

Jess and Dan – Livinginatinyhouse.blogspot.com

Basic Stats:

- What is(are) your name(s)? **Jess Belhumeur & Dan Sullivan**
- What do you do for a living? **Marketing/Sales & Banking**
- How many people do you/will be living in your tiny house? **2**
- What part of the country do you live in? **New England (RI)**
- How many square feet is your house? **128 sq ft + 64 sq ft loft**
- When did you start your build? **Last weekend! (4/20–4/21)**
- Is your house complete? **No**
- Have you been documenting your tiny house build and if so, where can people find that information? **Yes, we have a blog.**

Livinginatinyhouse.blogspot.com

Background:

- Why did you decide to build? **To live deliberately and eliminate as much of the “excess” as possible– possessions and consumption–wise...and of course to get out of debt.**
- What was your life like before your tiny house? **Busy, but average I guess. We live in an apt in an urban area, work 40 hr/wk jobs. But we do enjoy the outdoors and live very frugally (ie: we don't do the activities that cost money– dining out, movies, bars, etc – we bike, hike, picnic, etc) Were you fairly active, have you always had ‘projects’ going on? **Yes, I am a super duper active person (Dan too) and I can't remember a time in my life that I didn't have at least 4 different projects going. Were you fairly sedentary and looking for a change? **Not sedentary, but I was definitely searching for something to inspire me. I wasn't happy with what we were******

taught to do and expect from life. I have owned a home and I didn't enjoy feeling trapped by debt and having so much space that I never used, yet still had to pay for (heating/cooling/maintenance/taxes). Did you tend to work too much? (This question is an effort at trying to figure out WHO gravitates to the tiny house lifestyle) I work the typical hours (sometimes more, because I travel for work), but I want more time for myself. To me, my own free time is what's most valuable. Free time allows a person to develop themselves, explore their capabilities, cultivate stronger and deeper personal relationships, and feel more contentment and happiness in life.

- How did you come to hear about the movement, figure out it was right for you and get started? I was searching the internet for alternative building and homes. This was the perfect fit for us. We wanted to own our own home without the mortgage. Neither of us are in a position to be able to buy a house right now.
- What is/was your design inspiration? Our inspiration was a culmination of all the different styles we have seen out there today thanks to blogs, newsletters, and endless youtube videos. Obviously, Tumbleweed Tiny Houses provided a great starting point, especially since we are opting to build a tiny house that lands in the “very tiny” range of the spectrum. (8'x16').

Technical:

- How do/did you find the time to work on your house with a job, kid(s), relationships, AND building a house? We are working most on the weekends. We are going to work some nights after work during the week as well, but Dan has class two nights a week and I travel regularly. It will be a challenge at times, but we are very driven and excited. Did you do anything special to keep the balance? We go for walks in the woods and

at the end of each tiny house work day we compliment each other on doing a good job and admiring all we have achieved that day.

- Have you run into any problems with your local codes? How did you solve them? **Not so far. We are building in a rural area, and the neighborhood is more like a tight-knit family. Everyone around us is interested, excited, and more than willing to help. Also, since we are building on a trailer, it is not a permanent structure, which allows us to bypass many codes. Campers are allowed to be parked in yards in this town as well.**
- Where did you get the tools that you use? **We borrowed them from many sources. Dan's father gave us a few tools, and my Dad's neighbors (more than one) have big collections. Were they yours, borrowed, rented etc.?**
See previous
- How long did (are you expecting) construction to take? **We are hoping to be done by August- which would be about 4-5 month time frame.**
- Have you/were you able to stay on schedule? **We just started, but so far, so good!**
- What is/was the most time consuming portion of your build? **The planning- and drawing of blueprints.**
- What is/was the most limiting factor for your build? **Budget. As stated above, we are drawn to this lifestyle since we are struggling to get out of debt as it is.**
- 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, it is on a flatbed utility trailer that has a 8x16 deck. We attached the subfloor framing to the trailer using many corner brackets. We also bolted the corners to the metal frame of the trailer. We had to have someone drive the trailer to our build site and we will need to hire someone to move when we are done too.
- Do you have accessory houses/dwellings that you use to supplement storage/working/living? **We do not. We plan to really pare down our**

possessions and possibly get a small storage unit, if not our families garages.

- Where did you get your plans? **Referenced some free tiny house plans, but for the most part, we drew them out ourselves. I have past construction experience.**
- Have you consulted any 'professionals'? (structural, mechanical, plumbing, design etc.)? **Yes, my Dad's next door neighbor was in building construction for decades. He has been very helpful.**
- Are you insuring your house? **We don't know yet. It would be nice.** With who? **I don't know who would provide this type of insurance!**
- Have you been using any sponsorships to help fund your house? **Not yet, but I may create a book of my writings to sell and raise money for the build.** How do you go about finding that sponsorship? **N/A**

Specifics:

- What sort of items do you have for cooking? **Very basics– a couple pans, pots, cutting board, utensils and dishes...about 4 of each item.**
- Are you tied to the power grid or are you off grid? **We will be off-grid**
- Are you going to have a washer and/or dryer? **No**
- Where does your water come from? **Closed system– we haul in.**
- What kind of toilet are you going to have? **Composting**
- What do you use for a heat source if anything? **Haven't decided– either a small “Hobbit” wood stove or a thermal rocket–mass heater.**
- What are some of the space savings tricks you used? **High ceilings– cabinets up high, a wet bath, no bathroom sink, and a bookcase that is also a ladder.**
- What do you have for insulation? **Foam board in the floor then common fiberglass, and foam in the roof.**

- Where are you planning to park your tiny house? **Hopefully on a family member's property, or set up a rental agreement with someone willing.**

Personal:

- How much will/did your tiny house cost? **We are hoping in the \$12000-\$15000 range.**
- What is/was the most expensive part of your house? **Solar power system.**
- 'Best' injury story (worst injury)? **TBD...hopefully nothing noteworthy.**
- What has been your biggest accomplishment with your tiny house? **TBD**
- What is/will be the biggest benefit to living in a tiny house? **TBD**
- Is there anything you'll miss about living in a standard house? **Running water! Haha What will you miss the most? See previous.**
- What has been the scariest part about building your own house? **Wondering if we will be able to finish it – and in a good time-frame.**
- Did you have cash in hand to complete your build, pay as you go or take out a loan to construct your house? **Pay as we go.**
- Have friends and family been skeptical or supportive of your ideas? **A mix– some supportive immediately, some skeptical immediately, and many others just needed to warm up to the idea for a little while and are now curious/interested/supportive.**
- Is there anything else you would want other people to know about your house and build? **Feel free to follow along! We want to help grow the community and let people know that anyone can do this!**