

Breathing New Life Into A U-Haul Camper!

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January
February
2015

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**Kicking Off The Year
With A Special Issue**

**Unique Tiny
Campers!**



INTERVIEW

**Ted Fehrensén
So-Cal Teardrops**

**A Caboose Tiny
Trailer... Why Not?**

COOL Tears™ and tiny campers

M A G A Z I N E

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Standout Tiny Campers

I am very excited about this issue. It has come together almost by itself. We continue to receive emails about your builds and restorations and I continue to be amazed. Over the past few months there has been number of campers that are very unique. They are either particularly rare restorations or very creative themed tiny campers. This issue has both. You will find a restoration and a bit of history on a rare camper from the era when U-Haul rented out campers. There is also a restoration of a Scamp which is not commonly seen on the roads today.

As for the themed trailers, there is the pirate ship teardrop from the cover and another tiny camper that is built to look like a train caboose! I love the creativity found in the tiny camper world!

I have more stories coming together for the next few issues and one is especially mind blowing. It is very detailed and very cool!

Enjoy!

Kevin Cross

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Cross". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Editor
Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine™

VACATION ADVENTURE



Breathing New Life Into A U-Haul Camper

By Patrick M. Pellowski

Yes, you read the title correctly: a U-Haul camper. Although I am a Tear Jerker at heart and love teardrop campers, there is something to be said for a Standee. (A trailer you can stand up in.) I have owned two teardrop campers, but came to realize that it was not the right fit for my family (wife and two rambunctious Portuguese Water Dogs). So I sold the teardrop and purchased a vintage 1984 U-Haul 13' CT camper and have never regretted it for one moment.

In fact, I can honestly say I have enjoyed the U-Haul even more than a bright shiny new camper, which is saying a lot!

Although they are not a teardrop, they are definitely a tiny trailer. I was so surprised to find out that, with the exception of being wider, the U-Haul 13' CT's footprint was basically the same as our teardrop, but offered more creature comforts including headroom, sit-in dinette, sofa/bunk beds, small galley and closet. It is said that the dry weight of the 13' CT is 1,250 pounds, only 350 pounds more than what our teardrop weighed.

The history of these unique campers is actually quite fascinating. Most of what I have learned about these campers is from current and former U-Haul owners and first hand experience. There is a very active U-Haul Camper group on Facebook.

U-Haul commissioned the construction of these campers in the early 1980s to put them in their rental fleet. U-Haul rented out these campers until the early 1990s, when they were sold off to the general public. Reportedly, these campers were not a profit center for U-Haul.

The campers were offered in two models: 13' CT and 16' VT. The actual production numbers for these campers remained a mystery until just recently when the U-Haul company released them to the Facebook group. Based on U-Haul records, 1,725 CTs and only 59 VTs were produced, so if you're one of the lucky owners of a VT, it's a rare treasure. From what I have been told, the primary differences between the two models, beside the increase in space and layout configuration, is the addition of a toilet, sink and optional air conditioning in the larger VT model. I have never seen a VT in person, but would like to own one someday. It's kind of like the Holy Grail of U-Haul campers.

The camper's construction was unique and some of its features very innovative for their time. Report-

edly, the U-Haul campers were designed by John Gladfelter. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to find too much about the designer. However, urban legend has it that U-Haul had these campers built to withstand a drop from the Grand Canyon and still survive. Admittedly they are well built, but maybe not that well built.

The CT's original frame design used circular steel tubing mounted on a rubber torsion axle. The hubs are also unique as they are sealed, meaning they are permanently lubricated, requiring no maintenance. The bolt pattern of the steel wheel used on the U-Haul campers appears to be proprietary and used exclusively by U-Haul (in an effort to discourage theft). I have been told that the original Goodyear tires also bore the U-Haul insignia.

The body of the camper is made up of four molded fiberglass pieces, which create an outer and an inner shell when assembled. The outer shells, consisting of left and right sections, are joined in the center as opposed to the method used by other manufacturers where a horizontal seam joins the upper and lower sections. The closet, kitchen cabinets and miscellaneous storage compartments are molded into the inner shell. The cabinet doors were an off olive green color, and constructed of a hard plastic sheet material molded over plywood. Of course all of the door faces had "U-Haul" molded into them.





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One of the most unique and innovative features incorporated into these campers was the use of a roof mounted 10 watt solar panel, which was designed to keep the battery charged between rentals. I believe this was unheard of in the mid 1980s. Surprisingly, mine is still functional.

U-Haul wanted the public to know that these campers were the property of the U-Haul company. On various surfaces throughout the camper is inscribed "Property of U-Haul". I found this inscription on the frame, windows, rims, propane tanks, and even the fiberglass body itself. There was also a small circular steel tube welded to the frame and well hidden in which U-Haul would place documents verifying ownership, in case the camper was ever stolen. Some of the U-Haul owners have reported finding these documents still hidden in the steel tube. When these campers were sold to the general public, the frame was stamped "NOT" before the "Property of U-Haul" inscription.

I purchased our 13' CT from a nice couple in Milwaukee and felt fortunate to find one in original condition and well cared for. Mine came with the original cushions, curtains, sink, faucet, icebox, stove top burners and stove ventilation hood. The U-Haul advertisement which featured these campers was correct "...with all of the essentials of home.."

As with any vintage camper, there are several areas that needed attention. Some of the known issues with U-Haul campers include:



Rusted Frames:

Although the frames were well built, age and rust takes its toll. I removed the camper body from the frame and had the frame professionally sand-blasted, repaired, and primed. I originally wanted the frame powder-coated, but the rubber torsion axle would have had to be removed before doing so. So instead I elected to paint the frame myself with several coats of Rustoleum Professional grade paint.



Rotten Floors: The floors were plywood encased in fiberglass. In some cases, the floors have become soft and have rotted. I was fortunate as only a small-section (3"x 4") of flooring had to be replaced. Due to the camper's design, replacing the entire floor is no easy task and, as one of the current U-Haul owners stated, "not for the faint of heart."

Leaks: The windows and stove ventilation hood fans are notorious for leaking in heavy rainstorms,

as well as the taillights and side marker lights. The previous owner refurbished all but two of the five windows with new rubber seals. Guess what - the two remaining windows leak.



This is one of the projects I need to complete in 2015. The ventilation hood fan and stove top were removed to gain more counter place, as both my wife and I like to cook outside and not in the camper. Although I have learned some fiberglass repair skills while owning this camper, I will likely hire a professional to patch the hole in the outer shell, which was the result of removing the ventilation hood fan.

Wiring: This is not unique to U-Haul campers, but original wiring may crack over time and cause unwanted electrical shorts. As the wiring was 30 years old, I rewired the entire camper.

This year I decided to replace the original U-Haul power converter with a new one. I really wanted to keep the camper



as original as possible, but I felt this upgrade was warranted.

Since owning our U-Haul camper, my wife and I have learned a lot about vintage campers, but more importantly about how we camp and what's important to us. When we owned the teardrop, we ended up putting up a side tent and awning, which gave us more room and a certain amount of flexibility. In reality, we ended up with a three room teardrop, which required significant time and effort setting up and taking down. However, with the U-Haul the side tent was no longer needed. It really is nice being able to put your pants on standing up and not being all contorted as was the case in the teardrop. We kept the awning to have a place for us and the dogs to sit outdoors, while still being out of the elements.

In addition, we converted the rear dinette into a permanent bed and made the front sofa/bunk bed into a dinette with a small table - just perfect for morning coffee and playing a game of rummy. At night the front dinette converts to a single bed for myself, as the rear bed is occupied by my wife and the two dogs, who just happen to be bed hogs (the dogs not the wife)!

I recently splurged and purchased a present for myself, which allows me to camp in spirit during the cold Minnesota winter months, while still enjoying the U-Haul





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camper. Sometime in the mid 1980s, the U-Haul company produced Travel Trailer Team, which consisted of a toy U-Haul CT camper and a Plymouth Voyager van. Surprisingly, these miniature toy campers are harder to find than their full-sized cousins.



Probably the most important thing I have learned and would like to share is that you shouldn't discount the older vintage campers when looking for a camper. They are wonderfully nostalgic and true treasures and worth the time and effort to restore them. As with any teardrop, the U-Haul campers are unique and generate a lot of attention on the road and at the campgrounds. All U-Haul owners have heard this at some time or another "I didn't realize U-Haul rented campers."





By Steven Price

Hey guys, ever have one of those days months or years where a little idea seems to snowball into something outrageous? Who hasn't wanted to make a new teardrop trailer because the hatch could be done differently?

Having built four trailers, my wife said no more teardrops. I said “but dear, I have to make this little change.” Ok, so you start thinking “I know how to make a teardrop. I have a great shop full of tools but she said no more teardrops. I wonder if anyone has ever made a pirate ship from a teardrop. Not a teardrop decorated like a pirate ship but a real ship with masts, rigging and cannons.” I talked to a few fellow teardrop campers, got some great ideas and then it started. Emails came in with pirate ship pictures, gifts started having a piratical theme, and the snide comments started too “Built that ship yet?”

Concept drawings followed sleepless nights. Questions arose like: Why does a hatch have to open up with the hinge on the top side? Do the cannons come off during travel days and how can they fire? Where does the mast go and what is the minimum amount of rigging to make it look nautical? I talked to folks who had built 3000 pound trailers but my little Toyota Matrix would collapse if the trailer was that heavy. Time to take some features off the “must have “ list and find lighter materials to substitute.

Concept drawings moved onto model construction. Oops: the hatch opens out to form a poop



deck but the model tipped over and the hatch broke off. I talked to friends who weld, and reconfigured the frame construction so the frame expands to hold the weight. A year and a half has passed and finally it is time to start actual construction. Yes I am still married, my wife has serious doubts but it does keep me out of her hair.



I am often asked if I have generated working drawings and the answer is no. Mainly because I was not sure how some of the folding sections would function. As it turns out they did not. Six months and four rebuilds later I have a working trailer.



I took it over to the welders on a nice spring day to get another bracket welded on and he said he wanted to see it unfolded. His location is on Highway 101, one of the busiest roads on the Oregon coast. Six hours later and probably a 100 visitors later I have the bracket and two hundred suggestions on how to change the concept. I

had just finished and now I am overwhelmed with new ideas. Unfortunately for me, there were several really good ideas that I did need to incorporate into the trailer as a post build.

I had a local upholstery shop sew a deck cover and sides for rain and sun protection for the poop deck, extra legs added for additional stability and a rudder to complete the ship look.



On a sunny Saturday in September we took the finished ship out for our first camping event at a pirate festival of course. It was a fun day of showing the ship, tailgating and being content that I had done what I had hoped to.

The process took three years and about \$3,000 in materials. Labor was never a consideration so I never kept track, mostly as a spousal defense mechanism.

The frame is 2 inch thin wall tubular steel built so that all the piping is stored in the frame itself.

The walls are 3/4 marine plywood covered with 1/2 inch T&G fir stained and then sealed with four coats of urethane varnish. There is an eighteen foot tall mast with two sets of rigging. There is a futon in the compartment that acts as a couch during the day but at night folds out into a double bed. There is a door into the poop deck from the compartment and with the poop deck enclosed we have a changing room or an enclosed entertainment area. The hatch folds back and has a bench seat that seats three. The ships wheel spins and covers the controls for the cannons.



The cannons are permanently mounted, plumbed to spray water, flash red and a speaker under the body booms with cannon sounds.



Final weight is 1450 lbs. with a tongue weight of 100 lbs. The trailer tows like a dream with our small car but we end up going over the hills rather

slowly. Final length is 15 feet folded and 22 feet unfolded. Final frame is a true 5 X 10 frame.

Would I do it again? Of course. I have a hundred and twenty ideas to make it better. Will my wife allow it? Probably not. Her argument is that I would need to sell this pirate ship in order to have the funds to make a second one.



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Who would buy a pirate ship teardrop trailer? It is now for sale, so we will see if I get to build another one. I have already been rewarded for the effort as Rogue Brewing, makers of Dead Guy Ale beer have asked me to be their Piratical Ambassador. Come on guys who would not like to be a pirate and drink free beer .



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So-Cal Teardrops

An Interview with Ted Fehrensen

By Kevin Cross

When I first started this magazine one of the first names that popped up in my reserach was So-Cal Teardrops. They have been around for quite a while and they are busier than ever. Things continue to be busy here as well and as a result it took us a while to connect. (Mostly my fault.) However recently I contacted Ted Fehrensen with So-Cal and he agreed to an inerview to help us all get to know a little more about what they are doing and what they have to offer.

How did So-Cal Teardrops get started?

We, the Pari's, Mike, Gabe and Sierra, wanted a teardrop trailer for camping, and we knew we had the skills and capability to build one. The first two were built in Mike's garage, building them for sale was not part of the plan, until friends and family kept telling us how cool they were and asking, "how much to build a teardrop for me?", and the rest is history.

It appears that you have had your fair share of media coverage. Do you think that has had a part in your success?

Media has played a large part, coupled with word of mouth, and a very loyal following that have been key to our growth and continued success.

The popularity of teardrops and tiny campers continues to explode. Why do think people love these little trailers so much?

With fuel, recreation and travel costs continually increasing, outdoor folks are looking for ways to reduce cost and ownership expense, and simplify their lives. We like to tell people that our teardrops are a step up from a tent, not a step down from an RV. Teardrops are nostalgic, economical, secure, and great fun; solo or as part of a flock.

In general, teardrops are much like pets, decorated and outfitted as uniquely as the people that they belong too.

I understand that you have at least a couple of customers that are celebrities. Can you tell us more about that?

Over these last eleven years building teardrops, a number of our clients have been note worthy, prominent people, in-

cluding: American author - Thomas McGuane, Actress - Kate Jackson, and singer - songwriter - Alecia Moore (PINK).

Additionally, our teardrops have been included in TV commercials for Pepto Bismol and Nissan.

Our corporate builds include Kenwood & Firestone-Walker Brewery / 805 Teardrops



You have a great gallery of teardrop photos on your website. Of course some of them are your current models in action but you also have a collection of vintage teardrop photos. Where did you find those old photos?

Many of the early photos in our gallery are from clients, sharing childhood memories of camping with the family teardrop, while awaiting completion of their new teardrop. There is a sense of kinship and community among teardrop owners. People call, and send us teardrop memorabilia just out of the blue and it's great.



So-Cal teardrops offers a large selection of models and options as well as accessories and parts. What are some of your most popular models and options?

Well, of our four on-road models, our most popular teardrop is the “Sierra”, it's the perfect 5' x 9' size, with the queen sized bed and galley, all at about 1000 lbs.



Of our four off-road models, our most popular teardrop is a toss-up between the 4.5' x 9' “Krawler” and the 5' x 10' “XS”. Both are heavy duty, with 21” chassis to ground clearance, leaf springs, *Rancho XL* shocks, and 8” of suspension travel. They are rugged, durable and will follow on any terrain.



What's sets So-Cal Teardrop trailers apart from others on the market?

We believe our teardrop trailers are the benchmark, they are meticulously designed and engineered, we hand build each teardrop to exacting standards, with the finest materials and

Some of our most popular options are:

- Mounted/locking fridge slide with tray (350lb capacity)
- On board 30 gal. water system
- Locking tongue cage
- Propex; on-board - LP furnace



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methods known. If we are unable to source a suitable component in the market place, we fabricate it from scratch, our fit and finish is impeccable. Our “Hand built American Quality”, is very desirable in today’s market.

I have read that So-Cal is now offering Regional Manufacturing Facilities. Can you tell us more about how that works and how it is going?

We have four manufacturing facilities, including our primary plant in Upland, CA, and three RMF’s; Petaluma, CA / Phoenix, AZ / Lowell, MI, and Durango, CO will be coming soon



How can our readers find out more about So-Cal teardrops or contact you to purchase a unit?

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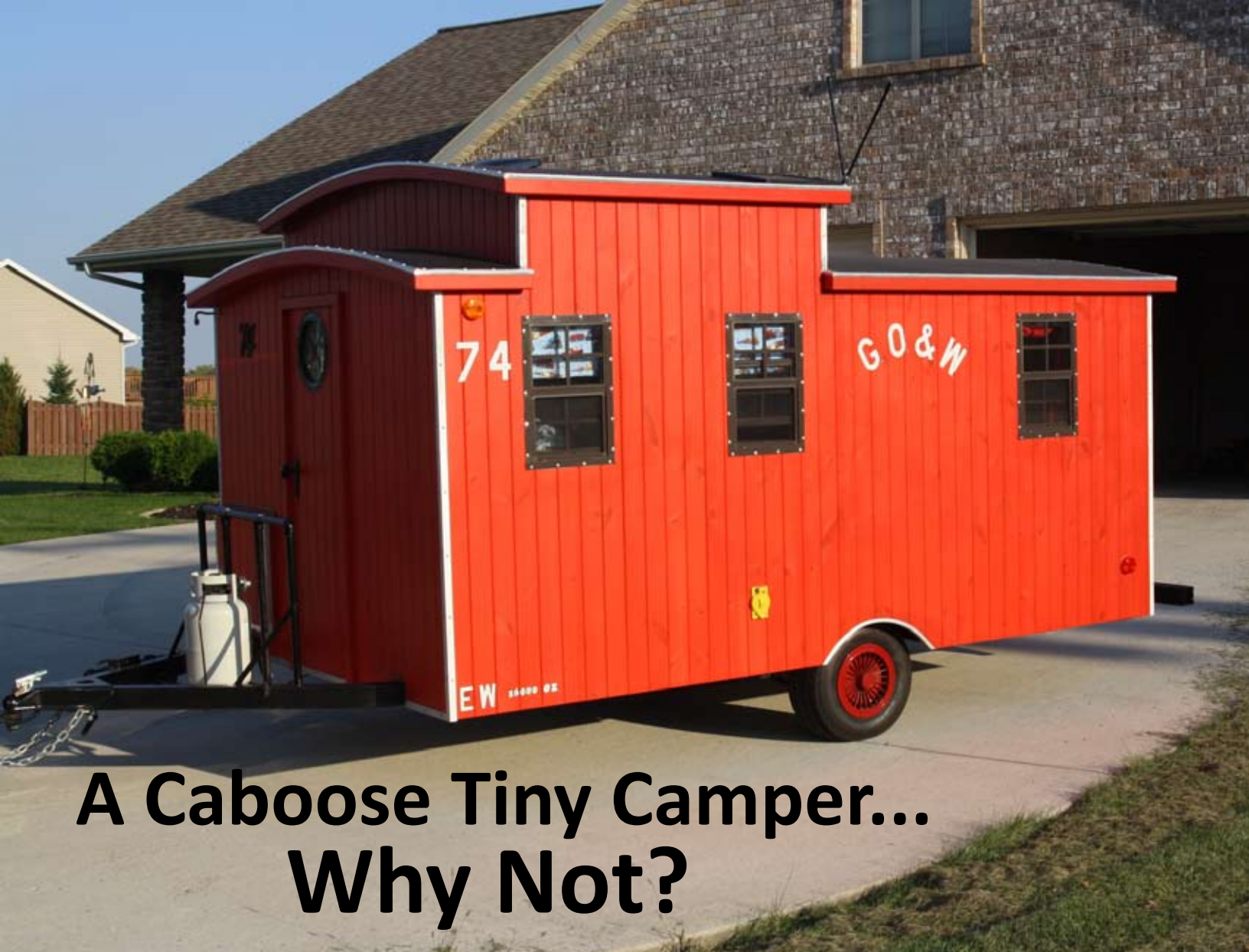
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A Caboose Tiny Camper... Why Not?

By Glenn Wallin Sr

I was sitting around a camp fire at a gathering and someone suggested I build a caboose...that was my inspiration. I had built 11 trailers prior to this and really enjoy that part of the process and coming up with something that is unusual.

I downloaded some pictures of early 19th century Caboosees and I decided to do a wooden sided one as they did back in the day. Since my wife enjoys being able to stand and dress, it was necessary to build one that allowed her to stand and at the same time it had to fit in my garage.

A fellow camper also had given me a lead on a pop-up camper that the owner wanted hauled away. Wallah - frame! I drove to Chicago,



picked up the camper and brought it home and another camping friend and I stripped it down to the bare frame and I started the build.



I built a step down box near the front so that when she and I stepped in, we had plenty of headroom (6' 5"). I was able to get that headroom because of the upper cupola being directly above that step down box.. Once that was done I taped out the floor and started to layout where things would go.

The walls are insulated with 3/4 rigid foam, the ceiling with 1 & 1/2 inch. The inside ceiling is 1/8 wall board that has a



bamboo pattern on it. The floor is covered with a dark wood grain linoleum. The inside walls are 1/4 inch tongue and groove pine with a clear sealer and the outside walls are 1x8 tongue and groove car siding that is planed down to 7/16ths. The roof has a rubber roof which is glued on with aluminum trim along all edges.





I built a small cabinet to house the AGM battery and the charger/converter and a front counter to support the 3 burner stove and sink that I reconditioned from the pop-up camper. There are two Coleman 5 gallon jugs under the sink...one I pump from and the other is the grey water catch tank. By rolling out a large drawer, I am able to empty one and fill the other and in the fall don't have to worry about winterizing either one...I just empty them both. There is a 12 volt demand pump

for the sink mounted under the counter on the side wall. Next to the large drawer is the small 110 frig/freezer. The last component under the counter is the AC unit which rolls out a door in the front when used and back in when traveling. Upper cabinets complete the galley.



I put the bed in the back with a TV at the foot and two small benches next to the bed which also serve as the wheel well covers and provide additional storage. My wife made two nice padded seat covers for those benches as well as all the curtains and window shade covers...(she glued train fabric to both sides of the shades). Under the bed at the foot is a slide-out porta-potty. 12 volt lights over the bed and in the galley provide sufficient light as do the reading lights over the bed. .



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The cupola is where I put the Fantastic fan, TV antenna, and a small solar panel to trickle charge the battery. The 5 side windows are small aluminum shed windows that actually work with screens. The round windows don't open but do provide additional light front and rear.



There is a false door in front and in back to simulate the porches on that early caboose. I put actual door handles and a porch railing also to enhance that look. The trailer weighs about 1,650 pounds and pulls very nicely and does draw a lot of attention going down the road and in the camp grounds. At 11 feet long it was necessary to build it wide enough so that we could sleep across the trailer in order to get everything we wanted inside and the 6.5 foot width gets that done.



It was an enjoyable build even with some of the hurdles and I look forward to the next build whatever that may be.



An advertisement for "Retro Ride Teardrops". The top part features a large, stylized logo with the words "RETRO RIDE TEARDROPS" in red and yellow. Below the logo is a photo of several white teardrop trailers parked in a forest. The text "Starting At \$3,595" is written in an orange banner. At the bottom, it says "Quality Built Teardrops Complete And Ready To Camp" in red, followed by the website "www.Retrorideteardrops.com", the email "Sales@Retrorideteardrops.com", and "Made in Central Wisconsin".

One More Trailer On The Road



By Kim Hollis

Certainly, I am not the only teardrop owner who feels everyone should camp. I am biased; I think it is the best thing ever. When you win someone over, I am sure the feeling is equivalent to winning the lottery. This fall my husband Arthur and I had the opportunity to introduce the joys of camping to his parents, Thom and Gail.

Hearing about our camping adventures and enjoying our photos sparked an interest in hitting the open road. Both in their 70's, health, work and family obligations have kept them close to home, but now they were ready to try their hands at this foreign recreational activity known as camping.

We would have loved to see them in a teardrop, but age and physical limitations would have made camping uncomfortable and very difficult. Weighing all the options, Arthur and I felt a small 13 ft fiberglass trailer would be ideal for their needs. Our close friends had a Scamp trailer and we were familiar with the size and ease of pulling and setting up camp.

We live about 1,400 miles from Thom and Gail so the logistics of finding a little trailer, making repairs and delivering could be a challenge. Two options presented themselves: finding a deal in the southwest and having Thom make the needed repairs or scouring the southeast for a treasure and making the needed changes and upgrades.

Arthur and I are guilty of jumping into projects. We pinky swear to do no more projects and just enjoy life. This normally lasts about a day. So of course the more we looked online at the little fiberglass trailers, the more we wanted to take ownership of the project. We had a vision and ideas we wanted to implement. After countless hours searching online, sending links to Thom and Gail and mapping out tiny campers for sale, we were given a local lead for a 1983 13ft Scamp. Just one county down from our hometown sat Thom and Gail's ticket to the great outdoors.



We towed the chunky marshmallow home on a Friday evening in August; by late Saturday afternoon she was gutted and ready for a full restoration. The only dark cloud over the project was



our 3 month deadline. Gail works for a large box store and the idea of taking any time off in November was taboo. Once the Scamp was completed, we didn't have the inside space to store it, so the sooner it could be restored and delivered the better. It quickly became apparent time management would be a must. Fortunately Arthur's drive to complete projects is amazing. We set our goal for mid October; we would be meeting Thom and Gale in Oklahoma (about the half way point)

and giving them a crash course in camping in their fully restored Scamp.

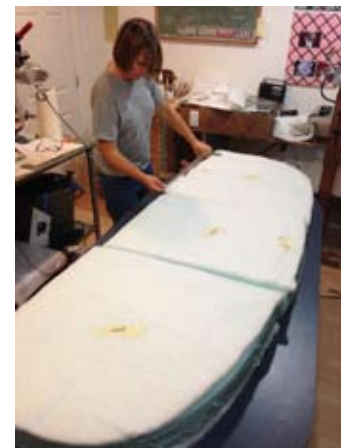
I thought our UPS driver knew us well before we brought home the Scamp, but once a part list was compiled and items ordered, that familiar brown truck barreled down our ½ mile gravel drive daily. It's a given, when working on any project you always just need 'one more thing'. Boxes of new parts quickly took over our kitchen table and surrounding floor space. They would sit quietly in their designated spot until needed.

During the restoration we were in constant contact with Thom and Gail. We tried our best to make them feel part of the project even though we were 1400 miles apart. Our plan in the beginning was to allow as much input from them as possible; the distance in mileage made this difficult at times. Fortunately for us they were just thrilled of the idea of having a camper and trusted our judgment.

The normal layout of a 13 ft Scamp is pretty simple. First, walk in the door. To the right is a bench and/or bunk beds. Center of the trailer is the kitchenette with a storage cabinet on the opposite wall. To the left of the kitchenette is the dinette that makes into a bed. Not a whole lot of room for improvising.



It was decided to turn the dinette area into a permanent bed with tons of storage space underneath and an area for all the electronics, "guts" and plumbing hoses. We split the bench area into thirds. The center area could be removed if a table wanted to be added



at a later time or keep the bench as is and utilize the center area for storage (great place to store the porta-potty). The ends offered more storage accessible by removing the cushions. All the basic necessities are in the kitchenette.



Replacing the range top with a hot plate for cooking added useable counter space and using a longer neck faucet for the bar size sink made the sink more user friendly. We discussed electric/battery/gas options with Thom and Gail and de-

ecided to set the camper up solely with a connect to grid system. Down the road they might want to add a battery backup or a solar unit, but for now they are just planning to camp where full hook ups are offered.


Fast forward two months three weeks and our three month deadline was approaching quickly. Our to-do list outweighed our allocated time. We pushed our departure date back one more week. The extra two weekends on either end were a huge help. Plus, Arthur ended up taking the week off to finish all the loose ends. The little Scamp was ready to roll the night before we were to leave. There was a bit of panic when the lights weren't behaving like they should, but Arthur calmly diagnosed the problem. I would be lying if I said the project didn't present itself with challenges, and as the deadline approached we were both ready to be finished. But knowing we were working together for two people we love dearly we were able to trudge through the frustrating times.

We loaded up the car the next morning, saved a small space for the dog and hit the road. Anxious to arrive, Oklahoma couldn't have been any farther away from Kentucky. A few missed turns and road construction made for a much longer journey than anticipated. A second boost of energy kicked in once we were off the main roads and heading to the campground. Thom and Gail had arrived hours before we did and waited patiently for our arrival.


It was very dark when we rolled into the campground; Thom flagged us down with his flashlight. Arthur backed the trailer into its spot, home for the next two nights. Hugs were exchanged and we presented Tom and Gail with the keys to the next chapter of their life. Arthur gave a quick overview and left his parents to become acquainted with the little trailer. We still had to set up camp. Normally home would be in our teardrop, but this trip we were pitching a tent.

We woke up to a beautiful day. It was going to be filled with Arthur going over all the trailer's ins & outs as well as finishing up a few items on Thom and Gail's tow vehicle. We would be camping for four nights, and our initial plan was to camp somewhere different every night. I found a cluster of campgrounds around Fort Gibson Lake. Our thinking was that it would be good practice setting up and tearing down. But after our first full day we all decided to stay put one more night and spend the next two nights at another campground across the lake. For our peace of mind, Arthur and Thom came up with a check list for setting up and taking down camp.

Thom and Gail had tent camped years ago. When they first started talking about the idea of having a trailer, camping related questions were asked and we would do our best to answer them. When visiting campgrounds Arthur started taking pictures of the sites and facilities to send to his parents. One question that was asked was "What




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do you do while you're camping?" We answered "Nothing, you do exactly what you want to do." I think after a couple of evenings sitting around the campfire, Thom and Gail quickly understood what we meant.

Each day we observed Thom and Gail becoming more attached to the Scamp. It was starting to feel like home. By the end of our stay, Thom and Gail had developed a routine and were feeling comfortable with the idea of camping. Once Gail started bringing up destinations to visit, we knew everything was falling into place. They even decided to take a little longer going home and try their hands at camping without their chaperones. We were thrilled and felt like the proud parents.

Our time with Thom and Gail quickly came to an end. The little Scamp that we spent hundreds of hours working on became a warm and cozy nest for two deserving people. Curtains were





hung, a floral quilt covered the bed and personal belongings found their place. It no longer felt like our project; the camper found its true owners. Thom and Gail followed us out to I-40, they head-

ed west and we turned east. Stealing a last glimpse of the Scamp we breathed a sigh of relief and joy.

When it was time for me to sit down and write my article for Cool Tears, I had full intentions to write a teardrop related topic. The more I typed, the more I felt moved to share our story. Arthur and I had the rare opportunity to take on a project where someone else's happiness was our focal point. I had no idea how much true fulfillment can be felt when priorities are shifted.

Arthur and I caught the camping bug three years ago and we never dreamt we would be sharing our hobby with his parents. We hope they put thousands of miles on that Scamp. We already have two road trips planned with Thom and Gail for 2015 and that's a great start. Happy Camping!!!



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