



# History of "2%" Part II

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"Van Scan" column by Sharon "CaMel" Brooks

Let's take a journey *back* into the Vanning cosmos...starships ready - FIRE retros!

What is a VANNER? What is 2%? Who was Fred? Who are the REAL vanners?

These questions have been asked many times...each time the answer has probably been different; depending on who asks, who answers, what area of the country you are from, or any number of other factors!

Over the years, many have come to realize that just because you drive a VAN does not necessarily make you a VANNER! You really don't even have to be one of them long-haired hippie stinks or any of those other disgusting things you sometimes hear, either! Gosh, some of us are even respectable.

So, what is this 2% you've been hearing about? That goes back to the often referred to "heyday of vanning" when gas was cheap and it was bigger than it is today. A certain organization called the NSVA (National Street Van Association) came along to "unite the vanners." As Brian Bowie wrote in the June Van Scan column, let me go one step (well, maybe TWO) further!

Yes, it sounded great...the one organization that was to unite vanning! However, here's where a certain "Fred"-came along. For a yearly membership fee you could join, get a NSVA window sticker and receive a newsletter. Great, huh, but...soon things began to deteriorate; no newsletter, no anything. However, the organization became quite lucrative and in return, nothing for the vanners. Even though, many STILL believed in it.

A certain group of vanners called "Steel Valley Street Vans, Ltd.", came along and they said "Hey, we are getting ripped off!" Since they were only ONE group

of many who had the nerve to speak out (get the message, 2% out of 100% as nationally named by Fred himself), it was time to do something. This shocked many! The word soon spread throughout the midwest via newsletters, club papers and by word of mouth at the truck-ins.

Soon the 2% movement grew...and grew until NSVA could no longer ignore it. They tried to stop it, so word went out via many van publications (most now defunct) that this group of radicals (aka 2%ers) was causing problems, which in essence meant a threat to those running this "easy money" organization. THEY had the bucks and the media to put down the so-called radicals; but even so, the number of protests mounted, spreading through the midwest and outward.

In August of 1978 it happened...while attending Van Canada '78 (truck-in) in Ontario, Canada, the Saturday night festivities were suddenly interrupted with the announcement that the NSVA was officially dead and Fred had gone; thus the "Fred Is Dead" slogan! The 2%ers had won...they successfully stopped the vanning ripoff. How the crowd cheered and fireworks were everywhere, making that a very memorable celebration. Midwest Vans Ltd. paper *The Truckin' Tribune* had the final letter from Fred to all the members printed in the paper and the *National Vanpoon* dedicated the September, 1978 issue to the demise of this organization, as did many other club papers.

The bottom line to the story is -WHO SAYS GETTING TOGETHER DOESN'T GET SOMETHING DONE! 2% began for that reason! Although it's main purpose has long since past, the "by vanners, for vanners" concept continues today. 2% has also been

described as "craziness with class," but the most accepted and meaningful of all is the "2% rules of the road."...Do whatever you want to do as long as you don't hurt anyone or his property. That came from one of the most dedicated vanners that ever lived, the late Mark Murphy (Magician), Steel Valley Street Vans.

Today with the economics as it is, a new wave of vanners has come along. They may not know of 2%, or Fred or any of the nostalgia of the early vanning era. This does not make them any less of a REAL vanner. Times change and vanning's older generation must look into the future too, for we are all still united in the same cause - enjoying our hobby whether as a 2%er, family vanner of just getting together for a party. Many charities have been helped in all areas by these same vanners, listed under the common heading - VANNERS!

Over the years vanning has become uniquely united, not at all like any other group to my knowledge; and they stick together in spite of how individually different each may be.

Vanning today is not dead, only changing; to what degree either way - no one can really say. No individual, club or geographical location should be put down for his beliefs whatever they are, for there is NO number 1 club or group, we are all number 1 in our own way. Besides, how could we all belong to the same club anyway! Also, not everyone is into the club scene! (Sounds like more of that CaMel's Logic at it again!)

Let's keep vanning alive and continue to enjoy our own special way of life, and if you keep those "2% rules of the road" in mind, it shall continue to be strong! It's amazing how many 2%ers are out there and who don't even know that they are.

- CaMel