



In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



Day 16
Saturday,
January 18th

I
Circumnavigate
The Salton Sea

Weather
50's to 70's and sunny

Hello to Family & Friends

It was a quiet night on the hilltop. No vehicles at all, at least none that I heard, until about 8:00 a.m.

I did some housekeeping. With all the hiking I keep dragging little stones in here in the treads of my shoes, or when I take them off. I have to sweep about every other day so I don't start scratching the floor up.

Alright, I have to admit, even the way I have this on my itinerary is 'International Banana Museum – REALLY?????' Truthfully I have no interest in checking this place out, so it's a good thing the Museum

doesn't open until 1 p.m. But I did find it on Roadside America and thought it deserved a picture at least. Well maybe 5. The reviews were mixed. Most of the likes involved the banana shakes or muffins while the nays said "don't waste your time. Just a bunch of junk." I wouldn't have bought and food stuff anyways. The sign above has certainly seen better times.



In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow—
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



The museum half is above



Don't ask me what this thing is supposed to be. Robo Banana maybe?



Directions
Bat Cave Buttes
Hwy 111 south from SSSRA—8 miles. At the County line park on the left side of the road near the RR tracks. Climb over the hill crossing the tracks and hike up the wash about a half mile to the buttes and the caves.

Objective: Bat Cave Buttes. Maybe the Riddler and the Penguin will meet me there. Oh wait a minute, maybe Bat Girl will meet me there.





These must be the Bat Caves.



There might have been some evidence of bats, but I could see none hanging from the roof. Most of the evidence of occupation came from humans, in the form of garbage left behind.

here were some neat configurations of the rocks. Wind and water have done some major sculpting here.





Obviously a good location for off road vehicles



This is probably the best view of the Salton Sea from up here



I had just made it over the tracks when a train came along. They are quite busy here, about every 10-15 minutes a load of intermodals go by.



Note the elevation



The 295 population was from 2010. I read that it might now be less than 200. But there seemed to be more than 200 residents around.

Below – Far left is the water. Far right is the sand beach. In-between is a width of 200-300 yards where the water has evaporated and left a salty morass.



The residents are mostly artists now, and they display their work on the sand.



Not to be an art snob or anything, but I guess beauty really MUST be in the eye of the beholder

Here it is, the shore of the Salton Sea



I'm not sure what was so interesting that it would draw photographers out here, but there were three with tripods set up and a fourth on his way out from where he parked.

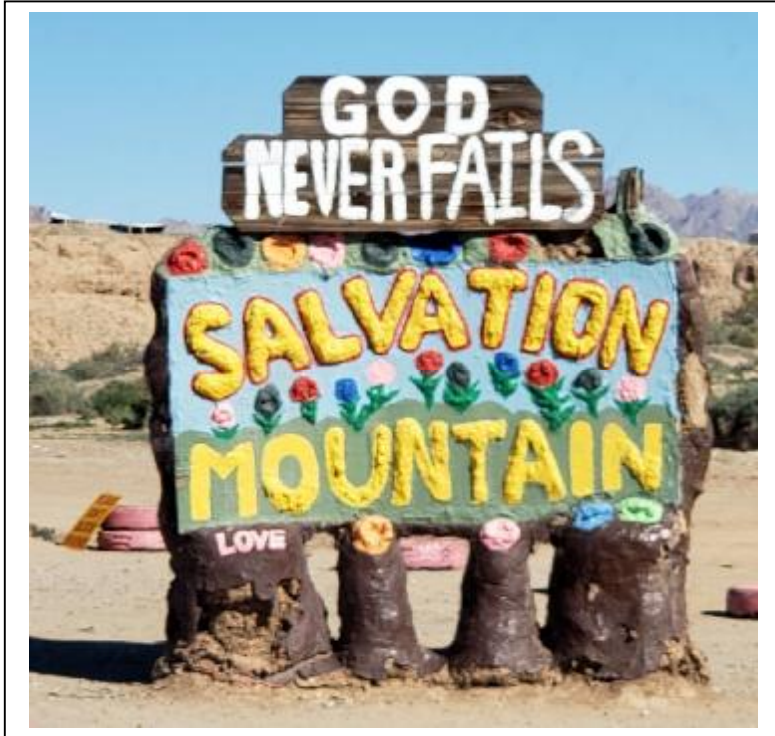


This is what I mean. It's a piece of sheet metal with the words cut out. Just about anyone can do that. I've even seen this saying somewhere else before, so that's not unique either.

Is this functional? Or artwork? You decide.



Note the highlighted phrase



Leonard Knight has been painting and repainting his bright Biblical messages on the sides of **Salvation Mountain** since 1985. He requests that all donations be in the form of paint, preferably acrylic. Leonard is a classic lone dreamer, intent on feeding his vision. But he's friendly, welcoming all who visit. He sleeps in the Salvation Truck, a decorated vehicle with a house on the back. The truck, like the mountain, is lettered with biblical quotations and a large "REPENT" warning. The sight of Salvation Mountain -- his three story tall, 100-foot wide riot of concrete, adobe and paint -- greets him each morning. Thanks to Roadside America

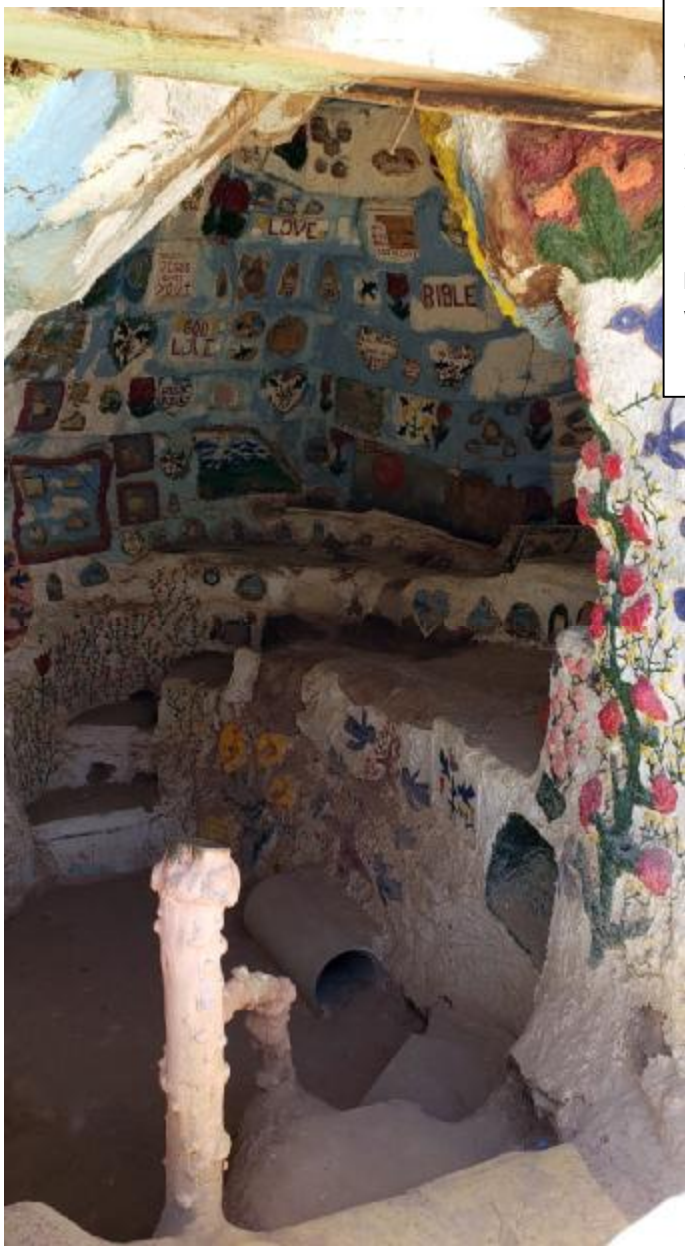


The photos above and below are the inside structure of the.....structure. What else should I call it?



You are probably wondering what the arrow was for on the photo at the top of the previous page. This is what's inside where the arrow is pointing to.

Salvation Mountain – Was I impressed? A lot of time and patience went into it, but its falling apart. People walking all over don't help any. Is there a reason for it? Was it done to attract attention? Or was it done just to please the inner self and just happened to become a tourist attraction?



I will admit, this place did remind me a little of Downtown Las Vegas. Homeless, beggars, performers asking for a handout, people selling their wares on the side of the road. I didn't get a pic of the guy in the panda suit, he was a little too aggressive.



Well here it is. Slab City is probably what the Salton Sea area is known for most. 'Slab City is a collection of trailers and sculpture sites, with a sign anointing it "Last Free Space." Out-of-season Burning Man vagabonds, aged hippies and youthful neohippies, die-hard red or blue anti-government hold-outs -- all coexisting in peaceful distribution on an abandoned streak of government land.' – Roadside America



Atlas Obscura – 'Previously an old WWII base, Marine barracks Camp Dunlap, the campsite earns its name for the concrete slabs that remained long after the military base had been bulldozed and abandoned.' Like the one below.



After I left the RV on the side of the road, about the roughest asphalt road I have come across out here (I actually drove on the dirt verge because it was smoother than the road), and made my way to the mountain, I kept hearing a drone above me. This went on for 5-10 minutes and a 150 yard walk. I thought, what is this guy doing, following me? I finally spotted it flew away.





Maybe I should have bought this RV instead? I'm sure it would have no problems on those gravel and dirt roads. Kali, is this the one you want? But seriously, think of how much it cost to have that shipped over here from England. That really is a home away from home.



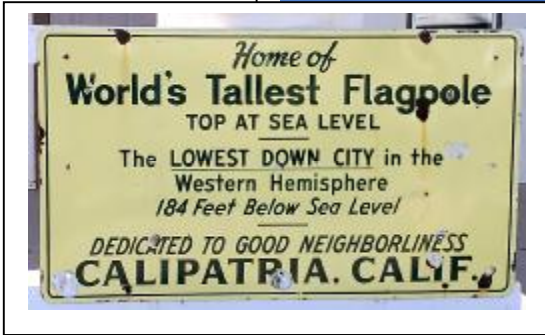
This is hilarious!! As I got to the end of the road and started to turn around, I saw this Sheriff's car sitting here. I pulled up next to him (this pic is from my driver's seat), to ask if they kept a police presence here. I thought he was ignoring me so I waved. Still no reaction. I am parked four feet from his window with a diesel engine rumbling away. Man is he out. Once I realized he was sleeping I snuck the camera up and took the shot, then drove away laughing. I pulled over down the road to enter an address and he drove right by. Sleepin' on the Job. Caught ya!



There are a couple things to see in Calipatria. Name????? Archie must be working because the license plate says ARCHIE.



The Tiki Head is a carved tree trunk next to Archies Place.





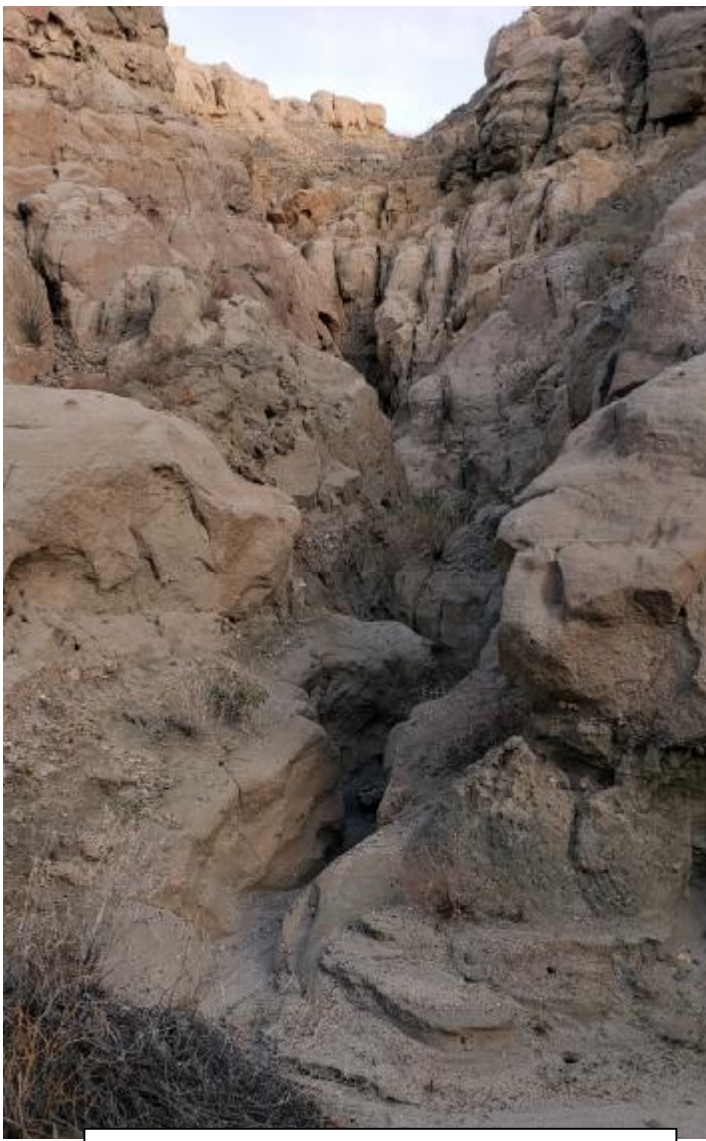
Yesterday I mentioned a forest of Palm Trees but the picture didn't turn out. So here's a good one. Those are each about 30 feet tall.



Back through Mecca, but from the west this time, completing my circuit of The Salton Sea. There is nothing to see on the south or west sides, so it was just a 65 mile drive back here from Calipatria. But now I head back to Box Canyon Road to enjoy some hiking for the next day or so. The canyons and dry washes in those hills look very inviting.



I found a good campsite, set up the RV, and since there was still a good 45 minutes of light left I decided to explore a little. This wash was just around the bend from me.



I may have to check that one out tomorrow



This one was amazing. Hidden by a bunch of bushes, I followed as it twisted and turned, sometimes a complete U-turn, for almost a half mile before it halted me above right.



I made my way back to camp just as it was getting dark. Not a bad campsite either.

I found out this is called the Mecca Hills Wilderness – No off road vehicles allowed. Yeah!

Before I lost the internet I did a search and found 10 or 12 hikes listed on AllTrails. The one I just took is not on there, so I imagine there are hundreds of dry washes just like the one above to keep me interested.

You are getting this one, and maybe tomorrows, a day or two late because of the lack of internet.

It is definitely warmer this far south. I am writing this at 6:30 p.m. and I have the screen door open for the first time on this trip.

Not sure how many pictures I will take. You guys will probably get tired of seeing dry wash after dry wash, so I will be conservative.

I was very pleasantly surprised to find diesel in Calipatria for only \$3.65. Even though I only needed 10 gallons, I filled 'er up.

Until next time.....