



Teardroppers of **O**regon and **W**ashington
Serving those who are or wannabe teardroppers

TOW Line

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CAMP LANE 2005

By **Steven Price**

The weather forecast was for rain, three days of rain. What teardrop builder hasn't been nervous taking the camper out into rain for the first time? Compound that by ten, as it was also our first overnighter and the first time driving in the dark with the trailer. Would a tire fall off, would the running lights work and would we experience the dreaded "Hatch Hinge Leak"?

So we leave at the height of rush hour in Portland loaded down with two teenage boys and a wiggly dog. We had to stop for dinner and at that point called the neighbors to bring us the items we had forgotten, as we would lose another hour backtracking. Hey, what else could go wrong? Lets see if we can get the stress level up any higher! Not the questions one should ask a novice trailer builder at this point. Finally, we're on the road and all the lights do work and it is not raining yet. Trailer tracks fine and everyone calms down, well actually just me as I was the only one on edge. Then there's a drive to Eugene and then across town to head for Florence.

The directions to Camp Lane were very specific which was good because it's very dark in those woods at night. What a relief, we found the camp with a functioning trailer and the rains had held off. We were met by a group of friendly folks as we pulled in. They had the trailer unhooked, put into position, gave us the grand tour, offered a late dinner and invited us over to the big campfire. We had the rain cover up and settled in within minutes, visited a bit and went to bed. And then the rains came. As I slowly dozed off, one could not help but wonder if there would be a leak and whose side of the bed it would be on.

Awoke in the morning to the sounds of silence, no rain. We proceeded to the grand lodge, which was only 30 feet away for a breakfast that would have satisfied a lumberjack. The food was great, the coffee hot and the conversation lively. It is always great to be with a group that has the same interests and as everyone found out it was our maiden voyage, the advice and stories made us feel normal. I counted fourteen teardrops and every one of them was different.

Camp Lane is a great facility for teardrops. It has a lodge with fireplace and a huge kitchen, restrooms like the state campgrounds. In addition, there are large grassy areas to park campers and even a large covered basketball court for those without rain covers or recipients of the dreaded hatch-hinge leak.

Saturday was a nice day with some folks hiking the trails in the area while others of us went on into Florence for the Street Rod show. There were perhaps a 100 cars on display including a teardrop from Nevada. The sun came out and it was one of those perfect fall days at the beach. Saturday evening was a potluck with more food than anyone could eat but we all tried. Then, a bit of after-dinner entertainment and off to bed.

Sunday morning there was another phenomenal breakfast and then it was time to really start talking nuts and bolts. My wife looked at ten different ways to pack a kitchen and I was looking at frame construction. Of course this implies that we are planning a second and better trailer, just like almost everyone else. Once again the weather was great and the packing up went as smoothly as the arrival.

I can say for sure that this event is on our yearly schedule now and special thanks to **Sheryl and Lonnie Aaron, Pam Hernandez and Jim Mangen** for making this a wonderful experience for the "newbie" and all the other campers. (And just for the record, no leaks. But the rain cover is too small as I got soaked getting out the door in the middle of the night.)

TEARDROPS ATTEND PORT ORCHARD HAPPENING

By Irma Reed

Cruizin' Sunday is sponsored by Christian Life Center of Port Orchard, Washington. This was the ninth year with our big ten-year celebration coming next year. There were 236 entries this year. Lots of spectators came with shuttle's bringing people in from close-by parking areas. It was the first time we've had any teardrop trailers attend.

There were five teardrops at the show; all had classic cars with them except ours. One was a single-person homemade pulled behind a motorcycle! Only one was built professionally. Ours was the only one that was an original vintage trailer as it was built around 1947.

Our show is favored by all who enter because it's free. Many local sponsors and the church pay for everything. We have lots of free food, entertainment, door prizes, T-shirts, hats, Polo Shirts, dash plaques, goodie bags, Krispy Cream donuts, lattes, snow cones, root-beer floats, kettle corn, and kid inflatables. In addition, there are award plaques, cash winner prizes and a grand winner's parade. A truly awesome happening!

We also do a food collection for the community food bank at our church, with tremendous participation. The church just purchased a large piece of adjoining property and hopes to have it all blacktopped for next year's big blowout celebration. I would love to personally invite the TOW group. Maybe everyone can drive over on that Sunday after the LeMay Open House.

Terry and Gordie Engelstad towed their Lil' Bear teardrop with their awesome 1948 Ford pickup called Peachy Keen. The two together won "Best of Show". Terry won a large car care set. The grand prize was a Sears large three-piece metal tool chest that went to Gordie.

TEARDROPS ON DISPLAY AT LeMAY OPEN HOUSE

The display of teardrop trailers at the LeMay Open House play an important part in the annual affair that's put on by the Harold E. LeMay Car Museum. Our icons of the past, some of which are reproductions of teardrop trailers built in the era just after WWII, attract lots of attention from spectators who tour the grounds at LeMay's Marymount Campus.

As usual, our hosts, **Jack Jacobson** and **Bob Book** (with wives **Sue** and **Tanya** as supports) did a superb job in organizing our display campout. In order to keep the display in keeping with other things to see, we all moved our modern iron out of the area so the public viewed only vintage cars and trailers.

This year, there were three vintage camp trailers added to 15 teardrops. The camping area is just great with lots of shade and terrific, luscious grass to park on. We had two rows of trailers back-to-back with lots of space between.

Buses between the two locations of the Open House (Marymount Campus and Home Grounds) let people off just down the adjacent road where we camped, so we got lots of foot-traffic through our area. We enjoyed showing off our tears and talking to people about the experience of building, owning, camping and traveling with them.

The LeMay staff really like our participation. We staff the "Big Green Building" with volunteers during the day. With every one of us knowing one another, the two-hour shifts never are without the next volunteer showing up. The collector tee-shirts and hats were ready to pick up when we reported to the volunteer table. This year, the graphics on the shirt was of a late '40's GMC wrecker truck. This truck was a focal point of the displays on the Home Grounds.

So remember, always on the last Saturday of August, the LeMay Museum's Open House is being held in Tacoma. Reports are that when the formal museum is completed next to the Tacoma Dome (hopefully by 2008) there will always be an open house event.

"SANTA'S BACK IN TOWN" THE THEME FOR TEARDROP DISPLAY

Yes, this was the theme for TOW's teardrop trailer display at the October Car Show put on by the Northwest Car Collectors Association. This year, TOW being a member of the Association, decided to use their 20 X 30 foot space for a static display. At last year's celebration pizza feed, many suggestions, some crazy and off-the-wall, were cast about concerning the "Santa's Back in Town" theme. No final decision was made at that time.

As the date of the car show approached, one of last year's pizza feed suggestions seemed to make sense. And this is what happened: The Steve/Peggy Birley Model A with its matching wood-sided teardrop would be placed in the middle. A chimney was mounted on the top of the tear. Santa was depicted as diving headfirst into the chimney with only his red pants and black boots showing. And driving the car? Well, it was Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer!!

All had a great time decorating the display on the Thursday before the show opened. Many thanks go out to the volunteers who helped, especially the gals whose talents really sparkled as packages and other Christmas decorations were arranged around the car and trailer.

Only eight of the thirty-five club displays were judged to receive a special recognition ribbon. And guess what? TOW was honored as one of the eight!!

THE GREAT CANADIAN TEARDROP GATHERING

By **Mary Church**

This was the first gathering in Ft. Langley, B.C., Canada, and it is to be hoped that there will be many more to come. We had a great time. We camped at Fort Langley RV Park, right on the Fraser River. We arrived late in the evening (8:45 PM) on Friday, September 9th, and found that the rest of the group had already checked in. **Ron and Linda Cain**, our hosts for the event, welcomed us.

Saturday morning we ate a leisurely breakfast while nearly everyone else packed-up their teardrops before 8 AM and moved into Langley (about 10 miles away) for the car show. Since our teardrop isn't quite finished, and we weren't towing it with a classic car, we decided to forego the "show and shine" moments for this year! After breakfast we drove into Langley and wandered the car show, which took up the majority of the downtown area. There were more than 1400 cars entered, so it took quite a while to see most of the show! There were a huge variety of cars entered (my personal favorite was the pearl white Avanti, while our son preferred the stainless steel Dalorean!) so there was something to interest just about everyone! It was a beautiful sunny day, and lots of people came out to see the show. After looking around for some time, we finally found the teardrops. There were lots of people looking at them, asking questions, and remarking about them.

After walking the car show for several hours, we decided to drive back to camp and get ready for dinner - potluck of course. Spent a very pleasant time back at camp fixing our dish and chatting with a couple from Vernon, B.C. who had brought their teardrop but had decided not to put it in the show this year. When all the rest of the group came back from the show, we had a great potluck dinner, followed by visiting around the campfire. Next morning some of the folks went in to Langley for a swap meet. We chose to go visit the historical site at Fort Langley, and spent nearly two hours wandering the grounds of the former Hudson's Bay Company trading post. It is actually the location where British Columbia was officially named a colony of Great Britain. It is very well restored, and a very interesting site to visit.

After visiting the historical site, we spent about an hour in Fort Langley, and wished that we had more time to spend. There were lots of interesting little shops that we would have loved to look into. As it was, we had to head back to our home in Washington and work the next day for both of us, so will have to save our further exploration of Fort Langley for next year.

Our border crossing experience was pretty uneventful, although we did hear that others coming up from Washington had quite a different experience. We came through at Lynden, and had no problems either going in or coming out. We were prepared with all the necessary ID just in case.

We met some really fine folks from Canada, and encouraged them to come to our Spring Fling next May. They are talking about putting together a meet up in the Okanogan Valley in B.C, and are hoping that some of us will come up and camp with them there. We think that would be a great idea!

PORTLAND CAR SHOW FEATURED A TEARDROP CORRAL

This Northwest Car Collectors Car Show this year featured a corral of five trailers on display. **Rod Glassett** organized this part of the show. He presented a very informative arrangement of the trailers where the owners were present to answer questions and talk teardrops with spectators.

Steve and Wendy Hughes-Jelen brought their 2004 Ester-built trailer and displayed it with their 2003 MINI Cooper. They also designed a large poster with a map of their "Streaking Across America" trip, displaying photos all along the way, including several taken along Route 66. It was a great exhibit of how a small car can tow a teardrop trailer and the occupants can have a lot of fun while doing it.

Rich Godat from Portland showed up with his 2004 Ester-built trailer on Thursday to help with the decoration of the static display themed "Santa's Back in Town". It was interesting to compare the Steve/Wendy trailer with Rich's. Both exhibited **Ed Ester's** craftsmanship in the cabinetry as well as the custom made interiors that **Barb Ester** puts together.

Surely the shiniest trailer was the one **Judy Robb** brought with her two sons **Mike** and **Morgan**. It was a 1947 restored Kit. Be sure to read Judy's restoration story in this newsletter.

A new couple to teardropping is **Terry and Diana Lindsley** from the Portland area displayed their new teardrop built on a Harbor Freight frame. Fully loaded, Terry estimates that it weighs about 850 pounds. The project took about 200 hours over two months. The neat feature on this teardrop was the bike rack mounted on the tongue. It was designed by Terry to carry two bikes. Another feature is the custom-made packcloth cover used when on the road.

Last, but by far not the least was the bright yellow teardrop find that **Larry and Terri Snedden** of Longview, Washington found last year. It had been a custom built unit for a street rodder who never used it for camping. What a treat it was for all of us to see it at the gatherings it attended this last summer. Larry also brought his 1946 Chevrolet pickup to the show. It was the maiden run for this street rodded ride.

TOW AND SHOW FOR A NEW TEARDROPPER

By **Judy Robb**

In 2002 I purchased a 1947 Kit teardrop trailer from a woman in Salem, Oregon who restores vintage trailers as a hobby. The price was \$1000 (that included \$300 for a set of fiberglass fenders that ended up not fitting). The trailer was a little rough, but was towable and appeared to be in fairly good shape. It had the original propane tank, two burner stove, icebox, and gravity-fed water spigot in the galley. My husband figured the restoration would take about two months. And this one was the perfect shape and had the aluminum galley that I wanted.

Unfortunately, when we began tearing it apart, we discovered the trailer was rotten to the core due to the fact that the water tank had rusted through and had been leaking for who-knew-how-long. We covered it with a tarp and put it on hold. One weekend early last spring when my sons were visiting, we started talking about the trailer and decided to go out and look under the tarp. When I saw the moldy, mildewed wreck under there I burst into tears. The boys vowed on the spot to restore it for me. And they have more than lived up to their promise!

My husband Larry and I met Marty several years ago at the Expo Center RV show. Since then he has e-mailed me invaluable advice and fantastic newsletters. Just that small amount of connection to another teardropper was all I needed to keep me going.

The work this year was done over six months of long weekends and one ten-day sustained push. My two sons, Mike and Morgan, did ninety-nine percent of the work at my home in Cloverdale, Oregon on weekends. The two boys would drive over from the Portland area and work while I fixed meals for them. A fair exchange I thought.

Our target was the Labor Day Weekend Car Show at the Oregon Coast Aquarium. On that last Friday we were still in a hangar at the Hillsboro Airport buffing our brains out, making curtains and watching the clock.

As it turned out, we got to Newport after the Aquarium parking lot gates had been locked Friday night, so we stayed in the nearby marina's dry-camping area. The boys slept in the back of their truck and I slept gloriously and well for the very first time in my teardrop. My husband was unable to attend, so I had the whole thing to myself. Saturday night, the boys got the trailer and I got the back of the truck with the dogs.

We didn't have the propane hooked up that weekend so I had to set my Coleman on top of the stove. That has been fixed now and the old stove works like a dream.

We received a "Best in Class" award on the second day of the Aquarium "Tow and Show". There were only a few trailers there (only one other teardrop) so we really didn't have a lot of competition, but it was still a sweet reward for my boys for all their hard work.

The restoration cost about \$5000. We did a lot of our purchasing online. We got aluminum moldings from Teardrop Fix-it-Shop (www.teardropparts.com). From Li'l Bear Tag-Alongs (www.teardrops.net/lilbear/parts) we got windows, door seals and a new beefy galley door hinge. We had to replace a lot of the aluminum sheeting. We got that from Pacific Metal Company in Tualatin (503-454-1051).

To achieve the Airstream-like mirror shine we used a polishing compound called Nuvite (www.nuvitechemical.com) that we had read about online. You can also get Nuvite from www.perfectpolish.com. We printed out their guide to achieving a perfect polish. I bought a Waxxpro variable speed sander/polisher and a Waxxpro 10" random orbital waxer/polisher from AutoZone. We ground the mill finish down with the sander/polisher using the heavier grit and then used the waxer/polisher with the finer grit to remove swirl marks. We read that it costs \$100/sq.-ft. to have it done. Now we know why. We spent countless hours polishing. And went through countless expensive wool polishing bonnets. Our fingernails were black for days from the aluminum oxide.

I do not regret any of the hard work or the expense. I am so thrilled with my perfect little trailer that I wouldn't part with it for any amount of money. I'm also very pleased that we were able to save a tiny piece of American history. And I can't wait to get on the road and go camping!

TEARDROPPING IN FOSSIL, OREGON

By **Hiram Stumpjumper**

We were invited to the Blue Moon Ranch in Fossil for a wonderful weekend party with zany friends of a personal friend of ours. A campout was mentioned, so we took our teardrop.

It turned out that this weekend was the opening of the Wheeler County fair and rodeo. Wheeler County is so small that it barely boasts 1400 people. Bearing that in mind, a tourist should not be surprised that the parade opening the weekend lasted only 10 minutes. But it was well attended along the six-block parade route. Everyone in town was very enthusiastic, knew where the route was and instinctively did not park on that street. No barricades, no police and no road-apple crew to pick up after the many, many horses. It was a GREAT parade for such a small town.

Fossil has only 450 people living in town. There is one grocery store where the prices are very reasonable. However, the only gas station pumped all brands of gas as long as you wanted regular. It cost \$2.90 per gallon compared to a Portland area fill-up at 40 cents less. Trouble was, the next closest station was 20 miles away, so the choice was not there. The town did boast a car museum with eight cars, one fire truck, a motorcycle, a soapbox derby racer and a homemade kid's car powered by a lawn-mower motor. The historical society has a museum that was great to tour. The history of this part of Oregon reflects the determination that homesteaders had to make a go of living off the large tracks of desert and forests.

All the residents are proud of their offerings for tourists. And, one of the more noteworthy is a collection of teapots that are displayed around a private home across from the courthouse. It's so well known that teapots arrive from all over the world. They are gaily painted and placed in a row along the property line. You see many, many hundreds of them!

This was an annual bash hosted by our friends. So many townspeople started showing up for this terribly fun party that our hosts let the word out that it was a family reunion. Absolutely everyone in town knew of it, so anywhere we went in town, jealous people kept asking how we were related. We finally told them that we were marriage related. Just before we left, we told the host that he was the son of my ex-wife's mother-in-law's cousin.

It had been 30 years since we had been to a rodeo, so on Saturday night we definitely wanted to attend. Our host provided a hayride trip to the rodeo grounds for about 20 of his guests. It was lots of fun. In the rodeo parking lot, we saw lots and lots of pickups, all with trailer hitches. But, we had to remind ourselves that this was ranching country, so it made sense.

Driving around town was a hoot. For one thing, there are no traffic lights. It seemed that there was a camp trailer in every back yard. So, it ended up that we trolled for vintage travel trailers. And, we saw a couple of good ones too!!

Over the years, our host, who is a carpenter, has kept adding amenities to this outside bash. One remodeled county lab had stainless steel counters and sinks scheduled for the dump. They now help make up a great kitchen area. Doors scheduled for disposal now serve as tables. All this is put on a slab that used to be a barn floor. Part of it was covered with a sheet-metal roof and the part that wasn't was shaded with army camouflage netting. Off to one side was a huge, custom-made roaster. First thing Saturday morning, a pig was put on for the afternoon potluck.

One of the joys of the bash was the performance of a volunteer crew of musicians that played country western. They were all personal friends of our hosts and really enjoyed playing and singing for us. Their gig lasted the whole weekend. Our host also provided rows of stretchers salvaged from a remodeled Civil Defense site. They were used very late at night for his guests to lay on to view the annual meteor show.

ED COLVIN'S REPORT ON THE GREAT BEAVER STATE CAMPOUT

We had a good time at Camp Lane 2005. There were 14 teardrops there and they were a swell bunch. We had some interesting TD's. One was pulled by a motor tricycle that was powered with a VW motor - they were real nice folks. It was too bad that the regular Washington folks couldn't attend because of the conflicting Canadian gathering. They were sorely missed!!

The kitchen facilities in the camp's beautiful lodge were really nice and we had several meals there. It poured down rain on Friday night but I didn't get wet at all as I was parked under a roof that was over the tennis courts where it was nice and dry.

About 9 PM I had some neighbors that just pulled in. It was **John and Henri DeJonge** from Oakridge, Oregon. They had just finished their TD at 5 PM and came on their maiden voyage. This TD is going to be theirs and is not for sale. Henri engraved their names on the cabinet doors on the inside! John said they would not be building another TD for a while. I asked John how much one like theirs would sell for and he said \$12,000.

TIME FOR SNIPPETS

1. Spamming is not good so TOW is asking for notification from those **NOT** wanting TOW Line.
2. **Ron Cain** has told the TOW Line that the Langley event is on for 2006. Same weekend.

3. **Brian Ireland** of Langley, tells us to plan a BBQ at his place on Saturday at Langley 2006.
4. The **Gig Harbor Gig** might not take place in 2006. Our camping property is being sold.
5. Many more vintage travel trailers are attending teardrop gatherings. All are very welcome.
6. **Ron Cain**, webmaster for www.teardroptrailers.org, will place a want ad for selling your TD.
7. Langley photos: <http://www.carnut.biz/images/05Langley/vintagepark/05LangleyV.html>
8. TOW printed 400 new brochures for teardroppers to hand out at events. See Marty for some.
9. Langley newspapers reported 1500 cars and 100,000 (wow!!) visitors at Saturday car show.
10. Northwest Vintage Car and Motorcycle Museum in Brooks. Oregon will host TD gathering.
11. Some asking about publishing a voluntary directory of TOW affiliates. A survey will be made.
12. **Ken Masden** arrived home recently trailering his latest acquisition – a 1936 DeSoto Airflow!
13. Look for a description of how and why TOW was founded in the next TOW Line edition.
14. Any one interested in hosting a teardrop gathering in Eastern Oregon or Western Idaho???
15. The 2005 calendar listed 14 teardrop events in Oregon, Washington and Northern California.
16. The very first Pacific Northwest TD gathering was the 1998 LeMay Open House with 12 TD's.
17. The **Glassetts, Engelstads and Boehmes** have been at every LeMay Open House event.
18. **Hiram Stumpjumper** is TOW's roving teardrop affiliate and reporter from Aumsville, Oregon.

CALENDAR FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

The calendar for next year will be published in the next TOW Line edition scheduled to go out in late January 2006. The first item will be the Midwinter Potluck with the date to be announced. All other events will be announced at that time also.

A new gathering in Oregon will be in July 2006 at Antique Power Land on the grounds of the Northwest Vintage Car and Motorcycle Museum. Details are being worked on at this time. The location is just north of Salem, Oregon.

Any new teardrop or vintage trailer event wanting an announcement published should contact the editor via the information seen in masthead at the top of page 1.

For sure, we can attend the following gatherings and rallies:

1. Spring Fling - Memorial Day weekend near Packwood, Washington.
2. Carnation Fourth - Fourth of July at '36 Fun Park in Carnation, Washington.
3. Camp Lane 2006 - Third weekend of August near Florence, Oregon.
4. Mt. Baker TCT rally - Third weekend of August in Deming, Washington
5. LeMay Open House Teardrop Display - Last Saturday in August in Tacoma.
6. Langley, BC Cruise-In - Second weekend in September at Fort Langley.