

Sarah - www.smallhousebigadventure.com

Basic Stats:

- What is(are) your name(s)? Sarah Myers McNair
- What do you do for a living? Training & Communications Manager for a university
- How many people do you/will be living in your tiny house? 1 or 2
- What part of the country do you live in? Blacksburg, Virginia
- How many square feet is your house? About 200 (including the loft; about 140 not including the loft)
- When did you start your build? March 2012
- Is your house complete? No, but so close! Probably in late October/early November
- Have you been documenting your tiny house build and if so, where can people find that information? Yes - www.smallhousebigadventure.com

Background:

- Why did you decide to build? I wanted to incorporate tiny houses in my Master's thesis...seemed like a good way ☺
- What was your life like before your tiny house? Were you fairly active, have you always had 'projects' going on? Were you fairly sedentary and looking for a change? Did you tend to work too much? (This question is an effort at trying to figure out WHO gravitates to the tiny house lifestyle) Fairly active, but living in a townhouse in crowded northern Virginia suburbia. I grew up around construction so I usually had some sort of project going on myself.
- How did you come to hear about the movement, figure out it was right for you and and get started? Someone sent me a youtube video
- What is/was your design inspiration? Tiny home builders

Technical:

- How do/did you find the time to work on your house with a job, kid(s), relationships, AND building a house? Did you do anything special to keep the balance? **Uh...full-time job, going through divorce, moving, etc. What a crazy time! Honestly, I just dedicated 10 hours a day on Sat & Sun, then random hours throughout the week. Dad has been a HUGE help. I also took a few weeks off work to get things done.**
- Have you run into any problems with your local codes? How did you solve them? **Nope. Codes don't matter here for building these. As for finding a spot to put it...**
- Where did you get the tools that you use? Were they yours, borrowed, rented etc.? **Dad's Tool Shop ;) Also borrowed some, like a planer and table saw**
- How long did (are you expecting) construction to take? **9ish months...hopefully 8**
- Have you/were you able to stay on schedule? **Heck no**
- What is/was the most time consuming portion of your build? **Flooring, but that's because my stupid butt decided to make my own hardwood floors out of pallets**
- What is/was the most limiting factor for your build? **Time first, budget second, patience third**
- Is your house on a trailer? If yes, how do you attach to the trailer? How do you move your tiny house? (Do you have a truck, do you hire it done?) **Yes trailer; my dad's f-150 tows it pretty well**
- Do you have accessory houses/dwellings that you use to supplement storage/working/living? **Not at this point**
- Where did you get your plans? **Tiny home builders donated them for my project**
- Have you consulted any 'professionals'? (structural, mechanical, plumbing, design etc.)? **My dad was a general contractor for 35 years, also a home inspector for a few years and now owns a hardware store; consulted electrician to doublecheck our work; had roofing pro's do the metal roof**
- Are you insuring your house? With who? **Probably will with USAA**
- Have you been using any sponsorships to help fund your house? How do you go about finding that sponsorship? **Nope**

Specifics:

- What sort of items do you have for cooking? **Propane range/oven**
- Are you tied to the power grid or are you off grid? **Off! Solar + propane. We're setting it up so it can be on or off though**
- Are you going to have a washer and/or dryer? **Yes, called my hands and a line outside ;)**
- Where does your water come from? **Storage tank in the loft or RV hookup**
- What kind of toilet are you going to have? **Composting...the cheap, hand-made kind**
- What do you use for a heat source if anything? **Marine propane heater (Newport)**
- What are some of the space savings tricks you used? **Storage under the "couch", storage under the stairs, lots of shelving, good cabinets, and still working on it**
- What do you have for insulation? **60% recycled material fiberglass Owen's Corning R-13 in the walls; foam board in the floors R-15**
- Where are you planning to park your tiny house? **Dunno. I plan to sell it, BUT if I can't sell it then I'll probably park it on my parent's land or buy my own down by the river and re-zone it.**

Personal:

- How much will/did your tiny house cost? **Hmm....last I calculated \$18,000...that was 3 months ago! I bet we're almost up to \$20k right now and still have a ways to go.**
- What is/was the most expensive part of your house? **Trailer, then windows, then roof (labor for the pro's)**
- 'Best' injury story (worst injury)? **Happily, not much. We kept jabbing our fingers on the nails sticking out from the walls that came through from installing the siding**
- What has been your biggest accomplishment with your tiny house? **Everything! If I had to pick one, the pallet flooring**
- What is/will be the biggest benefit to living in a tiny house? **Money savings; less environmental impact**

- Is there anything you'll miss about living in a standard house? What will you miss the most? **Hmm...woodstove**
- What has been the scariest part about building your own house? **Installing the plywood roof. It's tall!**
- If you could change one thing about your house what would it be? **I would re-frame the roof. Push the dormers back more into the sleeping area instead of having them in the middle.**
- Did you have cash in hand to complete your build, pay as you go or take out a loan to construct your house? **Loan from bank of dad ☺**
- Have friends and family been skeptical or supportive of your ideas? **Skeptical mostly, but supportive once they see it**
- Is there anything else you would want other people to know about your house and build? **The pros far outweigh the cons of taking on such a project. I friggin love this house.**