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# COOL Tears™ and tiny campers

Magazine

Vol. 6 No. 12

December 2018

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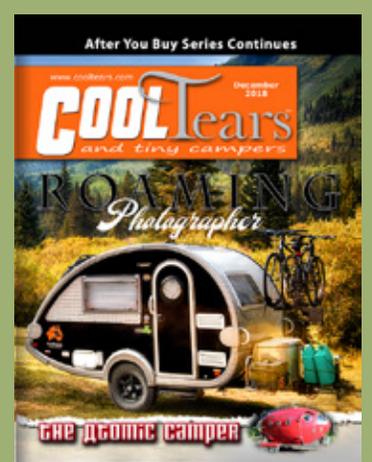
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Sarah Tucker

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## Letter from the Editor:

# A season for reflection

Well, believe it or not, the year is quickly coming to a close and we will soon put 2018 in the history books. So much change happened in my life this year but I am so thankful for the constant of monthly putting together this little magazine and in return, hearing so many amazing stories from our readers.



This was our first full camping season with the Cool Tears Teardrop and wow, did we ever make some great memories! Texas over spring break was our first long adventure and we all came away from that trip with new friends and a greater appreciation for non-windy campsites. HA! Our summer travels took us all over the state of Missouri as we learned how to quickly set up and tear down and also what is essential to teardrop camping. By far, we all enjoyed camping on Taneycomo Lake the most as it afforded us the opportunity to fish, swim, kayak and even get in some great shopping in Branson.

While all the trips were great, I always came home with the hope that the memories we made while camping are some that will last a lifetime for my girls. The conversations we had around the campfires would range from silly to deep theological to story telling from our own childhoods. These are the times that I hope stay imprinted on my girls minds as they venture into adulthood.

As we head into this Christmas season, may we take a few moments to give thanks for that tiny baby born so many years ago who would go on to become the Savior of the world. So from my family to yours, Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

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

**SARAH TUCKER**

Editor

Cool Tears Magazine™

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



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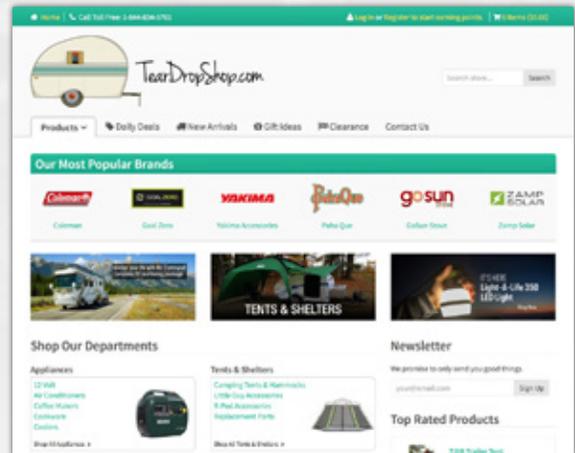
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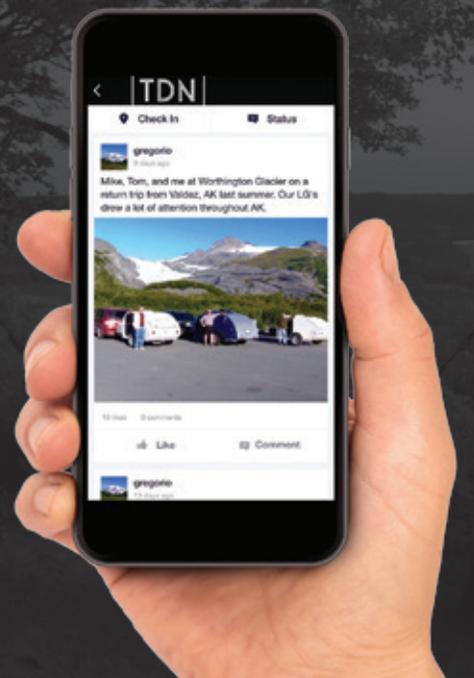
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# ON THE TEARDROP TRAIL WITH MARILYN

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/](http://teardroptrail.com/equipment-and-supplies/)

## PORK CHOP MAC AND CHEESE

One of the best parts of the 4th Annual Southwest Teardrop and Vintage Trailer gathering in Tyler State Park was the Cast Iron Cook Off on March 23, 2018. We joined the group just after acquiring The Ambassador, our teardrop in 2015. Jim and I have been collecting cast iron cookware and he found a great recipe for the contest in Southern Cast Iron Magazine October 2017.

### Serves 4

- 2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil, divided
- 1 ½ cups chopped yellow onions
- 4 bone-in rib pork chops (½ inch thick)
- 2 teaspoons Kosher salt, divided
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper, divided
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 5 cups whole milk
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 ½ cups shredded whole milk mozzarella cheese
- 16 ounces macaroni or cavatappi pasta cooked according to package directions
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons panko (Japanese bread crumbs)
- Garnish – fresh rosemary

### Prepare before leaving home:

- Measure dry ingredients, flour, crumbs and seasonings, place in plastic zip lock bags – label
- Place pork chops in plastic zip lock bags – label
- Chop onion place in plastic zip lock bags – label
- Refrigerate in ice chest or cooler

### On the campfire - Dutch Oven

Prepare the fire in time to provide coals for cooking. We started several batches of briquettes before the cooking began to have extra briquettes available throughout process. In a 12-inch cast iron Dutch oven,



heat 1 tablespoon of oil over medium-high heat. Add onion, cook stirring until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Remove onion from the Dutch oven. Add the remaining tablespoon of oil to the Dutch Oven. Sprinkle pork chops with ½ teaspoon of salt and ½ teaspoon of ground pepper. Add pork chops to the Dutch oven and cook until browned, about 3 minutes per side. Remove from Dutch oven and set aside. Add butter to the Dutch Oven and melt over medium heat. Add flour, cook for 1 minute, whisking constantly. Whisk in milk, sage rosemary, remaining 1 ½ teaspoons each of salt and pepper. Bring mixture to a boil over medium-high heat, whisking constantly, over indirect heat, no flame until thickened, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat. Stir in mozzarella until melted. Stir in cooked pasta. Top with porkchops, overlapping slightly, sprinkle with onion, Parmesan and bread crumbs. Place the lid on the Dutch Oven, add 17 briquettes to the top and allow the Dutch oven to “bake” over 12 briquettes until the pork chops are tender, about 25 minutes. Garnish with rosemary to serve.

**Note: If you are participating in a juried competition, cut the pork chops into bite-sized pieces before taking the Dutch oven to the contest so all the judges can have a taste of the pork chops**

### In the oven –

Preheat oven to 375°. Follow the campfire instructions using a 12-inch cast iron skillet on the stove top. Place the lid on the skillet and finish the baking in the oven.

# ROAMING *Photographer*



**Mandy Lea's T@B Teardrop  
Is Her Home and Office**

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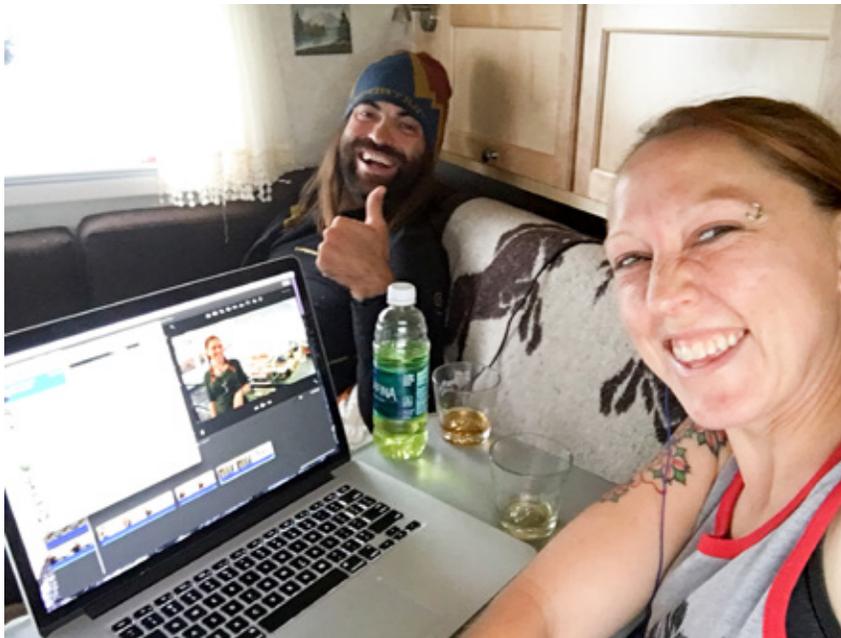
By **Bob Phillips**

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**L**iving full time in a tiny teardrop camper would seem to most people too confining, uncomfortable and inconvenient, but Mandy Lea has made it work; work, as in career. As a professional photographer her adventurous, nomadic life provides her boundless opportunities to explore nature's beauty, which she captures through her camera lens to share with others. It's a life she wouldn't trade for any other.



Her course in life changed following a divorce and the resulting fear and despondency. It was nature that brought her to a new beginning. Seeing a sunrise while vacationing in the Grand Tetons changed her perspective on life. She purchased a T@B teardrop three days after returning home, named it Birdsong, and started camping every weekend for a year. Realizing that she was happiest while camping in her teardrop, she quit her job and took her photography skills to the road.



“In my case, when I had hit my own rock bottom, depressed and in constant sorrow, I recognized one thing in life that made me happy -- my teardrop,” Mandy said. “One of the best pieces of advice I received was to ‘find what makes you happy and do more of that thing.’ So I literally asked myself, ‘Why not?’ When all I could come up with was a list of excuses rather than legitimate reasons, I decided I had to do it. I haven’t regretted a single day of it.”

Her new start hit an immediate roadblock. On the day she was ready to hit the road, Birdsong was stolen during the night. It was devastating. She sought help through the social media, posting a plea on Facebook for help in locating her teardrop. It went viral, and landed her on television news, and from it she developed a strong following on Facebook.

“There is no denying that the theft of my teardrop certainly helped grow my social media following before I ever left, but I believe with every bit of my heart that I would have made it to this same place on my own hard work,” Mandy said. “The



theft of Birdsong was one of the hardest days of my life, but it is framed in a silver lining. The most valuable thing that came out of the situation for me personally was realizing how good complete strangers could be.

“After this experience I felt a debt to all those who reached out to me and from this I drew my mission statement: ‘Show people things they wouldn’t normally see, to inspire them to do things they wouldn’t normally do.’ Dedicating myself to this was the best way



I could think to repay them. I left my old life with a renewed passion I would not have had without that event.”

After about a year on the road alone, Mandy crossed paths with Kendrick Callaway, a Colorado nomad who was living out of his Toyota Tacoma pickup truck. Just two weeks after making his acquaintance, Mandy asked him to join her on the road and for two years they’ve been traveling the country and building the photography business.



*All  
you need  
to know is  
that it's  
possible.*

*Mandy Lea*  
PHOTO



His story somewhat parallels Mandy's: "Growing up in a small Missouri farm town gave me a deep appreciation for simplicity. Working four years as a chemical engineer gave me a deep resentment of the corporate life. So, I moved into my Toyota Tacoma and roamed around the Rockies; working odd jobs and playing in the mountains as much as possible."

Now Kendrick does much of the driving while Mandy works on her laptop in the passenger seat.

"When I traveled alone, the times I was most lonely was when I was witnessing at a beautiful scene and had no one to turn to and just say 'wow, look at that'; not being able to

share something spectacular," she said. "Now, I have that person, and I know he appreciates it as much as I do."



Mandy has coined the term "Moochdocking," used to describe when they park in a friend's driveway or stay in their home. "These nights are still often spent in our camper, but I don't classify them as Boondocking," she said.

"One major misconception of my life is the amount of time we spend working. My calendar fills up quickly with workshops, expos, speaking events, and places I have to get to in a hurry. I have very little free time to 'play' or even have a day off. So I am very grateful that I have gotten to



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A silver teardrop trailer is shown with a bright green side entrance tent attached to its side. The tent has a large arched opening and is supported by poles. The trailer is parked on a wooded area with trees in the background.

  
[www.tinycamper.com/tent](http://www.tinycamper.com/tent)

know many people across the country. When I pass through a town I would much rather spend my one night catching up with an old friend in their driveway than sitting in a Walmart parking lot. And usually they are thrilled to have me as well. I also visit (my parents) home quite often, so I count those nights as moochdocking too!”

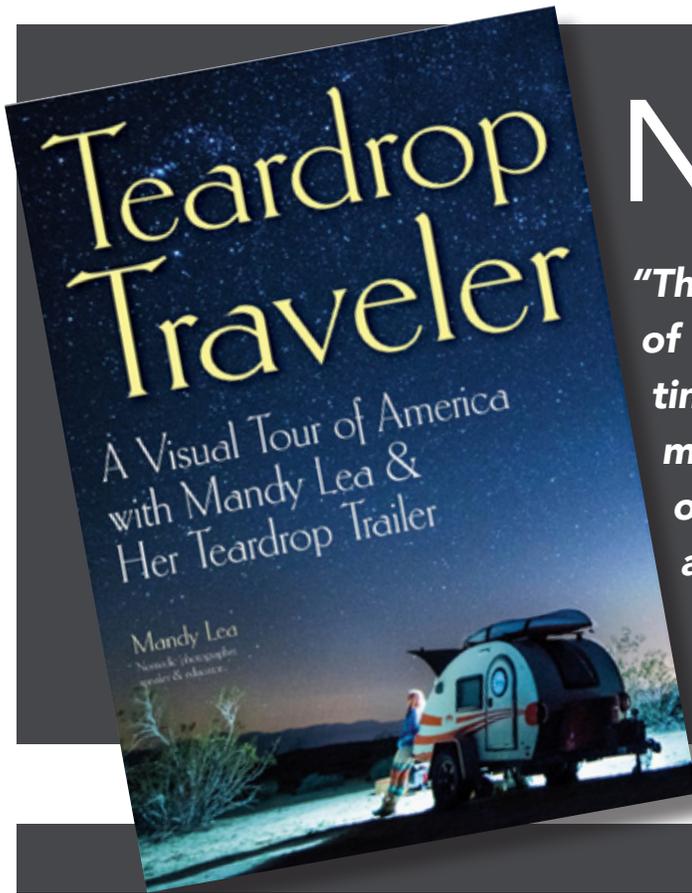
Besides her photography, Mandy is a brand ambassador for several products that she uses; is regularly published, both online and in print; and often interviews on podcasts, television, and at live events. They teach photography workshops, speak at events, write articles, and sell images. Mandy

also regularly updates her video blog ([www.youtube.com/c/MandyLea](http://www.youtube.com/c/MandyLea)) focusing on camping, road life, and photography.

In August, Mandy and Kendrick set out on a journey of a lifetime, towing their 2017 T@B Boondock camper, named Rocky, on a cross-continent trip from Alaska to the southern Mexico. In addition to gathering a plethora of still shots, they are doing videos along the way that are shared on their blog daily.

They took time away from the trip recently for a side trip to New York City, by air, to appear on the Nikon stage at a photography exposition.





## Mandy's New Book

*"The book is small, affordable, and full of inspirational content, just like my tiny home. It is packed with 200 of my favorite images, telling the story of how I decided to live on the road and the journey that followed."*

- Mandy Lea

<https://mandyleaphoto.com/product/teardrop-traveler/>

"It's interesting having my life split between the rv/camping world and the photography world," she said. "There are some aspects where they overlap, but for the most part they are completely separate. However, they are both equal passions and equal forms of income."

"When I speak at the expos in New York and Las Vegas, I am hired by Nikon. Thus, my talks have to be somewhat centered around photography. However, because my photography and travel are so intertwined, I usually end up talking about both. It usually ends up being how I travel as a professional photographer."

Mandy also has a new book out: *Teardrop Traveler: A Visual Tour of America with Mandy Lea and Her Teardrop Trailer.* The book can now be ordered

online.

"I didn't want a giant, expensive hard-cover coffee table book, but rather something more like my lifestyle -- practical," she said. "The book is small, affordable, and full of inspirational content, just like my tiny home. It is packed with 200 of my favorite images, telling the story of how I decided to live on the road and the journey that followed."

Mandy said she will stay on the road as long as it makes her happy.

"I aim to do what makes me happy in life. Right now, living on the road makes me happy. It's an unpredictable life; you never know what will come your way. So I suppose I'll stop when it stops making me happy, whether it's a month, a year, a decade."

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# Girl Camper

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## Mini Max Trailer Raffle!!!

By **Janine Pettit**

My summer of fun with my Mini Max by [Little Guy Trailers](#) has come to an end and the good folks at Liberty are donating her to charity!!

She's traveled over 10K miles across 14 states. Kept me safe and sound and warm and dry for over 60 nights. I've used her in campgrounds with full hookups, fields and driveways by solar power and in my own driveway as a quiet place to get work done.

I styled her to make me feel at home no matter where I traveled. I "wallpapered" the walls and reupholstered the cushions and cornices. I created a second set of cushions so that I could use it with as a single bed while traveling alone or return it to a Queen size when my husband camped with me. I asked the [Tear Drop Shop](#) to make me two covers, a big awning and a smaller visor. The visor and awning attach via a keder rail and can be used on either side of the trailer. I have loved this awning and use it as my "porch". It's been great sitting out at night when it's raining and watching the weather. It's great to have my chairs and table dry when there's dew in the morning and it's great being protected from the sun when I settle in to read a good book. The trailer is personalized and



pre loved! Whoever wins it will get "my" trailer with its cushions and wallpaper and awnings!! The winner will also get a new set of twin bedding from [Beddy's Bed](#), a complete starter camping kit from [Camco Manufacturing](#) and a \$100 gift card from the [Tear Drop Shop](#). It's been a great

cottage on wheels and I am thrilled and grateful that Little Guy has been so generous with it.



The recipient of the raffle earnings will be [HoldYou Foundation](#), the official charity of the Girl Camper Podcast. [HoldYou](#) is an organization that helps parents who have children enduring a medical crisis. They provide the kind of help that many parents with a sick child are in desperate need of. and that other charities often cannot offer. Keeping gas in the tank and food on the table isn't something someone with a seriously ill child should have to worry about.

[Check out my blog here!!!](#)

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By **Darius Riley**

**W**e bought our T@G in May of 2017. We love the it and have had no issues other than design flaws (minor) or desires for modifications. No mechanicals, no breakage, no premature wear. All in all a well built camper. It has taken us a while to get our camping system down. How much stuff to bring, what we need and don't need, how to set up and tear down. We have gotten to be pretty efficient and a good team, which really helps us enjoy the camper. In 2017, we took 7 trips that lasted 14 nights and covered 2,500 miles. In 2018, we took 11 trips that lasted 23 nights and covered 4,700 miles.

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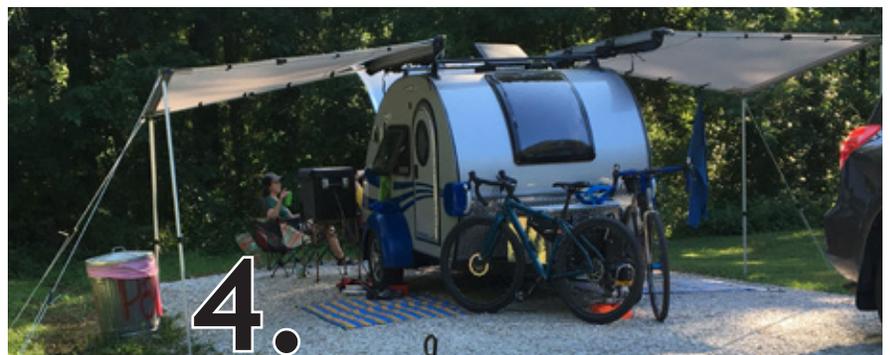


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# MODIFICATIONS



1. Built fender shelves
  2. Built a shelf and a pull out cutting board for the fridge area (ordered originally without fridge, stove or sink)
  3. Metal backsplash for magnets
  4. Two Yakima SlimShaddy awnings
  5. Vent cover over the Fantastic Fan
  6. Built shelf under sink location
  7. LED lights under the camper
  8. Velcro mesh nets inside on the doors
- Not pictured: 12v outlet outside for the external fridge (Dometic)





# BEST ACCESSORIES



1. Electric kettle for boiling water
2. Good camp stove
3. Good external table
4. Misc. baskets and storage modifications
5. Small rug for outside doors
6. Dutch oven



We have camped in 100 degree days, and 23 degree nights. The extremes are not the most fun, but can be done and add to the story.

One of the best things we have done is get involved with a local Teardrop Camper group (Heartland Tearjerkers). This has introduced us to some wonderful new friends, shared some new campgrounds and parks, and allowed us to see the infinite ways that people modify, setup and use their tiny campers. I think all of my modification came from talking to or see other peoples creativity and ingeniousness.

It's going to be a long winter.



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# THE ATOMIC CAMPER



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By **Bob Phillips**

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**T**he camper is the handiwork of Bill Guernsey of Anchorage. Severe injuries sustained in a small plane crash in late 2012 gave him ample time during a lengthy recovery to design and build the camper, a 16-foot-long bright red rocket on wheels. An Anchorage newspaper article said it “looks more like a 1950s comic book character’s ride” rather than a camper.

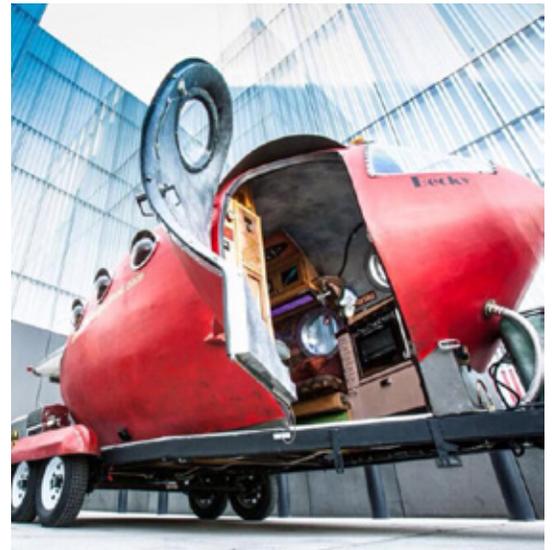
How did it get the name? In the newspaper article, Guernsey put it this way: “Everything was atomic when I was growing up; the time of the nuclear age and the rockets and the bombs. Everything that came out was going to be powered by nuclear science. Atomic is like the turbo of today.”

It took Guernsey two full years to complete the camper, working 6 hours a day, 6 days a week. His recovery allowed him time to include fine wooden detail on the interior that manufactured campers can’t provide. That was part of attraction that led Victor to buy it.

He saw the camper posted for sale on the Anchorage Facebook Marketplace in May, called Guernsey about his interest and went to see it the next day after work. He was so impressed after a tour of the camper that he wrote a check that same day and picked it up later that week.

“I like sci-fi for starters,” he said. “When I saw it in person and Mr. Guernsey gave me the complete tour and details on its build I was very impressed by how much work and innovation he had put into it. I could tell it was built very solid. I think the uniqueness of this camper and that it can actually





be taken camping clinched the deal.”

Victor has made a few improvements to the camper. “We reupholstered the sofa on the port side. It was changed from a light blue to a red color more in line with the color of the camper. I also added a camera on the back to watch traffic behind me as we are driving and towing it “

What he likes most about the camper is its uniqueness; there is none other like it.

“My girlfriend, Carrie, likes the galley,” he said. “It comes in handy when it’s raining out and we can choose to cook inside. I think my favorite thing is the solar power system that allows us to have some convenience off grid.

“We enjoy the outdoors, such as fishing, hiking, camping and traveling. Our kids are grown so it’s



just the two of us and a minischnauzer in the camper.

“We have taken it out only about four times since buying it. So far our best trip was our first outing in it. We went to Soldotna (Alaska) and parked at Edgewater RV Camp for three days. We went there to go fishing down in Kenai. The camp put us on a spot near the main road and we had lots of people pulling into the park to check us out, take photos and talk to us. In addition many folks at the RV camp stopped by as well. We met a lot of folks and kids on that first outing.”

The camper obviously attracts plenty of attention and comments.

“The little kids have the best comments. I overheard a little boy, probably about 4 or 5, telling a friend of ours as he pointed to the camper, ‘It’s

a rocket; it goes into space.' "There was another little two year old telling his mom that he wanted the rocket. His mom told him that he would have to get a job and save up to get one. He didn't want to wait that long and cried all the way back to his RV, moaning how much he wanted the rocket."

Victor said future changes he anticipates will include changing out the water tank with something that looks more like a fuel tank. He's researching metal type containers, like beer kegs or small barrels. He also wants to change the "starboard couch" with one that converts

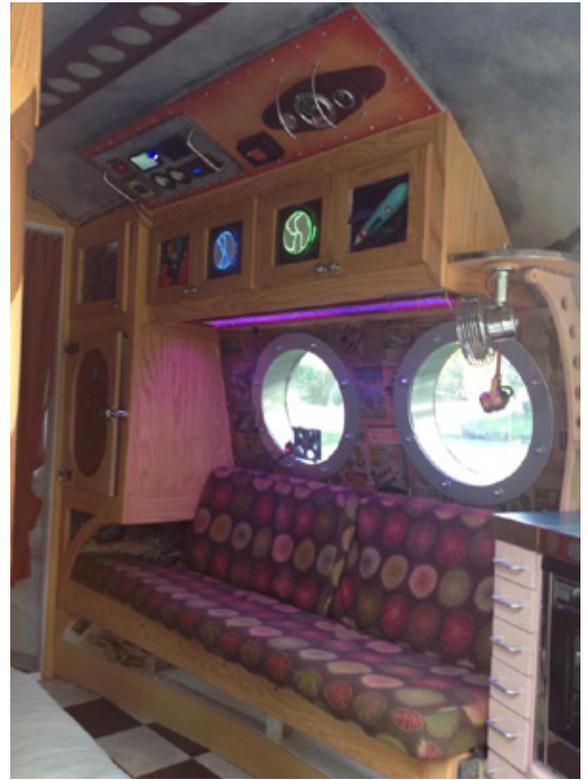


**The little kids have the best comments. I overheard a little boy, probably about 4 or 5, telling a friend of ours as he pointed to the camper, "It's a rocket; it goes into space."**

to a bed.

He's hoping to take it on a long trip next summer.

"If time permits and I can get vacation approved, next year we would like to take a road trip from Anchorage to Dallas, Texas, through Canada via the Alcan Highway. On the return trip we would like to stop in Roswell and Los Alamos, New Mexico, and the town of Vulcan in Alberta.



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