

# Route 66 Arizona

A Quarterly Newsletter Centered on Arizona's Historic Route 66

OCTOBER 2020



## WELCOME



Check out the wild burros in Oatman, AZ

Greetings to all lovers of the open road! Welcome to the newsletter of the Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona. I'm Roger Naylor, Arizona author and travel writer, and it's my privilege to pen these quarterly newsletters that we hope will inform and entertain.

First order of business is a heartfelt happy birthday wish to our very own Mother Road, soon to turn 94 years young. US 66 was established November 11, 1926. It stretched for more than 2,400 miles from Chicago to Los Angeles, crossing Northern Arizona, and changed forever how Americans traveled. Route 66 would go on to be immortalized in novel, movie, television, and song—a pop culture legend that symbolized freedom and a spirit of adventure. The old

highway connected us as a nation and became known as the “Main Street of America.”

Sadly, with the rise of the interstate system, the road became a relic. US 66 was decommissioned in 1985, with Williams, Arizona, being the very last town bypassed. America no longer had a Main Street. But you can't suppress a spirit of adventure. Just ask the folks in Arizona.

The old highway is back, now known as Historic Route 66, and is more beloved than ever. And Seligman's own Angel Delgadillo, aided by like-minded family and friends, spearheaded the preservation movement. The group he organized became the Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona. Today, the Mother Road still offers the sweet taste of freedom. A Route 66 road trip is a chance to rediscover a bygone era when life was less complicated, less stressful, and full of flavor. Put your wheels on that sliver of pavement and aim for the horizon sometime soon. It's a journey you'll never forget.

Here are just a few items of interest for all Arizona and Route 66 travelers.

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## ACCLAIMED CHEF RETIRES FROM TURQUOISE ROOM

Award-winning Chef John Sharpe, owner of the Turquoise Room in Winslow's La Posada Hotel, retired on September 30, and will be missed by one and all. The good news is that Allan Affeldt, owner of La Posada has taken over the Turquoise Room, and all of John's well-trained and enthusiastic staff stayed on. The name, décor and menu will remain unchanged.

One of the finest restaurants in the state, the Turquoise Room specializes in Southwestern cuisine using fresh and locally sourced ingredients. But it is also a celebration of cultures. John bought paper-thin traditional piki cornbread from Hopi women, tepary beans, cholla buds, and prickly pear syrup harvested by the Tohono O'odham people. He almost single-handedly brought the traditional Navajo-Churro sheep back from the brink of extinction by providing farmers with a consistent outlet. Yet it's not just that he was a chef with a conscience, his talent was immense and well recognized. Twice, John was a James Beard award nominee for Best Chef: Southwest. We send our very best wishes to John and his wife Patricia in their retirement. And we couldn't be happier that his legacy will continue. Do yourself a favor and dine soon at the Turquoise Room in La Posada, where every meal is a memory.

[www.theturquoiseroom.net](http://www.theturquoiseroom.net) [www.laposada.org](http://www.laposada.org)



*Chef John Sharpe*

## FUN RUN REVS UP AGAIN



Make your plans early for the most eye-catching, nostalgia-filled event on the Mother Road! Since Fun Run was canceled in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, a lot of pent-up excitement has been building for the next one. The rolling party of more than 800 classic cars, hot rods, street rods, jalopies, pickups, motorcycles, and anyone else who wants to ride along takes place from April 30 through May 2, 2021. The colorful caravan pulls out of Seligman and travels the longest intact stretch of Route 66, with festivities at every stop. All are welcome to ride along but for those that want to register for the car show, you can do so on the Association website. It's only \$55. Remember, this is a fundraising event with the proceeds going back into the Route 66 community. Sign up today. You'll never have more fun spending \$55 than on Fun Run!

<https://www.historic66az.com/33-fun-run.html>



*Street scene from 2019 Fun Run*

## **GALAXY DINER REOPENS**

We're always a sucker for a good comeback. And why not? The rebirth of the entire Mother Road began with the work of a few individuals, those folks who stepped up to save a piece of our heritage. They formed the Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona, and provided a blueprint for all the other states to follow. That passion to preserve and not destroy has led to so many properties being brought back from the dead all across Arizona. One of the latest success stories is the popular Galaxy Diner in Flagstaff.

This colorful joint, wreathed in neon and serving classic diner fare, suddenly closed its doors in November 2019. It was a sad day for locals and travelers alike since the Galaxy served as a retro community center featuring car shows and swing dancing weekly, as well as good food. But Will Pillen, a former manager purchased the eatery, spiffed it up, made some long needed repairs, and threw open the doors in September. Loyal customers quickly found their way back to this favorite haunt. Of course, these are hard times for so many businesses, so show your appreciation for Will's efforts and stop by for a meal sometime soon. Call 928-774-2466 for more information.



*Interior seating at Galaxy Diner, Flagstaff, AZ*

## WALK THIS TALK AUDIO TOUR

While you're in Flagstaff enjoying the tasty food and ambiance at Galaxy Diner, don't forget your walking shoes. Take a stroll along a lost, almost forgotten segment of Route 66 that cuts through the heart of Flag's Southside Historic District. With your phone dialed into the audio tour, you'll hear tales of old motor courts, brothels, unsolved murders, lavish street art, and moon-bound astronauts. And it doesn't cost a nickel.

The self-guided tour begins near the north side entrance of the historic Flagstaff Visitor Center (1 East Route 66) and lasts about an hour as you walk just a few short blocks. Dial 928-218-2926 at the Walk this Talk sign, and don't be surprised when former Flagstaff resident Ted Danson comes on the line to welcome you to town. If you need ear buds or headphones for your phone, they can be purchased in the Visitor Center. <https://www.flagstaffarizona.org/blog/walk-this-talk/>



*Flagstaff Visitor Center*

## ANOTHER PIECE OF HISTORY SAVED

A big tip of the cap and honk of the horn goes out to a handful of "roadies" who stepped up to purchase and preserve the Painted Desert Trading Post. This stylish derelict has been in a state of slow-motion disintegration since it was abandoned 60 years ago. But as soon as the Painted Desert Trading Post went up for sale in 2018, a few dedicated preservationists sprang into action, forming the Route 66 Co-op, buying the property, and then starting the monumental task of saving it from total collapse. Perched on the windswept plains at the edge of Petrified Forest National Park, the old trading post is a cherished Route 66 landmark. This forlorn outpost is the kind of relic that Route 66 travelers dream about finding here in the wide-open spaces of Arizona.



*Historic Painted Desert Trading Post*

In the past two years the co-op members, aided by a platoon of volunteers, have stabilized the building. A new metal roof has been added. They replaced the foundation, shored up sagging walls, repaired the original stucco, and patched up the interior. Their most recent work session took place in mid-September. The results are nothing short of amazing. Painted Desert Trading Post is still a picturesque ruin but now it's prepared to face the Arizona elements head on, and will be around to help tell the story of the Mother Road for a long time to come. Learn more, volunteer some time, and even donate to the resurrection of Painted Desert Trading Post here: [www.pdtp66.org](http://www.pdtp66.org).



*Painted Desert Trading Post in the 1940s*



*Preservation efforts are underway at Painted Desert Trading Post*

## ADIOS FOR NOW

Well, that's it for now. Look for the next newsletter to arrive in your inbox in January. Yet there's no need to wait that long to discover more of the great stories happening on Route 66 in Arizona. Just hit the road and go see for yourself.

If you have items of interest you'd like to share in an upcoming newsletter, you can email them to me, Roger Naylor, at [RNaylorinaz@msn.com](mailto:RNaylorinaz@msn.com), or to Nikki Seegers, Director of Operations at Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona at [nikki@historic66az.com](mailto:nikki@historic66az.com). *Newsletter design and layout by Rodney Kindlund, Hackberry, AZ.*

Thanks for being part of the Route 66 family. Happy motoring!