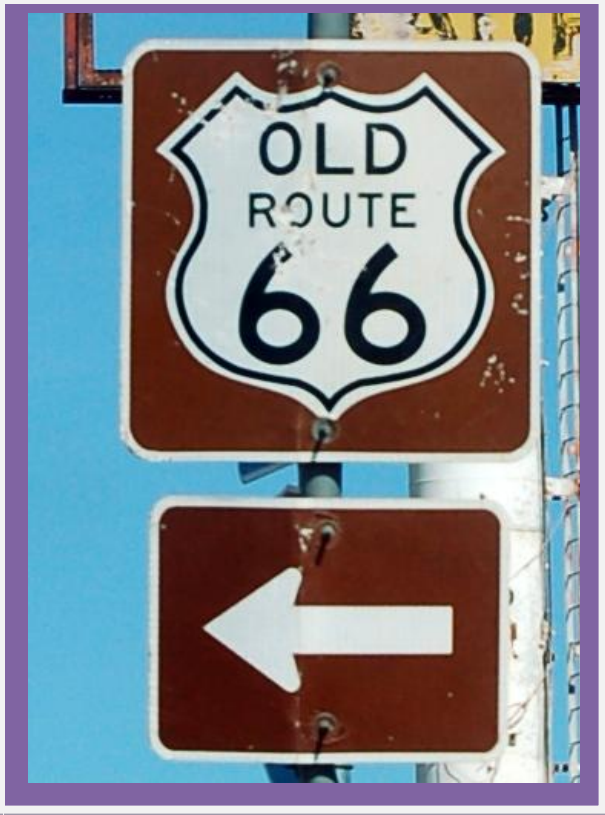




The Reel west newsletter

Day 7
 Thursday
 April 7th
 Shamrock, TX
 To
 Santa Rosa, NM

Weather
 High Temp: 73
 Low Temp: TBD
 Conditions: Fantastic



Left are my signs to follow in Texas.

For those of you who have never seen the famous Burma Shave signs along an American Highway, here they are. Motorists could read them in order as they drove by. I have seen better examples but none so easily photographed.

Below, in McLean, is all that remains of a former reptile roadside empire.



McLean was once known as "the uplift city" for the ladies undergarment factory, which now houses the Devil's Rope/Old Route 66 Museum. Devil's Rope, in case you're wondering, is barbed wire.

SCAVENGER HUNT – Everyone can make their own comments on this one.

What are the two huge balls on display at the Devil's Rope Museum made from?



The Answer?

Barbed wire of course.





The Phillips 66 gas station above was the first of that brand in Texas. McLean was the last town in Texas to be bypassed by I-40. There is a German POW internment camp nearby. Directions and info were to be provided by the McLean/Alanreed Area Museum. Of course it was closed.

Between McLean and Alanreed is an original dirt section of Route 66. Just imagine...Its 1932, your farm just north in Kansas has dried up and blown away...with the onset of the depression you have no money...you pack everything you own into an old jalopy...and look down this road as your path to a new life in California...over 1200 miles away.

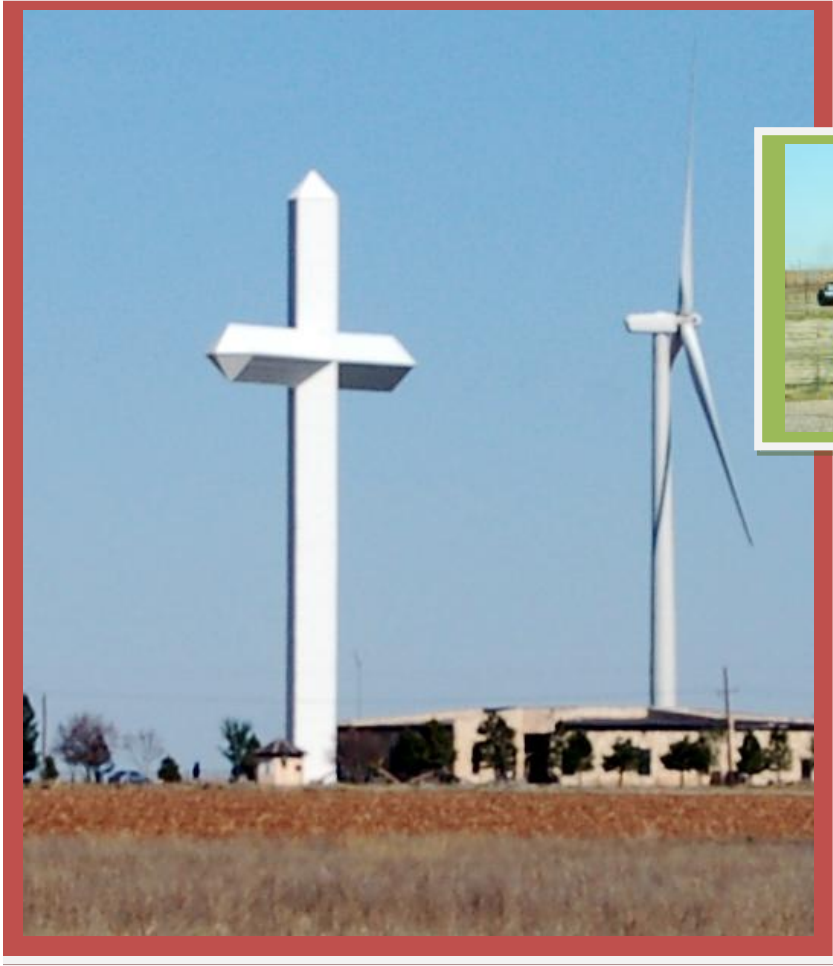


Don't worry. The "Leaning Tower of Groom" was built this way to attract attention to a former truck stop.

SCAVENGER HUNT – What government office is in a former W Bros gas station?

The Answer? Justice of the Peace.

GIANT ALERT – The “Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ Church” built in 1995. At 190 feet tall, it is billed as the “Largest Cross in the Western Hemisphere”.



Mr. Burk, who lives at the house above (the name is on the sign) must have a hankerin' for big guns. I wonder how long the place has been for sale.

Remember those VW Rabbits buried nose down in the dirt back in Illinois? Well, here in Conway is the “Bug Ranch”, an ironic satire of the “Cadillac Ranch” we will get to later today.





GIANT ALERT – Kind of two Giants with this one – the Giant Cowboy (kinda looks like Woody from *TOY STORY* doesn't he?) and the 72 oz steak. Both are at the Big Texan Steak Ranch in Amarillo. This place was huge. Those back home can compare it to the Mineshaft on steroids. There is also a motel which offers free rides wherever you want to go in those Limos below.



Here it is, just south of Amarillo, Cadillac Ranch



Tell a person NOT to do something, and that is exactly what they will do.



Despite what many say, Cadillac Ranch was never located on Route 66. In 1974, a Texas Millionaire commissioned the group "Ant Farm" to install the 10 luxury-barges nose down in the fertile soil of a farm field. In 1997 the sculpture was moved to this location on the South Frontage Road, just a short hop from Route 66.



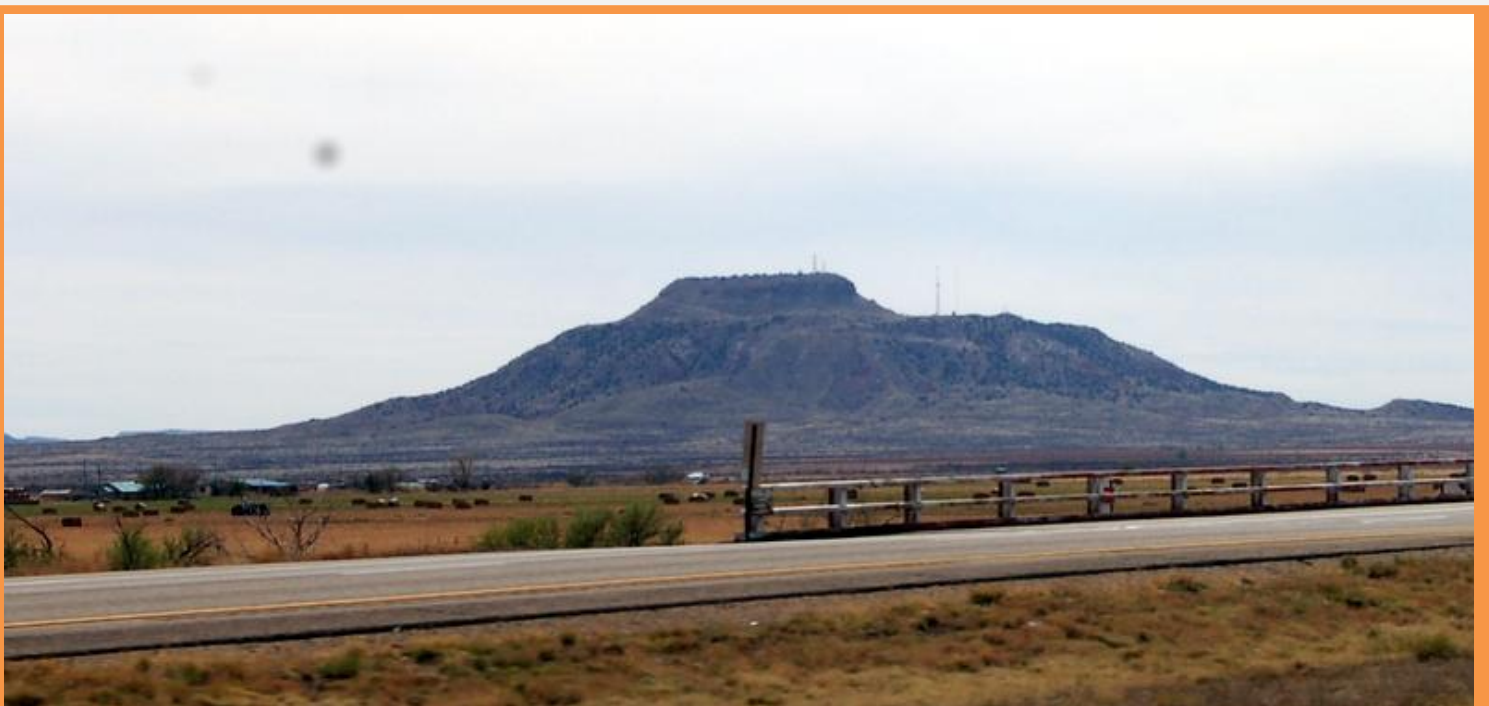
Unfortunately, the shop next door, where I was supposed to tell Fran that her crazy boyfriend from Kansas says hello, was closed. The new owner of the Café told me he had not seen her for quite some time.

The truck on the left is in front of Fran's store. I relates to the movie CARS.

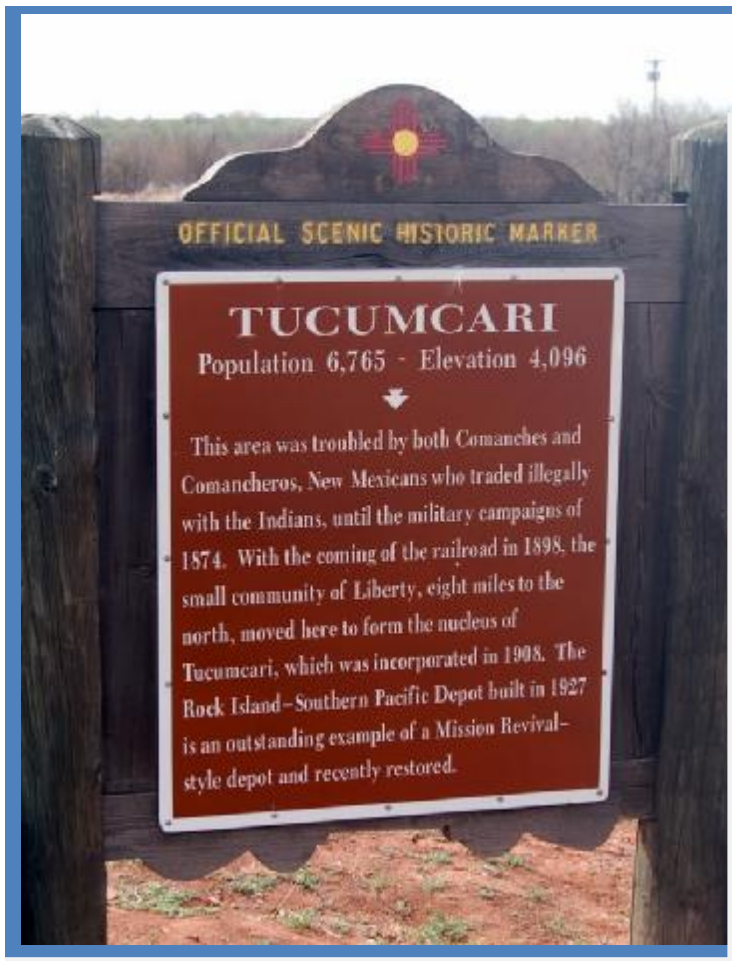


I took a short side trip to Endee, NM. At one time that dirt road was Route 66. Time and the Interstate have made Endee a ghost town (more of a ghost intersection if you will). Below is what remains of a roadside motel, the "modern" facilities and a gas station.





Tucumcari Mountain



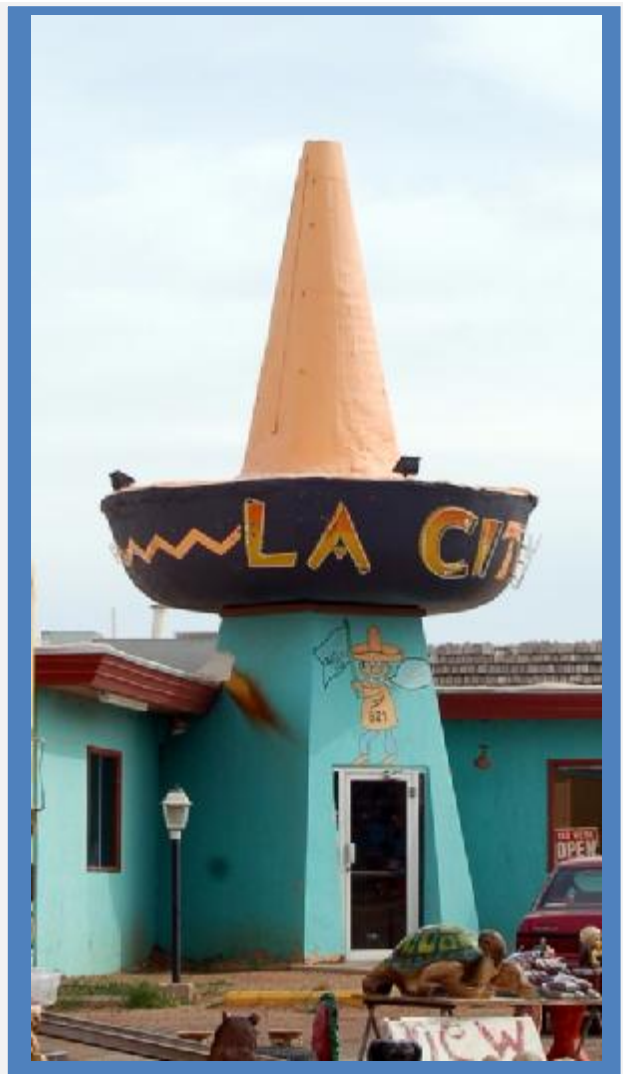
I bet that neon looks pretty good when it's lit up.

Just some photos I took as I drove through town. There are so many places, both restored and ruined, that would make interesting photos. I did notice that there must be 30-40 gas stations along the main drag. Maybe 2 or 3 are selling gas, the rest are split between restored and empty. There are also a lot of empty motels. The number of burned out buildings which have not been torn down amazes me.

The Blue Swallow Motel below is a well restored classic. However, Crazy Legs Dear back in Kansas told me to avoid it because of mold and stay at the Motel Safari instead.



GIANT ALERT – Giant Sombrero atop The La Cita restaurant.



I have to mention that today did not start out too well. While taking a shower this morning, and reaching to adjust the water temp, I must have stepped on the end of the shower curtain which was a little long for the shower. In 1/10 of a second my right leg went from the right side of the tub to the left and 1 second later I was lying on the floor of the bathroom on top of the shower curtain. My back had come down on the edge of the tub. I was pretty sore all day and could only walk very slowly and partially bent over. And my back was doing so well on this trip. No pain at all, especially when getting out of the hotel beds in the morning. I think I need a new mattress at home. I just hope it gets good enough over the next two days so that I can ride a horse for a week. No cards or flowers please, just send money.

I am spending tonight at the hotel below. Another classic neon sign.

Good night,

Mark



