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COOL TearsTM and tiny campers MAGAZINE

Vol. 11 No. 1 January/February 2023



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Letter from the Editor:



Tiny Camper Enthusiasts,

Happy 10th anniversary!

We've wrapped up 10 full years and we're on to our 11th! Thanks for being part of our journey through the years.

I am honored to continue in the footsteps of Kevin Cross and Sarah Tucker, the previous Editors of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine. Both of them graciously agreed to write an article for this anniversary issue. I learned a few things from both of them through our recent correspondence and by reading their articles. They were both so passionate about getting the latest teardrop and tiny camper information out to you, our subscribers. Thank you to Kevin and Sarah! They left some huge shoes to fill!

Many newspapers and magazines have gone out of business because they were not able to keep up in the digital age. While it's not possible to see what technology looks like ten years down the road, I'm 100% confident that people will still love teardrop and squaredrop campers so Cool Tears and Tiny Campers will continue to evolve to make sure that we're providing the best tiny camper content.

So what's ahead for Cool Tears? In 2023, the website will be revamped so it will be easier to search for past articles, recipes, plus it will be given an updated look. We'll have filters on the camping recipes page so you can filter by meal type, diet type, or cooking method. We're going to continue to do product reviews on gear that's meaningful for our community. We're going to continue to highlight your DIY trailers and we'll go in depth on some "How To's." And we're going to continue to highlight teardrop and squaredrop manufacturers around the world.

In a few weeks, we're going to publish an article about a teardrop crawl that will be hosted by Cool Tears in August. We're still working out the details, so be sure to keep an eye on our email later this month for the details. We'll also post an



article on our website with the details. This event will take place in Michigan.

The front cover of this issue has a thumbnail picture of each of the previous ten years worth of Cool Tears Magazine. The majority of those issues can be found on our website at www.cooltears.com/back-issues. ■

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Lisa Adams
Editor
Cool Tears Magazine™
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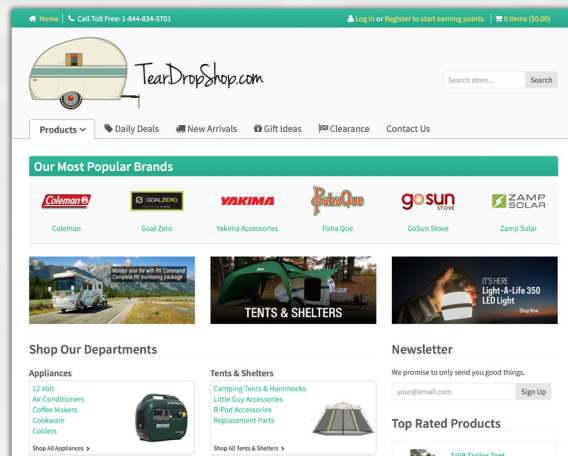
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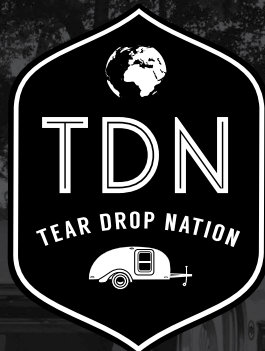
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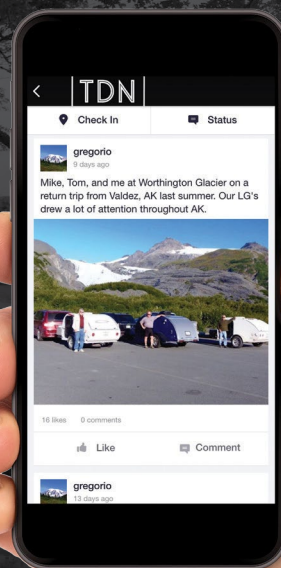
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KITCHEN ON WHEELS

WINTER CAMPOUT TORTILLA PIE

This easy recipe has been a go-to in our home for many years and I thought it would be perfect for a hot and hearty winter camp meal that is easily adapted for vegetarians if meat is not your thing. The beauty of this recipe is that you can embellish with extra flavor, use up leftovers in a new way, add loads of veggies or just keep it simple yet delicious and filling. You can vary the size depending on the number of servings you need and size of your pan.

Make a small pie for 2-3 people or buy large tortillas and make a giant one if feeding a group. I have a variety of cast iron skillets, from tiny to giant which allows me to make a pie to suit the number of people I'm feeding. At home, a cake pan with parchment liner and foil cover works beautifully. Do you have an Omnia oven? Just cut the tortillas in half and build the same way. Cooking on a campfire? Break out your Dutch oven! Create a bed of coals, keep pie elevated enough to cook but not burn and add coals to sides and top when needed to maintain temperature. This is a dense dish and takes time to heat throughout so medium temp and time works best.

I've listed the basic recipe along with possible additions. If you are winter camping and will be storing staples in subzero temps use cans and not glass bottles, thawing before use.

Basic Ingredients for a 10 inch pie to feed 4 people:

- 6 10 inch flour tortillas
- 1 can refried beans
- 1 jar salsa or 4 cans of salsa
- 1 package of shredded cheese, colby jack or Mexican blend
-

Additional or optional ingredients:

Corn, jalepenos, onion, spinach, spiced ground beef, turkey or chorizo, sauteed veggies (greens, zucchini), roasted sweet potatoes or peppers, pureed winter squash.

Instructions:

Oil pan or use parchment paper to line. Layer ingredients beginning with salsa, then tortilla, refries, salsa, cheese, tortilla, beans, salsa, cheese until the last tortilla. Top with salsa and cheese. If using other cooked meat or veggies just add thin layers as you build.

Depending on the size of the pie, bake for 40 min for a small pie and up to 60 minutes at 350°F for a larger size. ■



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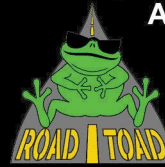
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February
2013

COOL TearsTM and tiny campersTM MAGAZINE

10 YEARS OF HISTORY

By COOL TEARS STAFF

Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine is celebrating our 10th anniversary with this issue! Thank you to each and every one of you who has supported us through the years. Without our loyal subscribers, this magazine dedicated to the tiny campers we love would not exist. The first issue of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine published was the January/February 2013 issue. It's hard to believe that it's been ten years!

The first cover is the background of this page.

Cool Tears by the Numbers

3 Editors/68 Issues and Counting

Since the beginning, Cool Tears has had three different editors. Kevin Cross started this great magazine and a few years later he brought Sarah Tucker on board to help. We'll have a few words from both of them later in this issue. Kevin published the first twelve issues of Cool Tears until Sarah became the editor with the May/June 2015 issue.

Sarah published a whopping 41 issues until the end of 2019! Two of those years, she successfully published an issue each month, which is no easy feat!

We've published 15 issues since acquiring the magazine in mid 2020. The plan is to keep the current pace at six issues per year.

Over the years, Cool Tears has published nearly the same number of words as War and Peace! Cool Tears has published over 544,000 words, while War and Peace is just over 587,000 words. Tolstoy wrote it in six years, while it took us ten years to get to about the same point. Not too shabby for a magazine about tiny campers!

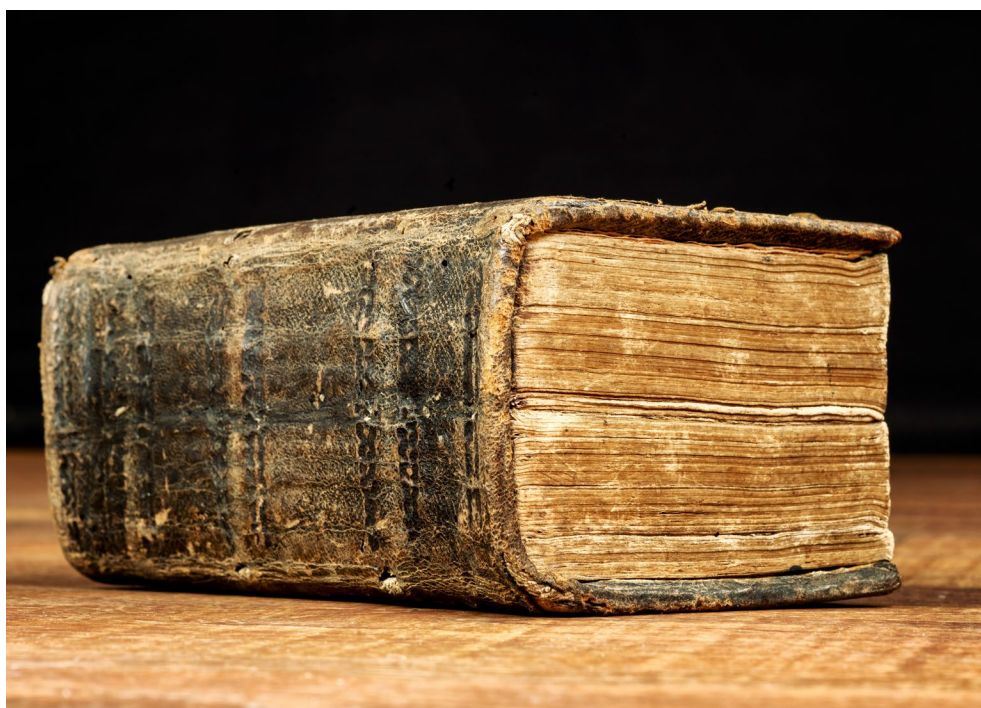
Subscribers

Cool Tears started with zero subscribers, but Kevin quickly grew the magazine

to just under 3000 subscribers. Sarah ran with it for the next several years and brought the subscriber list to just over 12,000. Today, we sit at just under 14,000. While it varies monthly, we gain between 40 and 100 new subscribers each month!

Featured Builds

Featuring DIY teardrop and squaredrop campers has been a consistent and much loved feature of the magazine since the beginning. Over the years, we have featured 49 home build campers and we'd like to feature at least one per issue. This issue highlights our 50th home built tiny camper. Keep those build stories coming and we'll get them published for all to see! Send your story to Anne@cooltears.com. If we select your build to be featured, we'll send you \$50 as a thank you!



Recipes

Camping and eating go hand in hand. It just makes sense that we include a recipe that can be easily made while out camping. In the first two years, Cool Tears shared over 20 recipes with their readers. While there was a pause on the cooking section for a few years, it was brought back in 2017 with the introduction of recipes shared by Marilyn McCray, a published cookbook author and fellow teardropper. Here's a link to her book, [Canning, Pickling, and Freezing with Irma Harding: Recipes to Preserve Food, Family, and the American Way](#). Irma Harding is the fictional spokesperson of International Harvester. We love food and camping, so we've kept the recipes in the magazine and we love trying new things to see what will make it into the magazine. To date, we've shared 47 different recipes that can easily be made while camping.



a few year hiatus, it's back. We started tweeting again in December 2021, so if you're a Twitter person, we'd appreciate the follow [@cooltearsmag](#). Twitter can be more newsy, so we like to highlight different topics as we learn of them. These could be national park related, camping related, etc.

If you enjoy Pinterest, you can check us out at [@CoolTearsMagazine](#). While this is newer for us and we're still growing our followers, we do have over 1400 monthly views. Pinterest is visual, so we like to highlight some of our recipes here as well as great looking campers that we find.

We've steadily grown on Facebook over the years and we have over 9300 followers. Who will be our 10,000th follower?! This is really the main place to check to see if we have any new articles or issues to read or new videos to watch. You can follow us on Facebook at [@CoolTearsMagazine](#).

Instagram - it's all about the Gram! Seriously, we enjoy taking pictures of our adventures or goings on publishing the magazine and we love sharing them with you. We have over 2600 followers now and it's building. You can find us on [Instagram @cooltearsmagazine](#).

Lastly, we've resurrected the YouTube channel. The channel started in 2017 and

Contributing Authors

This was a hard category to keep count; however, it looks like there have been well over 100 contributing authors over the years! Our best count was 122 different authors.

Social Media Channels

Cool Tears joined Twitter in 2015 and after

Sarah was able to get 6 videos published over two years. We started this back up and have published an additional 10 videos so far with plans to continue to grow our playlist. In a relatively short amount of time, you've helped us gain more than 270 subscribers. There are currently over 320 subscribers to our channel. You can find us at www.youtube.com/cooltearsmagazine. We don't often write articles that go with the videos, so this is unique Cool Tears content.

Happy Birthday Cool Tears!

We've completed 10 whole years! That feels pretty amazing. A huge thanks to Kevin and Sarah for keeping this magazine going for the first seven years. I'm honored to lead us past the 10 years and start our 11th!

Thank you to our advertisers. Without our advertisers, this magazine would not exist as a free publication. They keep the lights on and it's the reason we can now pay you for reader submitted articles that we use.

Lastly, a huge thank you to you, our subscribers! You're the lifeblood of our community and our magazine. Let's hit our 14,000th subscriber this year and see how quickly we can get to 20,000! Spread the word to your tiny camper friends and let's continue to spread our love of teardrops, squaredrops, and other tiny campers! ■

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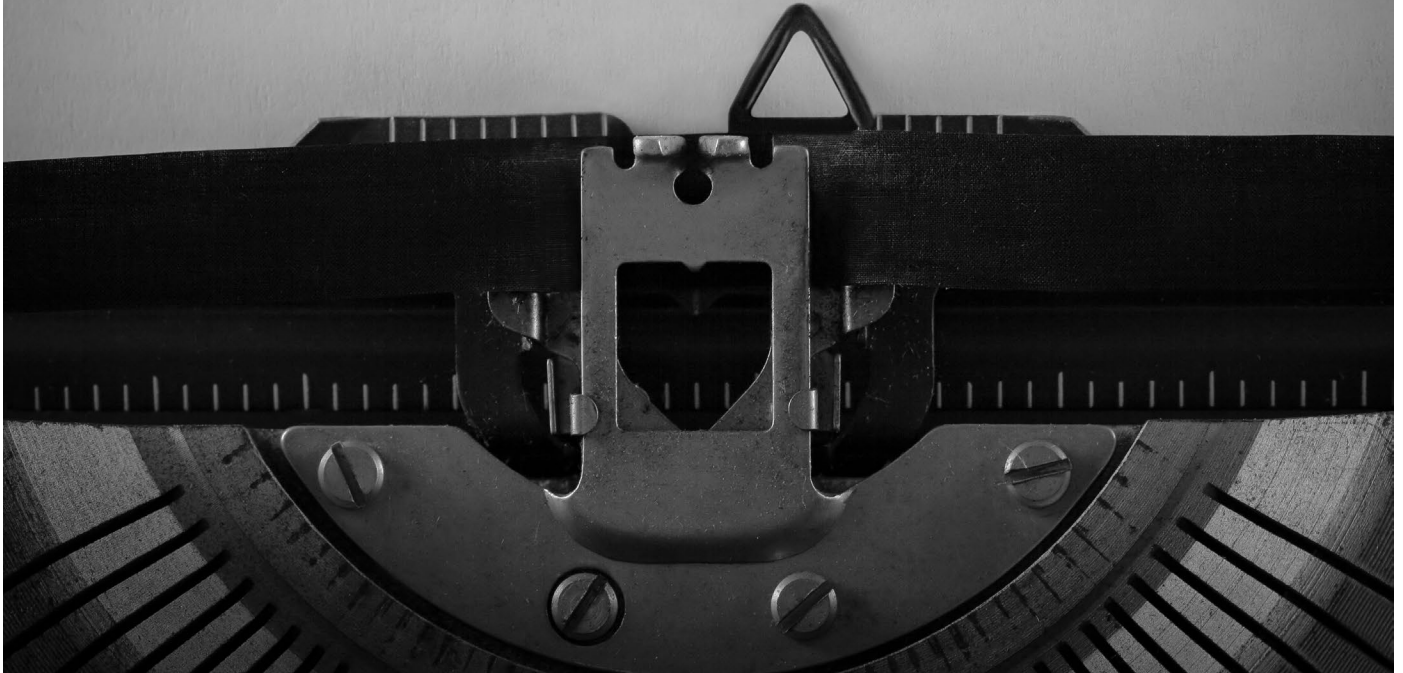
Cool Tears also participates in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate program designed to help small businesses like this to earn a small fee by linking products to Amazon that you may be interested in.

We appreciate your support. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact either of us at Lisa@cooltears.com or Anne@cooltears.com

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In the beginning...



The Beginning of Cool Tears

By **KEVIN CROSS**

I can't believe it has been ten years since publishing the first issue of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine. What started out as a quest for information and inspirational build pictures landed me in the middle of a wonderful community of teardroppers and a new business venture.

We all likely remember the economic downturn and rapidly declining housing market of 2009. During that time, I was working at a cabinet shop, and of course that industry was hit hard. I found myself unemployed. Before the cabinet shop I had spent almost ten years in the magazine publication industry, so I returned to that world doing contract work for a variety of publications.

Our family has always loved camping, but at that point in our lives the kids were headed off to college or spending most of their time with friends. My wife and I still wanted to camp, but obviously needed much less room. We began to notice a few teardrop campers on the road. That is where the story of Cool Tears begins.

I am a very visual person and sometimes a bit old school, so I often turn to magazines for the variety of images and information they provide. After a lot of Google searches, coupled with several visits to local bookstores as a long shot, I came up with nothing. All I found were a few internet references to a teardrop newsletter.

As I continued in my research, it became quite clear that there was a large community of very passionate teardroppers, but no current go-to publication to support them. Having had a background in electronic and print publication, my research turned from "What is this teardrop thing all about?" to "What if I started a teardrop magazine?" Surely there were others out there looking for such a publication and maybe I could make it a reality.

The next part of the quest was to find a local

dealership who sold teardrop campers so I could get a closer look at one. To set the stage a bit, I live in a rural area, so nothing is very local. I was hoping to find something within an hour or so from home, and make a Saturday outing of it. This time the Google search brought a pleasant surprise! As it turns out one of the largest, if not the largest, teardrop dealerships was seven minutes from my house. It was just around the corner, in rural terms.

I headed over and spoke with the owner, Dana Parsons. Not only was it a great place to see a variety of teardrops, but Dana was also one of the nicest guys I have ever met. As it turned out, he would play an instrumental role in getting Cool Tears off the ground. He provided a wealth of information, along with a couple of the newest models to take out on weekend camping trips. This allowed us to be immersed in the experience while having the opportunity to review the latest examples of campers on the market!

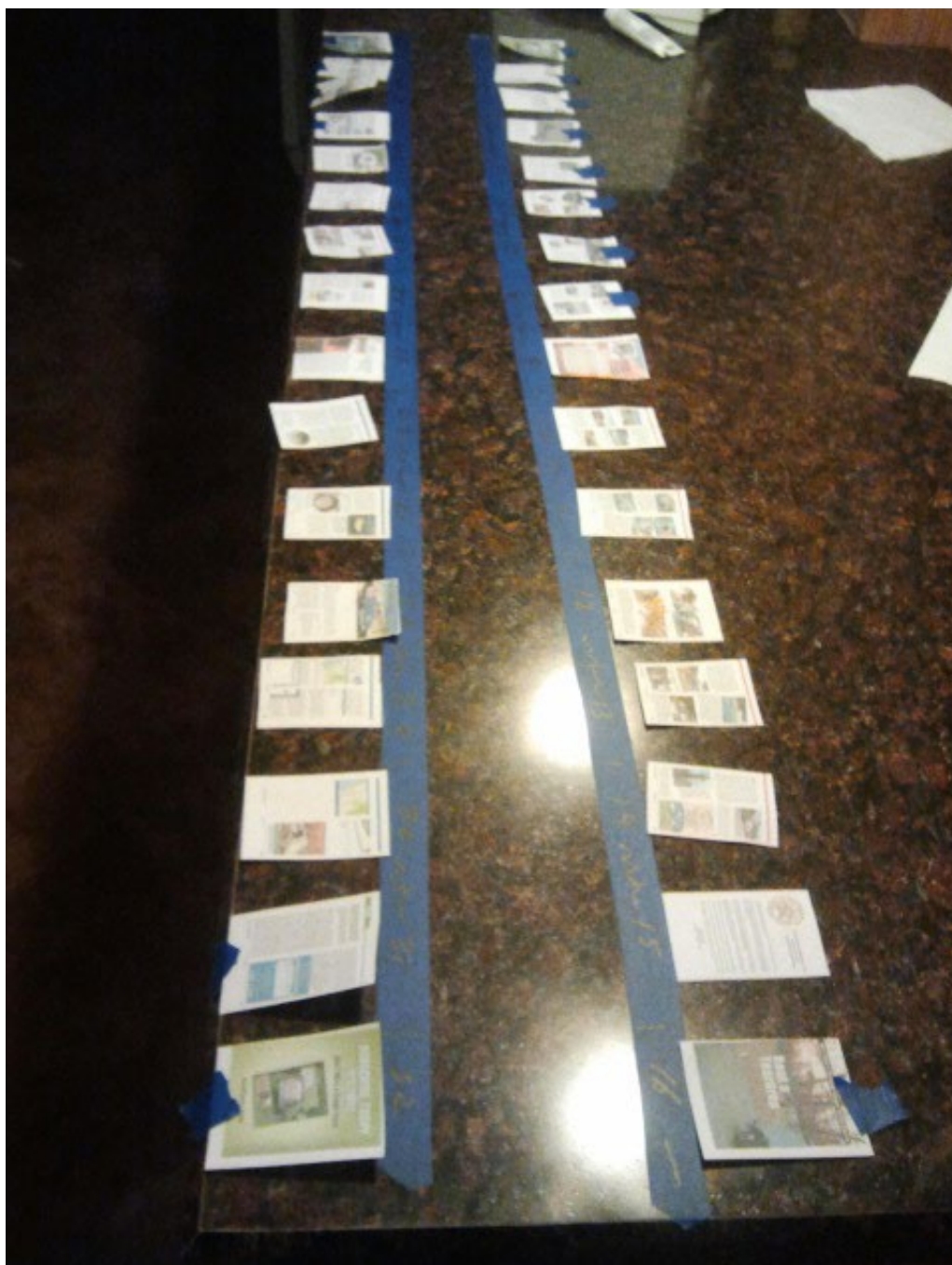
Now I had a good resource and a ton of inspiration. The next step was reaching out to the teardrop community. I started with Grant Whipp and a few other folks that worked on that newsletter I had found in my research. I wanted to get their thoughts on a teardrop magazine and get their blessing on the endeavor. I did NOT want to step on anyone's toes or detract from anything they were already doing. They were very much on board and unbelievably supportive! The wheels were in motion. Grant provided a ton of information on the teardrop community. He also wrote some of the first articles, including great coverage of some of the many teardrop gatherings around the country.

I began to work on building awareness of the coming publication. Without subscribers, there was no reason to publish and no reason for advertisers to support it. I started with some of the established teardrop message

boards and the owners were happy to publish an announcement. They even pinned it to the top of their page to help get subscriptions rolling in. I started a Facebook page and built relationships with others online. Everyone I contacted was super helpful.

Dana with Missouri Teardrop Trailers to the rescue again! Each year he had a large booth at the Kansas City RV show and was very gracious to provide some space in his booth to promote the Magazine. We greeted folks as they browsed through the rows of teardrops, handed out fliers and offered them a free subscription. It was interesting to see how many people shied away, assuming there was some sort of catch. Anticipating the hesitation, we heavily advertised "... no catch, just FREE!"

In January 2013, the very first issue of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers was published. The issue was well received in the teardrop community who reached out with messages of appreciation and encouragement. Soon



Laying out the first issue.

after awareness began to grow and along with it, advertising supporters and subscribers. I was amazed at how quickly the subscriber base expanded.

In late 2015, I accepted a full-time position where I am now, and I no longer had the time to keep up with the Magazine. Thankfully my effort was followed up with the work of passionate and talented people keeping Cool Tears alive. In early 2016, Sarah Tucker took ownership and did a fantastic job. Now it is in Lisa's hands and continues to be a great source of information and inspiration for teardroppers everywhere.

My sincere thanks to Lisa for her work and the opportunity to reminisce with you all. I am so pleased that the publication I had the opportunity to start is still alive and well ten years later! ■





The Middle Years of Cool Tears

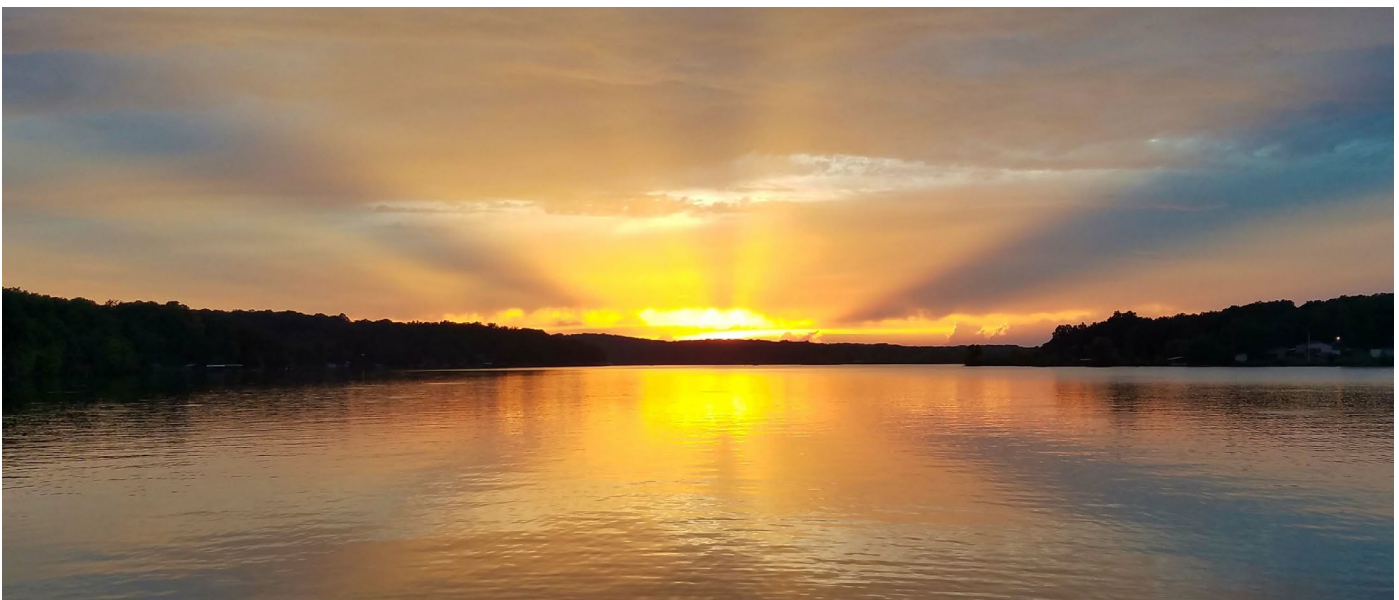
By **SARAH TUCKER**

Ten years! What an honor it was to be asked to contribute to this commemorative issue of Cool Tears. As I sit in this coffee shop and ponder the “teardrop years” as I fondly call them now, I am filled with so many memories of the people I had the opportunity to meet. When Kevin approached me with the idea of taking over the magazine I had so many questions and concerns as this was an industry that I knew nothing about. Those concerns were quickly put to ease as I started making contact with so many of you amazing readers.

Kevin gave me so many wonderful tips, but his best advice was to go see Dana at Missouri Teardrops. For those of you in the heartland area, Dana is a superstar. I went to see his new shop several years back and he took the time to share his wealth of knowledge on the teardrop industry. Later that year he invited me to the RV Dealer Open House in Elkhart, IN. Elkhart is the hub of the rv industry, and this show brings all the major manufacturers to showcase their new models to dealers across the country. Here I had the privilege to not only meet so many big wigs but also to put my hands on several teardrops.

Around that time, I decided the magazine needed a teardrop and figured I might as well try my hand at building one. That summer I started with a trailer, a set of plans and a sense of excitement over what I could create. We traveled in the heat of the summer to the Crossroads of America gathering and what we learned in those couple of sweltering, bug-infested days was that these tiny campers bring people together like family from all over the country. The conversations around campfires were priceless not only for the growth and continuation of this magazine, but also for my soul. Building my teardrop was hard and at times very isolating. Standing among some of the big names in DIY teardrops at that gathering gave me the boost needed to return home and finish.

Taking that little teardrop all over the Midwest to gatherings from Texas to Minnesota was an experience like no other. I met people from all walks of life that were connected by this deep love for enjoying our world in small campers. At the time my girls were in their preteen years and the memories we made on Cool Tears trips are something I will forever hold in my heart. I will forever be grateful for the email Lisa sent inquiring about the future of the magazine. As I learned more about her and her desire to maintain not only the integrity of the articles but also to continue the work of showcasing the tiny side of camping, I knew she was the right person to take over. Thank you to each and every reader for your continued support of this magazine and remember to always enjoy every sunset. ■





THE ARGONAUT TEARDROP CAMPER

By **RON KONRADE**

*T*eardrop trailers became an interest of mine after an elk hunting trip with my brothers in 2017. The compact size and functionality were very appealing, especially those with off grid capabilities that are necessary for my camping style. After much research, I decided to build a custom teardrop trailer. Too many teardrops looked the same and the desire to design something unique was a priority.

Concept drawings and a floor plan were decided upon. Material and appliance lists were made. In February of 2021 I began the build.

The frame was built with 2"x3", and 2"x2" square tubing. The subfloor was 3 layers sandwiched together. Bottom layer was 3/4" marine plywood. Next was 1 1/2" foil faced rigid insulation with 2x framing topped with 1/2" Baltic birch for a subfloor total thickness of 2 3/4". Raptor liner was sprayed on the underside.



Storage areas under the floor were incorporated into the subfloor. Most of the wiring is in the subfloor, with electric brakes being the only wires exposed under the carriage.



Timbren heavy duty #3500 suspension with a 4" lift, and electric brakes were installed. This should give me the ground clearance that I want. Long spindles will help with tire and wheel selection.



The side profile of the trailer was inspired by a WWI tank, the front and top were taken from plane/boat designs. The floor plan was much the same as a traditional teardrop. The



exterior of the cabin is 5'Wx10'Lx5'H. Front storage area was redesigned to accommodate the furnace. Sidewalls are made from 5'x10' x 3/4" marine grade plywood. These sheets had to be special ordered, but I wanted the structural strength of one piece. The interior plywood is 1/2" Baltic birch. The doors, windows, and appliances were ordered and delivered. Verification of specs and measurements eliminates mistakes and layout issues.

The cab and galley are constructed from poplar and birch hardwoods.

Exterior of the camper was sealed with 3 coats of sealer before the aluminum skin was installed.

Off grid capability was a necessity. Two marine grade batteries with a 200 watt solar charging system, Dometic propane furnace, and ductwork were then installed. Interior trimmed out.



Trailer specs

- Tubular steel frame
- Timbren #3500 heavy duty suspension
- Electric brakes, 4" lift
- Dometic furnace 12,000 btu
- Sink/stove combo with glass
- Max air fan
- 200 watt solar charging system
- 2 AGM batteries with shutoff
- Shore power connection with 30 amp breaker
- LED lighting
- Aluminum exterior .040 black
- Diamond plate .065
- ARK heavy duty stabilizers
- 7pin connector
- 15 gallon freshwater tank
- 12v Lippert flo-max water pump
- Camplux instant hot water heater
- Tv/dvd player 12 v
- Custom cabinets
- Oval portlights with screens
- Lippert doors w/window
- Insulated 4 season
- 18" ground clearance
- Underfloor storage
- 2" receiver on rear (accessories)
- Aluminum fenders
- Queen size 6" trifold mattress
- 20lb propane tank
- Reading lights
- 1100watt sine wave inverter
- Exterior 120v outlet
- Custom wheels



Profile

Ron Konrade

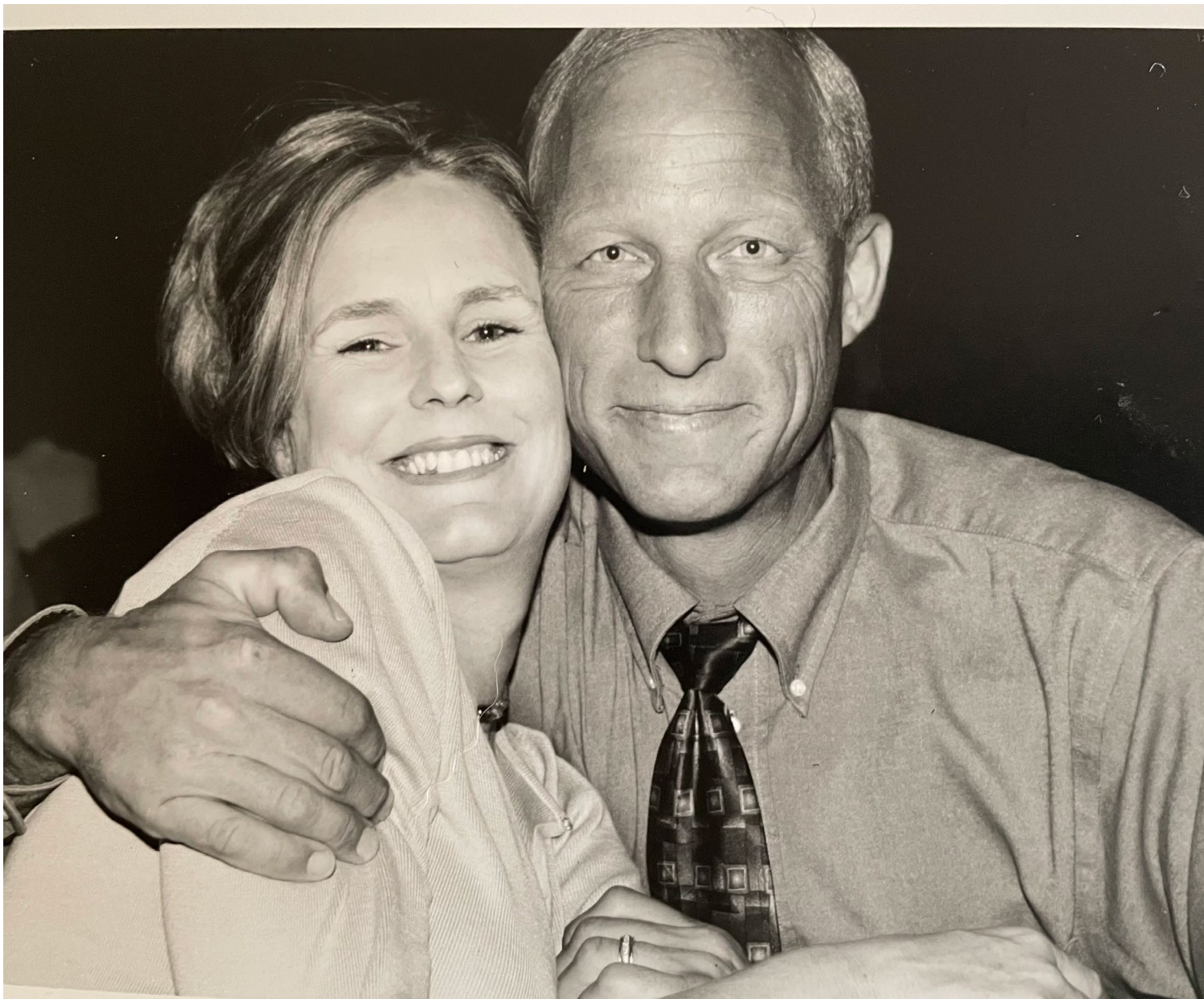
Age 66 Retired

Owner /operator Konrade Construction established in 1989

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The outdoors has always been a major part of my life. My Father was an avid outdoorsman that enjoyed hunting, fishing, camping, and boating. My brothers and I all grew up with a shotgun in one hand and a fishing pole in the other. Totally indoctrinated and loving it. Let's go camping!

Ron and wife Rene live in Topeka, Kansas.



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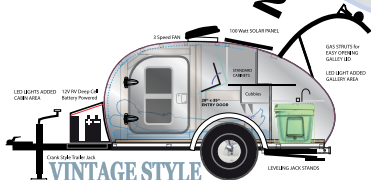
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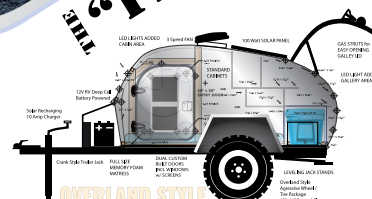
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RightOnTrek Eco-Friendly Meal Packaging is Finalist for Outdoor Retailer's Outdoor Innovation Awards

Columbia Falls, Mont., Jan 6, 2022 (PRNEWswire) -- RightOnTrek was selected as a finalist in the 2023 Outdoor Innovation Awards for Outdoor Retailer for their industry leading environmentally friendly meal packaging.

Already receiving multiple best-in-class awards and recognitions from Backpacker Magazine for their outdoor adventure meals, they now earn recognition for the meal packaging as well.

Their custom made multi-layer design provides not only the durability required for an outdoors meal package, but also uses bio-based material sourced from tree pulp that won't harm you or the environment in any way.

One of the biggest accomplishments in RightOnTrek meal packaging is that it's plastic-free.

The middle barrier layer is a material made from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) approved wood pulp.

The inner linear low-density polyethylene (LLDPE) is a bio-based plastic. The company that produces it is International Sustainability & Carbon Certification (ISCC), certified.

The convention for outdoor meals is to cook and freeze dry in a factory, and rehydrate with warm water in the bag.

While convenient, this requires many preservatives and uses industrialized packaging that can handle the boiling water without burning one's hands. That packaging contains materials and metals that you don't want in your system or our environment.

RightOnTrek breaks with this as most ingredients are air dried and cooked fresh on the trail. It uses freeze dried ingredients as minimally as possible while still providing a shelf stable meal that lasts 12-18 months. Its packaging adheres to the same principles of sustainability.

"The material going into the packaging is as important as what it turns into after use. By choosing 100% bio-based packaging derived from renewable resources, we feel we are doing our best to maintain a sustainable life cycle on the consumers' behalf."

Eric Boxer Sustainability Engineer and Head Chef of RightOnTrek Meals

RightOnTrek meals are available in retail stores throughout the US, and online. <https://rightontrek.com/meals/store>

The winners of the Outdoor Retailer's Outdoor Innovation Awards will be announced at the Outdoor Retailer Snow Show from January 10-12, 2023 in Salt Lake City, UT. <https://outdoorretailer.com/events-education/innovation-awards/>

About RightOnTrek:

RightOnTrek is a leader and innovator in outdoor recreation services that make epic wilderness adventures and transformative outdoors experiences accessible to everyone. For first-time family campers and lifelong elite mountaineers it provides an online trip planner, 24/7 automated gear rental near Glacier National Park, and the most delicious and nutritious backpacking meals you can find. Its Adventure Meals are available both online and in a growing number of retail stores nationwide.



nuCamp Names 2022 Top Dealers

Sugarcreek, Ohio. January 10, 2023 – nuCamp, a major manufacturer of teardrop trailers and truckcampers based in Sugarcreek, Ohio, announces the Top Dealers for the 2022 model year. Those receiving awards represent the elite nuCamp dealers. Awards are based on dealership achievement on overall unit sales.

“At nuCamp, we strive to provide an exceptional customer experience. That starts with forming positive relationships with our dealers,” said Scott Hubble, nuCamp’s CEO. “We value all our dealers, but wanted to take a moment to recognize those who have excelled over the past year with top-level sales.”

There are five awarded categories, North American Towable Dealer of the Year – Multiple locations, North American Towable Dealer of the Year – Single location, North American Cirrus Dealer of the Year, Top 5 performing towable dealers (by region), and Top Cirrus dealers.

Complete list of winners:

Top 5 Towable Dealers by Region

East Region:

Gerzeny’s RV World (FL)
Groupe Alliance (QB)
Miller Trailer Sales (PA)
Pete’s RV Center (VT, MA, IN)
Southland RV (GA)

Central Region:

Elk River RV (MN)
Jerry’s Camping Center (WI)
Princess Craft RV (TX)
Veurink’s RV Center (MI)
Mark Wahlberg RV (OH)

West Region:

Apache Camping Center
Parris RV (UT)
Tom’s Camperland (AZ)
Traveland Supercentre (BC, AB, SK)
Windish RV Center (CO)

Top 5 Cirrus Dealers

Apache Camping Center (WA, OR)
D&H RV Center (NC)
Groupe Alliance (QC)
Neimeyer Trailer Sales (MN)
Tom’s Camperland (AZ)

North American Towable Dealer of the Year – Multiple Locations: Apache Camping Center (WA, OR)

North American Towable Dealer of the Year – Single Location: Princess Craft RV (TX)

North American Cirrus Dealer of the Year - Groupe Alliance (QB)

For more information on the nuCamp products, please visit nuCamprv.com

About nuCamp

nuCamp manufactures the highest quality teardrop trailers / campers and truck campers available on the American market. Our recreational vehicle and trailer products are the results of extensive research and development, customer feedback, and the fusion of technology and old-world craftsmanship. The dedicated craftsmen and women who work at the nuCamp facility in Sugarcreek, Ohio, are committed to the principles of simplistic design, high-quality fabrication, and fanatical customer support. nuCamp is the world's largest manufacturer of teardrop trailers.



Salt Lake City, UT. November 30, 2022 - Bean Trailer

Black Bean is a huge success and has become our best selling trailer model since its introduction. In order to increase our capacity to produce more Black Beans and to reduce our backlog, we are allocating more production resources to it from our other Bean lines. This is resulting in an equalization of lead times across all our Bean lines. Starting today our current lead times are 6 months on ALL Bean Trailer models. In true Bean fashion, this is still an industry leading turnaround time for a custom trailer.

We understand that some of you might have done some planning based on shorter lead times for non-Black Bean trailers. Before we reallocated resources to Black Bean, we built several inventory trailers for people that don't want to wait six months to enjoy their trailer. We have most models available, so reach out to our sales team for details on what we have in stock. We anticipate these trailers will go quickly.

If you have already ordered this does not affect your lead time.



LEAVE NO TRACE: Plan ahead and Prepare

By LISA ADAMS

*T*wenty-five years ago, the Leave No Trace organization was created by environmental advocates and people working in the outdoor industry and land management sectors to protect our natural lands. Leave No Trace “pioneers science and provides proven, research-based solutions for the protection of the natural world.” The organization focuses on educating the public and land managers instead of spending money on restoration projects or limiting access to land.

In our 10th year of promoting the tiny campers and the tiny camping lifestyle, we have joined this effort as a Leave No Trace Partner. We love being outdoors and we want to help educate our tiny camper community about how some simple acts can help protect and preserve our environment. In this and upcoming issues, we will highlight at least one of the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace and give examples of how we can apply the principles to teardrop or squaredrop camping. Did you know that the Leave No Trace Principles vary based on the type of activity you're involved in? The original 7 Principles were rooted in backcountry settings; however, the Principles have been adapted so they can be applied anywhere. So we'll occasionally veer off of camping and will highlight how to apply the Principles in our daily life as well.

The pandemic was hard on our local, state, and national public lands as people flocked to parks, trails, and waterways. During our last year of hiking, kayaking, and camping we saw firsthand some of those effects: toilet paper strewn through the forest on hiking trails, water bottles and beer cans on the rivers, and cigarette butts, water and beer bottle caps, and other plastic food wrappers at campsites, in fire rings, or along animal trails leading from campsites.

LEAVE NO TRACE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors © Leave No Trace: www.LNT.org

In this article, we will focus solely on Principle 1: Plan Ahead and Prepare. Adequate trip planning and preparation helps enjoy our trip safely while minimizing damage to the environment.

Why is Trip Planning Important?

- It helps ensure the safety of your group while accomplishing your trip goals
- It minimizes environmental damage
- It can increase your self-confidence and provide for opportunities to learn more about nature

What to Consider When Planning a Trip?

There are some key elements to consider when planning a trip. First, know who will be going on your trip. Is it a solo trip or will it include your spouse or significant other? Will the trip also include children? Will a pet be traveling with you?

From understanding the answers to these questions above, it guides your next plan of action. Identify the expectations of everyone going on the trip. If you're looking for an off-grid camping adventure where you'll eat beef jerky and backpacking meals where you just add boiling water, but your significant other wants a proper meal with access to a flushing toilet, or the kids want access to a playground, then you're setting yourself up for a miserable trip.

look up their website and dive into the details. You're likely to find important information online about if pets are permitted, if there is a fire ban, if the campground requires a reservation, what the conditions are of hiking trails, what wildlife is present, etc. If all of your questions aren't answered on their website, then call the ranger station. The rangers are an excellent resource and they can help answer questions you may have that aren't covered on the website. No one knows the park better than the rangers!

Be sure to know the policies, guidelines, or rules of the area where you'll be camping. National forest guidelines may be different than the adjacent state forest so it's important to know where the boundaries are and to know if or how their policies differ. Some sites are first come first served while others may be free, but still require a reservation or a permit. If you're staying at an established campground, read up on their rules so they are understood.

By now, you know who's going, what activities you want to do, what the skill levels of the participants are, and you know the local park

If your trip will include hiking, biking, kayaking, or any other outdoor activity, understand the skill level of those people. By making sure these activities fit the skill levels of those in your group, you are ensuring their safety and it will help minimize the likelihood of a serious injury during your trip.

Now the fun begins. It's time to research the area you want to visit. If you're going to a



well known national or state forest or park,



regulations. At this point, it's time to think about what to pack. Unless you are staying at a public or private campground only, it's suggested that you have a map of the area. Do not rely solely on a map on your phone in case you don't have a signal or the battery goes dead. We don't always have paper maps of the areas we travel to, but we do download maps to our phones and we carry an additional handheld GPS/satellite communicator that can be used to call for help in an emergency. (We use Gaia GPS on our phones. We download topographic maps of the area to our phones and then we can use the maps without having a phone signal since the phone has a built-in GPS. We carry the extra satellite communicator, a Garmin InReach, in order to call for help if needed.)

While preparing what to pack for your trip, be sure to understand the weather that you will likely encounter and adjust your gear accordingly. It's also important to prepare for unusual weather conditions too. For example, if you check the local weather forecast for a location near the mountains, but not in the mountains, know that the weather could be very different. As an example, it could be 90°F in Denver, CO but 60°F within a thirty minute drive of the city. It's important to know typical weather patterns for the area you'll be camping in as well. Is the area prone to afternoon thunderstorms? Is the area prone to flooding during heavy rains? Are you camping below a dam? These are things to consider when planning what to pack for your trip and for considering possible escape routes. A few years ago, we were camping



in a national forest near a river. There were signs posted that warned that the area may flood during heavy rains, even if the rain was upstream and not in our location.

This past summer, we went on a fourteen day adventure through several states. We

preparation made for a great experience.

Either during your trip or once you're home, evaluate your trip and make a note of any changes that you want to make before your next trip. If you're not traveling alone this



We started the hike in coats and thermal underwear. A few hours later, Anne's in a short sleeved shirt.

experienced temperatures from 105°F down to 22°F within a matter of two days. While it's not easy to pack for such extremes in a teardrop or squaredrop we knew it was necessary to be prepared for just about anything. When we were in the mountains, we started our hikes in thermal underwear and an outer layer and by midmorning, we were able to take some layers off, ending the hikes with nothing but short sleeved shirts and bare arms slathered in sunscreen. Our

is an easy conversation on the way home from your trip with the passenger taking notes. We leave a small notepad and pen in the glovebox so it's easy to jot down ideas on things that we need to take next time or things to leave at home, etc.

Summary

It's important to do your research ahead of time and depending on your trip and

familiarity with the area, this could take thirty minutes or it could take a few months. In order to help ensure the happiness of your camping companions, it's important to know what they want to get out of the trip. Do they want to do different activities or just be at the campsite, relaxing? Learn about the area that you'll be in and choose your gear based on the weather conditions and activities you'll be doing. Understand the rules or regulations of the area you'll be in and know where the private land boundaries are.

By following these few simple guidelines, you can make your trip more safe and enjoyable for everyone. ■



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