

OUR 28<sup>TH</sup> YEAR



NATIONAL HISTORIC  
ROUTE 66 FEDERATION  
Volume 29 Number 3, Autumn, 2023



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Historic Route 66 Federation .



**Contents:**

Ad For Gallup.....3  
 Long Goodbye To The Soundtrack Of 66.....4  
 Sayre, Oklahoma Park.....12  
 The History Of The CB Radio.....15  
 Preservation & Restoration.....27

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**On the cover:**

Once a must-have, AM car radios are gradually disappearing.

As electric vehicles gradually replace gasoline-driven, automakers BMW, Volkswagen, Mazda and Tesla, are removing AM radios from their electric vehicles because electric engines can interfere with the sound of AM stations. And Ford, one of the nation's top-three auto sellers, is expected to take a bigger step, eliminating AM from all of its vehicles, electric and gas-operated.

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**DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

By David Knudson, Executive Director

Coincidentally, this turned out to be a radio issue. We have an article by Frank Gifford, "The Long Goodbye To The Soundtrack Of Route 66" and by Kip Wellborn, "The History Of The CB Radio."

Frank reminded me of my days listening to my favorite songs like "Sh Boom" and "Rock Around The Clock" on my car radio while I was in high school. Yes, I was lucky enough to have access to a car in high school.

On my maiden trip down Route 66, the car radio kept me awake for three days because my college buddy and I couldn't afford to stay in a motel. Just about all I could get was "hillbilly music" which I disliked and livestock price reports which I had no intention of buying a pig. The term "hillbilly music" has since changed to "Country and Western Music" which has gone mainstream.

I found Kip's CB article both interesting and entertaining. I learned a lot about CBs. I have never owned one but enjoyed watching the CB culture and the accompanying movies, "Smokey And The Bandit" and "Convoy".

Mark Potter points out a Route 66 roadside park in Oklahoma. I'm sure this park was a refreshing and relaxing stop for families on their long journey west whether that journey was for fun or survival.

Last comes my first article in a series. It covers nine properties that remain on the route for us to enjoy thanks to many peoples' staunch and dedicated work.

**This quarter's donations to the Federation**

Our heartfelt thank you to the following members who donated dollars to the Federation in the last quarter.

**\$20-\$49**

- Matthew Spalding
- Charles Levin
- Denise Hruska

**\$100-\$149**

- Karen Spalding



# The August Show: Transitions/Transformations at ART123 Gallery August 12 - September 2

Artwork in a range of media about transitions and transformations of the life, environmental, historic, personal, spiritual, elemental and colorful varieties.



## FEATURING:

Show Opening:  
Saturday, August 12  
from 7 - 9 pm

Artist Talk:  
Tuesday, August 22  
at 6 pm

Skylar Blackbull  
Jerry Brown  
MB  
Alizay Chavez  
Geddy Epaloose  
Lakin Epalosose  
Kim Esparza  
Jay John  
Alex Montjoy

Kyle Nash  
Virginia Primozić  
Be Sargent  
Valencia Smith-Chapito  
Andrea Sparks  
Cherille Williams  
Scott Williams  
Syren Wind  
Gooch Yadi

ART123 Gallery  
Hours:  
Tuesday - Friday  
2 - 6 pm  
Saturday  
12 - 6 pm





## A LONG GOODBYE TO THE SOUNDTRACK OF ROUTE 66.

By Frank Gifford of [www.rt66pix.com](http://www.rt66pix.com)

He seemed to live in our dashboard, a presence riding with us for hundreds of miles along the Mother Road. He always sounded upbeat, knew the time and weather forecast...and played our favorite songs. When he talked too much (or played too many commercials) we pushed a button and he went away. No drama, no apologies, no long goodbyes. He was the man on the AM radio, and in 2023 he hangs around waiting for retirement. Year by year, as listening choices expanded, he gradually disappeared from our lives and our rides. But what a life and what a ride it was. Start to finish, it lasted more than a century.

Now's a perfectly good time to get nostalgic about AM radio, before it disappears like the once-great Packard automobile – not in a glorious flash, but in a gurgling flush. AM is being targeted by automotive bean-counters who cut quality and add profit. It's shaping up to be a

pitiful ending for a technology that contributed so much to our lives and our enjoyment of the Mother Road.

**FORD MUSTANG... America's most exciting car**

	MSRP, SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
<input type="checkbox"/> MUSTANG HARDTOP	\$ 2372.00
<input type="checkbox"/> WIMBLEDON WHITE	105.63
<input type="checkbox"/> BASE 289 V8 ENGINE	52.85
<input type="checkbox"/> 289 4V V8 ENGINE	165.03
<input type="checkbox"/> GT EQUIPMENT GROUP	185.39
<input type="checkbox"/> CRUISE O MATIC TRANSMISSION	107.08
<input type="checkbox"/> INTERIOR DECOR GROUP	84.47
<input type="checkbox"/> POWER STEERING	35.83
<input type="checkbox"/> VISIBILITY GROUP	277.20
<input type="checkbox"/> FORDAIR CONDITIONER	31.52
<input type="checkbox"/> CONSOLE W/ AIR COND	30.25
<input type="checkbox"/> TINTED CLASS W/BANDED WINDSHIELD	69.30
<input type="checkbox"/> RALLY-PAC CLOCK/TACH	57.51
<input type="checkbox"/> RADIO AM	74.19
<input type="checkbox"/> VINYL ROOF	119.71
<input type="checkbox"/> WHEELS - STYLED STEEL 14	33.31
<input type="checkbox"/> 695X14 MSW TIRES	
WHEN APPLICABLE PRICES INCLUDE 7%FET	
<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION CHARGES	76.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 3801.27</b>

**AND JUST LOOK AT THIS LOW PRICE!**

Never before has a new car captured the imagination of the public so completely. With its smart European look, and its exciting sports-car flair, the Mustang is a very personal car, yet as practical as a family car must be. Look at all you get for your money.

Every Mustang has as standard equipment: bucket seats • 3-speed floor shift transmission • 200 CID 6-cylinder engine • padded instrument panel • color-keyed wall-to-wall carpeting • heavy vinyl upholstery • 1500lb steering wheel • full wheel covers • cigarette lighter • heater • padded front arm rests • seat belts\* • center fill fueling • chrome metal windshield reveal moldings • bright metal rear window reveal moldings • end-of-moldings hardtop and 2 • 21 • counter-balanced hood and trunk lid • door-operated courtesy lights • illuminated glove box • single-piece electric windshield wipers • bumper guards.

\*May be ordered without driver or seat belts.

You may pick from Hardtop, Convertible or racy new 2 • 2. The 2 • 2 Fastback has functional fresh air louvers, and with its rear seat folded down, you can carry anything from this to a surfboard.

For remarkably little extra cost you can choose from a lavish list of options that lets you customize your Mustang for exceptional luxury, fiery road performance or anything in between.

**SUGGESTION:** While you're here... test-drive the versatile Mustang.

SHIP TO (if other than above)

DEALERSHIP ONLY

PRODUCTS OF FORD MOTOR COMPANY

THIS LABEL IS AFFIXED PURSUANT TO FEDERAL AUTOMOBILE INFORMATION DISCLOSURE ACT. MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE INCLUDES EQUIPMENT AND FEDERAL, STATE TAX AND REGISTERED DEALER PREP. EXcludes any destination charge, handling, license and title fees, state and local taxes, and dealer installed options and accessories not included.



The Good Life once included a sharp new car with a push-button AM radio. Around 1965 it was a popular \$57 option on the Mustang, adding 2.5% to the base price. All the sound came from a single speaker above the dashboard. The Mustang wouldn't have an optional factory AM-FM radio until later – soft tranquilizing FM music of the 60s could put drivers to sleep.

That original Mustang is halfway back in time to the first Model-T produced in 1908. The world has been rearranged since pony cars, and electric vehicles from US-based market leader Tesla and half-a-dozen foreign manufacturers omit AM because electric motors cause interference.

Earlier this year, Ford tried to do away with the AM band in electric and gasoline-powered passenger vehicles beginning with 2024 models. But it caved under pressure from Congress, and perhaps blowback from potential buyers. Apparently Ford figured most customers never listen to AM and wouldn't care. Sadly, that's exactly what the evidence shows.

Oklahoma City's KOMA made it out to California.

We had the best and simplest technology back then too: a made-in-America radio installed in the dashboard. Interference had been a problem in experimental car radios back in the 1920s. But there was a compelling economic reason to solve it with proper shielding, and so it got done.

AM-only radios of mid-century also had the perfect solution if things got too noisy: Turn the left knob until it clicked to "off."

**In a sense, AM radio has already been removed from our cars.**

Stations we spent long road hours with, especially at night, no longer exist as they were. Some don't exist at all.

Since that first Mustang, hood ornaments, side-vent windows, lighters and ashtrays have disappeared from our vehicles. And AM radio's market share has cratered, from virtually 100% to 15%.

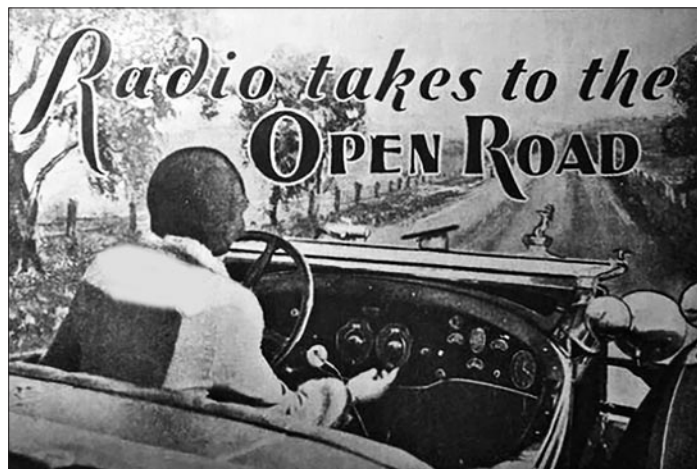
The AM band (550-1500 near the start)



*This deluxe AM radio in a late 1950s Lincoln had "signal-seeking" in both town and country environments.*

**AM stations have always had one powerful advantage.**

Their muffled signal really travels, potentially hundreds of miles during the day, and thousands of miles at night. We learned this years ago as young adults, perhaps on Route 66. Chicago stations like WLS boomed into Oklahoma and beyond after dark. And



*Ad in a 1930 issue of Radio News Magazine depicts an unpaved road similar to Route 66 at the time.*

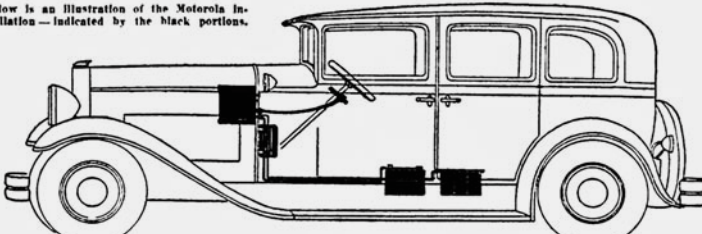
once was high-tech, along with paving and sliced bread. Radio broadcasting began around 1920, Route 66 was "invented" in 1926, commercial bread slicers in 1928, and the practical car radio in 1930.

AM radio was the first technology to instantly span vast distances and reach a mass audience. It's hard now to realize how



revolutionary that was. Newspapers had to set type, print and distribute copies – to be read by one person at a time. But now millions tuned-in to radio and got the latest news, sometimes from the scene, and frequently within minutes.

**The New 1932 Improved-**  
**MOTOROLA**  
AUTO RADIO  
The pleasing tone and ease of operation of Motorola in your car will give you motoring pleasures you have never before enjoyed.  
**IS HERE!**  
Below is an illustration of the Motorola installation – indicated by the black portions.



**EASY TO INSTALL**  
on Any Car

**RIGHT AT YOUR FINGER TIPS**

**Does Not Mar Your Car!**  
Can Be Removed Easily

*Motorola developed the first practical car radio in the early 1930s. Within a decade, a factory-installed AM radio became a popular option.*

**AM radio was part of most any Route 66 trip during the Golden Age of network radio, roughly 1930-50.**

Widely-enjoyed variety, comedy, drama and musical shows unified the nation during hard times. (FM and TV were largely experimental.)

AM brought us just about everything back then and for many decades beyond: FDR's Fireside Chats, Pearl Harbor, Elvis, Johnny Cash, Frank Sinatra, the Supremes, Vietnam, traffic snarls, tornado warnings, and DJs with names like Wolfman Jack.

News of Pearl Harbor arrived over AM radio, as it was happening, while many Americans were in their cars. The Japanese raid on our naval base near Honolulu came on Sunday December 7, 1941 during the morning in both Hawaii and California. Japan declared war that afternoon. It made the papers (depending on your location) hours later that afternoon...or the following day.

**Throughout World War II, radio led and newspapers followed.**

Since listeners had already heard the latest, papers were increasingly forced to provide background and supplemental material like maps. And at the very end in 1945, radio had the V-J (Victory over Japan) story exclusively for hours.

Factory-installed radios had become a popular option in new cars by then, so eventually many used cars had them. At least one station came in during the day everywhere on Route 66, although gasoline and tire rationing prevented pleasure travel through 1945.

At night, big stations boomed in. You could choose from network offerings, country acts out of Nashville or, beginning in the 1950s when travel exploded, the dynamic new music coming from studios in Memphis or Detroit.

Most of those sounds were on little records with big holes, developed by RCA in 1949. They played at a unique speed of 45 rpm, which RCA conveniently offered on new record-players. There was one song to a side – perfect for radio stations – and 45s became the music industry standard. Record a hit song and you'd please both stations and buyers, since those "singles" were relatively cheap.



*An RCA control board and Ampex tape recorder in the control room of the Sun Records Studios in Memphis. The equally-basic studio is visible through the glass. The secret was top-quality microphones...and talent like Elvis.*



Sun Records founder Sam Phillips was a radio engineer, and he purchased typical station equipment for his 1952 Memphis studio. His control room was Model-T simple, just enough to adjust microphone levels for the perfect mix, and capture it on tape. All the magic happened on the other side of the double-glass, where Elvis, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Roy Orbison launched their careers.

**Motown, established in 1959, was much more sophisticated and used a full bag of tricks.**

It turned the limitations of AM radio to its advantage through clever orchestration and mixing, doubling sounds, and propelling it all with drums. Part of its signature sound came from an attic speaker above the studio in an old Detroit house. A microphone at the attic's other end was wired into the control board, and the auditorium effect was blended in.

While Sun launched some incredible careers, Motown was a recording factory cranking out #1 AM radio hits – 110 over a decade – as its Black artists crashed through to success, helping demolish racial barriers maintained by older generations.

Both Sun and Motown were AM-oriented. Their singles, played over low-fidelity AM radio, sold high-fidelity albums, and (from 1958) stereo albums. Low and high coexisted nicely for Elvis and the Motown acts, plus artists recording elsewhere, from Frank Sinatra to the Beatles.



*On the East side of Tulsa, Route 66 (11th Street) still goes by the three towers that used to be KVOO-1170 "The Voice Of Oklahoma" where the late Paul Harvey got his start. (The station is now sports-talk.)*

Perhaps you left Chicago for Los Angeles sometime in mid-century, driving Route 66 only in daylight. Big cities had plenty of stations, and even remote stretches had something to listen to. Most stations had a network or teletype service for news. All added value through music, weather reports, and commercials for a Route 66 cafe with fresh strawberry pie.

Several Chicago stations reached St. Louis. A couple of St. Louis stations made it to near Springfield MO. One Springfield station reached Tulsa.



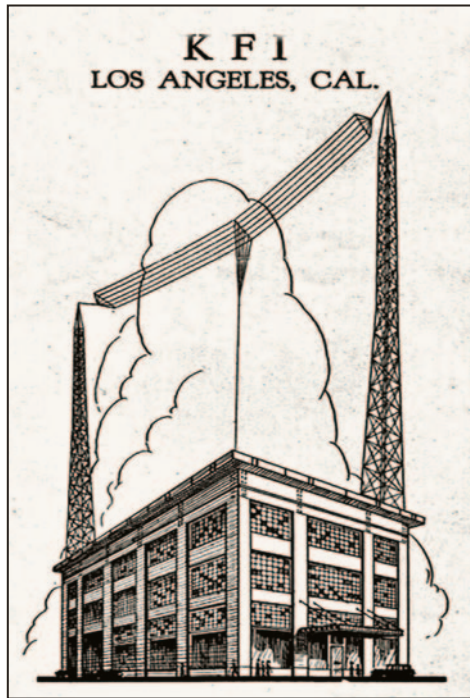
*With Oklahoma City and Albuquerque stations already on, regional radio covered most of the Texas panhandle by 1935. Power increases in the early 40s would close the daytime coverage gaps along Route 66.*

**Driving across Texas, New Mexico and Arizona on 66, radio was limited in the daytime and you had to put up with static.**

Amarillo and Albuquerque had early stations, and they received needed power boosts in the 40s. Gradually, smaller places like Tucumcari, Gallup and Kingman got radio too.

Flagstaff had struggling early stations, one at a time, with years of silence between them. But distant Phoenix came in along Route 66 through Arizona. Around Oatman AZ the big Los Angeles station KFI-640 began to overpower the static, although it was still 250-miles away. Eventually, as you started seeing palm trees, the dial was full.





The original KFI antenna. This primitive transmitting antenna was on the owner's Earl C. Anthony's, Packard car dealership in Los Angeles. A 1931 power increase (and a modern antenna) enabled KFI to reach Oatman AZ in the daytime and Oklahoma at night.

### After dark, AM radio really shined.

The sky was literally the limit with far-away signals twisting and distorting as they hit the ionosphere and bounced back. Theoretically, driving only at night, you could make it from Chicago to California on just one or two stations! This is the era many of us are...um, mature enough to remember.



WLS 89th anniversary. The backdrop shows three eras of WLS: establishment by Sears stores in 1924, Prairie Farmer ownership (1928-60), and finally the ABC rock era (1960-89). The glory days were over when this was taken in 2013.

Car radios of that time had mechanical push-buttons you would pull out to set. You might have selected these legendary AM giants.

Chicago's "89 WLS" (as their jingles proclaimed) had several Golden Eras.

The station was originally established by Sears, and the call letters stood for "World's Largest Store." Later, control passed to a farm publisher with shows like "National Barn Dance" and the always-popular hog report. Then in 1960, new owner ABC got things "all shook up" with rock-and-roll.



A strong AM station can handily beat coverage of a strong FM station during the daytime. At night there's no contest. Today, despite very tall towers, Oklahoma City's strongest FM stations don't reach the state line, day or night.

**Despite what the farmers and other grown-ups predicted, rock and roll turned out to have staying power, and WLS dominated the Chicago market for it.**

At night you could typically rock with them across Oklahoma. Then, very possibly, you tuned the dial from 890 up to 1520.

Oklahoma City's KOMA punched way above its weight. In the daytime it had a strong signal only in central Oklahoma. But at night it skipped up to Canada, down to Mexico, and out to California. Heading west on Route 66 after

dark, you had to pass Tulsa before it started to come in well, but then it would take you clear out to the promised land of Beach Boys and California Girls.



A publicity shot of the KHJ Radio-TV studios and, on the sidewalk, a Studebaker Avanti produced in 1962-63, just before KHJ's rise and Studebaker's demise.

**Finally, between Barstow and San Bernardino, Los Angeles-area rock stations started to appear:**

KFWB "Color Radio," KRLA in Pasadena...or the revolutionary KHJ. Starting in 1965 it muzzled the DJs, limited commercials, and pioneered short to-the-point jingles like "More Music 93 KHJ." By some accounts it went from worst-to-first in the ratings, and the format was copied at stations across the US and Canada.

Country music had (and still has) a home on the Grand Ole Opry, broadcast since the 1920s from WSM-650 in Nashville. Along Route 66, its signal would provide down-home companionship from Chicago to Albuquerque.

After radio had been around more than 50-years, a New Orleans station with another huge signal, WWL-870, discovered a new audience: all-night truckers. Beginning in 1971, its after-midnight show "The Road Gang" roared in along Rt 66 and the Interstates from Chicago to Flagstaff. Country songs dominated here too.

It was live and relevant with updated traffic and weather nationwide, and many car drivers listened.

**Way up near the top end of the AM dial was a manic mess assaulting your ears and intelligence.**



One of the few true stories about XERF.

XERF-1570 in Mexico, across from Del Rio, Texas had FIVE-times the power of the biggest US stations. (The local audience was tiny, so it signed off for 12 hours during the day!)

There are a lot of stories about XERF...and some are even true. This English-language "border-blast" was a jumble of aspiring country singers, prayer-cloth preachers, dubious products, and rhythm and blues. It covered all of Route 66 from Chicago to Los Angeles at night during its heyday in the 60s, with DJ Wolfman Jack (real name: Bob Smith) pitching mail-order baby chicks, miracle pills, and other Good Life essentials.

In the late 1960s, a few FM stations stopped playing numbing music for dental offices and went after AM's market-share of almost 100%. FM reception improved, and more of us bought AM-FM radios as factory options in our cars. Eight-track tapes and cassettes came and went. Satellite radio started up and AM radio started down.

The AM band (now expanded to 530-1700) has been struggling these last several decades. Roughly 85% of the audience (it varies by market) listens to something else.

A new type of network has emerged, with a different cast of characters (and villains). Many



AM stations now run syndicated conservative talk shows that mainly attract older listeners unwanted by many advertisers. And station ownership has changed hands, perhaps multiple times.

### **The mighty Route 66 call letters of yesteryear have fallen...and can't get up:**

WLS-890: Now #23 in the Chicago market with a conservative talk format and barely 1.4% of the audience, according to the Nielsen ratings service. (Co-owned WLS-FM is #11 playing the type of music that used to be on AM.)

- KOMA-1520 (now KOKC): Mainly syndicated right-wing talk in conservative Oklahoma City-- but it attracts just 0.4% of the listening audience. It trails two college stations, one airing National Public Radio, the other classical music! (Co-owned KOMA is on FM, rated #1 with a "classic hits" format.)

- KHJ-930: Soared from "Worst to First" in Los Angeles back in 1965, now back to obscurity at #44 with a religious format.

- WSM-650: Still running classic country including the Grand Ole Opry on Saturday nights. But the local country music audience has moved on to three Nashville FM stations. This historic station with a giant signal isn't even rated!

- WWL-870: A competitive #6 in the New Orleans market with a local news-talk-sports format on both AM and FM. The homegrown "Road Gang" would be a nice fit but it moved to satellite radio years ago. A syndicated financial show fills the time after midnight.

- XERF-1570: Now Spanish-language and run by Mexico's public broadcaster, it has reduced power to merely twice the US limit. It also streams over the internet helping to keep migrants in touch with their homeland.

Satellite radio "oldies" channels play music from that era, but lack the slick production values and local audience appeal of the best AM stations. The big call letters along Route 66 were "profit centers" before that term came into use. Some of that was plowed back into the product: talent, jingles, lavish contests and the like.

### **The Golden Age of AM radio survives through tribute sites, audio airchecks, videos and books.**

WLS had a peak audience of 4.2 million. Today it has [www.wlshistory.com](http://www.wlshistory.com) and WLS Radio Chicago by Scott Childers (Arcadia, 2008), a book with 200 images. An audio sampler of night man John Records Landecker from January 1972 is at

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCeDBvCdi7A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCeDBvCdi7A)

Many tapes of DJs and stations exist, some with the music intact, others with only snippets of the beginning and end of songs. They can be Googled this way: "XERF Wolfman Jack aircheck." Here's audio and video of a wild eight-minute PM Magazine segment on him, from a nostalgia trip in the early 80s [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrlZnF5uVTo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrlZnF5uVTo). He appeared in the film "American Graffiti" and his autobiography is *Have Mercy!* (Warner Books, 1995).

Nostalgic for old news? A half-hour of breaking news on Pearl Harbor, largely from the networks, is at

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlfAuTc6cNo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlfAuTc6cNo) And an Edward R. Murrow CBS report on the London Blitz is at

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=xn4znZ7Q\\_M0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xn4znZ7Q_M0) These were widely heard on stations along Route 66.

Los Angeles is the traditional destination of Route 66, and here's an intense one-minute audio and video sampler of an original KHJ "Boss Jock" The Real Don Steele at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZoA8te6ahM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZoA8te6ahM) (from a 1988 stint at rival KRLA).

And from 1970 comes a half-hour of another KHJ legend, Humble Harve, at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFO8wexKOpc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFO8wexKOpc) recorded off the studio monitor with the songs and commercials intact.

Miss the musical novocaine FM typically played during this era? Albums by the 100 Strings, 101 Strings, 1000 Strings, and (hard to believe) even 1001 Strings are still available on eBay, Amazon etc. Inside radio stations this was sometimes called "Music To Die By."



*The biggest stations like KHJ (shown here) and WLS were unionized with a control board operator. In AM rock this allowed high production values with short songs, DJs, jingles and commercials flowing seamlessly, adding to the magic. A 45 RPM record is on the turntable at bottom left. The DJ in the distance is Johnny Williams who did all-nights for almost a decade (1965-74).*

**Many mass advertisers don't target the 55-64 age group, much less 65+.**

Original listeners of AM music from this era are too old to be sold. Today's FM "oldies"

The Eagles' 1972 hit "Take It Easy" inspired this Route 66 photo-op in Winslow AZ. The "girl my Lord in a flatbed Ford" had to be 16 to drive. She's at least 67 now.

And on that note, we end our musical reverie and return you to the noise of 2023.

Tesla and many foreign electric vehicle manufacturers have already found the lack of



*The Eagles song "Take It Easy" inspired one of the most popular photo ops on the Route helping to keep both the song and Winslow, Arizona alive.*

AM is not a deal-breaker. Properly shielding the radio from nearby electric motors would add cost, complexity and weight. And work-arounds like streaming and FM simulcasts seem adequate in urban and suburban areas where most of us live and drive.

**Car ashtrays and lighters began disappearing as standard equipment in the 1990s.**

But in the year 2000, cigarette smokers were still 23% of the population according to the Centers for Disease Control. Nielsen currently puts AM at "20% of terrestrial radio listening" (but less of all in-car options) so factory AM radios may be doomed to join ashtrays. AM has been reduced to ashes and they're about to be emptied out.

No phone apps, limited-range FM signals, satellite radio imitations or congressional mandates will bring back the legendary stations that were part of a Route 66 trip. They boomed in across long distances in the daytime, incredible distances at night, with just the push of a button. They kept us informed, entertained, awake...and alive.

Sorry if you are too young to have experienced this, the best we can do is recommend the links above. AM radio sure was fun and important while it lasted. The technology was essential for 50+ years: the Soundtrack of Route 66, and the Soundtrack of Our Lives. 📌



*An album of 22 hits from Humble Harve's era is available.*





*Frank Gifford has photographed Route 66 and other American roads for more than 20-years. His site [www.rt66pix.com](http://www.rt66pix.com) is viewed in 175 countries. He was the afternoon news anchor at KRLD 50-years ago.*

## **Sayre, OK park offers recreational opportunities in historic setting**

*Story and images by Mark Potter*



Throughout the history of Route 66, roadside parks have served as stopping points for travelers to take a brief rest from driving, enjoy a picnic meal or give the car a break while checking the water in the radiator. These facilities were created by state highway departments and local governments—many of them built during the Great Depression of the 1930s as Route 66 was transitioning from dirt or gravel to concrete or asphalt pavement.

Sayre City Park located on the south edge of Sayre, OK is one such park. It has a swimming pool with a bathhouse built by labor from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) with construction starting in 1939 and completed in 1940. Likely, this is the most elaborate public pool/ bathhouse anywhere. The WPA, which was part of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal program, developed many such sites and other public works projects during that era.

Many of the WPA workers were immigrants who were out of work but were highly skilled. They tended to build particularly elaborate structures in spite of the fact they were paid very little.

**The park is fronted by historic (1926) Route 66, which dead ends a few feet to the north as its bridge over the North Fork of the Red River which was washed away by flooding many years ago.**







A stone brick wall, also built by WPA labor, fronts the park from the old highway. The later (1958) four-lane Route 66 bisects the back of the park to the east and includes access from that direction.

**The swimming pool and its original red stone bathhouse are still intact with the pool open during the summer season from Memorial Day to Labor Day.**

The bathhouse includes men's and women's restrooms and showers along with a concession stand.

Just south of the bathhouse/pool is a small building constructed of the same stone material as the bathhouse that is used as a pump house serving the pool.

The bathhouse, pump house and front stone brick wall contributed to the park being named to the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

Other features of the park include picnic tables, gazebo, pavilion, nine-hole golf course, 18-hole miniature golf course, baseball and softball fields, and courts for horseshoe, tennis, volleyball and basketball along with children's playground areas. Lighted walking/hiking trails are also included among the park's facilities.

In addition, there are both tent and RV campsites, some with electrical and water hookups. There are also fishing ponds for casting

lines to "catch some big ones."

**Located within the Sayre City Park is a rodeo arena which is the scene of many rodeos and playdays during the summer months.**

The largest such event, scheduled each June, is the Sayre Champion Rodeo, over two nights of events including bronc riding, bull riding, steer wrestling, barrel racing and team roping, and breakaway roping. The rodeo is augmented by a parade in downtown Sayre, Piggin' and Grinnin' BBQ Cook Off and a flea market along with live entertainment. 🍷

*For further information about Sayre City Park and its facilities, call (580) 928-2260.*



**Mark Potter** of Vernon, Texas is a newspaper reporter who has researched and traveled most of Route 66. He has developed a vast collection of collectibles including vintage road maps, postcards and other items pertaining to The Mother Road and he is a regular contributor to the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton. Potter has also staged collectibles displays at various Route 66 events including many of the International Festivals

# THE HISTORY OF THE CB RADIO

Story and images provided by Kip Welborn

One of the things that we Route 66er's are very good at doing is "harkening back." For some of us there is more to traveling Route 66 than marveling at the roadside memories of Route 66's past that still manage to exist. Route 66 was and is an exercise in time travel. Route 66 is not just a 2,448 mile trek from Adams and Michigan Aves. in Chicago to Olympic and Lincoln Aves in Los Angeles. It is also a trip through the evolution of travelers' tastes and sensibilities, and traveling in general between the 20s and the 80s in the United States.

**All one has to do is to pass through Tucumcari, NM to find a great example of this evolution.**

The Blue Swallow Motel gives the traveler an opportunity to feel what it was like to stay on Route 66 in its early days. The Safari Motel gives you a chance to catch a glimpse of what it was like to stay on Route 66 in the 50's and 60's. The motels by the Interstate East of Tucumcari give you the "opportunity" to take in the sterile sense of lodging after the Interstate supplanted Route 66.

Today's motel and hotel rooms seem to have an abundance of plug-ins and charging stations to make sure that you are never without the one device you seemingly can't live without anymore, whether you are traveling Route 66, traveling to work, or traveling to the bathroom, that being your cell phone. It was a mere 50 years ago, on April 3, 1973, that a guy named Martin Cooper of Motorola Corporation made the first cellular phone call on the phone that he created.

On March 6, 1983, Ameritech introduced



Early Midland CB radio set.



us to the first “1 G “network. Cell phones have evolved from a massive device that makes a phone call without a cord to a device that can do anything but catch fish (though a cell phone can tell you how to catch fish in a multitude of different ways and several different languages). You do not need a library, you do not need a record collection, you do not need an accountant. All you need is a small rectangular box that contains the kind of technology that would have required a building to hold in 1973.

**And as we travel through time on Route 66, in light of our reliance on computers and cell phones, it is amazing that we somehow managed, for most of our lifetimes, to get along without these “devices.”**

But we did and we did quite well doing it. Before Google Maps, we had highway maps. Before Google let us look up every motel and greasy spoon we passed, and every star rating and review that changed on a minute to minute basis, we had the Mobil Travel Guide and the Duncan Hines restaurant guide, and more recently the National Historic Route 66 Federation’s Dining and Lodging Guide. Before we had the internet in the palm of our hand to find out what the weather was going to be up the road five minutes from now, we had AM/FM Radio to let us know what the weather was like in our area. And instead of taking pictures with our phones we took pictures while looking through a viewfinder, manually focusing on our object. And when the roll of film was done. we took it to the photo lab and enjoyed the mystery of waiting to see what we got back.



*Martin Cooper of Motorola Corporation made the first cellular phone call on the phone that he created.*

My wife Quinn, and most others, constantly reminded me of all the benefits of the little rectangular box that provides us with everything. While there is truth to the usefulness of the little rectangular box, it is equally true that we survived without cell phones, Google and the Interstate Highway System for a good long time. Time travelers from days past somehow managed to get through 8 states, stay in hotels and eat in restaurants and find interesting things to see and do along the way, and to communicate with each other and the rest of the

world without cell phones, email and even facebook and or...god forbid...Google!!

**The evolution you find visiting hotels in Tucumcari extended to the evolution of the ability to communicate with each other without a phone cord, which, once upon a time, you could do without a cell phone.**

And thanks to a guy named Al Gross, thirty plus plus years before Martin Cooper made that first cell phone call, we were blessed with the ability to communicate with each other through the Citizens Band Radio. And the Citizens Band Radio, though for a brief time, had a huge impact on communication, on culture, and on travel along Route 66.

What makes a Citizens Band Radio “tick” is its ability to send and receive radio waves cheaply and without the complicated license procedure required to be a HAM radio operator. The “radio wave” is a form of electromagnetic radiation that emanates from an antenna. The “path” the radio wave “travels” creates peaks

and valleys. The entire pattern of a wave, once it has traveled from one peak to the next, is called a cycle. The number of cycles completed in one second is the "frequency".. "Frequency" is measured in "hertz", so named after Heinrich Hertz, who, in November of 1886, was the first person to send and receive controlled radio waves. From there, 1000 cycles is a kilohertz (Khz), 1,000,000 cycles is a megahertz (MHz) and 1,000,000,000 cycles is a gigahertz (GHz).

Hertz' discovery was instrumental in Oliver Lodge, Ferdinand Braun and Guglielmo Marconi's ability to create the first radio communication systems in 1910, for which they won the Nobel Prize. Their efforts, in turn, led to the birth of Radio and later Television, and in between the Citizens Band Radio.

**The "radio wave" itself, standing alone, tends to be around 1000 hertz, and the number of "Hertz" can be infinite, the larger the number of hertz' the shorter the wave.**

A radio wave that is part of 300 gigahertz can be shorter than a grain of rice. A radio wave that is part of 30 hertz can be as large as the circumference of the earth. The higher the number of cycles (hertz) the better quality of sound and the shorter distance the "wave" travels". Hence, an AM Radio station which operates between 530 kilohertz and 1.7 Megahertz can be heard over a greater distance than an FM station, but the AM station tends to produce lower quality sounds that are subject to greater interference.

After the concept of radio waves as a means of "communication" between devices



*Heinrich Hertz, in November of 1886, was the first person to send and receive controlled radio waves.*

had been discovered, the technology to broadcast through those airwaves was utilized by a wide variety of industries, filling the airwaves with so much "static" that the interference made it impossible for anyone or anything to "communicate" effectively. The Federal Government saw this as especially problematic for the military, emergency responders, and the police. As a result of this, Congress created the National Radio Commission by passing the National Radio Act of 1912. The Commission was granted the authority to create a system that would take the multitude of

devices that had evolved since the radio wave was discovered and assign them frequencies that they could operate in. This would protect the ability of essential services to communicate and ensure that private providers would be able to also communicate relatively free of interference.

**The Radio Act of 1912 gave way to the Federal Communications Act of 1934 which created the Federal Communications Commission.**

The Federal Communications Commission would bring telephones under their jurisdiction, and would be empowered to break up communications monopolies, the major example being the breakup of the National Broadcasting Company, which resulted in the creation of the American Broadcasting Company, or ABC.

The FCC broke broadcast mediums into three categories: Broadcast, Public and Safety/special. And it was determined that, as



part of the “special”, that a set of frequencies should be set aside for military personnel returning from World War II. These individuals had been working with two way radios on the battlefield, and would bring home the know-how to create a radio service where individuals could communicate with each other over certain frequencies. Thus the FCC delegated “personal radio services” in 1945, and in 1946 created the Citizens Radio Service Frequency Band, the first time that a means was created whereby a two way radio between two people found a place on the airwaves. The band was located on the UHF frequency range at 465 megahertz.

**And it was Al Gross who created the device to make “Personal Radio Services” possible.**

Gross was born in Toronto in 1913, but shortly thereafter moved to Cleveland OH. It did not take long for Gross to develop an interest in radio communication, which commenced on a steamboat trip at the age of 9 where the ships radio operator let him listen in to the ships two way radio. By the age of 12, he was creating patchwork radio devices in his basement with parts from junkyards, and by the age of 16 he had obtained an amateur radio license.

Gross utilized his knowledge and his experience at Case Western University to develop, in 1938, a two way radio, a hand held contraption with a receiver, microphone and antenna that was portable and allowed people to communicate with each other over short distances. Because you could talk to someone over those short distances while you walked,



*Al Gross invented the Walkie Talkie, Citizens Band radio in 1938.*

the device became known as the “Walkie Talkie”.

During World War II the Office of Strategic Services, the intelligence agency of the United States during World War II, was trying to develop a more long range two way system to have ground to air communications that would evade enemy intelligence. The OSS turned to Gross who developed a ground to air unit (the ground unit was called “Joan” and the air unit was called “Elenor”) which had a range of 30 miles, was compact and was not possible to monitor behind enemy lines.

After the FCC created the Citizens Radio Service Frequency Band, Gross started the Citizens Radio Corporation, to create the first Citizens Band Radio, the Model 100-B, a device that could broadcast on the airwaves designated by the FCC. He created 100,000 devices, largely sold to farmers and the Coast Guard. However, there was a problem with CB operations on the airwaves provided by the FCC.

**To broadcast on such high frequencies (UHF Frequencies were in the high Megahertz) required the creation of expensive and less than reliable equipment, and UHF wavelengths were stymied by structures which the wavelengths could not pass through.**

As such, this first offering of two way radio service to the general population received a less than enthusiastic reception.

However, Gross had laid the foundation for two way communication via the citizens band radio, and in 1958, changes were made that would make the citizens band radio more



## PERSONAL MESSENGERS

### 1 1/2 watt unit for Citizens Radio



These are the "Personal Messengers"—superbly engineered two-way crystal controlled transceivers so compact that they fit in your hand—so flexible and easy to operate they can be used in thousands of different applications!

The "Personal Messengers" are manufactured with selected American-made components, and offer you that built-in reliability so vital to day-in and day-out communications. Circuitry utilizes eleven transistors and four diodes—superheterodyne receiver with exclusive tuned R.F. amplifier gives you twice the sensitivity and 40% greater range than similar units with conventional circuitry! Powerful two-stage transmitter punches your signal home and delivers higher power output than similar units with the same rated input! Shaped high output "push-pull" audio provides unmatched intelligibility and razor-sharp voice reproduction! Automatic noise limiter is an engineering "first" in transistor equipment—reduces ignition and electrical noise which shorten the operating range of other equipments! Automatic Volume Control prevents distortion at close range... maintains uniform voice level and helps bring in weak signals at maximum range. Smooth operating "QUIET" control (squelch) silences your receiver on standby and prolongs battery life!

Operates with penlight cells or rechargeable nickel-cadmium batteries. Accessory earphone permits use in noisy areas for privacy—ideal for short range paging with antenna fully collapsed. Elastic hand strap makes unit easy to handle, easy to mount! Furnished with crystals for 1 channel and battery compartment (less batteries).

Cat. No. 242-102 1 1/2 Watt "Personal Messenger"..... \$199.50 NET

Department of Transport Type Approval No. 152361012

#### ACCESSORIES



##### RECHARGEABLE BATTERY

Cat. No. 250-817  
Rechargeable battery (in Canada, this plugs into Cat. No. 250-818. See Chicago, Italy, USA approved)



##### BATTERY COMPARTMENT

Cat. No. 250-805  
Snap plug-in battery compartment for use with penlight cell batteries.



##### EARPHONE

Cat. No. 250-803  
Earphone with cord and snap-on "straps" (also for use in noisy locations).



##### CARRYING CASE

Cat. No. 251-806  
Leather carrying case with shoulder strap and beltless. Fits radio and its accessories.

CIGARETTE LIGHTER ADAPTER—Cat. No. 250-801—Powers "Personal Messengers" from cigarette lighter socket of vehicles with 12 volt battery systems.

RECHARGING ADAPTER—Cat. No. 250-808—Used with Rechargeable Battery Pack (Cat. No. 250-817) for 230 volt, 50-60 cycle AC power line. With European type plug.

REPLACEMENT ANTENNA—Part No. 22-1795—Collapsible Replacement Antenna.

EXTERNAL ANTENNA ADAPTER—Cat. No. 250-809—Clips on "Personal Messenger" to install to external antennas for extended range.

PORTABLE CLAMP-ON ANTENNA—Cat. No. 137-807—Convenient portable and mobile clamp-on antenna. Used with external antenna adapter (part of external range kit for "Personal Messengers").

12" FIBERGLASS ANTENNA—Cat. No. 137-818-1



**MATCHED CRYSTALS**—Additional crystals available for all 20 channels. Furnished in matched pairs (one for transmitter, one for receiver) for Channels 4 through 23. When ordering, list identifying Catalog Number.

Cat. No. 250-1004 through 250-1023

Cat. No.	Dial set	Freq. (Mc)	Cat. No.	Dial set	Freq. (Mc)	Cat. No.	Dial set	Freq. (Mc)
			250-1009	9	27.065	250-1017	17	27.165
			250-1010	10	27.075	250-1018	18	27.175
			250-1011	11	27.085	250-1019	19	27.185
250-1004	4	27.005	250-1012	12	27.105	250-1020	20	27.205
250-1005	5	27.015	250-1013	13	27.115	250-1021	21	27.215
250-1006	6	27.025	250-1014	14	27.125	250-1022	22	27.225
250-1007	7	27.035	250-1015	15	27.135	250-1023	23	27.235*
250-1008	8	27.045	250-1016	16	27.145			

\* Municipal Channel

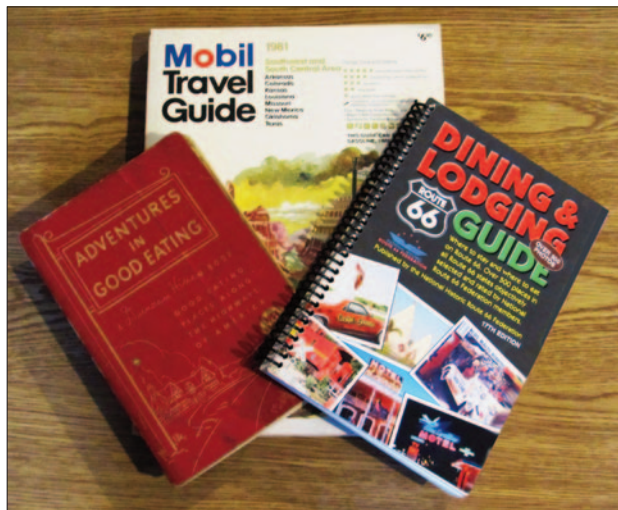


accessible. The FCC moved the frequency that was designated for personal radio operations from the UHF frequency to a little used portion of the ham radio band, creating 23 channels at different frequencies between 26.965 MHz and 27.255 MHz. The initial benefit of the new designation was that the lower frequency channels would have a longer distance and would not be as blocked by structures as the higher frequencies.

**In 1958, the FCC required Citizens Band users to have a license.**

However, with that license, you could broadcast legally on any of the 23 channels established by the FCC, except channel 9, which was reserved for emergencies. There were, however, limitations on the distance you could broadcast, as the maximum allowed wattage for a CB radio at the time is 4 watts. Also, the time you could spend on a given broadcast legally was limited to five minutes, and after that you were not to rebroadcast for at least one full minute.

Because the lower frequencies required by the AM frequency required lower operational energy, the cost of producing the equipment utilizing these frequencies was lower and that made the radios that could be utilized on these frequencies more accessible. The cost of Citizens Band radios were further reduced with the advent of transistors and solid state circuitry, which replaced the tubes used in AI



*How we traveled before the internet.*



*Trans Am driven by Burt Reynolds in the movie 'Smokey And The Bandit'.*

Gross' radios. Also, the ability to send and receive on a given frequency was because of quartz "crystals", which acted as a medium to receive and send out radio waves at a given frequency. Radios created in 1958 contained two crystals for each channel that you utilized, meaning that, if you wanted to utilize 23 frequencies, your radio would need to have 46 crystals. This made early CB radios more cumbersome and more expensive. However, during the course of the 1960's, a concept called frequency synthesis was developed. This allowed for multiple frequencies to be accessed via one or a

few crystals, which further decreased the cost of CB radio devices.

**Midland Radio was one of the first companies to start producing CB Radios for the new frequencies in 1959.**

Other companies soon followed, including the Dynascan Corporation which, in 1963, introduced the Sidewinder CB Radio. The name eventually evolved into the Cobra, and Cobra CB's became one of the most popular CB Radios on the market. There were companies such as Heathkit and Knight that offered build-it-yourself CB Radios, and CB's were created by old school companies like General Electric, which produced the CB Radio I discovered at a local yard sale for \$5.00

**CITIZENS RADIO STATION LICENSE**

CONDITIONS OF GRANT:

- A. Subject to the provisions of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, subsequent acts, treaties, and all regulations heretofore or hereafter made by this Commission, and further subject to the conditions and requirements set forth in this authorization the licensee or permittee hereof is authorized to use and operate the radio transmitting facilities herein described. This authorization shall not vest in the licensee or permittee any right to operate the station nor any right in the use of the available frequencies specified in the Commission's rules beyond the term hereof, nor in any other manner than authorized herein.
- B. Neither this authorization nor the right granted herein shall be assigned or otherwise transferred directly or indirectly to any person, firm, company, or corporation.
- C. This authorization is issued on the licensee's representation that the statements contained in licensee's application are true and that the undertakings therein contained, so far as they are consistent herewith, will be carried out in good faith. The licensee shall, during the term of this license, render such service as will serve public interest, convenience, or necessity to the full extent of the privileges herein conferred.
- D. This authorization is subject to the right of use or control by the Government of the United States conferred by Section 606 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.
- E. This authorization replaces and supersedes any previous authorization of this class issued to this licensee.
- F. The Commission must be notified of address change (see item 5 on reverse side).

SEE THE WARNINGS ON THE REVERSE AS TO THE USE AND OPERATION OF THE STATION LICENSED HEREBY.

CLASS OF STATION D	NO. TRANSMITTERS 6	CALL SIGN KEW 2106
EFFECTIVE DATE 07-07-72		EXPIRATION DATE 07-07-77

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

**NOT TRANSFERABLE**

LESTER E FARADAY  
104 OLD ALLAMUCHY RD  
HACKETTSTOWN N J 07840

*Ben F. Waple*

SECRETARY



1972 Citizens Band Radio license.

**There were negatives to establishing citizens band radio at the lower frequencies.**

The wavelength range allocated for Citizens Band radios was the same range that was utilized by a wide variety of devices, including everything from scientific and medical devices to devices you used to open your garage. As such the wavelength range allocated for Citizens Band and personal radios was subject to considerable interference. Hence the FCC regulations dictating the time of usage and distance of transmission.

Nonetheless, those drawn to this new means of communication took ownership of the little used 11 meter ham band that the FCC granted, and the 23 channels carved out of it, and created a medium for individuals to engage in two way communication without having to go through the rigmarole that was required to get a HAM radio license. Initially, the FCC intended Citizens Band Radios to be used for

communication between individuals operating a business, to allow for "in the field" communications to facilitate job production where it was not practical to run to find a phone. However, over the course of the 1960's, as the cost of the radios decreased and they became more practical to install in a vehicle, the use of the Citizens Band radio became more frequent and more social. People discovered the convenience and the fun of being able to have a "rig" in their car or at home, where they did not have to worry about a phone number, finding a phone or restricting themselves to communicating to a particular person.

**These aficionados created a culture around the communications on that radio.**

And they were willing to risk the sanctions imposed by the FCC for violations by utilizing frequencies outside the 23 channels allocated to Citizen's Band radio, by modifying their radio so that they could broadcast and



receive signals over greater distances and connect with other users for a greater length of time. Thanks to an interstellar oddity, these radio waveriders were able to shatter the distance from the CBer that they were communicating with.

**Every 11 years the sun goes through a “cycle” during which its electromagnetic field flips.**

During this time the number of sunspots and matter increase then decline by the end of the cycle. About midway through the cycle, there were a large number of sunspots, solar flares and other matter emitted from the sun that had an impact on the ionosphere—the upper level of the earth’s atmosphere—and the impact on the ionosphere had an impact on radio waves. As a result of this impact, CB radio operators, who would normally only be able to communicate with operators within 10-40 miles found they could communicate with operators hundreds of miles away, a practice known as DXing. This added to the allure of the CB radio and the numbers that communicated through that medium.

In the early 1970’s, the aficionados of the CB radio were joined by truck drivers who, in the late 50’s, 60’s and into the 70’s utilized Route 66 to take their own kind of California Trip, the kind where you travel from Chicago to LA to, referencing the prose of Elvis Presley, find the dollars to create their own American Dream, wherever finding that dream might take them.

The trucking industry, according to Tom Peters, Dean of Library Services at Missouri

State University and creator of the Route 66 Podcast, started becoming a force in the early 1920’s and its developments paralleled Route 66. Prior to the 18 wheeler becoming commonplace on Route 66 and elsewhere, the deliveries of most goods were by railroad. As highways evolved from dirt to paved roads and became wider, trucks—because they could go many more places than railroads and make deliveries all hours of the day—became the preferred method of delivery for most of the country, and to towns along Route 66.

However, because

truckers were, in the words of Tom Peters, “out there”; if a big rig broke down, the trucker might get lucky enough to have another trucker pass by but often they were in the middle of nowhere with no phone nearby.

If that wasn’t an inducement to join the CB radio community, the gas crisis that commenced in the early 1970’s gave truckers all sorts of reasons to join the CB radio ranks, and created a culture that had a huge impact on 70’s society.



*It was newsworthy at the time that Betty Ford communicated regularly with a CB on husband Gerald’s campaign trail. Her handle was ‘First Mama’.*

**Though an argument can be made that the gas crisis was fabricated and less a product of an oil embargo than oil companies playing upon a perceived threat of an embargo by OPEC, gas prices in fact went up and speed limits in fact went down.**

And the combination in the late 1970’s of higher gas prices, lower speed limits, and an ever increasing number of truckers who thrived until the industry was deregulated, induced

truckers to purchase CB Radios in growing numbers. They did so in large part to communicate with other truckers about the locations of “smokey bear”, about accidents they came upon out of nowhere, and about gas prices and gas gougers.

**One of the big trucking companies that operated on or near Route 66 was Campbell’s Route 66 Express.**

The company was founded by Fred Campbell in 1926 as Campbell Fuel and Transfer. In 1933, it took over Rapid 66 Express and became “Campbell’s 66 Express.”

The company became famous on Route 66, with its mascot “Snortin Norton”, and its slogan “Humpin to Please.” It would eventually operate in 42 terminals in 13 states before the company declared bankruptcy in 1986.

Campbell’s drivers relied on CB radios as did so many others, and Campbell's truck driving brethren “exploits” became the stuff of lore on Route 66 and in this country. And no better movie celebrated that more than perhaps the greatest guilty pleasure (at least for me) ever made, *Smokey and the Bandit*.

For the uninitiated, *Smokey and the Bandit* is the story of Bo Darville, better known as the Bandit (Burt Reynolds), and Cletus Snow (Jerry Reed), who are paid \$80,000.00 by Big Enos Burdette (Pat McCormack) and Little Enos (Paul Williams) to deliver 400 cases of Coors Beer from Texarkana, TX to Atlanta, GA in 24 hours so that Big and Little Enos can celebrate the victory of a race car driver they were sponsoring “In style”. They retrieved the beer from Texarkana, TX, but on the way back they are hampered by a runaway bride (Sally Field), who is being chased by the jilted groom and, more importantly, the jilted groom’s father, Sheriff Buford T Justice of Texas (Jackie Gleason). It was a race “to the wire”, as Bandit and Cletus cope with the bride they affectionately give the handle “Frog”, dodging Buford T. Justice, jumping washed out bridges and dodging patrolmen from several states, seeking

shelter from a “Convoy”, a funeral procession, and a herd of partygoers to reach their final destination.

This movie is a fun watch for so many reasons, from the action packed ride from Texarkana to Atlanta, to the hilarious performances, to the classic one liners, particularly by Gleason, who, in advising some youth vandalizing a police car to wait for the police to arrive and do nothing else: “Oh you can think about it...but don’t do it.” However, it is also a testament to what we loved (not necessarily the reality of) in trucking life, to the many CB Radio references, and to so much from the 70’s that we held near and dear.

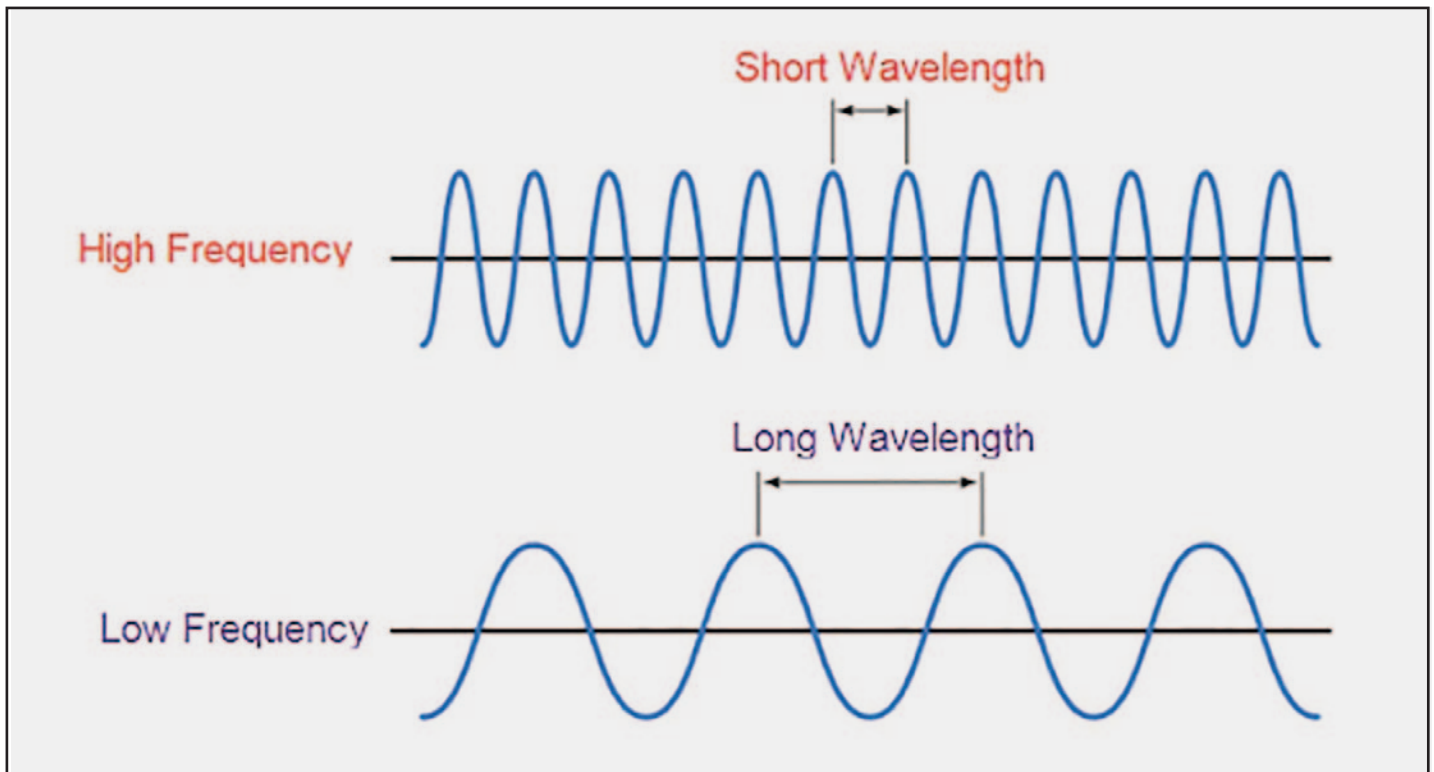
**The trucker, as portrayed in *Smokey and the Bandit*, exemplified a freedom that we all seek when cruising Route 66.**

The trucker also exemplified a renegade that was willing to do what was necessary to reach their final destination, and could always count on anyone with access to those 23 (and eventually 40) channels for help, and on their fellow truckers to band together, by convoy if necessary.

And all along the way they got help and helped each other with that little device that Al Gross came up with 30 years before the movie was made. All along the way, they get help from their well wishers and from other truckers, warning of upcoming police, of roadblocks and to otherwise usher Bandit, Cletus, Frog and Fred (Cletus’ Basset Hound) to safety. In one scene with Justice precariously close behind, Bandit is “ushered” into a funeral procession by the funeral home director, appropriately handled the Graverobber, leaving Jackie Gleason with no choice but to get out of his car, take off his hat, and pay his respects to the dead in begrudgingly respectful Texas fashion.

And all the trappings of CB usage are on display in *Smokey and the Bandit*. All of the users had their own “handles” which were the names that people used for themselves while talking on CB Radio. The “handle” was the product of the days when the FCC assigned call





*The wavelength (in feet) of a CB signal is 36' from peak to peak.*

signs to identify who the user was. It was discovered that, by creating an alternative means of identification or “handle”, to use instead of their call sign, that the FCC would have a more difficult time tracking the user down if they engaged in offending activity. Thus, Bo Darville used the handle “Bandit”, and Cletus Snow used the handle “Snowman”. President Gerald Ford’s wife, Betty, even got into the CB craze with the handle “First Mama”.

**Another thing that developed over the history of CB radio was a method of describing certain things, particularly related to driving, gas prices and the police, were terms to provide a shorthand affirmation or response to a given situation.**

The best known, as used in the song “Convoy”, a 1970’s classic by C.W McCall was Breaker 1-9 which translates into “breaking in on Channel 19 to report something” Channel 19 being a popular channel among truckers. On a side note, the song “Convoy” was written by a guy named Chip Davis, who is better known for his work with the electronic Christmas band

Mannheim Steamroller. Then there were the 10-codes which included everything from the well known 10-4 (“message received”) to 10-17 (“urgent business”) to the 10-100 (“bathroom break”). Now in Smokey and the Bandit, Sally Field quipped, in response to the 10-100, how she needed to do a 10-200. This would not have sat well with either she nor the Bandit as 10-200 means “Police Needed at (location).

**Also, there are the myriad of creative descriptions that were used by Cletus and Bandit, and were used by truckers to get through the day.**

A fond recollection from the movie was Burt Reynolds (Bandit) letting Cletis know that he was stopping at a “choke and puke”, better known as a diner. There are as many alternatives as there are visions in the mind, including such that are worthy of note as “Haircut Palace” for low clearance, “chicken coop” for weigh station, and “smile and comb your hair” for an upcoming cop with a radar. And of course there is “smokey” the identifying slogan for the highway patrol, which CW McCall



*Campbell's 66 Express became famous on Route 66 for its mascot "Snortin Norton" and its slogan "Humpin to Please."*

referenced in his 'bear hunt' in the song "Convoy."

**There was also the creation of a new favorite car, namely the 1977 Trans Am, and the glorification of the mystique of Coors, which was not available for distribution beyond 18 western states until the early 1980's.**

While Bandit had the car everybody wanted, and Cletus had the beer everybody wanted, CB radios were available to everyone and it brought everyone closer together. This included travelers on Route 66 outside the trucking industry, who utilized CB Radios to keep groups of travelers together as they made their California Trip. Quinn and I were lucky enough to go on one of those trips courtesy of my good road friends Kent and Mary Sue Sanderson, Jane Dippel, and a guy we affectionately knew as Captain Bob. This group embarked on a trek from St. Louis, MO to Flagstaff, AZ in June of 2001. Before we started out, Kent and Mary Sue required us to get a CB radio so we could keep contact with the rest of the group.

**As Quinn and I were not blessed with cell phones and or even "pagers" (remember those?) we went out and purchased a hand held Maxon 40 channel CB Transceiver and an antenna that stuck magnetically to the top of our car.**

Kent's handle was "Bliss" (short for Business Loop I-55, after the roadside park in Sherman, IL), Mary Sue was the Navigator, Quinn was "Brown Q" (a girl who loves her tan) and I was "Rudkip" after my first and middle names. With our CB Radios, we were able to follow Jane's directions of "short stop engines on" to limit my photo opportunities, we were able to catch up with each other when we got separated, we were able to share experiences and were able to point out future events to each other, all without a cell phone and without google

So today we travel much differently than we did so long ago....in 2000. Once upon a time, Bulova created the Accutron wrist watch. For a brief period between 1960 and 1977, the Accutron was the standard for time making with



its tuning fork mechanism that vibrated at 360 beats per second. Then Seiko created the Quartz watch that vibrated at 12,000 plus beats per second and made the Accutron obsolete in short order.

In 1948, Al Gross created the CB radio. For a brief period during the 1960's and 1970's, the CB Radio was the standard for two way communication outside Ma Bell's contraptions, until Martin Cooper introduced the world to the cell phone in 1973.

### **The CB radio met a better fate than the Accutron and is still in use by a large number of truck drivers and road enthusiasts to this day.**

However, for a brief period of time the CB Radio was, like the Accutron, as necessary as it was revered. And while today we have the little rectangular device that does everything a CB Radio and an Accutron wrist watch and pretty much everything else you can think of can do and more, when you "harken back", you see that, somehow, some way, we were able to get information out of our Mobile Travel guide and off maps, and we were able to communicate through CB Radio and the rotary phone and we were able to look at our wrists and see what time it was. No it wasn't as quick as pushing a spot on a glass screen, and no we did not have access to everything, everywhere all at once, but somehow some way, as we have since the first car headed down Route 66, we managed. 📶

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# PRESERVATION & RESTORATION

*Article by David Knudson. Images provided by the author.*

My wife, Mary Lou and I formed the Federation almost 30 years ago after traveling the Route and finding so many of the businesses and even towns closed.

Our goal was to save what we could before America's most famous road was gone.

One of our first steps was to contact the Federal government where we were directed to work with the National Park Service to develop what was to become the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program. This program has been extremely helpful by issuing grants

to Route 66 property owners in need of restoration assistance.

In addition to the Program, many individuals and Route 66 associations have contributed greatly since we began.

This article covers a random selection of sites that were on Route 66 during the road's heyday (1920's-1960s) and are still there today. They are the primary reason the Mother Road has enjoyed a resurgence of interest.

These are, by no means, all the preserved or restored properties. But a sampling for history-lovers to discover.

🌻 **Lou Mitchell's, Chicago, IL**  
Thankfully, Lou's is still around. If not, no one would know where and how to start their Route 66 trip. Seriously, untold people from all over the world, have made a ritual of starting here. In addition to being close to the beginning, they serve an excellent breakfast. I've started here many times and I heartily recommend it.

It began 100 years ago to the year, and they've only served breakfast 6am-2pm in their iconic big-city diner atmosphere.





❁ **The Berghoff Restaurant, Chicago**

This Chicago landmark opened in 1898 to sell its family's beer. They gave free sandwiches to customers who bought a beer.

The restaurant went through a series of openings and closings and owners, always within the family.

I have never eaten here for my beginning-of-trip breakfast instead I go to Lou Mitchell's which opens at 6AM. Berghoff doesn't open till 11:30 AM. I like to get an early start.

I have heard the food is excellent here.





🌻 **Funks Grove, Shirley, IL**

Here we have a grove of maple trees that are harvested to produce Maple Sirup. They spell sirup with an “I” rather than a “y” which they claim is historically correct.

The first commercial maple sirup farm at Funks Grove opened in 1891.

In 1942, sirup production was halted because of the war but resumed a year later.

In the early 1970s, construction began on Interstate 55 which was originally routed to cut right through the Funks Grove timber but the family was able to petition to get it rerouted.

Today they are a source for fresh fruits and vegetables as well as various candies and of course their famous maple products.





🌻 **Cozy Dog, Springfield, IL**  
OK, I like hot dogs and corn dogs, and even better yet, Cozy Dogs. Enjoying one here is as much a Route 66 ritual as Lou Mitchell's.

Some think the founder invented the corn dog but it's not entirely true. He says "In Muskogee, Oklahoma, I saw an unusual sandwich called 'corn-dog.' This sandwich was a wiener baked in cornbread. The corn-dog was very good, but took too long to prepare. The problem was how to cover a hot dog with batter and cook it in a short time." So, he proceeded to solve the problem with Cozy Dogs.





🌸 **Ariston Cafe, Litchfield, IL**

The Ariston is said to be the longest operating restaurant on Route 66.

The original Ariston Café opened in 1924 in nearby Carlinville, a town along the original Route 66. After 1930, the highway realigned to the east, bypassing Carlinville and going straight through Litchfield, which prompted the move of the café to Litchfield.

My wife and I always made a point of stopping there on our Route 66 trips. The food and the hospitality were exceptional.





🌸 **Old Chain Of Rocks Bridge,  
St Louis, MO**

I can vividly remember this bridge on my way out to California in 1964. It was in the middle of the night and a large truck was coming my way on the narrow curve. Somehow, we got by each other.

The Chain of Rocks Bridge was privately built as a toll bridge in 1929 between Illinois and Missouri over the Mississippi River. Its famous curve was necessary to anchor the bridge to bedrock.

In the late 1930s, Bypass US 66 was designated over this bridge to the downtown St. Louis area.

On August 2, 1966, the tolls were suspended. In 1966, the New Chain of Rocks Bridge was built immediately to the bridge's north in order to carry I-270. The original Chain of Rocks Bridge was subsequently closed on February 25, 1970.

In 1998, the old bridge was leased to Trailnet, a local trails group then sold to the city of Madison, Illinois. It is now for pedestrian and cycling use only.





🌻 **Ted Drewes, St Louis, MO**

The first Ted Drewes frozen custard store opened in Florida in 1929. In 1930, stores were opened in St. Louis, MO on Natural Bridge Road and on South Grand in 1931. In 1941, a second South Side location was opened which is the current Chippewa location on 66. By 1958, the two South Side stores were all that remained.

Ted's "concrete" which was created in 1959, has been the most popular treat and is praised by Route 66 travelers worldwide. It is a malt or shake so thick that it is served upside down.





🌸 **Wagon Wheel Motel,  
Cuba, MO**

This motel has had several owners and several reincarnations. It began life in 1938, and it is said to be the oldest continually operating motel on 66.

It is certainly one of the top original Route 66 motels and is beautifully maintained. Today, it is like stepping back in time to when we spent a long day on the Route and at 6 in the evening could hardly wait to find a comfortable place to spend the night.

Connie's Shoppe offers an exceptional selection of Route 66 necessities and unique gifts.





🌸 **Munger Moss Motel,  
Lebanon, MO**

Built in 1936 on Route 66 in Devil's Elbow, MO, this was originally a sandwich shop. The shop became famous for its barbecue, but unfortunately, in 1942, Route 66 was relocated and business slowed considerably.

The business was sold in 1945 and was moved about a half an hour away, to Lebanon, MO. The old building still stands on its original location, now known as the Elbow Inn.

The Munger Moss Motel was added onto the sandwich shop and opened in 1946.

As business got better, more units were built and the spaces between the cabins were filled in.

The motel has 44 rooms and 16 efficiencies. Some are themed.

