



# ON THE ROAD ■ ■ ■

Volume 15, No. 3

August 2003

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## TULSA ROUTE 66 FESTIVAL NEEDS YOU!

Preparations are moving along at a rapid pace for the 2004 International Route 66 Festival, to be held June 10-13, 2004 in the Brady Village district of Tulsa. Our Oklahoma Route 66 Association is taking an active part in the plans, and in fact all of the incorporators of the event, as well as numerous members of the Board of Directors, are members of our Association. Michael and Suzanne Wallis have agreed to act as Honorary Co-Chairs, and are both actively and enthusiastically involved in the planning. The Oklahoma Route 66 Association has offered its full support and assistance in helping to pull off this major Route 66 event. As a result, we need the help of every member.

At present, the committee is busy seeking sponsorships and donations, planning activities, scheduling entertainment, and arranging hotel package deals. Meanwhile, hundreds of volunteers are being recruited and assigned to various aspects of the Festival. Those who have already volunteered for leadership positions number in the dozens, and more than a hundred have volunteered to be "worker bees." But we need many more!!

Although we suspect many of you have already signed up to help out, we

See **Festival**, page 12



## Calendar of events

**OKLAHOMA ROUTE 66 ASSOCIATION HALL OF FAME AWARDS.** 2 p.m. Sept. 13, Oklahoma Route 66 Museum, Clinton. Two Oklahomans (one living, one deceased) who have made significant contributions to Route 66 will be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Clinton will be celebrating their centennial that same weekend. Everyone is invited to come.

**ALL-DAY CARAVAN-STYLE CRUISE.** Oct. 4, Sapulpa to Miami. There is no sign-up fee to caravan, so come join the fun! But take note: On a first-come, first-served basis, the first 20 or so people who pay \$5 a head will participate in the special "Mystery Tour" starting at 8 p.m. at the Coleman Theatre in Miami.

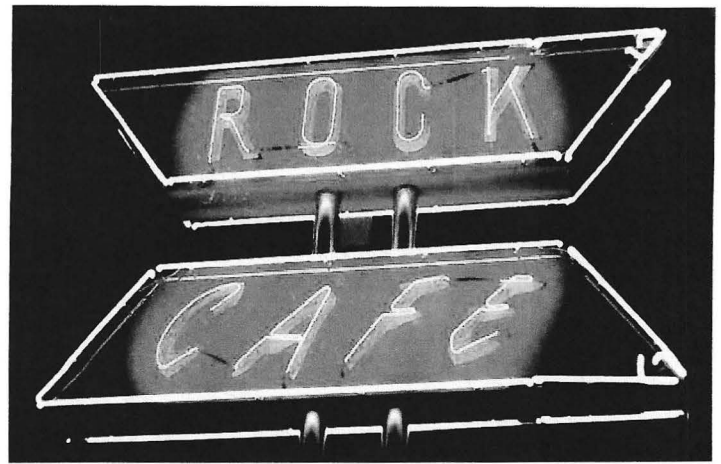
In the fall and winter months, the Coleman limits their tour group size and the number of tours given, so not every caravanner will be able to participate. Details are still be worked out, so keep checking our Web site. We'll also do a special mailing to alert our membership. The cruise probably will start about 9 a.m.

**BOARD MEETING.** 2 p.m. Oct. 26, Seaba Station, Warwick. Open to general membership and the public. Agenda: Set date for 2004 annual meeting; discussions about 2004 Route 66 Festival and Association participation; any new business.

**ROUTE 66 PRESENTATION.** 7 p.m. Nov. 17, Oklahoma Route 66 Museum, 2229 W. Gary, Clinton. Historian and author Dr. Michael Cassity will give a presentation about Route 66 in Oklahoma. The presentation, titled "Route 66 in Western Oklahoma," is sponsored by Preservation Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Humanities Council.

The presentation will include a slide show illustrating historic buildings and features along Route 66 in Oklahoma and showing some of the ways the Mother Road changed the communities and lives of people along its path, both when it was commissioned and when it was bypassed by the interstates.

For more information about the presentation, contact Pat Smith at (580) 323-7866.



*File photo*

The Rock Café in Stroud received a 2003 merit award from the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office.

## SHPO merit awards aid landmarks on 66

In May, the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office handed out merit awards recognizing groups and individuals for their efforts to preserve our state's heritage.

Recipients with 66 connections include:

- The Friends of the Coleman Theatre in Miami received a Citation of Merit Award for their aid to the Miami Area Downtown Authority for the rehabilitation of the Coleman Theatre. Some of their accomplishments include refurbishment of the mezzanine chandeliers,

work on the auditorium's grand chandelier and restoration of the marquees that grace the theatre's exterior.

- Citizens for the Golden Dome, the leading advocate for saving the geodesic dome bank building on Route 66 at NW 23rd and Classen in Oklahoma City.

- Dawn Welch, owner of the Rock Café in Stroud. Using a matching grant from the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, she has renovated the landmark restaurant.

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# They brought down the house in Erick

Let the Russells entertain you

By Emily Priddy

At first glance, Erick, Oklahoma — population 1,023 — doesn't look like an international tourist attraction.

Aside from a grocery store and a few shuttered buildings, there just isn't much to see.

Yet, for the past three summers, busloads of tourists have pulled up to the old City Meat Market and disappeared into the building for hours at a time, leaving Erick's residents to wonder just what's going on in there.

Inside the building — now known as the Sandhills Curiosity Shop — is a husband-and-wife team with an offbeat song-and-joke routine reminiscent of something off the vaudeville circuit.

Harley and Annabelle Russell didn't set out to become international tourist attractions. Like so much else in Harley's life, it just sort of happened that way.

In the 1980s — worn out after sowing wild oats all over the United States while touring as a guitarist with the likes of Charley Pride and Dave Dudley — Harley, an Erick native, decided to come home and settle down.



Photo by Emily Priddy

Annabelle, left, and Harley Russell performed for guests at their home in Erick.

"Actually, I ran out of gas when I was around 35, because I liked to party and have a good time," he says. "I liked to smoke dope, and I liked to drink ... and I finally ran out of gas about 1980."

He owned a brick storefront building downtown, and he decided to open a business. But what sort of business would thrive in Erick?

The answer was obvious: A health-food store.

Well, maybe not.

"Didn't have one customer," Harley laughs. "Not one."

On the up side, he didn't have to buy groceries for a while: "We just finished up our health food

about three years ago," he says.

He tried other business pursuits: a guitar shop, an antique store, a game room. None of it worked.

However, in 1987, his guitar-shop venture proved successful in an unexpected way.

Like Harley, Annabelle has roots in Erick: Her grandfather started the honey farm tourists will find advertised on billboards leading up to Erick.

Annabelle was living in California when she came home to visit her parents. She walked into Harley's shop one day to have her guitar tuned. While she was there, she fell in love with the pro-

prietor. They've been together ever since.

Love wandered into the old City Meat Market one day in 1987. More than a decade later, success found its way across the same threshold.

One afternoon about three years ago, Harley and Annabelle were sitting in their Sandhills Curiosity Shop — then an antique store — singing and playing guitars to pass the time.

A busload of English tourists was supposed to have lunch at a restaurant near the interstate, but they were running ahead of schedule, and the business wasn't ready for

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See **Sandhills**, page 4



## Sandhills • Get your kicks in Erick with the Mediocre Music Makers

Continued from page 3

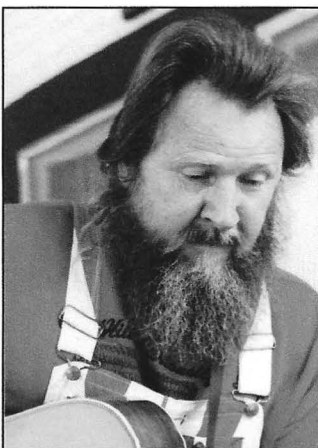
them. To kill time, the bus driver brought them into downtown Erick.

The tourists wandered into the shop where Harley and Annabelle were practicing their music and began listening. At the end of a song, they began clapping and throwing money on a nearby table.

"I looked at that and said, 'Well, this is all right,'" Harley said. "At that time, we were selling things, and we couldn't sell nothin' for enough to replace it."

When it was time for the travelers to head back to the restaurant, the bus driver approached the couple and told them he had another tour coming through in two weeks. Could the Russells entertain them? And how much would they charge to fix some sandwiches so the tourists could stay longer next time?

"I said, 'We'll do it for free,'" Harley said.



Harley played for guests at home in Erick.



Photo by Emily Priddy

Harley and Annabelle love to entertain Route 66ers.

The Russells — who call themselves the "Mediocre Music Makers," although most of their audiences agree they are well above mediocre — have been serving food and fun to tourists every summer since then.

The Sandhills Curiosity Shop isn't an antique store any more. The only items for sale are harmonicas, mouth harps, tapes and a few pieces of Annabelle's artwork.

The show is free.

Lunch is free.

Harley and Annabelle just keep four round, wooden tables and some chairs in their shop, and tourists can put money in the tip jars on each table as they see fit.

"We've never gotten stiffed by nobody ever from our shop," Harley says.

The Russells chalk

their success up to doing what comes naturally.

Salesmanship is not in their blood — "I can't take money out of your hand," Harley insists — but having fun and visiting with friends is.

"When we tried to do it as a business, it didn't work," Annabelle says. "When we quit trying to do it as a business and just entertained them for free, it worked."

Their show includes costumes (red-and-white striped overalls Harley refers to as their "redneck tuxedos"), music (everything from "Act Nat'rally" to "Get Your Kicks on Route 66") and sometimes ribald humor.

Introducing his tribute to both sides of the Mason-Dixon line — in which he plays "Dixie" and "Yankee Doodle" simultaneously — Harley

says, "Sometimes I actually get through it without making more than three mistakes."

"Are you talking about having sex or playing the guitar?" Annabelle quips.

They're not getting rich off their venture — Annabelle still holds a part-time job at a local motel, and they live frugally, relying mostly on each other and their visitors for entertainment — but the Russells find happiness in more than just money.

Annabelle's bright blue eyes light up as she tells how she and Harley bid farewell to their new friends after each visit.

"We always give them a hug and a kiss, and they'll hug us and kiss us, too," she says.

The couple wouldn't trade their experiences in Erick for anything.

"We had to stay here 'cause we couldn't afford to leave, and now we're gonna stay here come hell or high water," Harley says. "We've finally gotten to where we like it. Now that all the Route 66ers are coming by and we've got these tour groups, I wouldn't have a shop in San Francisco if it was given to me and paid for."

The Sandhills Curiosity Shop is located about a block south of Route 66 in the old City Meat Market.

For more information or to schedule a visit, call (580) 526-3738.



# Hitchhikers

Route 66 news and events from other states

## Illinois

**17th Annual Route 66 Reunion.** Sept. 5-7, Lexington. Friday night cruise in, Saturday and Sunday Taste of Country Festival with food and hundreds of craft/art/antique booths and more. Sunday car show and parade. The 17th Annual Illinois Route 66 Reunion Car Show and Parade will provide special recognition for Corvette drivers to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Corvette. Call (309) 365-9006 for more information.

**International Route 66 Mother Road Festival.** Sept. 26-28, Springfield. Hot cars, continuous live music, Route 66 authors and artists, sock hop, National Historic Route 66 Federation Award Banquet, Martin Milner and Michael Wallis, and much, much more. Visit [www.route66fest.com](http://www.route66fest.com) for more information.

## Missouri

**Route 66 Museum Fund Raiser.** Sept. 4-6. The Lebanon/Laclede County Route 66 Society hopes to raise money to establish and maintain a Route 66 Museum. Partnership with the proposed new Lebanon/Laclede County library would provide 2,800 square feet. A preview of the planned museum displays, scheduled for a preview of the planned museum displays, dinner, sock hop, a 3-act musical play about Lebanon and Route 66 and more. For more information, e-mail [laclede66news@tds.net](mailto:laclede66news@tds.net) or write to P.O. Box 66, Lebanon, MO 65536.

**Missouri Route 66 Motor Tour.** Sept. 5-7. Cruise Route 66 through Missouri from Joplin to Meramec Caverns. For more information, call Diane Warhover at (314) 965-5751 or Tommy Pike at (417) 829-6517 or visit [www.missouri66.org](http://www.missouri66.org).

## California

September 6, Barstow. Miss Route 66 Pageant. This is a one-day, walk-on pageant held in support of the Route 66 Museum and the Barstow Main Street USA Run Car Show. Open to anyone who has ever traveled on Route 66 — ages 1 to 100! Entry fee is \$75 in advance or \$85 the day of the event. No swimsuits, no interviews, no duties or responsibilities required of the winners. For more information, call (760) 257-3435 and leave a message in box 3.

## Properties to be nominated for National Register status

Using grant money from the National Park Service's Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office has undertaken a project to nominate up to 20 Route 66 properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

Using information provided by the 2002 "Historic Route 66 and Associated Resources" and "Oklahoma Route 66 Roadbed and Integral Structures" surveys, Dr. Michael Cassity will prepare nominations.

Properties selected for nomination include roadbed segments, brid-

ges and buildings.

The intent is to nominate a variety of property types that represent the entire stretch of the storied highway.

Among the resources being nominated are a section of original roadbed west of Sapulpa, a bedstead pony truss bridge west of Bristow and a roadbed segment that has an Ozark Trails marker near Stroud.

For more information, contact Melvena Heisch, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, or Jim Gabbert, National Register Coordinator, at the State Historic Preservation Office, (405) 521-6249.

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# Bunion Derby rides again in Oklahoma

By Carol Duncan

We did it again, gang. April 25th and 26th was the 75th Anniversary Celebration of the Great Transcontinental Bunion Derby of 1928.

What better way to do this than a modern-day motorized relay across the state from the Oklahoma/Texas line to the "Welcome to Kansas" line?

A commemorative plaque was handed off from one person to another like a track relay baton. Part of the planned route was several portions of the original 1928 pathway of C.C. Pyle's Footrace. What an experience!

Volunteers signed up, and we were off and running rpm-style.

At 9 a.m. April 25, the stopwatch started.

Tick, tick, tick.

There was only one miscue in the whole project, and Don Mullenix of Elk City made sure everything got smoothed out.

We had a variety of transportation modes: a bicycle, cars, pickups, SUVs, classic cars and a van.

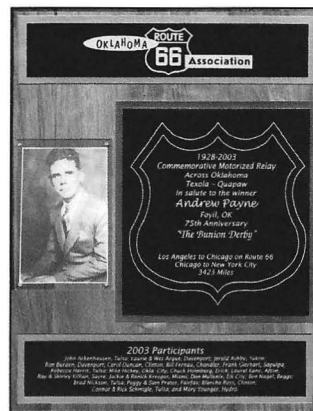
Everybody grooved to the beat of the road.

To all the folks who participated and all their friends, family members, and the Tulsa school children, thank you for making this event special.

Many thanks to all the businesses who agreed to



Bunion Derby participants used every imaginable sort of vehicle, from classic cars to modern SUVs to simpler forms of transportation — above, Chuck Holmberg, right, cruised from Erick to Sayre on his bicycle to hand off the plaque, pictured at right, which was donated to the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum.



be the relay exchange places.

At the Oklahoma-Kansas line, we posed for a group picture.

Renick and Jackie Kreeger treated relayers with cool refreshments at their Pizza Hut in Miami.

Laurel Kane showed off her restoration of the D-X station in Afton.

A relative of Andy Payne, the winner of the Bunion Derby, came to Bill Fernau's Phillips station to be a part of the plaque handoff at Chandler.

John Ackenhausen and Rebecca Harris had their picture taken by the Tribune at the Metro

Diner in Tulsa.

Mary Younger got to take a tour of Bridgeport before exchange time.

Rick Schmigle brought along his son Conner to be co-pilot, and they both had a blast.

Chuck Holmberg's daughter challenged him

to ride his bicycle from Erick to Delhi to Sayre, so he did.

Ben Nagel from Beggs and Rick Schmigle from Tulsa were the silver dollar draw prize winners.

The plaque has been donated in the Oklahoma Route 66 Association's name to the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum for display.

All relayers' names have been engraved on the bottom of the plaque in alphabetical order.

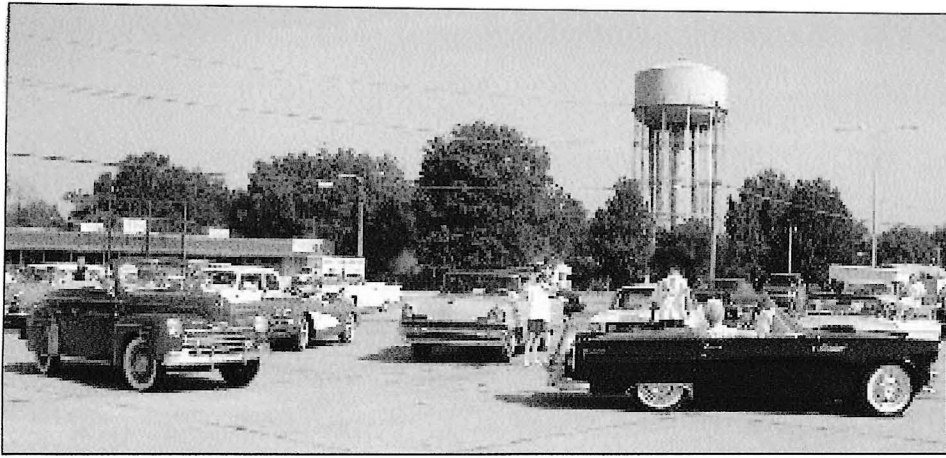
When I visited Mrs. Vivian Payne to show her our plaque and share with her what we did in remembrance of her husband, Andy, and the International Transcontinental Footrace of 1928, she was pleased.

"At the time," she said, "we didn't realize the importance of the race. Andy wanted to do it."

Andy Payne deserves an honored place in Oklahoma history and to be one of Oklahoma's favorite sons.

Truly Oklahoma is the soul of Route 66. Thanks again, Roadies.

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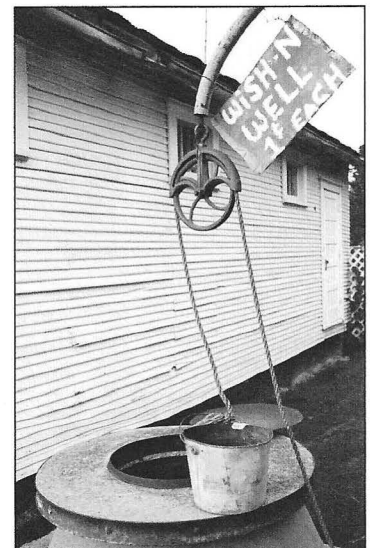
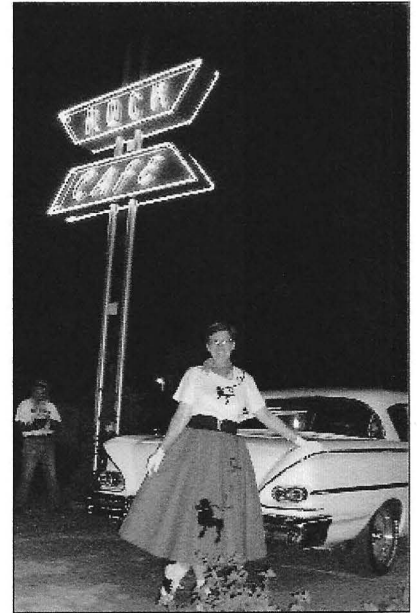
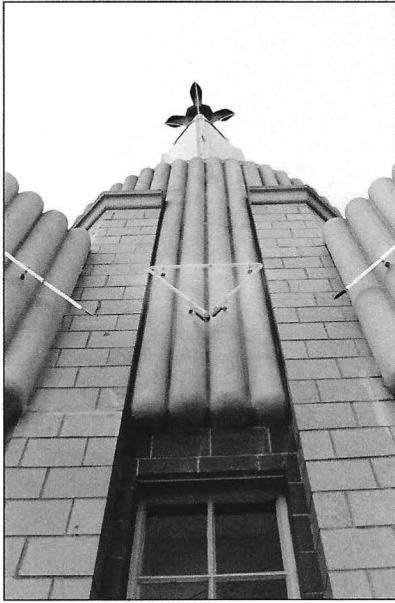


## 2003 Oklahoma Cruise a success

The pictures really tell the story of our 2003 cruise on Route 66 ... but for those of you who are keeping score, here are the stats:

- One hundred fourteen passport-bearing cruisers in 71 cars participated in the cruise.
- Fifty-six of the cars began in the east; 15 started in the west.
- Eighty-five percent of the cruisers were from Oklahoma; the rest came from California, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri and Texas.
- Signup fees brought in a total of \$2,015.
- Five new individual members and three new families joined the Association during the cruise — and six individuals and five families renewed their memberships.
- The silent auction brought in about \$700, 30 percent of which was donated to the Stroud Historical Society.
- The car show brought in about \$364.00; vendors added \$80.

If you attended the cruise, thanks for coming ... and if you missed it this time around, we hope you'll be able to join us next year!





# Hampton Caravan comes to Oklahoma

By Guy Randall

On Tuesday, May 27, the Route 66 Caravan left the panhandle of Texas and entered the great state of Oklahoma on Route 66.

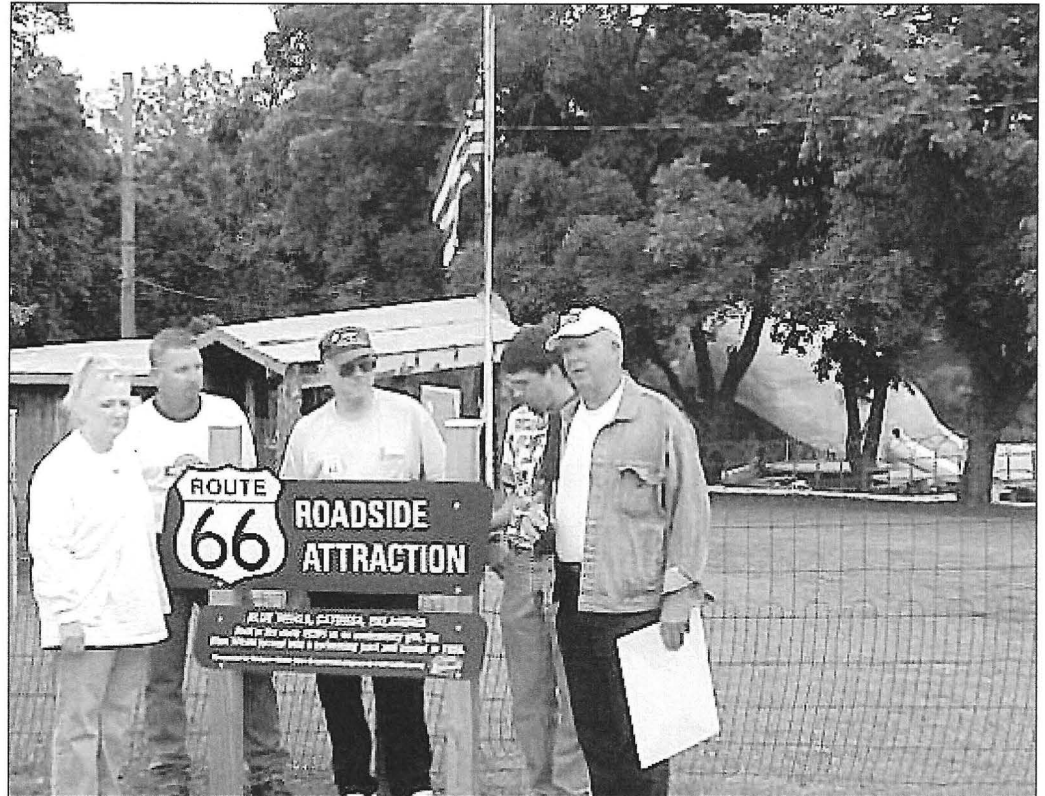
As part of Hampton Inn's Save-A-Landmark program, the core group of the Route 66 Caravan — Jim Conkle, Guy Randall, Kevin Hansen, Bill and Jaimie Hall and videographer Dennis Karlstad — came to recognize some of the wonderful Route 66 sites still left along the Mother Road in Oklahoma.

We were going to honor thirteen Route 66 sites with Roadside Attraction signs.

Unfortunately, that number is only a very small percentage of the worthy sites to be found in Oklahoma, but at least it was a start.

We felt any positive exposure for Route 66 would bring a greater awareness to the American public about the Mother Road and thus benefit the whole road and her roadside businesses — not just the ones getting recognized by the Route 66 Caravan.

Beginning on the western border of Oklahoma in Erick and working our way east on Route 66 to Miami, the Route 66 Caravan placed signs at the following businesses and historic



Photos by Guy Randall

Above: Rededication of the Roadside Attraction sign at the Blue Whale included, from left, DeeDee Belt, John Davis, Blaine Davis, Brad Nickson and Jim Conkle. Right: Unveiling the sign at Seaba Station were, from left, June Orr, Sonny and Sue Preston, Conkle, State Rep. Danny Morgan and State Sen. Harry Coates.



sites, providing a small cross-section of all Oklahoma has to offer to the intrepid Route 66 road wanderer:

• **Sand Hills Curiosity Shop, Erick:** Formerly the City Meat Market, this is known as the oldest brick building in

Erick. It is now the home of Harley and Annabelle Russell, "The Mediocre Music Makers."

• **National Route 66 Museum, Elk City:** Established in 1998, the National Route 66 and Old Town Museum Complex preserves the history of Route 66 in

Western Oklahoma.

• **Oklahoma Route 66 Museum, Clinton:** The Oklahoma Route 66 Museum opened in 1995 offering visitors a look at the epic history of the Mother Road.

This museum has great exhibits that illustrate

See *Caravan*, page 9

Continued from page 8

the many time periods of the Mother Road. It is like a time line of American history and well worth the visit.

• **Ann's Chicken Fry House, Oklahoma City:** Built in 1948 as a gas station, this site was converted into a restaurant in 1966 and became Ann's Chicken Fry House in 1971. It is famous for its chicken-fried steak.

• **Round Barn, Arcadia:** Built in April 1898 by William Odor on his farm. Restored in 1992 by Luke Robinson, community workers and local businesses.

• **Seaba Station, Warwick:** Built in 1924 as a filling station and garage, which continually operated until 1996. In 1996, restoration began, and the antique shop opened in 2000.

• **1930s Phillips 66 Filling Station, Chandler:** The Chandler Phillips 66 Station is typical of the type "B" cottage style built by Phillips Petroleum 1927 through 1938. It is being restored by owner Bill Fernau.

• **The Rock Cafe, Stroud:** Built in 1939 with rock unearthed during the paving of Route 66, the Rock Cafe is on the National Register of Historic Places.

• **11th Street Bridge, Tulsa:** The 11th Street Arkansas River Bridge was completed in 1916.



Photo by Brad Nickson

Michael Wallis addressed the crowd at the unveiling of the 11th Street Bridge marker.

## Preserving Tulsa's 11th Street Bridge

By Marian Clark

When the Hampton tour put a Route 66 Historic Site Marker on Tulsa's 11th Street Route 66 Bridge in June, the ceremony focused awareness on a city treasure that has been often ignored by historians and Route 66 enthusiasts.

Now is the time for

our association to focus on preserving a site worthy of all our efforts. The abandoned bridge stands between two more recent arteries, Southwest Boulevard and I-244. A view looking east from the bridge encompasses the spectacular skyline of metropolitan Tulsa. At the east end, near the new Hampton Sign, the

bridge abuts River Trails, a city asset that attracts thousands of hikers and bikers each year.

Tulsan Cyrus Avery was certainly proud of the 1916 structure. Although not officially documented, Avery promoted the fact that a bridge which was

See **Bridge**, page 10

It carried oil entrepreneurs and Route 66 traffic until Business 66 was eliminated in 1973. (See sidebar above.)

• **The Blue Whale, Catoosa:** Built in the early 1970s as an anniversary gift, the Blue Whale turned into a swimming park and closed in 1988.

• **Mojo's Famous**

**BBQ, Catoosa:** Original location of the Catoosa D-X filling station, Mojo's Famous BBQ opened in 1997.

• **Eagle (D-X) Service Station, Afton:** Opened in the 1930s, the Eagle Service Station served Route 66 travelers for nearly 60 years. Laurel and David Kane now own the station, which serves

as a visitors' center.

• **Coleman Theater, Miami:** Built by George L. Coleman, Sr. in 1929 at a cost of \$600,000. The theater is home to "The Mighty Wurlitzer," the original pipe organ.

For a day-by-day account of the Route 66 Caravan, please visit: <http://www.cart66pf.org/66caravan>.

## Mailbag: Letters from the road

### To: Oklahoma Route 66 Association

Just returned from a 66 trip in your state and thought I would send a short note on our trip.

It was a fun time.

Six of us from St. Louis/Missouri 66 Association enjoyed the shops, restaurants, cars

and most of all, the friendly people.

We did not have time to do everything, but we enjoyed four good days of touring and will spread the word about Oklahoma to others.

Sincerely,  
Bill Albertin

## Bridge • Preservation funds needed

*Continued from page 9*

already in place would provide the most economical route over the Arkansas River, thus saving taxpayers the expense of a new structure. Tulsa's 11th Street Bridge carried Route 66 through the heart of Tulsa from 1926 until 1973. In 1959, Skelly Bypass, I-44, became Route 66 in Tulsa. The 11th Street corridor through the city became Business 66. In 1973, the Business 66 designation was eliminated.

The bridge was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996.

Since the International

Route 66 Festival will be concentrated in downtown Tulsa in June of 2004, it seems appropriate that we launch a campaign even before that time to begin funding preservation. City officials tell us the decking as it stands today is unsafe for pedestrian use. They say a hands-on preservation effort by volunteers is preliminary.

So fundraising seems our best direction. If you know about possible endowment or grant money or have any other suggestions or ideas, get in touch with our state officers, and let's make the 11th Street Bridge a new destination for 66 travelers to see!

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## Hall of Fame induction slated for September

By Laurel Kane

Be sure to save Saturday, Sept. 13, for a trip to Clinton to attend the Oklahoma Route 66 Association's Hall of Fame Award Ceremony, to be held at the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum there.

The ceremony itself will begin at 2 p.m., but families might wish to plan an entire weekend in Clinton, since the award ceremony this year will be part of the Clinton centennial celebration, a weekend-long gala that will include a parade, pancake breakfast, trade show and fun for the whole family.

Route 66ers might be particularly interested in a display focusing on Clinton Route 66 businesses, both past and present, including pho-

tos and memorabilia.

The Hall of Fame awards are bestowed every two years.

One award recognizes a deceased individual who has made an important contribution to the Mother Road.

The other is awarded to a living person who continues to promote and preserve Oklahoma's Route 66 heritage.

This year, Michael Wallis will be present to speak, and refreshments will be served at the conclusion of the ceremony.

More details will follow in a mailing which will go out closer to the event itself.

Meanwhile, if you have any questions or wish to help with the event, please call Carol Duncan at (580) 323-

## Got news for On the Road...?

Send all articles, letters, questions,  
comments, ideas and information to:

Emily Priddy  
106 N. 30th St.  
Belleville, IL 62226

[sundayjohn66@aol.com](mailto:sundayjohn66@aol.com)



# Buffalo return to the ranch in Afton

By Laurel Kane

A herd of twenty-two bison arrived at Buffalo Ranch in Afton, OK, on July 26th, a gift of the local Shawnee Tribe.

Members of the Shawnee Tribe will care for the bison as they graze on land once inhabited by another buffalo herd, back when the former Buffalo Ranch trading post existed in the same location for 50 years.

Although the old buildings are gone and a newer, more modern convenience mart, gas station and café have risen in their place, the new owner, Lawrence Schumacher, has pledged to bring back as much of the old "tourist mecca" heritage as possible.

The introduction of the buffalo and displays of old Buffalo Ranch memorabilia are his first steps in that direction.



Photo by Laurel Kane

The first buffalo off the truck got used to his new home.

## Museum adds restored Valentine Diner to exhibits

The Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton recently added a Valentine Diner as one of its exhibits. The Friends of the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum, Inc. in Clinton bought the diner to renovate and display at the museum.

The Valentine Manufacturing Company in Wichita, Kansas, built Valentine Diners between 1938 and 1972. They were the only significant diner manufacturers outside the northeastern United States.

The Valentine Diner was a small, boxy diner that could be bought for \$5,000 with monthly installment payments of \$40.00.

The company produced the vast majority of the factory-built diners west of the Mississippi River. The diners consisted of



Photo by Kathy Anderson

The Valentine Diner is on display outside the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton.

five to 10 stools located around an L-shaped counter. There were no tables, and most of the time, it was "standing room only."

The diner was opened for business in 1956 in Shamrock, Texas, by M.L. and Alta Porter and was known as the Porter House Café.

The diner was located behind a house where the owners had moved it after

closing it in 1964. Although it was in bad condition after sitting out in the weather for so many years, it contained all the fixtures from its years of service, including stools and counter, the grill, vent and sink, refrigerator, ice cream machine, malt machine and soft drinks dispenser.

On February 16, 2002, the diner was moved to Butler to be refurbished

by museum volunteers Leonard Findley and Virgil Smith.

All the items inside were removed and cleaned so they could all be reinstalled when the new floor, roof, wallpapering, painting, and tiling were completed.

The diner was moved back to Clinton in March, 2003, for permanent display at the Route 66 Museum.

The museum's summer hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mon.-Sat. and 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays.

Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2.50 for seniors and groups of 10 or more and \$1 for students 6-18. Children under 6 are free.

For more information, call Pat Smith at (580) 323-7866 or e-mail the museum at [rt66mus@ok-history.mus.ok.us](mailto:rt66mus@ok-history.mus.ok.us).

# Oklahoma goes to Tucumcari

By Ron McCoy

The Route 66 Magazine's second annual Roadie Gathering, held in conjunction with Tucumcari's Third Annual Route 66 Festival, was held July 11-13. Estimates place attendance at 5,000 for the Gathering weekend and events. Several Oklahoma Route 66 Association members were in attendance and experienced this celebration of The Mother Road.

The first of the activities began Thursday night at the Trails West Lounge on Tucumcari Boulevard. In what has become an annual event, cowboys rode their horses through the lounge, picked up a beer from the bar, circled the



Laurel Kane handed out trip guides and Tulsa postcards during the festival in Tucumcari.

pool table and exited. The only reported problem was one cowboy's black eye from his encounter with a ceiling fan.

Student players from Northern Arizona University (which sits alongside Route 66 in Flagstaff) presented

Route 66: A Celebration of America's Main Street on Friday night. This musical revue, telling the Route 66 story onstage, featured a cast of seven with a five-piece band. It was written and directed by Mac Groves, a theatre professor at NAU. "Producing

new work is risky, especially when you're dependent upon box office revenues just to survive," Groves said in an article in the Winter 2002/2003 issue of Route 66 Magazine. "As importantly, we got to reaffirm to our students the artistic and emotional power that good drama can possess—good drama is always human drama. Route 66, despite the history, the facts and figures, is a very human drama."

The Saturday morning parade down Tucumcari Boulevard featured horses, floats and, echoing the nation's fascination with the vehicles that drove Route 66, numerous classic cars and hot

See Tucumcari, 14

## Festival • Volunteers needed to help with international event to be held in 2004

*Continued from page 1*

encourage those of you who haven't to do so as soon as possible. There are numerous areas in which you can assist. This is the largest Route 66 activity ever to come to Oklahoma, and we want to show our Route 66 pride, not just within the city of Tulsa, but statewide as well. The cities of Catoosa, Claremore, and Sapulpa have already enthusiastically agreed to partner

with us, and we anticipate that other towns will want to do the same.

Bus tours will run east and west from Tulsa, extending out-of-state visitors' exposure to Oklahoma's businesses and beauty from border to border.

Upwards of 40,000 attendees are expected, many of whom will represent a blossoming international interest in Route 66. Within the city itself, merchants will be sprucing up 11th St. and

Southwest Boulevard, the main roads that carried old Route 66 through the city. In conjunction with the festival, a major push is on to restore and reopen (to pedestrian traffic) the 11th St. Bridge, which carried early Route 66 travelers across the Arkansas River (see separate article, page 9).

Festival activities will include a street fair, a large classic car show, numerous entertainment venues, Route 66 exhibits and educational opportu-

nities, sightseeing tours, the Authors and Artists Expo, good food, lots of souvenirs to purchase, and of course the catalyst for the whole event, the John Steinbeck-Cyrus Avery Awards Banquet arranged by the National Historic Route 66 Federation.

To find out more about the event, and to sign up to volunteer, please visit our Web site at [www.tulsa66festival.com](http://www.tulsa66festival.com).

— Laurel Kane

# 66 could get \$15 million from program

By Brad Nickson

What would you think if you were told \$15 million was in the works to preserve, promote, and improve 1% of the Mother Road?

Well, consider yourself told.

That is what is being attempted in the Tulsa region and 24 miles (1932-1959 alignment) in Tulsa County. The older alignment is showing signs of renewed interest and will be included in the project as well.

On September 9th, the voters in Tulsa County will vote on a countywide one-cent tax increase (divided into four parts) covering four propositions designed to make the Tulsa region the most livable place in the United States by 2025.

Concerned citizens, organizations, city and county governments

came together to present their ideas on how to achieve this lofty goal.

Out of the several hundred ideas presented, only 32 projects made it to the September 9th ballot.

Projects cover improvements to city and county parks, pools, trails, new community centers, higher education needs (several institutions), economic development, infrastructure improvements (water, streets), tourism and Route 66.

Total cost for all these projects is a whopping \$885 million!

The Route 66 project is included with 21 other projects in "Proposition IV: Capital Improvements For Community Enrichment" at a cost of \$157.4 million.

A Route 66 consortium consisting of: The Route 66 Business League of Tulsa, the Southwest Tulsa Chamber, the Metro

Chamber, neighborhood associations, the Brady Village and Blue Dome property owners brought their individual Route 66 ideas together to form the \$15 million countywide project.

The consortium continues to work with the City of Tulsa and surrounding Route 66 cities, local historical societies and the Oklahoma Route 66 Association during this process. In a nod to Cyrus Avery, the father of Route 66, the consortium has begun calling Tulsa "The Home of Route 66."

How the money will be spent if voters approve the proposition:

- **\$6 million:** Streetscaping (lighting, sidewalks, landscaping)
- **\$5 million:** Rehabilitation of the 11th Street Bridge (maybe re-name it the Cyrus Avery Memorial Bridge?)

- **\$1.5 million:** Patterned Intersection Shields

- **\$1.5 million:** Signage (along the route and along major highways at appropriate exits)

- **\$650,000:** Administration & Marketing

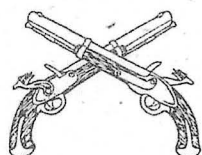
- **\$300,000:** Master Plan (up to \$100,000 has been donated as in-kind services)

According to figures from the project summary presented to the Vision2025 leadership, 200,000 visitors per year could visit Tulsa's stretch of Route 66 by 2008.

Average spending (by 2008) of those visitors could be as high as \$13.5 million per year.

The above figures are based on information obtained from the cities of Claremore and Clinton, OK, Springfield, IL, and Albuquerque, NM.

More information can be found on the Internet at [www.TulsaRegion.com](http://www.TulsaRegion.com).



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Oklahoma Route 66 Association  
P.O. Box 21382  
Oklahoma City, OK 73156

Individual: \$15; Family: \$25; Overseas: \$25;  
Business: \$35; Club: \$40; Benefactor: \$500+

### DID YOU KNOW?

Donations to the Oklahoma Route 66 Association make great gifts! Honor a road-loving friend with a donation today!



# Tucumcari • Oklahoma well-represented at Route 66 Roadie Gathering

Continued from page 12

roads.

Following the parade, activities centered on the Tucumcari Convention Center. Vendors offering everything from Route 66 souvenirs to hand-made crafts lined the air-conditioned arena. The Oklahoma Route 66 Association provided an information table and distributed Trip Guides. Outside food booths, with a decidedly western flair, served up items ranging from BBQ to roasted corn.

Greeting folks at a table just outside the arena doors were author Michael Wallis of Tulsa and actor Martin Milner. They patiently signed autographs and talked with the attendees.

The popular Route 66 Writers' Seminar was in the mix for Saturday morning activities. The



Kathy Anderson manned a booth at the festival.

panel included Neil Chandler, Jim Cobb, Rich Cunningham, Jim Etter, Shellee Graham (the 2002 Book of the Year Award winner), Johnnie Meier, Bob Moore, Scott Piotrowski, Jim Ross of Arcadia, Elizabeth Strickland-Smith and Delbert Trew.

Other daytime activities included: the Rotary Car Show 'n Shine, a demonstration of tum-

bling pigeons and the "Fire Hazard" thrill show.

Saturday night's sell-out Route 66 Magazine Awards Banquet began with a catered meal for 300 from Caprock Ranch.

After dinner, high bidders in the silent auction were announced, Martin Milner announced the winners of the door prizes, and various awards were presented.

The Book of the Year award went to Lisa Mahar (American Signs-Form and Meaning on Route 66), and the Preservation Project of the Year Award went to Johnnie Meier, President of the New Mexico Route 66 Association.

Both of these awards are selected by the readers of Route 66 Magazine.

Later, Meier presented the New Mexico Route 66 Association's Heritage Award to Route 66 Magazine.

After the awards, Wallis took the podium with a very moving and thought-provoking speech which touched on the effects of his recent life-threatening motorcycle accident and gave a heads-up to roadies about the unfortunate consequences of practicing racial and ethnic prejudice along the road.

## Newsletter advertising rates, per issue:

### Members:

Business card	\$7.50
1/4 page	\$15
1/2 page	\$20
Full page	\$30

### Non-members:

Business card	\$15
1/4 page	\$30
1/2 page	\$40
Full page	\$60

Business members get one free business card ad upon joining, space permitting, so if you are a business member and have not yet submitted a card, please be sure to send us one!

Ad space varies from issue to issue.

## Volunteers needed

**Help Wanted:** Treasurer for the Oklahoma Route 66 Association. Any member living in Oklahoma who is interested in this volunteer position should contact Rick Schmigle, evenings, at (918) 492-2822. Whoever holds this position must understand bookkeeping and be able to work closely with the president, executive director, our auditor and the Oklahoma Lakes and Countries Association.

**Help Wanted:** Our Association is interested in developing a line of merchandise for sale at the upcoming 2004 Tulsa Festival. Anyone interested in being a part of a committee to create and investigate pricing and manufacturing, as well as look into the possibility of merchandising on the Web, should contact Rick Schmigle, evenings, at (918)492-2822.

# OKLAHOMA ROUTE 66 ASSOCIATION BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Please patronize our business members. When you do, let them know that you are also a member of the Association.

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Miami, OK 74354  
(918) 542-1631

**Pizza Hut Express & Pizza Hut of Miami**  
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Miami, OK 74354  
(918) 540-2471  
(918) 542-8474

**Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
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(918) 542-4481

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(918) 256-2218

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(918) 256-5415

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Chelsea, OK 74016  
(918) 789-5212

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Foyil, OK 74031  
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Claremore, OK 74017  
(918) 343-3297

J.M. Davis Gun Museum  
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Claremore, OK 74017  
(918) 343-2868

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Claremore, OK 74017  
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Davenport, OK 74026  
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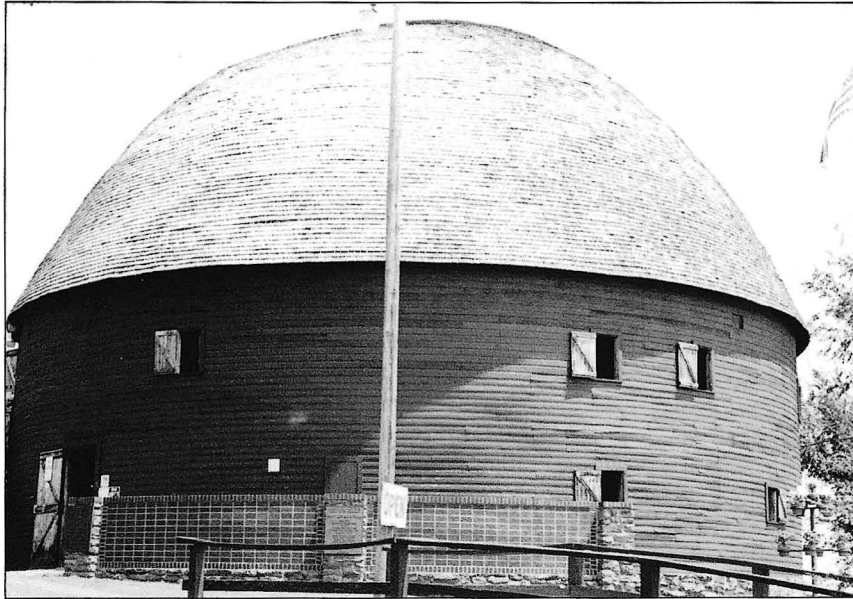
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