the songwriter, Rodney has always made it a point to keep a musical journal cataloguing every song he has ever written with the idea in mind that he never knows when he can use something he has previously written. His songs are a reflection of his friends and their life stories, as well as a sometimes dramatic monologue of Americana. Rodney will tell you that first and foremost he is a songwriter who has an appreciation for unique playing styles, and while he claims that he's never seen anyone duplicate guitar playing exactly like his style, he has seen people who could play the fret board like a piano.

Long term, Rodney envisions having a 'bad ass' band and hopes that by having a big band it will free himself up to be even more creative on the stage. He currently has plans to launch a three man band by January 2007, and he has the idea of playing four guitars at the same time with three guitars on a guitar stand. Rodney's efforts are certainly paying off as he opened the show for Jack Johnson on September 20, 2005 in Cary, North Carolina, and he has spent a great deal of time co-writing with various songwriters in Nashville, Tennessee with the hope of writing those elusive songs that 'move the masses'.

Rodney Branigan is a talent the likes of which has rarely been seen. His galvanizing style is a fitting complement to the music world, and as he continues to work in the studio and tour across the country, it's safe to say that Rodney Branigan's success and hopes for writing songs that 'move the masses' are just a couple broken guitars away.