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November/December 2022

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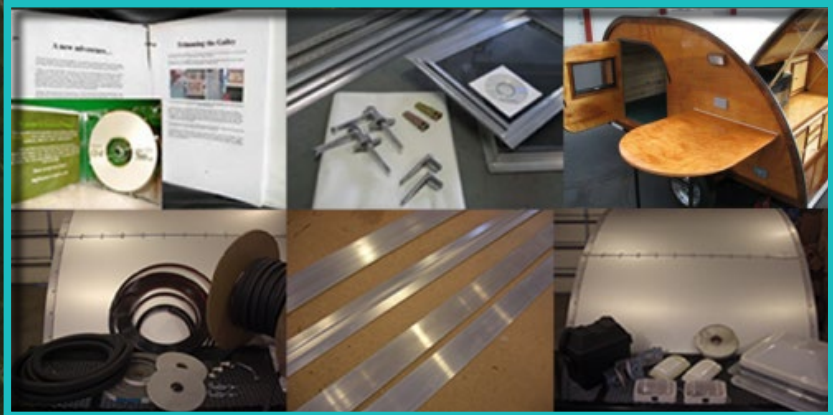
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# COOL Tears<sup>TM</sup> and tiny campers MAGAZINE

Vol. 10 No. 6 November/December 2022

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## 11 COVER STORY 2022 GIFT GIVING GUIDE

Cool Tears Staff

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5 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR  
Lisa Adams

8 KITCHEN ON WHEELS: CRISPY MASHED  
POTATO & STUFFING PATTIES  
Anne Cox

20 #CLEANINGUPCAMP  
Lisa Adams

24 A DIY SNOOPY CAMPER  
Anne Cox with Steve Owen

31 PRESS RELEASES  
Cool Tears Staff

33 HOLIDAY REGIONAL CAMPING SPOTLIGHT  
Cool Tears Staff



Editor  
Lisa Adams

Contributing Authors  
Anne Cox

Homebuild Trailer info from  
Steve Owen

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# Letter from the Editor:



Tiny Camper Enthusiasts,

What do the holidays mean to you?

For me, the holidays are around family, friends, memories, and traditions. Since I was a young girl in the 1970's, each Christmas Eve was spent visiting my aunt and uncle and cousins. When I was younger, my cousin Dana tried to convince me and her youngest brother that she could see Santa going from house to house, pointing out the window every few seconds to keep us excited for his arrival. She had us racing from window to window, hoping to catch a glimpse of Rudolf and Santa! Santa inevitably showed up, which I later learned was my Uncle Denny, and we'd sit on his lap and try to convince him that we deserved everything we asked for. Once we all grew up, we continued this tradition of meeting every Christmas Eve, keeping the spirit of Santa alive for the next generation, playing games, and enjoying each other's company.

Then every Christmas morning started out the same with my brother and parents; we always had the same breakfast before tearing into our presents as a family. "A Christmas Story" was always on the TV in the background for most of the day so we'd eventually see the entire movie. As a kid, it seemed like every year we wanted that "one Christmas gift." For Ralphie, it was a Red Ryder Carbine Action 200-shot Range Model air rifle. Some years my "special gift" was a pair of roller skates or a boombox to play music on. My dad died a month after Christmas a few years ago. One of my gifts for that Christmas was a version of a bobble head, but it is of the "A Christmas Story" leg lamp. It has never been put away with the decorations, but instead it remains on the kitchen counter, with the tiny solar cell gathering light so the shade of the leg lamp rocks gently back and forth.

While the people I celebrate the holidays with have changed over the last several years, the spirit of the holiday season hasn't. My parents, my aunt and my cousin Dana have passed. I married a few years ago and am blessed



with two great adult “kids” and a mother-in-law. Instead of gathering at my cousin’s house, our house is the gathering place for new family and friends. We’ve blended our family traditions and we honor the memories of those we’ve lost.

As an adult, I’ve realized that I still want that one special gift, like Ralphie. But instead of a BB gun, that gift is about being together with loved ones.

However you celebrate the holidays this season, be safe and be present with your friends and family. Maybe you’ll find that your Red Ryder Carbine Action Range Model air rifle is about being together with your loved ones too. ■

Happy travels and stay safe  
Live Tiny. Live Free.

Lisa Adams  
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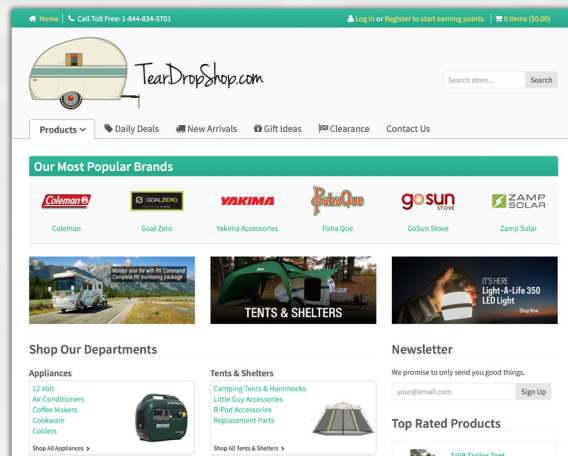
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# KITCHEN ON WHEELS

## CRISPY MASHED POTATO & STUFFING PATTIES

*Thanksgiving is just around the corner which usually means that we'll have turkey, mashed potatoes, and stuffing leftovers from the main meal. A few days post Thanksgiving, our family starts to dread having leftovers for a meal. But these crispy mashed potato and stuffing patties make for a great breakfast. So if you're going camping post holiday, pack up the kids, and pack those leftovers!*

*This recipe will make about 12 patties.*

### Ingredients:

- 2 large eggs
- ¼ of a medium sized onion
- 2 cups leftover mashed potatoes
- 2 cups leftover chopped, cooked turkey
- 2 cups leftover stuffing
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil (canola)
- salt and pepper to taste
- leftover gravy, optional
- bread crumbs, optional

Use about ½ cup of the mixture to form the patties and gently place them in the butter and oil mixture. If you have bread crumbs, you can coat the patty before placing in the skillet. Fry on each side until golden brown and heated through, which should take roughly 4 - 5 minutes. While they are frying, you can flatten them slightly in the pan so they will be heated through more quickly.

Set the cooked patties on paper towels to

### Crispy Mashed Potato & Stuffing Patties:

Finely chop ¼ of the onion and set aside. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, onion, and salt and pepper.

Gently stir in the leftover potatoes, stuffing, and turkey.

In a large skillet or Dutch oven, melt the butter over medium-high heat and add in the vegetable oil.





remove some of the oil and then serve immediately. If you have any leftover gravy, you can drizzle over the patties as well. ■





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# 2022 GIFT GIVING GUIDE

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By **COOL TEARS STAFF**

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**T**he holidays are approaching fast and camping related gifts can help brighten the cold, dark days of the winter in the Northern Hemisphere. Like in years past, we only recommend products that we use and love. None of the companies that have products listed below have paid us for our endorsements nor were any of the products given to us. Please note, we are affiliates for some of the products listed below, but not all. So we may get a small commission if you click a link and make a purchase. This does not affect your purchase price in any way.

We've broken our gift guide into four main categories: camp comfort, galley/cooking, awnings, and miscellaneous.

## Camp Comfort

We are year round campers who live in Michigan. The last three years, we have traveled west of the Mississippi River for camping where there are often fire bans. We've found that a propane fire pit works well on those cold nights and mornings in Michigan or the mountains of Colorado. We like our [Camp Chef Compact Fire Ring](#) for several reasons. First, it puts out a good amount of heat. Second, it doesn't take up much room in our tow vehicle. Third, the convenient carry bag is included which makes transporting the fire ring easy. A propane fire ring definitely doesn't take the place of a real fire while camping, but it is nice to hop into bed and not smell like smoke!

I mentioned that we live in Michigan. Some of our favorite camping sites in our home state are in the Upper Peninsula where it seems that mosquitos grow to the size of hummingbirds. [Last summer, I finally purchased a Thermacell Patio Shield along with a refill pack.](#) I had put off purchasing a Thermacell for a few reasons.

1. They are pretty expensive and you need another box of fuel and mats to get you through the summer. 2. I thought they were gimmicky, so I was slow to try them out. Needless to say, I spent an extra summer getting bit by mosquitoes because of the above two

reasons. Now I know that they do work and they are worth every penny. (There are over 52,000 reviews on Amazon!) We now use two Thermacells if we set up camp in a mosquito prone area, one in the galley area and one on the fender near where we sit for the evenings. We have two different models. We first tried the usual "Patio Shield Mosquito Repeller" which takes the small mats and butane cartridges. [The second model is the "Radius" which runs on a USB rechargeable battery.](#) The refills are about the same price as the refills on the ["Patio Shield"](#) model, but overall there is less plastic to dispose of which I prefer.

No campsite is complete without having somewhere to lounge around with a good book or magazine. We love to hang a hammock or two if it's allowed at the campground. It's really hard to go wrong with a hammock. Here are a few things to think about before purchasing one. First, decide



if you want a one or two person hammock. They aren't significantly different in size, but the two person hammock has a weight rating over 500lbs. Most come with built in pouches



for the hammock to fit into as well as the hanging straps and carabiners. [This hammock by Wise Owl Outfitters is less than \\$40USD \(at the time the article was written in October 2022\), it includes the hanging straps and carabiners and it has a 4.8 out of 5.0 rating on Amazon with over 46,000 reviews.](#) A few years ago, I was given a [MalloMe Camping Hammock](#) in a work gift exchange. This hammock has been on every camping trip we've made since then. [The MalloMe single and double hammocks have a weight limit of 1000 lbs](#), so it can hold you and your kids. We not only use the hammocks while camping, but we also use them at home too!

A few years ago, I went on a solo backpacking trip. Prior to taking my first step on the trail, I did a lot of research on the best socks for through hikers. One sock name that kept coming up time and again was [Darn Tough made in Vermont. My favorite is the Hiker Micro Crew Midweight Hiking sock, shown below.](#) They have just the right amount of cushion under your foot and they



manufacture them in such a way that you don't feel the seam. They are 59% merino

wool and they will keep your feet at a good temperature in the summer and winter. The best part about these socks is that they have a lifetime guarantee! Yes, a sock with a lifetime guarantee! If they wear, tear, or develop holes, Darn Tough will replace them absolutely free. If hiking is not your thing, they do also make socks for work, running, skiing or snowboarding, and hunting. These might be the perfect stocking stuffer, even if they are socks!

## Galley/Cooking

We're not coffee snobs, but we do like supporting our local coffee roasters. Since our local roasters only provide whole bean coffee, we needed a portable way to grind our beans while away from home. Earlier this year, we landed on the [Porlex Mini Stainless Steel Coffee Grinder](#). You can see it in action in [this short video](#) we made while trying to make a cup of coffee using our skottle. We like the size of this grinder because it packs away nicely in our galley. Another nice feature is that it's easy to adjust the grind setting to accommodate different coffee brewing methods. If your preference is an espresso, then adjust the burr by turning nine to eleven clicks. If you use an Aeropress, set it to about 15 clicks. If you like a pour over coffee, then adjust the burrs by counting to about 22 clicks. French press? About 40 - 42 clicks. We have ours set to about 35 clicks and we just leave it there for all. This produces a stronger coffee when we use our french press coffee maker. I'm contemplating purchasing a second one to keep in the house so we can get rid of the electric grinder that takes up valuable cabinet space.

A few years ago, I purchased a travel French press coffee maker for a twenty-something new camper that loves coffee. Once I saw the quality of the build of this vacuum walled French press, I had to get one for our teardrop as well.

We've been using the [OVRLNDR® Travel Press by Planetary Design for more than two years now.](#) The

OVRLNDR® will brew 24 oz of your favorite coffee or loose leaf tea. After your coffee or tea is brewed, there are two great features of this travel press that make it stand apart from the others.

First, you can enjoy your drink straight from the OVRLNDR® with the no-spill lid if you'd like. The second unique feature is related to cleaning the travel press. When you depress the plunger fully, there will be a few ounces of coffee in the removable base of the travel press. This is so you don't need extra water to clean the press. Swirl the slurry of grounds and water and then quickly dump in your trash and the cleaning is mostly finished! The only drawback of this travel press is that it has to be hand-washed, it is not dishwasher safe. I would imagine that the [OVRLNDR® Travel Press will likely last a lifetime.](#)

Roasting marshmallows or hotdogs over a campfire is enjoyable whether you're five or ninety-five. Portable, telescoping stainless

steel roasting forks are definitely a step up from using a dirty twig that may buckle under the weight of a hotdog. Two brands that stand out are [MalloMe](#) and [Jolly Green](#). Both brands have telescoping roasting

sticks that extend to 34 inches and collapse to about ten inches in length. Both also include a carrying bag to hold all of the roasting sticks which makes storage convenient.

Most campers could use a refillable butane lighter. A good quality refillable lighter with a long neck would make a great stocking stuffer and it would help cut down on the amount of plastics going into the landfills. These come in handy when lighting camp stoves, fires, or lanterns. These refillable butane long lighters can be found at most local grocery

stores and hardware stores.

Our last recommended galley item is for knife storage. For as long as we've owned a teardrop, we have always used a magnetic knife strip mounted in the galley to hold our knives. We usually travel around ten thousand miles per year with our teardrop on highways, country roads, and National Forest roads. Our knives have never fallen off the rack yet despite the kind of traveling that we do. The first magnetic knife rack we used was actually a magnetic tool holder that we purchased from a large DIY store. It worked well, but





aesthetically, it's lacking. This spring, [we purchased a Woodsom magnetic knife holder](#). These wooden magnetic knife holders come in lengths from 8 up to 36 inches and you can choose the wood type that you'd like. They come in birdseye maple, butcher block, cedar, cherry, hickory, maple, oak, walnut, wenge, alder, knotty pine and purpleheart, so it's easy to find a wood grain that will match



or compliment your galley. The neodymium magnets are strong and embedded in the wood from end to end, so there is no dead zone on the wooden bar, although it is slightly less strong over the mounting holes. The manufacturer even provides the wooden plugs to fill the mounting holes. We have the ten inch alder magnetic knife holder and it easily holds a few knives as well as a few sets of tongs within easy reach of our cookstove. The alder wood has a similar wood grain to Baltic birch, which many teardrops are made from.

## Awnings

There are two awnings that have absolutely changed the way we camp in the last year. The first is the [MoonShade by Moon Fabrications](#) is a portable awning that sets up easily with one person and attaches to nearly any sturdy structure, even if you don't have a roof rack. Every awning includes the strut pole, two large suction cups, and two small suction cups which can be used to attach the [MoonShade](#) to different sturdy objects. We've attached the MoonShade to our car, a flag pole, and a tree just to get some protection from the elements, whether it's sun or rain. This awning is about the size of a yoga mat and although it seems to be made for van life, it is absolutely perfect for covering the back hatch of a teardrop. Covering the galley of our teardrop is our absolute favorite use of the MoonShade! We can stay dry or out of the blazing sun while we're in the galley, which is also our gathering place - just like our kitchen at home. In a recent YouTube video, we did a review of our MoonShade and gave four reasons why we love our awning and also



provided a few things that could be improved. [To watch the review, click this link.](#) If you'd like to purchase your own MoonShade, use this link to get \$30 off. <https://moonfab.com/cooltears>

The second awning that has changed our camping experience is the [shower enclosure by 23Zero](#). This shower awning mounts to a roof rack and is the perfect spot for our portable toilet. We also use the awning as a changing room and as a true shower enclosure. The shower enclosure is heavy duty and it has weights sewn into the bottom hems to keep the sides from flapping around. There are also 4 stake points, one in each corner, to help keep the awning in place on those windy days. [The awning walls are height adjustable and silver lined for privacy.](#) Even on sunny



days, you cannot see the silhouette of anyone inside the enclosure. This has changed our camping experience because now we don't need to walk to a bathroom or pit toilet if we're in a campground or set up an extra tent for our portable toilet. We can slip out

the door of the teardrop and with one quick movement we enter through the zippered corner closest to the teardrop door. No more late night or early morning trips to the bathroom! We use this awning along with a portable toilet when we stay at Harvest Host locations. We're very transparent that our portable toilet is in this attached awning and to date, we've not been turned down for any stays. Simply legally dump or throw away all waste off site.

[As mentioned in our MoonShade review](#), one of the things that could be improved are the guy lines. We purchased this [8 pack of the 3mm yellow guy lines last year and we use them on the MoonShade as well as on a side awning.](#)

These 4 meter (13 feet) guy lines are reflective so they are easy to see when it's dark. They all come with an attached, easy to use guy line adjuster. This 8 pack of guy lines cost less than \$12USD at the time this article was written.

## Miscellaneous

How do you pass the hours when traveling to your camping destination? Our rides can be pretty quiet at times with someone napping or reading a book. That's great for the passengers, but it's awful if you're the driver! Since I can't read while driving, I listen to books or podcasts instead. I've used [Audible, by Amazon](#), for years. I like Audible for a few reasons. First, the books that I put in my library are mine should I choose to stop using the service. Second, [I've not found an audiobook library as extensive as Audible yet.](#) I know it's hard to remember Amazon when it started, but it was a bookseller. They offer a free trial and then there are two plans to choose from, one under \$8USD/month and



the other under \$15/USD/month. If paying for an audiobook doesn't appeal to you, then check out your local library. My local library card gives me access to an app called "Hoopla" where I can find audiobooks and movies that I can download for 3 weeks to listen to or watch. This is a free service, but the book and movie offerings are limited.

A few years ago, I purchased two different products that would help women pee outdoors without squatting. We've tried two different products, but one stands above the rest, at least for me. [The Tinkle Belle](#) is a

female urination device that allows a woman to remain standing and fully clothed while going. [This video created by Tinkle Belle says/ shows it all.](#) Until a few months ago, we owned two of these and we always kept one in each vehicle, so one was always with us if we were traveling. Somehow, we started our two week, multi-state teardrop tour without one! We realized it when we were about three hours into our trip already. So we ordered a third and had it delivered to a friend's house that we met up with a few days later. We'll do a review of this in a future issue, but it has completely changed our



travel and hiking days. During the pandemic, when a lot of our usual pit stop locations were closed, we were able to use [the Tinkle Belle](#) with an empty detergent bottle and we could stop nearly anywhere, tuck ourselves between the front and back doors of our truck and go without being seen and without leaving a mess. Due to the design, there is no toilet paper needed, so we're not leaving little "paper flowers" outside. This made in the US product is a perfect gift for any woman that enjoys being outdoors.

Lastly, the third annual [Cool Tears and Tiny Campers 2023 Calendar](#) is available to ship now. This calendar is made possible by you, our subscribers! Even in the digital age, wall calendars are perfect in your home, kitchen, or office and they help keep track of important dates, contacts, and other events at a glance. It's nice to see a monthly calendar and events in one quick view, plus it's a bonus to see an amazing tiny camper! ■



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# #cleaningupcamp

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By LISA ADAMS

---

*Nearly every time I go hiking or camping, this American folk song, written by Woody Guthrie in 1940, plays in my head.*

***This land is your land, this land is my land  
From California to the New York Island,  
From the Redwood Forest, to the Gulf stream waters,  
This land was made for you and me.***



The United States federal government owns over 640 million acres or roughly 28% of the land in the US. The four major agencies that manage this land are the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Park Service (NPS), and the Forest Service (FS). These four agencies manage over 606 million of the 640 million acres of land. That is our land. It's our land to use and go camping on. Camping on the federally owned land is usually inexpensive and in many places, it's free!

Do you remember the longest government shutdown in US history from December 2018 to January 2019? During that time, the national parks and national lands mostly remained open with a few exceptions. By day ten of the thirty five day shutdown, many areas raised health and safety concerns as public pit toilets overflowed with human waste and there were tons of garbage left on site. Illegal campsites were created, sensitive agricultural areas were damaged by foot and vehicle traffic. David Lamfrom, then the director of the California desert and wildlife programs at the National Parks Conservation Association said that "some (clean up efforts) would take weeks or months. Some will last generations. Some may not be able to be fixed." The amount of garbage and human waste would impact water and soil quality and raise health and safety concerns for the wildlife as well as human visitors. Then fast forward just fourteen months later and the world enters the pandemic of 2020 - 2022, where the same lands continue to be abused by people that were not good stewards. While this article is highlighting the issue on a national level, the same issues are visible on state, county, city, and private lands.

It just takes a quick google search to find headlines across the country of federal land closing to dispersed camping because of trash or misuse and damage to the land. Dispersed camping often means there are no amenities, such as pit toilets or trash containers. If campers don't pack out all of their waste (human waste and trash) the land can become trashed very quickly. Are our public lands doomed to be landfills?

While we haven't seen overflowing pit toilets or trash mounded feet high around trash cans in national parks, we have noticed a lot of damage. We've been to dispersed sites and other federal or state lands for hiking and camping across several states in the last few months. Unfortunately, we have also noticed



many signs that warn that the area may close due to abuse. This land abuse takes on many forms. It could be a fire pit where there should be no fire. It could be trees that are illegally cut for firewood. It could be human waste spread around a campsite with the toilet paper "flowers" visible at the base of trees and bushes. It could be non-burnable trash left in a fire pit. It could be bagged up

trash left on the side of the road for someone else to dispose of even when there are no services to pick up the bags. It could be remnants of trash strewn down an animal trail because a camper didn't safely secure their trash while not at the campsite. It could be driving or hiking in areas that should not see vehicle or foot traffic. It could be vandalizing trees or natural landmarks.

## The Not So Perfect Spot

It's so exciting to travel down forest service roads to hunt for the perfect camping spot. But the excitement fades when you come across that perfect spot only to find that campers before you have left their trash behind or worse yet, you see piles of human excrement that wasn't hauled away or disposed of appropriately. If you litter on these public lands, then you are negatively affecting the environment and the experience for those coming after you. At some point, park officials, volunteers, or other users must pick up the trash that was left or we all risk the danger of these areas being closed for use.

## What can we do?

First, clean up after yourself when you're camping and dispose of all waste legally. Beware that any garbage left unprotected while you're not at the campsite will likely be ransacked by critters who will spread it down their trails. Sadly, the common phrase is that "a fed animal is a dead animal." Animals that associate people with food become nuisance animals that must be dealt with. Unfortunately, for larger animals, this typically means that they are euthanized. No one wants a bear wandering around their camp,

scavenging for food.



Second, camp only in established areas. Avoid creating new campsites or new fire pits. If there is an existing fire ring, there are no burn bans, and you have ample wood, use it. It's best to keep the fire small and fully extinguish it with water when you're done using it. If there is no campfire ring and there are no burn bans, you can create a fire pit by shoveling out a small area. When you're done, fully extinguish it with water and then fill the pit back up with the dirt that was removed, so you leave no trace that a fire was there.

Third, put on a pair of gloves, grab a garbage bag and start picking up the area you want to camp in. We live on a river. I am very cognizant of the fact that trash flows downstream and is deposited elsewhere. I frequently pick up water bottles, plastic bags, and other trash on our property before it has the chance to flow further downstream and into Lake Michigan. No matter where we camp, whether it's a national forest or a campground, we always make an effort to



clean up the area to leave it better than it was when we arrived. This sometimes means pulling non burnable trash (plastics or metal) out of the fire pit, picking up cigarette butts, plastic water bottle caps, broken glass, etc. If you spot an animal trail leading to your campsite, you can be certain that animals have been successfully getting food from that site, whether it's from raiding trash that's been left out or simply opening a cooler to pull out some food. Walk down these animal trails that are leading from your site and pick up all of the garbage along the way.

We all travel to these great places to have amazing outdoor experiences. It's imperative that we pick up after ourselves and pass that key lesson on to our children and grandchildren because if we don't, then we are in danger of losing some of those millions of acres of land that belongs to the people.

## Cool Tears Challenge

We challenge you to pick up and properly dispose of one bag of trash for each day that you plan to camp. We may not be the ones destroying the land, but we can choose to be an active, positive part of the solution each and every day. We need to protect the lands that Woody Guthrie wrote about:

***This land is your land, this land is my land  
From California to the New York Island,  
From the Redwood Forest, to the Gulf  
stream waters,  
This land was made for you and me.***

We'd love to see the photos of you picking up trash while out camping on social media, so use the hashtag **#cleaningupcamp** on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

We will highlight the seven principles of "Leave No Trace" in the coming issues so we can all become better stewards of the lands we love. ■



# A HOME BUILT SNOOPY CAMPER



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By **ANNE COX**

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**W**hen Steve Owen set out to build a tiny camping trailer for his family, he wanted something that would stand out at campgrounds from the usual teardrop or squaredrop camper. Steve's wife is a big Snoopy fan and she asked if he could build a tiny camper that would look like Snoopy's doghouse. The wheels started turning in Steve's head as he realized that there were some advantages to building a squaredrop that looks like Snoopy's doghouse. He realized that if built right, the roofline would allow for a loft where the kids could sleep, but it could also fold down for easy transport and then fit neatly in the garage.



Steve's wife gave him this figurine to use as his inspiration. Steve started his build by



purchasing and putting together a 1720 lb capacity, 48 inch by 96 inch super duty folding trailer from Harbor Freight. He did make a few adjustments though so the trailer does not fold. He built the width of the floor an extra six inches on each side so his finished trailer would be five feet wide. He used 1" by 2" framing on the trailer and then added 2" by 3" on top,



securing everything with long three inch screws. With the floor framing complete, he moved on to installing the floor. Steve used  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch wafer board for the floor and attached it to the framing with screws and Liquid Nails. Before flipping the trailer over to seal the bottom, he

also bolted the floor to the frame using carriage bolts.

Steve framed the four foot high walls using a combination of 2" by 2" and 2" by 3" wood,

securing everything with screws and Liquid Nails. He roughed in openings for a window



on each side wall and two windows and two windows and a door on the front of the trailer. The back of the Snoopy doghouse build is a traditional style squaredrop camper door that lifts open to expose the galley. He skinned the

outside of the framed walls with  $\frac{3}{8}$ " plywood and secured them with nails and Liquid Nails.



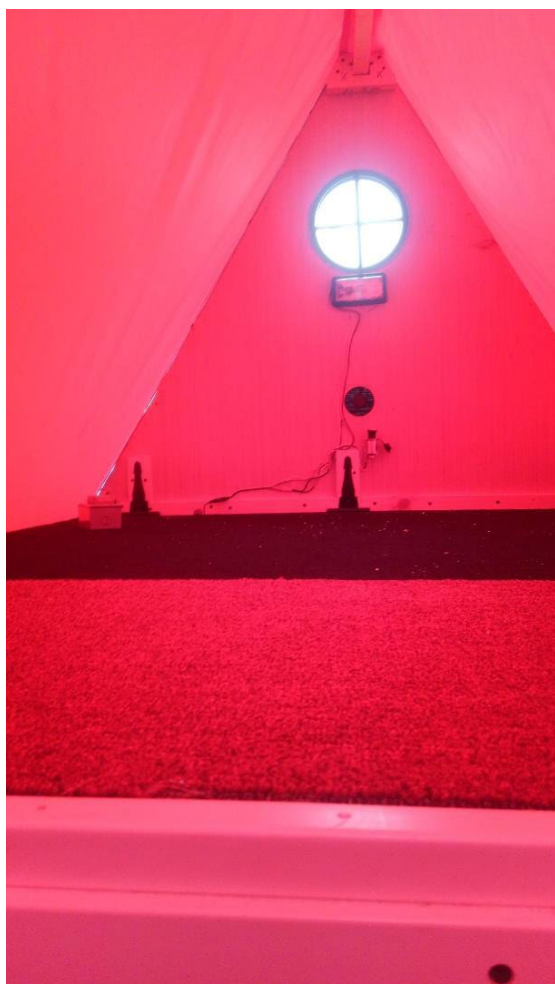
The roof of the trailer is unique and is what provides for an extra sleeping loft that will either fit one adult or two kids. The triangles that form the peak of the roof are attached to the wall

framing with hinges so they fold down for easy transport and for fitting into the garage. Steve originally built the roof two different ways. One roof was framed with 1" by 2" wood and 5mm plywood inside and out. These roof panels had insulation sandwiched between the plywood. The second roof is a red canvas "tent" that he made for the trailer for summer camping. When the two ends are lifted and secured into place (by eyebolts), Steve slides a 2" by 3" piece of lumber into a grooved slot on both ends to form the peak of the roofline. This tent drapes over this piece of wood forming the before attaching it to the sides with snaps. Steve and his family only use the soft top roof now though because

the hard top was difficult to put up and it was heavy.

He installed a 12 volt power pack in the galley and there are lights and outlets throughout the camper. He even installed a small TV antennae and DVD player. He keeps the power pack charged with a solar panel on mounted on the back of his trailer.

Steve's passion for building a tiny camping trailer that would work for his family and their needs shows in this unique build. Thanks for sharing Snoopy's Doghouse with us! ■



*Above: The loft with canvas roof*



*Above: The main cabin with TV*





*Above: The loft opening*



*Above: The completed galley with the power pack under the sink. The shelves and hooks were added for additional storage.*



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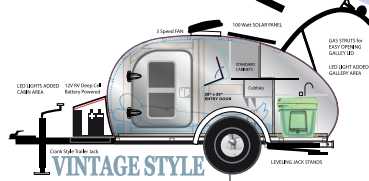
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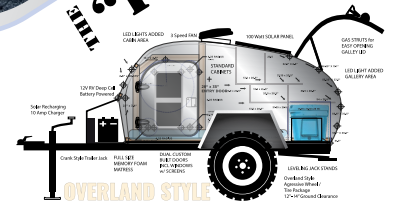
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**Sugarcreek, Ohio. September 7, 2022** – nuCamp, a major manufacturer of campers and teardrop trailers, launched its app on August 22, 2022. This first-of-its-kind, free app features four prominent highlights, including connecting owners. The app was developed to further engagement and cultivate connections within the nuCamp community.

nuCamp has an active community of owners which helps to set them apart from other manufacturers. It is largely for that reason why the company created uCamp: the app. When nuCamp chose to name the app after their annual teardrop trailer rally, they opted to pay homage to an event where many arrive as strangers and leave as friends. The company hopes to offer the same experience with this offering.

The app has three features that ANY RV owner can use to enhance their camping experience: trip planning, memory and photo journaling, and sharing those experiences with family and friends.

Perhaps the app's hallmark is the CONNECT feature. This unique element enables the user to link with other campers in a way much like the popular Life360 app. A user can simply turn on their location and allow themselves to be discovered by fellow uCamp users camping in the area.

Two other features designed explicitly for nuCamp owners include product support and an online store. The support feature provides owners easy access to the nuCamp knowledge base, FAQs, support articles, product manuals, and contact information for the nuCamp customer experience and warranty teams. The online store piece coincided with the launch of the all-new nuCamp branded apparel store based on the nuCamp website.

nuCamp partnered with Augustwenty, an Ohio-based software development consultancy nearly a year ago to tackle this massive undertaking. The synergy created between the two companies brought ideas to life and improved upon them along the way.

nuCamp CEO Scott Hubble stated, "At nuCamp, we continually look for ways to enhance our customers' experience. Our interaction doesn't stop when a camper is purchased. The owners become part of the nuCamp family, and we love seeing the adventures and helping them get the most out of every trip." Hubble added, "The CONNECT feature will continue to bring the feeling of comradery and community to owners all the time — not just at rallies and events. This aspect of the app sets it apart from other apps in the space. Augustwenty's experience and knowledge throughout the project was indispensable."

The nuCamp app is available for download via the Apple App Store for iOS and the Google Play Store for Android.

For more information please visit: <https://nucamprv.com/nucamp-mobile-app/> or reach out to [appsupport@nucamprv.com](mailto:appsupport@nucamprv.com)

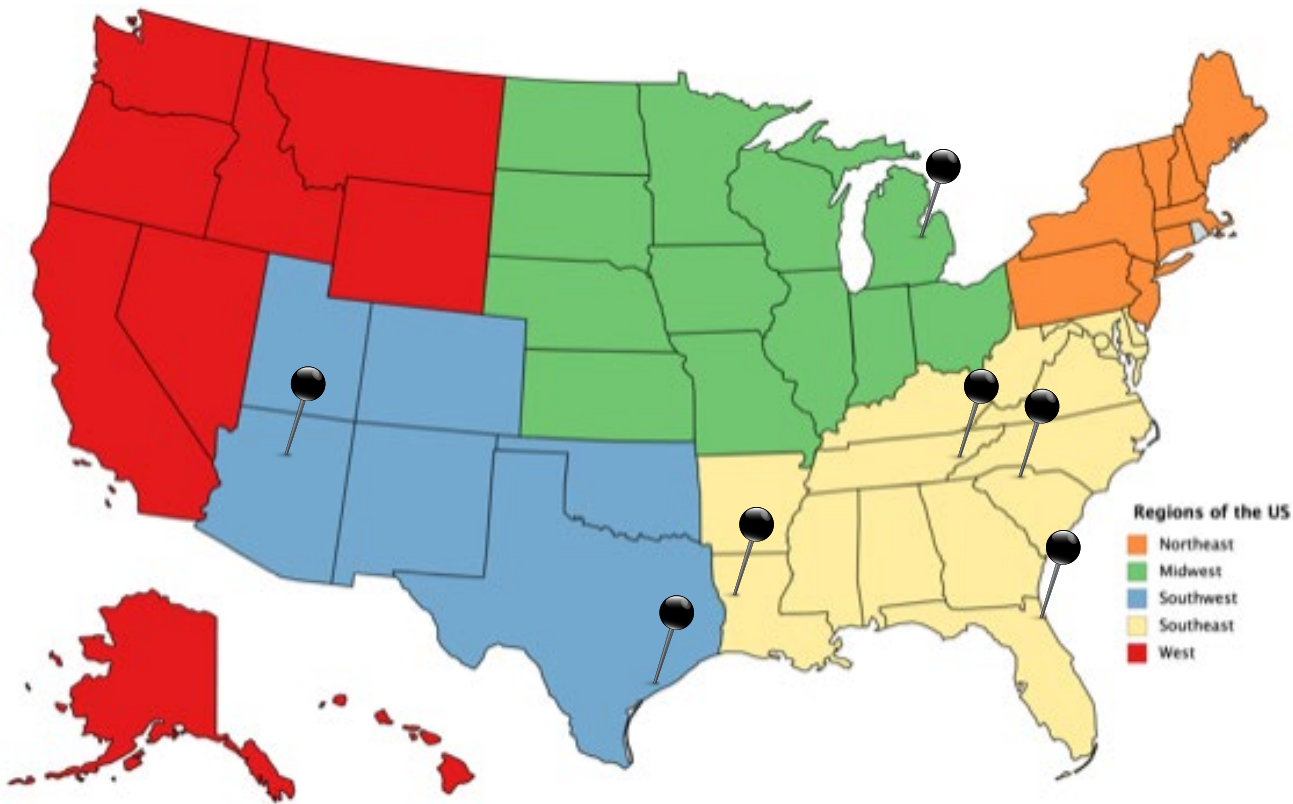
#### About nuCamp

*nuCamp manufactures the highest quality teardrop trailers, teardrop campers and truck campers available on the American market. Our recreational vehicle and trailer products are the result 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.*





# REGIONAL CAMPING SPOTLIGHT



**"You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist."** ~ First Female Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi

What do you do when the kids are off from school, you're already tired of the cold or snowy weather, and you're ready for a holiday adventure? Head out camping! Seriously, spend the holidays exploring a new location, a new culture, or a new holiday.

We'll cover different areas of the country that have different holiday celebrations that are camper friendly. So pack up and head out for a wintertime, holiday adventure that your family won't forget.

Happy camping! ■

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## East

### ChristmasVille - Rock Hill, South Carolina

With more than 70 events, Old Town Rock Hill turns into a picturesque holiday village and outdoor art festival from December 1 through December 4, 2022. The ChristmasVille festival celebrates the art of Vernon Grant who was an artist that settled in the area in the 1930's. Mr Grant was an accomplished artist who created the Snap!® Crackle!® Pop!® characters which can still be found on every box of Kellogg's Rice Krispies.

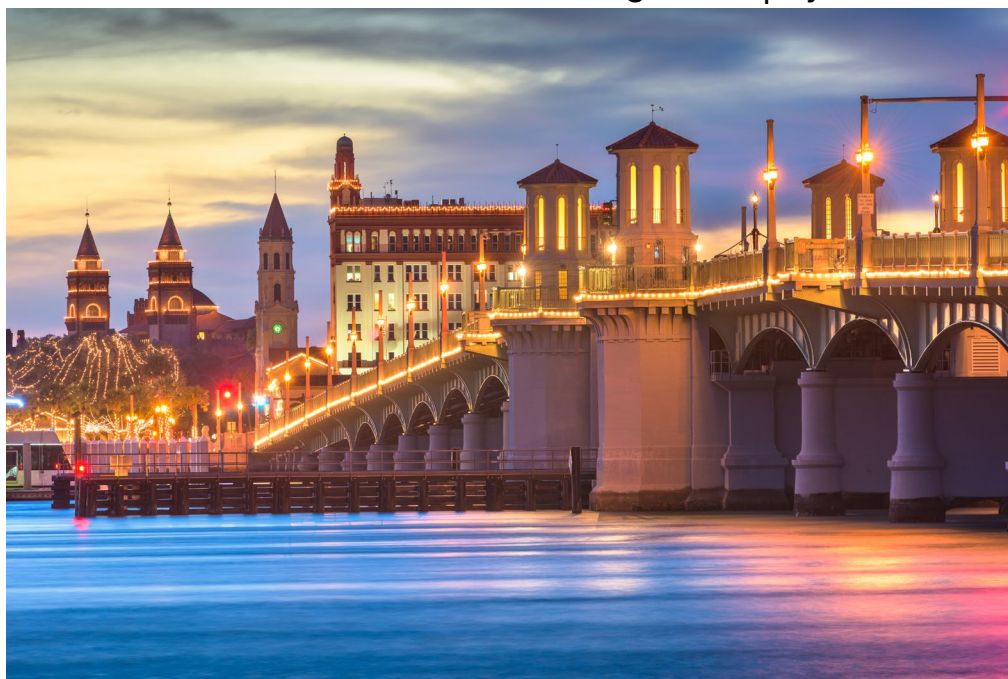
There are events for adults and children throughout the four days of ChristmasVille. Many of the events are free, but there are a few events that do require you to purchase tickets to attend. The activities range from listening to Dickens Carolers or a handbell choir performance, making ornaments, having cookies and cocoa with Santa, voting on your favorite gingerbread

house, watching a parade, making a phone call to the North Pole with Mrs Claus, climbing a rock wall, running in the Reindeer Romp 5k, making candles, enjoying a horse drawn carriage ride, and to tasting bourbon and scotch.

There is no camping onsite, but the Andrew Jackson State Park in South Carolina is only a fifteen mile (24 km) drive away near the border of South and North Carolina. The prices of these campsites range from \$20USD to \$32USD. All twenty five sites have 50 AMP electric hookups and water. This park does require a minimum two night stay.

### 41th Annual Holiday Regatta of Lights and 29th Annual Nights of Lights - St Augustine, Florida

The 41st annual Holiday Regatta of Lights is typically held on the second Saturday of December. The event features boats decorated with brilliant lighted displays.



*St Augustine and Bridge of Lions*



This year's lighted parade will start at 6PM on December 10, 2022. This annual event showcases the maritime heritage of the oldest city of the United States. Viewing from shore is possible from these locations: the Seawall on Bayfront, the Castillo de San Marcos, the Bridge of Lions, and the eastern shore of the bay.

St Augustine also hosts an award winning holiday lights display from November 19, 2022 through January 31, 2023 in the historic city. The city is decorated with more than three million white lights! Businesses in the area stay open later and there are trains and trolleys that offer tours through the best areas. You can also check out the lights via boat or golf cart.

[The Nights of Lights in St Augustine](#) traces its origins back to the traditional Spanish practice of having a white candle in the window during the Christmas holiday. The candles in the windows represent that Mary and Joseph could not find an inn. When the Spanish placed their candles in the windows, they were symbolically making room in their homes and hearts for Jesus.

There are several private and public campgrounds in the St Augustine area that you can call your temporary home away from home.

Anastasia State Park is located just a few minutes away from St Augustine and it has more than 1600 acres (647 ha) of tidal marshes, unspoiled beaches, ancient sand dunes, and maritime hammocks ready for you to explore. The park has 139 campsites. Some sites are paved and have accessible picnic tables and grills. All sites have electricity and water, a picnic table, and fire ring. Pets are welcome. At the time this article was written in early November 2022, there were sites available during the festival.

Faver-Dykes State Park is on the outskirts of St Augustine and it's also close to the highway. The Pellicer Creek forms the southern border of this park and it's a Florida Designated Paddling Trail. The creek has an average depth of 2 to 6 feet and it's one of the most pristine estuarine tidal marshes on the east coast of Florida. This park has 30 campsites in a shady hardwood hammock that features a natural vegetation buffer between most of the sites. Similar to Anastasia State



Park, each site has water, electricity, fire ring, and picnic table. The restrooms are ADA accessible. At the time this article was written in early November 2022, there were sites available during the festival.

If you're looking for more amenities than a state park can offer, then check out the St Augustine Beach KOA. While the cost is more expensive than a state park, you do gain access to a pool that is open year-round, laundry facilities, and more. There are currently sites available.

## Gatlinburg/Pigeon Forge - Tennessee

This eastern Tennessee area provides abundant events and holiday celebrations

from November through mid February.

From November through the end of December, the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad has THE POLAR EXPRESS™ trip which is a 1 ¼ hour round-trip train excursion to the North Pole. Santa boards the train at the North Pole to greet each child and gives them a special gift, just like in the story. Tickets sell out fast, so do pre-order to hold your trip.

Dollywood Smoky Mountain Christmas runs from November 5 through January 1 and it's been voted America's Best Christmas Event for more than a decade. The park is lit up with more than 6 million twinkling lights and award-winning shows fill the air with Christmas cheer. If you attend on a Friday or Saturday night during the event, be sure to





stay for the fireworks display set to holiday tunes that the whole family can sing along with.

The Winterfest Driving Tour of Lights at Pigeon Forge Parkway runs from November 10 through February 19th. You will see more than 5 million lights along this parkway between Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg.

The Gatlinburg Skylift Park is the best way to view the Lights Over Gatlinburg which runs from November 14 through the end of January. This is the most popular holiday lights event in Tennessee and it attracts media attention from around the country.

[There are more holiday events in the area, so click this link for more information.](#)

There are several camping options in the area that are open year round. [Riveredge RV Park has over 175 sites and all have electric](#), wifi, fire rings, picnic tables etc. This RV park definitely caters to the larger campers or motorhomes, but wouldn't it be great to see a teardrop amongst the big rigs?

Panther Creek State Park is open year round and is about 50 miles (80 km) from Pigeon Forge. We have stayed at this state park a few times in the winter. There are great hiking trails in the area where you can stretch your legs. Each of the 50 sites have water, electric, picnic tables, and fire rings. There are two bath houses with hot showers and restrooms. There are sites available at the time of this writing.

The Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg KOA Holiday Campground is closer to the heart of the

holiday events and sites start at about \$50USD/night. There are sites available at the time of this writing.

## Central

### Frankenmuth - MI

Frankenmuth, Michigan is a small city known for its Bavarian-style architecture. Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland claims to be the largest Christmas store in the world. Considering the store is roughly the size of 5 ½ football fields, they might be right. While no visit to Frankenmuth is complete without visiting Bronners and getting a meal from either Zehnder's or the Bavarian Inn (both are



known for their famous family style chicken dinners) the town itself has events all season long.

[Here is a link to this year's holiday guide.](#)

Camping in Michigan in the winter can be

challenging, trust us, we live here. I was surprised to learn that the Frankenmuth Jellystone Park is open during the winter. Note that because the campground is basically in the city, fires are not permitted at every site. However, small fireplaces that are at least 12 inches above the ground can be used.

## **Natchitoches - Louisiana**

If you're looking for somewhere a touch warmer than Michigan for the holidays, then you consider a trip to Natchitoches, which is hosting its 96th annual holiday celebrations this year. The festival runs from November 19th through January 6th. [The schedule changes from day to day, so here is a link to get you to more information.](#)

[This Natchitoches website will show a listing of campgrounds that are in the immediate area of town.](#) I would caution that some of the links provided on this website don't work, but many of the campgrounds have great amenities. The [Natchitoches Pecan Orchard RV Park](#) caught my attention as 51 of their 76 sites are under the shade of pecan trees. There is even a picture of a teardrop on their image gallery online.

## **Various Kwanzaa Events - Houston Texas**

Kwanzaa comes from a Swahili phrase that roughly translates to "the first fruits of harvest" and it's celebrated each year from December 26 through January 1. There are four main Kwanzaa events in Houston, three of which are on December 27th. There is a children's Kwanzaa celebration during the afternoon and then two evening celebrations. The final Kwanzaa event is on January 1. All events are free and open to the public.

There are a few camping areas within a 20 to 55 minute drive from Houston. Stephen F Austin State Park has over 100 sites, with at least a third of them having electric. Note that there are a few days this winter that the park is closed for camping due to hunting, so please be sure to check the dates. Huntsville State Park has 170 sites, (63 have electric). Both state parks have the usual amenities such as hot showers, restrooms, and hiking trails. Like Stephen F Austin State Park, this park is closed for three days for hunting. The Double Lake Recreation Area was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1937. There are 33 sites that are suitable for a teardrop or small camper.

## **West**

### **Polar Express to the Grand Canyon - Williams, Arizona**

Similar to the train ride in Tennessee, the Grand Canyon Railway hosts the Polar Express ride from Williams, Arizona to the "North Pole" to see Santa and his reindeer. The total round trip length lasts roughly 90 minutes and there are two trains each evening, one at 5:30PM and the second at 7:30PM. The trains run most days from November 11 through December 30th.

For convenience, stay at the Grand Canyon Railway RV Park right where you catch the train to the North Pole! All sites have electric, internet, access to an indoor swimming pool and more. There are laundry facilities on site as well as basketball and volleyball courts. Circle Pines KOA Holiday is also located in Williams, Arizona and is open year-round. Suitable sites for a tiny camper start at \$50USD/night. This park also has a heated



indoor pool and hot tubs. This KOA has over 100 sites to choose from. Neither of these two campgrounds are remote or in a national forest, but both put you right in the heart of Williams, Arizona which is a great jumping off point to visit the Grand Canyon.

We know that there are many other great places across the country to visit for the holidays; this is just a sampling of how to incorporate your love of camping with winter holidays. The intent is to help you think outside the box on how and maybe where you celebrate. No matter where you go, how you celebrate, or what you celebrate, stay safe and live life to the fullest. ■



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