

## TUCSON TO POULSBO - SPRING, 2013

For the past few years we spent the winters in Tucson, Arizona in a motor home. While it did not always work out, we would try to spend a month driving back and forth from our home in Poulsbo. On some trips we would travel with friends and on this particular trip, with Tim and Evi Halpin. We met Tim and Evi at the RV park we stayed at in Tucson and they lived in Williams Lake, British Columbia. So... with one last cocktail hour and sunset at our anchorage in Tucson before we hauled anchor and set sail for Poulsbo.



## TO PAINTED ROCKS, AZ



With our travel companions, Tim and Evi Halpin, we circled the wagons at Painted Rocks. This is just west of Gila Bend and a few miles north off Interstate 8.1







Evi, Tim, Wally & Wendy ready for another great sunset and dinner by candlelight.

**TO BUCKSKIN MOUNTAIN PARK, AZ**



We had to stop here again for brunch!



Our view from the Arizona side of the Colorado River to the California side.

## TECOPA HOT SPRINGS, CA



We had bad feeling that I really messed up when we arrived in Tecopa Hot Springs and found this slightly less than desirable RV park. For awhile I feared I may not have done my research very well.



From the outside, the local laundry facilities were lacking too. But... looks can be deceiving you know.





Then again...

Nearby is the curious China Ranch where they farm dates.

Definitely worth the several hundred mile detour into the desert and down a dusty one lane road for one of their date shakes!





## RHYOLITE, NV

Rhyolite is one of my favorite places to visit on our travels near Death Valley. It is a ghost town by most standards, but has a world class outdoor sculpture park. It is a sculpture park located in one of the most unusual places, if only because it would be one of the least likely places one would expect a world class sculpture park to be.

Albert Szukalski, a Belgian artist, created the first sculptures here in 1984. He wanted to place the sculpture, *The Last Supper*, in Death Valley but was not allowed to... Sooo... he settled for nearby Rhyolite. The sculpture, *The Last Supper*, consists of ghostly life-sized forms arranged as in the painting *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci. Szukalski molded his shapes by draping plaster soaked burlap over live models until the plaster dried enough to stand on its own. In the same year, using the same techniques, Szukalski also created *Ghost Rider*, a figure with a bicycle.

Between then and 2007, other artists, including three other Belgians, added new works. In 1989, Szukalski created *Desert Flower*, an assemblage of chrome car parts found in the desert. In the 1990s, Hugo Heyrman added *Lady Desert: The Venus of Nevada*, a cinder block sculpture in part based on the idea of the pixel. Fred Bervoets, in *Tribute to Shorty Harris*, celebrated one of the prospectors whose mining discovery of 1904 led to a gold rush. N Dre Peters created *Icara* a hand-carved female version of Icarus, the boy in Greek mythology who flew too close to the sun. David Spicer fashioned *Chained to the Earth* out of rhyolite from a nearby quarry.

Other works include Sofie Siegmann's *Sit Here!*, a couch created in 2000 for the Lied Discovery Children's Museum in Las Vegas and restored and moved here in 2007. In 2006, Eames Demetrios added a plaque, *Rhyolite's District of Shadows*.

Some of these are shown below, but one needs to stop by on their own to really appreciate the entire place.



Albert Szukalski's sculpture, *The Last Supper*



Szukalski's *Ghost Rider*



The abandoned railway station in Rhyolite.



### Isabelle "Mona Belle" Haskins

Died at the age of 21 years. She was trying to go straight after a life of prostitution but was murdered by her pimp Fred Skinner AKA Fred Davis. Described as young and full of life her murder was said to be so horrific as to shake the town to the core. She was shot four times in the back. Stories vary but one states that after she died, she was being carried to the cemetery. The women of the town decided she would not rest with the other good folk in the Bullfrog-Rhyolite graveyard on the south of town. The men carried her coffin back to town and buried her not far from the jail and the red light district where she used to work. Another version has her body taken to Ballard, Washington.



The graves where the 'good folk' are buried have not fared so well with time or retrospective checks on attitude. There must be some kind of message here?







Wendy, Tim and Evi take a time out on Sofie Siegmann's *Sit Here!*

Next to the prospector is a penguin which depicts how Mr. Bervoets, the Belgian sculpture that did this piece, felt about being in Rhyolite (IE. he hated it and felt like... well... like a penguin in the desert).





## LEAVING RHYOLITE AND HEADING TO DEATH VALLEY



We stopped here for gas (and only gas) on our way to Stovepipe Wells in Death Valley. Death Valley and "PART II" of our journey back to Poulsbo will be coming soon... (okay, okay!... so we checked out the Souvenirs too...)

## DEATH VALLEY



For a couple nights we stayed just outside Death Valley National Park so we could have electricity to run the A/C for our cat should that necessary. As it was, where we stayed was several degrees cooler than down on the valley floor so that worked to the cat's advantage. It was a thirty minute drive into Death Valley, it offered us a few other things to see, do and explore along the way. We planned to stay on night down on the floor to facilitate shortening a long and strenuous drive out the northwest edge of the park up CA 395 and Owens Valley Reno. AND... It would give me a chance to, once again, try my luck at photographing the great sand dunes at Stovepipe Wells, once at day and once at dawn. The sand dunes are right next door and within an easy five minute drive from where the campground. (This view is of Death Valley from Dante's View, the east edge of Death Valley, looking west.)



We stayed at an RV park at a small casino with a BIG cow. It was located just over the CA/NV state line. The CA line was only 100 feet away.



This view is from the RV park looking towards the west, into California, with Death Valley just over the distant ridge.





On our way to Death Valley we would pass through and turn into Death Valley at... odd enough.. a place currently called Death Valley Junction but once called Amargosa, (population 4). There are a couple businesses here; the historic Amargosa Opera House and Hotel and a cafe next door. The Amargosa Opera House is a place of special interest and on the National Register of Historic Places, so we took the offered tour. The guide told us all about Marta Beckett and how she transformed, rebuilt, painted the interior of the opera house, performed and brought in the likes of Red Skeleton, Ray Bradbury and others she felt appropriate to perform here. Madonna was NOT allowed to perform here, even after she came to all the way out here for a lunch with Marta in an effort to do so. I noted a grand piano under cloth. The guide noticed me checking it out and asked if I wanted to play it.

As if I actually knew how to play! I said I knew 'one' song and it was only a few steps above Chop Sticks. So, I played my little one bar 1-4-5 boogie-woggie number. The guide said I was only the 9th or so person ever allowed to play the piano.

More information here:

The Amargosa Opera House: <http://www.amargosa-opera-house.com/>

Marta Beckett: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marta\\_Becket](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marta_Becket)

Death Valley Junction: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death\\_Valley\\_Junction,\\_California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_Valley_Junction,_California)







Death Valley: A small moon rising over Artists Palette

One small oasis at Furnace Creek Inn.  
It seemed like the ocean should be in  
the distance, not the desert and a barren  
landscape!





For our last evening in Death Valley we moved to the Stovepipe Wells RV park, (and we were able to snag a couple of the very few spots with electrical hookups). I pulled out the DSLR camera, a couple lenses, then hoped for some nice light, no footprints and few people. It was pretty hazy but it was still enjoyable. There were lots of footprints and people but I made some images that will be worth messing about in post-processing (the digital dark room).



Photographers and sunset watchers were everywhere, seemingly on every sand dune top, waiting for the magic light moment. Didn't they know I was coming... to stay home... not to suck up **MY** light... not to make tracks in the sand... there is just no respect with for photographers from photographers anymore!





The next morning I was out at the sand dunes at sunrise. The wind was blowing, sand flying and it was very hazy. I chose one lens to work with, put it on the DSLR camera in the car and decided I would not switch lenses with all the wind and blowing sand, (which would, had I tried to switch lenses, most certainly found its way into the camera). The light was even more subdued than last evening, but I went the flow and headed out into the dunes to see what I could come up with. Certainly less people and foot prints this morning. I made lots exposures that will be fun to work with in post-processing.

After my morning photography expedition into the sand dunes, we broke camp and headed west towards Lone Pine and the Owens Valley, another of my favorite places. Tim and Evi have never been through that area and we are eager to not only show them around to the places we like, but to explore it ourselves again.

Part III of our journey home will be about our Owens Valley adventures.

The road out of Death Valley to Line Pine, CA is steep, (both up and down), and narrow. I wanted to leave plenty of time to slowly crawl our way out of the area. I had caused some worry with Evi regarding the driving conditions and wanted to make sure we had plenty of time. We were at sea level and the first pass we had to go over was almost 5,000 feet and that was less than 20 miles away. Then we had to descend off that pass for 3,000 feet to Panamint Springs which was about 10 miles away. From Panamint Springs we had to climb back up over 2,000 feet in another few miles to get out of Death Valley. This part of the highway is narrow and there are places and corners where two motor homes would have difficulty passing each other, on some corners it would not be possible. My GPS logged a total ascent of 9,003 feet, a total descent 5,262 feet over 81.95 miles and an average speed of 36 mph. It didn't log the smell of hot brakes, hot transmission or the warning buzzers. However, Evi was not too mad at me. She did say Tim's health would have been in danger should it have been him that choose that route!

As you may know or have guessed, we are already home and I am catching up on these Flying Pig Adventures travelogues. We arrived Poulsbo March 31st and then showed Tim & Evi a few of the sights around Poulsbo before they left for Williams Lake, BC a day or two later. This trip home from Tucson, we were just having too much fun to stop and put the time into posting these travelogues as we went along, AND... I think that is going to be more how things will work on our next Flying Pig Adventures too... So... Until the next Flying Pig Adventure, Ciao...