

# S.V.A.O. NEWSLETTER

## FALL 2014



### Greetings One and All

Hopefully everyone has had an opportunity to get out and enjoy their vehicles during the past summer. On personal front, I finally got out a couple of our cars that had not seen the road for a year or two. Just doing maintenance seems to take up most of my garage time these days! Something about too many cars and no time for projects.

The SVAO seems to have had a reasonably quiet summer, which from our perspective is a good thing. The great "Emissions and old cars" problems seem to have settled down and with the MOE getting their outlines out to the public. Most hobbyists seem able to work within those rules. There never will be a perfect situation regarding old cars and selling the public on exemptions, but the SVAO keeps on working on your behalf to keep things as simple as possible.

On that issue, we are not too pleased with the provincial government's decision to let their techies redesign all of the ministries' web sites. The Enforcement branch for the MOE had work diligently with the SVAO to put out realistic guidelines as well as contact information to real people within the MOE that worked. Now it appears that the powers that be have decided that the operators at the Drive Clean call centre are trained well enough to answer your questions. Be sure to check our web site for copies of the old Q&A from the old MOE site. Time will tell, but we would really like to hear from any of you who have used this new system – good or bad!

The SVAO's last face to face meeting with MTO officials took place in April and we covered a number of topics. One idea that we brought up again was the idea of a "collector car" license plate that would be less restrictive than Historic Plates and would also cover modified cars. Vice-chairman Bruce Stewart has included an article in this issue covering our position. The SVAO will continue to push for this idea on your behalf.

Another topic clarified at that meeting was the use of the 400 series highways by historically plated vehicles. For a number of years there have been stories of people being stopped for using vehicles with historic plates on the 400 series highways. The SVAO has not been able to document any such cases and would like to hear from you if you have been stopped for this issue. See the short note in this issue covering this topic.

Well that about covers it. A reminder that we are available to come out and speak at one of your club events if you'd like. Just contact us and we'll see what we can arrange.

Time to sign off and get out and enjoy some fall driving in the old cars. Hope to see you out there!

Chris Whillans (SVAO chairman)

*Chris Whillans*

# Validation Stickers and YOM Plates

The SVAO was recently contacted by a member with an inquiry about how to properly place a yearly validation sticker on a Year of Manufacture Plate. Normally the sticker would go in the upper right corner, just as with regular plates. However in the case of this member's YOM plate, that would cover the embossed year on the plate and defeat the purpose of having his specialty plate.

We contacted the Ministry of Transportation for Ontario and the following is their response.

"A validation sticker must be placed in the top right hand corner of the licence plate in accordance with Regulation 628, Section 9(1), under the Highway Traffic Act (HTA). There is no special exemption for YOM plates. Although the decision to lay a charge would be left to the enforcement officer's discretion, it is in the best interest of the vehicle/plate owner to best attempt compliance with the regulation, since there are no exemptions for alternate validation sticker positions on YOM plates.

If the sticker cannot be properly affixed to the YOM plate, or if the driver/vehicle owner does not want to cover the embossed lettering, the sticker may be affixed to a mini-plate. Mini plates are pieces of non-porous material, such as metal or porcelain, which can be attached to a YOM plate to allow sticker placement in the correct corner. Although the ministry does not issue mini-plates, Section 7(1)(c)(ii) of the HTA allows this option for YOM plate program participants."

As pointed out in the MTO's response, the enforcement officer's discretion seems to be the main determinant here, so an honest attempt to have a polite conversation if one was stopped on this issue, would appear to be key. The SVAO was not previously aware of these "mini-plates".

One of our directors came up with the novel idea of using a strong earth magnet to attach the validation sticker / mini-plate to the license plate, thus allowing its removal at a show so the YOM plate's year is not covered while on display. This needs the original YOM plate to be of a vintage when they were still made from steel and not aluminum. The other trick of course, is to remember to put the mini-plate / magnet back on before heading out on the road!

Hope to see you  
soon out there !



## After 20 years, is the SVAO still relevant?

As one of the founding members of the SVAO, it's hard to believe that we have been at it for more than 20 years. I'm sure that if you told me in 1994 I'd still be here in 2014, I'd either not believed you and said something rude, or more likely got in my trusty '56 Buick and pointed it towards parts unknown!

This is a question that all of us have asked ourselves from time to time. Are we still needed? Would anyone notice if we just went away and more importantly, would anyone care?

It all started when a group of us car guys from a number of clubs (and, yes it was all guys) started talking about the trend where in the US towards emission testing of cars, and the perception of all "old cars" could be lumped in together, whether it be a Model T, a '41 Buick, a 60's muscle car, or just a 12 year old used car. With more states in the US moving towards emission testing of vehicles, we felt that it was only a matter of time before something similar was enacted here and we needed to take a proactive approach. As most of you also know, it was through the efforts of a number of SVAO board members that we were able to get the initial "rolling 20 year" exception, which unfortunately was changed a number of years later to a less "old car friendly" approach.

One of the difficulties faced by our group, is that the bureaucrats seem to change jobs every couple of years or so. The somewhat sympathetic person you dealt with 6 months ago is gone, and then you have to start all over with someone new. Anyway, many of you folks already know this as we have many members who have been with us since we first formed. Your support over the years has been greatly appreciated.

To the present and where do we go from here? We don't call for dues every year, but there will be a renewal enclosed with this newsletter, and please, whether or not you're a Club, an Individual, or a Business, please send in your renewal. This helps to bolster our credibility when discussing our representation with either the provincial or a municipal government (the NAACC represents car hobbyists interests at a federal level) regardless of the issue at stake.

I believe that there will be a continuing need for our group, but looking forward over the next 20 years, who knows what changes there will be. I never have put much stock in the kind of "futurist" talk about predictions of what will be and what won't be. If someone is right, I think it's more a matter of luck, than anything else.

Change is constant, whether we like it or not. But the one thing I've noticed, is that some things change that you'd never expect too, and other things you think will change a lot, stay much the same. It will be the same with the vintage car hobby, many of us greying folks will have to pass the torch on to others and we all hope that there will be someone else who will love our babies the way we do, but nothing is for sure.

There will be various issues that will continue to come up from time to time which the SVAO is ideally suited to tackle, but who knows what and when. Far easier to keep the SVAO going than to create another one in a few years' time when something big comes up! But we can't do it alone, so please renew, whether or not you represent only yourself, or a car club, or a business.

Finally, please consider helping out at the board level. We do not have regular physical meetings very often, but we communicate through email, which helps since we are rather spread out across the province.

*Keith Corby*



# TO ALL CAR HOBBYISTS

## Something to think about.

Submitted by Ted Jeffery—Director of S.V.A.O.

How many of you have your car inspected each year by another pair of qualified eyes to make sure it is safe to be going on tours? I belong to The Antique and Classic Car Club of Canada and it is mandatory by National that our cars have a Touring Inspection each spring before the cruising season begins.

This was decided upon many years ago when rumours were starting to come out of MTO that they were thinking of having our cars inspected for safety as they felt that too many of the car hobbyists were doing all repairs and fixing their cars by themselves. Many of these owners were not qualified mechanics or proper body builders. This is not to say that many of you don't do a great job, because over the years a lot of you have proven that you have done very well.

In my own Region of Brampton, we were able to contact a local independent garage owner and asked him if he would be interested in inspecting our cars each spring before the touring season started. When I proposed this to him I mentioned that this may also help him to obtain some new customers that had never visited his location before. We have been using these people now for about fifteen years and he does it at no charge. When the cars start coming early on Sunday morning and parking out side waiting their turn to be inspected the people going by stop to see what is going on and more interest is also created. There is a Touring Inspection form that we use to do a complete visual check on each car. This of course includes checking tires, lights, brake pedal height, exhaust, listening to the horn and many other visual things as well. This works out very well if you belong to a Club.

If you are an individual who does not belong to a Club then it is suggested that you find another pair of qualified eyes to go over your car just in case you might have missed or overlooked something that is not obvious to you. This is also for your own safety and your family that enjoys riding with you on a beautiful sunny day. You do not want any break downs while you are out enjoying the day when it could have been avoided.

We in the S.V.A.O. are always trying to find ways to keep the politicians' from finding fault or ways to have us take our Antiques — Street Rods — Hot Rods — Modified — Kit Cars — etc. to be inspected by people who might not be familiar with our hobby.

As I mentioned at the start, this is just something for you to think about to keep our hobby in our control. Thanks.

*Ted.*

## Historic Plates and the 400 Series Highways

One of those reoccurring statements which the SVAO has heard about over the years was that a vehicle using historic plates could not use the multi-laned 400 series highways here in ON. For those of us who have such plated vehicles, this was something many of us had heard whispers about but really weren't sure of the truth. No one we knew had actually been stopped for this alleged problem, but many had heard about incidents. Once again, the SVAO could not track down any persons actually involved.

This past winter your executive contacted the Ministry of Transportation to find out their policy on this issue. At first there was some confusion on the issue, but in the end we came up with a reasonable interpretation of the regulations from the MTO.

Their contact sent the SVAO the following in regards to our question of what charges would be laid if using Historic Plates on the 400 series highways.

"This is a follow-up to your question during our discussion last week. We sought further legal clarification on the use of historic plates on highways and penalties for misuse. There should be no charges under any section if all of the regulatory requirements are met."

Now this assumes that the vehicle involved is properly plated and meets the other restrictions for Historic plates. Just to refresh everyone's memories, here are the restrictions for such plates.

According to Regulation 628 of the Highway Traffic Act (HTA), "historic vehicle" means, despite the definition in subsection 7 (1.1) of the Act, a motor vehicle that,

(a) is at least 30 years old,

(b) is operated on a highway in parades, for purposes of exhibition, tours or similar functions organized by a properly constituted automobile club or for purposes of repair, testing or demonstration for sale,

(c) is substantially unchanged or unmodified from the original manufacturer's product, and

(d) does not have attached to it year-of-manufacture plates; ("véhicule ancien")

If a vehicle with historic plates is found to be operating outside of the purposes outlined in Regulation 628 (highlighted above), the normal charge in that scenario would be under Section 8 of the HTA (Driver motor vehicle, not in accordance with permit limitations)

### Permit limitations

8. (1) Where the fee prescribed by the regulations for a permit or validated permit for a motor vehicle is calculated with regard to specific limitations or restrictions on the use of a vehicle, the owner of the vehicle shall not drive or cause or permit the vehicle to be driven on a highway except in accordance with the limitations or restrictions. R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8, s. 8 (1).

### Penalty

(2) Every person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not less than \$100 and not more than \$500. R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8, s. 8 (2).

The Specialty Vehicle Association of Ontario wishes to stress that all of our collector vehicles need to be properly plated. If someone chooses to improperly plate their vehicle, or use it in a manner outside the limitations of its plate, then they are setting themselves up for an expensive lesson by one of our law enforcers.

Regulation 628(c) is very clear that a vehicle must be basically unchanged or unmodified. All of us have listened to some "cruise night lawyers" trying to argue what constitutes unmodified, generally trying to convince themselves why their hot rods can run Historic Plates. The SVAO believes that each and every one of us knows exactly what it means - that the vehicle is basically as it was constructed at the factory, with factory like replacement parts replacing worn out parts as the need arises. Period accessories don't change things, but body modifications, different drivelines and suspensions sure do.

Enough said but our hobby needs to police itself. It is difficult to argue for more liberal licensing options when there are chronic abusers out there. If you can afford the car, do the hobby a favour and plate it properly.



## Collector Car Plates

Chris Whillans and I met recently with representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation to discuss a number of member concerns including the plating of collector vehicles.

We have, in the past, conducted a number of meetings with MTO officials regarding the need for an updating of the licensing of collector vehicles in the province without much success. Times have changed since then, however, and it now seems an appropriate time to reopen the dialogue.

A growing number of North American jurisdictions have begun to celebrate role of automobile in the economic and social development of both countries. Recognition is also being made of our colleagues and for our role in preserving examples of automotive art and technology for the enjoyment, not only of our membership but of society at large.

Government proclamations designating July 11 as an annual "Collector Car Appreciation Day" are appearing in more provinces, states and even at the municipal level. In the US, the Michigan State Senate issued a resolution commemorating August 2014 as Automotive Heritage Month in the state. Maybe it is time that Ontario did the same?

We were informed by MTO personnel that there is much greater cooperation among the provincial and territorial transportation authorities now than in the past and a growing trend toward coordinating laws and regulations leading to a more homogeneous body of law across the country.

A sizable number of North American jurisdictions recognize the importance of our community with the issuance of Collector license plates. In fact, collector vehicles are licensed by some jurisdictions at no cost in recognition of their historical, educational and recreational value to the community at large. It is time for Ontario to follow suit.

Currently, there are only two viable alternatives in Ontario for the plating of specialty vehicles:

- Regular plates
- Historical plates (including Year of Manufacture plates)

While Year of Manufacture plates are considered by the province to be a separate entity from Historical plates, they should be treated as a subset of Historic plates.

Owner surveys in Canada and other countries have indicated that the average annual use of hobby vehicles is approximately four hundred miles or less

than six hundred and fifty kilometers. This number should be borne in mind in any discussions of the government's treatment of these vehicles and their owners (or, perhaps more appropriately, custodians)

## Regular Plates

Regular plates are one option for those wishing to use their older vehicles beyond the restricted usage allowed by Historic plate regulations. Regular plates allow unlimited use but are expensive. The cost of about twenty cents per mile of use is certainly excessive. However, it's not so much the cost as the principle in this case.

## Historical Plates

There are currently in excess of 43,000 historically plated vehicles in Ontario. These vehicles represent a large part of the province's heritage and are functioning reminders of one of the primary economic engines in Ontario's evolution as the driving force and leader of Canada's socio-economic development.

While Historic plates are far too restrictive for those members of our community who desire even moderate use of their vehicles we advocate only minor changes to the Highway Traffic Act with regard to their use. The present usage constraints should remain substantially intact. The needs of those who desire a less restrictive plate can be solved by the introduction of a Collector plate. If the usage restrictions are rigidly enforced these vehicles cannot be used for regular transportation.

The vehicle eligibility age should be lowered to twenty-five years rather than the present thirty. This would bring Ontario into line with other Canadian jurisdictions and most of the international community. Currently, in the UK, any vehicle 25 years or older, road worthy and insured is licensed for free. We feel that a similar program in Ontario should be considered by MTO. A considerable amount of administrative costs could be eliminated.

The vehicle must be substantially unchanged from the original manufacturers' specifications. This is unchanged but perhaps could be modified to allow modifications made specifically for safety and/or environmental considerations.

The vehicle may be used on all public highways for exhibitions, tours or attending similar functions organized by properly constituted automobile clubs, *community groups* and for parades. This is in line with current regulations with a couple of additions.

No renewal of a Historic plate should be required. The license should be valid for as long as the vehicle exists and continues to be operated by the current owner as a "Historic" motor vehicle. This change would bring Ontario into line with other Canadian jurisdictions and the international community.

The regulations limiting the use of Historic plates and the vehicles to which they are issued should be strictly enforced. There is a need for some alternative MTO enforcement method besides using the local police forces. SVAO continues to urge its member clubs to ensure that all abuse of historical plates be stopped.

The SVAO has been informed that older vehicles are being improperly plated at some licensing centres due to the misinterpretation of the Historic qualifications by licensing staff. The SVAO has and will continue to encourage the MTO to regularly send reminders to its licensing staff that the age of a vehicle does not of itself qualify that vehicle a Historic plate. This has been done in the past after the SVAO requested it. Perhaps the issuers should be asked to read the restrictions to the applicant and get assurances that the vehicle qualifies before issuing the plate?

## Year of Manufacture Plates

As YOM plates are, in fact, a subset of Historic plates the regulations for their use should be modified to reflect this fact.

## Collector Plates

A number of years ago the province of British Columbia, in keeping with the actions of a growing number of jurisdictions in North America, instituted a Collector license plate. These were originally for use only on older stock vehicles but the program has since been expanded to encompass modified and customized vehicles. We feel that the time has come for Ontario to follow this lead.

A number of arguments can be presented to support the case for a collector plate program in Ontario.

- The precedent for a collector plate exists in BC and a number of other North American jurisdictions.

- It would be less expensive for the average collector who, contrary to popular opinion, is not independently wealthy.

- It could be structured to require less work on the ministry's behalf and, therefore, reduce ministerial costs.

- It would provide a medium for tracking collector vehicles and would give them a bit higher profile in the community at large.

- It is a small price to pay for the maintenance of Ontario's heritage, particularly in view of the vast impact of the automotive industry on our economy.

In the past it seemed as if MTO officials would be willing to look more favourably on our request if it were part of a national standardization of provincial and territorial statutes and regulations. We were put in contact with the Canadian Council of Motor Vehicle Administrators and a presentation was made to the national body but there did not seem to be any movement toward standardization. At our last meeting with MTO, however, we were informed that there is a steadily growing involvement with the other provinces through the CCMVA.

We suggest the following pattern as a starting point in the establishment of an Ontario Collector plate. They reflect our research into the regulations of other provinces and states and are skewed toward the BC model as it incorporates considerable input from the collector car community and reflects the Canadian values and norms.

- A "stock" and "modified" Collector plate would be offered.

- Annual stickers should cost 20% of that of a regular plate.

- The age restriction on the issuing of these plates should be 25 years and match those for Historic plates.

- An original Ontario license plate of the vehicle's year of manufacture may be registered to the vehicle and used in lieu of a Specialty Vehicle Plate.

## Collector Plate (Stock - Unmodified)

- Must be 25 years or older.

- Is maintained or restored to a condition that conforms to the original manufacturer's specifications and may have period accessories.

- Is used solely for pleasure purposes and is not for travel to and from work or school.

- A commercial vehicle may carry a load for purposes of a parade or exhibition if the carrying of the load is not for gain.
- May be driven 24 hours.

#### Collector Plate (Modified)

- Must be 25 years or older.
- Modifications are allowed.
- Must have the shell of a body, coach or cab from an original manufactured motor vehicle - aftermarket fiberglass, composite, or steel bodies aren't acceptable.
- Is used solely for pleasure purposes and is not for travel to and from work or school.
- A commercial vehicle may carry a load for purposes of a parade or exhibition if the carrying of the load is not for gain.
- May be driven 24 hours.

We strongly recommend that, with modifications to suit the Ontario community, our province adopt the BC model for Collector plates. There are a number of reasons for this finding. The BC transport ministry has hands on experience with the Collector plated vehicle population and could provide MTO with advice and guidance. ICBC has a history with the Collector plated population and this data could serve Ontario insurance companies in assessing premium rates.

MTO previously proposed our use of a graphic plate (much the same as that purchased by Maple Leaf and Blue Jay fans) and a regular price renewal sticker. This was an interesting concept but increased rather than decreased the operating costs of a collector vehicle.

*Your comments and input are welcome and are, in fact, requested in this matter (quest?). E-mail is the preferred format and we can be reached at [svao@rogers.com](mailto:svao@rogers.com).*

*Bruce Stewart, SVAO Vice- chairman  
Licensing in British Columbia*

There are currently three available options in British Columbia for the licensing of collector vehicles:

1. Regular plate for daily driving.
2. Vintage plate – corresponds to our Historic plate – 30 years or older.
3. Collector plate
  - a) - Stock.
  - b) – Modified.

BC has no provision for the use of year of manufacture plates.

#### Vintage Plate

- Must be 30 years or older
- Maintained as nearly as possible with original component parts.
- May be operated as a collector's item for transportation to or from and for use in exhibitions, club activities, parades and other like functions but not for general transportation purposes.
- May be driven to and from a garage or service station for servicing and repairs.
- May be driven for presentation of the vehicle at an approved motor vehicle inspection station.
- Vehicles with limited lighting (i.e. pre - 1915) may only be operated between 1/2 hour before sunrise and 1/2 hour after sunset. If vehicle lighting conforms to the BC Motor Vehicle Act a Vintage plated Vehicle maybe driven day or night.
- No renewal of license plate is required; the plate stays with the vehicle and is valid for as long as the vehicle exists and continues to be operated as an antique motor vehicle. The license must be renewed each year

## Collector Plates

#### Collector Plate (Stock - Unmodified)

- Must be 25 years or older and considered by the Insurance Corporation of BC to be of collectible value or:
  - Must be 15 years old and because of discontinued production or limited availability is considered by the Insurance Corporation of BC to be of collectible value.
  - Is maintained or restored to a condition that conforms to the original manufacturer's specifications and may have period accessories. – There is a prescribed list which is fairly flexible.
  - Is used solely for pleasure purposes and is not for travel to and from work or school.
  - A truck may carry a load for purposes of a parade or exhibition if the carrying of the load is not for gain.
  - Plate is issued to the owner rather than the vehicle and is not transferable.
  - May not be used for work or school
  - May be driven 24 hours.

#### Collector Plate (Modified)

- Must be 1958 and older—(hopefully this is being changed as of 2016—or 2017).
- Period modifications are allowed as prescribed by the province - there is a prescribed list which is fairly flexible..

- Must have the shell of a body, coach or cab from an original manufactured motor vehicle - aftermarket fiberglass, composite, or steel bodies aren't acceptable.

- Is used solely for pleasure purposes and is not for travel to and from work or school.

- A truck may carry a load for purposes of a parade or exhibition if the carrying of the load is not for gain.

- Plate is issued to the owner rather than the vehicle and is not transferable.

- May not be used for work or school

- May be driven 24 hours.

The Collector plate regulations were formulated during and after discussions among the following:

- Insurance Corporation of British Columbia
- BC Ministry of Transport
- NAACC
- Specialty Vehicle Association of British Columbia

We have been informed that there are approximately 10,000 Vintage plated vehicles in the province, about 800 of which are insured and driven on BC highways and 20,000 Collector plated vehicles, 1,000 of which are Modified plate eligible.

*Bruce Stewart*

SVAO Vice-chairman

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