

Grant Whipp returns with his gathering stories!

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September
/ October
2014

COOL Tears™ *and tiny campers*

Bringing Back A Classic Teardrop *Part 2 - A Teardrop Restoration Story*



Building The Dash *A True Work of Art*

INTERVIEW
Jennifer Robinson
Big Woody Campers



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M A G A Z I N E

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Keep it coming!

Wow! I must have one of the best jobs in the teardrop world! Our readers keep sending me great pictures and stories. Every time I think I have seen just about everything in the tiny camper world, along comes something else really cool. That is demonstrated again in this issue. We have part two of a great restoration project on a unique teardrop and a completely original creation by a pair of artists. Those are just a couple of examples of all the awesome creations our readers continue to send.

So Keep em coming! We love to see unique creations as well as classic examples of teardrops and other tiny campers. If you have a project you have been working on or even something you have already made, send us some pictures and tell us about your tiny trailer. We also like to hear about your gatherings as well. You may end up in the pages of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine!

Kevin Cross

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Cross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Editor

Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine™



Building the Dash

By Bryan Scott

Our entry into the world of teardrops was completely by accident. We had returned to Portland after a year traveling through Mexico and Central America in a campervan, and we were excited to be settling back in. The urge to travel was not lost (far from it) but we found our trips shorter and more local than the extended travel across multiple borders we just returned from. We also found ourselves with ample free time and no furniture (and few other belongings) as we had sold everything before our trip.

Luck took us to a local community shop where we began using our pent up creative energy designing and building furniture. First a table, then some chairs and stools. As summer set in we started getting the travel and camping bug and realized that since our campervan was still in another country we had no easy escape. We drove a mini cooper and while we tried once sleeping inside it was clear we'd never make that mistake again.



Over a drink one evening the idea of making a teardrop was tossed out as a joke and then immediately dismissed. But over the next few weeks as the desire to travel grew I found myself looking into homemade teardrops, learning about their history and reading through build reports from others tackling a build. I signed up for an online forum and started realizing that the process seemed really exciting to me. I was starving for a large project and this one seemed both fun and uniquely suited to our needs. Our community woodshop had a boatbuilding school in the back and I figured the teardrop wouldn't have to float and therefore had to be worlds easier and we could always seek advice from the resident experts.

I looked into plans online, but the fun part to me was in designing and figuring it out from scratch. I saw a few designs that appealed to me, but nothing small or light enough to tow behind our mini cooper, and nothing that was quite right. I started sketching a few shapes by hand and after finding a smooth aerodynamic shape that I liked moved into 3D. The more detail I used to build the 3D model, the more I dove back into the forums to learn how others were handling the construction details.

My wife thought I was crazy, but once I had the design finalized we actually decided to jump in and make our own teardrop from scratch. We also decided to get it finished before fall so that we could use it to tailgate at football games and have a place to sleep at the coast after a surf session. Sadly, it was already July so we knew we would have to work hard to make our September deadline. Little did we know exactly how much work we had in store.

To make the teardrop as light as possible we decided to use a hollow/insulated plywood skeleton and skin the frame in a bamboo ply. We knew we didn't have time to cut everything out with a jigsaw and our shop had great rates on a CNC machine, so we started there. We found a utility trailer online, brought it home and shortened it and made a few mods to save weight. After a few days of cleaning up files and triple checking that everything would work as planned, we pulled the trigger on the CNC.

What a terrifying and exhilarating day. Within hours we went from a stack of 3/4" plywood to the basic frame and skin pieces for our future camper. We couldn't help but clamp them onto the trailer just to make sure everything looked as planned.



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That would be the last day that things progressed quickly... In fact, from there everything seemed to move at a snails pace, or worse. We found ourselves spending 10-14 hour days in the shop



every day trying to meet our deadline. While I had drawn everything out in advance, I discovered it's simply impossible to plan for everything. We had a very steep learning curve and while we're handy, we had never tackled anything quite like this. Before long the teardrop was defeating us. Looking back, I'm amazed we finished the project. I think the very public event of working on this type of project in a community shop made us incapable of backing out or running away. Otherwise our tiny trailer would likely be stuffed away in the back of some garage as a stack of wood and metal collecting dust. Somehow, between the communal energy and the desire to tailgate at that season opener we pushed on. The work days got longer and our frustration grew, but we were also

seeing an amazing thing develop before our eyes. We filled the wooden skeleton's gaps with insulation and laminated the interior and exterior skins.

We connected the basic framework to our trailer and began to form the ribs and cabinetry



that would hold the pieces together. Some things actually went as planned. Most did not. We dry fit everything at least a few times and asked everyone around us for advice before moving onto each next step. We are happy with the technique and process we used, and our teardrop is made remarkably well. It's solid, it's light and if I allow

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myself to back away enough to admit it- it's a thing of beauty; but it almost broke us. In the final weeks we began to see how the last 10% of the project takes 90% of the time and causes 90% of the stress. Laying up the exterior panels was stressful work.

What if they didn't hold, what if it leaked, what if... Epoxying was even more terrifying, even with expert boat-builders looking over



our shoulder. We did not make our deadline...but 2 weeks later we did drive our teardrop out of the shop without some details finished. We hadn't yet connected latches to the rear hatch (in fact we hadn't even finished the rear hatch, so we tied it down with rope and hit the road. We simply couldn't help ourselves. We had to get out and enjoy this thing if we were going to find the strength to finish.



We rolled the trailer across the shop, connected it to our new hitch and pulled out of the loading bay. Other members stood outside and applauded, but inside the vehicle we looked at

each other with sheer terror. This must be what leaving the hospital with your firstborn feels like. "Are they just going to let us drive away with this thing?" we asked ourselves. "Shouldn't we (or it) have to pass some kind of test?" We drove at a

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snails pace to our house to drop the lower back hatch and pack it with a weekend of belongings. We are used to backpacking, but the ability to throw ample food, supplies and clothes in wasn't lost on us in the slightest. We threw the dog in the car and hit the road. Another terrifying glance at each other and we hit the ramp to the interstate.



We were amazed. Afraid to speak to each other and barely watching the road in front of us as we stared into our mirrors watching for a wheel to fall off, for the sunroof to blow open or for the entire trailer to burst spontaneously into flames. But the oddest thing happened. Nothing at all. The trailer pulled straight and easy. There was no wind drag, no wobble. Our tiny mini cooper acted exactly as it did before and we soon forgot we even had a trailer behind us.

We hit freeway speeds and probably faster than most would advise, and our tiny trailer continued to handle as it did when we drove 5mph from our shop to home. We had done it...we had created a tiny home away from home. And now we would take a weekend off to enjoy the fruits of our labor. We slept fantastically well, the two of us and our 70lb dog at our feet. Backpacking no more, this thing was amazing!





exactly what we needed to find the energy to finish our project over the next few weeks.

Our build wasn't easy, and it certainly wasn't all fun, but it was a terrific learning experience for us and we are thrilled with the result. Literally, the only thing I would change about our teardrop was the ridiculous timeframe we gave ourselves to complete it.

We awoke more rested than in the last 3 months combined, and our teardrop attracted more attention than drinking games at the tailgating festivities. Everyone wanted to talk to us about it, peek inside and test fit to see if a 6'4" person could actually lay down comfortably inside. Someone coined the term "dash" camper and it stuck. We glowed from the praise, and their excitement was

You can read more about our build and see countless more photos at our blog; <http://www.thedangerz.com/category/teardrop-camper/> P.S. - We are returning to our international travels (and therefore to our campervan). As a result, the "dash" camper is for sale. We simply can't bear the idea of it sitting in storage instead of out exploring. If you're interested let us know. 



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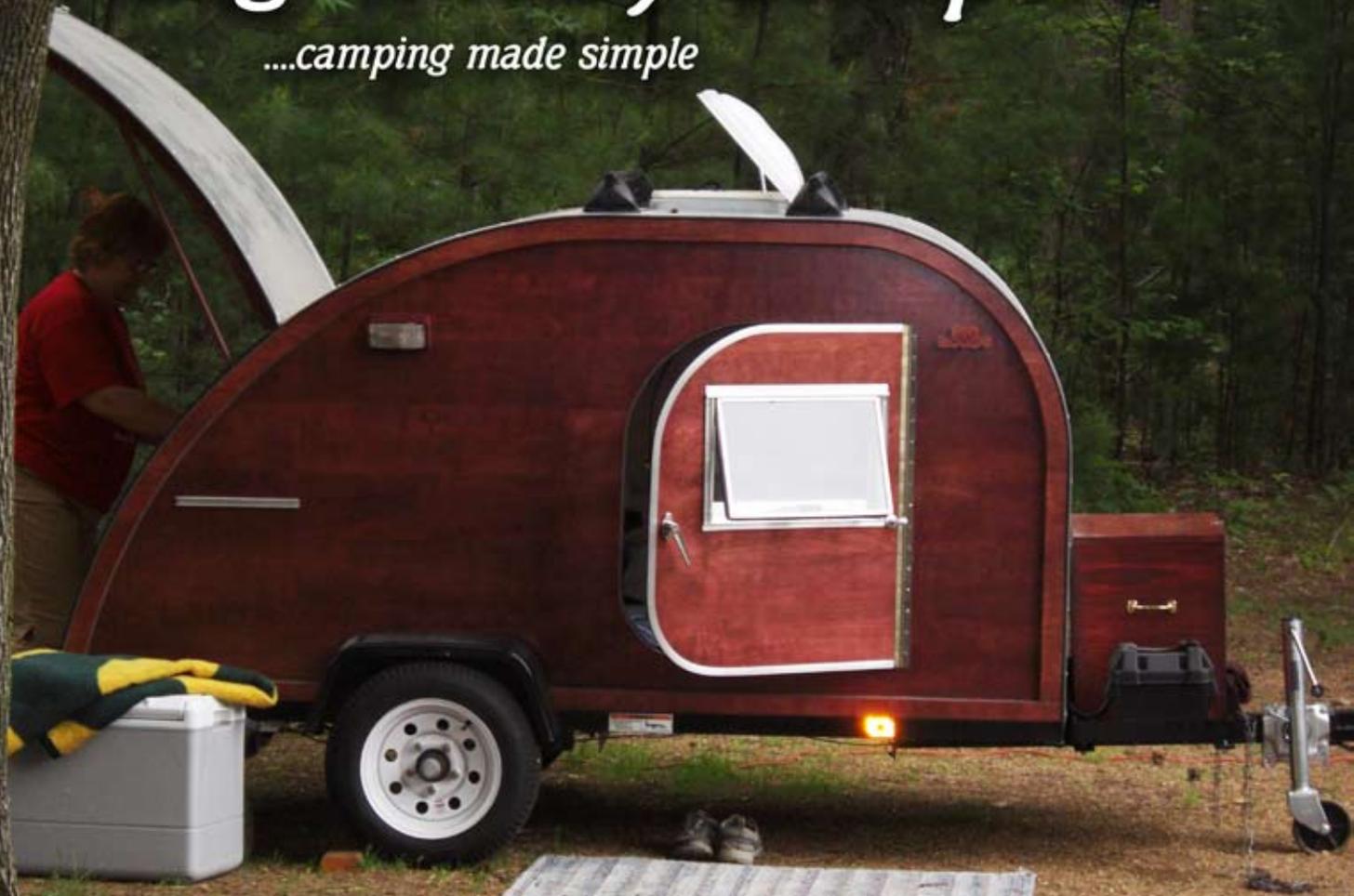
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Big Woody Campers

...camping made simple



An Interview with Jennifer Robinson

By Kevin Cross

So, you have decided to build a teardrop but you're not sure where to start. Big Woody Campers can help you out. They provide plans as well as parts to help you make your teardrop dreams a reality! Big Woody has been around for a long time, but some of our readers have been asking to know more about them. I decided to interview Jennifer the owner and founder. I hope you enjoy learning more about the story behind Big Woody Campers as much as I did.

How did Big Woody Campers get started, and where did the name come from?

In our younger days David and I did a lot of tent camping. The older we became the more we wanted to research options to get us off the ground and into a nice dry camper. We began looking at different campers available. Many were larger than what we wanted. Then we discovered teardrop campers and our search was over. Small, lightweight, and economical. Doesn't get any better than that.

Big Woody Camper's began about the time David was between careers. I still remember the day he told me was building us a teardrop! My response was, "That's it!" You can do this, not only for us but to sell as well! It was an exciting time and things quickly fell into place. He built the first one, after that there was no turning back. We moved manufacturing into a larger facility and the business continued to grow. We added plans, parts and accessories a few years later. I quit my job and the two of us were a team! We never hired anyone to help as we wanted to keep it small and control the craftsmanship of our campers. David was a stickler for perfection and every Big Woody was unique.

The name Big Woody Campers is a play on words. We both loved classic cars, especially the Ford Woodies and the Airstreams of the past. Between the "wood" sides and the aluminum skin for a roof we created our campers. Big (of course they are small) and Woody (from Ford Woodies).

Can you tell us your husband's story and how he touched others?

David was born in Minnesota, served in the Navy, and returned to Minnesota to raise a family. In the 1990s his career brought him to

Wisconsin to be part of the local YMCA camp. He rebuilt all the cabins, lodge, and dining hall and left a lasting mark there. The camp had been a perfect fit for David. He really loved camp, the kids, and nature. Big Woody Campers began about this time. David had completed his work at the YMCA camp, and building things was his passion.



David was very passionate about Big Woody Campers. He not only loved to create a new camper, but also loved the planning and working with each new customer. Probably one of the happiest days was when we would deliver a camper and finally meet our customer. We made so many friends along the way and continue to do so.

David was approached by a young high school student, Greg from the Chicago area. Greg asked David if he would help him build a Big Woody Camper as a class project. After David got permission from his parents they were underway. It was one of David's most rewarding times, being able to help Greg from start to finish, building his Big Woody Camper via email and phone calls. It was during this time that David realized he'd written a how-to, and put the plans down on paper. After lots of pictures and many diagrams they were ready to sell. We have the most detailed and extensive plans out there. David walks you through the whole build process with a little humor thrown in along the way.

October 2009 David was diagnosed with stage IV melanoma and was given 6 months. He was

determined to beat it and exhausted all treatment options available. During this time, David still continued to work almost every day on campers. Many days this took his mind off his illness. He passed August 2011 and his legacy lives on with every set of plans we sell.

You seem to be very customer oriented.

Would you like to expand on that?

We have wonderful customers. We always tried to help our customers with their questions and concerns. We also began a [Facebook page](#) for Big Woody Teardrop Campers to share pictures and comments from our home builders. I really believe this helps motivate. Seeing all the possibilities using our plans is incredible. One of the things I love most is getting pictures and hearing from my home builders.



It seems that Big Woody provides a number of resources in a variety of formats for those wanting to build their own teardrop. Can you tell us a little bit about what you offer?

Our teardrop plans are written for 4x8 campers, but many of my customers are building larger. They are easily adaptable to make this change.

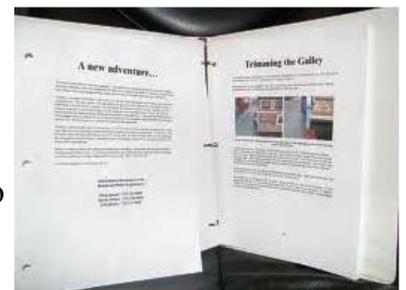
Between the pictures in our plans, our website with a photo gallery and also our Facebook page, customers have a lot of different ideas to consider when they plan out their teardrop.

Do you offer support to customers that purchase your plans?

Yes. Email, phone, or text.

You go a step beyond plans by also offering parts and accessories to complete the build. Tell us more about what is available.

We offer several kits which bundle parts at a savings. The basic parts kit includes the plans and templates along with the components to finish off your doors. Most serious builders order this kit. We have also started offering the wood kit shipped. Prior to this it was for pick up only. This kit has the wood sides, trim, doors, window, and counter/bulkhead all cut. In addition we offer a weather-strip/hardware kit, galley hinge kit, electric kit, and side table kit.



None of the kits overlap one another. Parts are also available separately.



You have a very nice collection of photos in your online gallery. Do you find that customers draw inspiration from them? Is that the thought behind it?

Definitely yes. We try to help and give customers as many ideas as possible. Just as when we build a camper, no two are alike. Each one is different in some way, even if its just the color combination.

Facebook ads to the variety and choices. Its always fun exciting to see what DIYers do with our plans. I'm always asking for pictures and



to stay in touch. I think the ultimate would be a Big Woody Teardrop Gathering. Stay tuned.

How can our readers find out more about Big Woody Campers or place orders?

Call us at 715-874-5465 or call/text 715-271-0465 or email at info@bigwoodycampers.com Always happy to answer questions. Our website is going through a facelift. The new website should be up within the month. Making it easier to navigate around is essential. Big Woody Campers. Less is more....camping made simple.

Jennifer Robinson
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Bringing Back A Classic Teardrop



Part 2 - A Teardrop Restoration Story

By Van Vlist

Every story has a beginning and this one goes something like this. My family has been in the automobile business nearly 50 years to date. We have a showroom that has evolved into a museum of sorts that displays antique cars, vintage motorcycles, old gas pumps, signs, and other transportation related items. All of which bring me to how the teardrop came into my life.

You see, customers love to look at all of the fun things in our store. Some of them will share stories about their own memories, while others will try to enrich my life by offering up something that they believe I can't live without. I must admit that on occasion they are correct and I find it hard, if not impossible, to say no. That is exactly how this project came to be.

With the exterior aluminum removed the time had come to salvage what was left of the interior, and that would prove to be not much. Time and the elements had taken their toll; the original tongue and groove flooring was as rotten as the bottom 6" of the interior walls. In fact the walls were so bad they were not worthy for use even as patterns.

So now with only the bare frame work left it was time to begin the reconstruction. I cut a sheet of 3/4" marine grade plywood to fit and then varnished the edges and the exposed bottom before attachment. With no patterns for the sidewalls I simply clamped the sheets to the exterior of the framework and then traced the shape directly onto the wood; don't forget your windows and doors. After cutting those out I applied several coats of finish stain before installation.

Now that the walls and floor were installed the time had come for the overhead panels. My creative side really came into play while I was walking through the garden section at a local hardware store. I spotted some bamboo garden fencing, bamboo stalks about a 1/4" in diameter and wired together rather tightly. My thought was this; Why couldn't I cut this to the width I required and somehow attach it to the overhead panels, sort



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of a “Tiki” like theme. Through experimenting with different types of adhesives, none of which worked to my satisfaction, it dawned on me - why not use a staple gun? I could utilize staples longer than the thickness of the paneling and then simply fold over the excess staple locking it in place. The only thing I

would do different next time would be to varnish it; it would have been a whole lot easier than doing it after installation.

I wanted to have a black and white checkered floor and the simplest way to achieve that was one piece vinyl. Just make sure any surface imperfections are minimized, in my case wood putty made quick work of it. Take your time cutting the vinyl to fit and follow the adhesive directions to the letter. I went ahead at, this point, and installed the rear cabin/galley bulkhead and trim boards. All that was left in the cabin was to install lighting, 12 volt power points, and a 110 volt outlet.

It was time to string wires. I mapped out three separate systems. One that would supply the 12 volts to the interior lights and power points in

both the galley and cabin, another that would bring 110 to them also; and of course the exterior lighting that alerts other motorists of your intentions. Taking your time running one circuit at a time and testing it before moving to the next may take a little time now, but will save your hours of frustration after it’s all covered up with the exterior skin.

I wanted a modern fuse box that was easy to access, but hidden from view. I had designed a raised panel that housed the galley’s 110 and 12v outlet and made it large enough to hold my fuse box. I really did not want a hinged door to allow access, much preferring a cover that “disappeared”. I simply made



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the outlet enclosure long enough to not only hold the two outlets, but long enough to house my fuse box as well. I cut the part that covered the box, attached cabinet magnets, and there it was, a cover with no apparent means of attachment.

Really all that was left at this point was the galley. I had been avoiding this part, but that was no longer an option. Sure I had gained some confidence in working with wood, but now I had to design and build cabinets, drawers, doors, and a countertop. I knew I wanted two drawers, a cabinet with two doors, and a countertop with red laminate on it. After taking some measurements that would maximize the space available I started building the framework. A friend of mine built the drawer boxes for me and a YouTube video taught me how to cut laminate. Even though this was the most dreaded part of the project I will admit it



was the most enjoyable, and I think the end result speaks for itself.



My wife and I have pulled this little trailer some 800 miles since its completion and have made some improvements along the way. First off we tow it with my better half's '57 Chevrolet wagon. On our maiden outing we were not 5 miles down

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the road when we lost all of our exterior lighting. After replacing the fuse and having it blow again we proceeded without lights. The trailer, being as narrow as it was, still afforded other motorists a view of the cars lights.

Upon our return I determined that the old Chev's 6 amp fuse was sufficient for the car but with the additional lights on the trailer, not so much. Now I know some of you are thinking that is what tinfoil was made for, that's just a bit too old school for me. LED's (light emitting diodes) have been around awhile now and their benefits are many. One big one is the fact that they are very bright, and another is they draw practically no amperage. I have purchased LED bulbs from Super Bright LED's, Inc. (superbrightleds.com) for other projects, so for less than a



steak dinner I not only kept fuses from blowing but had the safety that comes with the brightest of lights.

Another area that was a concern was the lack of countertop space. The actual galley surface got crowded pretty quick with the four liquor decanters, an assortment of shot glasses, and a blender. The solution was detachable side tables. One that would hold the Coleman stove for heating water for the hot buttered rums, the other being considerably larger for dining. These tables are easy to make, quick to mount, and store flat. The extruded aluminum mounting system is available from most online RV stores.

Oh yeah, two things I need to confess to; One, I managed to work with wood and other than a splinter or two there were no injuries, and Two, I am still waiting for the better half and that sleepover. Just thinking out loud here, but what if I lit some candles, fired up that blender with some margarita fixin's, and put on a little Barry White, maybe just maybe.....

Got to go now, a customer just told me about an old Serro Scotty Sportsman in his neighbors driveway, he said it looks pretty nice other than the door is missing, a couple of the windows are broken, and there might just be a family of raccoons living in it.



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Teardrop Gifts and Stocking Stuffers

By Kim Hollis

With the holidays quickly approaching, I thought it would be fun to put together a list of personalized and ready to ship gifts and stocking stuffers for your teardrop family and friends.



Personalized Teardrop Quilted Fabric Postcard by Sew Upscale

Linda Johnson specializes in handcrafted quilted fabric postcards. I approached Linda in 2013 about a personalized postcard when I came across a camping themed postcard she created. I loved the colors and landscape she incorporated in her design. Ordering was very easy. I furnished a photo of our teardrop. Linda cheerfully accepted the custom work. I was thrilled with the results. My postcard sits by my computer and I admire the detail every day. Please note, it takes time to create personalized fabric postcards, so order accordingly.

Linda also carries an assortment of ready to ship quilted fabric postcards; including rural landscapes and seascapes, nature settings and a small quantity of teardrops. Custom home fabric portraits are also available.

Contact Linda for a price quote.

www.etsy.com/shop/SewUpscale



Custom Teardrop Potholder by BS Originals

I first became aware of Beth Springer custom trailer and glamping potholders when I was given a copy of *Glamping with Mary Jane*. I quickly became an admirer of her amazing sewing skills. I contacted Beth about a custom teardrop potholder. Ordering couldn't have been easier. I supplied a photo of our teardrop. Beth asked a few questions to get a feel for what I was looking for and gave a couple of suggestions. I was updated through the whole process. The finished teardrop potholder turned out adorable. Please understand it takes time to create the customized potholders and ordering right away is recommended.

Beth also offers a variety of ready to ship treasures. All sewn by hand and created with joy.

Custom camper potholders start at \$28.

www.etsy.com/shop/BSoriginals



Teardrop charm by Simplee Charming

I have been a collector of charms for over 20 years, so it was natural for my husband to surprise me with a teardrop charm once our little woody was built. I have since purchased several teardrop charms for friends. Simplee Charming has been great to work with. They offer a large quantity of sterling silver teardrop charms.

Simplee Charming's assortment of charms is large; the category and search tool is very helpful.

Teardrop sterling silver charm \$21.99

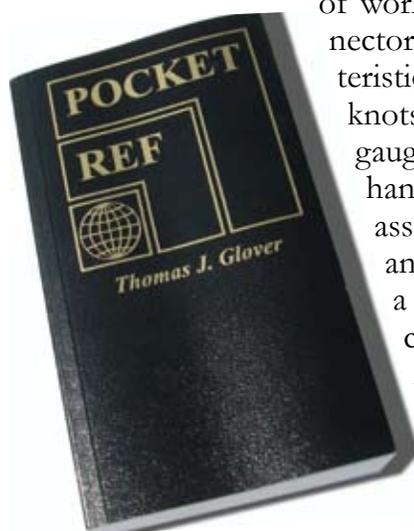
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A gift for my husband, I find myself fascinated when thumbing through the



pages. Add a small magnifying glass and it will make an outstanding gift for any teardrop owner.

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Nylon Pot Scrubbers by Artist Bee Bee

Rebekah Wheat's pot scrubbers are so bright and cheery; washing

dishes while camping is actually kind of fun.

Don't let the vibrant colors fool you, with a

squirt of soap these little pads can just about scrub

any pot or pan clean.

My husband even com-



TEARDROP GIFTS AND STOCKING STUFFERS

mented how well they work. They have become a permanent fixture in our home and camping dish washing station. Rebakah offers an assortment of beautifully made crochet gifts. To keep up with the demand, Rebakah's items are made to order; please keep this in mind when placing an order.

Set of 8 scrubbers \$16

www.etsy.com/shop/ArtistBeeBee



Pan Scrapers by Norpro

Again, maybe it is the vibrant color or maybe it is just a great product, but we love Norpro's pan scrapers. Stuck on scrambled eggs while camping? The little scraper makes the job much easier.

Looking for a stocking stuffer? The pan scraper paired with an Artist Bee Bee pot scrubber make a perfect duo for a stocking.

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How Many Trailers Make a Gathering?

By Grant Whipp

When someone mentions Teardrop Gatherings, most folks think of a group of 15 to 100+ trailers. Truth be told, however, most are less than 15. The very first such conclave, the 1st Dam Gathering of the Tears in 1994, only had eight campers and two drop-in visitors for a total of 10! At that time, even singular teardrop sightings were rare, so we always said that it only ever took TWO trailers to make a gathering! In that regard, especially when it comes to regional get-togethers, not a lot has changed in the last 20+ years ... and as evidence, I present you with this year's series of Jefferson State TearJerker Gatherings (the 21st Dam Gathering notwithstanding.)



At the end of May, we held the JSC/TJ Bigfoot Gathering at Pearch Creek Campgrounds, about a mile-and-a-half north of Orleans on Hwy 96 along the Klamath River in Far-Northern California ... deep in the heart of Bigfoot Country, hence the name. The campground is small and quaint, tucked into a little valley & ravine cut through the eons by Pearch Creek, and originally established/constructed by the CCC and the US Forest Service ... many sites still had the old cast-iron-surrounded-by-stone cook-stove/fireplaces. There is fresh potable water, but no electricity, just the way we like it!



Seven trailers were in attendance, making for about 15 people, and along with the usual pot-lucks and communal breakfasts, there was fishing, hiking, sight-seeing outings, and Dean & Joanie Hubbard filmed a “webisode” of their YouTube



channel series, Outdoor Cast Iron Cooking ... all topped off with a Bigfoot Pinata Bash put together by Sharon Heisley ... great fun for all!

Next up was Fathers’ Day at Ludlum House, another small-but-wonderful facility, this one 11

miles inland from Hwy 101 along the Oregon Coast, just north of the California border. Ludlum House is a unique location, offering guests an unexpected setting for recreation and relaxation, the cabin (rebuilt in 1999) is a near-replica of the original two-story Ludlum Family vacation home. Ludlum, an oil executive, constructed the house in 1939, then sold the property to the Forest Service after World War II. There is also a small-but-beautiful 10-site campground adjacent to the spacious landscaping surrounding the house. Initially, there was a lot of interest in this gathering, but due to several last-minute cancellations and a couple of family emergencies, only two trailers showed, just enough to make it an “official” gathering! However, a number of other family members joined us, making the overall numbers a little more respectable. A handful of kids, fishing, fun & frolic, all combined to make it a great weekend! I even tagged along with Dean on one of his four early-morning forays down to the beach in Crescent City, CA, to learn about and do some clamming ... the reward for which was deep-fried clams almost every day, and another webisode of OCIC!

Back in 2010, Kay discovered a great camping area within the Kings Canyon/Sequoia National Parks that also just happened to be FREE, so we decided to host a gathering there at the end of



July! It is in a beautiful location, a few miles off the General Sherman Highway (the Park’s main thoroughfare) on a decent paved road, that just happens to be almost dead-center between the two Parks ... and nearly everyone who attended



took advantage of the location, visiting and taking in as much of each as we could! Six trailers, 11 people (One couple come from Denver, CO!), a handful of dogs, and our parrot, Bird, enjoyed a picture-perfect weekend, along with each others' wonderful company!

A couple of weeks later found us high on the slopes of a 14,000'+ high volcano for the Mystic Mount Shasta Gathering at what used to be



one of the parking lots for the original Ski Bowl (now long-gone, after several catastrophic avalanches wiped it out). Although a number of nearby forest fires left a thick blanket of smoke in the lower elevations, we were at nearly 8,000' and the views in all directions were nothing short of spectacular! Hikes up the mountain or over to



nearby Panther Meadows, as well as a great number of other trails, seemed to be the order of the weekend ... and since there was a full moon on Saturday night, we were able to witness a unique celebration at the old Ski Bowl site that featured native American drumming, singing, and dancing (Panther Meadows is considered sacred by all of the local indigenous peoples). Due to the aforementioned smoke and the high elevation, we only had four trailers, with one couple coming from Montana to camp with us and pick up a trailer we had procured for them.

Rounding out our season of small get-togethers (We did attend the 5th International Redwood Gathering, but that is by no means a "small get-together!") was the Reunion at the 'Glyphs at the Hickeson Petroglyphs Recreation Area, 25 miles east of Austin, NV, on Hwy 50. This is another great facility that is also FREE camping, and

The advertisement features a cartoon bear pulling a teardrop trailer. Below the bear, the text reads "Tag Along". The main text says "Teardrop & Vintage Trailer Parts, Accessories, Plans, & Advice for the Enthusiast, Discerning Builder, and Small Manufacturer". At the bottom, there is a phone number "(530) 242-6452" and a website "WWW.TEARDROPS.NET". The background of the ad shows a teardrop trailer parked in a campsite with a campfire and trees.



we've been there several times. (Hence the name "Reunion.") It's one of our favorite locations, as well as having some special significance for Kay & I! Although easily accessible and less than a mile off the highway, it feels incredibly remote, peaceful, quiet, and refreshing! It's also a great location from which to base fabulous day-trips to ghost towns, abandoned mines, hot springs, historic railroads, and so much more ... not to mention the 10,000 year old petroglyphs adjacent to the campgrounds!

A few of us drove to Ely on Saturday morning to ride the Ghost Train, one of a handful of old steam trains operating in Nevada. On the way back, we drove through several thunderstorms/squalls, one of which produced a genuine flash flood, covering the entire highway in several inches of water! As it turned out, the rains weren't through with us, and we had to erect a makeshift shelter back at the campgrounds for us all to gather under for the potluck and wonderful camaraderie ... and ICE CREAM! All told, there were nine trailers.

So, the moral to this story is ... don't worry about numbers ... grab a friend or two or four or more and GO CAMPING! Enjoy each other's company & friendship, share some local adventuring, and bring home some stories to tell! THAT, my friends, is what teardropping and tiny trailering is all about! Today, just like 20 years ago, it only takes TWO trailers to make a gathering.

CHEERS!



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