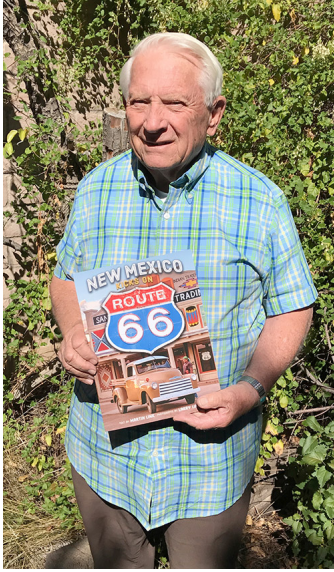


Local historian gets his kicks on Route 66

Written by By Babette Herrmann Sun Editor
Friday, 07 October 2016 05:47



Red or Green? Locals know in an instant that they best select the type of chile they want smothered on their enchiladas unless they want to seem like an outsider. Go down Historic Route 66, in the heart of Gallup, and there's plenty of restaurants along the way and beyond where that's a typical question asked by servers of their customers – and the official state question.

And this normal aspect of dining out in New Mexico is one snippet from the Land of Enchantment's rich, cultural history that's woven into local historian Martin Link's new book *New Mexico Kicks on Route 66*.

Link's book takes readers on a road trip down time-honored Route 66, from the far reaches of Glenrio to the east, and Gallup to the west.

In between those boundaries, *Kicks* provides an intriguing balance of photos and the stories of the beloved highway's landmarks and its people – capturing the iconic, the picturesque, and the sometimes rusted remnants of a glorious era, stopping in such places as Santa Rosa, Tucumcari, Moriarty, Los Lunas, Albuquerque, Grants, and more.

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The 91-page coffee table-style book introduces some facts about New Mexico before taking readers on a seven-chapter road trip down 66, complete with suggestions for side trips, such as to Chaco Canyon, Zuni Pueblo, and El Morro National Monument – places in *our* neck of the woods.

Kicks may even persuade locals to take Link's New Mexico trip where the Burlington-Santa Fe's locomotives and railcars, seemingly a mile-long, chug past cloud-busting cinnabar mesas – probably one of the few places in the Southwest where you can see the front and back of a train while driving along Interstate 40.

As locals know, starting in the 1960s, the emerging I-40 slowly phased out Route 66. But the interstate serves as the gateway to places where time has stood still, like Moriarty – the town with the last operational Whiting Bros. gas station, where its fully restored sign serves as a monument to signify the end of an era.

While the book ends in Gallup, it's where Link said he embarked on this fun, investigative journey.

"I wrote the book in reverse," he said. "I wrote Chapter 7 first."

Link said it's the second book in a series about states that are lucky enough to have Route 66 as a part of their landscape. The first book, *Arizona Kicks on Route 66*, was penned by Roger Naylor. Photographer Larry Lindahl shot the stunning photos for both Naylor's and Link's books.

"He knows his art, and he knows his business," Link said of Lindahl.

Link explained that he was first approached by the distributor, Treasure Chest Books, in 2012. The inquiry stemmed from a talk he gave about Gallup at a college in Las Vegas, N.M.

No stranger to publishing, with five books already published on the Southwest, history-buff Link

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was captivated by the idea of penning a book on Route 66's tourist sites and the mystique of a bygone era.

With New Mexico's rich history, Link could have probably created another 100 pages of text and photos. But this book was meant to serve as a traveling companion, the type of book that will look good on the coffee table or the dashboard of *your* car.

Seemingly humble, and a man of few words — except if you want to talk about southwest Native Americans or the area's military history, you're bound to get a passionate earful — Link said he's "very, very happy" with the outcome of his book.

New Mexico Kicks on Route 66 retails for \$12.95, and is available at Butler's Office Equipment & Supply, USA RV Park, and Bill Malone Trading.

By Babette Herrmann

Sun Editor