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Strange RV Encounters: Cement Ships Do Float

The Weird, the Wacky, and the Wonderful



Juliana Mathews, Yahoo Contributor Network
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A cement ship that floats? Believe it or not, this one did float at one time, but her voyage was shorter than that of the ill-fated Titanic. Just consider this another entry in the "Who thinks of these things?" column.

We last left off at the [two-story outhouse in San Juan Bautista, California](#). If you head about 40 minutes northwest, you'll come to [Seacliff State Beach](#) in Aptos, California, home of the S.S. Palo Alto, aka The Cement Ship.

During World War I, when steel was in short supply, construction began on three cement ships, two of which were slated to be oil tankers for use in the war. However, before construction was finished, the war ended, and the S.S. Palo Alto, one of the oil tankers, did not get the chance to leave her home port in Oakland, California.

That is, until 1929, when a company bought the hunk of floating concrete with plans to make her into an amusement attraction. Her maiden voyage was made under tow to the end of a pier in Aptos, California, at Seacliff State Beach. She was then outfitted with a restaurant, dance floor, and [swimming pool](#).

While this sounds like it had all the makings of a successful attraction, business must not have been as anticipated. Within two years, the amusement company went bankrupt, and the ship's hull split in half.

Currently declared unsafe, a fence at the end of the pier blocks access to her deck. However, she has plenty of company -- the seagulls and cormorants now call her home, providing the true meaning of a poop deck.

To see more photos, [follow more of my weird, wacky, and wonderful RV adventures on Flickr](#).

My next stop: [Strange RV Encounters: Millions of Dead Fish](#).

Read how it all began: [Strange RV Encounters: An Introduction](#).

Published by [Juliana Mathews](#)

In the summer of 2011, Juliana bought an RV, gave up most of her possessions and began traveling around the country with her cat, seeing all the weird, wacky and wonderful roadside attractions. She writes... [View profile](#)

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