

Arizona License Plate Society

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Name: Ray Havens
Birth Year: 1953
ALPCA #: 7828
Residence: San Diego, CA
Occupation: Golf, Bowling and Tennis Coach/Instructor; Golf Pro, Business Professor

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

Our family went on many trips in the summer since my wife has been a professor of Economics for many years (stopped travelling when she became a dean). I made license plate games to check off states. We would do the games in San Diego--you could often see 40-48 states by visiting the San Diego Zoo in the summer, or my kids and I have seen up to 49 states just sitting off Rosecrans watching sailors go by. Then we started noticing environmental and graphic plates. We started taking pictures of them at the zoo and other places. And then we found one. We found a Blue on Yellow Oregon plate, then my daughter found a blue California plate, then it was all over. My young kids learned how to use a screwdriver in wrecking yards (not in California). My son probably made it to about a dozen states pulling off plates in wrecking yards. He even helped me in Northern Territory, Australia, where my brother lives.

How did you hear about the Arizona Regional?

There were 2 things that influenced me to come your way. I think it was mentioned at the Camp Pendelton meet just over a year ago. And my mom (step-mom) lives in Mesa, Arizona.

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

Well, I used to collect everything and anything. Well, about 1 year ago, I told myself that I was getting older and that I should limit my types that I collect. So I started selling and found out it was as much fun selling as buying. As a Christian, going out of my way to serve the customer. Used to selling golf clubs rather than plates. So what do I collect now? I collect Animal Friendly and Spay and Neuter plates for daughter who just finished her first year of vet school. I sort of collect environmental plates too. I collect DR, MD plates, Handicap and Dealer plates, not so much for me, but for someone who is looking for them. I get plates from ALPCA meets and Ebay sometimes. When I am out of state, I will try to visit a wrecking yard or two. Occasionally get plates on Craig's List or at Antiques stores, and very occasionally at swap meets.

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

I don't feel that I am a very sophisticated buyer or seller. All the places I mentioned, perhaps recycling centers, or some states at DMVs, or ALPCA newsletter ads, although I don't do any of these.

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

Just started last year so about 3-5 times/year. It is a great excuse to come to see my mom and do a couple of jigsaw puzzles.

Which plate in your collection has the best story?

Well not very good ones to you more than 10 year collectors, but my two favorite stories. One just recently. My daughter came back for Christmas from her first trip in Grenada, Caribbean (She has been going there for one year going to vet school). She always tries to bring gifts back from her trip. A prior trip to Washington where she spent a summer taking 3 Biology courses, her class was visiting a recycling plant and low and behold on top of the stack, her and her friends climbed up to retrieve about a dozen Washington plates. But back to Grenada. A day or two before she returned home, her friend and Kara were walking between their school and apartment and the friend said look at the license plate in the middle of the road, and a lightbulb went on and she retrieved it for Dad. Now I have had a few people ask me for one, so when I go down there I will try to find some. The other story was a road kill story. Not too proud about it, but there was a plate in the middle of the freeway when I first started collecting. During rush hour you would drive by it (it was upside down). Well after a week or two I woke up at 4am and drove 2 miles to see if it was there. I stopped in the middle of the freeway (no one in sight), picked it up. I waited to get home to turn it right side up. Low and behold it was a California Yosemite plate! And it was personalized. DOGR JAG. It is in your newsletter. I assume it came off a Jaguar of a Dodger fan or Dodger player.

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

About 11,000 plates. Mostly 1980 and newer. Mostly passenger but a variety of everything. Wish I had more 63 Black Californias (no just kidding). Just like a variety to service my clients.

Do you display your plates?

Kind of sort of??? First made a license plate lamp. Then did a border of 50 states + for my son's room. And one more display in my garage. Also did a 16' long and 9' tall American flag with all 50 states on it for my kid's Amerikids Children's Musical.

What other non-license plate hobbies do you have?

I used to collect logo golf balls, but gave them up. License plates are enough. I do play golf, tennis and bowling (and pretty good for an old guy). Scratch golfer, 4.5-5 Doubles Tennis player, and Carry a 190 average in bowling.