

## MY TURN

# Memory parks would enhance city's prestige

In his best-selling nonfiction book, *Mayflower*, Nathaniel Philbrick writes that Edward Winslow and Stephen Hopkins left the Plymouth settlement with their guide, Squanto. As the men walked along an ancient Indian trail, they were joined by other natives who had



LES  
CONKLIN

been gathering lobsters off Cape Cod.

The Englishmen learned that to walk across the land in southern New England was to travel in time. All along the narrow, hard-packed trail were circular holes in the ground that had been dug where "any remarkable act" had occurred. It was each person's responsibility to maintain the holes and to inform fellow travelers of what had once happened at that particular place so that "many things of great antiquity



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The writer proposes that neighborhood groups, local non-profits and the city build small memory parks along Scottsdale Road. The Desert Foothills Scenic Drive is south of Jomax Road.

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Winslow and Hopkins began to see that they were traveling in a mythic land, where a sense of community extended far into the distant past. "So that as a man travelleth," Winslow wrote, "his journey will be less tedious, by reason of the many historical discourses (that) will be related unto him."

The areas near 27-mile-long Scottsdale Road have many unique and interesting stories to tell. Arabian horse farms were located near Bell Road. Settlers near Indian School grew cotton. A mine operated on Black Mountain, just north of Carefree Highway.

Now, I'm not proposing that tourists walk the 27-mile

length of Scottsdale Road and that the city dig memory holes in the pavement.

I am proposing that neighborhood organizations and local non-profits with the help of Scottsdale establish small memory parks in convenient locations along the length of Scottsdale Road. The parks would be linked to create a memory trail. The location and information about the exhibits would be provided in a pamphlet, CD, DVD or on the Web.

The Scottsdale 2000 bond program, which appropriates \$27 million to acquire, preserve and restore desert along Scottsdale Road, includes designing and enhancing portions of the road to reflect its signature status to the community.

Initial improvement plans divide Scottsdale Road into six districts. We suggest naming each district based on the history of that part of the city. A small amount of available city-owned land near Scottsdale

Road could be set aside in each district for a memory park. Prospective locations include McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park, parks near City Hall, and the Scenic Drive exhibit area south of Jomax Road.

In 1621, two Pilgrims enjoyed a remarkable traveling experience because the local inhabitants had invested their time, energy and minds to ensure that "things of great antiquity are fresh in memory." Any city or town can build a nice road. A distinctive roadside, complemented by a 27-mile-long Scottsdale memory trail, would clearly differentiate our signature road and community.

Having citizen groups do most of the work designing the exhibits would save money and result in a tourist amenity that truly reflects our community.

*Les Conklin, Scottsdale, is president of the Greater Pinnacle Peak Association and founder of Friends of the Scenic Drive.*