

TINY HOUSE

FOR MICRO, TINY, SMALL, AND UNCONVENTIONAL HOUSE ENTHUSIASTS



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ON OUR PAGES



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FEATURED

In Memoriam

The tiny house world lost a great inspiration for off-grid living, tiny house living, and self-sufficiency recently. Read the words editor Andrew Odom shares.

Paddles of Preservation

Perch & Nest are at it again. This time they are turning their attention away from tiny houses on wheels and are focusing on saving a beautiful piece of architectural history!

A Life Well Traveled

Losing a pet is never easy. Everything seems to remind us of them. Author Laura Lavoie tells of her precious Piglet.

Pep Talks Paints and Plants

Emily Kearcher is a great inspiration on her Instagram channel. This month she brings some inspiration to us all.



THERE ARE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF LIVING OFF GRID WITH A FAMILY OF FOUR FOR FIVE YEARS. Macy Miller shares what it is like and answers a few of the many questions that come their way. They live in a tiny house but still have access to modern technology and a quality of life many of us dream of.

There are fun challenges of living tiny with pets. We have two articles this month that our pet lovers will enjoy and relate to.

Our cover features a unique cottage and we have the story of how it was created. It showcases that living small doesn't have to be boring.

Perch and Nest, a popular tiny house construction company, is spreading its skills and has a new project of restoring a historic retail structure into a living space.

We recently lost John Wells, a tiny house leader in our community. He will be missed, but what he learned and shared with us will live on.

This and so much more in the June issue of the Tiny House Magazine.

Kent

Kent Griswold, Editor in Chief



OFF GRID

What Does That Even Mean?



WRITTEN BY MACY MILLER

Off-the-Grid: What does that even mean?

There are different feelings about what this entails, but I'll speak from my own experience and keep it simple. We live off the grid which just means that we are not tied to any public utilities. It does not mean that we shun electricity, reject the internet, or move nomadically with the patterns of the seasons. We are self-reliant for our energy production, water collection, and waste streams.

I recently learned that, out of 333 million people who live in the US, it is estimated that only between 180,000-250,000 families live off-grid and untied to public utilities. Adjusted for average family size that is between .0186-.0217% of Americans! That number shocked me because I expected it to be much higher. There are projections that by the year 2035, 12% of the population will live off-grid. Many factors go into those estimations but without exception, projections show a dramatic increase in this lifestyle!

We're five years into this life, here are some of the main comments we've heard over the years and our response to them:

"It's illegal to live off-grid!"

This one isn't universally true, or untrue! Living in a community is a social contract. Nearly every city in the country has put up funding for utilities to bring in power, set up water reclamation sites, and source drinking water. This infrastructure is typically not paid back for many years and has a lot of maintenance costs associated. As the city grows, so too does the infrastructure, which costs money. If people started moving to these communities and decided that they don't really need to use those resources, they wouldn't be helping to pay for it. The systems would simply skip them and spread further past them which

ultimately costs even more money, so it's kind of a double whammy to skip out on that part of the social contract. Because of that reason, housing units inside city limits are almost always required to hook into local utilities and at least pay the base-level fees associated.

This doesn't mean they have to use the utilities. Users can usually supplement their power grid with on-site energy generation or hand-dig their own shallow well (or collect rainwater) to supplement their garden efforts. Whether that alternative system is allowed to tie into the community grid or remain completely separate is up to each jurisdiction. There are usually requirements (costs) associated with tying independent systems back into public systems.

In our case, we used secondhand PV panels and self-engineered components to get power to our home. It works great. We know we are competent without being certified solar installers, and we have that right as homeowners to DIY our own systems. However, if we were in city limits, our setup would have to remain completely separate from the public system OR be procured and installed by a certified solar installer. It would have cost us a whole lot more than the \$2,800 we paid.

Living in a community is a social contract. Nearly every city in the country has put up funding for utilities to bring in power, set up water reclamation sites, and source drinking water.



“Where do you get your water from?”

We do not have a well. That was estimated to cost between \$30-60,000 just to drill it. It doesn't 'feel' good to me to reach down to the aquifer when we require wildlife to drink from polluted streams and lakes. Skipping this expense was an intuitive move on my part which requires me to think (and act) differently in the world. Having a well still fits within the 'off-grid' definition and it's probably the most usual deviation from public utilities. Wells didn't used to be required to be so deep. Mass agriculture introduced fertilizers and pesticides to our groundwater. Now, to be drinkable, wells have to go 100+ feet down into the ground which of course drives their costs up.

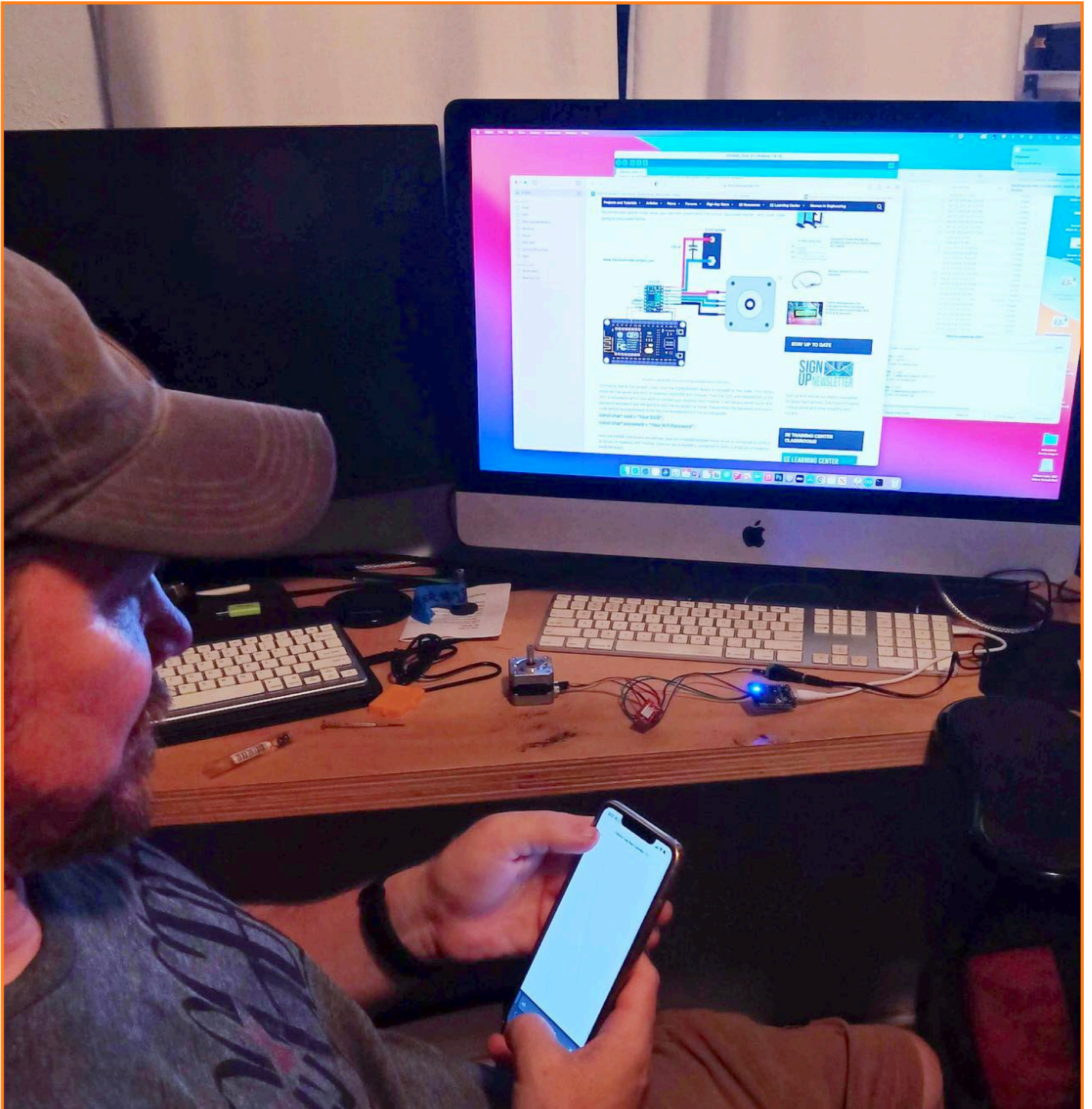
Instead, we collect water from the sky! Rain is the last step in the water cycle and historically the most 'pure'. With all of the pollutants now in our atmosphere, I'm not sure this is still true. It certainly isn't a fail-proof system, especially with



“That’s a lot of work!”

a giant construction project happening nearby and a history of neighbors who burn plastics. The ash and dust from both, settle on our barn roof, which we use to collect this water. It stinks to see the destruction and know it impacts us directly, regardless of our filtration systems. However, knowing we are a part of this system and its impacts drives us to be better activists.

It’s not a forever amount of constant work. Getting things set up takes a lot of doing. Once things are going, it is just maintenance which I think is simpler than my previous life choices. We’re not doing it as well as others, but we’re not struggling either. We’re just doing what we can, with what we have, right now. It helps a lot that we are the sole beneficiaries of our hard work.



I'll take that any day over giving my best daytime hours to some corporate goals! Ultimately, our goal is to work *WITH* nature, not against it. I think that helps keep our workload down quite a bit.

“Technology is the future. Your kids need to know it.”

We love technology in this house. Screens are not a bad word for us. I could happily move back to the 1800s but James and our kids love to learn about all things tech. The kids have a 3D printer and model their designs to print from TinkerCAD. They use it to run a farmer's market stand. While plenty of hours are wasted zoning out, they all recognize technology is a tool, not just a pastime. Shoot, everyone in our family has their virtual reality headset that we use for homeschool field trips and fun. We just run it all with solar power. Sometimes, if the sun isn't out for long periods, we have to plan our tech usage. It's no biggie and makes us grateful for the sunshine!

“How do you make your income?”

James and I both have master's degrees (in architecture) but we have worked outside that field for years and years. As a team, my self-appointed work is generally to save us money (on housing, food, healthcare, etc.) and he is the main financial earner. We are not married and don't combine finances however we have worked out a mutually beneficial agreement which we reevaluate often. Ultimately, he pays me his portion of 'childcare' and 'rent' (both largely reduced costs) and he earns his own wages. We also do our own investing, his in a triplex, mine in our home. We both dabble in the stock market, never risking more than we can afford to lose. James owns his own business, [**The Custom Brand Shop**](#), where he has developed a process for designing and manufacturing custom branding irons to assist craftspeople in branding their own wares. My side income is more passive

which includes teaching people the basics about tiny house construction via eClasses ([Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), and [Part 4](#)). We don't need to earn as much money to thrive which leaves extra time to spend doing things we're passionate about. The main way I spend that time now has been advocating for individual tiny homeowner rights via their next iteration of [incorporation in the International Residential Code \(IRC\)](#).

“You must live in the middle of nowhere!”

We are about a six-minute drive from the hospital and maybe eight minutes from our preferred grocery store. We searched the entire country for a place that felt right. We had a short list of wants from our new home town. Things like a university (to keep up with modern times as we age), somewhere beautiful, a small population far from an airport (to keep it small), etc. Because we are willing to live rural and outside of city limits, that off-grid goal could pretty much be achieved anywhere. We did pay special attention and put some research into which direction the city was growing so we could do our best to avoid being annexed into city limits for a while. In the end, our commute to get groceries is much shorter than it was when we lived in the heart of a city. It's more relaxing as well!

“Why is off-grid always so rustic/rudimentary?”

It's not, at all. In fact, there are a lot of off-grid places that you would never guess are off the grid. It's even being incorporated into big cities and in public buildings. I guess that each of you has spent some time in some independent/off-grid spaces without even knowing it. It's just the messy parts that get shown a lot. Just like with tiny houses, good design goes a LONG way in making a functional space. In the beginning stages, it's hard to look polished.

I think the ultimate goal is to lead a comfortable life though. The process to getting there may differ but that probably looks pretty close to the same whether it's in my house or yours.

“What if there is no apocalypse?”

We aren't doomsday preppers, but we've had a lifetime of scientists screaming that the path we are on as humans isn't sustainable. We're making different choices. I think we all had some opportunity to learn from the Covid pandemic and material/food supply lines, too. It doesn't take too much to disrupt that system. I believe we are all doing ourselves a favor by learning to grow and preserve our own food and find alternatives and redundancy in all our daily tasks. These are skills that used to be passed down from generation to generation. Now we just depend on big businesses to provide. I think we have a lot of proof already

that people aren't the biggest concern of big business. Because we feel this way, we have been investing in ourselves and our own knowledge more than we have been stocking up for some epic event. Starting with the tiny house, and then homeschooling, now off-gridding, I think we have learned that the further we step out of requiring social systems and into self-reliance, the better off we have been. Those social systems are our backup, not our primary choice.

Additionally, I believe that self-reliance is a skill set to keep our social systems and big business in check.

This is a much more affordable lifestyle in my experience. That phrase, “Vote with your dollar” means a lot. Without other options, food and product suppliers are free to inflate prices as much as they deem achievable. The less we participate there, the better. And the more we can help each other figure it out too, the better off we all are. It's not easy to learn new things, but it's hard to keep up with those other systems, too. We are choosing our hard and none of it is driven by the fear of the world somehow ending. The earth was here long before us and I think it will still be here long after.

***Macy Miller** is a mother, teacher, and time traveler. After designing and building her tiny home in 2011, she's been a key player in incorporating tiny homes into the International Residential Code (IRC). Her goal is the widespread adoption of tiny homes as just another housing type, accessible to all. She continues to live tiny with her family on their off-grid homestead located in North Idaho.*



IN MEMORIAM

WRITTEN BY ANDREW ODOM



Eight or nine years ago Laura LaVoie and I co-hosted a podcast. The name of the podcast escapes me right now. I want to say it was the r(E)volution Podcast or something but I just can't remember. I tried searching Google for it but my efforts were fruitless. That really isn't the point though. What is the point is that not long after it had started - in fact, before Laura joined me as co-host, I was fortunate to have John Wells join me as a guest. For me, this was a starstruck moment. I had been following John for nearly three years by that point. John was a bit of a mystery. He had left his heavily-mortgaged home in upstate New

York around 2008 and bought 40 acres in West Texas for just \$8,000. The area was so isolated that there were no codes or zoning restrictions. This was perfect for John as he quickly built his own tiny home in just 9 days for only \$1,600. As time passed he expanded his Field Lab and took on more notions of exploration becoming a wise, online sage, having dabbled in chickens, solar energy, permaculture, biosphere-style gardening, and so much more. If I remember correctly the podcast was me kind of vomiting out surface questions while he humored me and then expounded greatly on all that he had learned. It

was a great conversation and one I will probably never forget. Afterward, we became email pals and I would tune in regularly to his live YouTube streams just to catch a glimpse of a man living on his own terms and discovering the limits of so many things. I'm gonna miss 'ol John. Thankfully he left behind a ton of videos, blog notes, photos, and great memories.

John Niles Wells was born on the 8th of April 1959 in Oak Park, Illinois. Upon graduating from high school, John studied design at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. After his time in Greensboro, John moved to New York City in 1986 to pursue a career in photography. He began assisting fashion photographer Bruce Weber shortly after arriving in Manhattan where he lived on Elizabeth Street in the East Village. After a year with Weber, John began assisting photographer Chris Callis. Chris was a very technical photographer and John was right at home as he possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of things technical. John was a consummate tinkerer. In 1988 he began building kinetic sculptures out of old television components and jokingly referred to himself as a "Televisionary". His pieces were sought after by collectors and his work was used by MTV for station I.D. spots as well as in numerous advertising campaigns.

John left Manhattan and moved into his great-grandfather's historic home in Spencertown, New York. Fire destroyed the home in 2006, after

which he painstakingly restored the structure and created a simple life for himself. John was interested in life off the grid and made a trip to West Texas in 2008 to visit a couple that were developing solar technology. He was so taken by the West Texas Landscape that he made the decision to move there and begin a new chapter in his life. He committed himself to living off the grid, building a compound he named, "The Field Lab".

John worked tirelessly on the experiment. He kept up with a blog and shared his triumphs and defeats with his sizeable audience as he worked on his project of sustainability. John shared not only his antics but also his data with his blog and YouTube followers. His generosity with information no doubt helped many pursue a similar lifestyle. John lived life on his own terms. His 15 years in West Texas brought him immeasurable joy. He had friends and pets, the most recent being a beautiful longhorn named Bennito. John was a fairly private individual and was a fiercely loyal friend. His dry sense of humor and compassionate nature will certainly be missed.

You can still learn from John (as he would, of course, want you to) by [visiting his website](#) or checking in on his many, many live streams archived on [his YouTube channel](#).



The Little Dog With The



BIG NAME

There were the big dogs; Cicely, Frodo, Sadie, Bear, and Sitka. And then there was Goliath, the big dog trapped in a little body. Goliath was the last of the family dogs and the one that would transition into tiny house life with me. Goliath was raised with the big dogs in a large log home at the end of the road on acreage, and moving to 270 square feet would have its challenges.

As my children moved into young adulthood and we downsized, I could sense Goliath's unease – would he be the next to leave? Taking him to the construction site, which would eventually become the permanent location of the tiny house, I noted his anxiety. While we were still in the mountains, the new property lacked a fence and faced a busier road.

As I worked, Goliath explored his new boundaries, interacting with neighbors, their pets, and the local wildlife.

As the build progressed, we spent more time inside the tiny house. Goliath was content to be by my side, unaware that this would be his new forever home. When we moved into the tiny house full-time in October 2018, new challenges arose. Without a fenced yard, I chose not to install a doggie door, concerned about his safety near the road. Leaving him alone for short intervals, I aimed to show him I would always return, easing his anxiety. Goliath, deeply attached to me, showed signs of distress by chewing on the freshly painted trim around the door to find me when I was away. I have left the damage

un-repaired as a reminder of our shared journey.

Goliath eventually familiarized himself with the tiny house and embraced our new lifestyle together. While I continued teaching part-time and being away for more extended periods, he adjusted by napping contently in the loft until his afternoon walk in the woods. Initially, he never had accidents indoors while I was out, but as he aged, health issues arose. Seeing a wet spot on the kitchen rug, I wrongly attributed it to the little dog, leaving him looking perplexed and disheartened. This pattern repeated, prompting me to ponder how to address this situation. Only after removing the rug to dry for the third time, did I notice water seeping up between the floorboards, revealing a small leak in a plumbing connection that had made its way under the flooring soaking the rug.

Goliath was absolved of any blame, as my attention shifted to the plumber who had done the installation. I was able to repair the faulty connection, but the leak required me to tear out the stairs and flooring to ensure the subfloor would completely dry. It is the only disaster I have experienced with the tiny house and felt terrible for blaming my trusty companion.

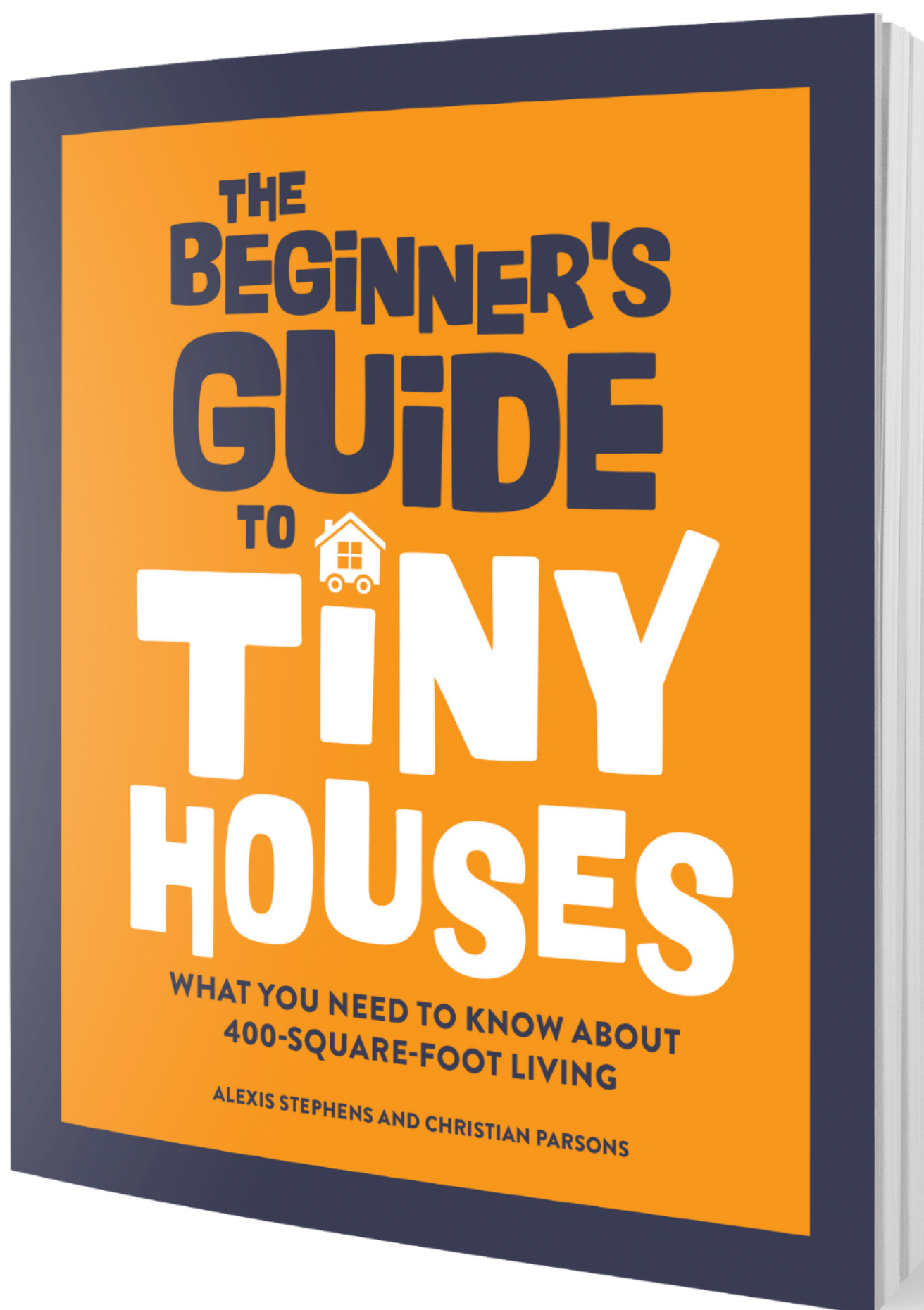
*As my
children
moved into
young
adulthood
and we
downsized, I
could sense
Goliath's
unease –
would he be
the next to
leave?*



Goliath was put to rest in the garden in 2021 leaving me with a massive void in such a tiny space. I have not yet acquired another dog, adjusting to the quiet and freedom of pet responsibilities. In the summer of 2022, Stuart a big orange cat from the barn across the road jumped into my lap purring and decided to become a permanent member of the tiny house nation. He is primarily an outdoor cat, coming in for naps, food, and treats and I am once again enjoying sharing the space with a furry friend.

"Your thorough guide to tiny house living, full of time-tested advice from legendary tiny house dwellers and travelers."

—Ethan Waldman, host of the Tiny House Lifestyle Podcast



PADDLES OF PRESERVATION

Breathing Life into a
Classic Building



Creative individuals have a unique talent for breathing new life into old things, seeing potential where others might see only decay. This imaginative approach often results in beautiful, functional spaces that honor the past while serving contemporary needs. This blend of the old and new is particularly evident in the trend towards small houses and affordable living, where historic charm is seamlessly integrated with modern conveniences.

Johanna Elsner - 1/2 of Perch and Nest Tiny Farm - is nothing if not a creative individual. Her vision along with her husband Tom's artistry and craftsmanship have brought a number of industry-altering tiny houses on wheels to life. They remain one of the most sought-after tiny house builders on the East Coast and are now poised to take over a new project that marries their visionary style, woodworking talent, love for renovation and restoration, and commitment to architecture

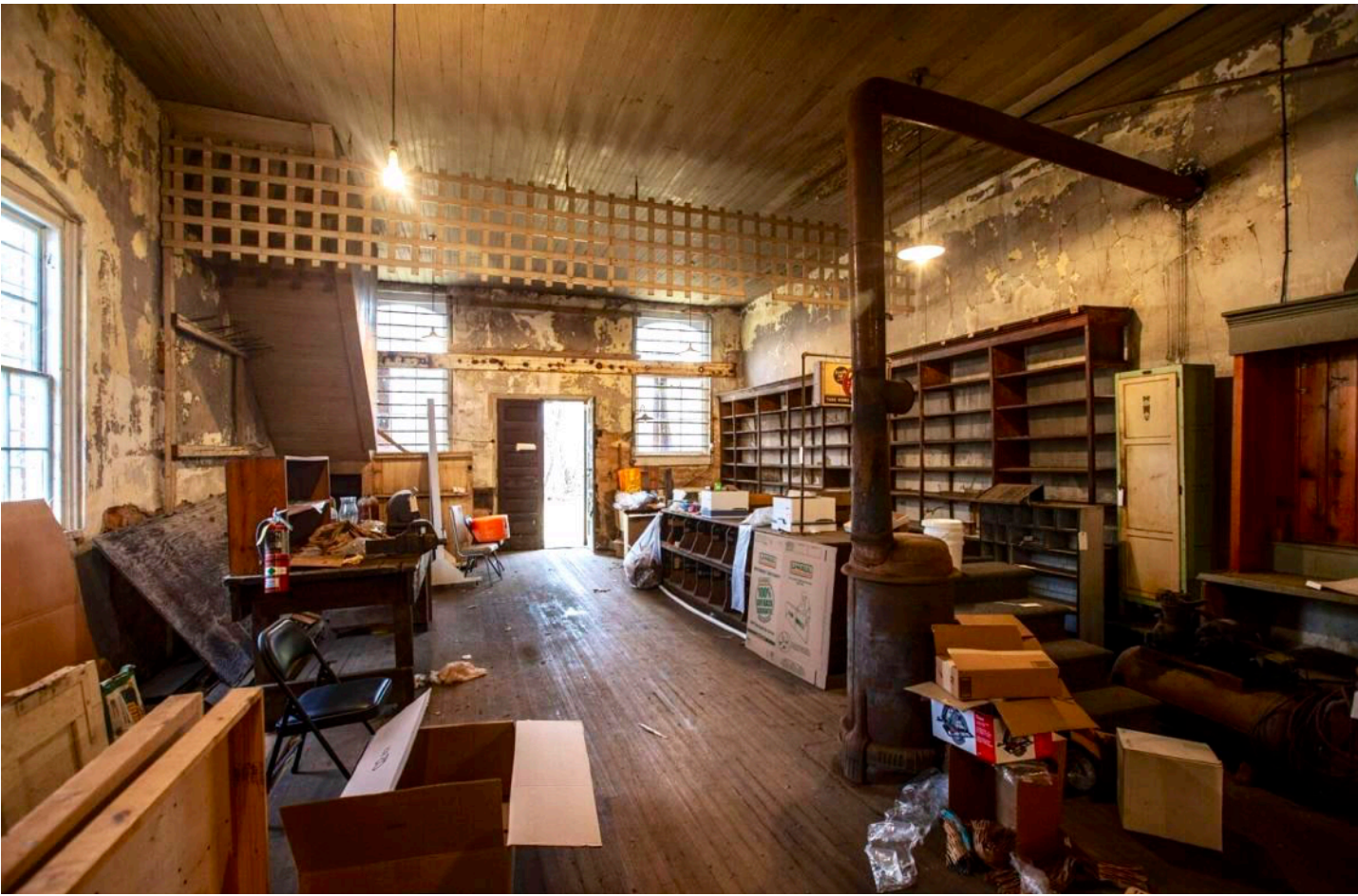
rehabilitation. Johanna and Tom are the proud new owners of the historic Gordon Hardware building in Summerfield, North Carolina and they intend to breathe new life into the building selling vintage items downstairs and operating an Airbnb rental upstairs.

This is right up Johanna and Tom's alley as they have quite an extensive portfolio of restored historic homes and Airbnb properties already.

"We worked in older home restoration for ourselves and others for many years before getting into the tiny house business," Johanna is quick to point out. The couple began building tiny houses on their property after they started their family and Tom needed to work from home to be with their kids. But with one kid out of high school and the other in her final years, the couple can explore more opportunities off the farm and away from tiny houses.







house movement.

The couple's crew is rehabbing other properties. They are restoring the historic Hooper House, a farmhouse in Danbury, in Stokes County, according to Johanna. They plan to wrap up the restoration of two circa 1904 vacation cabins in the North Carolina mountains before turning their

The Elsners purchased the circa 1870s Gordon Hardware building at 7722 Summerfield Road in January. Preservation North Carolina (PNC), a nonprofit organization based in Raleigh, facilitated the sale for the Town of Summerfield. The choice of this property highlights a trend where old buildings are repurposed for modern use, preserving history while meeting contemporary needs.

The Elsners anticipate starting restoration work on the Gordon building this summer. "We are waiting for septic/well permit approval and our historic tax credit application to be approved prior to any major renovations," Johanna said. This careful planning underscores the importance of blending historical integrity with modern functionality

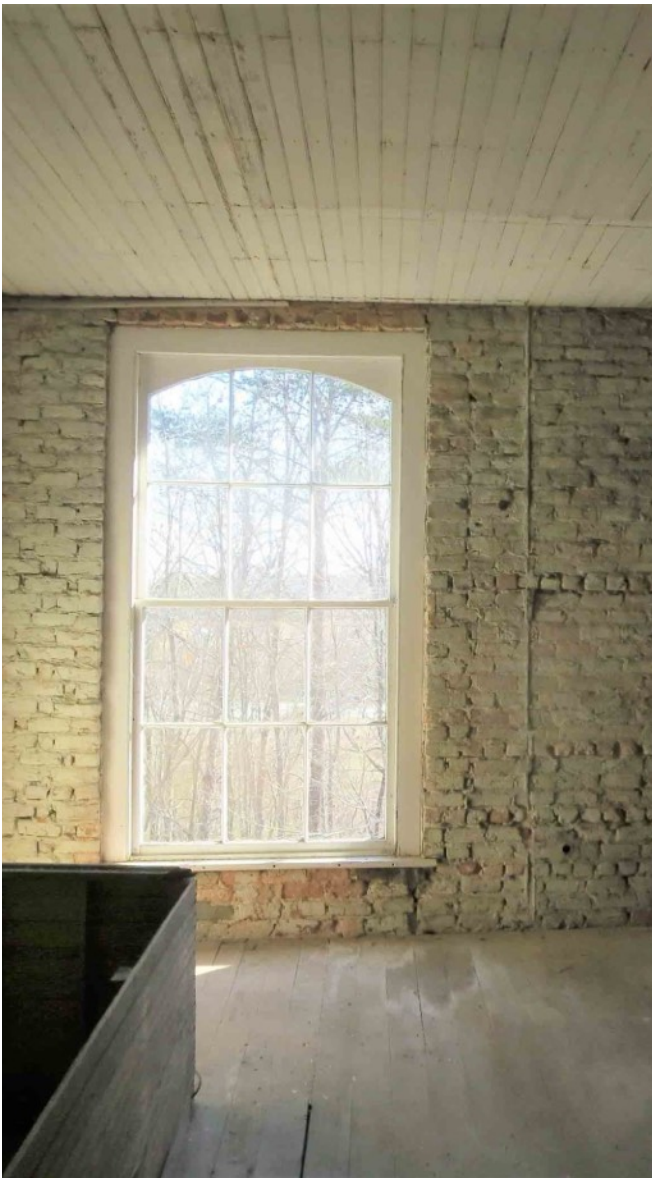
The Gordon building sits on less than half an acre at the corner of Summerfield Road and N.C. 150. Due to the small size of the lot, the Elsners plan to seek Guilford County's permission to install a smaller septic system that since the start of the year is now allowed within county regulations, she said. They also plan to drill a new well for water. These measures are part of the innovative solutions they have become accustomed to in the modern tiny

focus to the Gordon building. This extensive portfolio demonstrates a commitment to revitalizing older homes, making them relevant and livable today.

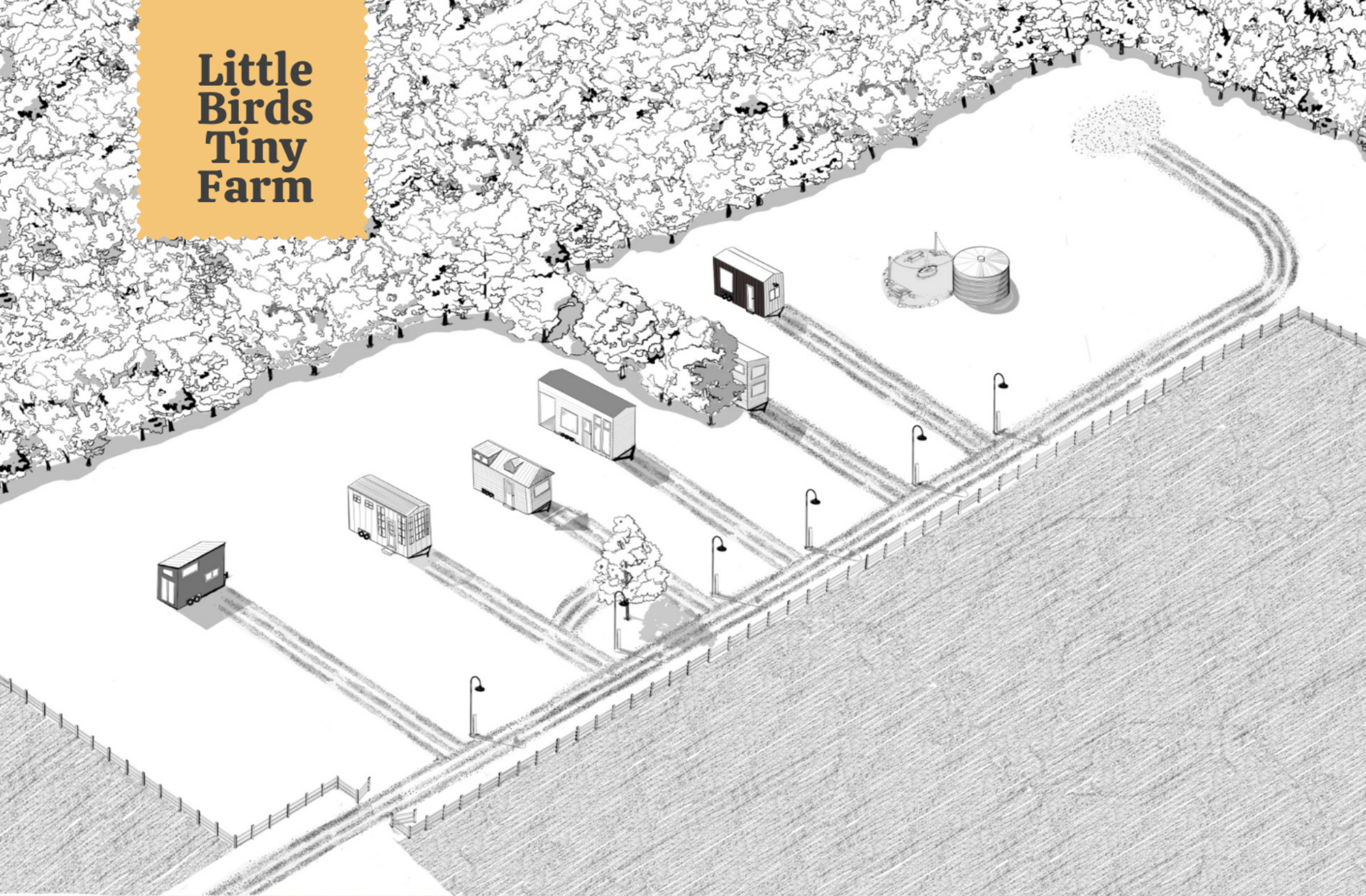
Johanna said the Summerfield restoration will marry her husband's carpentry skills and her "love of all things old."

"I have always been a collector of vintage finds (and) a thrift shopper," she said. "So this project is really going to bring everything we both love together." This project, like their tiny house ventures, embodies the principle that what's old is new again, showing that with creativity and care, historic structures can be transformed into vibrant, functional spaces for modern living.

Incorporating vintage elements into new designs and using innovative solutions for small spaces, the Elsners are at the forefront of a movement that values history, sustainability, and affordability. Their work on the Gordon Hardware building is not just a restoration but a renewal, blending the past and the present to create a unique and welcoming space.



Little Birds Tiny Farm



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- 11+ Acres of gated pasture, full RV hook-ups, and space to garden
- 30 minutes to Greensboro, Winston Salem, + Martinsville
- Month-to-Month and Annual Leases Available

ON THE COVER

Enchanted Cottage

Small on space, a Virginia bungalow surprises with big design

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MEGAN VAUGHAN

Then we miscarried.

I decided I needed plants. Lots of plants. All under my control, all things I could keep alive. I never seemed to have enough. Each month we had a negative test, and that day I'd go to a nursery and get more plants. I'd take my time walking through the plant aisles. I'd run my fingers across their leaves, waiting for one to call out to me. Sometimes I'd go with my son and let him pick one. Sometimes, I just wanted to go alone. This was an errand where I couldn't be rushed. I needed to take my time and let the minutes, sometimes hours, in the company of plants work their magic.

In June 2017, I woke up with an idea. Greenhouse. I want to build a greenhouse. So we did. We designed it ourselves. It's not a kit you buy. We were outside for 7 months, just the two of us, placing each individual piece with our own hands. Our fingerprints are pressed into the wood. Our blood, sweat, and tears are mixed into the foundation. I've touched every single leaf and petal of every single plant and flower that calls it home. The greenhouse is an extension of my heart and soul. It shows us that there is good that comes from the bad and is a reminder of God's promises and His Perfect Plan.

It's so much more than just a greenhouse. We found out we were pregnant with Marigold the day it was completed. We found out we'd be adding a daughter to our family inside its walls. Our family visits it daily and we play beneath the leaves. While it was never built for weddings, it's grown to be a micro-wedding venue. Couples say 'I do' here and for us, that's incredibly special. From pain comes beauty. From death, new life.

And so their story begins.

Mitch and Megan Vaughan were a full-time photo/video wedding team for almost 10 years. They had traveled all over the world, documenting 40 weddings a year. When Covid hit though they were faced with 40 couples whose weddings had come to a complete halt. The couple felt so bad for them! They quickly realized they had a rather attractive backyard greenhouse. They told their clients to keep their wedding dates, lower the guest count, get married on the original date, and let them document it and then your reception at a later date! Many took them up on the offer, as well as couples that weren't originally theirs. Before Mitch and Megan knew it, they had accidentally created a wedding venue in their own backyard and are now honored to host 80 weddings a year.

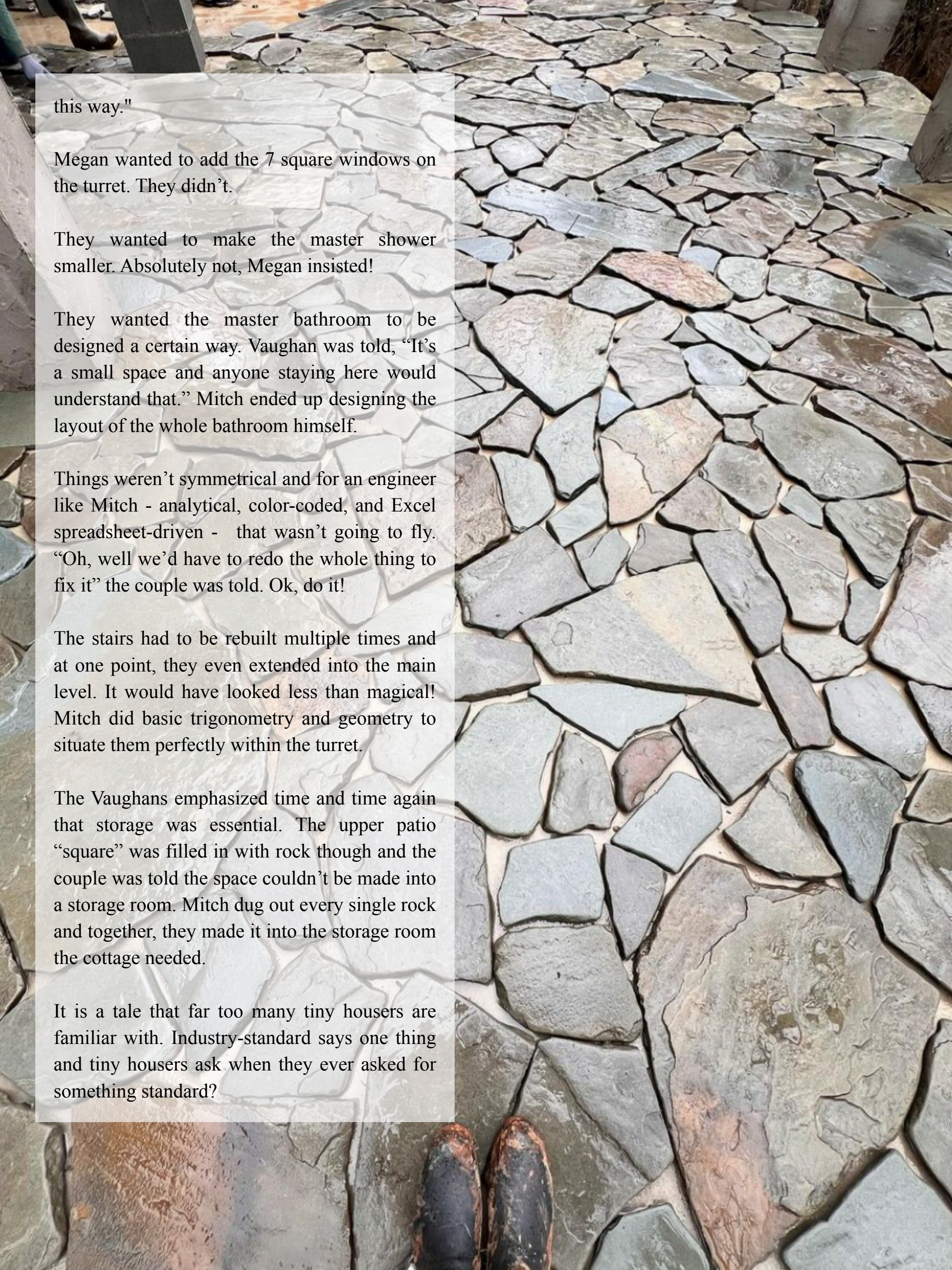


In late 2023 the Vaughans decided to expand on their offerings and construction of The Enchanted Cottage began. An Airbnb and elopement/micro-wedding venue, the Virginia Cottage is truly straight from the pages of a storybook. Inspired by nature and designed with incredible attention to detail, it is designed for couples but will sleep up to four. It has two full baths, a library, a full kitchen, an atrium, upper and lower patios, and an outdoor fireplace. The turret will be fully functioning, connecting all three levels. The space is truly one-of-a-kind.



But like all fairy tales there has to be an obstacle and the construction of this space was no exception. In the beginning, Mitch and Megan were met with a lot of pushback. She felt like everything she wanted had to be fought for. She admits she never just heard, “That’s a great idea, we’ll get right on it.” Instead, it was always, “We can’t do this, and here’s why.” “I’ve been doing this for 40 years blah blah blah.” It got to a point where she had to look at them and say, “This is what I want. We’re doing it





this way."

Megan wanted to add the 7 square windows on the turret. They didn't.

They wanted to make the master shower smaller. Absolutely not, Megan insisted!

They wanted the master bathroom to be designed a certain way. Vaughan was told, "It's a small space and anyone staying here would understand that." Mitch ended up designing the layout of the whole bathroom himself.

Things weren't symmetrical and for an engineer like Mitch - analytical, color-coded, and Excel spreadsheet-driven - that wasn't going to fly. "Oh, well we'd have to redo the whole thing to fix it" the couple was told. Ok, do it!

The stairs had to be rebuilt multiple times and at one point, they even extended into the main level. It would have looked less than magical! Mitch did basic trigonometry and geometry to situate them perfectly within the turret.

The Vaughans emphasized time and time again that storage was essential. The upper patio "square" was filled in with rock though and the couple was told the space couldn't be made into a storage room. Mitch dug out every single rock and together, they made it into the storage room the cottage needed.

It is a tale that far too many tiny housers are familiar with. Industry-standard says one thing and tiny housers ask when they ever asked for something standard?



Like with so many cases though, persistence and knowledge outweigh that same industry standard.

The Enchanted Cottage is an absolutely beautiful example of such. The whimsical turret is wrapped in green rocky mountain stone. The home is filled with custom ceramic tiles depicting sprites, fairies, ivy leaves, and more! The home even has a round hobbit door. No detail was missed by Mitch or Megan.

The kitchen has a fridge with a freezer, gas stove/oven, and microwave. The appliances are from Big

Chill, a retro appliance company specializing in style and uniqueness. They also have a huge range of colors available. In fact, Megan ordered a sample of every green offered and stared at them for months before making a final decision.

For the library, Megan thrifted books for 3 years. The shelves are filled with a number of genres including history, philosophy, astrology, mathematics, science, religion, music theory, and more! There is even a book Megan's dad wrote about her family lineage! Some are old and some are even first editions.











THE STORYBOOK



- Couple + officiant only
- On-site coordination
- Zero wedding guests
- Overnight stay for couple

THE MAGIC SPELL



- Ceremony only
- On-site coordination
- Up to 25 wedding guests
- Seating
- Overnight stay for couple

THE EVER AFTER



- Ceremony + Reception
- On-site coordination
- Up to 25 wedding guests
- Tables & seating
- Overnight stay for couple

TWO REALMS



Greenhouse Ceremony & Cottage
Reception or Cottage Ceremony &
Greenhouse Reception
Inquire for details

Now renting, the cottage is available as an intimate wedding venue or elopement spot, or just an overnight destination.

The Vaughans entire realm has been featured on The 700 Club, NBC, and ABC News, as well as on the pages of The Cottage Journal, Cottages & Bungalows, and Lynchburg Living.

It truly is enchanted: the greenhouse, the cottage, and the grounds. All at once it has fostered healing, eternal love, and a plethora of magical memories.





A-Frame Tiny House Plans

Alexis

[Click Here](#)



5 Things You Can Do Today That Your Future Self Will Thank You For



“Six months from now, what will you wish you had spent time on today?” —James Clear

It's easy to miss the potential of today because “today” happens so often.

But each day provides opportunity. As a result of our actions today, we will move forward, stay the same, or (unfortunately) slip further away from the person we want to be.

Every single day, we make choices. And even though both routine and chaos can blur that fact, it remains true whether we

feel it or not. We make choices every day about how to spend our time, our money, our energy, and even what receives our attention.

And these choices, whether they are made deliberately or unintentionally, whether they are small or large, always shape the direction of our lives. Annie Dillard said it this way, “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.”

Knowing that, we would be wise to make purposeful decisions every day that move

us in the direction of the people we want to become. But what decisions are those exactly?

Before I answer that question, it's important to realize that oftentimes in the rush rush of our busy lives, we give our days little thought. And when we don't give them thought and intention, we end up following the same motions and routines as yesterday, we prioritize what is urgent over what is important, and we get caught in a cycle of responding to the loudest calls and latest fads rather than the most meaningful ones.

In doing so, we give up our right to choose.

It's easy to see why this happens. Our society often equates busyness with productivity and stillness with wasted time. Our world constantly pushes convenience and short-term benefits on us. And the pursuit of conformity has long been a temptation to the human race. As a result, our lives slip into following the masses.

However, by recognizing the power of our choices today, we can realign our actions with our values and passions and the life we aspire to lead. And when we choose well today, six months from now (or one year from now... or ten years from now), we can look back with gratitude at the decisions we made.

Nobody can predict the future—this is true. Life can change in the blink of an eye. But regardless of what the future holds, there are things we can do today that our future self will thank us for.

Regardless of what happens in your life tomorrow, I don't believe you will ever regret doing these five things today:

1. Investing in Our Health

Our body and mind are the instruments through which we live our lives and make a difference in the world. So prioritizing our health is one of the most profound investments we can make in ourselves. Unfortunately, too many of us will not do that today.

Whether it's exercising, eating healthy, or simply choosing to go to bed at the right time, each healthy choice contributes to a stronger you today and tomorrow.

In the future, ensure that you can look back today and be grateful for how you intentionally took care of yourself. No matter what the future holds, you will be glad you did.

2. Investing in Our Relationships

The quality of our lives is greatly influenced by the quality of our relationships. In fact, according to the world's longest-running longitudinal study on happiness, the single greatest factor in

human happiness is healthy relationships. Today, you have the opportunity to deepen connections with loved ones, reach out to old friends, or start brand-new relationships. It may require you to turn off the television, put down the video game, or even turn down a new business opportunity, but your decision will pay off dividends for years to come.

These moments of connection bring joy and hope into our lives, filling them with hope, support, and love. Nobody ever gets to their deathbed wishing they had spent more time at the office as the old saying goes. But lots of people wish they had spent more time with their family and loved ones. Make a decision today your future you will be thankful for.

3. Investing in Your Personal Growth

None of us have fully arrived and all of us have room to grow. This fact will never change. And by that I mean, we will never reach perfection. Some might hear this and think, “Then why grow at all?” But those who have intentionally invested in their personal growth see this differently.

The better versions of ourselves we become, the better we can show up in this world. The more we grow, the more we can help and influence others. Personal growth, when understood correctly, isn’t just about becoming better versions of ourselves, it’s about becoming the type of

person who can enable others to become better versions of themselves.

Push your limits today. Tackle a new problem. Read a new book or find a new podcast. Become the best you that you can become today. And you’ll discover an even better version of you tomorrow.

4. Making Wise Financial Decisions

74% of working Americans say they are stressed about their personal finances these days. And 80% of Americans believe they would be happier if they had more money.

There is no doubt that some people in the world need more money, but it is not 75% of Americans.

However, 100% of us, regardless of where we live, would feel better about ourselves and our future if we became more intentional with how we handled our money. Wasted dollars are wasted potential. No doubt that is one of the reasons this blog continues to reach so many people.

Today, you have that option. You can refrain from an unnecessary purchase, you can move some money into savings, you can learn how to invest wisely, you can give away a little bit, or you can sit down with a pen and sheet of paper and get very clear on where your money is going.

No doubt, if you do, you'll be glad you did.

5. Focusing on the Direction of Your Life

Slowing down long enough to reflect on the direction of your life and then making intentional choices about your path is one of the most significant and important actions we can ever take. But again, too few of us do that. Instead, we rush from one thing to another not even realizing life is slipping away underneath it.

Francis Chan summed it up this way, "Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter."

Taking time today to focus on the direction of your life might mean setting a

new vision, changing goals, choosing new daily habits, or even changing course when you know something isn't right. Either way, it will require time with your heart and soul and mind and thoughts.

Of course, staying true to your values and moving purposefully toward your vision will not only shape your future but also enrich your present. When you look back, you'll be grateful for the time you invested in charting your own direction.

The greatest mistake we can make today is making a decision that we regret in the future. But the second greatest mistake is to simply waste today.

Choose instead something that your future self will thank you for. Any (or all) from the list above should guarantee that.



Joshua Becker and his young family were introduced to minimalism during a short conversation with their neighbor. Since then, Joshua's story and writing have inspired millions around the world to find more life by owning fewer possessions. Today, based on his thoughtful and intentional approach to minimalism, he is one of the leading voices in the modern simplicity movement reaching over 1 million readers every month.



Dep Talks Paints and Plants

Written by Emily Kearcher

You know that feeling when you get to your friend's house, open the door (it's unlocked of course), kick off your shoes, and just plop down on their couch all before saying "hi"? You grab their blanket, make yourself at home, and you two sit and chat without any need for small talk. I mean the good talk where you get right to the meat, the issues, the hard stuff. No topic is off limits and you can freely discuss anything from hopes and dreams to bad days at work and trying times at home. I want you to pretend for a moment that that's where you are right now, and I'm your friend you came to. Except you don't know me, yet, so let's start there.

Hi! I'm Emily. I've been a nurse for 10 years, a wife for 6, and a mom for 4. I've moved across the country and back, bought homes and sold them, started new jobs and hobbies, and have lived through some real lows. That's all to say, I'm not naive to how difficult life can be. Some days and even whole seasons are hard and adding anything new is so far out of reach it seems impossible to begin. I fully understand that, and yet I also know you're someone who is always thinking of new ideas.

*You're a
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You're a brainstorming machine who has successfully completed so many projects in the past. So if you will, take a moment to think of something you have been wanting to start but just haven't started moving on yet. Maybe it's a home improvement project or downsizing and decluttering, or possibly even starting a new

hobby or business. Small or big, I want you to think of your idea. Got it?

Now here's the best part, you've just plopped down on the couch of a friend who is an absolute optimist. I choose to see the good and believe that we *ARE* the good. If you need someone to believe in you, let that be me. Now let me tell you all the reasons why you should start because I already know once you get going, there's no stopping you from accomplishing it. Consider this your pep talk.

1. You want it. You've been thinking about this for so long but just haven't taken the first step.
2. You're capable. You're full of grit and determination and have crushed goals before.
3. It would make your life easier/happier/more peaceful.
4. There's great potential to learn a new skill or something new about yourself.
5. You'll make yourself proud.
6. It could actually be really fun.
7. The bonus is it would make friends/family happy, but that's not a necessity. Right now is about you.

Let me again remind you that this doesn't have to be this life-altering/huge goal. It can be small. Paint that bathroom you've been thinking about for months, start a blog, grow some veggies this year, or even learn to bake with sourdough (that's my personal goal). There's no harm in trying and if you fail, so what! You can always paint the bathroom a different color, write about something new, grow new plants next year, and if it turns out you don't like sourdough, learn to bake something else. Release the stress to succeed from yourself and just see how it goes. If you dwell so much about the end result, no doubt it will be hard to start. You've got this, friend! I can't wait to see what you do.



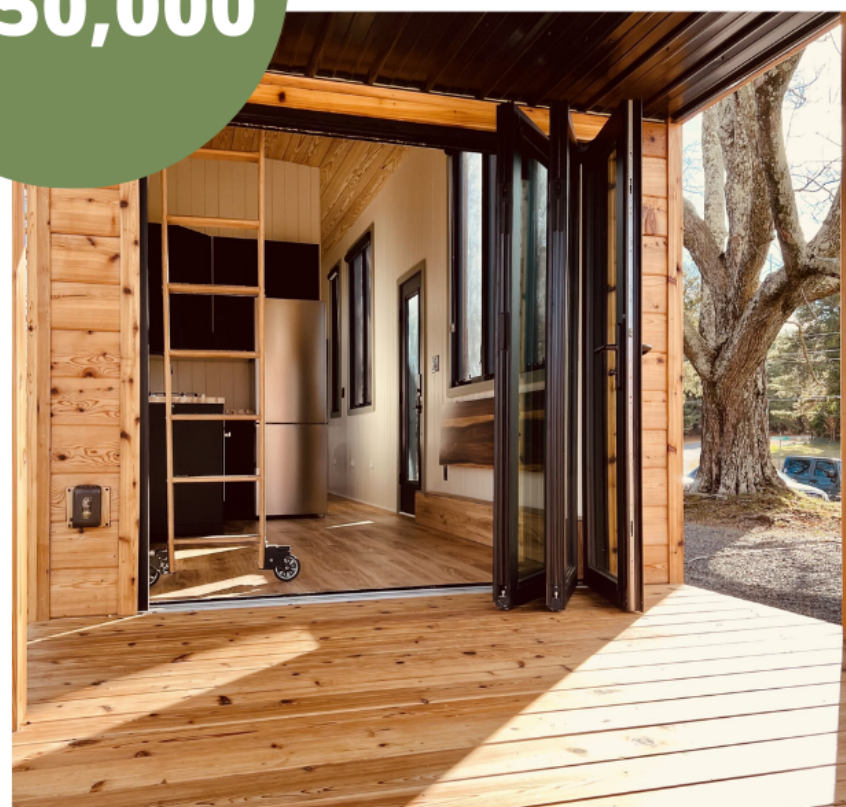
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Written By Laura LaVoie



Prologue: The Last Night

The last night was hard on everyone. She'd stopped eating, and we'd always said that would be the sign. We made an appointment with a new vet. We'd just moved back to Atlanta for our latest adventure. She was so skinny and struggled to walk. I wondered if moving again had been too much for our old kitty, but she had been her usual self on the way. She snoozed in the seat next to me, even using the litter box in the car. Guilt gnawed at me, but deep down, I knew the only culprit was time. It wasn't the move; seventeen years of a well-lived life weighed on her.

Chapter 1: The Beginning

In 2001, Piglet experienced her first adventure. We rented a Winnebago and drove from Detroit to Pennsylvania to pick up the hairless kitten. She was just thirteen weeks old and barely two pounds. She looked up at us with her spring-green eyes as if she knew we were her humans. Calico patches covered her soft skin. I couldn't help but kiss the little off-center black widows-peak on her forehead. Piglet immediately attached herself to Matt, forming a bond stronger than I had anticipated. I wanted a cat; he didn't. We compromised and got a cat.

As he held her that first time, she purred in his arms and bit him. It was love at first sight.

Piglet was a champ in the camper, riding in my lap under a blanket. When we stopped to nap, she climbed into the bed with her claws because she was too small to jump. There was no nervousness and no apprehension.

We were told to let her adjust to her new home slowly and keep her in a single room until she got

comfortable. When we got home after the long drive, she just walked in like she owned the place.

Chapter 2: Adventure Cat

Piglet was an adventure cat before that was a thing. She took to a harness immediately and despised carriers, so a leash became her mode of transport. In the summer of 2003, we moved from Michigan to Georgia. Two men filled a moving truck with our boxes and drove off while we packed a few things in an old Saturn and drove twelve hours to our new home. It was her first move, far from her last. Over the years, she adapted to seven homes, her resilience and curiosity unshaken.

She would even travel back to Michigan with us for the holidays. One year, we got caught in a massive snowstorm in Cincinnati, which brought all the highways to a standstill. Every hotel we tried was already full. Finally, we found a room, exhausted and miserable. Sneaking her in with us was a small victory amidst the chaos.

The following day, back on the highway, we faced another delay—a jack-knifed tractor-trailer stretched our journey even longer. At the time, we had a friend working as a cameraman for the Weather Channel. He was stationed along I-75, and we coordinated our passing with him. As we drove by in our Honda Element, he zoomed in, and we proudly showed Piglet out the window. Then, we called everyone we knew to tune into the Weather Channel for her big debut.

Chapter 3: The Tiny House

Our most life-changing move was in 2012. We built a 120-square-foot house in the Western

North Carolina mountains. Before moving in, we took Piglet for a trial weekend. She bolted out of the Element, pulling me up the path to the tiny house as if she instinctively knew it was home. Inside, she explored, then settled on the little sofa, napping under a green blanket that matched her eyes.

Matt and I worried when Piglet stayed on the sofa that first night. She had always slept with us. Before our final move, we devised and installed shelves as steps to the loft. Matt coaxed her with treats, and soon, she mastered the shelves. Two weeks later, she had figured out the ladder on her own.

One day, we came home and found her in the storage loft, but we had no idea how she got there.

Chapter 4: Hardships and Healing

In 2014, life threw us challenges after moving from the tiny house to a bungalow in Asheville. I underwent surgery, grateful to be in town rather than up the mountain. Then, Piglet was diagnosed with aggressive cancer. Her hairlessness helped us catch it early, leading to surgery at a specialist in Greenville, South Carolina. They removed a third of her jaw and all the cancer, giving us more time.

Soon after, she developed skin cancer, non-fatal but slow-growing. We focused on keeping her comfortable. Her initial surgery bought us three more years, but old age eventually caught up with her.

Epilogue: A Life Well Lived

Piglet was with us for seventeen years, enriching every chapter of our lives. Her presence in our

tiny house, her adventures, and her resilience through illness left a mark. Her story is a testament to a life well-traveled and deeply loved.





7 Things I Learned from Traveling Around the World



By Christina Nellesmann



Not only do these tips make a trip go more smoothly, but your health, sanity, and even your feet will thank you.

I just got back from traveling to my 38th country, Portugal. My husband and I went to Europe for three weeks this spring to visit family in Denmark and the Netherlands and to check out a few cities we had never been to.

While I'm an experienced traveler and have been to a wide range of locations such as Africa, Easter Island, and Tahiti, this particular trip reiterated a few things about travel that can help anyone who wants to get out and see the world.

Anyone can learn how to pack light or fly business class with miles, but these seven things might not come to mind when planning a trip or while traveling. Not only do these tips make a trip go more smoothly, but your health, sanity, and even your feet will thank you.

Traveling these days can be a tiresome adventure. There are people everywhere all the time. There doesn't seem to be a shoulder season, on-season, or off-season anymore. After several years of lockdown, traveling the world is at the top of all bucket lists and the most popular places are bursting at the seams.

If you do nothing else on this list, be sure to pack your patience. You will need it for crowds, travel delays, missed flights, weather issues, language barriers, food illness, and the list goes on. Being willing to accept what comes and roll with it will make any trip better and can make for some fun stories to tell later on.

But don't be discouraged. Travel is so rewarding and can give you some of life's best memories, so get out there and do it.

1. Travel carry-on only

This is a common rule among experienced travelers. There is nothing so frustrating as having to stand in line to check a bag, hang out at the luggage carousel, and then wait days for that bag because it didn't arrive at your destination. I have traveled carry-on only for 30 years and won't check a bag. In fact, I've gone so small with my backpack that it is essentially considered a personal item.

If you are physically able, I would also only travel with one backpack. We saw many inexperienced tourists trying to wheel large suitcases up the steep hills, cobblestone streets, and staircases of Lisbon and Porto and they looked miserable. With our small bags we were able to quickly get through crowds in airports, travel easily on the metros, and walk up steep staircases that pass for streets in Portugal.

Having too much luggage or large bags leaves you vulnerable. You will have to depend on taxis and other personal vehicles, airlines will charge you for excess weight or bags, and other passengers will need to assist you with your bag. Stay light and nimble!

(Read about how I packed for a trip in a 7-liter handbag in Tiny House Magazine Issue 127

2. Don't shop for or buy souvenirs

These days, you can purchase any type of item from anywhere in the world with a click of a button. Of course, it is so nice to bring home something that reminds you of an amazing trip. However, how often does that thing lose its luster as soon as you get home?

Shopping for souvenirs can take a lot of time away from more valuable endeavors such as trying yummy foods or meeting new people. You will also have to lug home those souvenirs in that very tiny bag of yours. There is just no room for them.

Instead, take as many photos on your phone as you want, save a few tickets or museum stubs, and learn how to make your favorite travel dish at home and share it with friends.



Produto: **RESERVA VITICOLA**
Variedade:
Cultivo:
Preço por kg:
1.95 €

Produto: **CLEMENTINA**
Variedade:
Cultivo:
Preço por kg:
1.95 €

2.95 €

AL
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3. Don't try to do it all

You will just need to admit there will be some FOMO (fear of missing out) on a trip. While you may have some good plans or intentions of seeing all the special sites or visiting everything on your list, just accept that you can't or won't.

The world is a massive place and becomes much larger when you need to walk, drive, or take a bus to all the locations you want to see. It becomes physically impossible to do it. Be happy with what you do get to see and don't waste all your precious energy trying to cram it all in.

4. Plan for a few rest days

In our everyday lives, we can't go full blast from morning until night without crashing. When we are not traveling, we also have to take a day off from work, have a relaxing evening, a calm morning, or sleep in. The same is true for traveling.

While some downtime can be enjoyed on a plane, it's not the same thing as taking off a day or half a day to recover from miles of

walking or hiking, overstimulation from cities and airports, or too much food. Plan to do this every few days and your trip and your health will thank you.

While I advocate packing light, I will make some room in my bag for my "downtime clothes". These are comfortable loungewear that signify that it is time to rest. I use them for both sleeping and lounging, so they also do double duty.

5. Care for your mind and body

Along with resting, it is very important not to forget about your daily health while traveling. Traveling, eating new foods, new environments, and sleeping in unfamiliar beds takes a toll on your body. Don't forget to do the daily things you normally do. This includes staying hydrated, eating whole foods, taking any necessary vitamins, stretching, and yoga, or sneaking in a nap.

Your mind needs care too. Take advantage of quiet time to meditate, do deep breathing exercises, and go over all the things you have already seen and experienced.



6. Be as independent as possible

While we have done several organized tours or cruises, we prefer to travel independently. This means that we do all our own planning and scheduling. This opens up so much more freedom and we are not bound by anyone else's timeline.

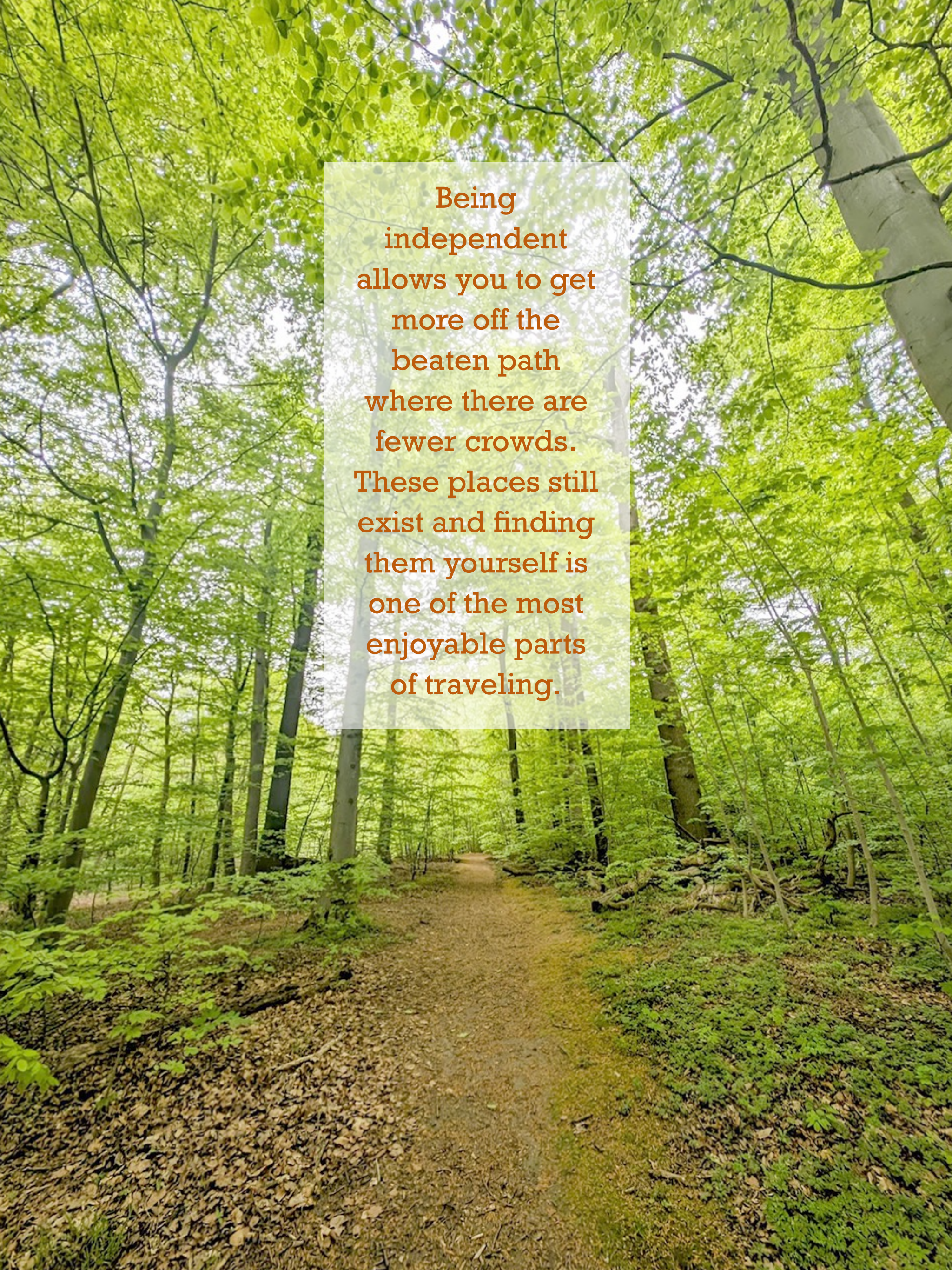
If we want to change our plans at the last minute, we can do it. If we want to go somewhere else because of the weather, we can.

Being independent also allows you to get more off the beaten path where there are fewer crowds. These places still exist and finding them yourself is one of the most enjoyable parts of traveling.

7. Don't plan too much in advance

This goes along well with being an independent traveler. While it's a good idea to have a few key flights and accommodations booked ahead of time, don't try to plan all your excursions, train or bus rides, or meals in advance.

Just take each day at a time and see how your body and mind are doing and go from there. On this trip, we really just winged it every day and everything worked out fine.

A photograph of a dirt path winding through a forest with tall trees and a dense canopy of green leaves. The path is covered in fallen leaves and leads into the distance. A semi-transparent white box is centered over the path, containing text.

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exist and finding
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