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**TEAR JERKERS**

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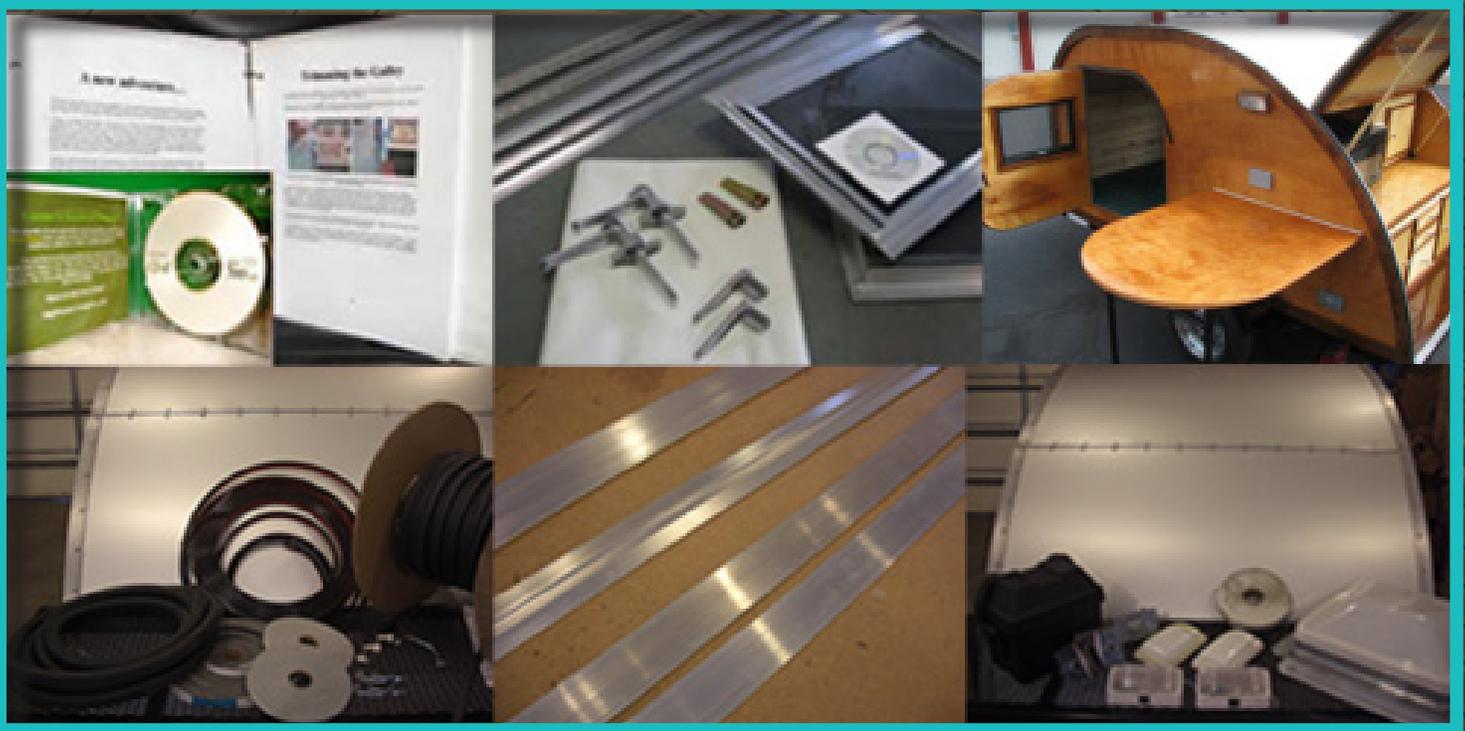


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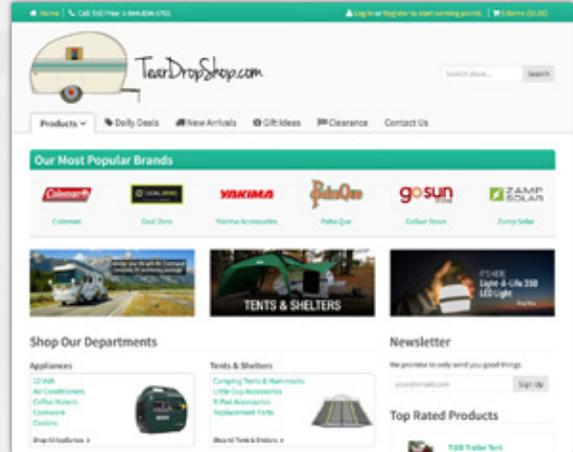
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# COOL Tears™

and tiny campers

Magazine

Vol. 5 No. 2

February 2017

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By Frank Healy

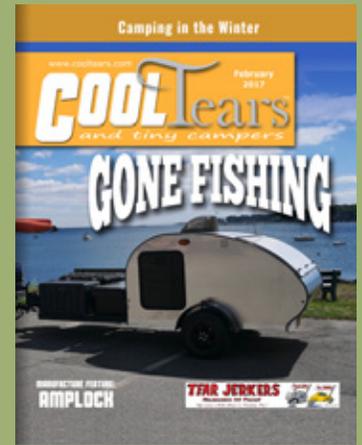
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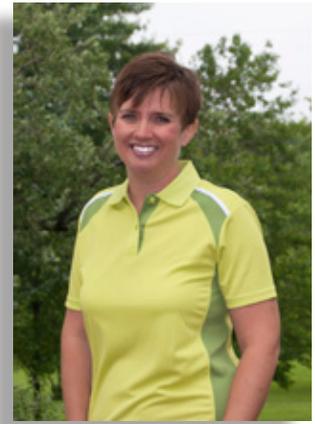
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# Letter from the Editor

## Two decades of fun for Tearjerkers



Every once in a while I get to sit and chat on the phone with some amazing folks in the teardrop industry. A few weeks back I had the pleasure of a rather lengthy conversation with Todd Brunengraber. I had been meaning to educate myself further about the Tearjerker group for months and finally was able to learn all about the history and drive from the founder himself. We live in a fast-paced, judgmental society that is constantly bringing to the forefront of our minds the depravity of life around us. But if we would all take a few moments to simply talk with someone outside our normal circle, we would all be more aware of the wealth of knowledge and kindness people can pass along. This was very evident to me as I chatted with Todd about all things teardrops and just life in general.

Todd has a passion for connection people who like to camp. What a journey he has taken as the internet has allowed folks from all over the globe to meet on the Tearjerker forum and then hundreds of them meeting at gatherings across the country. He told me that although the massive size of the group was not even a pipe-dream in the beginning, by breaking the group into chapters they have been able to maintain a “small-town” feel in the midst of thousands of members.

I couldn't help but smile as he reminisced of gatherings and conversations he has had with fellow campers (maybe even some reading this little magazine.) He was quick to tell me that the main reason the group has grown and succeeded is due to the volunteer administrators and chapter directors. Their dedication to the group has allowed many the opportunity to truly enjoy teardrop gatherings.

You can read all about the Tearjerker group starting on page 16 of this issue.

Until next time...enjoy every sunrise!

**SARAH TUCKER**

Editor  
Cool Tears  
and Tiny Campers Magazine™  
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This statement would seem to describe the creation of AMPLock. In August of 2001, Andre Pare was storing his fifth-wheel camper on his company’s premises. While sitting on the back lot, the camper was stolen. In a matter of moments, Pare’s investment vanished at the hands of thieves who drilled the lock and took the camper. While insurance can reimburse a stolen camper, the loss of personal property and special things can never be returned.



It was after this experience, Pare was determined to find the best anti-theft device on the market. A device that can not be destroyed quickly and that would provide piece of mind and offer complete protection. His search proved fruitless.

At the time, Pare owned a machine shop company and had vast experience in machining and a good knowledge of metal properties. He took that knowledge and expertise and began developing a lock that could withstand any assault. He did not want to be victimized a second time and was beginning to realize the market was ripe for this type of lock. After an intense development process and numerous tests, the first AMPlock was created in 2002. The great quality and high destruction time was one of the firsts in the industry.

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# GONE FISHING

**FISHERMAN  
REELS IN THE BIG ONE**



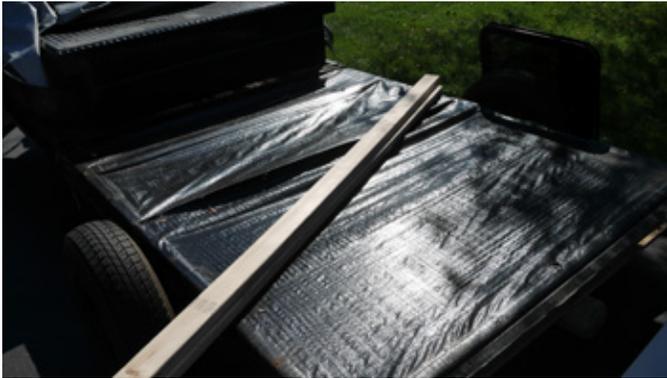


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by Frank Healy

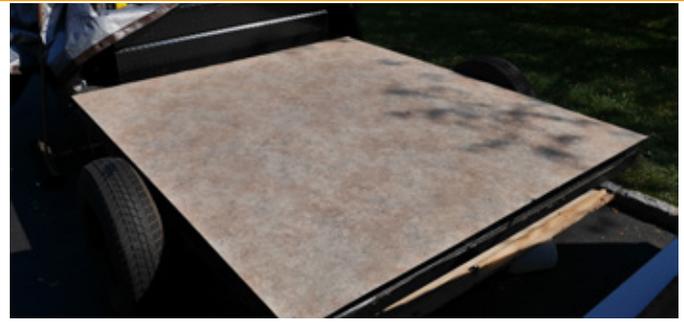
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**I** am a fisherman and needed some room for storage so I built this teardrop on a trailer that was designed for hauling All Terrain Vehicles(ATV). The trailer weighs in at 1400 pounds (finished) but can handle tough roads and bad conditions. The trailer is 6 foot wide (7.3 at the fenders) and 15 foot tongue to tail. The sleeping area is over 7 foot long which is important since I'm 6 foot 3 inches tall. I built the teardrop and mounted the tool boxes to carry my fishing and camping gear. As of now the trailer has been from Massachusetts to North Carolina.



**PREPARATION**

Preparation is the most important thing that could be done. Once you mount the teardrop and cover everything it is what it is. If it is rusted it will get worse, if your lighting wires are frayed they will fail. So PREPARE! I ground down any rust and primed and repainted the problem areas. Found wiring that was substandard and replaced. Lastly I covered bottom of trailer with a breathable vinyl product to keep the water out and mounted 4 job boxes to the front of the trailer.



**THE FLOOR**

Measured and matched the framing of the trailer. I then covered the frame with 3 coats of roofing tar. The real sticky, nasty, smelly stuff. The frame was fastened down with trailer deck screws. If you look around you can find them at Home Depot or Tractor Supply; The floor is 3/4 Inch B-C exterior plywood that was butted together and sanded, to make one large surface. All edges were sealed with polyurethane and covered with tar. I covered the plywood with a piece of remnant Congoleum and trimmed the edges.

**THE WALLS**

The side walls are made of 5/8" exterior plywood spaced with 3/4" slats. In between the slats there is ridged foiled insulation. The inside of the walls are 1/4" interior Birch sanded. After fashioning a guide 3/8" smaller then the door opening, I used a router trim bit to cut the holes on both sides. I drilled a hole on the exterior next to the doors for exterior lights and 4 holes for LED running lights. All the wood was plasticized with a 3 to 1 mixture of thinner and polyurethane , 3 coats. after the sides were complete I ran the router around the cut edges to square it all up.



### FRAMING AND SHEATHING

The framing is made out of 2x4s and 2x2s ripped from the 2x4s. I used a Kreg Jig to prepare the 2x4s and mounted them around the walls. I drilled 1/2" holes to run the wires that I ran as I built the framework. After the framing was up I installed ridged 1 1/2" and sheathed it with 3/8" plywood and cut out the galley hatch hole and the vent fan hole.



### ALUMINUM

Out of all the steps this was probably the most difficult, I am not a metal worker and have never handled large pieces of metal. Again the T&TTT website was invaluable in the advice I received. I started by getting my buddy Jim over to assist with the cutting and mounting. We cut the aluminum into pieces that were just larger than what we needed and applied contact cement to it and the plywood.



We aligned the sides and trimmed off the excess with a trim bit on the router. The top was done the same but we had to use straps and 2x4s to hold it down. The holes for the doors, galley, and the vent fan were cut again with the trim bit. All edges of the metal were then stapled with 1" staples, very close to the edges so the corner trim would cover them. I must say we did a fine job and learned much along the way about metal working.





### INTERIOR

Finished the wires for all the lighting. I covered the inside with luan ply and mounted the doors. I built a bracket for the galley shelf, rear bulkhead and the cabinet frame. The shelf protrudes into the camper and is trimmed with larger angle L trim to form and shelf on the inside. Then I tested the vent fan, exterior lighting, exterior switches, ceiling lighting, Smoke/CO alarm and reading light. The ceiling lights have 2 switches and I placed whites lights on one side and red lights on the other, so when I step out in the dark my night vision is not disrupted by bright lights. The cabinet doors were



made from scrap pieces of wood and luan ply. The handles and TV came from Amazon and trimmed it out with PVC trim because it is very flexible. The vent fan is so powerful on high that it feels like a wind tunnel inside.



### **GALLEY AND HATCH**

I was lucky that I saved a hatch door from an old camper and built sides with the same curves and contours of the hatch. 1/2" hollow rubber gaskets were used to waterproof the opening. The hatch weighs about 35lbs so I mounted 2 hydraulic assist rods and now it lifts effortlessly. I also installed a LED light strip on the back of one of the rails.

The galley and bulkhead carry most of the utilities: AC/DC electrical power unit, audio entertainment unit, AC receptacles, and the speakers. I installed an AC/DC meter to keep track of my power usage, two USB plugs, and a 12V lighter plug.

### **FINISHING UP AND ODDS AND ENDS**

I thought about storage for plates, cups, and silverware. I had not thought about this until I went out on the road. So I added these cubbies and was able to pick up storage space for napkins and



propane bottles for the stove.

Found these fish cabinet handles on Amazon and installed them inside. Finished the TV. The edges on the outside did not look good, so I cut pieces of diamond plate and trimmed it out with that. Opened the hatch one evening and realized that it was too dark to do any work in, so I added lighting by installing an LED light strip and switch. Looks great and lots of light.



### AFTER-THOUGHTS

There are a few things that I may have done differently, but not to much. Perhaps a bit larger next time. I completed the build on July 4, 2016 and many of my friends and family thought I was crazy and they said it would never get used. I have now used this camper for over twenty nights in five states while traveling.





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# TEAR JERKERS

**CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!**

*"Life moves a little slower on Teardrop Time"*





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by Sarah Tucker

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*Editor's Note: In the August 2013 issue of Cool Tears we ran a brief overview and history of the Tearjerkers group. With the celebration of their 20th Anniversary, we felt it time to honor this group again.*

**B**ack in 1997, the teardrop world was slowly crawling out of a 40-50 year lull. There were numerous reasons for this resurgence in attention on the teardrop camper; the baby boomers were becoming empty nesters and recalling camping trips they took in their youth, the vintage style was becoming more popular, gas pricing were beginning to creep up and folks were looking for a more economic way of camping.



Several of those reasons were leading Todd Brunengraber to begin his teardrop adventure.

Todd bought his first teardrop, a 1958 Scotty Sportsman from a fellow in Roanoke VA. And just like that Tearjerkers was on its way. As silly as it sounds, you hook the little teardrop to your vehicle & jerk it along.

The first gathering, so to speak, was held at the Seaport Campground in Mystic, CT. Seven teardrops from as far away as Lansing, NC. came to the campground. All of these early followers are members, directors or administrators today. With the inception of the Yahoo Chat Group in the late 1990's/early 2,000's, things really exploded & chapters were formed. In

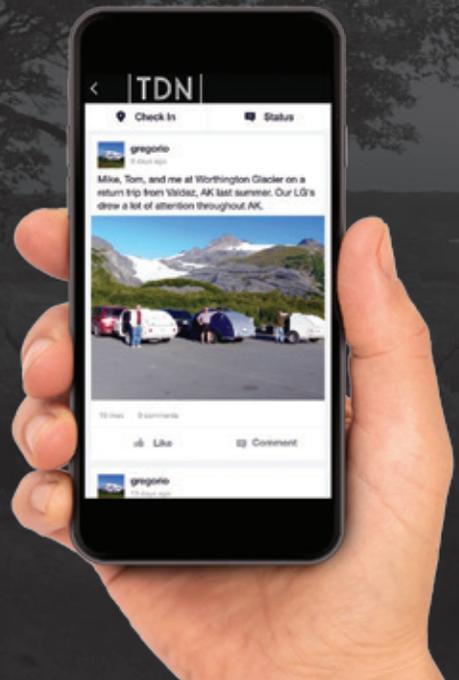
Ourcampfires are always open to you. We'll leave a lantern on for you!  
-Tearjerkersmotto



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2001 we introduced the PHPbb forum. The first chapter was the NE Chapter taking in the 6 NE states. From there it was on to the Liberty Bell Chapter in PA. and the Southern Appalachian Chapter taking up most of the South. From there they had interest from fellows in Great Britain & Finland. As the numbers grew, so did the chapters.

The mid 2000's brought some major gatherings. A centralized location, Wytheville, VA was chosen for the first North/South gathering. This was a major success and so 2 years later brought another gathering, the South/North. In 2011 another director planned the CRA. Known as the



Crossroads of America, this gathering was held in Spencer, IN. People attended from states in the North & Southwest as well as the east. There were 142 trailers in attendance for that first CRA.

Tearjerkers is a family oriented camping group. It was originally for teardrop trailer owners, but has added small or tiny travel trailers. Many members have more than 2 trailers. Anyone is welcome to attend a gathering. You do not need to be a member but once you attend a gathering, chances are you'll have a blast & join. The Tearjerkers website has information pertinent to trailers, members, vendors, products & much more. The forum board is private and you have to





ZachEngle'shomebuildpicturedherewithhistowvehicle.Watch upcoming issues of Cool Tears for a feature on his project.

join to use the board features.

Cool Tears contacted a few of the members of Tearjerkers in order to learn more and were given several great stories. From **Zach Engle**, "I've been involved since 2010, first just as a member, and have since taken on role as Liberty Bell Chapter Director and an administrator on the forum. I

*remember my first gathering, before I really knew anyone, was the original Tearstock, in Phoenicia, NY. We toured the Woodstock site and museum and had a tie-dye themed weekend. I think we had about 65 teardrops and other small campers show up, with bear sightings in and around the campground throughout the weekend. Was an awesome time with some crazy people!"*

From Rich Cooper, "We are a camping group. The trailers are the common bond. We are a inclusive group... ALL are welcome! The Chapters are only as good as the Co-Directors & Directors who guide the Chapter through the camping season and beyond. I first got intrigued after I saw the "RV Crazy" episode that had Teardrop Trailers in it. So in the spring of

**...life by the 'Drop**

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by Gary Roys

From Madrid, Iowa. [middle of the state]

My wife Elaine and I tent-camped for years & years. Now in our mid-60s, we've moved to small trailers and/or campers. During the recession of 08-09, my body-shop business was slow, and I decided to make a teardrop trailer out of ½ of a Neon sedan. We used it quite a bit, though it was "cozy" for 2.

A few years back, we had a January thaw. For several days we had daytime highs in the 60s. We decided to camp overnight at Ledges State Park—just a few miles away. [We had the whole campground to ourselves!] 'Had a nice fire in the evening, then climbed into the teardrop, only to find we'd brought the electric blanket that Didn't work. Left clothes on... zipped sleeping bags together... snuggled in for the night. Heavy frost on the windows' inside the tear indicated that it was nowhere near 60 next morning!

But Elaine fired up the coffee-maker, while I rebuilt the campfire, and we had big mugs of coffee/cocoa mix, and slabs of homemade bread toasted over the fire.

And we camped... in January... in Iowa.



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