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# COOL Tears™ and tiny campers

M A G A Z I N E

Vol. 3 No. 5

September/October 2015

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By Sarah Tucker

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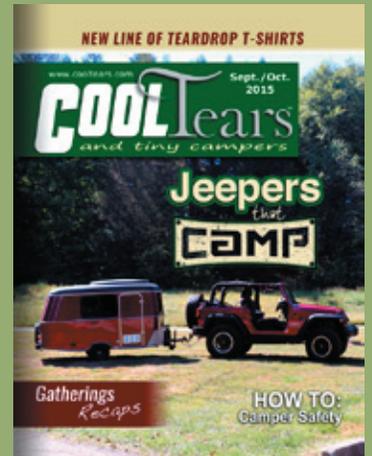
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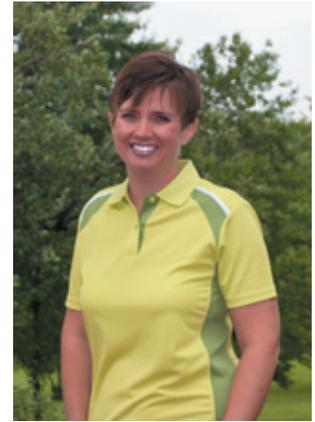
Stacie Tamaki

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## Websites, t-shirts & Jeeps!



To say the Cool Tears office has been busy over the last couple of months would be a gross understatement. So many great ideas have been sent to me and I am very grateful for every one. Some of those ideas have led to big changes for the magazine.

First of all, the Cool Tears website has undergone a complete makeover thanks to the incredible guys at [Christian Brothers Marketing](#). Gary and Steve took my feeble and at times random thoughts and made the site look and feel exactly how I wanted...user friendly, informative and fresh! I plan to continue adding to the site so keep checking back!



Several months back, I began tossing around the idea of creating a line of t-shirts that are teardrop specific. In the process, I was given the opportunity to purchase all the necessary items to start a custom t-shirt/vinyl cutting business. And so another new adventure began with high-quality, teardrop/camping specific shirt production. No expense has been spared in the research and it took me a while find the quality of shirt I felt worthy of the teardrop designs. We currently offer 3 different designs but as with the website will continue to add to the line. More info can be seen on page 28 and at [www.tuckdesigns.com](http://www.tuckdesigns.com).

And last but certainly not least, the other item of business keeping me hopping is a special issue of Cool Tears that will be released at the end of October geared toward Jeeps and the tiny campers they use. Here's what I've learned in research and getting to know several Jeep camping enthusiasts...Jeepers are their own breed. What a super fun and unique bunch of folks who I've found obsessively love their Jeeping adventures. The wonderful lady who's Jeep graces the cover of this issue has quite the story to tell and pulls an amazingly unique tiny camper. You can expect all the normal Cool Tears typical stories such as camper builds, manufacture features, interesting insights and all sorts of new tidbits. Are you a Jeep camper with a fantastic idea for this special issue? Please e-mail me asap with your ideas!

Until next time...enjoy every sunrise!

**SARAH TUCKER**

Editor

Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine™  
[sarah@cooltears.com](mailto:sarah@cooltears.com)

# Happyen Camper

ULTRA-LIGHT TRAVEL AND UTILITY TRAILERS

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by **Derek Michael**

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I first fell in love with classic trailers early on, watching my father carefully restore these campers in their backyard. A few years ago, after borrowing a fiberglass trailer I fell in love all over again. I started taking the trailer out on weekends and visiting parts of California that I never knew existed. As my bond with the little trailer grew, I started restoring other vintage trailers and soon found myself with a driveway full of these egg-shaped campers including Boler, Burro, Trillium, Scamp, Paris pacer, Compact Jr, Uhaul.



*Fiberglass ultra-lights are unique in size to weight ratio, their longevity and quintessential design.*

I invented a product, called iBallz for the first tablets. It's a drop proof case that looks a little goofy, but works well and we marketed them to education markets.

When we first got started, I asked my father for some help, he offered to send me his vintage Boler and paint it our company colors "iBallz blue" to use at conventions for promotion. We put our logo on it and used the trailer for conventions and events all over the US. It made transporting product easy, it fit perfectly in a booth and it got a ton of attention. After about a year with the trailer I fell in love with outdoor traveling, camping in amazing places and just simple trips to the beach with the trailer, but it had logos all over it. So I bought a 1985 Uhaul CT, restored it and painted it bright orange.

I had a dilemma in that I had no where to park two trailers at my apartment building. So I rented some parking spots from my Volvo mechanic down the street in LA to keep the trailers safe. Within days the mechanic was getting dozens of phone calls and visits from folks that wanted to buy the little trailers. I didn't want to sell them but one day a young couple said to me "We just want to rent it, not buy it." That I could do! So they were off and it was my first rental. They came back after the weekend and had the best time,



and it was an easy for me to make a few bucks.

Happier Camper is the result of this; a start-up venture renting new and restored vintage ultra-light trailers with an emphasis on camper-friendly design, utility, flexibility and above all, fun!

It's been a few years since we began working on the HC1, our first production trailer. This unique trailer is inspired by classic design but packed with modern functionality. The idea of a small ultralight travel trailer with a modular interior and large operable rear hatch just seemed like a logical progression. Through our rental business we spent years reconditioning vintage trailers and taking note of the features that made them great. By adopting the best





parts and adding a few new ideas of our own, we've designed and built what we think is a distinct and remarkably useful travel trailer.

The HC1 took 3 years of work to build and consists of 4 major fiberglass molds and about 15 smaller ones. From the ground up we wanted it strong and impervious to rot and decay, so we made a 1.5" thick honeycomb fiberglass modular floor with a built in drain, table base mounts and D-ring tie downs that go into the rigid frame. The trailer is insulated double hull so that means there are pieces on the inside and out, it makes for a very tough and water tight trailer. There are molded storage compartments throughout the trailer and the doors hinges and latches are customized to work perfectly with the rounded shape. Every part of the fiberglass has been painstakingly thought about for perfection and purpose. The Adaptiv™ modular interior and the rear hatch are what really set the trailer apart, effectively making the trailer fit into 100s of different uses. From a mini toy hauler, to a giant

bed that can sleep a family of 5. The system really does work well and is simple and cost effective. All the components can be used in and out side the trailer even the kitchen sink. We tried to use the best materials and accessories to complete the trailer from Sunbrella fabrics on our plush cushions to Bose blue tooth performance speakers. There are a ton of options to customize the trailer to your needs. The HC1 base price starts at \$15,950 and you can learn more on our website at [www.happiercamper.com](http://www.happiercamper.com).



# Jeepers that CAMP



Photography by Andrea Hamilton and Lizann Wallace

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by Sarah Tucker

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*In 2012, Kristy Guzik lost everything to a catastrophic house fire. Her 3 pets, house, 98 Jeep Cherokee, all of her material belongings along with her life history were gone. Two weeks after the fire, her husband filed for divorce and left. She was left with nothing from the divorce but a 2008 Jeep Liberty (it was parked at the airport when the house burnt).*

She moved to the next town and started over with nothing. After owning 6 Jeeps, with her husband, Kristy traded it in to fulfill her dream of owning a Wrangler. Upon finding her Wrangler online, she immediately fell in love and knew it was meant to be hers. It is a 2013 2 door JK with a 3.5 lift, Fierce Attitude 35's and FOX suspension. All modifications were in place when she purchased it.

While rebuilding her life, Kristy decided to buy a camper to guarantee if she ever lost everything again she would at least have a roof over her head. The more she looked for campers, the smaller they kept getting. She never intended to actually pull a camper with her Jeep. But then she found her "baby" a 1971 Eriba Puck. Hymer Co. in Germany manufactured them. The Puck was found on a Facebook page and purchased blind



match her Jeep.

Our first camping experience with the Jeep and Puck was at Keystone State Park in New Alexandria Pa. It is a great state park and they are voted 5th in the nation this year for family friendly parks. Once we got out there and set up the Puck there was no turning back. We just went deeper and deeper into debt buying fun camping gear and fixing up the Puck.

after as much research as possible to check on the owner/seller. Kristy said to herself, "You've already lost everything else, so what if you lose this?"

So she put 1/2 down to ship it and the other 1/2 was paid when it arrived. The seller was legit and the Puck arrived a few weeks later. The seller, Robin, actually delivered her on her way to North Carolina.

Remodeling has taken place since Kristy purchased the Puck but she waited 2 seasons to begin. There was a stove, icebox and sink inside that were removed because they were not original and they were not being used. Kristy added more counter space and an area for a dropdown portable ac unit. The outside was white and blue (not original) and it has been painted to



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Kristy started [Jeepers that Camp](#) (JtC), which at this time is primarily a Facebook group, because she wanted to see how other Jeepers and campers enjoyed their camping experiences. Her desire was to know how other people cooked over the fire and what type of tents and campers they had.

She got the idea while attending the Bantam Jeep Festival in Butler Pa. After booking a camp site at Cooper's Lake, she started thinking about the fact that there will be every type of Jeep and every type of camping imaginable there. A few short weeks later, she was there! Jeeps and campers were everywhere. People came from everywhere including neighbors from Minnesota, Canada, and New Hampshire.

Kristy is truly excited about the groups future. There are so many amazing set ups out there and the members post the most beautiful pictures of where they go and how they camp. The group is now linked to Instagram so others can experience the Jeep/camping lifestyle.

Decals are available for sale on the groups Facebook page and these decals are now on Jeeps and campers all over the US, S Korea, Australia, Germany, Canada and Brazil.

The group was started approximately 9 months ago and has already passed 4,100 members.

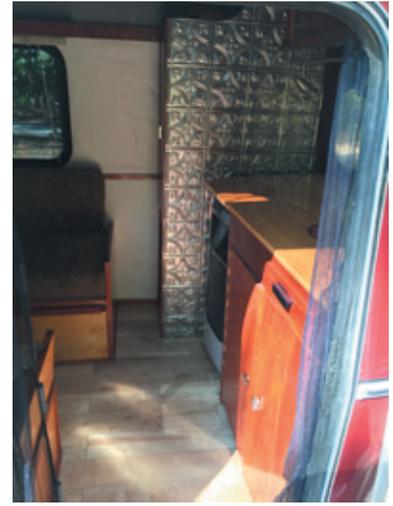
"The members are the ones who make up the group and keep it going. I just gave them a place to start." says Kristy. "I hope that we keep growing and sharing so others can enjoy what we all enjoy."

It's a great place to find answers to so many Jeep and camping questions. People often sell camping gear and Jeep parts that someone may need. Kristy is hoping to start selling t-shirts as well as the decals so that she

can start giving back to the group. Rightline Gear, along with a few other companies, are now donating promotional items that allow the group to give away and raffle things off.

It is an extremely family friendly group and Kristy is doing her best to keep it that way.

**Be sure to watch for a special JEEP issue of Cool Tears coming in late October!**





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by **Babs Zehren**

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*Todd and Carol Mowrer, owners of TCTeardrops LLC, of Wausau WI began building teardrop campers in 2008. With over 400 teardrops being built so far, they thought it would be fun to have an annual TCTeardrop “Tour of Teardrops” rally. For the last 3 years they have been hosting an annual rally at Indian Trails Campground near Pardeeville, WI. On Friday, September 11, 2015 the 3rd annual TC Teardrop “Tour of Teardrops” began and my how it has grown.*



October 2013 was their first year and there were 12 campers who braved the cool temps, showers and fun. In October 2014, the second event, around 20 campers and several tent campers arrived to enjoy the fall colors and fun, and this year they decided to move it up to September to hopefully have a little nicer weather. That move did make for better weather and there were 25 TC Teardrops, 5 other brands or home-builds and several more interested tenters that came from as far away as Illinois and Kentucky to enjoy all that the weekend had in store for them. We enjoyed fabulous weather, and had a wonderful time with some new events this year and what a hit they were. On Friday night we gathered for a group meal that again included pudgie pie creations and shared dishes as well as visiting around the campfire. Rocky and Shar Kimball of Woody Dutch Ovens, <http://woodydutchoven.com> spent Friday night and all day Saturday demonstrating the use of their aluminum dutch ovens and treated us to the many dishes they created. Many of us left with a new Woody Dutch Oven, a handful of recipes and the hope that we can recreate them as well as Rocky and Shar did. Whether we have a new oven or a traditional castiron dutch oven I am sure we will all have fun trying to master or improve our cooking skills, thanks Rocky.

Another new event this year was a teardrop workshop. Todd wanted to make sure that all our trailers are in tip top shape so he held a new event, a maintenance workshop explaining the many simple things we can do to update and protect our teardrop campers.



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On Saturday afternoon many of the campers enjoyed a canoe/kayak trip down the Fox River that actually leaves right from the campground. When we were finished with the paddle trip Indian Trail's staff provided a return shuttle for us.

Late on Saturday afternoon we traveled from one campsite to another taking a look at all the different campers and their unique setup. I am sure we all learned a few new tips or tricks to make our camping experience more fun.

Each morning Todd and Carol treated us to a delicious camp breakfast and in the evenings we all gathered for shared

potluck meals with many great dishes. Of course we swapped many of the recipes so they could be recreated on one of our own camping trips. We also get to enjoy the teardrop cookies that keep showing up at each campout. They have been a hit three years running and we all wish we were so talented and could make them ourselves.

If you are interested in joining in a TCTeardrop "Tour of Teardrops" rally in the future, contact Todd and Carol for details at [info@tcteardrops.com](mailto:info@tcteardrops.com) or call Todd at 715-573-7242 or Carol at 715-573-7247. The date for 2016 has been set for September 9<sup>th</sup> – 11 at Indian



Trails Campground. If you would like to make your reservations give the campground a call and let them know you are part of the “Tour of Teardrops” event. They can be reached at 608-429-3244 or **Toll-Free:** 877-636-8757 (reservations only). It is never too early to get your name on the list.

If you are interested in finding out more about TCTeardrop campers or maybe checking to see if they are the camper for you, go to <http://www.tcteardrops.com/> and find out what they have to offer.

Todd and Carol are great to work with and make the process of choosing and ordering your teardrop a fun process. We own our second TCTeardrop and have never regretted our choice. You can also find TCTeardrops LLC and Indian Trails campground on Facebook, check them out.

I have attended all three “Tour of Teardrops” rallies and can tell you it is a good time and you will not regret the travel time or distance - you will have fun. Whether you have a TCTeardrop or another brand of camper or even a tent and would like to join this group, I know you will have fun touching base with those that come year after year or meeting the new members that come to join in the fun. I hope we see you at next year’s rally or maybe at a campsite along our travels.

*We hope you have a great fall enjoying time in your teardrop, I know that my husband and I will be out enjoying the fall colors and all that Wisconsin has to offer during this autumn season.*



# HOW TO:

# CAMPER Safety

by Jay Taylor

***“Thieves respect property.  
They merely wish the property to become their property  
that they may more perfectly respect it.”***

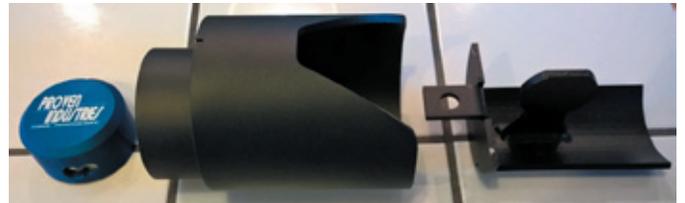
*- Gilbert Chesterton*

Losing your trailer to a thief is not only painfully disheartening but a major inconvenience as you have to file a police report, deal with your insurance company (assuming you have insurance), find lodging if it happened while camping, replace the trailer and all your gear. If your trailer was hand-made, you have a lot of labor and hard effort put into the build process so it not easily replaced. The entire process can be emotionally overwhelming.

Now, there is no full proof security solution and a determined thief will find a way to defeat even the best lock. Therefore, locks are deterrents. The more difficult the lock, the better the deterrent. There are a lot of different security solutions out there that range in price from \$20.00 to over \$300.00. So, in this post I thought I would share an overview on how

I am securing my trailer from would be thieves. You can find more detailed info on my solution including videos on my blog at [www.cre8tiveapps.blogspot.com](http://www.cre8tiveapps.blogspot.com).

After spending great deal of time reading reviews, pouring over websites, looking at specs and watching videos, I found that there are generally two types of locks or ways to secure trailers, coupler (aka hitch) locks and wheel locks (aka the Denver Boot). Each has advantages over the other and their own



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drawbacks. So, let's take a look at a couple of locks that can help secure your trailer.

**COUPLER LOCKS** –Coupler locks work by securing the hitch or coupler on your trailer so that



thieves cannot hook up your trailer to their vehicle and drive off. However, after watching a number of videos on YouTube, it became apparent that a LOT of the mainstream coupler locks were not much of a deterrent. They were easily defeated by a crowbar, bolt cutters or a drill in a matter of a minute or two and in some cases, seconds....seriously....SECONDS! I managed to find a few coupler locks that were actually quite rugged and not easily defeated by common tools from a hardware store. The [AmPlock](#), [Megahitch](#) and [Proven Industries](#) lock all seemed to withstand quite a bit of punishment without failing. All three locks are made from durable materials like hardened steel or cast iron. The AmPlock secures the coupler by sliding over the lip and preventing access to the coupler. Both the Megahitch and Proven Industries fits over the entire coupler. They each used hardened steel locking mechanism to resist drilling and pick resistant designs for the key.

However, one of the drawbacks

of a coupler lock is that they don't typically secure the safety chain(s). The purpose of a safety chain is to keep the trailer attached to the vehicle if it comes off the hitch. If a thief shortens the chain(s) enough by looping it around the hitch or through the bumper, they can easily haul off your trailer even with your coupler securely locked. Of the three locks listed, only the Proven Industries lock secured both the hitch and the safety chain which I saw as a major advantage over the other two and why I selected it for my trailer. The lock retails for \$195 at the time of this posting and is sold through retail trailer vendors. Contact Proven Industries to find a retailer in your area.



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**WHEEL LOCK** - While the coupler lock is a good deterrent, you might consider adding a wheel lock for a good second layer of security for your trailer. Again, there are a number of options out there with various designs. I found two that seemed pretty

durable and had favorable reviews. The Wheel Chock Lock by [TriMax](#) and [The Claw](#) by the same people that make The Club.

For my trailer, I chose the TriMax TCL 65. It is made from 1/8th inch steel, weighs about 6lbs and is fairly rugged. It is powdered coated bright yellow and has rubber tipped arms to prevent scratching or marring of your wheels/rims. The locking mechanism is high strength steel with a bullet style key/lock so I don't think it is easy to pick and should resist drilling. The lock is a plunger type and does not require the key to lock it. It also has a tire chock feature so that the wheel does not move easily once in place. It has square steel tubing so it is like a hitch/receiver design that fits snugly around the wheel. It is pretty easy to put on as well as remove. The version I have (TCL 65) retails for about \$50.00 at the time of this posting and is sold online and through retailers.

Now, as mentioned, there are also drawbacks to wheel lock solutions. One is that they are often defeated by just removing the wheel and putting on a temporary spare. Some wheel locks have a plate or cover over the lug nuts while some claw style designs do not. In either case, if you go with a wheel lock solution, be sure to also use locking or keyed

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lug nuts. This will make it more difficult for thieves to remove the wheel and steal your trailer. You can find locking lug nuts at your local automotive store or an online retailer like Amazon fairly easily.

As stated, no solution can stop a determined thief but you can make your trailer a less appealing target. Security products alone are only part of the solution. Get to know your camp neighbors so you can look out for each other, look into replacement insurance, explore GPS trackers for recovery, a multipronged approach is often the best way to secure your property.

Again, for more details on the locks I am using, including videos, please visit my blog at [www.cre8tiveapps.com.blogspot.com](http://www.cre8tiveapps.com.blogspot.com)

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by **Stacie Tamaki**

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*Meeting people and making new friends  
is what these rallies are all about.*

**T**he Crossroads of America gathering is held every other year in Spencer, Indiana at McCormick's Creek State Park. It's hosted by the "Tearjerkers" a large (but close-knit) group of international teardrop and tiny trailer owners who congregate at gatherings in real life and on the Tearjerkers' forum online. Word is 147 trailers and 289 campers made the 2015 CRA a smashing success!

I was able to meet in person friends I'd made on the Tearjerkers and Teardrops and Tiny Travel Trailers forums as well as new friends who don't actively participate on either forum. Some I got so caught up having fun talking with I forgot to take pictures of their trailers (like Jessy and Bob Henry.)

Though there were many activities available at the State Park, I went to see the trailers. For a northerner like me it was really hot and terribly humid but I slogged around (albeit at a snail's pace) to see as many trailers and to meet as many people as I could.

The Glampette (pictured right) was there with her new domed awning and mosquito net sidewalls that I sewed together. The new awning is a huge improvement over the cotton table cloth one I made in 2013 because it's made with water resistant outdoor canvas. The domed shape will keep water from pooling in the center if it does rain, and I can stand upright beneath it.

The mosquito net side walls cover all three open sides as well as frame the doorway to create a bug-proof enclosure. I also brought along two Thermacell® mosquito repellent devices and some lemon eucalyptus oil bug spray for my arms and legs. Between the three methods they did the trick keeping me safe from bug bites at base camp.





The Wild Goose (left top) and Cabin Car (bottom left) are both vintage reproductions built by their respective owners. Their quality and craftsmanship were self evident. The Wild Goose is one of the few teardrop trailers that converts into a standy when you lift the tailgate. You can actually walk into it and stand up indoors to dress and cook. The Cabin Car combines a huge bed with an actual sit shower and small bath tub! I'll admit, it was so hot out, when I saw the little tub I wanted to fill it with cold water and a few bags of ice and just sit in it all day long.

If vintage isn't your taste there were also modern trailers both small and large. The myPod is a tiny bed on wheels. There isn't a galley kitchen so you'll need to set up your own camp kitchen once you arrive at your destination.

The TAB and Alto are larger teardrop shaped trailers but aren't technically teardrops because the rear tailgates don't open to outdoor galley kitchens. You can stand up in them and they are quite spacious so they're a popular choice for those who want a little more room for comfort. The Alto in particular has both a shower and fixed toilet for those who don't want to make do with a porta potty.

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The BoatTrailer (above) is just that a boat+trailer that come as one nifty set. At the rally was an actual vintage trailer combined with a modern, reproduction boat as the original boat had been lost somewhere in time. The rear storage area is larger than it looks in photos and can be converted to have protruding shelves to create an easy to access kitchen/prep area. If this could be your dream trailer it's now easier than ever to acquire one since the American Dream Trailer company recently began reproducing the BoatTrailer on the West Coast using an actual vintage BoatTrailer to create their molds from.

Two of my favorite trailers there were small, vintage, canned hams. I would be happy to have either a 10' Shasta or Scotty if I ever travel the country for extended periods. They have a bed, table, seating,

indoor kitchen, and even room for a porta potty. If you get creative you can set up a shower station as needed. I've seen people do so in articles and videos I've read and watched online.

And these were two of the most unusual trailers I spotted at the CRA. The teardrop above was painted with chalkboard paint on its exterior so creative types could color and draw on the exterior walls or you could use them as a message board. So clever!

The lower is a Vardo-style trailer that includes a bed towards the front and seating and counter space just inside the doorway. There's even a composting toilet that fits beneath the bed with plenty of room for storing other gear.

If you need a trailer that is extremely lightweight and/or budget conscious a "foamie" could be your best choice to be able to have a trailer sooner vs. later. Made of rigid foam board and covered with

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Pictured to the left are two of the most unusual trailers I spotted at the CRA. The teardrop above was painted with chalkboard paint on its exterior so creative types could color and draw on the exterior walls or you could use them as a message board. The lower is a Vardo-style trailer that includes a bed towards the front and seating and counter space just inside the doorway. There's even a composting toilet that fits beneath the bed with plenty of room for storing other gear.



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Of all the trailers at the rally I have to say that Joe's all aluminum construction, 400 lb, tiny motorcycle teardrops were the ones that really caught my eye. Though longer than The Glampette they were definitely shorter and (I think) also a foot more narrow. Joe said he didn't design the trailer at the outset but

rather figured it out as he went along which, to me, just made his work all the more impressive.

His craftsmanship was impeccable and I was floored by his ingenuity. Space was utilized to maximum efficiency and each trailer was equipped with an awning, sound system, two rear storage compartments, a swiveling light post, a nice prep shelf, a long horn beneath the rear bumper, and decorative touches like the metal window awnings and window boxes of flowers.

Aside from wishing I had a gorgeous classic car to tow my trailer with, two other things that inspired me at the CRA were to add a colored light beneath my trailer to gently illuminate my camping area in the evenings before going to bed. And to finally add a solar panel to the roof of The Glampette as she's already wired for one and has roof-top mounting tabs to the rear of her vent/fan.

Every rally has a huge Saturday night potluck

dinner. It's always a lot of fun but sometimes can take a while to make it up to the food. At the CRA they tried something new this year: Two long rows of tables with four rows of hungry campers all heading down the lines at the same time. It worked out great. It cut the start to finish time from the first to last campers in line dramatically from previous years.

There were lots of other activities some I tried and some I missed out on. Apparently there was a hoola-hoop contest, karaoke, some type of giant underwear race, a builder's seminar, a backing up seminar, a silent auction, a Dutch oven cooking contest, outdoor movies, a group breakfast provided by our hosts, and more. You can participate as much or as little as you'd like but you better come prepared to be social because meeting people and making new friends is what these rallies are all about.

To keep up on my latest adventures visit  
[www.Tinygami.wordpress.com](http://www.Tinygami.wordpress.com)

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