

# BACKING UP A TEARDROP TRAILER

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May 2018

# COOLtears™

*and tiny campers*



## SENIOR PROJECT

*A 72-Hour Emergency  
Preparedness Teardrop*



### Introducing the Little Guy Mini Max





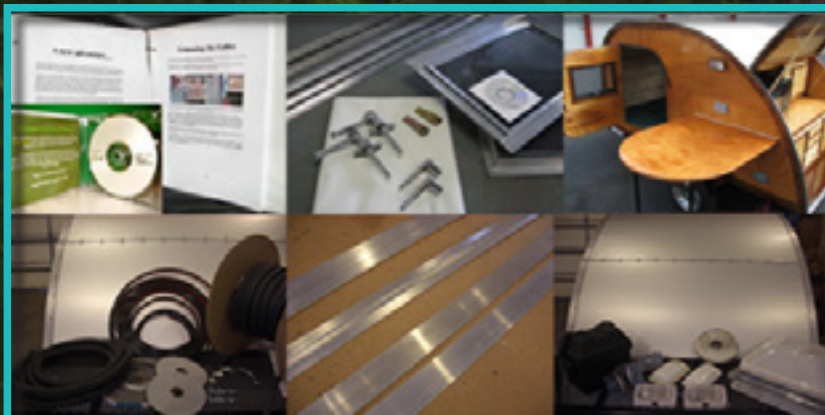
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# COOL Tears™

and tiny campers

Magazine

Vol. 6 No. 5

May 2018

## 8 COVER STORY

### Senior Project

By Melody Miller

## 5 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

By Sarah Tucker

## 18 TOWING A TINY TRAILER

By Mike Miler

## 22 LITTLE GUY MINI MAX

Manufacture Feature

## 28 TEARDROP GATHERING SPOTLIGHT

By Peter Holbrook & Mary McCartney



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## Letter from the Editor:

# Remodel...it's hard work!

Ever had a grand remodel idea and in the middle of acting on that idea you completely regret it? Yep, that was me this past month. I never liked the roof of the Cool Tears teardrop and after chatting with some awesome builders at the Texas rally, I came home all excited to redo the roof. And so the fun began.

I sourced some 5'x10' sheets of aluminum from a friend who owns a steel company here in KC. The kicker is that my teardrop is 5'4" wide. So to bridge the gap, I also ordered long pieces of heavier steel strips to use as trim. The original trim came off the teardrop quickly and the original FRP sheets came off the sides. At this point, my husband convinced me to leave the sides with the birch exposed. So I added the logo and a several coats of marine varnish. I also cut 2" wood trim for the sides and painted it black. Once the aluminum arrived, I placed it over the FRP roof with plans to float it to allow for expansion and contraction.

The metal trim will rust so it was painted black and covered with a sealant. Placing it over the aluminum was not fun. At all. It was stiff and hard to work with...not to mention our super windy spring weather. But we made it happen and attached it to the spars. The hatch door came off and both sides of it were covered with aluminum sheeting as well (and it looks WAY better now!) By this point, my mood started improving as I had crossed many of the "who in the world can I make this work" issues had been solved and I was starting to be able to really see what the finished product would look like.

I still need to polish and buff the aluminum (and seal it with something I think...suggestions welcomed here!) and the Fantastic Fan still needs to be reinstalled but we were able to take it out this weekend for a trial run. Eventually those sides might get covered with a vinyl vehicle wrap but for now I really like it.

Bottom line is that I'm happy with the remodel but probably should have waited until late fall when the season is almost over.

**Have you done a major remodel? Share it with us for a chance to be featured in a coming issue of Cool Tears!**

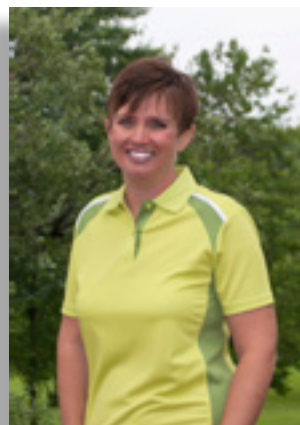
*Until next time...enjoy every sunrise!*

**SARAH TUCKER**

Editor

Cool Tears Magazine™

[sarah@cooltears.com](mailto:sarah@cooltears.com)







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# ON THE TEARDROP TRAIL WITH MARILYN

Marilyn McCray is a published author of a cookbook titled *Canning, Pickling and Freezing with Irma Harding*, the International Harvester's fictional spokesperson. Marilyn and her partner, Jim Kerkhoff, travel in a beautiful teardrop to promote the book and she has graciously agreed to share some recipes with us in a regular column. Be sure to check out her book at [teardroptrail.com/equipment-and-supplies/](http://teardroptrail.com/equipment-and-supplies/)

## TEARDROP TROUT

*When we were at the 4th Annual Gathering of the Southwest Teardrop and Vintage Trailer at Tyler State Park in March, we had lots of fun reconnecting with friends. One of those friends was Diane Cox who is a force of nature and fishing is her passion. Campsites for her trailer, "Miss Kitty," must include fishing nearby. She has even been certified by Texas Parks and Wildlife as a fishing instructor. People who camp near her are often the beneficiaries of her successful fishing excursions. She was kind enough to bestow trout on the last day of the gathering. I had grown up trout fishing with my dad. All the way home, I was running through my memory for all the delicious ways to cook these amazing fish. Here are a few options if you fish or have the good fortune to camp next to someone else who does.*

### Preheat oven to 400°

- Cleaned trout with skin butterflied (opened up with the halves still attached), about 1 pound each.
- Lemon slices, with zest and peel, cut additional lemon slices as garnish
- Herb mixture of your choice (I like a blend with red pepper, garlic and citrus) Diane likes Old Bay.
- Minced garlic
- Olive oil or butter (Optional)

Pat dry and place trout in baking pan coated with olive oil or butter. Slip lemon slices inside the fish. Shake herbs over fish.  
Bake 15 to 20 minutes, until the flesh is flaky.  
Garnish with parsley and lemon



For the grill or camp fire  
Prepare fish as above.

Wrap fish individually heavy-duty foil to make individual packets  
Heat grill to medium-high heat. Place the packets on the grate over indirect heat. Grill 10 to 15 minutes, or until the flesh is flaky.

Put each packet on a plate, open carefully and slid fish and its juice out.

### Serving suggestions:

Rice or potatoes  
Salsa  
Other citrus – lime, orange  
Pesto





# SENIOR PROJECT

*A 72-Hour Emergency  
Preparedness Teardrop*





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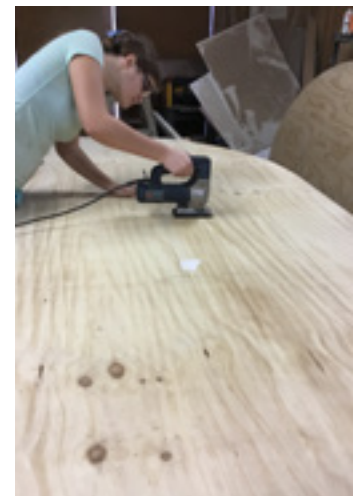
By **Melody Miller**

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**G**illian Davis is a senior in high school. A graduation requirement for seniors in her high school is to complete an essay and a project that takes at least 20 hours to complete. The project helps each individual to gain knowledge in an approved area. Gillian decided she wanted to build a teardrop after her parents completed their trailer three years ago.

Gillian was raised the youngest of nine children and camped in tents her whole life. She grew up having a daily knowledge of food storage and the importance of being prepared for an emergency. She was taught about 72-hour kits and water storage. When it came time to do the senior project she knew how important these things are, but how little most people are actually prepared in emergency situations. The senior project was implemented after some of her older siblings graduated, but three of her brothers and one sister did do senior projects before her. From their examples, "Music and Emotions," "Gun Laws

and Gun Safety," "DIY vs Manufacturing," and "Life Skills from Boy Scouting" she knew that building a birdhouse was not an option for her. Her sister built a AR 15, her brother built the dashboard in his truck out of wood, and another brother built a wooden stitch and glue kayak. Because her parents camped in their teardrop monthly, while she slept in a tent or hammock, she decided she wanted to build a teardrop of her own. One camping friend has a Benroy style teardrop that Gillian absolutely loves, so that was the inspiration for the shape of her build, with a few slight changes, to make it her own.





Once her project was approved Gillian worked on it every day. She had to do research on how to build the teardrop and the supplies she needed to complete it. Part of the requirement for her senior project was to have a mentor who can guide and instruct. She chose a mentor who is also female

and has built her own teardrop as well, Shelley Tumino.

Because the subject of her essay was emergency preparedness, she built her teardrop to be her 72-hour kit. No electrical lines were run as part of the project. She installed a vent and a USB charged fan. Her lights are LED battery powered.

### ***Gillian's essay notes...***

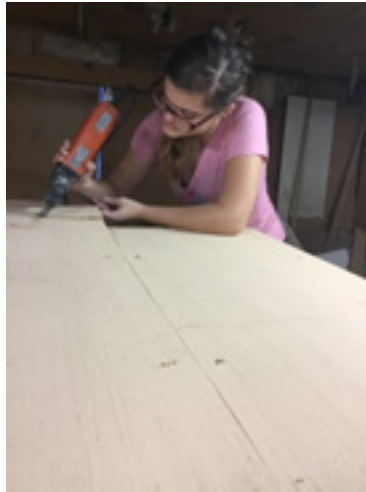
*Monday, February 6 - I was frustrated towards the gorilla glue because it was clogged and slow. Scared of messing up lines when cutting. Calm while painting the post paint on the bottom of the flooring.*





*Monday, February 12* - I was very tired. While screwing the bulkhead in, I screwed in the wrong place and it frustrated me.

*Monday, February 19* - I got frustrated at the shelf. The shelf wasn't level at first, so once again, I had to wood putty holes. This week I got lazy without any direction. I didn't know how to do the galley rib/spars exactly, so I had become very lax.



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*Monday, February 26* - I had a problem with the trim warping. Screws were constantly stripping and I had to use pliers to remove the screws. I got frustrated when the pliers kept pinching my fingers.

The galley hinge was aggravating due to the fact that I had to readjust it multiple times. The galley hatch aluminum also buckled a little so I have to unscrew it and adjust it until it's flat.





*Easter weekend* - I took it to Bistineau State Park for the maiden voyage. I was frustrated with myself because I forgot many things. I didn't have any eating utensils and had to borrow from my parents. Saturday, we returned home for me to collect the things that I needed, which were forgotten Friday. My bed was very comfortable and I felt a sense of accomplishment, especially when I received compliments. Several people stopped by and the park ranger asked if he could take a picture on their Facebook page.



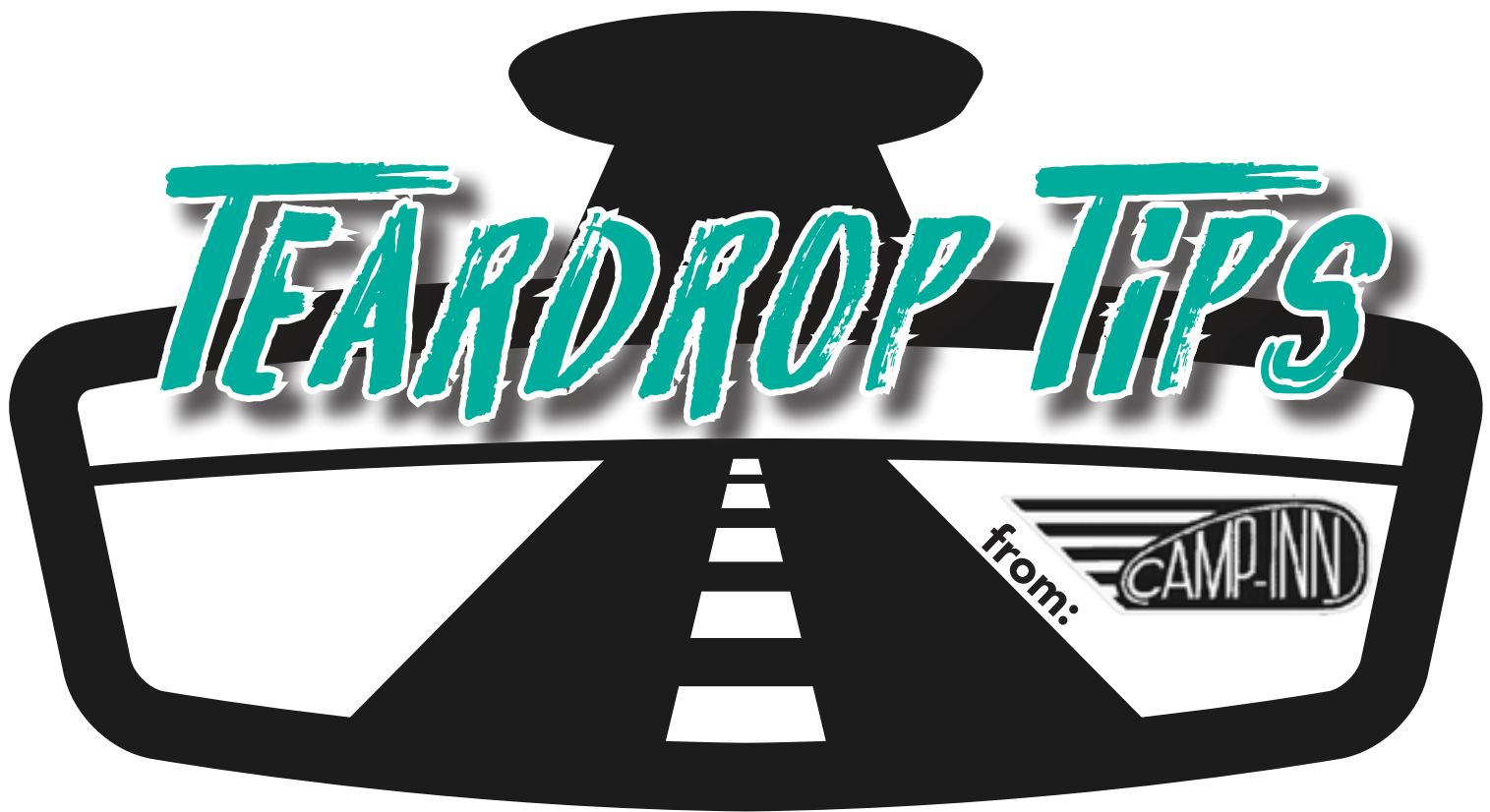




Gillian has christened her teardrop the "Gilly Bean" and as of the publication of this issue of Cool Tears she is almost finished with her project. She has added her own artwork to the interior and the Gilly Bean logo to the exterior.

*Editor's note: Gillian, Cool Tears magazine is proud of your accomplishment and want to wish you a heartfelt congratulations on your graduation. As you step into the next stage of your life, may you remember the challenges you had in this build but more importantly remember the pride you felt by finishing what you started. Good luck!*





## Backing Up a Teardrop Trailer

1. Practice turning, stopping, and backing in a secluded place away from traffic. Large empty parking lots work well.

2. Start by backing in a straight line 100' or more. Learning how to back a straight line teaches you 80% of the skills needed to back a trailer. The other 20% come with practice. If things go wrong, pull ahead and try again.

3. To back up your trailer, put one hand on the bottom of the steering wheel. Push that hand in the direction you want the trailer to go. When the trailer starts turning, turn the tow vehicle so it follows, "chase" the trailer.

4. When backing up your teardrop camper if the camper goes too far left or right – don't try to "chase" it. Pull ahead to straighten out then try backing up again. Avoid backing angles more than 30 degrees.



5. With your trailer hitched, drive in a tight, full 360 degree circle. Stop. Look over your shoulder. Check your mirrors. Make a mental note of the angle of car to trailer. When you are backing your trailer, you should never allow your trailer to get sharper than this angle. If you ever get

this sharp or sharper, you will not be able to recover by "chasing" the trailer. You will have to pull ahead to straighten out and try backing again.

6. When backing it helps to have someone spotting near the rear of trailer to guide you. It's a good idea to agree on a set of hand signals beforehand, so you can communicate clearly with the spotter. Make sure the spotter stands somewhere that you can see them.

7. When helping someone back up a teardrop camper, remember, if you can't see the driver's eyes (in the mirror), they probably can't see you.

8. When guiding a trailer, backing at night, make sure you are illuminated so the driver can see you. If necessary hold a flashlight so it shines on you or at least illuminate your signal hand.

## Now for some real world tips!

9. The best tip for backing up is to avoid doing it! Consider your route carefully to avoid having to back up. Park on the street where you can pull out and walk the extra block to save pulling into a parking lot that will be tricky to back out of. When you do have to back up to put the camper into the garage or into a campsite simply unhook from the tow vehicle and maneuver in by hand. (only do this if the surface is level)

10. Before backing into a camping spot, get out of the car and inspect the campsite. Make a note of possible obstacles and choose where you want the trailer to end up.'

11. It is very difficult to concentrate on backing a trailer if you are tired. If you have just finished a long or stressful day of driving, close your eyes and relax for 5 minutes before attempting to back into a tight spot. In the end, you will probably save time.

12. If you get to a campsite really late and are exhausted, just pull straight in to your camping spot. You can back out in the morning, when you are rested.

13. If you have a long driveway, drive in forward, unhook the trailer, turn it around, and push it into the garage by hand. If you need the tow vehicle to move the trailer into the garage, line up the trailer, turn the tow vehicle around, then re hitch the trailer and back it the last few feet.

14. When stuck backing down a long or narrow road or out of a dead end street or alley. It may be quicker and easier to un-hitch at a wide spot, turn the tow vehicle around, turn the camper around by hand, then re-hitch the camper and proceed on your way.

15. When helping someone back up a teardrop camper, remember, if you can't see the driver's eyes (in the mirror), they probably can't see you.

16. When guiding a trailer, backing at night, make sure you are illuminated so the driver can see you. If necessary hold a flashlight so it shines on you or at least illuminate your signal hand.

*A special thank you to Craig Edevold with Camp Inn Trailers for these tips.*

*Watch monthly for more great camping helps!*

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# TOWING

## a Tiny Trailer



### Two wheel vs All wheel vs four wheel CONTINUED

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By **Mike Miller**

---

*Editor's Note:* In the April issue we began a series on towing a tiny trailer with an article on 2WD, AWD and 4WD. Several readers sent in responses to the article and a few were so good that we are continuing with the subject this month.

When considering a tow vehicle with 2WD, AWD or 4WD it's good to consider a few specific things about each. Though there are always exceptions, AWD (all wheel drive) is a full-time or "passive" system that can't be turned off. This is very helpful in slippery conditions like rain, snow or sand because you don't have to think about anything, the vehicle handles it for you. The downside is it does decrease your mileage. It's also a little "softer" than a 4WD system because power

is always sent to all 4 wheels so you have less control over how it's used. Many AWD systems integrate this with traction control or torque-vectoring, but that can simply mean if a wheel starts to spin the car may apply the brakes a bit for you. A true 4WD system is (with very few exceptions) a part-time system that requires you to activate it. In the old days this involved getting out of the vehicle and manually turning a lock on the front wheels, not exactly convenient in a snowstorm or



mud! Now it's typically just a switch or lever inside the cab. The important thing to note is that the majority of 4WD systems are actually not, despite the name, driving all 4 wheels at the same time. In 2WD mode it sends power to the rear wheels, only one of which is actually using the power at any given time. Putting it into 4WD mode means power is sent to the front and rear axles, but you really have one front wheel and one rear wheel getting power at a time. The most capable 4WD systems have the ability to lock the differentials and send power to all the wheels. So only with true locking differentials do you get true 4WD. However, the downside is that 4WD is only meant to be used in slippery conditions, never on dry pavement, so if you're on roads that have slippery patches you may be shifting in and out of 4WD frequently to avoid damaging the drivetrain.

Why is this important for a tow vehicle? For most people, it's not. Think of it this way. An AWD vehicle on sand or snow might spin all 4 wheels at different speeds and potentially just keep spinning them. A 4WD vehicle in 2WD mode will spin one rear wheel, and with 4WD activated will spin one front and one rear wheel at the same time. A 4WD with locking diffs powers all 4 wheels at roughly the same speed

depending on how much acceleration you give it. This more direct control over all 4 wheels is what makes 4WD vehicles with locking diffs so great off road - the driver really has more capability to get in and out of tough spots. That said, I've seen 4WD vehicles stuck where AWD (and even 2WD) ones cruised right through. The bottom line, whichever option you choose, make sure you know and test what's capable of before you actually need it. Especially before you hook up your beloved trailer! The most important thing to remember in every case is that AWD or 4WD is to help you GO, but doesn't help you STOP so in all situations and vehicles the most important system is the one sitting in the drivers seat!





I like the extra security of having AWD because we actually take our trailer out consistently in snowy conditions and when pulling it up a long snow covered hill the extra driven wheels (and snow tires!) make a huge difference. In fact, we've taken our trailer on winter trips where AWD or 4WD and tire chains were required! We currently have a Toyota 4Runner Limited which is one only a handful of vehicles that combines the best of each - it has the advantage of full time AWD normally but has the ability to lock it into 4WD high or low range if and when we really need the power off road. We had been using a 4 door Jeep Wrangler Rubicon (4WD with locking diffs) and there was a lot to like about it, until we



bought a kayak and had a friend come on a trip with us. Then the other major tow vehicle consideration really factored in - Gross Vehicle Weight Rating and cargo weight capacity. Many vehicles max out at 1000 lbs or less. Our Wrangler was only 850 lbs and we quickly realized we would routinely exceed that, especially when you start with 100 lbs or more of tongue weight from your trailer and then add a kayak and bikes. It adds up more quickly than you think. I was advising a friend who wanted to buy a used SUV and a travel trailer and was pretty set on what vehicle he wanted until he realized by the time he loaded it up with his family and their gear there weren't many options for a trailer under the weight he would need. Finally, I talked him into looking at the trailer he'd want for his family and then figuring out what kind of vehicle could safely haul it, his family, and their equipment. The bottom line when choosing any tow vehicle is to be realistic about your needs and requirements first and take it from there. Not everyone needs or wants AWD or 4WD especially because many of those options are on bigger vehicles that get worse mileage. By thinking a little bit about where you want to take your trailer and in what conditions, usually the answer becomes pretty clear!

The other major factor when choosing a tow vehicle

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is always GVWR - I've heard and read so many discussions that it can make a person's head spin. And the scary thing is how few people actually understand it. While I'm definitely not going into it here, I attached a spreadsheet that I created when we purchased our 4Runner to show how quickly "cargo capacity/weight" disappears. There are many SUVs that max out at or less than 1200lbs. We had to get rid of our 4-door Wrangler because it's max was only 850lbs! That's barely enough for two people and two weeks of gear let alone a friend or any other big items when towing a trailer. This is just an easy way to think about how much capacity you ACTUALLY need when selecting your tow vehicle.

WEIGHT (lbs)	QUANTITY	TOTAL WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
200	1	200	200 driver
160	1	160	160 passenger 1
0	1	0	0 passenger 2
0	1	0	0 passenger 3
0	1	0	0 passenger 4
0	5%	37800%	37800% fudge factor, sometimes literally!
10	1	10	10 misc (glove box contents, fire extinguisher, tool box etc)
8	21	168	168 full tank of gas (qty = gal)
18	1	18	18 tool box: misc tools, jumper cables, bungees etc
14	1	14	14 trailer tool kit
33.4	2	66.8	66.8 tire chains
60	1	60	60 camera gear
25	1	25	25 cooler + food + drinks + ice
8	2.5	20	20 water: 8 lbs per gallon; quantity = 8 of gallons
40	0	0	0 Yeti Cool Zero 400 / solar panels / etc
3	1	3	3 trailer hitch(es); qty = 1 regular hitch; qty = 4 dual hitch unit; qty = 8 dual hitch plus extension
50	0	0	0 trailer mount bike rack
25	0	0	0 bikes (avg weight)
125	0	0	0 kayak with all accessories
12	1	12	12 roof rack actual weight (add bike trays, kayak supports, etc)
40	0	0	0 full size spare
10	0	0	0 MacTrex set
8	0	0	0 firewood (qty = 8 bundles)
20	0	0	0 screen tent (average, may be as low as 10 or as high as 50)
8	4	32	32 camp chairs
20	1	20	20 shower kit including 1lb propane tanks
20	1	20	20 trailer hookup gear - leveling block, water hose, extension cord
16	1	16	16 misc: torque wrench, blue electric heater, lug nut kit etc
3	2	14	14 clothing tote in trailer
25	1	25	25 VB bedding (pillows, comforter, sheets, black carrying bag)
0	1	0	0 Viasir compressor & accessories
20	1	20	20 space saver spare tire
0	1	0	0 Zamp solar kit
1700	30%	51400%	51400% This is for 12% tongue weight which is 10% standard with some buffer for balance etc. (adjust to actual trailer)
		1462	TOTAL IMPOUND

## Notes from folks:



I thought someone might find my tow vehicle interesting. We have used my 1988 BMW 325is to tow our 800 lb, (5' wide x 9.6' Long) Teardrop since 2014. The 30 year old car has performed faithfully, including a 6000 mile round trip from Pennsylvania to the Canadian Rockies and Yellowstone. It has 125,000 miles on it and gets about 20 MPG pulling the Teardrop at interstate highway speeds. The car weighs about 3000 Lbs, 165 hp 6 cyl eng, has rear wheel drive and provides a stable tow platform. This was proven to me when the trailer blew a tire at over

75 MPH! Although the car did a fine job of controlling the trailer, I've since installed much better radial tires on the trailer. These are hard to find for 12" diameter wheels.

The car is very well maintained. The only modifications are heavy duty Bilstein shocks, Synthetic ATF, and high performance brake pads. Although we have recently purchase a new Prius for most of our driving, I believe the old Beemer will continue to perform all the towing duties, as it has yet to complain.

**Andy Toussaint**  
Gettysburg, Pa.







*What are you waiting for?*



NEVER TOO SMALL. **ALWAYS A MAX.**



---

by Sarah Tucker

---

**L**ittle Guy Trailers is building a name for themselves in the RV industry in an impressive way with the release of the Mini Max teardrop. Last year, Little Guy released the Max with much fanfare and received numerous accolades for it including Best In Show from the RVIA. But the Max had its drawbacks and Little Guy has now released their answer. The Mini Max, while still not a traditional teardrop, comes in to the market at a more manageable tow weight.



## *Little Brother to the Little Guy Max Hits Showrooms This Spring*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Uniontown, Ohio, – Liberty Outdoors is proud to announce a new addition to the Little Guy family. The Little Guy Max is getting a little brother, named the Little Guy Mini Max. The Mini Max is smaller than the Max by design, but it retains many of the same great features of the Max.

Manufactured by Liberty Outdoors in Somerset, Pennsylvania, the Mini Max features the same high quality materials, superior craftsmanship, and thoughtful details as it's bigger brother.

The Mini Max weighs just under 2,000 lbs., making it an ideal companion for most small SUVs, and well-equipped crossovers. It's also very roomy for it's small stature. The 6 ft. interior height gets the most out of every inch, and the amount of storage is simply larger than anything in it's class.

The interior of the Mini Max is full of innovation. Several design touches allow a residential style wetbath, a microwave (not seen at this size), a queen or dual

twin bed configuration, and an unbelievably large refrigerator which is actually larger than the Max.

"We are super excited to announce the Mini Max. Our community has spoken and we are responding with a smaller Max that is much easier to tow, while not sacrificing the best features or the craftsmanship of the larger model. Our operations team and production crew has outdone themselves with the Mini Max. We can't wait to bring it to the teardrop market," said Liberty Outdoors Co-founder and Managing Director of Sales and Marketing, Joe Kicos.

"The Mini Max really hits the sweet spot for many more customers," said Dylan DeHoff, Liberty Outdoors Director of Operations. "The spaciousness, the storage, the huge refrigerator, the electric ignition stove, the bed configuration, the ability to keep the microwave, I could go on. These are things that trailers in this class simply don't have. I think our community will be thrilled with the Mini Max," said DeHoff.







NEVER TOO SMALL. **ALWAYS A MAX.**


**Dry Weight**

**1,993** lbs.

**Tongue Weight**

**280** lbs.

**Overall Length**

**17' 2"**

**Overall Width**

**6' 9"**

**Exterior Height**

**8' 6"**

**Interior Height**

**6'**

**GVWR**

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**Fresh Water**

**20** gal.

**Grey Water**

**14** gal.

**Black Water**

**9** gal.

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- ▶ Entry door with friction hinge
- ▶ Aluminum entry step
- ▶ 12"x20" exterior baggage/storage door
- ▶ Magnetic latch compression style storage door
- ▶ Aluminum framed sidewalls and roof
- ▶ Azdel™ composite paneling in sidewalls and roof
- ▶ Block foam insulation in walls and roof
- ▶ One-piece, seamless fiberglass roof
- ▶ Back up camera bracket and prep
- ▶ 5 Euro-style, insulated, dual-paned acrylic windows
- ▶ Windows have integrated shades and screens
- ▶ Sliding screen entry door
- ▶ Radio Antenna
- ▶ Exterior Furrion™ speakers
- ▶ Exterior TV mount

### Interior Feature Summary

- ▶ 100% hardwood cabinetry with dovetail construction
- ▶ 8" deep stainless steel kitchen sink
- ▶ 2 burner glass top stove with electric ignition
- ▶ Stainless steel microwave
- ▶ Wardrobe/kitchen pantry with adjustable shelves
- ▶ 19" LED 12V Jensen™ TV
- ▶ 13,500 BTU Roof Mount Dometic™ Air conditioning
- ▶ 16,000 BTU Dometic™ Furnace
- ▶ LED touch screen and switch panel for tanks and lighting
- ▶ 5 cubic foot, double door, 3-way Norcold™ refrigerator
- ▶ 75" x 70" Queen master bed
- ▶ Unique hide-a-way slat system for bed
- ▶ Marine style, 3 stage hydraulic action table pedestal
- ▶ Rotating dinette table top

### Available Options

- ▶ Rough Rider Package (15" Off-road tires, 2.5" axle riser)
- ▶ 100W Flexible Zamp™ Solar Panel
- ▶ Walnut Cabinetry
- ▶ Jack-It™ Bike Carrier
- ▶ Furrion™ Wireless Observation System

The Little Guy Mini Max is entering production now. See [golittleguy.com/mini](http://golittleguy.com/mini) for more features, specs, and a 3D tour. Dealer opportunities are available now. Call 1-877-545-4897 for more details.

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*Established in 2017, Liberty Outdoors' mission is to deliver high-end recreational products with superior features and design for outdoor enthusiasts worldwide. Headquartered in Uniontown, Ohio, Liberty Outdoors was formed as the result of a merger between Little Guy Worldwide and GFM Manufacturing, and is the parent company for Little Guy light-weight teardrop trailers, ParkLiner full fiberglass trailers and Serro Scotty retro campers. Liberty Outdoors has more than 80 employees,*

*with manufacturing sites located in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Dr. Godfrey F. Mendes is a Co-Founder and the Managing Director of Operations and Joe Kicos is a Co-Founder and the Managing Director of Sales & Marketing for Liberty Outdoors.*



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## *The Girl Camper takes a Mini Max on a 5-week road test*

by **Janine Pettit**

Twelve years ago when I began camping again I bought a vintage 1959 Field and Stream trailer. It was full of charm and that's about all. It had no bathroom, holding tanks, hot water, air conditioning, heat or refrigerator! It had an old school ice box. By the time I filled the icebox with the gallons of water I froze ahead of time I could barely put any food in it!



Like the Max, the Mini Max features solid hardwood cabinetry which is made in house at the Somerset, Pennsylvania factory. Dovetailed drawers and high end hardware give a "home" feel to the kitchen. A microwave, two burner propane stove and deep stainless steel sink with retractable faucet make the kitchen a compact delight.

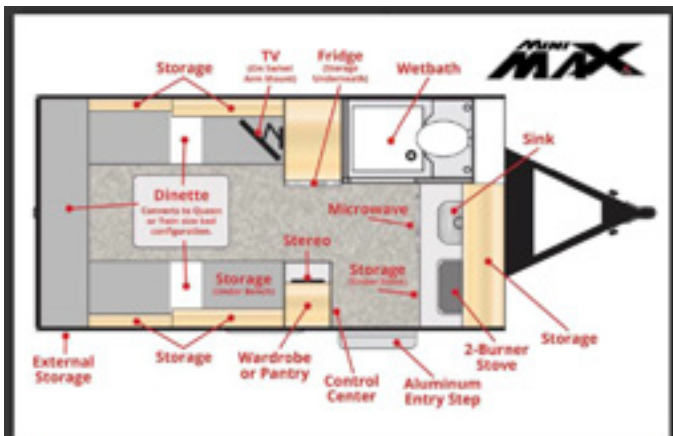
I dreamed about a little trailer that would be as charming and cozy as my vintage one but would have all the safety and comfort features of a new trailer. It would be small enough and light enough to easily tow and I wouldn't have to constantly bring it in to my trailer guy to make sure it was safe. I could stop worrying about the axle and if the frame had rusted through. I could just tow it without thinking that every bump I went over was going to break something big and strand me somewhere. Well, my dream has come true in the Little Guy Mini Max.



My favorite feature of the kitchen though is the 5.0 cubic square foot three way refrigerator. It runs on electric, propane, and battery. The battery is supported by the solar panels on the roof of the trailer. I can keep this refrigerator cold without running the propane while I'm driving by way of the solar panel and battery. The added refrigerator space will allow for longer boondocking stints in remote places without having to replenish refrigerated items.



The floor plan of the Mini is flexible. It comes with a U shaped configuration of cushions and a unique center table that compresses down beneath the cushions allowing the area to be made into a Queen sized bed. When it is not made up is the large bed, you can seat quite a crowd here for meals, board games, or trip planning sessions. The large windows let in plenty of light and air.



The other flexible aspect of the Mini is that you can personalize the space to fit the way you travel. As a solo woman traveler I knew the table would not be as useful to me as the floor space would be. I reconfigured the cushions and created a full twin bed across the back. I can comfortably sleep here, watch TV or use the space as a daybed while working on the road.



The bathroom is a wet bath or as we like to say, a "shoilet". I added spring rods across the back to hold my towels. They need to be taken out while you are showering. Some people add an additional spring rod with a shower curtain that has been cut down

to cover the towels while showering. I think it's far simpler to take them out. The bathroom also comes with a mesh bag that is riveted to the wall which holds shampoo, conditioner etc...

This is the floor plan as it comes from the factory. I encourage all those thinking about this trailer to consider how you would use it and to make modifications that work for you. I never owned a vintage trailer that I did not modify to suit the way I travel. What I love about the Mini is that I didn't have to give any time or attention to making it roadworthy and safe. That was all done for me. All I had to do was make it my own.

After this loooong winter I am looking forward to some fun around the campfire. Stay tuned for more pictures and feel free to post questions and comments. I am more than happy to dish! At the end of my 5 week road trip I will be doing a podcast episode reviewing the Mini Max trailer. I can't wait to share with all of you how the trailer performed!

### READ MORE HERE:

<https://girlcamper.com/introducing-the-mini-max-by-go-little-guy/>

Instagram- [girlcamper528](#)

Facebook – [Girl Camper Podcast Page](#)



# TEARDROP GATHERING



**T**here simply is nothing like a teardrop gathering. Over the next few months, Cool Tears will share a series of articles on gatherings all across the globe. To have a gathering it takes leadership, organization, collaboration and most important...fun! After experiencing a few gatherings, I came to realize how vital it is to showcase these events in an effort to encourage more campers to gather. In this article, we will travel from one of the longest standing gatherings in the US at Lake Perris, CA to the Mmidwest for the very first gathering of the Arkansas Tearjerkers chapter.



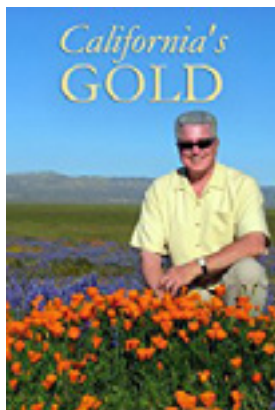



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 by **Peter Holbrook**


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After Huell Howser visited the teardrop camper gathering in 1998 at Guajome Regional Park in Oceanside, California, to film the event for his show "California's Gold," many people across California were introduced to these strange, mini two-wheeled campers for the first time. These "teardrops" all had certain features in common: Their sloped backs triggered their "teardrop" monikers, they all fit two people comfortably inside with their futon-styled beds, and their backs opened like a car trunk to display stoves, sinks and cabinets. Some had small refrigerators. But few looked exactly the same. Many were hand-built with beautiful wood cabinetry, personalized with painted designs of extravagant detailing and other features. Many were made to reflect the personal lifestyles of their



owners. But what in the world were they, exactly, and what kind of people own them?

"What have we here?" Huell asked in his unmistakably inquisitive way, opening the door of one of the teardrops. "Is this where you sleep? My goodness! Can you really both fit in there? My oh my, just look at this!"

Indeed. If you had never seen a teardrop camper before, seeing the two dozen or so on Huell's show made you ask the same questions. The fact is, teardrop campers have been around for a long time. They became especially popular after WWII when there was lots of scrap metal available. So all of the teardrops at that time were home-made.







Yet they were outnumbered by the larger RVs and campers, so to see one on the highway being pulled by an average automobile was a strange sight indeed. And teardrop campers today are more popular than ever.

The annual teardrop gathering in Southern

California, now held at Lake Perris State Recreation Area near Riverside at the end of every March, can number over a hundred teardrops. They mostly come from California but some arrive from outlying states. Teardrop owners are young and old, rich and poor, from all walks of life, sharing one simple thing: the love of these tiny campers.

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A photograph of a silver teardrop camper parked in a wooded area. A bright green side entrance tent is attached to the side of the camper, providing an additional living space.

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campground at Lake Perris that can accommodate as many as 150 teardrops is reserved for the event.

The idea of getting teardrop enthusiasts together in Southern California was the brainstorm of Deane and David Locke, back in the 1990's, who simply got everyone they knew who owned a teardrop to join them for a weekend of teardrop fun. It started small but before long grew large.

The venue changed to Lake Perris many years ago. The organizing teams change from time to time but the gathering continues to grow in size and popularity. Teardrops start arriving on Thursday and leave on Sunday. A large event-sized

So what exactly happens at the Lake Perris gatherings? Perhaps the most enjoyed thing is just being there in the company of other teardrop enthusiasts, swapping stories and comparing the



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various features of one another's teardrops. But the planned activities are also quite popular. There is the Dutch oven cook-off on Friday evening, led by Marianne Habeger who has organized the event for many years, the Saturday morning hike around the lake for those who like to exercise and take in the natural beauty of the lake's surroundings, and the pot luck dinner Saturday evening that includes live music, awards, and even dancing. There are even teardrop-related movies, like the Huell Howser episode, shown after the pot luck. Whatever is going on, the bottom line is having fun, and lots of it.



The current organizing team consists of six members: Rich and Donna Grosch from San Diego, Lynda Harman and (yours truly) Pete Holbrook from Los Angeles, and Jim and Donna Grey from Palm Desert. They all work together throughout the year to plan the event, collect reservations, and make all the necessary arrangements with the Lake Perris officials. Interested tear droppers can find information about the gathering at [www.lakeperristeardropgathering.com](http://www.lakeperristeardropgathering.com). If you own a teardrop camper and would like to join the fun, we'll see you next March!

<https://lakeperristeardropgathering.com/>



# First gathering in Arkansas



by **Mary McCartney**

The newly rekindled Tearjerkers Natural State Chapter, led by Kenny Tee, gathered at Bull Shoals - White River State Park in Bull Shoals Arkansas from April 12 to the 15th. The weekend was full of good food, a hot campfire, great company and the tragic demise of a chair. Kenny and his wife Connie pulling their 13 foot Scotty were joined by son in law Darin and granddaughter Viola with a Scotty Hylander. Bob and Lisa brought their Camp Inn, and Robin drove her small Toyota RV from Baltimore. Barry and Barbara, along with Mary and Ava, showed up with their home build woodies.



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The weather brought the campers even closer as tornado warning sent them into the lady's bath house Friday evening. Men, women, children and three dogs took cover in the building, and the event, punctuated by lightning and thunder, actually took on a bit of a party atmosphere. The wind kept up and an innocent lawn chair was blown to its death in the campfire during the group picture on Saturday. While rescue attempts were made, it was too late to resuscitate. Despite the tragedy, dinner held lively conversation and fantastic barbeque. Sitting around the sinister campfire that night, everyone shared travel and camper stories while admiring the perfect arrowhead that five year old Viola found earlier. It was quite a good time.

The Natural State Tearjerkers will host another gathering at Lake Catherine State Park in Hot Springs Arkansas from Thursday Sept. 27 through Sunday Sept. 30. This chapter is growing quickly, and invites everyone to attend.

Facebook: [Tear Jerkers The Natural State](#)





Have a gathering you think  
Cool Tears should feature?

Email [sarah@cooltears.com](mailto:sarah@cooltears.com) with info on the  
gathering and we will spotlight it in a coming issue!



# DON'T MISS A SINGLE ISSUE



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