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May/June 2021

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MAGAZINE



PLUS: Regional camping spotlight
Stewards of the Night Sky
Two Reader Submitted Home Build Teardrops!

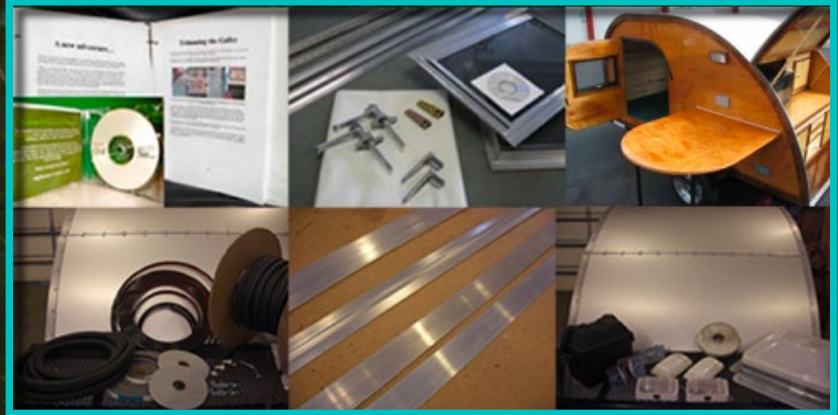
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COOL Tears™ and tiny campers MAGAZINE

Vol. 9 No. 3 May/June 2021

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Letter from the Editor:



Tiny Camper Enthusiasts,

We believe that business and community go hand in hand, even if that community is virtual and spread across several countries and four continents. It has been an honor to be part of this tiny camper community. Thank you for supporting us and the advertisers in our magazine and on our website. As long as we are here, we will always support you! (*Did you know we have readers in North America, South America, Europe, and Australia? We do get a few in Africa and Asia, but not enough to officially add to our count.*)

As the camping seasons ramp up across the northern hemisphere or come to a close in the southern, please keep in mind that we love to have articles submitted by our community. We'd love to hear from you and we believe that everyone has a story to tell. Going forward, we plan to highlight at least one article submitted by someone from the community. If we use one of your articles in a 2021 issue, we will send you a free 2022 calendar when they are available. The same will go for 2022...if you submit an article that is used in the magazine, we will send you a free 2023 calendar. You see how this works.

I have been reaching out to as many people on social media as I can to help continue the dialogue about teardrops, squaredrops, and other tiny campers. It's been a lot of fun interacting with more of our tiny camper community and it's helping to continue to grow our community. We do gain about 100 new subscribers per month, which is fantastic! In some of the social media groups, you'll see me under the Cool Tears name and in others, it will just be under me, Lisa - as not all social media groups allow a page to join a group.

I personally want to thank the following people for becoming patrons of the magazine. We appreciate you and your support. Thank you for being Top Fans of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine

Larry H
Ron L
Michael M
Lindsay K
Robbie S
Theo M
David R
Kathy W
Jason D
Kevin L

Final note: Over the last year, I have had some feedback from readers asking about why areas of the magazine "flash" as they turn the page or why some text looks different in an article. This typically means that if you click on that picture or click on that text, that it will take you directly to another website. It is intended to be an easy method for you to discover information

about other topics of interest to you. It is intentional and there is nothing wrong with your device or how it's uploaded to the website. So click that mouse or tap that finger on a picture and see where it takes you! You may discover something that you can't live without or you may discover a new place to try camping. ■

Safe travels and stay safe

Live Tiny. Live Free.

Lisa Adams

Editor

Cool Tears Magazine™

Lisa@cooltears.com



Photo by Aaron Bills of his home built camper "The Roadlizard"



KITCHEN ON WHEELS

EGG CASSEROLE

If you're looking for a low stress, easy to prepare breakfast casserole while camping, then this can be added to your repertoire. This recipe, coupled with the Omnia Stove Top Oven that we review later in this issue are a perfect match.

Ingredients:

4 to 6 large eggs
2T of milk per egg
2 slices of day-old bread cut or torn into cubes
1 cup of your favorite cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

Additional ingredients depending on taste:

Cooked bacon, ground sausage, or ham
½ cup chopped broccoli (raw or cooked, raw will turn out more al dente)
¼ cup chopped onion
½ cup sliced mushrooms (recommended to pre-cook these some to remove water as mushrooms hold a lot of water)
1 sliced leek (the white part - recommended to pre-cook these some to remove some water)
Any other vegetables that you like or have such as peppers, corn, cauliflower, zucchini, etc
Other dried or fresh herbs such as basil, rosemary, thyme, parsley, cilantro, etc

To make the casserole base, beat the eggs in a large bowl.

Stir in the milk and cheese.

Place the cubed/torn bread in the bottom of your Omnia

Put your additional ingredients of your choice on top of the bread (remember - some of your optional ingredients may need to be pre-cooked. You can cook your ingredients in this oven and then add the other items as listed above.)

Lastly, pour the egg mixture over everything in your Omnia. Ideally, everything should at least be touching some of the egg mixture. If you need to add more egg mixture, see the tip above.

Since this will not rise much, it is possible to fill the Omnia to within 1" of the top of the pan.

Bake this over your heat source at approximately 350F for about 30 minutes or until set. Most things do not brown in the Omnia, but the egg casserole should be relatively firm to the touch when finished. Let rest for about

10 minutes before serving.

If you use the silicone ring for the Omnia, then cleanup is very easy. If you used the silicone ring, do NOT use a sharp knife to cut your egg casserole. A plastic knife or a dull kitchen knife are both fine. Cut into 3 - 4 inch wedges to serve.

An all time favorite of mine is to use sauteed leeks, cooked bacon, gruyere cheese (a type of Swiss cheese) with a pinch of nutmeg. ■



Left: Egg casserole prep. There is cooked sausage on the bottom, with broccoli and spinach on top.

Right: The finished product! The eggs have set and Anne sprinkled feta cheese on top before cutting and serving. This dish served 4 adults for breakfast with enough leftovers for the next morning.





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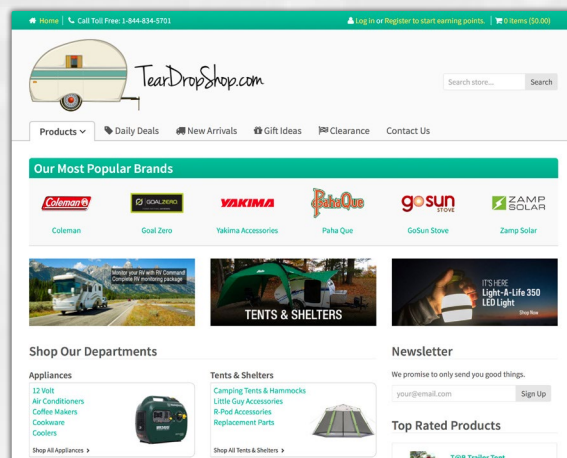
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STEWARDS OF THE NIGHT SKY

By **Lisa Adams**

Even though International Dark Sky week was prior to this issue being published, there are still many ways for us tiny camper enthusiasts to get involved. A large focus of the International Dark Sky Associations work is on education about light pollution and methods to reduce that pollution. Remember this picture that was captured by Colleen Olsen (opposite page)? Not everyone in the world has the opportunity to view the Milky Way as shown on the cover of the 2021 Cool Tears and Tiny Campers calendar, because of light pollution.



This article will focus on steps that can be taken by anyone to get involved with improving our view of the night sky regardless of what country or city you may live in.

Light pollution is defined as excessive, misdirected, or obtrusive artificial light. These are some of the negative effects of having too much light pollution: it prevents us from seeing the stars (or many stars) in the night sky, it interferes with astronomical research, it can disrupt ecosystems, it can create health issues, and it wastes energy. For nearly 20 years, I spent a week in Hilton Head Island, SC for vacation. For those that have been there before, there are two things that you may have noticed. 1. It's not easy to get around because businesses are tucked back from the street. 2. It's hard to find things at night because it's so dark!

When the island was being developed, there was a focus to remain true to nature, so signage is low to the ground and they only have lights pointing directing to the signs. They also have a light ordinance that requires all exterior light fixtures that are visible from the beaches to be pointed downward and have a shield or they must be turned off between the hours of 10PM and 6AM during certain times of the year. You may be wondering why this city would actually pass a law relating to outdoor lighting. It's because of sea turtles.

From May to October, it's sea turtle mating and nesting season. The city works hard to protect the endangered loggerhead turtles as well as the leatherbacks, green sea turtles, and other species of turtles who lay their eggs along the shores of Hilton Head Island. Anyone with lights facing the beach are required to turn their outside lights off and to draw their blinds/curtains to prevent the interior light from being visible as well. The light pollution along the shore confuses the turtle hatchlings and it causes them to move toward the lights, not the ocean, which means they will not survive. The lights can also prevent the females from coming to shore for nesting. The city and businesses take this so seriously that even the Westin Resort and Spa on the island invested in a special film to cover the exterior windows of their event space to make sure that there are no bright lights visible outside resulting from their events.

The above is a perfect example of how having too much light pollution can disrupt our ecosystems. As tiny campers going out for a weekend, it's not likely that we're interfering with astronomical research, or creating health issues for people, but we could be affecting how we or others around us view the night sky and we might be having an effect on the animals around us. So what can we do as tiny camper enthusiasts to help improve our night sky?

First, we could limit our use of lights whenever possible. This seems pretty basic, but it's a great first step to helping improve the night sky for ourselves and others. Many teardrop, squaredrop, and other tiny campers have LED lights under the trailer as well as on top. These definitely add a custom touch to the tiny camper, but please limit their use

and definitely turn them off when you head to bed. Many nocturnal animals lives revolve around regular day and night cycles. Since we typically go away from the cities and into the animal's natural habitat for camping, we could be disrupting their normal nighttime activities, which can cause major issues for some species. For example, some species are drawn to artificial light, such as the turtles mentioned above. Other species are attracted to the lights as well, which leads them away from their safe environment and it often makes them more visible to predators. While you may be thrilled at first that insects are drawn to the light and may die, it does also affect the birds or bats or other animals that rely on those insects for food. Seeing fireflies (or lightning bugs, as I knew them) while outside on a summer night used to be a common occurrence, but overall light pollution is resulting in a loss of habitat and they are not as prevalent as they once were. They rely on darkness to attract a mate to reproduce, but as light pollution increases, they move further away from the lights, if possible. Our grandkids may not experience the joy of running around the yard trying to catch a few lightning bugs and then watching them glow while perched on our hands.





North America light pollution

Secondly, if we use lights, we could shield them downward. Many camping lights on the market today already do this to reduce the environmental impact. When the light isn't shielded, it can point outwards, upwards and all around which can negatively affect the wildlife and other campers nearby. A few years ago, we purchased a few [Luci lights](#). While we weren't thinking about light pollution at the time, we did like that they

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are small, lightweight, solar powered lights that have adjustable brightness levels. They are designed to point downward and they don't spill too much light upwards in the night sky. These lights are great for us. If we will be leaving the campsite for the day, we deflate them and set them on the dashboard of the truck where they can recharge quickly in the daylight. If we stay at the campsite for the day, we still usually deflate them and set them either on the ground or on a table for recharging. (Hint: These lights are so lightweight, that if not deflated or attached to something, they are more prone to blow away by the wind.)

The last easy adjustment that we can make as responsible tiny camper enthusiasts is to choose warm colored lights, such as those with yellow or orange hues. It has been proven that cooler lights, like on computers or other mobile devices affect our sleep cycles. As a result, many electronic devices will automatically change from blue or cool

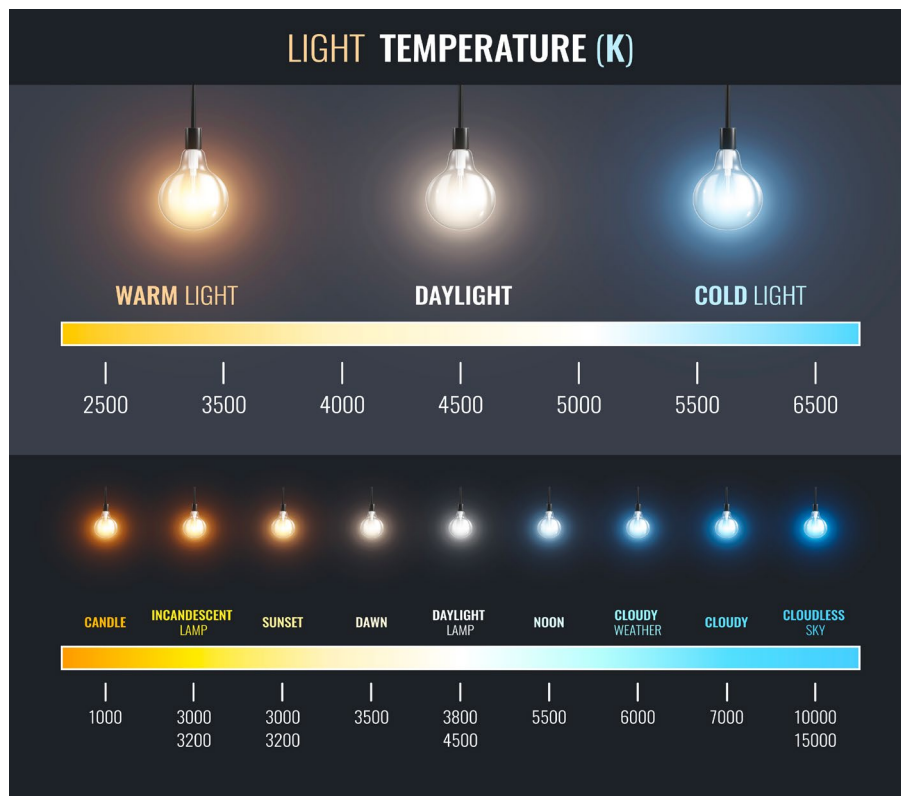
lights during the day to warmer tones at night. This is great for us, but if we have cool colored lights outside while camping, the animals can't flip a switch and change the color temperature. Similar to humans, the cool lights affect the circadian rhythms of the animals as well. When purchasing lights to use on your tiny camper, consider buying lights that are under 2700K or buy LEDs with adjustable colors that you can "warm up" at night. Not only will the animals appreciate the color adjustment, so will your human neighbors at the campsite. (Hint: Using low intensity red or green lights help to preserve

increase our chances of having a great view of the night sky and it should also have less of an impact on the environment around us as well.

International Dark Sky Week was April 5th - 12th and it included events globally to help teach people about the dark sky movement and to discover the night sky where you live. One of the ongoing events is "Globe at Night" which is "an international citizen-science campaign to raise public awareness of the impact of light pollution by inviting citizen scientists to measure & submit their night sky brightness observations." Fortunately, the

Globe at Night program runs the entire year and is available to anyone globally.

To participate in the Globe at Night, all you need is either a smartphone/mobile device or a computer, which you have if you're reading this digital magazine. Each month, there is roughly one week set aside for citizen scientists to re-record local measurements to help promote awareness and monitor light pollution locally. This is compiled into a global database that is then used to compare trends year over year regarding light pollution as well to help collect data on energy consumption, and the impacts on plants, wildlife, and human health.



your night vision.)

In summary, using our lights less frequently at night, pointing them downward, and adjusting the color to warmer tones can all help reduce light pollution in our area which will

Here's how Globe at Night works. Each month, a date range and constellation are selected. Constellations are selected for the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, so everyone can participate. During the

campaign dates, go outside about an hour or more after sunset (but before the moon comes up.) Let your eyes adjust to the darkness for at least ten minutes before making your first observation. Use a night sky app on your smartphone to find the constellation as its position will vary in the night sky based on your location. Once you have found the constellation, go to the Globe at Night Report page and answer the six questions. On question number three, there are a series of drawn pictures available of the constellation, simply select the picture that most closely matches what you're physically seeing in your night sky. That's it! Once submitted your data will be entered into the database and it will help develop maps to show the light pollution around the globe. At the time of this writing, people have made



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Globe at Night

1 When did you make your observations?

Observation Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Observation Time (24 hour time)

Switch to [Nighttime version](#).

2 Where did you make your observations?

[Map It!](#)

Map Satellite Red

Location correct: ☐ [Reset GPS](#)

Latitude:
Longitude:
Elevation: meters
Country:

Location comments

(E.g., Rural, suburban, or urban location; Snow cover? Number of streetlights, porchlights or other light sources (vending machines, etc.) in vicinity; Trees or structures in vicinity)

3 How dark was the sky that night?

Constellation: Boötes

4 What were sky conditions like that night?

Clear 1/4 of the sky 1/2 of the sky More than 1/2 of the sky

Sky condition comments (E.g., Haze – direction? Clouds – type, direction? Sky glow/light dome – direction?)

5 Did you use a Sky Quality Meter (SQM)?

SQM reading

Serial Number

6 Ready to send us your data?

If you have a SciStarter account and would like to earn credit for your contribution to Globe at Night, enter the email you used to create your SciStarter account:

SUBMIT DATA

14,770 observations from 70 countries. The goal for 2021 is to collect at least 20,000 observations from people around the world.

In closing, as tiny camper enthusiasts, we enjoy getting away from the hustle and bustle of our lives as we dive into nature. We should be good stewards of not only the land, but also the sky and work to protect the night skies now and for our kids and grandkids. We've highlighted three easy steps to take to help reduce light pollution while camping as well as highlighted one fun way to help collect data on our current night sky. Whether you're out camping in your favorite hideaway or at home, we encourage you to help the International Dark Sky Association collect data through their Dark Sky at Night program so we can help become part of the solution and reduce light pollution. ■



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Photo by Jim and Barb Steffens on their way to Pictured Rocks and Lake Superior. What a great shot of The Mighty Mac!



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By **Chuck Koehler**
with **Lisa Adams**

The last few issues have highlighted different teardrop kit manufacturers and Chuck Koehler shared a photo journal in which he documented his build. He used the Big Woody plans and followed their step by step process with building his teardrop. Chuck built a great teardrop as you will see through his photos on the following pages.

Thanks to Chuck for sharing his great teardrop project!

Be sure to check out the Big Woody ad on the inside front cover of the magazine.

Chuck used the Big Woody plans and followed the manufacturers step by step process of building his camper. The plans allow many options for building and for being creative. The first step in building his teardrop camper (nicknamed: Woodrow) was to build the metal frame which included electric brakes. He found a local welder to build the foundation for the camper and he also worked in the early stages to insulate the floor. At this point, he covered the floor with particle board because installing a finished floor would come later.



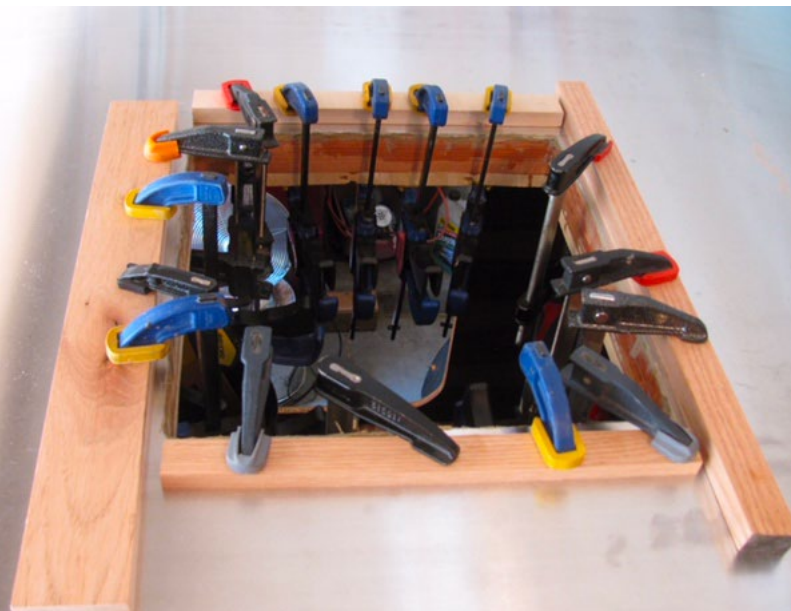
The 2"x4"s need to be attached to the frame of the trailer being sure to leave a gap of 3/4" to set the side walls to the trailer. Note the space at the front of the trailer for a toolbox, battery, and spare tire. The foundation for the teardrop is 5'x8'. The sides of the teardrop are made from 3/4" dual sided walnut plywood that he purchased in standard 4'x8' sheets. Chuck also installed a beautiful cedar tongue and groove floor.



Next up, building the roof supports. Electrical wiring and the kitchen structures go in next.



Chuck next worked on the foam insulation as sheets are cut to fit between the roof ribs and the tongue and groove ceiling boards. The 1/8" thick plywood bends over then, meeting up with the walnut sidewall curves. He then cut out moulding made from a 4'x8' sheet of plywood, that he painted black, glued and tacked in place. The 4'x8' sheet of aluminum was glued to the plywood roof with an all purpose heavy duty glue - Chuck adds, "it's best to have extra hands." He placed stainless steel screws every four inches, in pairs, on the edge of the black moulding. The hole for the fantastic fan used a lot clamps!



The curved hatch frame fits along the kitchen curve opening. He used a stainless steel piano hinge to attach the hatch. He performed the same aluminum skinning method on the plywood hatch as he had the rest of the teardrop roof. The bottom right image on the page shows the finished kitchen complete with 12v lights and 120v dual power plug. There is a slide out lobster cage drawer for large storage and a slide out drawer for utensils. The upper cabinets are 8" deep which leaves enough space for a toaster or microwave oven. The floor in the galley is linoleum.

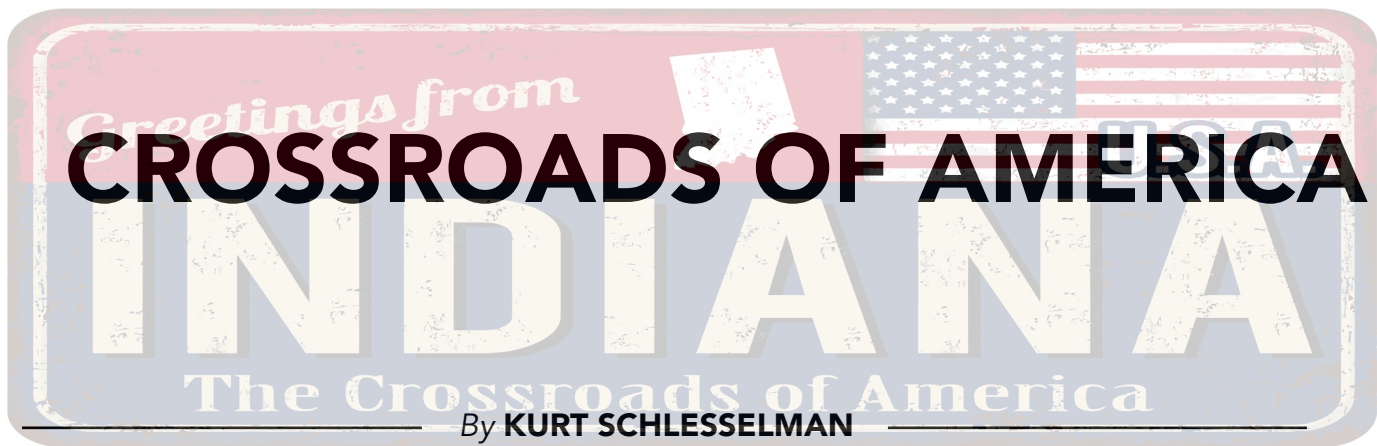


Chuck adds that the Big Woody Campers Manual had hundreds of photos that help guide you through the process of building your own teardrop. The instructions were clear and well written. Another bonus is that they sell parts and accessories for the build and the owner was helpful on the phone. The book really helps keep you moving with a step by step process.

All of his hard work has paid off and he has an amazing teardrop! The last few pictures submitted by Chuck show the interior as well as a few of them enjoying their teardrop in Arizona state parks. Well done Chuck! Woodrow is a work of art!

Thank you for sharing your build with us! ■ <http://www.bigwoodycampers.com>





"Crossroads of America" is a name associated with many places in the middle of the country but to "us" [the Hoosier Chapter of Tearjerkers] it has a special meaning.

This event is sponsored by the "Camping and RV community" as well as the help from other Tearjerkers Chapters such as Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, Southern Appalachian and Illinois. Also keeping the event manageable are dedicated helpers from other chapters, all in an effort to make the gathering a fun and memorable event.

In 2011 the inaugural event of the "Crossroads of America Gathering" [CRA] event took place at McCormick's Creek State Park in Spencer, Indiana.

A great turnout of campers began signing up for one of the biggest Teardrop trailer gathering in the nation. The excitement was amazing and the 146 registrations added to the fun with 26 states and 2 countries represented.

So far we have had 5 very successful biennial events which means, of course that CRA2021 will be our sixth gathering.

This year we have decided to move the gathering to a new venue and a new date. We are hoping to fight back against the mid-summer heat that has plagued us in past events. Only time will tell if our decision was a good thing.

Instead of McCormick's Creek SP, the venue for CRA2021 will be at:

Whitewater State Park in Liberty, IN.

September 9-12, 2021

We are attracting Sponsors to help us successfully fund the event and will be offering Registration forms [on our web site] for the attendees. Details can be found at: CRA2021.com

Special thanks to "Cool Tears" magazine for publishing this notice and helping us spread the word.

CRA2021 committee
CRA2021.weebly.com

OMNIA STOVETOP OVEN: IS IT WORTH HAVING IN OUR GALLEY?

By **COOL TEARS STAFF**

Note: While we did receive this product for free, this is not a paid endorsement, nor will we be compensated in any way if you choose to make a purchase of this product. We are writing this review to share our real experiences with the product for the benefit of our readers. There is a discount code at the end of this article if you do want to purchase the Omnia Stove Top Oven.

We are tiny camper and camping enthusiasts. If we look at the different Facebook groups or forums, there are always discussions about the galley. Several times per week, in some sort of camping or RV related group, someone poses the question "I'm picking up my camper this Friday, what's the one thing I must have"? Of course the answers are different from the hundreds of responses that are given. Honestly, if you would have asked us that last year, our answer would have been different than it is now.

Soon after becoming the editor of this magazine, the CEO of Omnia Sweden contacted me about trying out the Omnia Stove Top Oven. At the time, I told him I wasn't interested. I wasn't

interested because I didn't want another "gadget" that we would need to pack in our teardrop galley or kitchen box. But as the magazine about teardrops, squaredrops, and other tiny campers, I figured we owe it to our readers to be the guinea pig. So I emailed him again in late 2020. A week or two later, I received my very own Omnia Stove Top Oven with several accessories.

The Omnia

The Omnia Stove Top Oven looks similar to a bundt pan, but with a lid. There are three main pieces to the Omnia: a stainless steel bowl shaped base, the aluminum baking pan, and the red aluminum lid. All three of these need to be used together to work correctly. This circular pan has a diameter of just under 10 inches or 250mm and is about 2 ¾ inches tall or 70mm. It's large enough to hold about 8 cups of batter, which is large enough for a 9 inch cake mix or box of brownies.

The Omnia works by placing the bowl shaped base directly on your heat source. As a side note, from December through February, I tried this in our home on our gas stove top. Since March, we have used it solely in our teardrop galley on our two burner propane stove. The Omnia can be used on any heat source except an induction burner, it can even be used over a campfire if you prefer to cook over fire. When the base is set on top of a heat source, it directs the hot air around the bottom of the pan so it provides heat from below. The large hole in the base allows the hot air to rise to hit the lid so it also provides heat from the top, very similar to using a conventional oven. Note that the red lid does have some ventilation holes as well to release some heat and moisture as you cook.



What can you cook in the Omnia?

So what can you cook in this circular pan from Sweden? My first reaction is "just about everything." Our first attempt was a batch of savory, parmesan scones directly from the Omnia cookbook. We've also made a frangipane (almond tart), a birthday cake, a crustless quiche, a loaf of bread (granted, it's round) and lamb kofta with rice. While I have not tried these yet, I have seen successful meals (from an Omnia users Facebook group) of pizza (just cut the center out of your premade crust or shape your crust in a circle), meatloaf, a roasted chicken,

Our Experiences

We first used the Omnia in December to make a batch of savory, parmesan scones, which we thought would be an easy first test. While they were edible, we did over bake them and they were burned on the bottom. For just a few simple ingredients though, it was a very tasty treat and is one that could easily be made while camping. (We later learned that we should have used the metal baking grid too to help lift the scones up off the bottom a bit). Our next attempt was a frangipane (an almond tart). We needed to get this right as it was going to be a birthday cake for a dear friend of ours. Let's just say that the taste was amazing as we expected, but we did get a similar result of burning it a little bit. (We still took it that evening for the birthday cake, we just cut a few of the burned bits off.)

We were clearly having an issue with understanding how to get to a baking temperature of 350 or 400F with only a knob on the gas stove. We had noticed that some on the Facebook group that we're in had commented about having the same issue and they solved it with a cheap grill thermometer. We found this one at a local DIY store and decided to give it a try. We did have to enlarge one of the holes in the lid a touch with a drill bit before we could install it, but that only took about 30 seconds. We're not 100% convinced that it's accurate, but it gets us in the vicinity of where we need to be from a temperature perspective.

Next came the outdoor trials on our propane camp stove. Last month, we drove north to the UP (Upper Peninsula) of Michigan for a weekend camping trip with friends. In two short days, we made another birthday cake, a crustless quiche, a loaf of bread, and lamb kofta with rice. We did cheat a little bit on the ingredients so it was easier to prepare than what we do at home normally. For the birthday cake, we used two packets of Martha White muffin mix. These are roughly 7 oz packets of mix that just require you to add milk. This was extremely easy to do while camping and we'll definitely do this again. The other cheat that we used was for the bread. We had Rhodes frozen dinner rolls in our freezer at home. Saturday AM, we took them out of the portable freezer and placed them in the silicon ring of the Omnia and set the lid on it. Frozen dinner rolls or frozen bread first needs to thaw and then rise in a warm place, which can be challenging while camping, especially in the north in early March. We set it on the dashboard of the truck and left it there for about three hours. Since it was a sunny day, the truck had warmed up nicely and the rolls were thawed and risen in time for us to bake them for lunch. They honestly had raised so much that instead of individual rolls at this point, we had a loaf. It only took about 15 - 20 minutes to bake it on our little propane cook stove and we had fresh bread for lunch!



We do want to mention that for everything we have made in our little oven, we did use the silicon ring, which makes cleanup a snap. It cleans easily with a wet sponge or cloth or even paper towel. Without this insert, we would think that trying to clean the aluminum stove would be a bit more time consuming. Because we have solely used the insert, the rest of the Omnia stays clean and there has been no reason to wash it between meals.

Our Verdict

We're hooked now on the Omnia oven. While we are definitely foodies, even at camp, this will definitely open up our camp meals to more options. We do have a cast iron Dutch oven, but we don't always take it with us because it's heavy, takes up a lot of space, is not always easy to clean, and we don't always have a fire to cook over. The Omnia is more portable. It's super light weight, it's easy to clean and we can use it on the propane cook stove or on the fire. The Omnia will remain in our galley from now on as it's



a great kitchen accessory, it's not another gimmick. The Omnia Stove Top Oven is the real deal. With the exception of cooking a holiday turkey, you can cook anything in this portable oven that you would in your oven at home which opens up a ton of possibilities for your camping meals. On a scale of 1 to 10 stars, with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest, we give the Omnia Stove Top Oven a solid 9 stars! We're deducting a point because we felt we needed to add a thermometer for better success. Maybe with more practice, we'll find that the thermometer isn't required - but it definitely helped lessen our learning curve. The knob on the lid also gets very hot, which we didn't expect at first - so do use a hot pad or something similar while taking the lid off. This may be specific to our stove, but when we remove the lid, flames do shoot up through the hole in the middle, so it did make stirring or moving items more challenging during cooking.

The different Omnia related Facebook groups as well as the Omnia website have recipes and hints on how to use the product to its fullest potential.

At the beginning of the article, we mentioned that if someone asked us what was the one, must have thing for our camping set up a year ago versus now that our answer would have been different. The Omnia Stove Top Oven tops that list now. We won't camp without it. It's super easy to use and it allows us to eat like we would at home, but with less clean up.



Generous Offer

Omnia Sweden has generously offered to help our tiny camper community. They are offering a 20% discount on one product for ten days by using the promo code "cooltears20." This code is valid until May 20, 2021 only. The Cool Tears recommendation is to, at a minimum, purchase the oven, a silicone ring, and the baking grid. This will get you baking or roasting in no time while you're camping. We also have the recipe book, a carrying bag, which helps to keep everything together as well as the silicone muffin ring. While we've not used the muffin ring yet, we have plans to on our next camping trip. Click here to purchase <https://buyomniaus.com> and don't forget to use the promo code "cooltears20."



Omnia is also going to giveaway one Omnia stovetop oven with recipe book to one of our readers! To enter the giveaway, send an email to Anne@cooltears.com with "Omnia giveaway" in the subject line. We will randomly select a winner on June 1st and the product will be shipped directly from Omnia. ■



2nd Annual Calendar Photo Contest

You helped to make our first annual calendar contest a success! Let's keep that rolling this year. Help us fill a Cool Tears and Tiny Campers 2022 calendar with amazing outdoor shots of YOUR campers, whether it's a teardrop, squaredrop, or other tiny camper.

We are looking for creative photos that celebrate tiny campers in beautiful locations around the world. The best 13 photos will be selected to be in the Cool Tears and Tiny Campers 2022 calendar. The top three winners will receive a free calendar and some Cool Tears swag. The ten other winning entries will receive a free calendar. Your photo entry may also appear in the Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine or across the Cool Tears social media channels.

Please note that the dates are earlier than last year. While we were quick in shipping out the calendars once we received them, we didn't anticipate some of the issues that cropped up. We definitely didn't expect the issues with getting the correct envelopes from the USPS or the delays in shipping times. We've learned from our mistakes and will do better this year.

The Rules:

- Photos must be taken in an outdoor setting
- Photos must be high-resolution digital images
- The preference is at least a 1MB picture, higher is fine. Most mobile phones meet this criteria
- Touching up or adding filters to photos prior to submitting is allowed
- No negatives, printed photos or links to web libraries.
- Photos must be horizontal orientation - if you're taking a picture with a phone, turn it sideways
- Entries must include the following information: Name of photographer, location, indicate if the camper is home built or manufactured, and title of photo (if you have one)
- Images become the property of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers. No images will be returned. You will be given credit for the photo, if used
- Parties submitting photos certify that they have permission of all individuals shown in each photo and all individuals owning property shown in each photo.
- We will blur out any visible license plate
- Submit your entries to: Anne@cooltears.com

Timeline:

The deadline to submit photos to the 2022 Cool Tears and Tiny Campers calendar is September 19, 2021.

Winners will be contacted by October 3, 2021.

We will open the website for orders on October 1, 2021 and the calendars will be ready to start shipping in early November. ■

Harvest Hosts is a membership program that provides access to a network of wineries, farms, breweries, museums and other unique attractions that invite self-contained RVers to visit and stay overnight. If you have a self contained teardrop or tiny camper (indoor cooking and toilet required), then consider a membership to Harvest Hosts. Click the logo below to get 15% off the regular yearly price.



NOTE: One of the great things about having a digital magazine is the ability to link you directly to the products or services that you want to hear more about. Some of the links on our website or in the magazine are affiliate links where we earn a small commission on goods that you purchase, this does NOT raise the price of what you're purchasing in any way. These commissions help us to continue to defray the costs of publishing this magazine. You may notice as you read through the magazine that if you put your mouse over any ad, the screen may flash briefly. You can click on that picture of our advertisers and it will take you directly to their website.

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. Again, this does NOT raise the price of what you're purchasing in any way.

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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The Conception of a Dragon

Part II

By MELODY MILLER

In the November/December 2020 issue, Melody Miller shared with us the first installment of *The Conception of a Dragon*. Here is part two of her story. [You can click anywhere in this sentence to be taken to the back issue that includes her first article.](#)

It has now been six months since the first outing in The Lair. We have camped every month, since. Sometimes, several times a month. Our trips have taken us to Texas, Oklahoma, and Tennessee.

In February our planned trip was cancelled. However, due to the week long snow and three days without electricity, The Lair was our bed for those three nights, keeping warm with a generator and ceramic heater. All along, our teardrops have been our emergency

plan. There is always three watertight and critter proof containers of food ready to go. There have been two trips in which we were boondocking. With two generators, porta potty in a separate tent, a water pump, on demand water heater, potable water containers, and recently a 200 watt solar panel, we have easily been able to be self-contained for four day weekends without site hookups.



The unique aspects of the build are many.

The design itself is original. The theme is not only dragons, but books. The shelf above the bed can be used to display a mini library. Much of the decorations are book maps and other things derived from bookish ideas. There are several epoxy and wood features, from the black walnut, live-edge "fire wall," counter top, light covers, and to serving trays. The trim and door fronts are walnut and beech, creating a contrasting ambiance of dark and

light woods. The floor plan is open, while still having plenty of storage. Two drawers under the bed are for clothing. There is a back cabinet with sliding doors for various needs. In the nose, the cabinet has two drawers for smaller things like flashlights and remote controls for the tv and lighting. More cabinets are planned, and yet to be



built. Under each bench is storage for less frequently used items, mostly seasonal decorations. The galley has plenty of storage, as well, and a live-edge cedar shelf.

The actual building of the Lair was done 100% by John and myself. However, it would have not been possible to be what it is



without the talented help of a few major people. The "awnWing" was discussed and planned for months with Shelley of Shelley's Vintage Camper Awnings. When it came time to produce it, Shelley contracted a nearly fatal case of COVID. Therefore, we took the design to our

son, Elliot, who works at Mark Faries Top and Trim, and was allowed to use the industrial sewing machine after hours. Lastly, without the direction of Superior Graphics on which program to use and basics on pixels, etc. Lagniappe, the dragon herself, would never have come into existence. We have also had several friends gift us very special and meaningful





dragon items, which are displayed while we camp. The wheels were gifted to us by our son, William. Good friends, the Brooks, donated a roof top air conditioner, which needed a little bit of repair, but our regular AC specialist was able to do this for us.

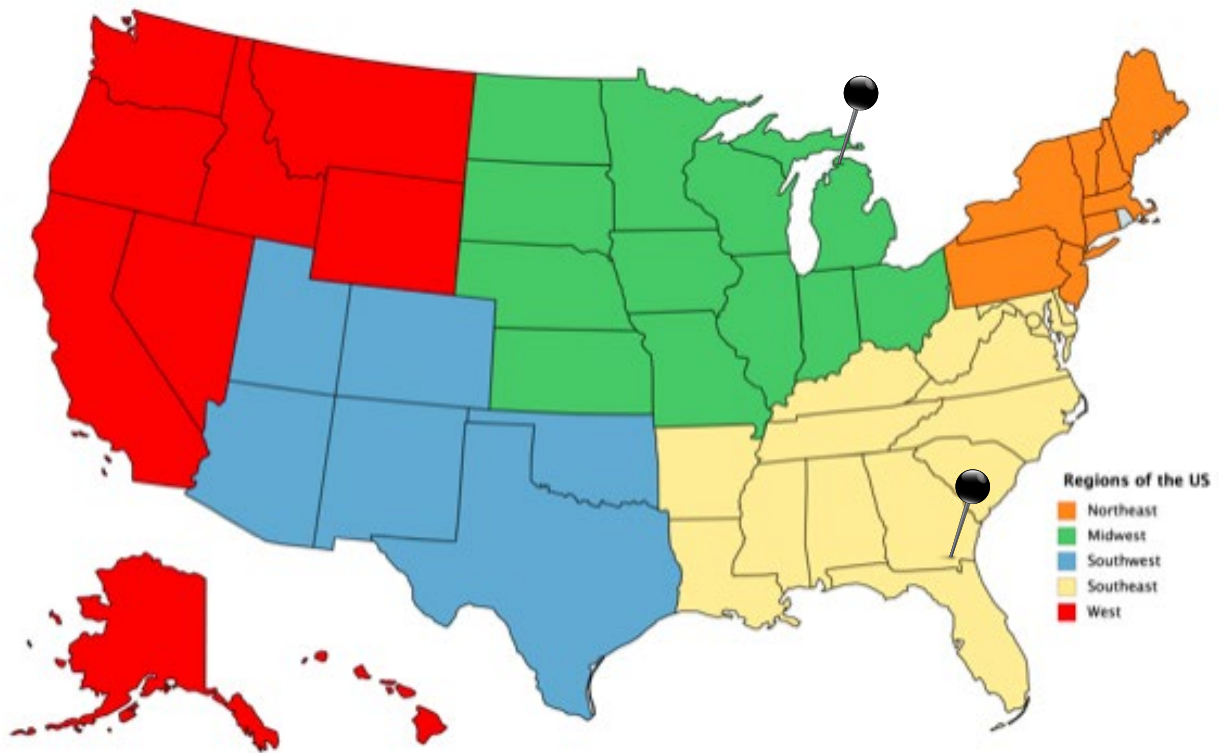
We have be very blessed to have met so many people in the teardrop community both in person and online. I know that we wouldn't have been able to accomplish so much without all the love and support of so many. Inevitably I have not recognized everyone, but if you know us, you know what you mean to our camping family. We are very active in 4 teardrop groups, DIY Teardrop Campers Community, South Central Teardrops (from tnttt,) Southwest Teardrop & Vintage Trailer, and Texas Vintage Trailer Club.



Here's to the many adventures we've had and to many more in the future. Honk if you see us in the wild. ■



REGIONAL CAMPING SPOTLIGHT



Created with mapcharttool ©

"Only when it is dark enough can you see the stars." ~
Martin Luther King, Jr

This quote was from the last speech that Martin Luther King, Jr gave before he was assassinated. In context, he was speaking on the large problems in the world at that time; however, we can often pull a nugget out of that statement and apply it to own our lives. We all face difficulties during our lives of varying degrees, but it's important to consider the stars in our own lives, and realize that only the brightest will shine during those dark times.

These two campgrounds have the dark sky designation in common; however, both have plenty to offer for people not interested in the night sky, as well. Martin Luther King, Jr's quote can be interpreted in many ways. Despite everything going on in our lives, keep gazing at the night sky, keep using your tiny campers, because we have to go through the dark times to see the beauty in life, like the stars in the night sky. ■

Location: Wilderness State Park

903 Wilderness Park Drive
Carp Lake, MI 49718

Getting There:

GPS Info (Latitude, Longitude):

45.7341, -84.9028

45°44'03"N, -84°54'10"W

Wilderness State Park is located just eleven miles west of Mackinaw City near the northern tip of the lower peninsula of Michigan. This beautiful state park boasts 26 miles (~42km) of Lake Michigan shoreline and it includes more than 10,000 acres (4047 ha). The park is a mixture of wild, dense coniferous forest and mature hardwood forests, as well as including open meadows, small ponds and wetlands. The area is also home to black bears, snowshoe hares, beaver, porcupine, bobcats, and otters. Occasionally, wolves can be in the area as well, which has been confirmed by the DNR. The park's cobble beach areas also provide an excellent habitat for the federally endangered piping plover.

Wilderness State Park is adjacent to the Headlands International Dark Sky Park (9 miles away or 14.4 km) which is open 24/7/365. Note that no camping is allowed on the grounds of Headlands, nor are campers or tents of any kind allowed on that property. You are encouraged however to pack your sleeping bags, chairs, blankets, food, etc so you can be comfortable on your stargazing adventure. Due to Covid, the park staff are only allowing 67 vehicles in the parking lot at a time, so on warm summer nights, you may be waiting for a parking space.

Wilderness State Park has something for most outdoor enthusiasts. There are more than 20 miles (32 km) of trails to enjoy either on foot or by bicycle. This part of the state is relatively flat, so you won't encounter huge hills to climb. Roughly ten miles of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) traverses through Wilderness SP. The NCT, as the locals call it, spans over 4700 miles (7564 km) and is the longest scenic trail in the United States. It winds its way through eight states from Vermont to North Dakota.

Other Nearby Attractions

Mackinaw City is a short drive away from the park. This waterfront city is full of history and worth exploring. There are three National Historic sites in the city to explore: Fort Mackinac, Historic Mill Creek, and the Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse. The city is also home to the southern terminus of the Mackinac Bridge (aka The Mighty Mac) which is the longest suspension bridge in the western hemisphere. The Mighty Mac is over 5 miles (8 km) long while the Golden Gate Bridge is only 1.7 miles (2.7 km) long.

Mackinac Island is a short ferry ride from Mackinaw City (less than 15 minutes). Cars are not permitted on the island and the major mode of transportation here is either by bicycle or horse.

All campsites are available to be reserved up to six months in advance.

Number of Sites: 250 (one loop is closed for the 2021 season for maintenance)

Pets: yes (there is a pet friendly beach as well)

Water: yes

Electric: yes

Price per night: \$\$\$ (\$33 with electric)

Fire Rings: yes

Picnic Tables: yes

Restrooms/Shower: yes

Campground is ADA accessible.

Primary activities within the park:

Hiking, biking, fishing, kayaking, swimming, boating, wildlife viewing, sky watching

Pro Tip: This is a very popular state park in Michigan and due to its proximity to Mackinaw City and Mackinac Island, the summer can fill up quickly. Try to book early or come in the shoulder season.

Pro Tip II: The French pronounced it "aw" but spelled it "ac." The British heard it pronounced "aw" so they spelled it that way. Whichever way it is spelled, it is always pronounced "aw."



Above: The Mighty Mac, the Western Hemisphere's longest suspension bridge

Location: Steven C Foster State Park
17515 Highway 177
Fargo, GA 31631

Getting There:

GPS Info (Latitude, Longitude):

30.82556, -82.36194

30°49'37.02"N, -82°21'43.56"W

Steven C Foster State Park is a remote park that serves as the primary west entrance to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, one of Georgia's seven natural wonders. This park is a certified International Dark Sky Park where guests can experience some of the darkest skies in the southeastern United States. While the state park is tiny at just over 100 acres (40 ha), the adjoining wildlife refuge is 402,000 acres (162,683 ha).

Inside the park, paddlers, hikers, and photographers will enjoy the reflective black swamp waters with the cypress tree knees rising upwards as they view alligators, turtles, black bears, ibis, wood storks, red cockaded woodpeckers and numerous other creatures that call this beautiful swamp home.

Other Nearby Attractions

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Laura Walker State Park which is located near the northern edge of the Okefenokee Swamp. Inside this state park which is roughly 20 miles (32 km) away you may be able to see carnivorous pitcher plants. The Cumberland Island National Seashore, which is known for its secluded beaches and wild horses, is roughly 1.5 hours away from the park as well.

Number of Sites: 65

Pets: yes

Water: yes

Electric: yes

Price per night: \$\$\$ (\$35 per night)

Fire Rings: yes

Picnic Tables: yes

Restrooms/Showers: yes (pit toilet in the Pioneer group campground)

Campground is ADA accessible.

This park is open year round and you can book a site 13 months in advance.

Primary activities within the park: Paddling on the 15 miles (24 km) of waterways, boating (no pets allowed on any watercraft within the park), fishing, bird watching, photography, geocaching, and astronomy

Pro Tip: The park often has astronomy programs where an 18" telescope is offered for viewing, so if that is your interest, keep an eye on their schedule of events. There are numerous state or national forests, state parks, or wildlife management areas near the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, so be sure to take time to explore.



Paddling - Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, GA

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