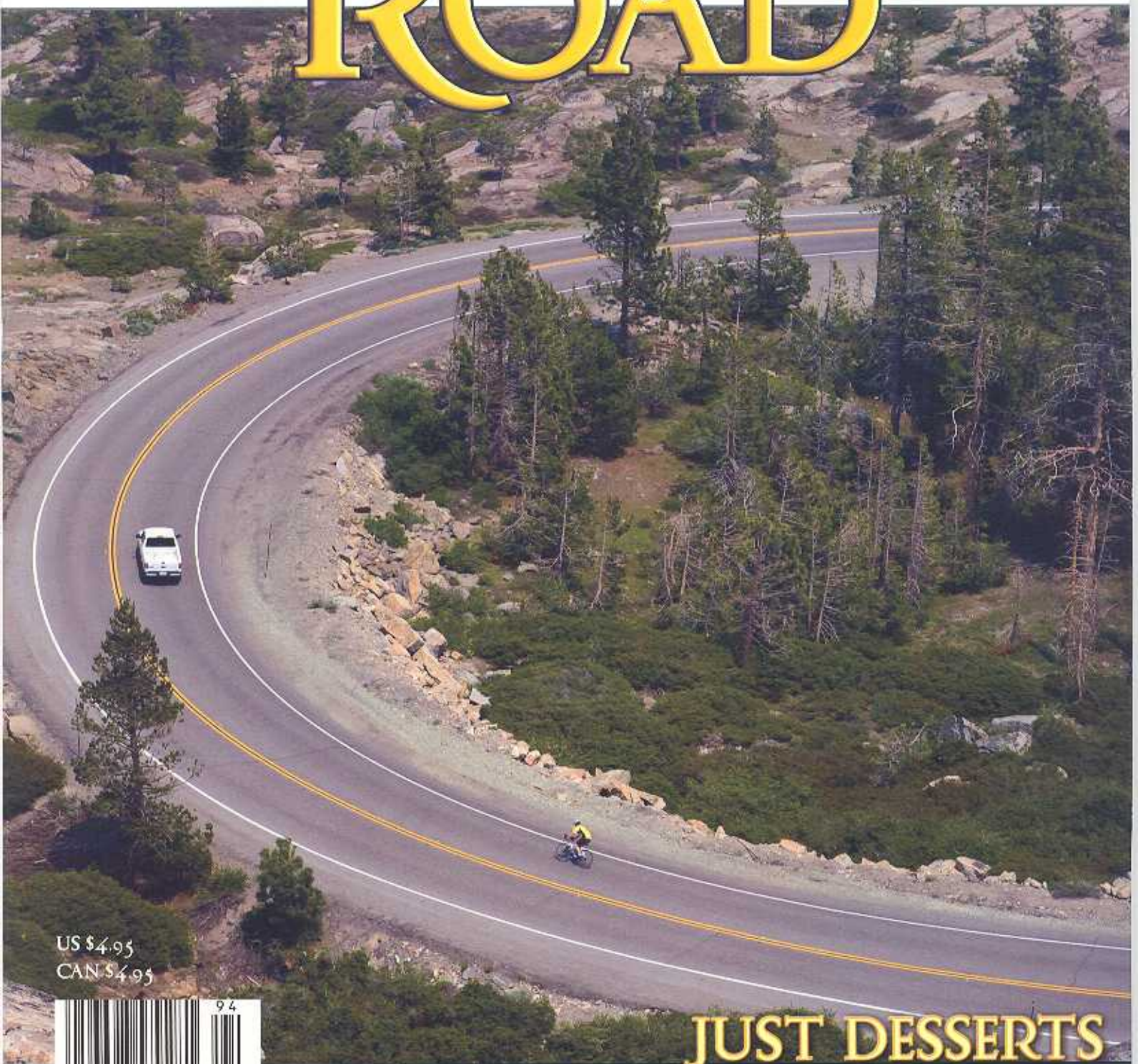


Yuba Donner Scenic Byway Duncan Hines Scenic Road US Highway 1 Potato Heads

AMERICAN ROAD

VOLUME VII NUMBER 4



US \$4.95
CAN \$4.95



JUST DESSERTS

Classic Sweet Shops Around the Road

facilities; kids can stamp chocolate coins. The Last Supper Candy Bars make great holiday treats, and there's no need to feel the pangs of a guilty Judas while enjoying one: We're sure supping on chocolate is not a sin.



Patsy's Candies

11

930 Manitou Avenue
Manitou Springs, Colorado 80829
patsycandies.com

Was the original recipe lost in a poker game? So say the stories surrounding Patsy's Candies of Manitou Springs, Colorado. According to those accounts, Irishman Patsy Mehaney dealt himself into a high stakes hand in Terre Haute, Indiana, when he found himself unable to cover the pot. Impulsively, he tossed his recipe for gourmet popcorn onto the table—and left the contest a little poorer in the popper.

Fate, however, soon dealt Mehaney better cards. In 1903 he moved to Manitou Springs, Colorado, and opened a candy shop near Manitou Springs Spa. The town had gained fame as an oasis where the aching and sick could soak their bodies in soothing mineral water. Patsy helped tourists cure what ailed them by introducing them to gourmet popcorn. He bathed his signature brand with butterscotch instead of the more commonly used burnt sugar. The taste sensation hit the jackpot.



Today, owners Jack and Ellie Johns carry on the tradition at Patsy's original store. A second location at 1540 South 21st Street in Colorado Springs houses the candy

factory and is open for tours from June through September. Visit either, and you'll walk away a winner: Patsy's butterscotch, cheddar cheese, and chocolate-covered popcorns are available by the gallon.



Jimmie's Chocolates

12

148 North Federal Highway
Dania Beach, Florida 33004
jimmieschocolates.com

In 1967 John, Paul, George, and Ringo, sang "All You Need Is Love" to a war-weary world. Down in Dania Beach, Florida, Jimmie Yonglis was already familiar with the tune. He'd beaten the Beatles to their own anthem by twenty years.

Yonglis—by all indications—was a fellow who valued his fellow man. He believed a taste of sugar sweetened the daily grind, and so he pursued a life as a chocolatier.

Jimmie opened his Dania Beach store in 1947. He so infused work with an adoration for his art that his attitude influenced future owners. After Jimmie's death, Naomi Turner—known to children as "Old Yummy"—carried on the benevolent legacy. When Turner retired, the shop was purchased by loyal patrons Rodney Harrison and Ken Smith.

Jimmie's remains the oldest chocolate shop in Florida. And although the exterior of the building retains its original charm—and an interior window permits patrons to watch the candy-making process—it's the emotion that goes into each candy that endures. Wrap yourself around the handmade truffles and crèmes or start a full-fledged affair with one of the ivory chocolates. They say all you need is love—and they may be right—but a bite of candy never hurt.

Throughout the 1950s the Saxons established stores in other parts of Alabama—along routes such as US Highways 231, 280, and 31. Most of these stores were located in older buildings leased by the company (including one on US Highway 78, which had housed a Stuckey's outlet). As Saxon's grew in popularity, the stores were remodeled to make them more visually appealing: The trademark candy cane sign and bright red roof were added to many locations.

In 1966 US Highway 431 was widened in front of Saxon's flagship store. Henry and Cora moved their headquarters to a larger facility a short distance from their original location. Rooms at the new factory included a mail order department, chocolate dipping room, packing room, shipping room, and kitchen. Around this time the Saxons purchased air-conditioned trucks that allowed candy to be shipped long distances.

At its peak, Saxon's Candy Kitchen boasted forty locations throughout Alabama and parts of Georgia and Tennessee. The success of the business led to thoughts of franchising. Then tragedy struck. On November 3, 1968, Henry Saxon passed away from injuries sustained in a wreck near Anniston, Alabama. Suddenly, Cora alone bore the burden of maintaining all aspects of the business. The strain imperiled her health, and she eventually allowed the leases on the stores to expire. Although Cora continued marketing the Saxon's brand during the 1970s—selling the candy in gift shops throughout the South and by mail order—she ultimately decided to stop marketing the Saxon's brand rather than compromise its quality.

It was the end of an era for Saxon's delectable pralines and pecan logs that travelers had grown to enjoy. It was also the close of a uniquely American story, but—happily—it wasn't the final bow for mom-and-pop-based sweet shops in America. Across the country, vintage candy stores, bakeries, and ice cream parlors continue their roadside traditions established in the 1950s, 1940s, and earlier—rolling out welcome mats that smell faintly of sugar and satisfying the most stubborn sweet tooth. ♥

AARON TANNER is a freelance writer living in Huntsville, Alabama. ALBERT ZWEGAN is a foodside contributor to *American Road*. Saxon's photos courtesy Tim Hollis. Borden's Ice Cream Shop photo courtesy John & Kris Murphey. O&H Bakery photos courtesy Ricchio & Associates, Inc. Ted Drewes photo by Denny Gibson. Patsy's Candy photo by Christine Martens. Additional photos courtesy of their respective businesses or tourism bureaus and/or convention and visitors bureaus.