

History of "2%"



Written by George Kettell my thanks goes out to Vannin.com for permission to use this. If you would like to use this article on your site, I ask that you just directly link to it, and not copy it. On Vannin.com thanks

Unless you have been on a seven month van run in the Sierra Madre, you must have noticed the "2%" movement unfolding in the van world.

Actually, the 2% is spreading rapidly and its feelings seemed to pop up throughout this country and Canada at about the same time. The movement originated from a letter published in the March '76 issue of the National Street Van Association's (NSVA) newsletter.

The letter claimed that 98% of the van movement felt that Midwest Vans LTD (MVL), of which I am a member was an undesirable element in vanning. It claimed that 98% did not mind how the NSVA treated their members, or how they ran their truckins, 98% did not care about the NSVA's list of no-no's... no all night partying, no "boogie 'til you puke", no wet T-shirts. Just the NSVA and suburban camping at its finest.

Thus the 2% was born, and word spread fast as the MVL, over 500 strong, vanned to every major truckin this year to find that vanners all over shared their "feelings" too. Vanners everywhere who cared became known as the 2%.

Many feel that the NSVA cares more about the almighty dollar and its sponsors than it does about the average vanner. The feeling grows that the NSVA, rather than offering itself as an information source and promoting unity among vanners, merely "sanctions" events and clubs and offers a list of no-no's. Clubs and independent vanners are either approved, chartered and sanctioned, or unrecognized and/or labeled undesirable (as MVL was).

Commercialism is another point of conflict between NSVA and the 2%. Commercialism is a universal concept that is definable only through its application.

Take a club like Syndicated Truckers from Niagara Falls, Ontario. They held a field meet in May, made "x" number of dollars, and turned the money they made back to the members in the form of a set of club colors for each. That's the way it should be. A club hosts an event, makes a buck and gives it right back to its members.

When a national association like the NSVA makes a buck, like at Bowling Green, you can bet that the administrative costs of running the association will devour almost every penny of the members treasury, leaving nothing for its coast-to-coast, border-to border members.

When people depend on an organization for a living they start to look away from the people's need and see only the dollar sign.

Compare the 4th National Truck-In in Colorado to Bowling Green. Rocky Mountain Vans expected and provided services for 4000 vans, and got much less. They kept concessions to a minimum and barely broke even when it was over. They put most of the money into services, dash plaques and beer for the vanners. At Bowling Green, on the other hand, the NSVA expected 8000 vans, got 6500, and provided services for 1500. Then they provided a long list of rules, not to mention the police. Reports have it that there were 25 to 30 plain-clothes officers and 10 narcotics officers.

I have been to many truck-ins where there were police, and still had a great time. I have seen them walking the West Coast Van Nationals with an attitude of "we're here if you need us". At Butler, Pennsylvania, the police attitude was "stay out of the stables and everything is cool". But at Bowling Green, officers with guns concealed under their Hawaiian shirts moved through the crowd. Letting the police dampen the party spirit of the vanners showed that the NSVA has lost sight of why vanners go to truckins. It certainly isn't to file obediently past rows of commercial booths. Vanners like to know what's new but the commercialism should be secondary to the partying.

I recently picked up a copy of Prairie State Gazette, September '76, in which the club president compared the NSVA with the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA).

Twenty-five years ago, drag racing was a family event for Sunday afternoons. Then, seeing that money could be made from the drag racing, promoters took over the NHRA. Nowadays, amateurs put out five grand to make it down to Indy to get a first round elimination and receive \$400. The NHRA has

priced the sport at multi-thousands of dollars, leaving only the sponsors left at the track. The only real thing the NHRA has done for the average drag racer is to charge him ten

bucks to sit in the stands. The participant has become a spectator.

Likewise, to make vanning big business, you will end it. If the NSVA looks to sponsors for support instead of vanners, a recent letter from Action Vans of Detroit states, vanning will take the same course as NHRA.

So, the 2% is something much needed at this time in the vanning movement.

Unity starts at home, so your own club comes first. Don't leave it to some out of-town organization to do it for you. Remember, you joined a club to meet new friends, not to argue. Sit down and work out solutions.

Organize your area into van councils with other clubs. "Area" does not have to mean statewide. Some states, like Ohio, have many more vanners than others, so three or four councils may be needed. The idea is to organize closer ties between clubs through councils, not through national organizations who have no time to help clubs falling apart, or hassling over name similarities.

Right now, national organizations like the NSVA have control over news media, making them hard to stop, but cross-country unity between a vanner and his brother will help put vanning back where it belongs...

..... in the hands of the vanner

This article does not have any connection to the National Street Van Association in England the running of the association in the USA in the 1970s was outside our control.

George wrote this a long time ago and a lot of it still stands today.

2% works for me