



LICENSE TO ROAM



AN  INTERACTIVE BOOK



van•i•tize (văn'ĭ-tīz') *tr. v.* -tized, -tiz•ing, -tiz•es.
To embellish a motor vehicle with a vanity license plate or plates. *same as* **VNTYZ** (văn'ĭ-tīz').

TOP 10½ REASONS TO VANITIZE

10. You're so vain, you probably think this license plate is about you;
9. It's fun to watch people read your vanity plate, which many will misconstrue.
8. It's easier to find vanitized vehicles in a crowded parking lot, so you won't whine;
7. Vanitized ex-governors could find their vehicles easier with plates like this one: **CLIENT-9**.
6. Vanitizing is the easiest way for a bald, overweight, middle-aged man to become a **SUPR LVR**;
5. Vanitizing lets you tell everyone you're traveling **UNDRCOVER**.
4. If you need a job, you could get this plate: **HIRE ME**;
3. If you hate your job, you should get this plate: **FIREME**;
2. If you want a spouse fast, you would get this plate: **MARRYME**.
- 1½. Vanity plates are cheaper than tattoos and...
 1. you can remove them by taking out the screws!



LICENSE TO ROAM: VANITY LICENSE PLATES AND THE GR8 STORIES THEY TELL™

An  INTERACTIVE Book

BY STEFAN J. LONCE

PROTOTYPE EDITION [8/09]
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INTERACTIVE RIDDLES

scrutinizing the *AAMVA-LCNS2ROM Vanity License Plates Survey* results (page 16). Need help? Answers to the riddles are on page 36.

LCNS2ROM is an **NTR/ACTV™**

[INTERACTIVE] book because readers can interact with vanity plates almost everywhere that motor vehicles can be found.

LCNS2ROM is also **NTR/ACTV™** because it's riddled with riddles, which are listed below. The answers to the riddles are found in *LCNS2ROM*. *Hint*: some of the riddles can be answered only by carefully

RIDDLES:

1. What is the reason for the order of the plates in the subtitle and by-line on the front cover [HI, AK, AZ, NM, OK, UT, WY, ID, WA]?
2. Two of the plates listed in "**PRE10D VNTY PL8S OF FAMOUS PEOPLE™**" (page 4) could not be issued because the plates would violate state/provincial DMV rules; can you identify the 2 plates and explain why the relevant state or provincial DMV would not issue them?
3. What is the reason for the order of the VA, NH and IL plates used in the headers for **PRFC 1** (page 5), **PRFC 2** (page 7), and the **NTRDKJN** (page 9) [Introduction]?
4. What is the reason for the order of the plates in **PRFC 1**, "HOW TO READ A VANITY LICENSE PLATE" (page 5) [VA, NH, IL, NV, MT, ME, CT, NJ, ND, VT, WI, AZ, AK, OH, HI, NC, AL, MS, ID, IA, RI, CA, MO, WV, OR, NE, CO, OK, WY, PA, FL] ?
5. What is the reason for the order of the IL, CA and VA plates on the first page of the **NTRDKJN** (page 9)?
6. The date of the photo shoot is hidden in one of the profiles; can you identify the profile and the date?
7. The last line of one of the profiles is a spoof on the last line of a famous book; can you identify the profile and the book?



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PRE10D VNTY PL8S OF FAMOUS PEOPLE™

The vanity plates listed below are fictitious, and fun, except for one: a bona fide famous person actually has one of the plates listed below. Answers are on page 34.



BIBLICAL/HISTORIC FIGURE



SINGER/ACTRESS/
"9 TO 5"



SINGER/CELEBRITY/
"THRILLER"



SINGER/CELEBRITY/
"TITANIC"



ACTRESS/CELEBRITY/
"REAL LIFE"



ACTRESS/CELEBRITY-
SHOPPER



TV HOSTESS/CELEBRITY/
"SPIN OR SOLVE"



TV HOST/CELEBRITY/
ANSWERS & QUESTIONS



BUILDER/CELEBRITY/
"YOU'RE FIRED"



SCIENTIST



ATHLETE/ICED/CELEBRITY



SENATOR'S WIFE/
FAMILY BEER BIZ



INVENTOR



INVENTORS/BROTHERS



AUTHOR/POET



ATHLETE/SLUGGER/
BAMBINO



PRESIDENT/LOG CABIN



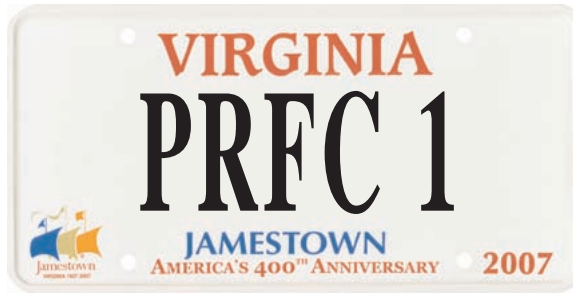
PRESIDENT/INNOVATOR/
INSPIRER-IN-CHIEF



PRESIDENT/CHARISMA/
TRAGEDY/CAMELOT



PRESIDENT/CELEBRITY
INTERN-BLUE-DRESS



HOW TO READ A VANITY LICENSE PLATE



[Vanity license plates are minimalist poetry in motion. They empower motorists to tell stories or promulgate phrases. And vanity plates are fun! EVERYONE VANITIZE!]



There are no rules for vanitized spelling, but there are certain commonalities:



often spelled phonetically;



frequently omitted – often the omitted letters are vowels;



or parts of words;



To understand vanity plates, you must be creative and think outside the box. But even if you know what a vanity plates *says*, you can't know what it *means*, unless you know the story that inspired the motorist to vanitize!



BANNED BY THE DMV?

There's a potential roadblock in the path of every motorist who wants to vanity plate: the department of motor vehicles officials who, legally, must approve all vanity plate messages.

DMVs have a legitimate interest in preventing "offensive" vanity messages, but who's to say what's "offensive"? One motorist's vanity message could be another motorist's blasphemy. Even someone's actual name could offend:

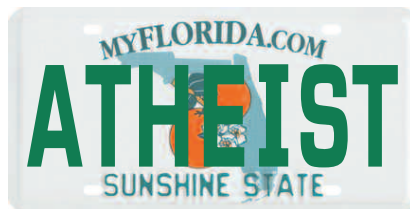
DICKBUSH would have a hard time getting his name on a vanity plate.

Some motorists are so passionate about their vanity plates that they will sue DMVs to get or keep them. That's because vanity plates allow us to publicly say... the messages that we want to convey.

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that the First Amendment's right to freedom of speech applies to license plates. Other courts have ruled that motorists have only a limited constitutional right to freedom of vanity speech, however. Courts have upheld DMV bans of vanity messages that are obscene, profane, sexually explicit, excretory-related, or derogatory to racial, ethnic or social groups.

DMVs may also constitutionally ban vanity messages that relate to alcohol or illegal drugs, or that encourage violence. Some DMVs ban **HATE** and **H8** from vanity plates. But why shouldn't a motorist be allowed to vanity plate and proclaim, **H8 2WORK?**

Each of the **VNTY PL8S** depicted on this page is controversial and potentially “offensive”; to learn which were banned by a DMV, and which weren’t, please visit www.LCNS2ROM.com/bannedbythedmv.htm.





Who's so vain?

Vanity license plates are minimalist poetry in motion. Vanity plates reflect our values of freedom, opportunity, creativity, mobility -- and fun; vanity plates have empowered American and Canadian motorists to tell almost 10 million of the shortest of stories, in eight or fewer characters.

Vanity plates are resolutely public, yet frequently enigmatic: even if you know what a vanity plate says, you cannot know what it *means* unless you know the story, or the cause, that inspired the motorist to vanitize. *LCNS2ROM* recounts some of the GR8 stories that North American motorists have told on their vanity plates.



It's obvious that the title of this book, which chronicles the vanitizing phenomenon, had to be an actual vanity plate. It's equally obvious that **LCNS2ROM** probably is the most famous vanity plate in North America: it's easy being number one when there is no competition, and there are no other famous real-life vanity plates, except for Cindy McCain's moderately famous Arizona vanity plate.

That's because vanity plates are usually seen, but not noticed. Until

November, 2007, no one even knew how many motor vehicles Americans and Canadians had vanitized.

The *American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators-LCNS2ROM Vanity License Plates Survey* revealed that Americans have vanitized 9.3 million motor vehicles, and Canadians have vanitized 440,000 vehicles; AAMVA represents the American and Canadian departments of motor vehicles. The *Survey* results are listed on page 16. In the U.S., Virginia ranks first, followed by New Hampshire, Illinois, Nevada and Montana; in Canada, Ontario is in first place, followed by Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Pennsylvania issued the first vanity plates in 1931, but limited their messages to the vehicle owners' initials. Connecticut issued the first true vanity plates in 1937, allowing motorists to create messages of up to four characters; soon the Nutmeg State's roads were replete with such vanity plates as **MAMA, PAPA, STOP, and HELP**. Today, every American state, and the District of Columbia, and every Canadian province, except Quebec and Newfoundland & Labrador, issues vanity plates.



It is uncertain who coined the term "vanity plate," but it originated in the United States in the mid-1960s. The *Britannica Book of the Year 1967* included "vanity plate" in its "new words and meanings" entries. On September 17, 1967, the *Los Angeles Times* published a story about a Californian who had a Massachusetts "vanity plate," without defining the term, suggesting that it was commonly understood, even though California didn't issue vanity plates until 1970. Today, many dictionaries define "vanity plate," but most North American DMVs call them "personalized plates," as do British, Australian and New Zealand DMVs.

"Vanity plate" is an appropriate moniker, however. License plates are the most public form of identification. Motorists with personalized plates

express their “vanity” by creating messages designed to draw attention to themselves – or at least their motor vehicles. They tell their stories, promote their causes, or promulgate their phrases, in the most abbreviated way possible – in the four to eight characters allowed on vanity plates (depending on the jurisdiction).

Although it has pejorative connotations, “vanity” can be a good thing. Without vanity, there would be no great art, music or literature, because if artists, musicians or writers didn’t want to show off their work, they wouldn’t create it.

Motorists vanitize because they have messages that they want to convey. The vanitizers profiled in *LCNS2ROM* all report that observers frequently ask them about their vanity plates, which allows them to tell their stories, or to promote their causes--or thier careers.

Vanity plates are great conversation-starters. Vanity plates can turn strangers into neighbors, and neighbors into friends, as Holly’s story about how she befriended Charlotte, after noticing Charlotte’s vanity plate, demonstrates.



Holly was visiting Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, on business, when she received the worst news that a parent can get: her 21 year old son, Brent, had died. Traveling back to her hotel during a tropical rainstorm, and numbed by grief, Holly could barely see, but she noticed Charlotte’s inspirational vanity plate: **RISN4U**. As a Christian, Holly regarded Charlotte’s vanity plate as a message that Brent was at peace; that he had gone to a “better place.”

The next time that Holly was in Myrtle Beach, she went to the DMV office to try to contact the South Carolinian who had vanitized with the **RISN4U** plate; although privacy laws prevented the DMV from releasing Charlotte’s name and address, the DMV-er with whom Holly spoke forwarded

a letter to Charlotte that Holly wrote. Charlotte, whose husband was then a minister, began a phone and email friendship with Holly, and became Holly's "personal minister," helping her overcome her grief, although they have never met in person.

"I will be forever grateful for the comfort I got from Charlotte's **RISN4U** vanity plate on that horrible night, and for the open arms that Charlotte's message bestowed. So while I love a cute plate as much as anyone (and often photograph them), it's not all about vanity," Holly wrote in an email that she sent to me after she read an Associated Press news story about the *Vanity Plates Survey* results and about *LCNS2ROM*.

Holly and Charlotte's moving story demonstrates the power of vanity plates to convey messages, which is why vanity plates



have become pop culture icons.

Vanity plates have been featured in such movies as "Back to the Future," in which Michael J.



Fox's time transporter DeLorean vehicle was vanitized with an **OUTATIME** vanity plate. On TV, one of the funniest "Seinfeld" episodes involved an **ASSMAN** New York vanity plate that was mistakenly delivered to Kramer, instead of the proctologist who ordered it.

Vanity plates even inspired a Canadian word puzzle game show, which later ran on American cable TV, called "Bumper Stumpers," in which contestants won by deciphering the messages of the vanity plates featured on the show.

Vanity plates are pop culture icons because they take mundane objects – license plates – and turn them into art, using words. Vanity plates thus resemble the work of pop artists like Andy Warhol and Jasper Johns, who turned ordinary commercial



products -- soup and beer cans, steel wool boxes, and flags -- into pop culture icons. Indeed, many state and provincial license plate designs are themselves pop art exemplars.



Vanitizing also makes it easier for motorists to find their vehicles in crowded parking lots.

Many businesses have vanitized their vehicles, because vanitizing is an inexpensive way to advertise; for taxi or livery services, vanitizing makes it easier for customers to find their vehicles, quickly.

Vanitizers often use the same kind of 21st century spelling/shorthand used in electronic messages -- emails, instant messages and text messages: **LTRZ R** omitted, **WRDZ R** spelled phonetically, **NUMBR5 R** substituted **4 WRDZ** and acronyms **R USD**. **LCNS2ROM** is a paradigm of this new form of vanitized spelling, which I call SHRTSPL™ [Shortspell].



Less space = fewer characters + more creativity.

New York Times "Language Maven" William Safire has described vanity plates as a "new language," and some vanity plates incorporate neologisms or neo-acronyms that DMV officials, who screen all vanity plate applications to prohibit "offensive" messages, don't understand.



For example, North Carolina DMV-ers recently learned how hard it is to keep up with the new text-message-lingo: the Tarheel State issued a new series of standard license plates with a **WTF** prefix; those plates were recalled once news reports revealed that **WTF** is a text message acronym for "What the F*ck"! Prisoners who manufacture license plates sometimes catch approved vanity plates with cryptic references to gangs, drugs or violence, which DMV screeners then refuse to issue.

It isn't easy being the DMV-er who has to screen vanity plate applications, or deal with complaints about already-issued vanity plates that some people find offensive. American and Canadian DMVs effectively regulate and manage almost 275 million registered motor vehicles, but it's not realistic to ask DMV-ers to decide which vanitized messages are constitutionally protected, and which aren't – especially since the U.S. Supreme Court often reverses its First Amendment rulings.

Therefore, in a *New York Times* op-ed article, I suggested that AAMVA establish a database of prohibited vanity plate messages, compiled with advice from First Amendment experts, and open to public scrutiny. I am now working with AAMVA-ites and DMV-ers to establish the vanitized database, which would make vanity plate screening more consistent -- and fairer to motorists.

Every vanity plate could potentially offend someone. Vanity plates with political or religious messages are frequently "offensive" to some, and controversial. In January 2008, the South Dakota Senate rejected a bill to abolish vanity plates; the bill was a reaction to a controversy over an anti-Bush vanity plate that said, **MPEACHW**. The South Dakota DMV had rescinded its revocation of the plate, because vanitized political messages are constitutionally protected.



Vermont prohibits all vanitized religious messages; a motorist who wanted a vanity plate that says **JN36TN**, a reference to a New Testament passage, is appealing a federal judge's decision upholding Vermont's vanity plate rules.



Specialty license plates are the first cousin of vanity plates; they promote sports teams, universities, professions, the military, organizations, and causes. In most states and provinces, specialty plates can be vanitized. The organizations that sponsor specialty plates usually receive some of the additional fees that motorists pay for the plates.

Specialty plates empower groups to express themselves, and political or religious specialty plates are often divisive.

Seventeen states issue the **CHOOSE LIFE** specialty plate, which promotes a pro-life, anti-abortion message. Choose Life, Inc., which sponsors the plate, claims to have raised \$8.6 million from plate fees.



In June 2008, South Carolina passed the first-ever religious specialty license plate, which has an image of a cross in front of a stained glass window, and the slogan, "**I BELIEVE**"; the plate is being challenged in court on constitutional grounds.

The debate over the role of religion in American public life has morphed to a new platform: license plates. In an op-ed article posted on the web site of *The State* (South Carolina's preeminent newspaper), I wrote, "[T]here's a distinction between a vanity plate with a religious message -- which is clearly the motorist's message -- and a religious special license plate. I respect the strongly held beliefs of the sponsors of the "I Believe" plate, but to some people, the plate could imply that the state is endorsing a particular religion."

Controversial vanity and specialty plates will continue to generate news. Courts will continue to refine the application of the constitutional right to freedom of speech to license plates.

License plates are more than mere vehicle identifiers; they allow us to express ourselves, and they reflect our values. Vanity license plates are fascinating and fun... vanitize, everyone!

~ Stefan Lonce
Croton-on-Hudson, NY
9/09/08



VANITY LICENSE PLATES SURVEY

U.S. State	Rank	Vanity Plate Penetration Rate 1/	No. Vanity Plates	No. Registered Motor Vehicles 2/
Virginia	1	16.19%	1,065,217	6,578,773
New Hampshire	2	13.99%	171,438	1,225,075
Illinois	3	13.41%	1,293,157	9,645,590
Nevada	4	12.73%	174,682	1,372,652
Montana	5	9.80%	100,975	1,030,169
Maine*	6	9.79%	107,000	1,093,341
Connecticut*	7	8.14%	250,000	3,072,562
New Jersey	8	6.88%	429,199	6,239,518
North Dakota	9	6.51%	45,793	702,888
Vermont	10	6.11%	31,818	520,518
Wisconsin	11	5.40%	267,051	4,948,758
Arizona	12	5.16%	207,875	4,027,534
Alaska	13	4.99%	34,068	682,892
Ohio	14	4.79%	514,996	10,755,809
Hawaii	15	4.07%	38,695	950,185
North Carolina	16	4.05%	248,405	6,137,578
Alabama	17	4.00%	183,508	4,584,413
Mississippi	18	3.87%	76,208	1,969,317
Idaho*	19	3.84%	54,000	1,406,338
Iowa	20	3.72%	130,011	3,493,728
Rhode Island	21	3.67%	30,341	827,712
California	22	3.49%	1,136,772	32,592,000
Missouri	23	3.45%	160,025	4,633,733
Kansas*	24	3.33%	80,000	2,403,176
West Virginia	25	3.19%	42,204	1,324,001
Oregon	26	3.16%	91,239	2,889,356
Nebraska	27	3.16%	53,497	1,692,587
Colorado	28	3.01%	56,707	1,881,368
Oklahoma	29	2.97%	110,797	3,724,320
Wyoming	30	2.94%	19,351	657,248
Pennsylvania*	31	2.80%	280,000	10,014,167
Florida	32	2.74%	435,452	15,881,147
Michigan	33	2.55%	212,809	8,354,659
District of Columbia	34	2.55%	5,697	223,841
New York	35	2.43%	287,382	11,802,755
Delaware	36	2.40%	17,803	741,031
Utah	37	1.99%	44,462	2,229,008
Maryland	38	1.89%	81,978	4,347,895
New Mexico	39	1.69%	26,075	1,543,091
Washington	40	1.53%	87,333	5,694,318
Arkansas	41	1.53%	29,972	1,960,315
Georgia	42	1.50%	121,536	8,081,145
Minnesota	43	1.50%	72,050	4,787,646
South Dakota*	44	1.39%	12,200	878,667
South Carolina	45	1.35%	45,213	3,345,346
Massachusetts	46	1.19%	65,238	5,485,319
Kentucky	47	1.08%	37,013	3,434,687
Louisiana	48	0.98%	37,145	3,777,149
Indiana	49	0.96%	47,883	4,999,596
Tennessee	50	0.87%	43,258	4,999,211
Texas	51	0.56%	97,315	17,347,615
TOTAL		3.82%	9,292,843	242,991,747

1/ The "Vanity Plate Penetration Rate" is the percentage of registered motor 

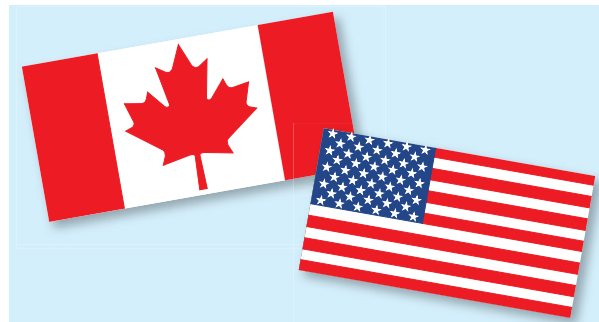
CANADA Province/Territory 1/	Rank	Vanity Plate Penetration Rate 2/	No. Vanity Plates	No. Registered Motor Vehicles 3/
Ontario	1	4.59%	334,121	7,271,566
Saskatchewan	2	2.69%	19,751	735,024
Manitoba	3	1.96%	13,074	668,370
Yukon	4	1.79%	511	28,522
Northwest Territories*	5	1.75%	400	22,828
Alberta*	6	1.73%	45,000	2,605,063
New Brunswick	7	1.42%	6,931	487,761
Prince Edward Island	8	1.15%	952	82,885
Nova Scotia*	9	0.90%	5,000	553,651
British Columbia	10	0.59%	15,360	2,607,261
TOTAL		2.93%	441,100	15,062,931

1/ The following jurisdictions do not issue personalized ("vanity") plates: New Foundland and Labrador, Quebec and Nunavut.

2/ The "Vanity Plate Penetration Rate" is the percentage of registered motor vehicles, as defined in footnote 3, that are "vanitized" (which means, "to embellish a motor vehicle with vanity license plates").

3/ All registered motor vehicles, excluding buses, trailers and off-road, construction and farm vehicles. Source: Statistics Canada, Motor vehicle registrations, by province and territory [2006]. (<http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/trade14a.htm>)

* DMVs from these provinces and territories reported estimated or rounded numbers of the vanity plates that they have issued.



vehicles, as defined in footnote 2, that are "vanitized" (which means, "to embellish a motor vehicle with vanity license plates").

2/ Privately owned and commercial automobiles, trucks and motorcycles in 2005. Source: Federal Highway Administration, Highway Statistics 2005, Table MV-1 (<http://fhwa.inet.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/ohim/hs05/htm/mv1.htm>)

* DMVs from these states reported estimated or rounded numbers of the vanity plates that they have issued.

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OUR AMERICAN CONSTITUTION, VANITIZED!



Photo by: HANUMAN, courtesy Flickr.

Mike Wilkins proved that vanity plates are pop culture icons. Using 51 actual vanity plates – one from each state, and one from D.C. – Wilkins recited the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution [“We the people... ”], to celebrate its bicentennial, in 1987.

Nissan Motor Co. donated “Preamble” to the Smithsonian American Art Museum, where it is one of the most popular artworks on display.

Wilkins persuaded officials from every American DMV to issue actual “pretend” vanity plates for “Preamble,” which he attached to an 8-foot square vinyl, dashboard-like canvas. “Actual [vanity] plates added authenticity, and

part of the conceptual part of the work is having to convince 51 separate [DMVs] ...that it is a good idea,” Wilkins said.

Every American auto and oil company Wilkins approached rejected his proposal to purchase “Preamble” and donate it to the Smithsonian, whose curators wanted the work. Finally, with help from a friend at Nissan’s ad agency, Wilkins approached the Japanese car company, whose officials presciently recognized that vanity plates are American cultural icons. Today, Nissan is pioneering the development of zero emission electric motor vehicles.

As Wilkins intended, the vanity plates in “Preamble” make people think; it’s the only artwork he ever created. He is an author (with Doug Kirby and Ken Smith) of *Roadside America*, (www.roadsideamerica.com) a book and web site that catalog “offbeat tourist attractions.” He hasn’t found any vanity plate museums...yet.



WIMOWEH

JAY SIEGEL



Jay Siegel's vanity plate makes people sing. Jay was an original member of the "Tokens," whose 1961 world-wide hit song was, "The Lion Sleeps Tonight"; his vanity plate is the song's chorus, **WIMOWEH**.

"Almost everyone knows the words and melody to 'Lion,' which is an 'ear-worm' – a catchy song that people replay in their minds. Sometimes people see my vanity plate and start singing," Jay said, smiling broadly.

After hearing a recording of an African folk song about a lion, whose chorus sounded like "wimoweh," Pete Seeger recorded a folk version of "Lion"; the Tokens later recorded it in their signature "doo wop" style, with its mellifluous harmonies, rhythm and blues beat, and nonsense syllables.

Just 22 in 1961, Jay realized that a career as a singer was uncertain, so he segued into music production and management; he produced such hits as "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Around the Old Oak Tree." His musical talent and



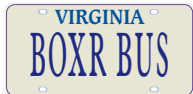


business acumen enabled him to afford to marry his college sweetheart, Judy, to whom he remains totally devoted – a rarity in show biz.

Half a century after he began singing professionally, Jay still performs about 100 concerts a year with his group, Jay Siegel and the Tokens. His passion and talent inspire concert-goers; his audiences rise ... and become a chorus; they smile as they sing, "In the jungle, the mighty jungle..." with Jay leading them through encore after encore.

Jay Siegel makes people sing, and they like it.





It's doubtful that Rin Tin Tin or Lassie had it as good as Melissa and Jason Ferrari's dogs, Enzo and Testarossa.

When Melissa and Jason lived in a small apartment, they realized that their beloved Boxer, Enzo, needed more space, so they bought him a house. Then they realized that Enzo was lonely, so they bought him a playmate...Testarossa. Then they realized that they needed a bigger vehicle, so they bought the dogs a SUV.

"One day Jason and I were driving, and the dogs were looking out the window, which reminded us of kids on a school bus. We realized that we should vanitize with a plate that says **BOXR BUS**," Melissa explained.

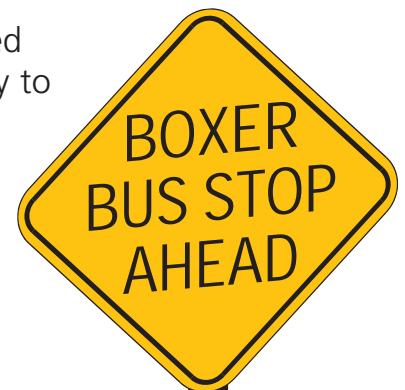
Ferraris are luxurious Italian sports cars, famous for their power, speed and style; Enzo and Testarossa are named after Ferrari models. Melissa and Jason have high aspirations – and a keen sense of double entendre. But





what matters most to them is the happiness of their beloved canines, whose gentle dispositions and playfulness bring joy to all who encounter them.

Melissa, who is an editor and communications professional, and Jason, a hospital technician, are relative newly-weds. They will start a family soon, but, for now, according to Jason, "Boxers rule!"





ALLY & RUDY MASRY



Allison Masry is always with her husband, Rudolph, even when they're miles apart. That's because, in 2003, Ally donated a kidney to Rudy, who suffered from end stage renal failure. Ally's vanity plate proclaims, **DONOR**, and Rudy's proclaims, **DONEE**.

"It was almost kind of selfish on my part to donate a kidney to Rudy. He was on dialysis three times each week, and it controlled our lives," Ally said, modestly, but candidly. Later, she admitted that she donated a kidney to Rudy, "because I love him."

A couple since 1965, Ally and Rudy met at work. She was a textile designer in a family-owned business; he was a new salesman. She just wanted to be left alone after breaking up with a boyfriend; he was intensely smitten. She finally agreed to date him, but





only if they went to see the new Beatles movie, “HELP” – she is a huge Beatles fan. They have been holding hands ever since.

Any observer can see that, after more than four decades of marriage, Ally and Rudy are still best friends. “We’re both retired, Ally is almost always with me, and, I still adore her after all these years,” Rudy said, as he and Ally kissed, and then smiled at each other.



No. 081507

EMILY PERL KINGSLEY

RAFLPRIZ

No. 081507



When opportunity knocks at her door, Emily Kingsley answers it. In 2004, Emily found opportunity at a Special Olympics fundraiser when she won the raffle prize, a BMW convertible, which she vanitized with this message: **RAFLPRIZ**.

Thirty years earlier, Jason, Emily's only child, was born with Down syndrome, a genetic accident that affects one in 800 births. Emily and her husband, Charles, rejected medical "advice" that they institutionalize Jason. Instead, they found opportunity in adversity, took Jason home, and raised him. Today, Jason lives in a group home and holds a job.

"We learned about 'Early Intervention,' which involves intense activity to stimulate kids physically and mentally, and realized that we could raise Jason," Emily, an Emmy



award-winning writer for “Sesame Street” said, excitedly.

Emily and Charles, who died in 1997, constantly taught Jason and surrounded him with sounds and bright colors. It worked... Jason is smart; he appeared on “Sesame Street” and other TV shows; he learned to read when he was four; he was good at math, better than many “normal” kids.

But then adversity struck again, and the normal kids surpassed Jason academically. Emily and Charles found new opportunities to teach Jason, who graduated from high school with an academic diploma.

According to Jason, “People with disabilities can learn! I think of my abilities, not my disability.” Emily agrees: “My car was a raffle prize, but Jason is the real prize of my life!”





WHISTLER

STEVE "THE WHISTLER" HERBST

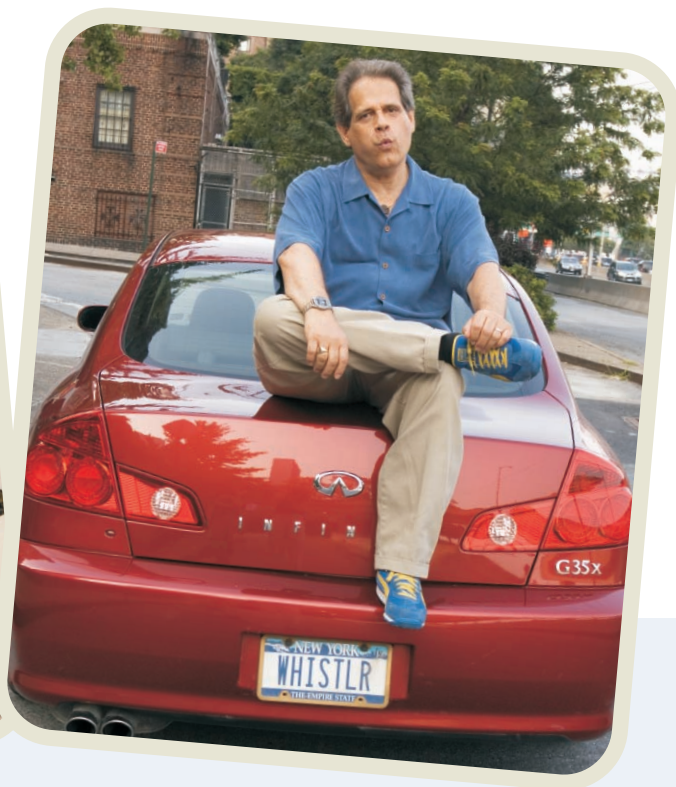


Like Rodney Dangerfield, Steve Herbst gets no respect. A retired ad man who is now a professional whistler, Steve regularly encounters the ignorance and indifference of people who have never heard him whistle. He has suffered such indignities as being invited to appear on a radio show, only to be mocked by the shock jock hosts.

But when Steve whistles, people listen; when he whistles something classical, listeners who close their eyes and concentrate on the sounds think that they are hearing a fine woodwind instrument, being played by a master musician.

It's no exaggeration to say that Steve is a master musician. Entirely self-taught, he has developed a whistling style that mimics instruments. Steve has performed at Carnegie Hall, in national ad campaigns, on TV, and in the movie "Pucker Up." He has had his **WHISTLER** vanity plate since 1988.

"During the 'Golden Age of Whistling,' which lasted from the 1930's until the 1950's, whistlers toured with bands, performed as soloists, and were



respected as musicians. It's important to me that people refer to my work as 'music,' rather than just as 'whistling,'" Steve said.

Besides his talent and musical range, what's most striking about Steve is the joy that his face conveys when he whistles. So he whistles on ... a boat against the musical current, borne back ceaselessly into the whistling past.



PRE10D VNTY PL8S OF FAMOUS BOOKS, MOVIES & TV SHOWS™

The vanity plates listed below are fictitious – but the plates with ** were featured in a famous book, movie or TV show. Answers are on page 35.



MOVIE:
GALACTIC BATTLES



MOVIE:
CHILLING/DRAMA



MOVIE:
STEAMY-LEGAL-DRAMA



TV SHOW:
NEWS/HARD-HITTING



Book/MOVIE:
FAMOUS OFFER



TV SHOW:
"SORRY 'BOUT THAT CHIEF."



****TV SHOW:**
COMEDY ABOUT "NOTHING"



MOVIE:
HISTORICAL/DIXIE



TV SHOW/MOVIE:
CULT CLASSIC/VULCAN



TV SHOW:
VANITIZED WORD GAME



****MOVIE:**
SUPERNATURAL/COMEDY



TV SHOW:
1980s/FAMILY/DRAMA



Book/TV SERIES:
CANADIAN ORPHAN



****TV SHOW:**
REALITY/IMPROVEMENT/GAY



****TV SHOW:**
TALKING CAR & HASSELHOFF



TV SHOW:
TOP 10 LIST



****MOVIE:**
TIME TRAVEL



****MOVIE:** CALIFORNIA-
CRUISING/"U.S. SCRIBBLES"



****TV SHOW:**
LATE-NIGHT/COOL



MOVIE:
THEME SONG/WICKED WITCH



FDR WAS VANITIZED!

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a GR8 communicator. So it's no surprise that FDR was vanitized: He had Georgia plates that said **FDR** on cars he kept at the "Little White House" in Warm Springs, where he established a rehabilitation center for polio victims.

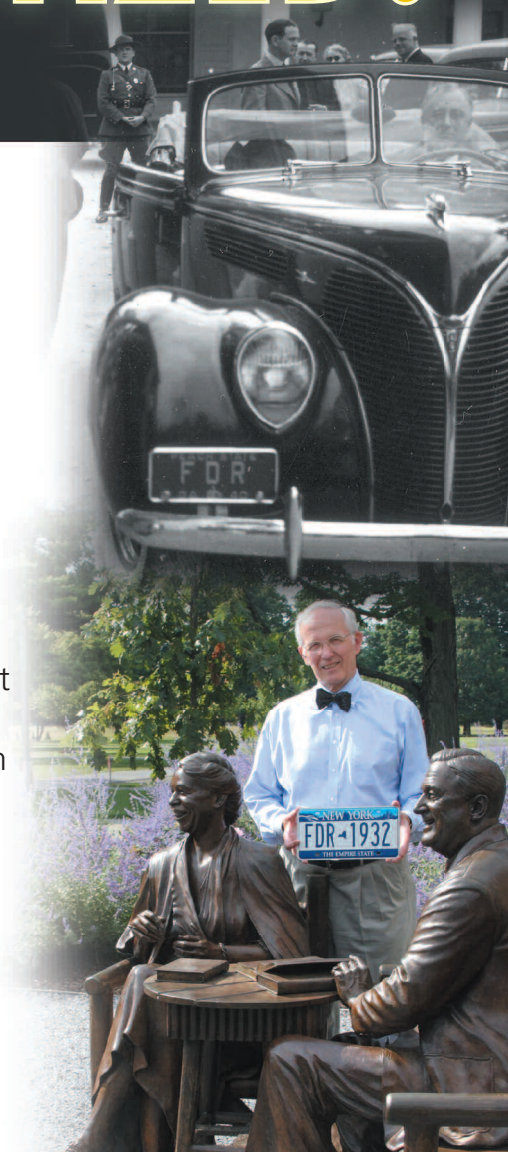
FDR triumphed over personal adversity: Although he never walked without assistance after he caught polio in 1921, FDR forced himself to learn to walk well enough, while wearing steel leg braces, to create the impression that he could walk.

Because he was paralyzed from the waist down, FDR had special hand controls installed on cars at his homes in Warm Springs and in Hyde Park, New York, enabling him to drive.

According to Dr. Christopher Breiseth, the former president of the Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, "You get a vanity license plate to send a message. FDR's vanity plates were a form of self-expression and empowerment, and driving the specially equipped cars was liberating for him."

Chris is vanitized: People who see his **FDR 1932** plate are often inspired to talk about the New Deal, or the War, or Eleanor... or Fala. After all, Chris vanitized to encourage people who see his plate to talk about FDR.

FDR would have liked that.



Free Speech on Wheels

By STEFAN LONCE
Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y.

THE latest license plate controversy erupted last month when the South Carolina Legislature passed America's first-ever religious specialty license plate, with the slogan "I believe" and the image of a cross over a stained-glass window. The plate is being challenged in court by a group that promotes the separation of church and state.

The challengers have a point. Specialty plates are approved by state legislators, so a message or slogan can easily be construed as an official endorsement. States shouldn't get out of the specialty plate business altogether. They are a huge source of state income. (For instance, in Nevada they brought in \$3.8 million last year.) But I don't think states should issue specialty plates with religious or political messages.

The good news is that an acceptable forum for this kind of self-expression already exists: vanity plates. And what's better, federal courts have consistently ruled that they are protected under the First Amendment.

But if we're going to let vanity plates flourish, we need to reform the way they are approved. Americans love these plates; 9.3 million motor vehicles have them, which puts a tremendous burden on motor vehicle departments that must screen all applications. Deciphering, evaluating and potentially rejecting a "vanitized" message because it could be construed as offensive places department officials in an awkward position. What we need is a database where requests can be logged and evaluated by experts.

A national database of prohibited vanity plate messages, created with advice from First Amendment experts and open to public scrutiny, would help alleviate some of the problems of defining what's offensive. The database could be created and maintained by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, which represents American motor vehicle departments. Motorists would be charged a small fee to cover the cost of the database, which department officials would consult when reviewing applications.

And it can't come soon enough. In January, the South Dakota Senate rejected a bill to abolish vanity plates. The proposal was motivated by an anti-Bush vanity plate that proclaimed MPEACHW. In New York, a vehicle owner is suing in federal court to force the state's Department of Motor Vehicles to reverse its decision to revoke his vanity plate, which says GETOSAMA. And in Vermont, a motorist who requested a plate that says JN36NT (a reference to a New Testament passage) is appealing a federal judge's decision upholding the state's prohibition against religious messages on vanity plates.

Very few vanity or, for that matter, specialty plates are controversial; most are just creative and fun. As long as we have a reliable method for deciding what's allowed and what isn't, I say the more, the merrier.

Stefan Lonce, the editor of The Montauk Sun, is working on a book about vanity license plates.

What does Sanford believe about license plates?

By STEFAN LONCE - Guest Columnist

License plates are more than mere vehicle identifiers: They reflect our values and our political beliefs. South Carolinians will soon learn how controversial religious messages on license plates can be.

On May 22, the General Assembly unanimously passed a bill authorizing a Christian special license plate, which would have images of a cross and a church stained glass window and the slogan "I Believe." There would be no extra fee for the "I Believe" plate if Gov. Mark Sanford signs the bill into law.

The American Jewish Congress, which strongly advocates separation of religion and state, has urged Gov. Sanford to veto the bill.

Like death and taxes, it's a certainty that South Carolina would be sued if it issues the "I Believe" plate. The plate would apparently be the first U.S. license plate with explicitly religious images (other than university logos that incorporate religious symbols). South Carolina is the only state that lost a lawsuit over the "Choose Life" special license plates, which have an explicitly pro-life, anti-abortion message.

Special license plates honor universities, sports teams, regions, professions, the military and causes. Although motorists would have to request the "I Believe" plate, a court could find that it implies that the state is endorsing a particular religion, and violates the First Amendment.

Vanity plates with religious messages are frequently controversial. Vermont prohibits all religious messages on vanity plates; a motorist sued when the Vermont DMV refused to issue him a vanity plate that says "JN36NT" — a reference to a New Testament passage. The motorist is appealing a federal judge's dismissal of his lawsuit.

I think that there's a distinction between a vanity plate with a religious message — which is clearly the motorist's message — and a religious special license plate. I respect the strongly held beliefs of the sponsors of the "I Believe" plate, but to some people, the plate could imply that the state is endorsing a particular religion.

To be constitutional, South Carolina would have to allow other religions to apply for special license plates, and then state legislators would have to decide which religion would get which plate. What if different branches of the same religion apply for its special plate? South Carolina already issues a special plate honoring secular humanism — but is secular humanism a "religion"? Would atheists be entitled to a special plate that says "I Don't Believe"?

To close the state's budget deficit, the General Assembly cut spending, including for the Department of Corrections, which is running a \$4.3 million deficit this year. Legislators did not consider the potential costs of defending litigation over the "I Believe" plate, although members of the House Education and Public Works Committee were assured that it is constitutional. Still, the House amended the bill to strengthen the state's legal position in court.

Florida legislators, recognizing the "I Believe" plate's potential legal problems, did not pass it.

Gov. Sanford is famously frugal with taxpayer dollars, and should consider that the "I Believe" plate would raise no revenue, but would cost the state to defend in court. License plates reflect our values, and our politics.

Mr. Lonce is author of the forthcoming book LCNS2ROM — License to Roam: Vanity License Plates and the GR8 Stories They Tell (www.LCNS2ROM.com) and editor of the Montauk Sun in New York.

Vanity plates: Poetry in motion or ego on wheels?

By Dena Potter
The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — URSOVAIN, Virginia.

You, too, New Hampshire and Illinois. A state-by-state survey of the popularity of vanity license plates has found that car and truck owners in Virginia are the vainest of them all.

Of the 9.3 million personalized plates on U.S. roads, about 1 in 10 are in Virginia, according to rankings provided by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA).

That's 16% of the plates issued by Virginia. New Hampshire came in second with nearly 14%. Illinois had about 13.4%, amounting to nearly 1.3 million plates, the most of any state. Texas had the fewest, with only about 0.5% of drivers personalizing their plates.

Kathy Carmichael's plate says COFENUT, although she is down to just three cups of java a day from eight to 10. "It's a personality thing," says Carmichael, 58, a real estate agent who lives near Richmond. "You get to know something about the person in front of you or who passes you."

Stefan Lonce calls it "minimalist poetry in motion" — telling a story in eight or fewer characters. Lonce, author of the upcoming book *LCNS2ROM — License to Roam: Vanity Plates and the Stories They Tell*, worked with AAMVA to survey vehicle licensing agencies in each state. "A lot of people have stories to tell, and they really want pieces of those stories out there," he says.

Ion Bogdan Vasi, an assistant sociology professor at Columbia University, calls people who personalize their plates "the narcissistic-materialist poets of the 'I' generation. ... They want to tell the world they are special. They wrote an ode to themselves and they want to share it with everybody on the highway."


Why does Virginia have so many personalized plates? "It's only \$10. You can do it online with little effort," says Benjamin Mace, a Virginia Beach Web designer who started CoolPI8z.com, where people post pictures of their vanity plates.

POLITICAL PLATES

A political candidate could use vanity plates with a campaign slogan, and, by using a very short vanitized message, could allow supporters to get vanity plates with the slogan (by adding different digits to the slogan). The candidate would vanitize with the slogan plate, generating free, positive media coverage, and by demonstrating his/her creativity, be more likely to win.

Here are some examples of political campaign posters that use vanity plate slogans:

JOHN SMITH
4 GOVERNOR



CRE-8
OPPORTUNITY!

www.ONEVA09.com

JANE DOE
4 GOVERNOR



TAKE BACK
OUR FUTURE!

www.TBOF09.com

Answers to PRE10D VNTY PL8S OF FAMOUS PEOPLE™ From Page 4

The Arizona MS BUD vanity plate belongs to potential First Lady Cindy McCain; the other plates are fictitious.



ABRAHAM



DOLLY PARTON



MICHAEL JACKSON



CELINE DION



PARIS HILTON



WYNONA RYDER



VANNA WHITE



ALEX TREBEK



DONALD TRUMP



ALBERT EINSTEIN



WAYNE GRETSKY



CINDY MCCAIN



THOMAS EDISON



ORVILLE & WILBUR
WRIGHT



EDGAR ALLEN POE



BABE RUTH



ABRAHAM LINCOLN



FRANKLIN D.
ROOSEVELT



JOHN F. KENNEDY



BILL CLINTON

Answers to

PRE10D VNTY PL8S OF FAMOUS BOOKS, MOVIES & TV SHOWS™

From Page 28 (**Vanity Plate was featured in a famous book, movie or TV show.)



STAR WARS



TITANIC



BODY HEAT



60 MINUTES



THE GODFATHER



GET SMART



***SEINFELD*



GONE WITH THE WIND



STAR TREK



BUMPER STUMPERS



***GHOSTBUSTERS*



EIGHT IS ENOUGH



ANNE OF GREEN GABLES



***QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY*



***KNIGHT RIDER*



LATE NIGHT WITH DAVID LETTERMAN



***BACK TO THE FUTURE*



***AMERICAN GRAFITTI*



LAST CALL WITH CARSON DALY



THE WIZARD OF OZ



Answers To INTERACTIVE RIDDLES From Page 2.

1. The plates in the subtitle and by-line on the front cover are the most recently admitted states, in reverse chronological order [HI, AK, AZ, NM, OK, UT, WY, ID, WA].
2. The 2 plates listed in "**PRE10D VNTY PL8S OF FAMOUS PEOPLE™**" that could not be issued are the South Carolina **1 GOD** plate (SC does not allow special license plates, like the forthcoming **I BELIEVE** plate, to be vanitized) and the Quebec **LNG NCK** plate (Quebec doesn't issue vanity plates).
3. The VA, NH and IL plates are used in the headers for **PRFC 1**, **PRFC 2**, and the **NTRDKJN** [Introduction] because that is the ranking of the top 3 states in the *AAMVA-LCNS2ROM Vanity License Plates Survey*.
4. The order of the plates in **PRFC 1**, "HOW TO READ A VANITY LICENSE PLATE" is the ranking of the top 32 states in the *AAMVA-LCNS2ROM Vanity License Plates Survey* [VA, NH, IL, NV, MT, ME, CT, NJ, ND, VT, WI, AZ, AK, OH, HI, NC, AL, MS, ID, IA, RI, CA, MO, KS, WV, OR, NE, CO, OK, WY, PA, FL].
5. The IL, CA and VA plates on the first page of the **NTRDKJN** represent the ranking, by absolute numbers of vanity plates issued, of the top 3 states in the *AAMVA-LCNS2ROM Vanity License Plates Survey*.
6. The date of the **RAFLPRIZ** photo shoot is hidden in the profile header: 08-15-07.
7. The last line of the **WHISTLR** profile spoofs the last line of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."



LCNS2ROM author Stefan Lonce with the most famous vanity license plate in North America.

Stefan is also creating a series of **PRE10D VNY PL8S™** for each state, to be used on postcards, clothing and other platforms. Below are examples of the first two plates as postcards.



van•i•tize (văn'ĭ-tīz') *tr. v.* -tized, -tiz•ing, -tiz•es. To embellish a motor vehicle with a vanity license plate or plates. *same as* VNTYZ (văn'ĭ-tīz').



Read inside to learn the identity of the famous person who has vanitized with this VNTY PL8!



[VANITIZED GAMES™]

The motorists who have vanitized with these plates below are profiled in *LCNS2ROM*: *Add the missing LTRZ to complete the PL8S*



This vanitizer puckers up to make music.

This VNTY PL8 celebrates winning a convertible in a contest.



This VNTY PL8 is a school vehicle filled with dogs.

Match up these

PRE10D VNTY PL8S OF FAMOUS PEOPLE™

George Washington
Gerald Ford
Herbert Hoover
George W. Bush

