

Arizona License Plate Society

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Name: J.R. Bloom
Birth Year: 1929
ALPCA #: 9577
Residence: Cottonwood, AZ
Occupation: Semi-Retired

How did you start collecting plates? Was there someone who was your mentor?

I started by helping my young son (John) in collecting AZ and foreign plates. Then many years ago, we met with Mel Bowen. Mel was a great help. After John was grown, he kept his 1957 birth year run foreign and his Colorado run. He gave me back his Arizona collection and I got back into the hobby.

How did you hear about the Arizona Regional?

I heard about the Arizona group through ads and by word of mouth

What plates do you collect and which are your favorites? Where do you get most of your plates?

I collect Arizona passenger. Favorites are the 1917 plus the coppers from 1932, 33, and 34. I find plates mostly at flea markets, yard sales, and regional meets.

Do you have tips for newer members on the best places to acquire plates?

The best places for new members are flea markets, yard sales, and regional meets.

How often do you make it to Arizona License Plate Society events?

I generally make it to about 50% of the events, especially the ones in northern and central Arizona.

Which plate in your collection has the best story?

The best two plates with stories would be my 1917 dealer that apparently originated in Cottonwood, but I got it from an antique dealer in Chino Valley seven years ago (a nice front side, but a lot of Bondo on the back). The other was a special Christmas gift from my son (it isn't for sale at any price!) as the mint 1934 copper reads "4JR2", it says it all!

How many plates are in your collection? What types? What do you wish you had more of?

My personal set is 1916-1980, with around 40 or 50 miscellaneous Arizona. I'm always searching for plates to "upgrade" my set, plus still buying plates in the teens and twenties, plus 32, 33, and 34.

Do you display your plates?

In 2005, Wal-Mart tossed an eyeglass display unit into a dumpster, and I salvaged it and added an extension to the top. I now have my AZ passenger run (up to 1980) mounted on it, as it has four sides, rotates, and even has casters to make it moveable. But the following plates are mounted in a display unit: 1916-1921, and 1932-1934.

What other non-license plate hobbies do you have?

Other hobbies are clocks, coins, R.R. date nails, old bottles, and AZ collectible items. Also, a big hobby is drag racing, I still have 28 trophies from racing in 28 events back in the 50's using an inline Buick engine with six carburetors, burning nitro-methane fuel (the world's first "self starting" machine on 100% nitro). I'm #6 member of the AZ Drag Racing Hall of Fame. Plus, I designed and built the world's first "Junior Dragster" when John was nine years old (in 1967). He drove it on an exhibition run at the AHRA Winter Nationals at age 10. It still hangs in my garage today and will soon be restored. I was the official photographer for AHRA for 12 years and still have 3200 negatives in stock, plus 8 scrapbooks loaded with photos. My latest "hobby" project is the 1976 Chevy Nova I built and drive today. It has an engine (6-cyl) from a 1961 dump truck, plus a Corvette transmission, etc. The license plate reads "SS NOVA 6." Also, I am still active and work on clocks. I have more hobbies, but ran out of paper!

