

## GTOAA ROUTE 66 2018 STREET LEGENDS CRUISE

### “THE REST OF THE STORY(S)”

Written/Compiled by **Gail Schott**



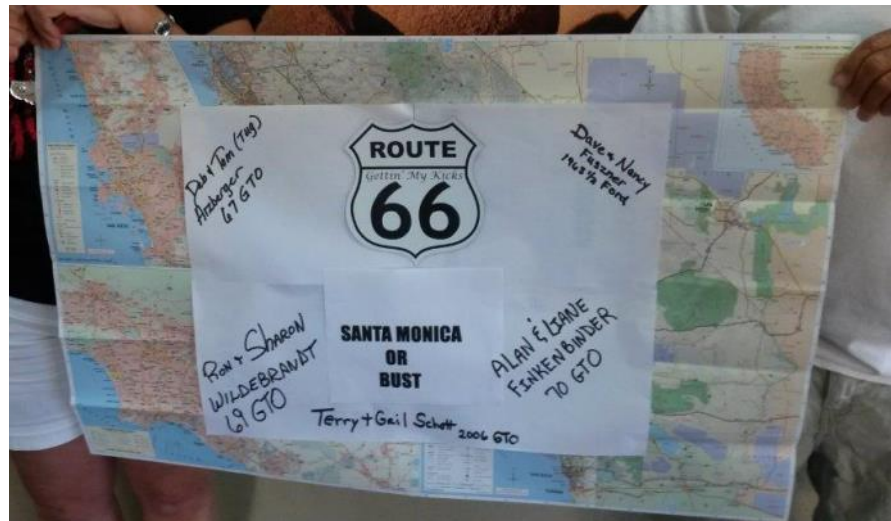
We’ve all read G. Thomas Oxler’s (Mr. GTO’s) great stories of the GTOAA Street Legends Route 66 Cruise, but there’s still a little more story past the “official” last stop in Needles, California. Here is “The Rest of The Story”. Those of us who went the rest of the way to the Santa Monica Pier, and the end of Route 66 felt we had stories to tell as well.

Alas, not all of the old Goats, and Galaxies felt they were up to the heat and slower pace of city driving thru Los Angeles and Santa Monica. That would be the '70 convertible of the Finkenbinder’s, the 63 ½ Galaxy of the Fuszner’s, and the '06 GTO of the Schott’s. Schott’s felt that the '06 would not have any issues, but in the interest of those that did have concern, we came up with a plan. While still in Kingman, AZ, we thought that if we could rent a minivan the three couples could all chip in and take the van thru the final desert and city driving to get to Santa Monica. But what to do with the cars while we were gone?? We got with Tom Oxler, and the master roster of the GTOAA, and found a member in Kingman, Arizona! Fellow member, Dale Jensen, was more than happy to accommodate our request for refuge for the cars. There happened to be rain in the forecast, and Dale even pulled his truck out from under the carport so that Alan Finkenbinder’s convertible would not have a chance of any water leakage or damage. Of course, the boys had to check out Dale’s cars too, while the gals waited in the van.

# Route 66 - The Rest of the Story

The van took us into Oatman, AZ, and then into Needles, CA. On the route to Needles, still traveling with the rest of the GTOAA Route 66'rs, the minivan caught Dave Sindelar, in his '66 GTO, "asleep" and seized the opportunity to pass him and take the #2 position! As his eyes opened wide at the sight of the minivan passing him, he immediately rose to the task of remedying that situation! The minivan succumbed to the rear of the field to join the "riff-raff"-- non-GTO's. In Needles, we bid adieu to those that were now heading their respective ways home. Those of us who were taking the rest of Route 66 to the coast were Terry & Gail Schott, Alan & Liane Finkenbinder, Dave & Nancy Fuszner, "Tugboat" Tom & Debby Arzberger, Ron & Sharon Wildebrandt, and Dave

and Carol Sindelar. We drove further into California to El Cajon to spend the night. The next morning, Monday, October 1, since we were so accustomed to having our picture taken each morning with the Route 66 map, we made up one of our own for, "Santa Monica or Bust!" But without our fearless leaders Don & Janice Duryea, we were somewhat confused as to the best way to proceed!?!





## Route 66 - The Rest of the Story

Let me go on from here saying that we had lost track of the Sindelar's. They had decided to stay at a different hotel and we never met up with them again until the Arzberger's saw them briefly at the pier. We have asked each of the couples to write up a few paragraphs concerning their journeys home from Santa Monica and those will follow.

Leaving Cajon Pass, we headed thru California and saw another Wigwam Motel

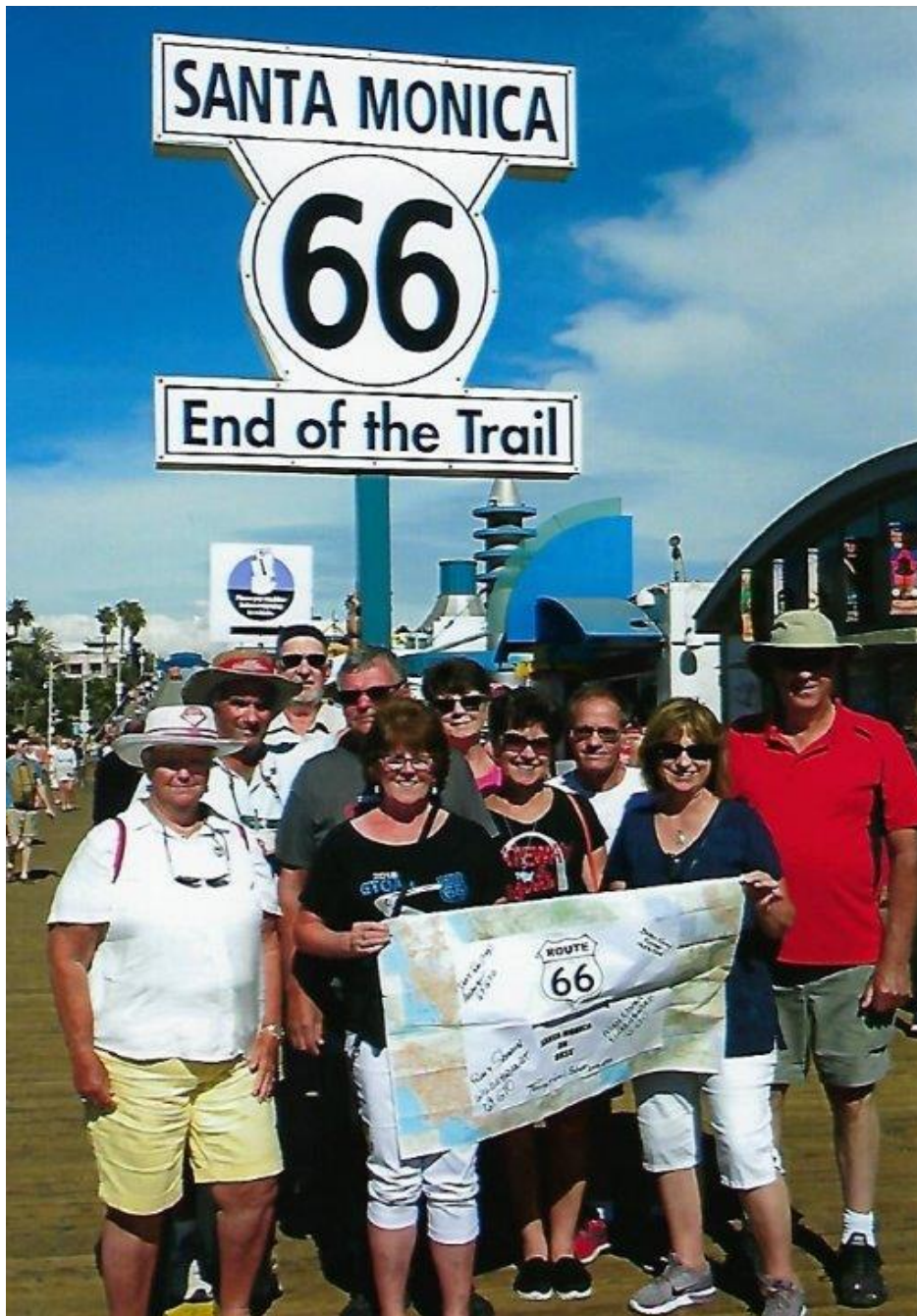
site, drove thru Cucamonga, South Pasadena, Chinatown, and experienced A LOT of traffic (as we had anticipated). "Tugboat" got antsy and left the highly traveled route, "took the high road", and got to the pier before the Wildebrandt's in their '69, and us in the van. But we all DID gather at the Santa Monica, Route 66, "End of the Trail" sign for a photo op.

Upon leaving Santa Monica, the minivan crew headed back to Kingman, AZ to

return the van and get our trusty steeds. We had purchased an "In and Out" burger gift card for Dale to show him our appreciation of his accommodations for the cars. We stayed in Williams, AZ at the Canyon Motel again and had our evening meal in Williams. Williams has a very bright neon town center and we enjoyed walking thru town and visiting several of their shops.

Wednesday, October 3, we were at the south rim of the Grand Canyon. What an awesome sight! Around every turn was just another fantastic view of the canyon. One thing that was rather disturbing was how many people felt the need to go beyond the fencing to the farthest outer edges of the cliffs to take pictures. Unbelievable...

The final day of our long haul took us through Wichita where we met up with Don and Janice Duryea for





lunch. This is when Alan noticed that his '70 convertible was running a little hot. After lunch we discovered that Alan's heater valve was leaking. We dug through Alan's stock of parts and he had what we needed to bypass the valve and fix the leak. We started the "bucket brigade" or "water bottle brigade" in this case, refilling our water bottles and replenishing the thirsty radiator. This turned out to be the last maintenance work that was done on the trip and we were led out of town by the Duryea's.

Finkenbinder's took the high road and started heading northeast back towards home in Pontiac, IL. The Schott's and Fuszner's took the low road, so to speak, and headed towards Joplin, MO and Route 66 again. Joplin proved to be less than we had expected for hotel/motel accommodations, and we made the decision to head on into Springfield for the night. We only had a little over 3 hours the next day and made it home with no issues. Wow... What a trip... What a GREAT time we all had. Thank you, thank you, thank you to Tom and Terrie Oxler and Don and Janice Duryea. It was FANTastic!!

*Gail & Terry Schott*





## Route 66 - The Rest of the Story

We left Needles, CA on Hwy 95 with Jeff and Susan Caldwell heading for Hoover Dam. We had another tire go bad after that we decided to put on 4 new tires, if you have ever had a tire throw all of it tread at 70 MPH you understand why a complete set was called for, Jeff and Susan went on to Hoover Dam. After getting a new set of tires we continued on to Hoover Dam. While pulling into Hoover Dam we were stopped for a security check and the Park Ranger questioned the black bags in the storage area, I probably should not have called them “body bags”. After explaining that they were tires, they just looked the wagon over and let us go.

From there we traveled UT 89 to NV 98 to CO 160 enjoying Monument Valley, Four Corners because of the extra couple of miles to get to Four Corners we ran out of gas about a mile from a gas station. We had to use our reserve can that we carried for the trip to make it to the station. We then visited the Mesa Verde Cliff Dwellings. Which were amazing and another item off the bucket list. During our passing thru Colorado we were pulled over by the local police. We saw the car but I was not speeding. I said to Cheryl that he acted like he was going to stop us, about then the red lights came on. He pulled us over and asked all the normal questions and then said we could go. Since he never did say why he pulled us over I asked him why. He said I was doing 37 in a 35 zone!!! We think he wanted to look at the wagon because he then asked us if it was our primary mode of transportation.

From there we continued on into Kansas and go on US 54 all the way into Missouri with a brief stop in Lebanon, MO to replace a front U joint on our 1961 Pontiac Safari Wagon. From there we traveled I 44 to St. Louis and home. The wagon had a good summer by completing both the Hot Rod Power Tour Long Haul and the GTOAA Rt 66 cruise with no major problems after traveling from coast to coast. All in all a good trip with good friends. Now to determine what the next road trip will be, and there will be another.



*Frank & Cheryl Chapman*



## Route 66 - The Rest of the Story

Alan & Liane Finkenbinder's Return from Wichita, Kansas

We back tracked on Rt. 66 to Tucumari including a stop at the Grand Canyon. While at the Grand Canyon I noticed an antifreeze smell coming from my car but upon inspection noticed no leakage. At Tucumcari we traveled up Rt. 54 to Wichita, Kansas for a lunch stop with Don and Janice Duryea. As we were approaching the restaurant, I noticed the GTO was beginning to heat up. After lunch we inspected the car and discovered the vacuum operated water valve was leaking. I removed the valve and installed a bypass I had brought along for just that kind of an emergency. With the help of the Duryea's, the Schott's, and the Fuszner's, the radiator was topped off with our water bottles and we were ready to go. I thought I was overdue to have car trouble and if that was all, I was very lucky! Going forward we would be traveling alone without the backup of friends.

The Duryea's volunteered to lead us out of Wichita and get us pointed in the right direction. We assumed our well-earned #2 position and waved a final good-bye. We traveled small routes 135, 50, 35, and 59 ending the day in Atchison, Kansas. The next morning we traveled in rain to Hamilton, Missouri for a stop at the Missouri Star Quilt Company. Once there I made a visit to the men's lounge as Liane shopped for material to add to her already large collection. I really can't complain though, as I have a few collections of my own! We took Rt. 36 to Springfield, Illinois and then the home stretch (Rt. 55) to Pontiac. Home at last! Approximately 4,200 miles in the GTO. A bucket list item completed!!!!

We are both looking forward to future trips with this group of great friends!!

*Alan & Liane Finkenbinder*





# Route 66 - The Rest of the Story

When we started this journey it was on our bucket list to go all the way to Santa Monica. In leaving the pier, it was with mixed emotions. Sad because we were leaving our new found friends not knowing if we would ever see them again. The highlight was we had fulfilled our goal of going all the way! (We drove up the Pacific Coast Highway, saw where the Hearst Castle was but did not tour it wanting to get further down the line. Encountering 60 miles of switchbacks only driving about 20 to 30 miles per hour hugging the mountains with waves almost splashing on the traffic coming the other direction! (Wouldn't want to be coming the other way hanging onto the cliff!) Went up to Sacramento to spend a few days with an Army buddy of Ron's. We left there and traveled across Nevada and Utah seeing some beautiful scenery and rock formations on Highway 50, also known as the "Loneliest Highway in America". I can see why! Not much traffic, towns, and little to no cell phone service. You better have plenty of gas, too! Entering Colorado the weather was changing with possible snow forecasted. Possible road closures and warnings of chains being mandatory. I can just see it now. "69 GTO" with chains on, plowing through ice and snow! So, we took a more direct route stopping in Arvada (a suburb of Denver) for a very short visit with Ron's brother. In leaving there, with the weather coming in behind us, cold and rainy all the way to the Missouri/Kansas line. Almost home! Stayed the night in Kansas City, Missouri and then home the next morning with a total of 4,725 miles! ON TO OUR NEXT ADVENTURE...??



## *Ron and Sharon Wildebrandt*



# Route 66 - The Rest of the Story

“David and Carol Sindelar’s Route 66 – Mission Accomplished”

Cruise to the Santa Monica Pier in California and their Journey back to Kansas city, MO from September 13, 2018 driving to the beginning of Route 66 in Chicago and then on to Pontiac, IL and completing the entire Route 66 GTO cruise on October 13, 2018.

Dear Friends,

We finished our journey across the country on Route 66 at the Santa Monica pier sign on October 3, 2018. We arrived slightly ahead of the GTO tour group and then enjoyed a Ferris wheel ride before heading up the hill to the Kiosk and Route 66 Marker on Ocean Drive to pick up our Route 66 Certificate of Completion and metal Route 66 sign.

We stayed on the west coast to visit friends and relatives and do some sight-seeing before we began our journey east to KC. Of special interest in California were the Peterson



Automotive Museum, the Getty Museum, the Huntington Beach Botanical Gardens, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, and Hearst Castle and visiting Carol’s childhood classmate in Cambria, CA and David’s Employer/ Owners in greater Los Angeles, CA.

We then headed to Peggy Sue’s Diner near Route 66 east of Barstow, CA and to Saint Georges, Utah, and the Mojave Desert – Lake Mead Recreation Area, Nevada before meeting up with five hiking friends on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, Arizona for 3 days of glorious hiking. On our last day out of the Grand Canyon it snowed lightly until we visited the lower altitude Vermillion Cliffs National Historic Monument, Glen Canyon, and the Navajo Indian Reservation – 4 corners where you can stand and be photographed in 4 states at one time – Utah, Arizona, New





## Route 66 - The Rest of the Story



Mexico and Colorado.

As we drove over Wolf Creek Pass from Durango, Colorado, we again encountered snow. From there we had dinner and a visit with our favorite uncle in Colorado Springs, CO before the final push through Topeka and into Kansas City, MO arriving home on October 13, having driven 5,500 miles. Our 1966 GTO held up well for an old car and brought us safely home with so many wonderful memories of our bucket list trip along Route 66 with the GTOAA Street Legends Cruise and the Gateway GTO Club.

*David & Carol Sindelar*



# Route 66 - The Rest of the Story

## Gertie the Goat's Magical Journey

It all started at 9:15 AM on September 11th, 2018, when Tom Arzberger started up his 1967 GTO, also known as Gertie the Goat. His wife, Debby, jumped in the fully packed car to begin the trip of a lifetime, and off they departed from Greenwood Lake, SC !! They meandered up through "The Moonshine Trail", a windy, twisty, hilly road, through Highland NC, ending the first day in Franklin NC. The second day proved to be even more thrilling as Gertie tackled the famous "Tail Of The Dragon" at Deals Gap NC which consists of 318 curves in just a mere 11 miles .. Wow-eeee! Day two ended in Knoxville TN. Day 3 we traveled to Franklin, TN where Gertie made a pit stop at Buffalo Trace Bourbon Distillery!! Day 4 was ended in Terre Haute IN. Day 5 we drove on up to Shererville IN for the night. Day 6 we made it to where the "real" beginning of our adventure started in Chicago IL. We stopped at the sign that marked the beginning of Rte. 66 for a picture. Gertie finished the first leg of her trip on Sept. 16, 2018 in Pontiac IL. Here we joined the fabulous group we were traveling with across the country on Old Route 66!!! Joy, Joy, oh the adventure we would have cruising old Route 66 with the best of the best people!!!

On September 30th we bid fare-thee-well to the majority of our Cruise'n buddies to begin the next segment of the trip ... on to the Santa Monica Pier in California to the end of Route 66! Crossing the Mojavi Dessert was a hot trip, but Gertie took it all in stride, bless her little engine!! We met the rest of our group that had also gone the distance to the end on the pier where we all posed for pictures to document that we had made it to the end of the road. Truly magical!!

Gertie continued on up Route 1, the California Coastal Highway, taking us to Ventura Beach then we journeyed on up to the majestic Sequoia National Park. From there to Yosemite National Park, and Sutter's Mill where later that evening we saw Elon Musk's Space X booster







## Route 66 - The Rest of the Story



rocket separate and land in the far distance ... OORAH !!! Next came Lake Tahoe, Reno NV, Tonopah NV, St. George UT where we visited Bryce Canyon and Zion Nat'l Parks. We continued on to Kanab UT (AKA Little Hollywood), the north rim of the Grand Canyon, Page AZ and the Glen Canyon Dam, back to Utah to Monument Valley, Four Corners, Durango CO, Kit Carson's hometown of Taos NM, Woodward OK, Branson MO, Jackson TN, and Helen GA. Here we stopped for a good German beer and to do some yodeling to commemorate our last night on the road. On day 47, October 27, 2018, we arrived home at Greenwood Lake, SC at 1:40 PM.

WHAT A RIDE!!!! Gertie took us on a 7,205 mile drive. She consumed 612.6 gallons of premium gas over the 47 day journey through 17 states with minimal hick-ups which included 1 missing oil cap, 1 new alternator, and 1 flat tire. She's a keeper!!!

This report was brought to you by "Ima Roadie" (AKA, *Debby Arzberger* )

