

# "Highway 66 Revisited, and other places"

Allan Blunden

"It winds from Chicago to LA./More than two thousand miles all the way. . ." The Stones' *Route 66* was probably the classic "road-song", and it is more than a decade since Jagger invited us to get our kicks on *that* journey. Or I should say "trip", for in that song the word rings with all its resonances, literal and figurative: "Go take that California trip." Well now, what kind of a trip is that? A good one, so the song leads us to believe. Like all "road-songs" - like all road-culture, which now comprises considerable weight of rock and roll, novels, and movies - *Route 66* suggests that to be "out there", on the road, is to be - as they say - where it's all at.

It is a peculiarly American belief, this, a part of the American mythology (and let's keep it that way; it is fashionable to bandy the "odyssey" metaphor about, but this is misleading, if only because Odysseus had a distinctly bad trip). Of course, the call of the road and the absurd belief that travel broadens the mind are universal, but the physical circumstances of American life have obviously done much to create a myth which has proved powerful enough to nourish a whole sub-culture. In Europe travel can still be a pleasure, provided you can afford it and have had years of practice. In the USA travel is a necessity rather than a pleasure, and it is by way of compensation that so many Americans make a virtue of this necessity and romanticize the road. Thus winding from Chicago to LA is not perceived as the monstrous bore which it really is, but as a chance to get those kicks. Not just a journey, but a trip.

Travel in North America is different from travel in Europe, not only in degree but in kind too. Of course the distances are vastly greater: but this fact of itself implies other differences. Europeans measure journeys in miles (or kilometres), Americans define them by time, and a crude but instructive distinction could be made here between an objective and a subjective response. Let me explain. The measurement of a journey by distance is a measurement of what is actually out there, objectively: the miles and kilometres are a statement of space, an articulation of the actual landscape that one traverses. Such a statement is definitive and absolute. But a journey measured by time is a journey seen wholly subjectively and relatively: "how much of *my* time is this trip going to take? how soon will it all be over?" It would be fanciful - and in me, chauvinistic - to generalize and say that the sensitive Europeans are therefore more responsive to Nature and beauty than the self-centred Americans, who only want to get from A to B in order to make more money faster. . . . But it is surely true that a culture that speaks of a "six-hour-drive" perceives the experience as time passed in an automobile, rather than as units of space to be seen and enjoyed.

Not that this is surprising. The American landscape is very tedious. There is virtually no sales-drive by the US tourist industry in Europe, for the very good reason that there is not much to see in this great big wonderful country that Coca-Cola is always trying to sell. (And they would if they could.) Any 300 miles of Europe will reveal many different landscapes, and a journey of that length will not be without variety and charm. In a day one can travel right across the broadest, southern part of England, and see a dozen quite different landscapes, each expressive of a certain kind of relationship between man and his surroundings. Admittedly it costs as much in gasoline as driving from New York to Miami, but then everything has its price.

But what is there to see in 300 miles of Indiana? Or Minnesota? Or North Dakota? Three weeks after driving across England this summer, coast to coast in a day, I was on

the road for six days, from Charlottesville to Western Canada. Such a journey becomes, not just something you *do*, but the context within which you *live*. Six days, after all, is a measurable and valuable fragment of one's existence, and to spend it in a car imposes peculiar strains, on the mind as well as the body. Herein lies one of the roots of road-culture, assuredly, for in six days a new and alien way of life - living and partly living - makes itself felt. One may indeed finish the journey a different person from the one who set out, not because Illinois has wrought an epiphany, or Idaho opened the spiritual eyes, but simply because six days is time for a change. And perhaps this is the sense of *Route 66*: it isn't the 2000 miles of highway and American scenery that excite the rock and rollers, but a week lived in flux and transit. Time again, not space.

Such empty space it is in America too. Not an ever-changing dialogue between man and Nature, but an enormous monologue by Nature into which American man has screamed the broken obscenities that are his cities. Six days of flat lands only flatten the mind and spirits. It probably never was travel as such that broadened the mind, but the human experiences which used to go with it as a matter of course. As a

friend of mine put it, it isn't travel that makes people interesting but vice-versa. Whatever the discomforts and dangers associated with travel in earlier centuries, it was certainly a more social - and normal - kind of experience than can be had on *Route 66*, or indeed on Flight 505. The accounts of people who did the European Grand Tour in the 18th century are as rich as novels, but modern travel is a supreme expression of the anonymity which industrial society has created.

Nothing is more characteristic of our fallen situation than those hideous ersatz societies which punctuate highways. I don't mean the communities, of whose vitality no passing traveller is able to judge; I mean the rest-areas and restaurants, tellingly called "oases" in some parts of the continent. A desert, like home, is where you find it. A singularly nasty species is the "family restaurant", which tries to offer a dose of instant civilization to the reeling, disorientated traveller, but does it with all the finesse of a massage parlour. Such places offer not just food - in fact that is one thing they rarely do offer - but an environment: the simpering Muzak, the universal folksy

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## "A.I.E.S.E.C. a fusion of education and business experience"

by Harald Kuckertz

"It always amazes me how little the average business student is concerned whether his courses are relevant and whether the training he is getting at university will be applicable to his job once he gets out."

"Many students come out of University with perfect models and theories that don't work in the real world. A.I.E.S.E.C. provides the opportunity to students to supplement their theoretical education with business experience."

Those are the words of Bob Crockett, the president of A.I.E.S.E.C. - Edmonton. A.I.E.S.E.C. (pronounced eye-sec) is the International Association for Students of Economics and Commerce, an apolitical, non-profit, student-run organization.

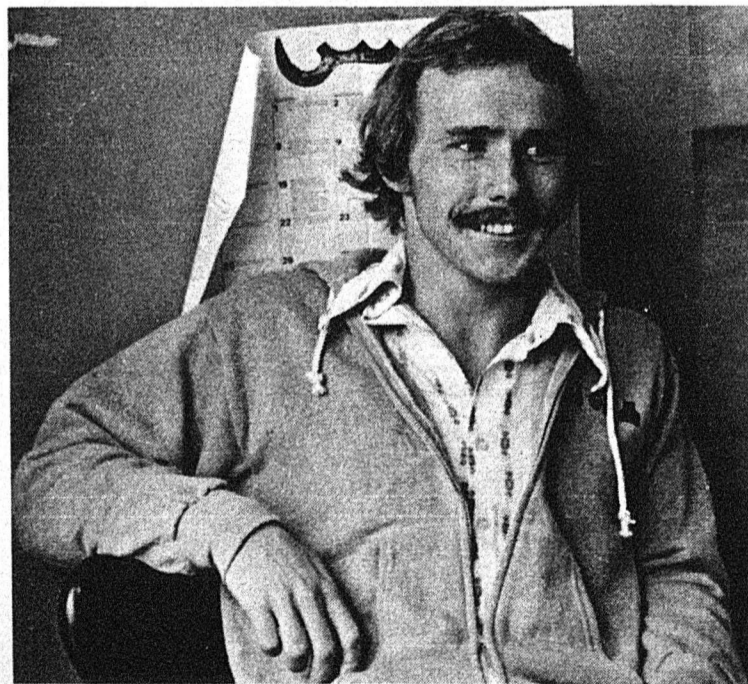
In addition to bridging the gap between the theoretical university education and the practical business world, A.I.E.S.E.C. is designed to develop an internationally educated management which can be effective in various

economic environments here and abroad.

These two objectives are achieved through an international student exchange program for students of economics and commerce and through seminars of various types whereby students can interact directly with government and business circles.

For the international student exchange, the local A.I.E.S.E.C. committee approaches the business community and solicits business-oriented jobs for visiting students. A.I.E.S.E.C. Edmonton can send one of its own members abroad in return for every job made available to visitors in Edmonton. The International Secretariat of A.I.E.S.E.C. annually matches some 4000 students and jobs by computer around the world.

At present four foreign students work in Edmonton as part of the exchange program. Over the past year a total of nine Edmonton students took part in the exchange. Four of them are still abroad.



A.I.E.S.E.C. president Bob Crockett

The major event of the coming year will be A.I.E.S.E.C.'s National Congress which will be held in Edmonton on February 6, 7, 8. During this event, executive members of other local committees across Canada and the National Committee will meet to discuss the events of the past year, outline objectives and activities for the current year and suggest recommendations or strategies for future activities.

Bob Crockett hopes to make next year's Congress the first free Congress for participants by paying for delegate fees and transportation expenses up to \$100. To raise the necessary amount of money, an estimated \$22,000, A.I.E.S.E.C. - Edmonton will operate a Casino at the Capilano Motor Inn and a Dinwoodie social in November.

An event of immediate interest is A.I.E.S.E.C.'s 4th annual Businessmen's Luncheon to be held this Friday, October 3rd, from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Edmonton Plaza Hotel.

The speakers at this luncheon include Mr. Alan G. Bleiken, The Business Development manager for the City of Edmonton, who will talk about "Edmonton's Economic Future: International Horizons." Mr. Per Wendschlag, an A.I.E.S.E.C. exchange student from Sweden, now working with the Alberta Government's Department of Regional Service, will talk about "the A.I.E.S.E.C. Experience."

One of eighteen local Canadian committees, A.I.E.S.E.C. - Edmonton has been in existence for four years and has its office in Room 305 CAB, phone 432-1453. Bob Crockett believes that his Edmonton group is "in a league of its own as far as projects and number of activities are concerned." The Edmonton Committee won a national A.I.E.S.E.C. award earlier this year as the "Top Local Committee in Canada."