

# BIRTH OF A BOOK

by Stefan Lonce

## CELEBR8!

### RONALD REAGAN & 40 YRS OF CA VNTY PL8S

Many of you, if not most of you, know I'm in the process of writing a book entitled *LCNS2ROM-LICENSE TO ROAM: VANITY LICENSE PLATES AND THE GR8 STORIES THEY TELL* ([www.VanityPlatesBook.com](http://www.VanityPlatesBook.com)). What I thought would be a cute and fun book about the stories behind vanity license plates (and it is still cute and fun) has mushroomed into so much more. I've grown to see (and am trying to make others see, including our elected officials), that besides being great conversation starters and fun puzzles to solve during a drive, they can be money-makers for cash strapped states.

So, this is what I think Ronald Reagan would do on August 21st if he were alive today: He'd CELEBR8 the 40th birthday of California's vanity license PL8S.

On August 21, 1970, at a ceremony dominated by an image of a mock vanity PL8 that said **CLEAN**, Governor Reagan signed S. 262, which authorized California to issue vanity PL8S, into law. The bill provided that the fees from "Environmental License Plates," as California's vanity PL8S are called, are paid to a fund that helps preserve the environment.

Governor Reagan understood that vanity PL8S are minimalist poetry in motion that empower motorists to tell the shortest of stories, to promote causes, to make us laugh and to make us think.

On October 26, 1970, Gov. Reagan personally presented the first California vanity PL8, which

said **AMIGO**, to the motorist who had ordered it. Although Ronald Reagan never vanitized, Nancy did: her PL8 said **111NDR** (I'm trying to find out what the 111 means, the NDR, of course, her initials).

Today, with about 1.1 million "vanitized" motor vehicles, California ranks 22nd among the states in vanity PL8S. California allows up to seven characters on a vanity PL8, and charges \$49 during the first year, and \$38 annually thereafter.

I hope to celebrate the 40th birthday of California vanity PL8S in the Golden State: I have written to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, CA DMV Director George Valverde, and Reagan Library Director R. Duke Blackwood, suggesting that they hold an event on August 21st. The Reagan Library would sell many copies of its mock CA vanity PL8, which says **GIPPER** and sports a photo of California's vanitizing governor. The Library also has a portrait of Reagan, and portraits of the other presidents, created out of old license PL8S!

February 6, 2011 will be the 100th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's birth, and the Reagan Library is gearing up 2 CELEBR8. It would B GR8 to kick off the Reagan Centennial Year with an event celebrating Ronald Reagan, California vanity PL8S, and the environment, which would attract national media coverage.

If Reagan were alive today, I'm certain he'd agree with me that states should promote vanity PL8S... because they need the money! My proposal - to give DMVs vanity PL8 marketing budgets, and to allow them to keep part of the annual fees from new vanity PL8S (to be used for driver and vehicle safety education and training DMV personnel to better serve motorists) is very Reagan-esque.

Gov. Schwarzenegger held an event on June 30th promoting California's Arts special PL8S, which helps fund art projects; the Gubernator stood in front of a curtain that depicted a mock CA Arts PL8 that said **ART LVR**. He understands that in these tough economic times, a state can use

license plates to help raise needed funds.

Here's my idea for a project for California's governor, who is term limited will leave office in six months: promote vanity PL8S and redesign the CA standard PL8, which is plain and boring. California could emulate South Carolina and Texas, which chose their new standard PL8 designs in online votes.

If California were to issue a really attractive PL8, it could copyright it and license the design for souvenirs, post cards, etc. That's an idea that Reagan would embrace.

## **crossroads music** instruments lessons rentals repairs

We Carry a Full Line of:

Guitars • Amps • Musical Accessories  
Songbooks • Band Instrument Rentals  
Sound Equipment for Your Next Event

We Offer:

Personalized Instruction (Including Voice)  
Instructors for Sound and Mixing  
Just About Anything Associated with the Music Business

All in an Open & Inviting Musical Atmosphere

A Proud Sponsor of:  
**Montauk Music Festival™**  
East of Napeague

160 Main Street  
Amagansett, NY 11930  
631.907.4838  
[www.crossroadsmusicstore.com](http://www.crossroadsmusicstore.com)

# Memory Motel

- World Famous Bar
- Live Music
- Reasonable Rates
- One Block from Ocean Beach
- In the Center of Montauk's Historic Village
- Golf, Hiking, Bicycling, Boat Rentals, Miniature Golf, Horse Back Riding, Jet Skiing all Nearby



**Every Wednesday:**

**Karaoke with Big Rich - 10pm**

**See the Center Spread for  
more Entertainment Dates!**

692 Montauk Highway (Main St.) • Montauk, NY 11954  
631-668-2702: Main • 631-668-6392: Fax

# MONTAUKET

HOTEL • RESTAURANT • BAR

88 FIRESTONE RD. • MONTAUK  
668-5992

**LUNCH SERVED 12-2, SAT. & SUN. 12-3  
DINNER SERVED STARTING AT 5:30**

Enjoy the Sunsets! Overlooking  
Gardiner's Island and Fort Pond Bay

**Happy Hour Everyday: 3-5pm**

Live Music with Jetty Koon  
Every Thursday at 6pm

**TO VIEW OUR MENU, GO TO:  
[www.montauksun.com/Montauket/](http://www.montauksun.com/Montauket/)**