

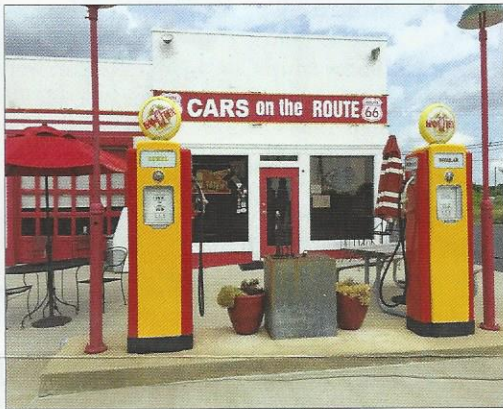
Jack Treadwell Concludes 'Route 66' Tour Narrative

By Jack Treadwell, Chesapeake Region Treasurer

The signs for businesses along Route 66 are a fascinating part of traveling the road. Near the beginning of the trip, I stood between the legs of a giant figure holding an equally large hot dog (see photo). This sign advertises a lunch counter and hot dog stand. The statue started life holding a muffler, but the auto store closed and the figure was sold to the restaurateur, who adapted it to his own purpose. There are many other signs like this along the way: giant figures adorning curio shops (affectionately known as 'trading posts'), a giant jackrabbit, giant ketchup bottle, soda bottle, etc. There are sometimes juxtapositions of signs that make you laugh, a giant bowling pin next to the sign for an adult bookstore! Just off

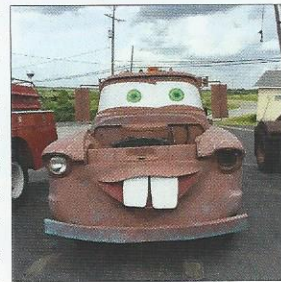


of Route 66 in Amarillo, Texas, in a small strip mall, are two adjacent Businesses. One is the Catholic Superstore; religious articles, books, etc. Next door is the *INFERNO FITNESS CENTER!*



Route 66 covers about 2,500 miles and runs through eight states. The shortest distance of the road in any of these states is 13 miles in Kansas, which contained one of my favorite attractions, a restored KAN-O-TEX gas station

with a number of old vehicles, including a life-sized 'TOWMATER' tow-truck from the 2006 Disney animated movie 'CARS'. If there is a 'must see' anywhere on Route 66, it's the 'Cadillac Ranch' outside of Amarillo, Texas. The tradition at this attraction is that you can spray paint on the cars. As we walked the 1/8 mile from the roadside to the cars, it was apparent that we were downwind of about 60 people spray painting the autos, and the residual fumes were blowing directly past us as we were approaching. Talk about an attraction that takes your breath away! A lesser



known but equally as interesting attraction is the 'VW Slug Bug Ranch' in Conway, Texas. My Buddy Frank and I had the place all to ourselves! (see photos of both attractions)

One of the modern businesses we visited along the way was Fast Lane



Classic Cars, Inc. Located in the St. Louis suburbs, they have three sizable buildings filled with muscle, classic and exotic cars for sale, as well as a large service and repair facility. It's definitely worth a visit if you're in St. Louis.

After visiting Winslow, Arizona and 'standing on the corner', we end-

ed our Route 66 tour in Flagstaff, Arizona, then turned north and headed toward Salt Lake City. The mountainous terrain of southern Utah is some of the most beautiful that the American West has to offer. We were on the road for fifteen days and drove about 3,700 miles! Quite a trip, of which I'm very happy I did!

A note about driving Route 66: large portions of original Route 66 are either in very poor condition, or are sitting underneath the current Interstate 40, or chopped up into small sections that are blocked off

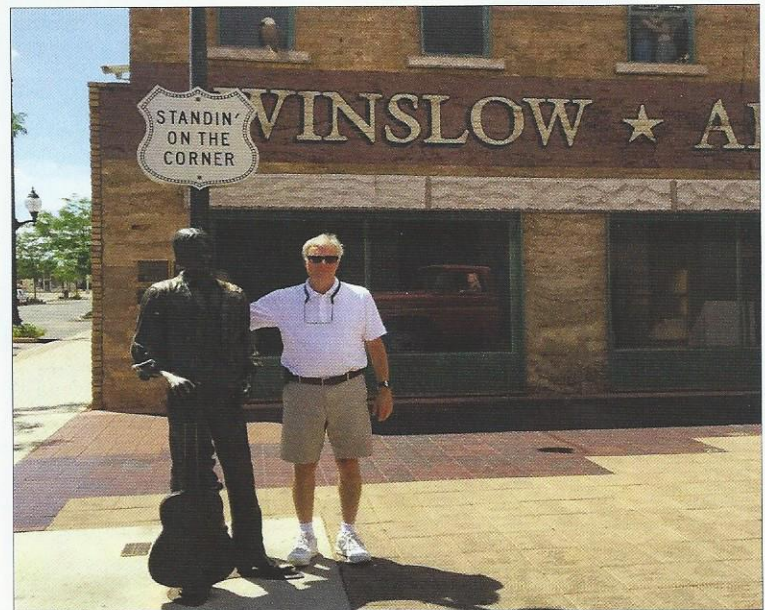


or simply come to dead ends. Our practice was to mostly use the interstate in between towns, and hop onto 66 just before each town we wished to visit. There are a few stretches of the old Route 66 which are fairly lengthy and in good condition. I traveled these

stretches to immerse myself in the atmosphere of the '30s, '40s and '50s, when Route 66 was the artery that carried most of the traffic westward. There were thousands of motels, gas stations, diners, and roadside tourist traps, all catering to the vagabonds that used the highway for adventure, to escape the dust bowl, or to seek a new life in a new and strange location. It was a simple matter for me to imagine being in those times and traveling the 'Old Road.' I know it sounds overly romanticized, but hey, that's what old car guys like to do!

P.S. Many of the attractions mentioned here either have their own website, or there is reference information online which is interesting and rewarding. One book which I particularly recommend is 'Route 66, The Mother Road', by Michael Wallis, in paperback, St. Martin's Press, ISBN0-312-08285-1.

In the words of the ESSO Tiger, *HAPPY MOTORING!*



Frank O'Donnell, 'stands on the corner' in Winslow, AZ next to the statue of the late Glenn Frey of 'The Eagles' rock band. The statue immortalizes the line 'standin' on the corner in Winslow, Arizona' from the Eagles mega hit, 'Take it easy', co-written by Glenn Frey and Jackson Brown.-- Jack Treadwell photos