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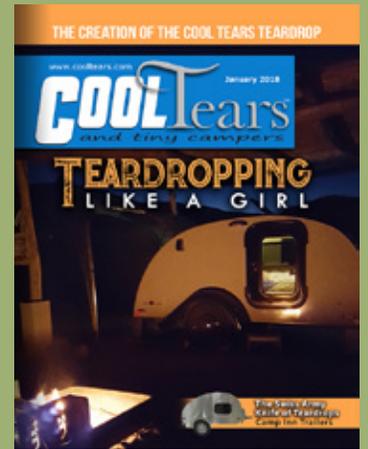
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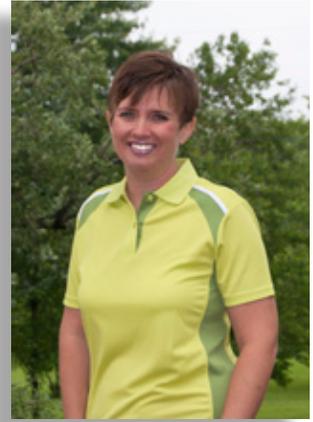
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Mailing Address:

Cool Tears Magazine
2600 NE Douglas St
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Girls Go Camping!

Happy New Year!!! Hard to believe 2017 is now in the books and we have a brand new year looming directly ahead. The New Year came in cold here in the Midwest and my hopes of a New Year camping trip fled with the single digit high temps and night temps in the negatives. I'm just not that hard core.

This issue certainly celebrates the female camper. I loved learning all about the ladies in our cover story and have so enjoyed being part of Sisters on the Fly. One of the best things about teardrops and tiny campers is the freedom they allow to enable female campers to conquer fears of towing, and set up and tear down! I never camped without my husband until I took out a teardrop. I am excited to hopefully be apart of the Becoming an Outdoor Women program in a few states here in the Midwest this year. If you haven't heard of this organization, be sure to look it up in your state and see what events they have to offer you.

At the very end of this issue you will find the story about how I built the Cool Tears teardrop that has now been named, "Slice." While it is still not completely finished (are we ever completely finished with a home build?) It is far enough along that I was ready to share with you all. This build pushed me to my limits but now I can say with certainty that anyone can do it. I don't even have a garage...although I did indulge in a portable shed from Harbor Freight during the heat of the summer. I simply took the little woodworking knowledge, standard garage tools and a LOT of determination and tackled the job.

I can't wait to get *Slice* on the road this year! In March, we will head south for a rally in Texas during Spring Break. Over Memorial Day, our family will venture out on an All-American road trip to St. Petersburg, Florida to show our girls the ocean for the first time. In July, I head north for [Tearstock](#) in the UP of Michigan. And in November, the RVIA show in Louisville will probably round out the long trips for the year. In between those, I plan to camp all over the Midwest on short weekend trips.

As always, if you have a tip, trip or story for me please email and let me know your thoughts at sarah@cooltears.com.

Until next time...enjoy every sunrise!

SARAH TUCKER

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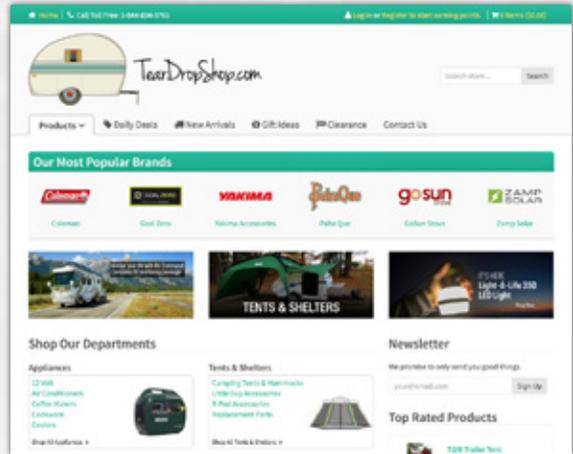
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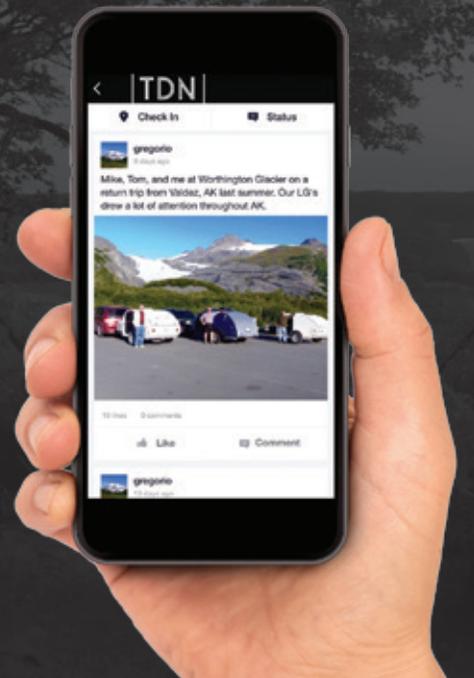
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ON THE TEARDROP TRAIL WITH MARILYN

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/

SKILLET CORN BREAD

We love fresh hot cornbread as we travel on the Teardrop Trail. Everyone has their favorite recipe for this American classic and I am happy to share mine. I love starting with fresh ground cornmeal from Boggy Creek Farm in Austin, Texas. You may be able to find fresh cornmeal at a farmers market on your travels. Pair this with your favorite campfire chili recipe or BBQ for a memorable meal.

This recipe can be made in either an 8" cast iron skillet with lid or 8" Dutch Oven with lid and can be cooked on a camp stove or over a camp fire.

- 4 tablespoons oil – can be melted butter, coconut or olive oil
- 1 cup fresh corn meal
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1 large farm egg

Melt 4 tablespoons of butter or heat the oil in the skillet or Dutch oven until the pan is hot.

Combine the dry ingredients in a bowl. Add milk, egg and ½ the oil. Stir until just combined.

Some small lumps are OK. Pour the batter into the hot skillet/Dutch oven which should sizzle a bit. Cover with lid or crimp aluminum foil over the skillet/Dutch oven to form a lid that will retain rising steam that cooks the cornbread from the top down.

Cornbread cooks quickly. If the heat is too high, the bottom will scorch. Place the Dutch oven



on glowing embers, the legs of the oven should keep it elevated ½ inch above the embers. The skillet can go on a rack over glowing embers or on a camp stove. Cook for 15 – 20 minutes on medium low heat or low campfire, remove when the batter becomes firm in the center and starts

to pull away from the sides. Let it sit, covered for another 5 minutes on a heat resistant surface.

Cornbread should be firm with a light tan and a toothpick should come out clean when inserted. Slice, enjoy with butter or a drizzle of honey.

Variations:

Corn Kernel Bread – Add ¼ cup of corn kernels, fresh, canned or frozen to batter.

Cheesy Cornbread – Add ¼ cup shredded cheddar, Monterey Jack or Mexican cheese mix to batter.

TexMex Cornbread – Add ¼ cup of diced chili peppers or jalapeños to batter.

Short cut: Combine all the dry ingredients in a plastic bag or lidded jar at home.



TEARDROPPING LIKE A GIRL



TEARDROP LESSONS
with the Outdoor Women

by Sarah Tucker

B e f e a r l e s s . B e c o n f i d e n t . B e d a r i n g . These three small, powerful statements are ideals that I work hard to instill in my two young daughters. As girls, I want to set them up to be strong and bold in every step of their lives. Building a camper and taking it out by myself have been great ways of showing them by example. It has been awesome to be in contact with numerous other women who are camping on their own and enjoying the freedom of the open road. Join me as we meet several different groups of amazing women that are paving the way for the next generation of female campers.

I am Diane and my teaching partner is Terri. We started learning about teardrops together about three years ago. We bought them about the same time and started traveling. So far, we have gone about 15,000 miles in Miss Piggy (derived from vintage name of “canned ham”) Diane’s Silver

Shadow. Terri and her husband Brian, have one that is almost identical. We got our teardrops with a purchase receipt, two sets of keys and then set off to learn on our own. This inspired us to teach introduction classes to other women. We had the opportunity at the Becoming an Outdoor





Woman program sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife. (Heidi Rao, head of program). We will be teaching again next April and November. There are Outdoor Woman programs in most states.





We have traveled throughout Texas and into Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico. Texas is considerable territory, and we are on a quest to visit every Texas County. (See picture of map)

We keep a travel log/journal and enjoy rereading about prior trips. We laugh about our survival of rain storms, hail showers, tornado warnings, bug swarms, snow, high wind, a broken fan, a frozen coffee pot, a stow-a-way mouse, Mt. Nebo in Arkansas, and a screen room assembly disaster.



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Several months ago, I joined Sisters on the Fly and since have been amazed at this group of women. They go way past just a bunch of camping loving gals; they truly care about each and every member.



From the Sisters on the Fly website: "Since its start up in 1999, more than 9,000 women have joined the SOTF ranks. Our current active membership is in excess of 4,200 and growing daily. This membership-based community supports women in their journey to get up, get out, become more adventurous and have a more fulfilling life. Our membership is \$70 USD a year. Once you JOIN you have instant access to an organized network of incredible members and a members-only/ women-only calendar of amazing events and activities that take place across the United States and Canada all year long.

Member-hosted events and special destination trips run the gamut- camping, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, service projects, philanthropy, wine tasting, geocaching, sight-seeing, line dancing- whatever else sounds fun, productive and satisfying as a group; small, medium or large. From gathering for a 1/2 day or for several days, the sky's the limit for how Sisters recreate and balance life together."

We always plot a route that takes us onto scenic country roads and away from dense highways and truckers. We have camped in state parks, national parks, RV sites, primitive desert locations, rest stops and national forests. We have camped with turkeys, bison, tarantulas, javelins, and deer and love to set up our game camera to capture our wildlife visitors. We love seeing diverse countrysides and Texas has it all - prairies, forests, sea shore, mountains, ghost towns, and canyons. We enjoy hiking, cooking, viewing the flora and fauna, and a good night by the campfire. Our last hike in Big Bend provided us with an incredible opportunity to see four black bear in the Chisos Mountains on The Window Trail. We camped 100 yards from Mexico along the Rio Grande in the desert and witnessed the beauty in our Five Million Star Hotel.





One of the best parts of my job is meeting women working toward making their travel dreams come true.



Janine Pettit, aka the Girl Camper, is a well-known blogger, podcaster and host of numerous camping events across the country.

She discovered that camping was still in the cards for her when she stumbled onto an article about a women's outdoor adventure group that travels around the country in RVs, meeting new friends, checking off bucket list adventures and doing things she had only dreamed of.

Janine has become an Ambassador for the Girl Camping movement. She encourages women to go places and do things on her podcast Girl Camper, on her blog for Go RVing, and through her frequent public speaking engagements.

Janine says, "Helping empower women to get out and travel with friends or on their own is a great privilege. One of the best parts of my job is meeting women working toward making their travel dreams come true. Owning a teardrop trailer that is easily towed, lightweight and has all the

comfort of larger trailers makes that goal easier to achieve.

This year I got to road test the newest and largest Teardrop made, the Max by Little Guy, on my four week, 6,000 mile National Parks Tour. I loved it so much that I sold my trailer and kept it!! I blogged about it on my Go RVing blog <https://blog.gorving.com/2017/08/yellowstone/>

I will be touring Texas in April and Colorado in June. I will also be attending Tearstock in July in the Upper Peninsula in Michigan which I have never been to and am so excited about!"





A Tiny Christmas Campout

A group of tiny campers came together at Big Lagoon State Park in Pensacola, Florida for the first ever "Tiny Christmas Campout" on December 7-11, 2017.



A Tiny Christmas Campout 2017



by Donna Urquhart

The Tiny Christmas Campout was a well-attended for an inaugural event. Over 30 people hooked up their tiny campers on twenty plus sites in the campground. One couple from Virginia drove over 900 miles to be there. There were also campers from Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Tennessee and Florida. Coincidentally, there was a person in a tiny camper from New York who was not aware of the event. He also joined the group.

There were several different types of campers. Runaways represented the majority and there were several different Runaway models. There were also Little Guys, custom-built campers, and a T@G, plus a camper in a van and one in a tent. There were definitely more small campers than are typically seen in a campground in the Southeast.

Big Lagoon State Park is very nice and the staff was very accommodating to the campers. The camp hosts were very friendly and actually came to some of the events. The camp store provided coffee, Christmas cookies, and eggnog to the campers. The park was clean and well-maintained. It is a great destination and has many scenic trails.



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Johnny Watson and his mother, Judy, were organizers of the rally, which was very well-planned. However, bitterly-cold weather created a need to improvise. Pensacola's average December temperatures are highs of 60 degrees and lows of 42. The first two days of the rally, it rained steadily the majority of the time. After the rain subsided, temperatures dipped to highs in the low 40s with freezing temperatures at night.

An outside campfire gathering had been planned for Friday night with everyone bringing hot dogs for roasting. However, it was just too cold for extended time outside, so the group met instead at Lillian's Pan Pizza. Thirty campers met at Lillian's, which provided a warm meal in a nice, temperature-controlled environment. Lillian's has a good range of food and drinks and everyone seemed to enjoy the food and the time together.

Saturday was the big day for the campout. After two days of cold rain, the sun was finally up and it was considerably warmer, which enabled the campers to decorate. There was a decorating contest with the public invited to view the decorated campers. There were not a lot of visitors, but the few who came were enthusiastic. One couple

interested in purchasing a small camper drove from Baton Rouge just for the event. Most of the campers had decorated their trailers and a few went all out. It was very festive! The campers would be voting for the best decorated site, so everyone walked around to see what their fellow campers had done to bring Christmas cheer.



Saturday evening was a potluck that was held on an empty site across from the host. The food was very delicious! There was jambalaya, gumbo, sweet potato soufflé, deviled eggs, and many other wonderful dishes. One camper actually prepared fried shrimp and fish as people were going through the line for their food.





Deserts included a sheet cake decorated for the event, brownies, cookies and two other cakes. It was hard to believe the group was eating

so well with most of the food prepared in the campground.



Multiple campfires helped to keep everyone as warm as possible with Christmas music playing in the background. A group photo was taken and Dirty Santa gifts were exchanged after dinner. Dirty Santa gifts for the dogs at the campground were also exchanged. One lady made homemade dog gifts for the largest and the smallest dogs. It is clear that campers are huge dog lovers! The human gifts were Christmas or camping related. Dirty Santa was a lot of fun.

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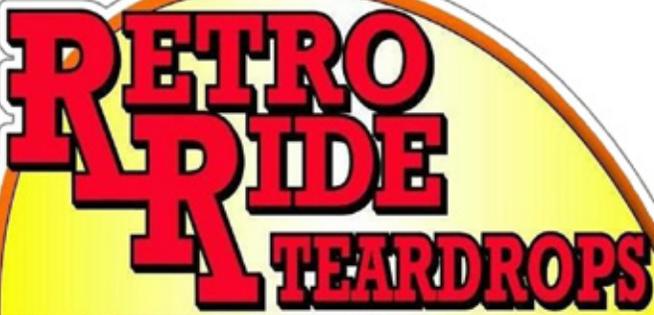
Last on the agenda was voting for the best decorated site. Everyone took their food and dishes back to secure and then went around to see the lighted sites in the dark. They then met back at the campfire site to cast votes for the best decorated site. The result was a landslide for Joe and Glenda Bordelon from Louisiana. They had a Santa that was about 7 feet tall and an abundance of decorations. It is amazing that they were able to bring so much with a truck and small camper. Their site was beautiful and truly amazing!



Tent interior of best decorated site



Interior of camper of best decorated winner



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A couple of things were unusual related to the event. First, the campout occurred during unseasonably cold weather. However, everyone kept a good attitude, was flexible, and just hunkered down. Second, the park was populated with overly friendly raccoons. At least eight raccoons seemed to have no fear of humans. One stuck his head through a tent twice while the occupants were up and talking with lights on. One approached a woman as she was cooking outside and another woman woke up with a raccoon in

The campsites were also beautiful in the dark. Most had Christmas lights and were very festive. Anyone interested in viewing all the photos taken at the sites in daylight and in the dark can find them at Tiny Christmas Campout on Facebook.

Quite a few campers left on Sunday, but a few remained. They relaxed and reveled in another beautiful sunny day. It was also an opportunity for those who had the time, to leisurely begin to remove decorations and pack for departure on Monday, the official end of the campout.

The participants at the campout were very cordial and many friendships were formed. One lady made tree ornaments for all the campers with the name of the event painted on it. Another was a secret Santa and left a wrapped presents containing rocks painted for the event at each site.



her tent! Everyone heard them nightly because they were very persistent and examined everything that was outside, whether food was around or not. Jambalaya leftovers from the potluck were in a very heavy cast iron pot with a heavy lid, yet the raccoons managed to open it and have a feast. The park will be removing the raccoons soon as they have become such pests. It is sad for them, but they are too bold.

Our host, Johnny Watson, and his mother, Judy, worked tirelessly to make the event nice for everyone. Johnny personally made rounds to welcome everyone and to keep them informed of what was occurring. He is planning to have the campout again next year. If it is like 2017, it will be well-worth attending!

Thank you, Johnny and Judy, for a wonderful Tiny Christmas Campout experience!



THE SWISS ARMY KNIFE OF TEARDROPS



 by Sarah Tucker

Camp Inn Teardrops have set plenty of industry standards when it comes to high quality, hand built teardrops. In one of the very first issues of Cool Tears, we ran a Q & A story with one of the owners, Craig Edevold. That was five years ago and thousands of subscribers have joined the Cool Tears family since the story ran. Here is part of that interview along with great new tidbits from Camp Inn.

SO HOW DID CAMP-INN TRAILERS GET STARTED?

Cary and I worked together back in 2000 and I discovered that he loves to design and build things as I do. In our free time, we built kitchen cabinets for both our homes, and a custom car.

I decided I wanted to take a 3 week “retro” trip with my family along the original Route 66, from Chicago to the Grand Canyon, and then up through Utah’s National Parks. I was a tent camper. But with such an aggressive travel agenda I wanted overnight accommodations that were quick and easy. I looked at various small travel trailers on the market, and couldn’t find one that worked for me. I wanted to be able to pull it with the family car. I reasoned that if he had to buy a truck, it would double the cost of buying the trailer, and then I would have a truck I didn’t need except to pull the trailer. Everything was either too heavy, or created too much wind resistance.

One day, Cary tossed a magazine across the desk to me that had a

photograph of an old 1938 teardrop camper. It was love at first site. I researched all the existing vintage designs for teardrops and all had their shortcomings. After quickly concluding that a teardrop camper of my dreams didn’t exist, Cary and I built one. During the Route 66 road trip, the trailer attracted a lot of attention and everyone wanted one.

After returning, Cary and I discussed and dreamed of creating a business building these unique little



Photo submitted by Steve Lee.

trailers. We spent a couple years refining their design and setting up shop, and in April 2002, we quit our jobs and followed our dreams.

WHAT SETS YOUR TRAILERS APART FROM OTHERS ON THE MARKET?

When we started Camp-Inn, our very first trailer was fairly basic. Even though it was basic, it had several innovative design changes from the vintage designs. It had two doors, 5 feet wide, queen size bed, front windows, etc... When we started building them for other folks, we created two models, a basic trailer that was similar to that first trailer, and an Ultra model with even more bells and whistles. We thought we would sell a lot of the basic trailers and one or two "loaded" models each year. The opposite has been true.

We realized that one of the biggest challenges to managing nationwide sales was minimizing the "service" and "warranty" issues. We reasoned that it was better to spend money up-front on quality than to fix stuff later. So, as we evaluated every component, we asked, "is there a higher quality version that will be more reliable?" We found that the marine industry had much higher quality components than the standard RV fare, so we gravitated toward marine sources for hardware and fixtures. Marine hinges and latches, marine lights, marine plywood, marine faucet, waterproof urethane glue and marine sealants etc make our trailers less like a typical RV and more like a boat.

One of the biggest factors promoting our quality is that I use our trailers... a lot! I still use the third trailer we built (our first demo). That trailer has

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over 75,000 miles on it. It has been from Maine to California, and from Florida to Alaska. Betsy and I have visited 39 states in our teardrops. Using our trailers, I know what works and what doesn't.

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE "RAINDROP" DESIGN?

One of our employees (Joe) wanted to buy one of our trailers, but he had two young boys. We started throwing around ideas of teardrops with two bedrooms, or slide-outs, or pop-ups. Nothing was working. Every idea had huge problems or deviated too far from the "teardrop" concept. About 10 pm one evening, I was looking at pictures online from a teardrop gathering in California. I was scanning a page of thumbnails, when out of the corner of my eye I saw the "Raindrop." When I looked straight at the picture, I realized it was an illusion and was actually just two teardrops behind a couple trees. As I continued looking at other pictures, I had that "Ah-Ha!" moment that what I thought I had seen would actually work. I immediately started designing the Raindrop and by about 3 am, I had concept drawings ready. I thought the design, and the way I had come up with the design, were strange. So the initial drawings were actually titled "Bizarre."

The next morning (actually that morning) I brought the drawings to work and showed them to Joe. He liked the idea and wanted to try building one. We decided to call it the "Raindrop" since "teardrop traditionalists" would throw rocks at us if we tried to pass it off as a "teardrop" trailer.



We built the first one, and it all worked. I still wasn't convinced that anyone else would want one, but we put it on our web page and slowly it started to catch on. The Raindrop is now almost 50% of our sales. (The introduction of the Raindrop at the first International Teardrop

...life by the 'Drop

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to catch on.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MORE POPULAR UPGRADES?

Many of our standard features (like Fantastic roof fan, stainless fenders, folding dining table and cooler stand) started out as options or upgrades. When we found out that 80% of the people ordered them and half of the people that didn't order them, wished they had, we made them standard equipment. The remaining options are fairly split. About 60% get Air Conditioning, 50% get the TV option and 30% get the furnace.

I designed a new "teardrop" shaped main door hinge. We made it standard on the Ultra models. Most of the people buying Classics and lower models upgrade to the new teardrop hinges.

80% of our customers get one of our side entrance tents. When I designed this tent, I designed it

to be flexible so it could fit most teardrops both manufactured and home built. We sell as many side tents to other teardrop owners as we sell to our own customers.

HOW CAN OUR READERS FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CAMP-INN TRAILERS OR PLACE AN ORDER FOR THEIR OWN CUSTOM CAMPER?

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Our web page, www.tinycamper.com, has the most complete and up-to-date information as well as pricing.



We do have a couple “try before you buy” rental trailers. You can rent one for a weekend or for a couple weeks. This is the best way to satisfy yourself that “teardrops work for you.” And, half of your rental cost is credited toward your purchase of a Camp-Inn.

For more information, visit the Unofficial Camp-Inn Forum at: <http://www.campinnforum.com> this is a forum started and run by individual Camp-Inn owners.



Photo submitted by Steve Lee.

CAMPING

TIPS FROM:



TIP 1: To determine what is necessary to take with you, put a piece of masking tape on every item. When you use each item, remove the tape. After a few trips consider leaving home any item that still has the tape on it.



TIP 2: Placing pieces of cloth between pots and pans will reduce scuffing and scratching of your cookware.



TIP 3: For your cooler, try wrapping a towel from the top, around the back and underneath when you put it into the storage area on the countertop. You can pull on the bottom of the towel to assist sliding the cooler out. It will also add insulation and reduce scuffing of the stainless countertop.



TIP 4: In cooler weather, you will get condensation on the windows. Roll up a small towel and place it between the curtains and the windows. This will absorb excess condensation that might otherwise drip onto you at night. Remove the towels in the morning. Opening side windows, sunroof or roof vents slightly will help reduce condensation.

A special thank you to Craig Edevold with Camp Inn Trailers for these tips. Watch monthly for more great camping ideas!

Building *Slice*



The creation of the
Cool Tears teardrop



by Sarah Tucker

I never went camping growing up. Never. It wasn't until my soon-to-be husband took me with him to a large group camp-out, that I experienced camping life. That rainy Labor Day weekend was one for the record books and I remember laying in a friend's pop-up wide awake because of a storm raging and thinking, "I will NEVER do this again."

Fast forward over a decade, and here we are, having owned four campers and teaching our girls all about the outdoor life by camping. Life is funny like that sometimes.



The Cool Tears teardrop was the product of a New Years resolution brainstorm I had at the end of 2016. As the desire grew to have a teardrop, I knew that building one would be a great way to go. Both my Dad and husband have been wood-workers, so the tool selection is plentiful and I have done some other building projects. A teardrop would

by far be the largest and hardest thing I ever built.

I knew my limited skills would require me to have a kit and plans from which to build a teardrop. So I immediately contacted Jennifer Robinson from Big Woody Teardrops and she was more than helpful to answer my questions and get me started on this build. Big Woody offers not only fully-built units but also kits, plans and accessories for the home builder. I chose the Ultimate Kit which included step-by-step plans as well as tons of hardware and accessories for the build.

Once the kit was chosen, it was time to choose a trailer. My dad (who passed away just under five years ago) had an old

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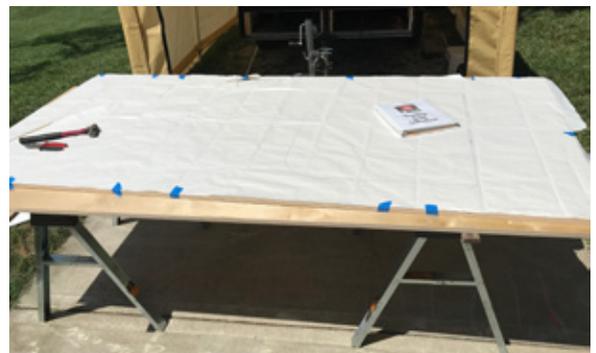
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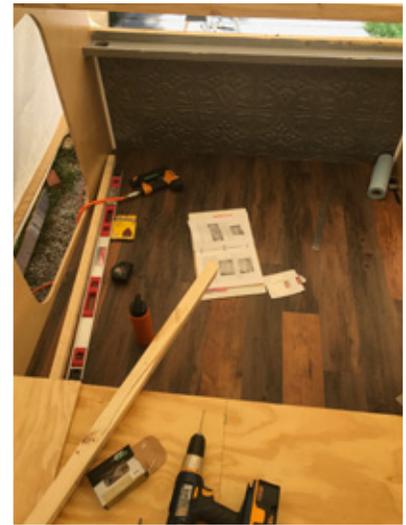
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home-built trailer and the sentimental side of me thought it would be so cool to build a camper on that trailer. However, upon better inspection, I decided it would not be worth the time, money and effort required to get it ready for a teardrop. So Memorial Day weekend, I picked up a 5' x 8' Carry-On trailer from our local Tractor Supply store as it was on a great sale. The trailer came with a mesh floor, side rails and a large ramp. I cut the ramp off but, after much discussion, decided to leave the side rails that would be the starting point for a large, under-floor storage system. I knew that taking our two girls with us on long trips would require a substantial amount of extra supplies. The floor was covered with plywood that had been painted with truck bed liner.

The sides of the storage area are diamond-plated and have three access doors. Initially, I had two flip-up access doors on the front of the camper with one large door on the back for the galley. After chatting with several super-smart teardrop guys, I realized those front doors would be very difficult to keep weather proof and if I wanted to add a cargo-rack on the front, then the doors would no be easily accessible. So those two doors were moved to the sides.

After weeks of work on the under-floor storage, I was finally ready to start the camper build. I laid a 2x10 timber vertically down the center of the storage area and then stringers from side to side that would be floor support. Plywood went on top of those and was bolted directly to the top of the metal trailer rails. This actually makes the camper 64" wide so it's a tad larger than a standard 5'x 8' but now I'm thankful for those extra few inches.

From this point on, I was able to heavily rely on the plans from Big Woody. I knew my interior cabin needed to be as large as possible as my husband is 6'3" and I tend to be a bit claustrophobic. At first, my thought was to scrap the galley all together but after taking about a Little Guy Silver Shadow a few times, I realized how easy a built-in galley makes camping. Finally, I decided to shorten the galley and make the interior floor space 80" long. Again, now I am so thankful for the long interior and the smaller galley is supplemented with a wonderful exterior kitchen space from Trail Kitchens (watch for a complete video and write up on our awesome little Trail Kitchen coming soon!)

The walls are pre-finished birch plywood and the floor is covered with peel and stick vinyl flooring



left over from a house project. I chose to only go with a small over head shelf on the front of the cabin and then a large cabinet with 2 doors and an opening for an a/c that will be installed in the future. The interior ceiling is sheets of shelf plastic and then covered with textured wallpaper.



While the plans gave step by step instructions for doors, the awesome guys at Purdy Teardrops (recently purchased by Teardrops NW) sent two silver HEHR prefab doors. I love the built in sliding windows in these doors and the fact they are waterproof. Cutting the holes proved very easy and the install went quick, once I tossed the hand sander and started using the electric palm sander. While, the under-floor storage make the doors sit higher than most teardrops, it has not

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been an issue (especially for my tall husband) and I simply take along a fold-up step stool.



Electricity is something I had never touched before this build and was a huge unknown for me. After much deliberation and research, it was finally decided to go with all 12 volt lights and run 110 through a generator line that is accessed via the under floor storage below the galley.



The good folks at Dometic sent a Fantastic Fan & Vent which also runs on the 12 volt system. I have been increasingly impressed with this fan and was very pleased with how easy it was to install and work.

Be watching for a video on the install of the fan and a FREE GIVEAWAY of a Fantastic fan!

The battery sits in a box on the front cargo carrier and all the wiring runs through a 12 volt marine fuse box with grounding bar. Didn't that all sound so professional? Before this build, I would not have had any idea what any of that was! The miracle did occur here, when I had all the wire ran, we hooked the battery up and all the lights and the fan worked on the very first try!

There is no water in the galley, as we have a portable Coleman sink that can be used on the Trail Kitchen when needed. Not having water tanks was an easy decision as I knew we would only use filtered water from home to drink and the sink can be filled with water from either campgrounds or home. It was one less thing to mess with and worry about leaking.

The galley was then finished with a laminate counter top and the left-over diamond plate pieces for a back splash. It is shallow, but I am working on getting it organized and am very glad we built it.



TEAR JERKERS

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The exterior was skinned with FRP turned to the backside. I used Sherwin William exterior paint and then coated it with Flex Seal rubber coating. The roof is also FRP and sealed with Flex Seal tape. I went this route because I tend to change my mind often, and I knew I would want to change the designs on the sides.

The hatch was the last thing to be built and yes, it was difficult. I followed the directions in my Big Woody Plan, just scaled down to a smaller size as my galley is short. I used a rain-gutter hurricane hinge from TC Teardrops. The hinge and all the edges were very difficult to figure out and I spent a lot of time just standing behind the camper staring at it. Once it was built, and working, I installed four different latches. The two swing latches have locks and then under the door, I have two clamp latches. That door is not going to move when I'm driving down the highway.

We have added a few wonderful accessories since our first few trips out. I installed a metal cargo carrier on the tongue to hold the battery, ice chest and Trail Kitchen. Because we camp with our girls so often, the awesome folks at Family Tent Camping sent an Oz Tent. This thing is life-changing when it comes to camping with kids. It sets up and tears down in just 30 seconds (well a bit longer when you use the tent stakes) and is the perfect size for our girls. Be watching for more videos on this awesome tent!



Bottom line: If I can build a teardrop...SO CAN YOU! Seriously, this is one of the coolest things I've ever done and I jokingly refer to it as my 3rd baby.

While not totally finished, I am thankful we were able to take it out four times this past fall and have lots of trips planned just as soon as the weather warms up a bit (it's 10 degrees outside while I'm writing this.) In 2018, we plan to hit Texas, Florida and the Upper Penscala in Michigan along with many, many trips here in the Midwest. I can't wait to make life-long memories with my family!



Now that it is built, we can hop in the car and head out to enjoy every sunset!