



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

TOW Line

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TEARDROP TRAILERS ON THE INTERNET

By **Michael Burton**

In today's world, the Internet serves as a useful tool for many people. It provides a quick means to look up useful information, get pictures, music and video and to talk to others about subjects that interest them.

For teardrop trailer owners or would-be owners, the Internet can help you with building, maintaining or restoring your teardrop trailer or with finding plans for one in the first place. It can also help you get in touch with other teardrop trailer owners near you and provide you with information about teardrop trailer gatherings. If you just want to talk to others about teardrop trailers, there are discussion groups you can join.

Where Do I Start?

You can start finding teardrop trailer information by going to a search engine such as Google (<http://www.google.com/>) and entering 'teardrop trailer'. You will find about 182,000 entries that match that term, however. When it comes to searching on the Internet, it pays to be specific. If you are looking for plans, add that to the search. Do the same for discussion groups, parts, manufacturers, etc. Of course, you can always look for 'teardrop trailer links' to see pages of links to teardrop trailer web sites.

A prime-starting place is the Tails & Trails web site (<http://www.teardrops.net/>). The site is run by Grant Whipp and contains a lot of useful information.

I have done a general survey of the Internet with respect to our favorite subject, and have gathered some of the more visible and popular sites. You can see many of them on my own links page at http://teardrop.blogicalthoughts.com/td_links.html.

Teardrop Trailer Plans

Some of the web sites for obtaining teardrop trailer plans are

- Kuffel Creek Press (<http://www.kuffelcreek.com/>)
- Lil Bear Plans (<http://www.teardrops.net/lilbear/plans.html>)
- Tails & Trails Teardrop Trailer Plans Directory (<http://www.teardrops.net/plans01.html>)

You can also google 'teardrop trailer plans'. Be careful if you see any plans on e-Bay, though. There are some scammers and pirates out there who try to make a quick buck by stealing other's hard work.

Discussion Groups

Discussion groups are where teardroppers go to ask questions, talk about their latest camping trips, or just gab about teardrop trailer stuff. The groups are divided into those that can be accessed by anyone and those that require you to be a member.

Currently the major Internet discussion group is the Teardrops & Tiny Travel Trailers Forum (<http://www.mikenchell.com/forums/>), run by Mike Schneider. Ask any question and you will get lots of answers. The group is pretty freewheeling, so you can expect all kinds of information to be there.

Yahoo! has several groups dedicated to teardrop trailers. The Tearjerkers have a members-only forum (<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/TearJerkers/>). There is a free forum called racepig84 (<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/racepig84/>) that is centered in Illinois, and one called Teardrop Campers (<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/teardropcampers/>) that is centered in Australia.

There is a private discussion group called The Campfire (<http://mosquitoes.ediththispage.com/discuss>) which is run by Pamela Hernandez. It covers anything concerning teardrop trailers. Membership is by permission of the moderator.

Manufacturers

You don't have to build your own teardrop trailer - there are plenty of manufacturers for them. Most of the manufacturers have a web presence of some kind. Some of the more popular teardrop manufacturers are

- Camp-Inn Trailers (<http://www.tinycamper.com/>)
- Cozy Cruiser Mfg, Inc. (<http://www.cozycruiser.com/>)

- Hunter Outdoor Products (<http://www.mrglobal.com/>)
- The Little Trailer Co., Inc. (<http://www.thelittletrailerco.com/>)
- Locke Nest Teardrops (<http://www.lockenestteardrops.com/>)

There are many more - check the Tails & Trails website or my own links page.

Personal Web Pages

Web pages about teardrop trailers are of two basic types – personal pages and gallery pages. Personal pages contain pictures and information. They may have construction information, teardrop history or pictorials of camping trips. Gallery pages are usually on photo web sites. They consist entirely of pictures.

Conclusion

The Internet is very useful place to obtain information about teardrop trailers. Whether you are looking for a design to build, looking for help with a construction detail, or just browsing to enjoy others work and camping trips, you will find it on the Net.

I GREW UP WITH A TEARDROP CAMP TRAILER

By **Rick Conover**

I am a native Oregonian having grown up In Oregon City and Clackamas. Being a young boy in the 1960s I loved to go camping with my mom and dad. My dad got a teardrop trailer in the mid sixties. I can't remember the brand or if it was a homebuilt trailer. Dad stored the trailer in the garage. If my brothers or me got caught playing in the trailer, we were grounded. It was to be used only for camping.

My dad loved AMC Rambler cars. I remember the first time he hooked it up to the teardrop. My brothers and I always waited to see where we would sleep in the trailer. I remember when the three of us were really small; we use to sleep crosswise. But as we grew taller my two older brothers slept the other way while I always got the back end of the deal. All this time, my folks slept in the Rambler wagon.

We loved to camp at Fort Stevens State Park. We also camped many places in the Cascade Mountains, but Fort Stevens was the family's favorite place to go camping. The trailer was also towed over to Eastern Oregon to go hunting and camping. .

My mom loved to cook in the galley in the back of the trailer. We boys really liked hot dogs and Sloppy Joes. Most of the time, we would have a campfire. They were great. I remember the camp songs we would sing and the stories we would tell. We were having too much fun and it was hard to go to bed. Mom would end up making us.

I was 17 when dad passed away. We sold the trailer to a young couple. We were sorry to see it go. We never saw it again.

As a man now in his fifties, I miss the days spent with my family at Fort Steven and camping in the teardrop.

DRIVING CROSS COUNTRY IN 1934

By **Phil Shore**

My first cross-country road trip was as a 20-year-old college student. At the time, we lived in Reno, Nevada while I was attending the University of Nevada. My mother had moved us from New York City to a ranch on the outskirts of town. She wanted to visit relatives back east in 1934, so I did the driving in our new Plymouth four-door sedan.

In those days, way before interstates, roads were still pretty much primitive. For instance, as soon as we left Reno, it was all dirt or gravel roads. We took the northern route driving east to Elko, then across the Utah Salt Flats. As we left the Salt Lake City area we began to follow the route of the first Intercontinental Railroad. Today, it's I-80.

About the only time we were on pavement was when we went through an occasional town. Cheyenne, Wyoming had paved streets. We started to run into more paved roads when we reached North Platt, Nebraska. Between towns west of Omaha, there were no gas stations or help if you broke down. Fortunately, we never had any trouble with our new Plymouth. One thing you don't see on the I-80 freeway these days is people stopping to help other drivers. In the old days in the remote stretches between towns, everyone stopped when a stranded traveler seemed to be having car trouble. In some places there was nothing but wide-open country.

Meanwhile, the dust was terrible. Seals on the car doors were poor. It sometimes got as dusty inside as it was outside. Rolling down the windows when there was no oncoming traffic was our solution for air conditioning. We always carried a shovel in case we got stuck so bad we had to dig ourselves out. Water for the radiator was always a worry and we carried extra. For drinking water, we usually hung a canvas water bag on the back door handle. Because of the wet canvas surface, evaporation kept the water cool. Gas was only 15 to 20 cents a gallon.

This was almost a 3000-mile trip so it took about a week. At the end of the day, we stayed in a town's hotel. I recall a good hotel, "The Utah" in Salt Lake City and one in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The

hotels were nowhere near anything seen today. I don't recall us using any motels. Outside of a good-sized town, food was very poor. There was no fresh food. Maybe refrigeration didn't exist in most remote towns. It seemed that everything was out of a can. Today, 71 years later, I still can't stand canned spinach.

On the way, after our first spare tire had been used, I had to repair flat tires. In those days, before a cell phone could be used to call Triple A, I had to repair the tires myself. I used tire irons to pry off the tire, take out the inner tube and repair the tube with a patch kit.

Repairing an inner tube with a patch kit was quite a process. The first thing done was to rough up the rubber around the puncture with the lid of the kit. The lid was made with a surface that made a good rasp-type file. Then using the clamp from the kit, you clamped the patch onto the tube. The patch had a substance on it that was highly flammable. Touching a match to it ignited the substance and the heat bonded the patch to the rubber.

I made this trip every summer with my mother during my last two years of college. Each time, I left her in New York and drove back with a fraternity brother. We stayed mostly in YMCA hotels when we ran across any. They were clean and cheap. Those trips back to Reno were much, much faster as we shared driving and drove like crazy.

TOURING THE USA – OR – 48 OR BUST

By **Gene Galipeau**

This spring, I traveled 10,000 miles in touring all original 48 states. The trip was not long but a lot of things took place. So, if you want a more complete story, you will have to corner me at some gathering and I can fill in the blanks. If you have specific questions I would be happy to answer them.

I was gone forty-two days. The total cost of gas, food, camp fees and whatever was \$2,900. The most expensive gas was in California at \$2.98 a gallon and the lowest was \$1.82 in Minnesota. Most gas was \$2.03 to \$2.19. Gas was \$2.40 at home. The tow vehicle was a Honda Pilot that got 16 mpg.

The title "48 or Bust" is a sticker I had on the back of my trailer with a map of the USA that I added the state stickers on as I passed through each state. It turned out to be a great conversation starter and thumbs up signal from people passing me on the highway. This "mission" statement informed people what I was doing and they loved it.

The original plan was to tow my teardrop for this trip. A few weeks before I was to leave my son-in-law spotted a 13' Casita trailer that was fully self contained, shower, potty, hot water, air-conditioned, microwave and the like. I modified the table so I did not have to set it up every night and the bed was always ready to go. I put a shelf up on the end over my feet for maps, books and general stuff. I bought the trailer used and sold it three days after I returned for \$500 less than I paid for it. A few nights of 27-degree weather, heavy rain and high wind made me glad I was not in the teardrop. The highest temperature was in the mid-nineties. I used the air-conditioning four nights. Some nights I used no heat or air. The rest of the time the heater was in use. Before this trip started I took all the equipment on a trip down the coast to San Francisco and back, over eight days, to proof everything. I felt that made few changes needed to be made.

I left late in April and arrived back home in early June. The first seven days out it rained sometime during the day. Then it snowed. I had a few nice days as well as hail, wind, and lightning storms. The mid-west can be an intimidating place. Spring around the country is very pretty, but the rest of the year is not at all like home. The Pacific Northwest is still where I want to live.

I averaged 226 miles a day. That translates into about five hours of driving and five hours of looking around and the balance eating, sleeping, reading, relaxing and visiting with the natives. I traveled over 80% of the time on non-freeway type roads. Drove through numerous small towns, and down some side streets to get the flavor of the places. I avoided major cities if I could. I visited Indian ruins in the Southwest, old forts in the Northeast, Niagara Falls and Yellowstone. I was glad I went counter clockwise around the states as the weather going the other way was not going to be very good according to my research. I was very glad I went south first. However, the weather was still bad a times.

The US Corp.-Of-Engineers has some exquisite campgrounds that are inexpensive and mostly on scenic lakes. They were the best and I always looked for them. I also looked for places with hiking trails. As the result of an accident in 1977, I have been walking about three miles a day to keep mobile. These daily walks forced me to get on trails and roads to see the country close and personal. I met a few people at times and that gave me a flavor for the weather, the terrain of the area as well as a good mental break from driving and touring.

I stopped a fellow in Maine to ask directions. He turned out to be a Park History Ranger. We talked for almost four hours. He gave me the history of battles, lighthouses and places I should tour. We had a great old time. I met a couple in Arizona that lived in the wilds of Canada without modern services. We discussed their business and life while on a hike to some Indian ruins and cliff dwellings. I ran into a guy fixing a building at a campground in a small town and before the evening was out, I game my

Management Business Seminar to four local business people. I learned about the local business situation and how they felt about things so it was a fair exchange.

I found that the sign on the trailer opened up a lot of conversation at fuel stops, restaurants, campgrounds and other places I stopped. Anyone who had the guts to talk to a stranger was very interesting in their own way and found out about my motivation and trip. In return, I found out about them and the area I was visiting.

Knowing what your goal for a trip like mine is the first most important thing. Do not over-plan, as you will not be able to follow the plan without guilt. My plan was just loose enough to allow the flexibility I put into the trip almost every day. My original route does not very well resemble my actual track but the planned mileage and the actual were within 50 miles. Talking to people led me to roads not on the map and sights I would have not known about. I knew I could not see everything but that was not the goal. I wanted an overview and feeling for this kind of travel. It was perfect for me. I wanted to see America from the viewpoint of the average American not living in the big cities. I wanted to see some Indian culture and learn more about it. I wanted to get a feel for the expanse of the country. Plane rides are quick but you do not get a feel for the land that way.

In conclusion, if there is an interest I can talk about maps, routes and the search for campsites. Anyone doing this for the first time has a steep learning curve without some guidance.

MY DAD BUILT OUR CAMP TRAILER

By **Hiram Stumpjumper**

When I was eight years old, my dad built a camp trailer for our family. It was very similar to a teardrop except that the entire four-foot by eight-foot lid of the trailer hinged up on one side. That's where the bed was. Just like a teardrop, it had a galley in the back. When on the road, it looked like we were towing a three-foot high wooden box.

The back swung down when the top was raised and served as the galley's work counter. There were storage drawers that held a jumble of kitchen supplies. A compartment stored our white-gas Coleman stove. On the right, there was an icebox crafted out of sheet metal. My little sister was three-years old so Dad built a small bed that hung from the lid by chains. We called it the "Crow's Nest". Dad sewed a tent that hooked to the lid and pretty much covered everything.

The frame was welded from angle iron. In those days, trailers usually used front axles from old cars. With the axle welded directly to the frame, the trailer was a rough ride. Wheels must have been hard to come by because Dad had to use hubs with spokes from one set of wheels welded to different sized rims. Balancing new tires was a nightmare because of those modified wheels. Other than trouble with the wheels, my brother remembers how bad the hitch and ball squeaked. One time it annoyed our dad so much that he unhitched and put a slab of bacon on the ball. Talk about improvising. And this time it worked!

Underneath the mattress floor, there was a storage area. As the loadmaster, I was small enough to crawl into the space to help store camp gear. We packed chairs, a homemade fold-up camp table, feather-bed mattresses us boys slept on and special cardboard boxes for blankets and clothes for the whole family.

When it came to camping in the late 1940's, everything was "War Surplus". Our family had its share. My brother and I slept in a GI (Government Issued) wall tent. We used war surplus army cots and slept under genuine GI wool blankets. Our camp chairs were wooden GI folding chairs painted olive drab. We packed these in the storage area too.

When Dad built the trailer, we lived in the Los Angeles area where he worked for Lockheed building P-38's for the war effort. About the time he'd put the last coat of shellac on our camp trailer, Mom with my brother and sister took the train to Spokane to visit grandparents. So, the maiden voyage was the drive north to fetch them. I was supposed to sleep on the rear seat of our 1940 Plymouth, but I remember one night in Central Oregon when I ended up sleeping with my dad when coyotes started to howl.

Perhaps the biggest and most exciting trip was the time the folks decided to move to Oregon. By that time my grandmother had joined the family, so we camped the whole way with her sleeping in the back seat of the car. We drove the coast of California and Oregon driving through the Redwoods and along the Pacific Ocean. We camped out for a month after arriving in the Willamette Valley while the folks looked for a farm to buy.

We sure were a camping family while us kids grew up. We camped on the Oregon Coast, went on many fishing trips in the Cascades and even toured Yellowstone. Just before I left home for college, the folks decided to take us two boys on our last family camping trip. This time it was fishing in British Columbia. The fishing was great, but of the whole two weeks, we spent six days in camp because of heavy rain. It was miserable, but with the camp table set up between our two cots, Mom and Dad taught us how to play Pinochle.

After moving to the farm, the trailer body was put in a shed on sawhorses. Dad built a removable stock trailer on the frame. We'd put the body back on the frame every summer to go camping. Eventually, it was taken apart. The only thing remaining is one of the big galley drawers. It's now used as a storage box in my basement.

Anyway, as an example that fruit doesn't fall far from the tree, both my brother and I have also built camp trailers. They are traditional teardrops.

TRAVELING IN ENGLAND WITH THE LeMAY ENTOURAGE

By **Bob Falleur**

Once in England, we had a newer bus, no interpreter and started at Beaulieu at Lord Montague's 7,000-acre estate. His car collection started in the 1950s in the front of his house and by 1972, moved into its own building and recognition as Britain's national motor museum. The "most fun" car was a 1930 supercharged Bentley the curator started for us. This car is shipped around the world for rallies and will go to Africa in April 2003. Lord Montague himself drives the car in these rallies.

We spent two nights in a hotel that was once a boys' school. The old part of the building has a moat around it and looks like a small fortress. We wouldn't have been surprised to see Harry Potter in the hallway.

The nearby National Motorcycle Museum is privately owned by a very gracious gentleman that "loves America," houses 800 motorcycles, and boasts ownership of one example of every model built by most of the major manufacturers in the world. There are 300 more bikes in storage, waiting for construction of a new building. The owner said he values his collection at around \$25–30 million.

On to Gaydon, England, to the Heritage Motor Center. By now the cars and bikes, no matter how exotic, are becoming commonplace. We are paying attention to buildings, parking lots, lighting, restaurants and anything else that contributes to a museum's economic survival. This museum happens to be located on an old Royal Air Force base and shares the grounds with the Land Rover factory. The Land Rover driver skills course with lots of hills, water and mud is located next to where we were and easily viewed.

On to Coventry, at one time the unquestioned home of England's transportation industry. There have been 300 bicycle manufacturers, 130 car manufacturers and 90 motorcycle manufacturers in Coventry over the years. In the 1950s and '60s, over 65% of the working population of this city was directly or indirectly employed by a transportation company. A city-supported museum featuring this history displays many exhibits of manufacturing around Coventry through the years. The best display for me was the current land speed record holding jet-car. The simulator put us behind British Air Force pilot Andy Green as he set the current record of 741 mph. It was, needless to say, very stimulating. The car and its Mercedes support vehicles were all on display, as well as the command center, a high tech mobile trailer.

Bus, dinner, sleep, bus, and we drove into Malvern Link. This sleepy small town is home to the Morgan Motor Car factory. This stop was probably the most fun for me. The little Morgan company hand builds 475 cars each year and clearly sets the standard for hand-built vehicles. There are no modern tools to be seen. Wood is cut and treated for the body support, sheets of tin are formed with hammers and dollies, gas tanks are hand rolled and soldered. No robots, no spot welders, no conveyor belts, but one large bulldog mascot. A two-year-old paint shop reduced delivery from order to ship down to one year. When I asked about getting a job there, I was gently told I was probably too old for their target apprenticeship program. We finally had to leave. Except for the wood used in the body structure of the Morgan cars, I felt I could have been in a Porsche factory circa 1948. A visit to Warwick castle for a little English social history and another bus ride to a hotel by Heathrow airport, and our tour was over. Now home to write our reports about how we perceived each of the museums, considering buildings, light, cars, display, etc.

(Editor comment: Bob is a friend of old cars. He restores classics and builds street rods. As a Steering Committee Member for the LeMay Museum, he took the opportunity to join the LeMay staff on their tour of outstanding car museums in Europe. We picked up his story when the group got to the British Isles. The TOW Line appreciates and thanks Bob for letting us reprint part of his story. It must have been an exciting time to see all those historic museums.)

I RESCUED AN OLD VINTAGE CAMP TRAILER

By **Hiram Stumpjumper**

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It looked like a very old camp trailer sitting in a field in Vancouver, Washington. Its most visible feature was a round window in the door. I asked a neighbor about the nearby vacant house. A developer had just bought the property and was going to build

condominiums. It looked like the trailer was going to be hauled away - maybe even to the dump. I couldn't let that happen.

I then found out how simple it is to track down the owner of a piece of property. Get the address from the house or mailbox. Take it down to the county courthouse. In just a few keystrokes you will be handed a printout describing just about everything you ever wanted to know about the property. I did this and was able to contact the owner. He told me to haul it away – it's free. I could have the house for nothing too. I passed on that.

Looking at the trailer in more detail, I found it choked in weeds, but I was able to hook it up and tow it to safer ground. The bias tires were cracked and rotting. I took the wheels off, bought used radials and towed it home.

Now came the challenge of finding out what it was. The oval nameplate that had been mounted just in front of the door had been removed. All you could see was the imprint and two screw holes. Friends told me it could be a Palace or maybe an eLcar. Surfing the web, I found a great site. It has a Trailer Coach Timeline Museum with over 850 images of advertising literature and pictures of vintage trailers. The site is <http://allmanufacturedhomes.com/>

THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING A TRIP LOG

We've kept a trip log for our teardrop ever since it was finished in 2002. Some remarkable notes have been taken in the four years since. They have proven helpful. So far, we've had our TD out 36 times and towed it 18,365 miles. The longest trip was 4,065 miles.

The starting mileage is usually set at zero on the trip odometer. Arrival mileages are noted as well. These figures are written down on the margin of the log page for a particular trip. At the end of an outing, the roundtrip mileage is recorded.

We've kept entries of the places we've visited while traveling to and from teardrop gatherings. Along the way, we've noted some of the outstanding rest stops along our interstate highways. Since we're able to haul our gear in the back of our minivan, we've often just pulled off the road to take naps in our empty tear. Those times are noted in the log.

Traveling empty also allows us to "bushwhack" it when it's time to find a place to spend the night. We've found some great places. One of our favorites in Oregon is Exit 123 off I-84. The road heads south from the Columbia River up onto top of the plateau. The first right turn leads to a wide place in the road where we've camped many times. No need to unhook. Just park and crawl into bed. This and other places we've bushwhacked have been noted in our trip log.

We record the places we've stopped for meals and note the ambience of the restaurant. One place along California's I-5 has a display of hundreds of kid's lunch boxes. I saw the Roy Rogers one I used. They were nailed to the walls, the ceilings and along supporting beams.

If you've ever wondered about your gas mileage, a log is a great place to make notes. Later on, the number of gallons and their prices make interesting reading. Gas mileage calculations are made on the pages of the log too.

Another thing our log is used for is to note those we've met at gatherings or along the way. An example is a couple that approached us at a rest stop to ask about our trailer. It turned out that the guy was a finish carpenter building the insides of yachts. He was assured he had the talent to build a teardrop. He wanted more information, so his name and address were noted in the log and is now on the Washington Group list to receive the TOW Line.

When at a campsite, we go around looking for the "perfect" site. At Rocky Mountain National Park, we found that the site two away from ours was better. Its number was recorded. We also note the most terrible campsites. One BLM campsite along the Colorado River in Utah was just the pits. It was all dust with no water, no table and had an open pit toilet. But, it cost only \$3 for the night.

If you're into scenery, the log is a place to describe it. Even though the just described BLM camp was primitive, the red rocky cliffs along the river were spectacular! I remember making a note of the pictures taken on that day. Recording pictures is a good thing to note.

Lots of times we've cooked really spectacular meals when camping with the tear. You can bet we describe them in our log. The bum ones are sometimes noted too.

A record of the trips and their miles are kept at the back of the log in table form. It's a great way to review the total yearly accumulation. Our mileage total at the end of two years showed it was time to repack the trailer bearings.

We use a Mead Record Book. It's nine and a half inches high and six inches wide. It comes with ruled lines and has 160 pages. The best thing is that it is a bound book that doesn't come apart. The Mead number is 64516 and usually costs about \$6 at any stationary store. Our first log lasted four years.

DRIVING TO MINDEN – A FREEWAY ENCOUNTER

It was a great time to hold the International Teardrop Gathering in June of last year. Green expanses met your eyes as you traveled the mountainous and desert parts of Idaho, Utah and Wyoming. Nebraska is very flat, but also very green. Because of its flatness, the Nebraska freeways are built on top of fill excavated from pits that ended up being very scenic ponds. The water table is very shallow in that part of the world, so any hole fills with water.

On I-80, the summit of the Rocky Mountains is not noticed. A plateau on top is 20 to 30 miles around with a sign at the east and west boundaries announcing the summit. Imagine pioneers trekking through this region on the Oregon Trail. No trees anywhere – just flatness!

Late at night and between towns, you and trucks seem to be the only things on the road. In the wide-open spaces it seems you can see the road ahead for 20 miles. Most of the time, speed limits were 75 mph. But, it's unnerving when one moment you are driving all alone - then an 18-wheeler out of nowhere passes you going over 80!

HOOKING UP YOUR TEARDROP SO IT WON'T DROP

When hooking your trailer onto the hitch ball, make sure that the tongue wheel is fully rotated in the swiveled-up position BEFORE you put the latch-bail down onto the ball. Lots of time, the ball is not fully captured and the latch sits on top of the ball. After the tongue wheel is stowed, you'll drive only a short distance before the trailer falls to the ground.

One teardropper got to the freeway. Sparks really flew when the tongue hit the pavement going 60 miles per hour. Another hazard is hurting your back if you try lifting a TD with lots of tongue weight.

A HIRAM BUILDING HINT

On the tongue wheel – If it's an assembly that is welded on the tongue make sure that it's as high as possible when welded on. My first one was welded with the plate flush with the top of the tongue. I thought it looked cool. However, when the trailer was fully loaded and on bumpy ground, I could not rotate the wheel down with the wheel cranked in the fully-up position. I actually had to lift the trailer off the ball in order to rotate the tongue wheel into position. That's hard to do if there's lots of tongue weight.

GETTING READY FOR THE SPRING FLING

In just three and a half months you should be finishing your new teardrop so you can join the fun at the Spring Fling. If you haven't started, there is time to build a TD from scratch.

You have to first decide on the suspension. Most prefer leaf springs, but torque axels work well to. Then fabricate the chassis. Hopefully, you'll have a friend that knows how to weld. Channel steel makes a great chassis. It's not a closed tube that captures water to cause rust. Don't worry about keeping the chassis absolutely flat when welding. Flexibility is OK.

Using any one of the published plans for the body, you can cut out plywood using a good quality power saber saw. Some plans have full-sized drawings to cut around.

One of the most important things to remember is to put everything together on a flat surface. The teardrop is designed to be rigid. It resembles a big wooden box that does not flex or twist. When mounted on the chassis, the chassis will conform to the bottom of the trailer

MIDWINTER POTLUCK

All you teardroppers in Oregon and Washington will be getting a special invitation to the Midwinter Potluck gathering. This should happen in a couple of weeks.