

"ROUTE 66 - A ROAD TO REMEMBER"

Charles Hartman

On Tuesday evening, March 18, 2008, the Belleville Rotary Club will present its fourth program of the TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE FILE SERIES at the Lincoln Theater, 103 East Main, Belleville, IL.

Fifty years have passed, and Charlie is on the road again - this time as a film-maker in search of the old Route 66- "You have to search for it," he explains, "because it's gone now - since the decision to decommission the route, and the removal of its fabled double digit signs, in the 1970's and early 80's."

Replaced by sections of five different Interstate Highways, the old route may be gone as a numbered federal highway. But, for most of its 2,448 mile length, the old "Main Street of America" is still there. Just beyond the interstates it still "...winds from Chicago to L.A.," as the song, "Get Your Kicks on Route 66" put it.

Millions of Americans remember that song from the 1940's. They probably remember the 1960's television series too. And best of all, they remember the road. They remember when they were on that road, and the car that they made the trip in. They remember what the country looked like, and the towns that the road went through, not around.

Come along with us for a nostalgic look back, "from Chicago to L.A." Chicago's Grant Park, beside Lake Michigan, where the road began. Out through the "Land of Lincoln" and across the Mississippi River at St. Louis. Through the Ozarks, Springfield and Joplin, Missouri. A corner of Kansas and on to Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Endless vistas open up as we motor west, across the Texas Panhandle to Amarillo. Then into New Mexico, with Tucumcari, and Santa Rosa..."It must have been just about here. We rolled to a stop with that old radiator just steaming..."

On to Santa Fe, and Albuquerque, and Gallup. Maybe buy a Navaho rug, or a Hopi pot, at a road side Indian Trading Post. Then Arizona, the Painted Desert and the Petrified Forest. Flagstaff, and of course a side trip up to the Grand Canyon! into California, the Mojave Desert, then Barstow and over the mountains to San Bernardino, the Valley of Los Angeles, and the end of the road beside the Pacific Ocean at the Santa Monica Pier!

For millions of Americans, Route 66 is an adventure in memories. Of all these places, and of all the countless other places in between. Come along and recall the way it was...and the way we were. Take a ride on "**ROUTE 66: A ROAD TO REMEMBER**" with Charles Hartman.