

# Vanity plates express identity

Joe Piazzisi  
The Clackamas Print

People like to stand out in a crowd, whether by doing their makeup a certain way, the choice of clothes they wear, or in their personality. No one wants to be like someone else. Sure they want to have aspects others like, but they want to be their own person.

A lot of people do it in different ways. This individualism can even spread onto our license plates. You can see anything from people's names to funny comments to some not-so-funny comments. I think that having these custom plates is a good thing as long as it's kept tasteful. It sets you and your car aside from every other car that is on the road.

Having a custom plate also draws people's attention to your car, giving them something to talk about during rush hour traffic, or something to think about as they see it. Most people have no idea what you mean by your custom plate, so they contemplate it.



Angela Gerhart Clackamas Print

Vanity license plates are used to draw attention to a car and show individuality.

Some people even get tricky and make backward messages. Like "T1 3VOM" which says MOVE

IT in your rear view mirror. Each plate gives you an idea of what kind of person drives the

car. If a car has someone's name on it they are mainly saying "look at me, I'm \_\_\_\_\_," which isn't

necessarily smart if you have any enemies. Then there are those who have their name and then a number. Over in my neighborhood there is a guy that has Sam 1, Sam 2, Sam 3 on up to 6. This tells me he's all about money, by showing people which car he's driving today.

There are also some more meaningful plates, with people's nicknames, their car's nickname or other message. People with a plate like the T1 3VOM obviously drive fast and like to tailgate. While others with "CLOC ME" like to upset traffic cops. Then of course you have the high-end sports cars with messages like "C - YAA" on a Porsche or "SHS FST" for she's fast on a Toyota Supra!

I even have one of these custom plates on my car. Oregon only allows 6 characters to be placed on a plate. So keep this in mind if you are wanting to get your own. Remember not to upset people with your plate because you may get keyed in a parking lot, or worse could happen with things like road rage. So keep them tasteful, and make them your own.

## Wal-Mart: cheap goods, high cost to society

Shannon Armstead  
The Clackamas Print

Wal-Mart is one of the most profitable companies in America, making its way onto the top of the Forbes 500 "most admirable companies," but its real worth to our society is questionable. While Wal-Mart continues to gain enormous profit through marketing cheap goods that may boost our economy, the superstore destroys American ideals for free enterprise.

Wal-Mart has its benefits; it's a huge store that provides for almost every household need, besides fresh food, with highly competitive prices. It is no wonder Wal-Mart is growing so quickly; they have what people want for less money. It shows they can afford to sell what seems to be more for less is troubling.

Wal-Mart moves forward in our society in the name of capitalism, yet in reality the company supports the totalitarian governments of the countries it purchases from, and leads the industry trend of wringing out more and more labor for less. Wal-Mart purchases their goods in large commodities and imports goods from communist countries like China. While importing goods from these countries, Wal-Mart holds the social governments that

pay only enough for daily living of workers. This also puts American manufacturing industries out of work.

Another reason Wal-Mart is able to provide for their low prices is because of the low wages and lack of benefits they offer employees. Wal-Mart may create needed jobs, but not the kind that society really wants. Employees are offered benefits such as health insurance, but at a cost to their already low paycheck. Most employees are held to part-time work so that the company does not have to pay any benefits. With these conditions, no employee can afford to work at Wal-Mart for long without a promotion, which is undoubtedly the reason for an employee turnover rate of nearly 100 percent every year.

Americans enjoy the convenience of everything they want in one place for low prices, yet the unseen cost is a lower standard of living for Americans and brutal labor conditions for workers in other countries.

Wal-Mart needs to take a new approach to making their way into the Forbes 500, and Americans should be aware that Wal-Mart does not support the capitalistic ideas that our country was founded on, but props up totalitarian governments and endangers American free enterprise.

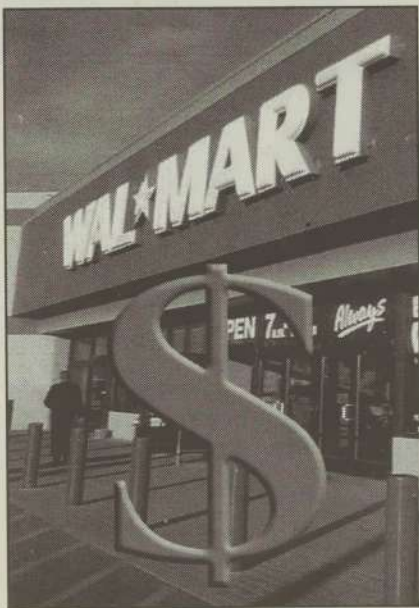


Illustration by Joel Gaynor

## Letters to the editor

New insights on social security □

Thank you for touching on Social Security Reform in your February 23rd article. However, I was annoyed that neither of the two [editors] wrote about a very simple, and for most Americans, pain-free solution to any social security problem, present or future. The solution is changing the regressive nature of the present system.

Here is a brief example to help people understand: Dudley makes \$45,000 a year; under the present system, he pays \$2,790 a year in payroll taxes (social security). Donna makes \$90,000 a year, she pays \$5,580 a year in payroll taxes (exactly double what good 'ol Dudley pays). Jaime makes a whopping \$180,000 a year. Any guesses how much he pays in payroll taxes? Answer: \$5,580 (the same amount Donna pays). The problem becomes even more clear with Janet; she makes \$1,000,000 a year, and like Jaime and Donna, pays exactly \$5,580 in payroll taxes. Social Security is set-up so that anyone who makes \$90,000 a year or more is treated as if they were only making \$90,000 when it comes time to pay payroll taxes.

Were we to remove the \$90,000 ceiling that is currently shielding the rich from paying their fair share, ALL social security solvency problems would evaporate overnight. As I said, this would be completely painless for the average American, who makes about \$43,000 (U.S. Census, 2003). So what is keeping this unfair tax system in place? Ask your millionaire congressional representatives the next time you see them.

Shad Downey, CCC student

## Creel's view on war skewed

"WTF?" is right! When will people like Mr. Creel wise up? Being wrong is not lying.

Every person who saw the intelligence on Iraq agreed that they had WMDs. Blaming George Bush for acting upon the world's intelligence is absurd. If the intel was correct and Bush did nothing, Creel would be bashing him for letting Hussein continue his reign of terror.

Those who oppose Bush all sing the same, tired song. Mr. Creel would like us all to believe that Bush somehow manipulated the world's intel, that the terrorists are not in Iraq, and that the American troops are the ones causing the chaos. This simply is not true. The car bombs and beheadings are a pretty clear indication of where the terrorists are, and the facts are that out of the 50,000 prisoners of the war on terror, there have been only 300 "allegations" of misconduct by our troops. Compare that to the atrocities suffered by the Iraqi people under the previous regime.

Mr. Creel did get one thing right. We are now alienated by those countries who were in bed with Saddam. I find this article's timing to be interesting. What better way to take attention away from the successful Iraqi elections than to play the "deception" card again.

Facts aren't important to Mr. Creel, and why should they be? As long as there are plenty of those incapable of forming an opinion based on fact and reason, there will be accepting arms for such cheap propaganda.

Jon Stogsdrill, CCC student

the CLACKAMAS Print

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The CLACKAMAS Print is a weekly student publication and is distributed every Wednesday except finals week.

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