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AN INTERVIEW WITH GRANT WHIPP

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8 COVER STORY **THE GODFATHER OF** **TEARDROPS**

By Melody Miller

5 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR *By Sarah Tucker*

18 START DREAMING: BUILDING THE DREAM INN *By Rick Farrow*

22 GATHERING SPOTLIGHT: **SOMBRERO HORSE ROUND-UP** *By Martin and Liz Albright*

29 CAMPGROUND SPOTLIGHT: **MARK TWAIN CAVE CAMPGROUND** *By Sarah Tucker*



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Letter from the Editor:

A vacation without the teardrop

It was a first in a few years for my family...a vacation that did not involve camping. Over the Memorial Day week, my family flew to Orlando and then drove down to St. Pete's Beach. We planned the trip a year in advance with every intention of camping down and back. But sometimes life happens and plans must change. While I was initially frustrated about not taking the teardrop, I was reminded on the trip of the importance of time away.

We did Disney and the beach and a few tourists type attractions but one brief moment left what I hope will be a lasting impression with me. In the middle of a grocery store that we had run into for a few supplies, my nine year old daughter grabbed my hand and gave it a little tug. I glanced down and she looked up and said, "Mom, I love going away with you." Those words stopped me cold as the realization hit me. It doesn't matter what we do or even the mode of transportation...going away with family is one of the most important things we can do.

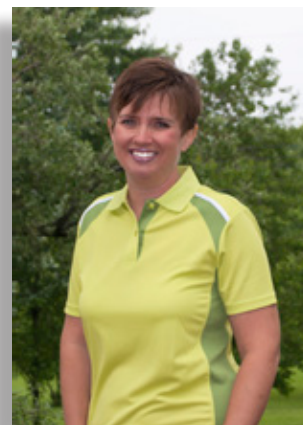
I spent the rest of that trip soaking in every little memory and let myself enjoy just being with my husband and daughters. So may we all learn from the wise words of my little girl and just go! Go spend time with your family! Or go spend time in nature! Or just go and enjoy a few free moments!

Ps. Have no fear, I already have a camping trip planned for the middle of June...camping is in my blood!

Until next time...enjoy every sunrise!

SARAH TUCKER

Editor
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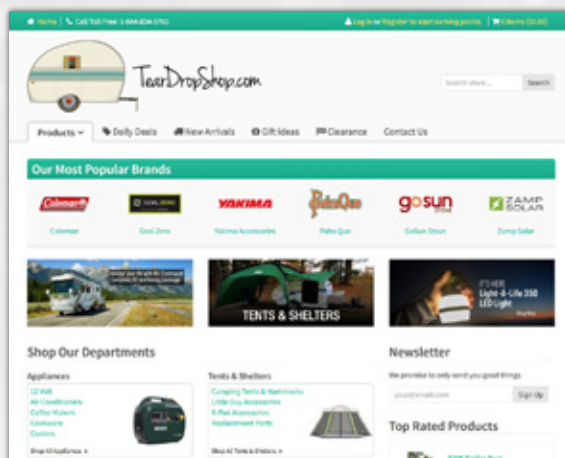
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ON THE TEARDROP TRAIL WITH MARILYN

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/

TEARDROP PORK CHOPS AND CABBAGE IN CAST IRON

Serves 4

This recipe can be made in 2 regular large skillets or two cast iron skillets with lid. It can be cooked on a camp stove or over a camp fire.

CABBAGE

- 1 small head of white or red cabbage, thinly sliced. This can be done before leaving using a mandolin or food processor. Place the cabbage in a bag in the refrigerator or ice chest.

- 1 yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon marjoram or thyme
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

PORK CHOPS

- 4 – pork loin chops, ½ inch thick
- 1 teaspoon marjoram or thyme
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

BEGIN WITH THE CABBAGE. It can be prepared up to three hours earlier.



Heat the oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Add cabbage, onion, garlic and herbs. Stirring occasionally, cook until tender. Stir in vinegar, season with salt and pepper. Cover skillet. Simmer to warm before serving.

FOR THE PORK – heat oil in another skillet over medium heat. Season chops with salt, pepper and herbs. Cook

chops for about 6 minutes, turning once until done. Transfer cabbage to serving platter and place chops on top. Remove skillet from heat. Add chicken broth and vinegar and stir to incorporate browned pork residue from the skillet. Pour over chops and cabbage.

ON THE CAMPFIRE –

Place cabbage in skillet on the grate over a campfire and stir occasional until tender. Cover and remove from heat.

For the pork, place skillet on grate over campfire add oil. The entire surface of the chops must make contact with the skillet to brown evenly. Follow the remaining instructions.

Serve with potatoes, Dutch oven biscuits or cornbread.

The Godfather

OF MODERN TEARDROPS



AN INTERVIEW WITH GRANT WHIPP



By TOW Line

Besides being a heck of a nice guy, we've always esteemed Grant Whipp as the key person in the revival and fellowship of owning a teardrop camp trailer. He has been both a builder (aka: Li'l Bear Tag-Alongs) and was the first one to organize teardrop trailer gatherings. He also produced the first publication for and about teardropping with the "Tales & Trails - Teardrop Times" newsletter. Grant is most known as the host of the "DAM GATHERING", the first teardrop get-together, at Shasta Dam, near Redding, California in 1994 (he hosted it 'till its 22nd anniversary). What follows is an interview by the TOW Line (TL) that was conducted while at the Shadows Over Shaniko Total Eclipse Gathering in Shaniko, OR, last July.

TL – Lots of teardrop trailer owners hold you in very high regard because you are the person that revived the production of the post WWII teardrop trailer. When were you attracted to owning one?

GW – My father used to race yearly at the Bonneville Salt Flat Speed Trials, outside of Wendover, UT. That's where I first saw teardrop trailers, in the backgrounds of pictures he would bring back. Some of the racers would camp in them out on the flats. When I got my first car in 1972 (a new Pinto), I got the urge to own one. Knowing it couldn't pull much, I thought a teardrop would be perfect to take camping.

TL – So you decided to buy one?

GW – Yes, I went looking, but even then, everything



I found was too expensive or needed a total re-build, and I didn't have the skills or knowledge then.

TL – So then you decided to build one?

GW – Well, not for another 10 years or so. In 1983, a former high school sweetheart had a 1947 Modernistic that I fell in love with. I tried to buy it, but they wouldn't sell because they used it all the time. Then she pointed out that, since I was already working building camper shells and enclosed 'cycle-hauling trailers, that I could simply build my own! So in '84, I built my first one in my father's shop, paid for by saved-up quarters.

TL – What prompted you to make another?

GW – My father was a machinist and his custom-



ers were “car guys” who showed a big interest in my project ... after a while, he said to me, “You know, you could make a business building these!” So before I was even done with that first one, I had a company name and cards printed up, calling it Li'l Bear, after my dog. I attended rod runs and cruise-in's and swap meets, marketing my trailer, and camped in it for about a year before selling it to Gordy & Terry Englestad in Washington. They really started the ball rolling for me, and by the time I closed the business and retired a couple of years ago, I had built 39 ... but, still have two unfinished.

TL – *What kinds of plans were available in the early days of people custom building their own teardrop trailer?*

GW – If you knew where to look, there were actually several old magazines that had “plans” in them, dating to as far back as 1935/'36, like Mechanics Il-



lustrated. By the time I started building, Bill Adkins was selling his “modern” version, then a short time later Bill Harper introduced his “Quik'n'Easy”, then “Desert Teardrops” came along a little later. Quite a few trailers have been built from those plans.

TL – *How was the first teardrop gathering started?*

GW - Through marketing my trailers at all kinds of events, I kept running into folks who already owned teardrops, some vintage originals, some homebuilt, who thought they were the only ones crazy enough to love them. We'd talk and they'd reminisce, and invariably the idea of a campout for just teardrop enthusiasts would come up, so I'd take down names & addresses. After almost 10 years of talking about

it, I decided it was time to DO something, so I found a nice campground nearby and chose a date, the first weekend of May in 1994. I thought a simple little “newsletter” would be a good way to put the word out, so I created “Tales & Trails” and sent it to all the names I'd collected over the years. I also had the audacity to send copies to Trailer Life Magazine, Sunset, and several street rod publications. Because I was a “car guy,” I sort-of



modeled the gathering after a rod run (casual - not like a formal car show). It was a sit down – hang out – social thing - around a shared like-minded passion. That first year we had all of eight trailers who came to camp the weekend, with two locals who dropped by. The next year (thanks to coverage of the 1st one in Trailer Life and some of the car mags) we had 35, and the following one we had 45. Those first three years we were at the campground near the base of Shasta Dam (hence the name, “Dam Gathering of the Tears”), which only had 26 campsites, so by ‘96 we had gotten too big and were even using the overflow parking lot. We had to find another site, and that’s when we



moved to Antlers Campground at the north end of Shasta Lake, and remained there 'til the Last Dam Gathering (#22) in 2015. Also, for roughly the first 10 years, many of us would take our cars & trailers and join the “Damboree” parade on Saturday morning in the little town of Shasta Lake, where some times there were so many of us, we’d have a parade within a parade. That was a lot fun!

TL – *Have you noticed the mix of people attending gatherings change over the years?*

GW – Yes. In the beginning it seemed that the majority of enthusiasts were “car people”, but as word got out and the popularity spread, we started

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TL – Any comments on the first ITG?

GW - The First International Teardrop Gathering, held in June of 2005 at Pioneer Village in Minden, NE, was the biggest and best gig on a national scale, drawing 145 teardrops from all four corners of the US, and even one from Mexico, the most of any Gathering (until the 20th Dam Gathering, which saw 175 trailers). I organized one of the tear-a-vans from the West Coast area out to the ITG (there were two others, one from SoCal and one from the PNW). We started

bringing in folks from all walks of life and interests. We can thank the internet for that! Another positive trend is more and more women are getting involved, building or buying their own teardrops, and attending trailer gatherings. Perhaps they find that the small size and ease of maneuverability with teardrops and small vintage trailers is less intimidating and easier to manage, making it all very doable for them. I see it as all good!

out with 18 trailers from Carson City, NV, and took mostly 2-lane highways & roads all the way, ending up with 25 in Vernal, UT, where we had to split up due to some folks not being able to handle the 12,000'+ elevation on the planned crossing of the Rockies. I had made campground reservations along the way, so we all had a place to stop together each night and a scheduled departure in the morning, but everyone was free to make their own daily schedule



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and stop to see what they wanted to at their own pace, although we usually had a pot-luck each night. This worked really well, and I was happy to hear everyone enjoyed it so much! I only wish I had been able to make it out to the 2nd & 3rd ITGs!

TL – *Vintage travel trailer gatherings are really popular these days. Do you believe it's an outgrowth of all the teardrop gatherings?*

GW – Yes, I do! Many got started by following and doing some of the same things we've done at teardrop gatherings for all these years.

TL – Thanks for visiting with us. We all feel honored whenever you take the time and effort to attend gatherings here in the Pacific Northwest. (Note: for other life interests – chat with Grant about motorcycles, model railroads, drift trikes, grand- children & great-grandchildren, and much more..."it's not all about teardrops any longer!").

GW - Sarah asked me to elaborate a little more on my first teardrops, and to comment about my thoughts regarding the increased popularity of teardrops over the past decade:

As mentioned previously, when I started that first trailer, I was working for a company building wood-framed camper shells & motorcycle haulers, and I had previously worked for a slide-in pop-up truck camper company in Denver, CO, so I was pretty familiar with typical construction techniques. Because I would normally be pulling the TD with an old Honda CIVIC, weight was an issue, so I wanted to keep it



as light as possible, and that all contributed to my decision to "stick frame" the basic body structure, keeping the walls about 1" total thickness. Since my ex-girlfriend's old Modernistic was my inspiration, I wanted all those lovely curves, and I set about drawing the profile full size (4'x10') on a large "Car Show" sign my father had laying around ... using the old "dangling rope" method, I set about tracing out a series of parabolic curves until I was satisfied with the basic shape. A particular design element that I

was adamant about was the feature that part of the lower walls hid the chassis of the trailer, so I included “skirts” to be added below the floor. (Stop and look closely at nearly ALL of the iconic vintage teardrops from the past ... you’ll find that they always extended the walls to hide the frame!)

One of the suppliers for the shop I was working for sold us large nearly-full-glass “walk-in” doors for the backs of campers, and I thought that having one of those along with a large street-side window would take a lot of the typical claustrophobic feeling away while being inside the trailer. Using the Modernistic as a guide, I determined axle, door & window location, then laid out framing members accordingly, also plotting out how I would cut the curved profile out of 1x8 lumber and piece everything together like a puzzle. I was lucky enough to be able to use my employer’s table saw and staple guns, but I had to cut the curved pieces with Dad’s 30-year-old jig-saw ... once all the pieces were all assembled, I attached the interior paneling to the framework using copious amounts of wood glue, and a router to cut away the excess. While working for the camper company in Colorado, I had learned how carefully-fitted foam-board insulation can be a structural element, so I cut & installed 3/4” foil-backed urethane foam between the frame members. I kept the cabinetry basic & simple, using typical RV construction techniques. Roof construction followed the usual RV method of

placing the paneling and framing on top of the walls, which ended up being rather challenging and time-consuming, shaping & fitting all the curved side pieces between the cross members. Once again, I used the foil-backed insulation fit between the rafters, but in 1-1/2” thickness.

After the basic body structure was together, I rolled it upside down, then designed and laid out the frame for the chassis. I purchased some 1-1/2” x 2-1/2” x .083” rectangular steel tubing, cut it by hand with a hack-saw, then my father welded it up. I got a 4” dropped tube axle and 1,000# leaf-spring set through my employer and mounted that up, then found a nice set of lightly-used slotted mag wheels at a local wrecking yard, and a pair of lightly-used tires got the chassis rolling. We bolted on a coupler (which turned out to be a VERY GOOD idea ... more about that, later!) and safety chains, then painted it with rattle cans, and it was ready to go under the body.

Through my employer’s suppliers, I was able to custom-order the “rolled mesa” side metal and sheet for the roof ... still being very weight conscious, I went with .016” thickness aluminum. Once that was attached, I trimmed the edges using RV moldings. The fenders were typical steel boat-trailer type, but I wanted them to stay close to the tire, so I fabricated brackets to bolt them to the brake flanges of the axle.



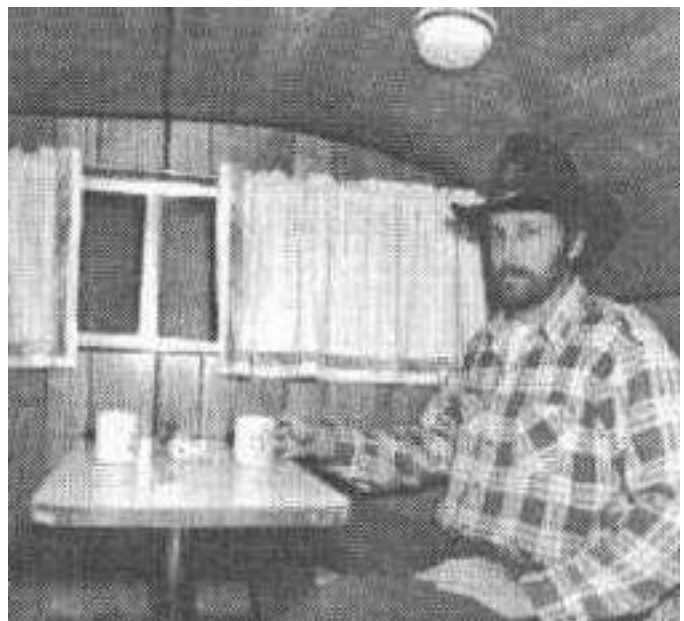
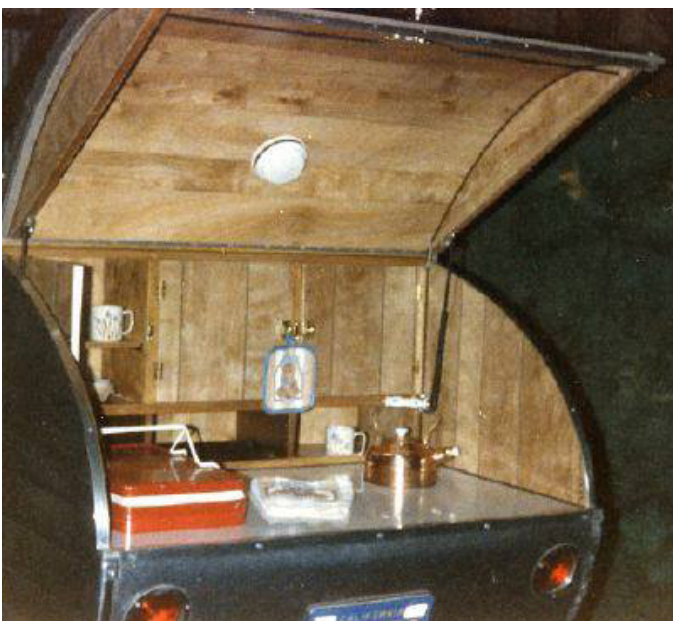
At this point, I was ready to tackle the interior, but I was out of money! My father had wanted me to include an interior seating feature that he had come up with, but I had wanted to keep it simple with just a mattress on the floor ... he and his wife offered to pay for all the upholstery work, IF I installed the seating feature ... how could I refuse, and thus was the beginning of one of my signature options!

When it was all complete and ready to hook up to the Honda, the empty weight came out to only 650#, with a 35# tongue-weight ... considering that the weight of the all-aluminum Modernistic (without insulation, paneling, or interior seating) was 500#, I was pretty happy! As a result, the construction of trailers #2 & #3 followed the same methods, except I increased the skin metal thickness to .019" (and I NEVER purchased used tires or wheels again!) ... #2 is a simple & basic 4'x8' that weighed in at 500#, and #3 was also 4'x8' but included a full-length galley lid, appointed galley, and seating package, weighing 600#.

A significant change to construction techniques came about as a result of me prototyping a light-weight motorcycle camping trailer for a local company that

produced MC cargo trailers ... in order to reduce construction time and still keep the weight low, I used an ultralight airplane wing-rib idea of skeletonizing or "cookie-cutting" plywood for the walls (cutting out all but the necessary perimeter and structural-framing), and screwing the roof ribs in between the walls (adding the roof sheathing over). In the full-size teardrops, it only added 50-100# to the overall weight (depending on the size of the trailer), but simplified and cut construction time considerably! (Incidentally, that MC camping trailer [3'x3'x6-1/2'] ended up weighing only 250#, with 50 of that being the chassis!) About the only other significant construction changes I made were to increase the steel frame thickness to .095" and the skin metal thickness to .040" ... lots of other minor changes and or features would come along over the years, though, as different materials or supplies became available.

As for the "bolt-on" coupler ... on its maiden out-of-town voyage, due to an incorrectly-adjusted tensioning nut, #1 came off the hitch at over 60mph, snapped the too-light safety chains, caromed off a concrete bridge abutment, and buried itself in the oleander bushes in the median of the freeway! In the process, nearly half the coupler was ground away! Af-



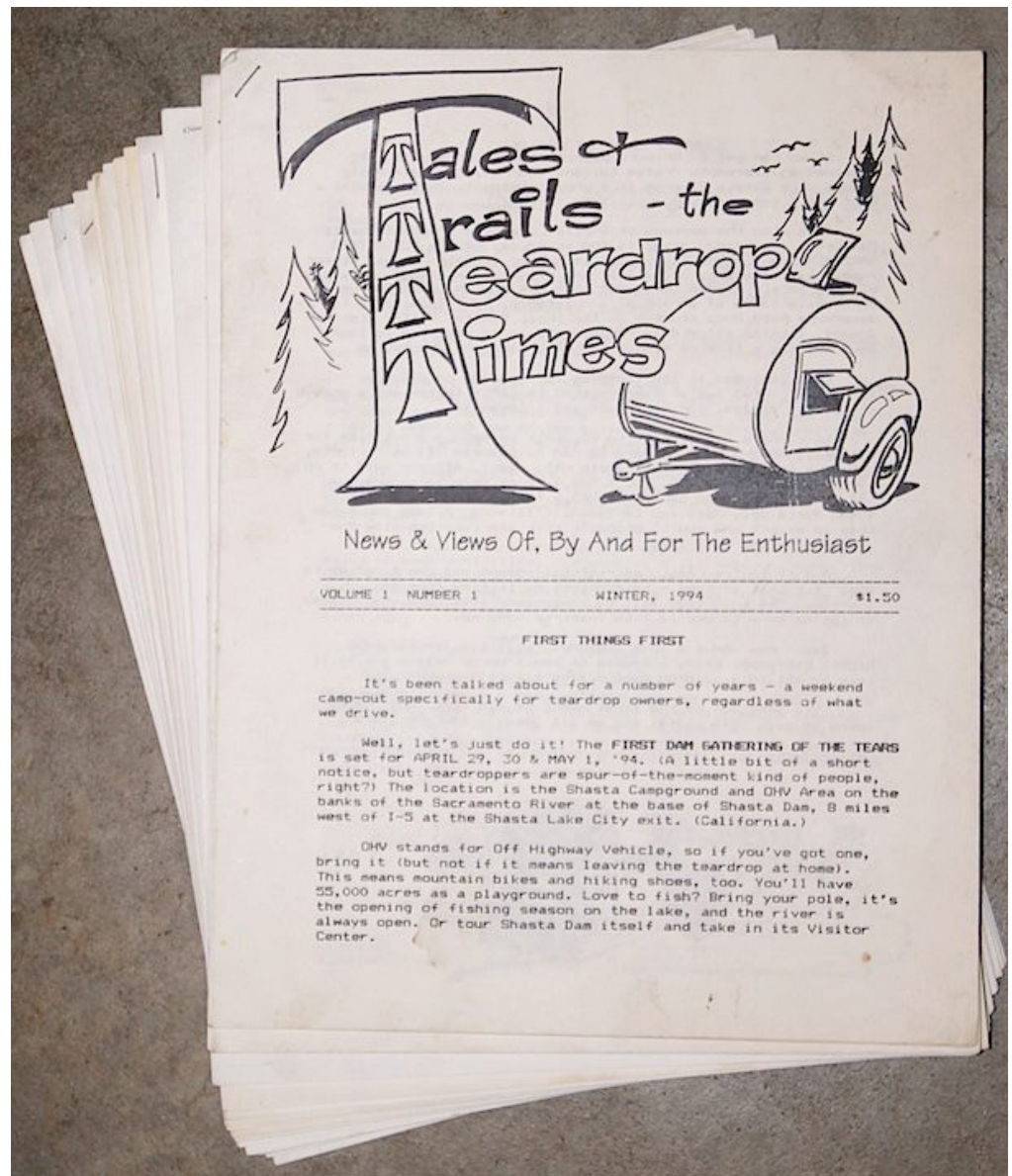
ter digging the trailer out of the bushes, I secured the it back on the hitch with some bailing wire, nursed it slowly down the road to a safe place, went to a local auto parts store and purchased a new coupler off the shelf, borrowed a couple of wrenches, and replaced the damage one on the spot! I hooked the trailer back up, returned the wrenches, and we were back on our way to our destination (with relatively minor damage done to the trailer). As a result, I have NEVER welded a coupler on a frame, using only Grade 8 bolts and adequate safety chains (also bolted on), and have never had another problem.

Regarding my thoughts on the popularity of teardrops ...

I know you asked about the increase in popularity within the last 10 years, but I think to really put it into perspective, we need to go back almost 25 years! When I first started publishing my newsletter (Tales & Trails - the Teardrop Times) in 1994, I never thought subscribership would be much more than 200-or-so, remembering that in nearly 10 years previously, I had collected only about 70 names & addresses for current enthusiasts. But within two years, thanks in large part to newsletter and Gathering coverage in international magazines like Trailer Life and Rod & Custom, I had over 2,000 subscribers! Those first issues were knocked out on a typewriter, and a graphic

artist friend would "scan" and half-tone photos that would be glued to the masters and then photocopied, while the newsletters themselves were mailed through the Post Office! It's hard to envision these days, but all correspondence was conducted via the mail and telephone!

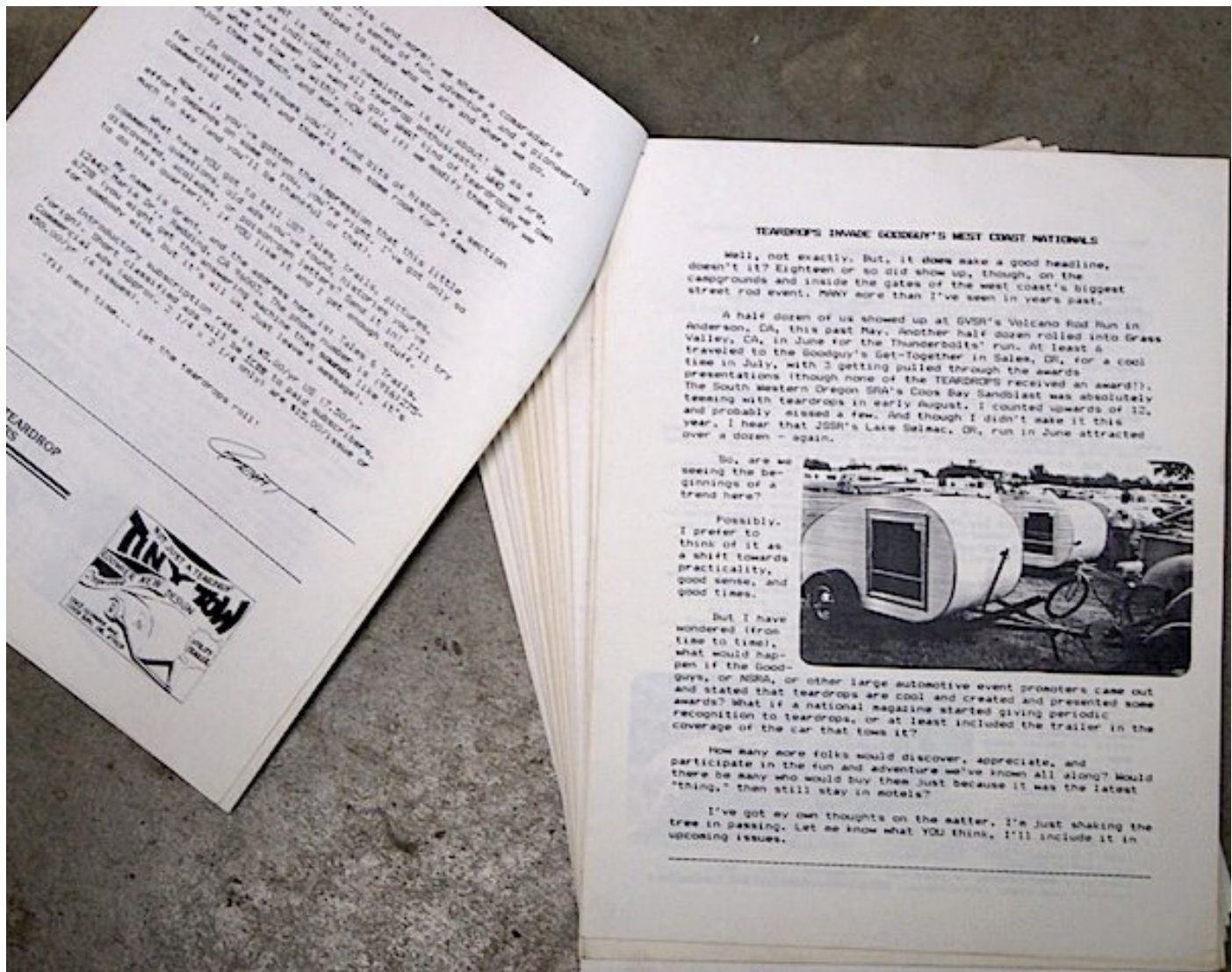
Things really started rolling again about 1998 when Huel Howser's PBS TV program aired about his visit with Teardroppers at the first Southern California Touring Tears Gathering In Oceanside, CA, in 1997



... and I realized that the computer I had purchased to better produce the newsletter could also be used to access the new-fangled thing called the World Wide Web, and I got talked into creating and putting up the first teardrop-specific website, www.teardrops.net (which I recently sold).

Over the next few years, interest and participation in teardrop activities like Gatherings and on-line forums increased steadily, and where once there were only a small handful of campouts devoted to teardrops around the country, there was soon nearly

100 throughout the US, Europe, and Australia! As with anything that is a relatively good idea, the more something is seen and given public exposure to, the more interest it gets and the more popular it becomes ... so, it's only logical that teardrops and teardropping would gain in popularity with all the coverage that has been happening on the internet, in the campgrounds, out on the highways, and even in a handful of TV commercials. It is still (and will probably always will be) a niche market/interest-group, because (as I've said from the very beginning) teardrops are NOT for everyone!





Start Dreaming



By Rick Farrow

While tent/car camping with friends, I noticed a Little Guy teardrop camper in an overflow parking lot and thought a little camper would improve my camping experience, so I started researching them on the internet. I have an extensive background in design, manufacturing and professional woodworking, so I knew I could design and build a camper that would stand out among the others and raise the bar in quality. I think teardrop type camping trailers are for people who like to camp out while having an easily transported great place to sleep and prepare meals.




I knew I wanted it to look like my FJ Cruiser tow vehicle but not to look out of place, if towed by another vehicle. I knew I'd have to deviate from the classic teardrop shape, and still wanted to retain the Bed and Rear Galley design of both. It was important to me that it remained cute and cozy, which draws people to teardrops, without feeling too claustrophobic. Being 6'2" I decided it needed a queen size bed, lots of windows, and a teak wood interior as it went well with the blue and had a classic boat cabin feel.

I believe I spent more hours on the design and research, than the actual build time. Once I started fabrication, it was approximately 30 days as a full-time project to complete. I've tinkered and added additional elements like the on-demand hot water heater and awning, which would be hard to track. I first started with Cad Design and after a plan, formed

a company to manufacture more in the future.

When almost complete with my build, I said to myself "My dream is almost complete." And with that the name Dream-Inn camper and Dream Coachworks was born. I designed the Dream-Inn as a modular assembled trailer. I actually built the frame last. The roof, galley cabinetry, floor, walls, hatch and tongue box are all separate units and designed to be joined together during final assembly. The frame was my biggest safety concern. After the custom frame was all tack welded, I had a certified structural welder do the final welding. People that know me weren't too surprised that I could manufacture a camping trailer, but they have raised a eyebrow or two when I told them I bought a sewing machine to make the curtains and various upholstery items (that still surprises me as it was the easy part).



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That first, maybe several campouts were in the driveway! It's so cozy, I've had house guest sleep in the Dream-Inn while visiting me.

I eventually took my first few trips short distance and invested in AAA RV insurance before leaving in case a wheel fell off. My little Dream-Inn has proved to be a hit with the rangers and others, so it serves to provide a good welcome on my adventures.

After the maiden voyage I was off to Yosemite where it proved itself in light snow and heavy rain worthy. I've since been to the Sequoias and several small



campsites around my home state of California. I've learned what to expect from different campsite conditions. So now that Dream-Inn has had its few voyages, I'm planning on traveling this summer to places like Zion, the Oregon Coast, the Grand Canyon, etc. May just hook up, pick a direction and let the road tell me where to go.

Oh..and it weighs in at 1760lbs with a tongue weight of 220lbs. No problem for my FJ Cruiser.



THE SHORT LIST OF SOURCES USED:

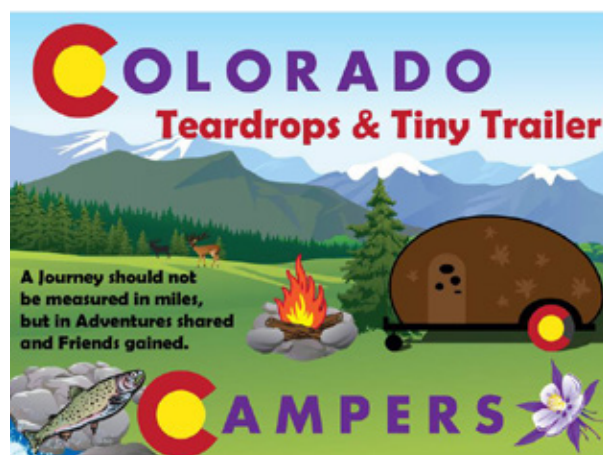
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- Camp Chef Oven/ propane stove, Coleman Classic Cooler Chest, Custom Propane Enclosure.
- Deep Cycle AGM battery, WFCO power supply panel, multiple 120v/ 12V outlets and lighting, shore power and cable hookups, DVD TV
- Storage compartments are lined with automotive trunk liner felt and rubber mats.
- UL labeled, 7" latex foam queen size mattress with custom modifications, and custom vinyl door aprons.
- GL Veneer RC Teakwood clad interior surfaces with satin pre-cat industrial Lacquer finish. Custom made bedding and curtains.
- Bargman exterior running and tail lights
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SOMBRERO HORSE ROUNDUP

by Martin and Liz Albright
 Co-Founders of the Colorado Teardrops
 and Tiny Trailer Campers Facebook group.

On the first full weekend of every May in the arid sagebrush desert of Northwestern Colorado, a few hundred lucky souls get to witness a unique event that harks back to the glory days of the American West – the Sombrero Ranch Great American Horse Drive through Maybell, Colorado. It's a thrilling spectacle that evokes powerful visions of America's vanishing past – saddle-weary horse wranglers, thundering hooves pounding on small town streets, all set against the backdrop of a big Western sky and the still wild and open rangelands of the high Colorado plateau.



The Sombrero Horse Stables were founded in 1958 by Rex Walker and Pat Mantle, who operate guided horse rides all along the Colorado Front Range. During the summer months, the Sombrero Stables offer a wide range of trail rides and other horse riding experiences to the thriving tourist industry in the Colorado Rockies. When the busy summer season ends, the horses are pastured near Walker's sprawling ranch in the Brown's Park area of Moffat County in Northwestern Colorado. The horse drive started in 1962 as a way to get the horses from their summer working locations near Rocky Mountain National Park.

Over the years, the horse drive has become a local event for the residents of Moffat County and the sleepy hamlet of Maybell (pop. 73.) Despite its small size, Maybell offers a



unique feature for tiny trailer campers; a municipal park with a designated campground (including some sites with electrical hookups) complete with a shower house.

In May of 2018, the Colorado Teardrops and Tiny Trailer Campers group made our third trip to the Great American Horse Drive.

My wife, Liz, and I formed the Colorado Teardrops and Tiny Trailer Campers group (the cumbersome name is usually just shortened to "Colorado Campers") in 2014. We started the group in order to create a Face Book-based group where we could gather with other tiny camper enthusiasts to enjoy the wonderful outdoors opportunities that the Centennial state has to offer. Since its founding in 2014, we have organized 45





camping trips in 6 states (Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, Texas and South Dakota) and camped with over 190 people from all over the USA. We are an inclusive group and while the campers at our camping trips have included everything from ground tents and tiny, home built teardrops to large, fully equipped factory RVs, most of our members have teardrops, small trailers, or vintage “canned ham” campers.

Liz and I first heard about the Great American Horse drive in 2015 when we were camping at Dinosaur National Monument in Northwestern Colorado. Brenda McKey, a member of our group who grew up in the area, told us about the annual May horse drive. We quickly decided to include it in our 2016 camping schedule. We had such a great time in 2016, we went back in 2017 and 2018, bringing more members every year.



Colorado Campers started arriving on Thursday afternoon from three different states, and by Thursday night about half of us were set up in the campsites that surround the municipal park. By the time we all got set up on Friday, 25 people from Colorado Campers and 14 trailers were there.

On Friday, as a few later arriving members were coming in, we got ready for our first event of the weekend, a group trip to “The Tank.” The Tank is a



Rio Grande Railroad water tower in Rangely (about 60 miles from Maybell) that is known worldwide for its unique acoustical properties. The Tank has been used by musicians from all over the world after it was abandoned by the railroad, until it was finally purchased in 2015 by a non-profit group and then opened as the “Tank Center for Sonic Arts.” Individuals or groups can reserve time in the tank for their own use, or just to experiment with music and other sounds.

Our group departed Maybell in mid-afternoon and carpoled to The Tank, where one of our members, Janice Taylor, had reserved an hour of time for us. While we were there we sang, rang bells, played musical instruments and enjoyed the weird and magical reverberations and echoes through the huge metal tank. We even got assistant audio director



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Samantha Wade to sing for us in her amazing voice. It was a magnificent outing to a truly spiritual and unique place.

After experiencing The Tank, we convoyed back to our campers and enjoyed a campfire, took our group picture, held a dessert pot luck and handed out buttons made just for this campout – a tradition that we started in 2015. Members enjoy getting to know each other at our campfires and we had several new members joining us for their first time.

Next day, Saturday, Liz and I led a group of vehicles

out to the Sand Wash Basin. The Sand Wash Basin, located about 18 miles Northwest of Maybell, is an area of BLM (Bureau of Land Management) public land that hosts one of the largest herds of wild horses in Colorado. Over 600 horses, descendants of those brought over by Spanish 500 years ago, live in the Sand Wash Basin. They thrive in the high sagebrush desert and roam freely through 250 square miles of open public lands. Our group spent about 4 hours in the basin, seeing hundreds of wild horses in every imaginable color. One of our members, Laura Carlson, rode her mountain bike over 25 miles through the Sand Wash viewing wild

horses as she rode. From individuals to groups of 20 or 30, horses were everywhere. We even saw a horse who horse-watchers have named "Picasso", because of his beautiful and distinctive coloring. Picasso is considered the "King of the Sand Wash Basin."

After our trip to the Sand Wash, we returned to Maybell to get ready for Saturday evening's events. Several of our members grew up in the Maybell area and some of their family members still own land nearby. We again formed into a convoy of cars and trucks and drove out to the town of Sunbeam, about 8 miles Northwest of Maybell, for our first viewing of the Great American Horse drive. Group members parked on private land just off of State Highway 318 and had a bit of a party waiting for the horses. 30 minutes later, we saw the clouds of dust and heard the clatter of hooves that told us the horses were coming! We were in awe as we watched the hundreds of beautiful horses rumble by, driven along by tired cowboys and cowgirls to their Saturday night pasture.

After watching the horses pass by the ranch (a preview

of what we would see next morning in Maybell itself) we returned to Maybell for a group potluck dinner. 43 people brought a variety of cowboy themed food to enjoy with homemade cream puffs for dessert. After cleaning up the community center, where the potluck was held, the Colorado Campers gathered around the campfire for s'mores and camaraderie. Everyone enjoyed another fiery Western sunset.



soaps, food, wood crafts even a baby goat! The Colorado Campers had a booth selling hand made quilts, photographs, jewelry and other handicrafts. The Maybell Park event coordinators brought out a bouncy house, inflatable slides and other games for the children. The volunteer fire department sold yummy breakfast burritos to raise funds for new equipment, and the sole restaurant in town, "Grandma's Kitchen" offered a breakfast-to-go for those already lining Maybell's only paved street in anticipation of the coming stampede.

Sunday morning was the "big day." Not only was Sunday the day of the horse drive down Main Street, it was also the day of a craft sale in the park with a wide variety of local vendors – hand crafted goat's milk



Finally, at about 10:45 the approaching "yipping" from ranch hands and the dust



LINKS TO CHECK OUT

Links: Colorado Campers Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/COTEARDROPS/>

Sand Wash Basin: <http://www.sandwashbasin.com/>

Wild Horses of the Sand Wash Basin: <https://www.facebook.com/sandwashbasin/>

Sombrero Ranch Great American Horse Drive: <https://www.sombrerohorses.com/horse-drive/>

City of Maybell: <http://www.visitmoffatcounty.com/maybell.php>

The Tank Center for Sonic Arts: <https://tanksounds.org/>

cloud told everyone the horse drive was almost here. From the side of the road we watched as the tremendous herd galloped down Main Street driven along by weary cowboys/girls (both professional and amateur), relieved that their 60 mile journey was almost at an end. Accompanying the horses were 4H

club members throwing candy to the children, riders from the Moffat County Sheriff's Department horse patrol and even Zorro made an appearance, tossing silver dollars to a lucky few!

Following the excitement of the horse drive, the spectators returned to the craft show and vendors in the main park square, which remained open until almost 1:00 PM. After putting away our wares, the Colorado Campers found other ways to amuse ourselves. Some took naps and others went out exploring the remote and beautiful open country of Moffat County. A few members, who had to get back home by Sunday night, packed their trailers and headed out. Many members extended their stay through Sunday night and enjoyed a huge campfire and another show-stopping sunset.

Over all, it was a splendid camping trip, with Western vistas, visions of the old west, the unforgettable and wild natural beauty of Northwestern Colorado, and of course, the companionship of great friends. A truly "Colorado" experience for the Colorado Campers!



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MEET ME AT TEARSTOCK!!!

I'm excited to announce that Cool Tears Magazine will be at Tearstock 2018 in Mackinaw, MI.

Tearstock is a weekend of peace, love and camping hosted by Liberty Outdoors annually.

The rally includes camping, entertainment, door prizes, awesome food and socializing with new and old friends! Tearstock is a rally for teardrop trailers, but every person and type of RV are welcome! Mackinaw Mill Creek Campground offers spectacular views of the Straits of Mackinac and the Mackinac Bridge. Conveniently located 5 minutes from the Mackinac Island Ferry Docks and downtown Mackinaw City.

Click here for more info <http://tearstock.com/>



by Sarah Tucker

Early May brought beautiful weather in the Midwest and the Heartland chapter of the Tearjerker association gathered once again to kick off the camping season. The Mark Twain Cave Campground was the meeting place for this gathering and as it was only 3.5 hours from our house, I decided it would be a great place to camp with my daughters.

The Mark Twain Cave Complex (where the campground is located) has lots of things to do and is a great destination in and of itself. Nestled amongst the bluffs that surround the Mississippi River, this campground is rustic yet boasts many great amenities and best of all...A WINERY!!!

We happened to be camping the weekend that was both Cinco de Mayo and the Kentucky Derby all rolled into one and the campground winery provided a great Derby event complete with big screens to view the race, live music and dancing (shout out to Steve and his beautiful partner Jane) and even a pinata for the kids.



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The above complex greets you upon entering the campground and it holds both the welcome center for the cave as well as the campground office. A wonderfully friendly lady welcomed us to the campground and told us all about what they had to offer for the weekend. She also mentioned that we should check out the gift shop in the cave welcome center for some great souvenirs.

Our campsite, while gravel, was level and very well shaded. (And I backed in on my first try!) The campground offers 99 campsites with everything from tent sights up to 50-AMP water, electric and sewer sites ranging from \$19-\$32.

On site shelter houses, playgrounds and laundry facilities along with wifi and nice bathhouses all add up to create a full-service, high-quality

camping experience.

On Saturday morning, we were able to venture into the Mark Twain Cave with a group majority of our



group and we had a fantastic experience! The cave tour began in their gift shop area with a short video presentation about the history of the cave and the early explorers.



FROM THE CAVE'S WEBSITE:

Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) wrote about our cave in five of his books. Most notably *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* published in 1876. With the popularity of this book, thousands of people from all over the world came to Hannibal by steamboat to see this cave that they had read about.

In 1848, Dr. Joseph Nash McDowell bought the cave with the sole purpose to experiment in the preservation of dead bodies. Today, our guides still tell the story of when Dr. McDowell brought his deceased 14- year old daughter, who died of pneumonia and placed her in a glass and copper cylinder coffin and left her there.

In 1879, Jesse James used Mark Twain Cave as a hide-out after robbing a bank in Saverton, Missouri. The cave has been shown continuously during all the World Wars, the Great Depression and today.

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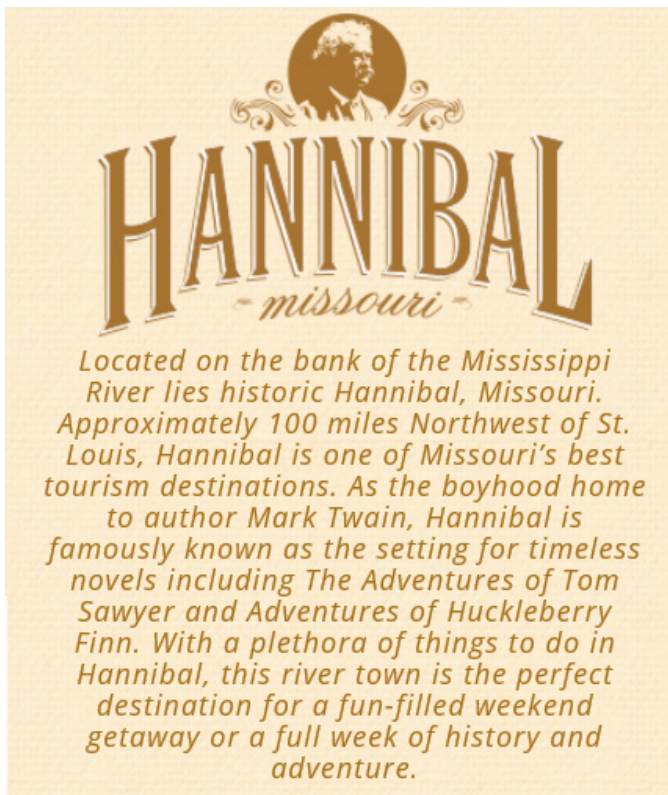
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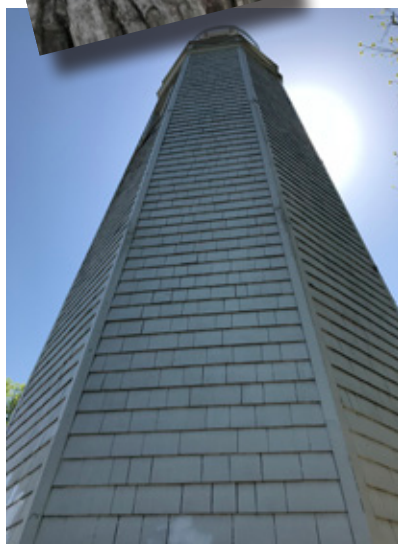
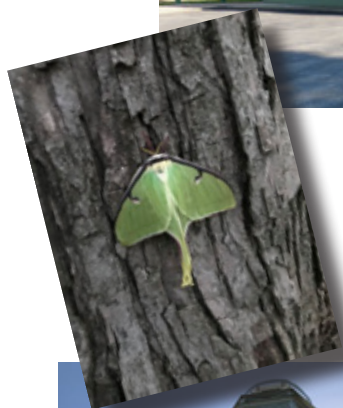


Camping at the Mark Twain Campground allowed us to visit Hannibal, MO which we prepared for by reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The*



Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. The river community is best known as the 19th-century boyhood home of author Samuel Langhorne Clemens (aka Mark Twain). The settings of Twain's novels are inspired by this town. Numerous historical sites, including his boyhood home and Becky Thatcher's house, are associated with Mark Twain and places depicted in his fiction.

Between town and the campground is Lover's Leap lookout (top picture) that gives you a gorgeous outlook of the Mississippi River and Hannibal.



The Mark Twain Memorial Lighthouse, which we climbed all 244 steps to see, was constructed in 1933 during the Great Depression, as a public works project under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It has been lit on ceremonial occasions at three separate times by presidents Franklin Delano Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Bill Clinton.

Mark Twain Campground is open April 1st through October 31st and if you stay six nights, the seventh night is free!

More info here <http://www.marktwaincave.com/campground/>

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