

Arizona License Plate Society

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Name: Art Phillips
Birth Year: 1947
ALPCA #: 226
NILPS #: 136
Residence: Flagstaff, Arizona



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

My Dad was director of a training school for fish hatchery managers in Cortland, N.Y. The students came from all over the U.S. for a year. How could they turn him down when my Dad asked them to save their plates for his 10-year-old son? I also collected plates on family trips out-of-state. My first contact with other collectors came when Sports Illustrated published a full-page color photo of Thomas Chilton's plates in 1958. I wrote to him, and he told me about ALPCA, which I joined that year and received membership number 226. I've been an ALPCA member continuously for 46 years.

How did you hear about the Arizona Regional?

I joined an Arizona club that Roy Carson and others started in the early '70's, when I lived in Tucson, and often attended the meets. It later evolved into NILPS when Roy moved to Nev. So there's been an Arizona club of some sort for more than 30 years.

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

My current active collecting interests are porcelains and plates from Belize and British Honduras. I have a complete Arizona run, a birth-year set, and a large ham radio plate collection. I also have a medium-size general collection. My favorites are a mint 1914 Arizona motorcycle plate (one of 2 known) and some of my porcelains. Most of my plates these days come from meets and eBay.

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

Regional and national meets are a great way to acquire lots of plates inexpensively, depending on what you want! Ebay always has a large variety of plates available, and nearly everything shows up eventually. These days, with so many different kinds of plates out there, picking a specialty early is a good way to avoid being overwhelmed.

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

I try to make it to 2-3 ALPS meets a year when possible. I go to NILPS in Henderson every year, and the ALPCA national when I can.

Which plate in your collection has the best story?

I was at a ham radio club meeting in 1978 when one of the other hams, who knew I collected plates, pulled out a 1914 Arizona motorcycle plate. I knew what it was, but didn't know it was unknown at that time. I gave him \$20 for it, and we both went away happy. He said his son found it somewhere in Flagstaff. I never heard the whole story. My other favorite is a beautiful 1912 NY porcelain that was on my grandfather's first car. He gave it to me in 1958; I was one happy 11-year-old that day.

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

About 4,000, I think, although it's been a long time since I counted them. I have about 145 different porcelains. I'm most actively working on my porcelains at this time.

Do you display your plates?

I have some of my porcelains, my Arizona set, and some of my Belize/British Honduras plates displayed in various rooms in my house.

What other non-license plate hobbies do you have?

I've been a ham radio operator for 42 years, and currently hold callsign NN7A (the plate on my car). I also hold or have held ham licenses in Belize, Mexico, Russia, Australia, and Honduras. I enjoy combining traveling, hamming, and plate collecting.