

## Building Your Very Own Z Car Club

So, you decided that your Z car would be happier, if it only had other Z cars to play with, or maybe you just want to get some advice from Z car veterans. The reasons for joining/starting a Z Car Club are too numerous to cover. As a member of the Association of Z Car Clubs, I have worked with other members of the group to put together an information package that will assist you in your quest. This package contains input from clubs, and Z Car individuals from all over North America.

Although laws will vary across North America, you will likely find that in your state or province that it is a good idea to incorporate or register your club. The Edmonton Z Car Club, for instance, is registered as a non-profit society. This allows some measure of protection, for the members/executive against legal actions etc. The other main benefit that you may see is that companies will be more likely to support a club that is formally registered and submits audited financial statements to a government department once a year.

### Membership-Liftoff

So how do you get started? A club needs members. There are a number of ways to gather interested Z Car people.

1) Nissan Dealerships- local dealerships will often have special Z Car weekends to promote the sale of new or used Z Cars. This might be an opportune time for you to set up a booth, or display area proclaiming your intentions to start a new club. Realizing the potential customers that this would draw to them, the dealer may even mention you in his advertising for the event.

2) Newspapers- newspapers often have an automotive section on a certain day of the week. In this section they might have a free notice area for car clubs. You can decide on a place and time to hold the first meeting, then ask the local papers to run it in their auto section before the event.

3) Posters- you may wish to have a poster made up, and put up in Nissan dealerships, tune-up shops, tire shops etc., proclaiming that anyone interested in a Z Car Club should call you, or you can put a specific date and time, for the first meeting, on a poster.

4) Leaflets- leaflets are cheap and easy to slip on the windshield of every Z you see parked. Some clubs have had a high rate of return, others have found this a low rate of return. It may depend on how good a job you do with the leaflets, and what level of awareness Z owners in your area have about the advantages of car clubs. Many clubs that I talked to felt that the more professional the leaflet the better the rate of return. A nice professional leaflet can be done on any PC using one of the many word processing packages available.

#### First Meeting:

The location of your first meeting might be at a favourite restaurant that has an area that is segregated from the rest of the patrons, or a Nissan dealer might have a meeting room, or training room that they would let you use.

Remember, Z Car Clubs promote brand loyalty, not just to the Z Car, but for the family sedans, or vans, or four wheel drives members might drive. Your club can be of great value to dealerships.

At your first meeting you need to gather as much information as you give out:

- 1) Ask participants to sign a guest book with at least name and phone number in it. Future meeting times and places may change, you will need to get ahold of people to let them know. Also, you will have to call everyone before the next meeting to see if they are interested, and to remind them.

- 2) Ask each person to introduce themselves, and find out what they think they would like to do in a Z Car Club. It won't help your cause if you have 4 road rallies, and 6 country tours planned, when your prospective members really only want to run autocross events. As you talk to Z Car Clubs around the world, you begin to learn how versatile the Z car is. Make sure you know what everyone is looking for, there will be plenty of time, once the club is established, to introduce new ideas to people.

- 3) Introduce prospects to the concept of Z Car Clubs, talk about what other clubs around the world do. This can give them an idea of the fun that's in store for them, as well as reassure them that dozens of clubs have spread their wings from their first meeting, and grown into functioning clubs with years of operation behind them. Be sure to point out the many discounts that dealerships, tune-up shops, tire

shops, detailing shops etc., might offer a club, based on the volume of business they might gain by doing so. The cost of joining a club is repaid on the first tune-up, or purchase of any amount of parts each year. Also, point out the advantage of technical sessions that can help educate owners on everything from exterior/interior finish care, tire selection, performance parts, to restoration projects.

4) Set a date and time for the next meeting, and an agenda. Also ask if anyone would like to work with you to organize things, better to find out immediately how many working members you got.

#### Membership Drives:

The success of any club is it's ability to attract members, and keep them interested. I have already outlined a few possibilities for membership drives in the introduction stage.

- 1) Co-events with Dealerships
- 2) Newspapers are often only too happy to put a notice of your next event in their automotive section.
- 3) Posters in dealerships, tire shops, tune-up centers etc.
- 4) Leaflets, are cheap, and give every member a way to spread the word to other Z owners. If every member gives out a leaflet or two per week, soon the whole area knows about your club.
- 5) Grand Openings, that new detailing shop that just opened, or is about to open might love the idea of the Z Car Club holding a Show N'Shine in his parking lot. You can put a notice of it in the newspaper's car club section, or the owner of the shop might include a note about you in his newspaper or radio advertisement.

#### Events:

There are a variety of events you can participate in. The events may vary from sports car related driving events to pure social events. In this package I have included many examples of events that other clubs participate in, as well as the rules for the events.

A few examples of events:

- 1) Road Rallies: Gimmick Rallies, Timed Rallies etc.
- 2) Autocross or Slalom events
- 3) Scavenger Hunts

- 4) Country Cruises-cruise out to your favourite picnic spot or winery.
- 5) Charity Events for crippled children etc.
- 6) A night/weekend at the races, most cities will have a local race track, where you can watch IMSA, NHRA or local talent.
- 7) Rent a race track for a day. (make sure you cover insurance issues)

Networking:

If you require more information, or assistance on starting a club, or a list of others clubs in your part of North America, please contact:

Milt Joneson  
54 Patterson Crescent  
St. Albert, Alberta  
T8N 4T7

Z Car Club of Edmonton  
New Club Information  
(403) 459-1007

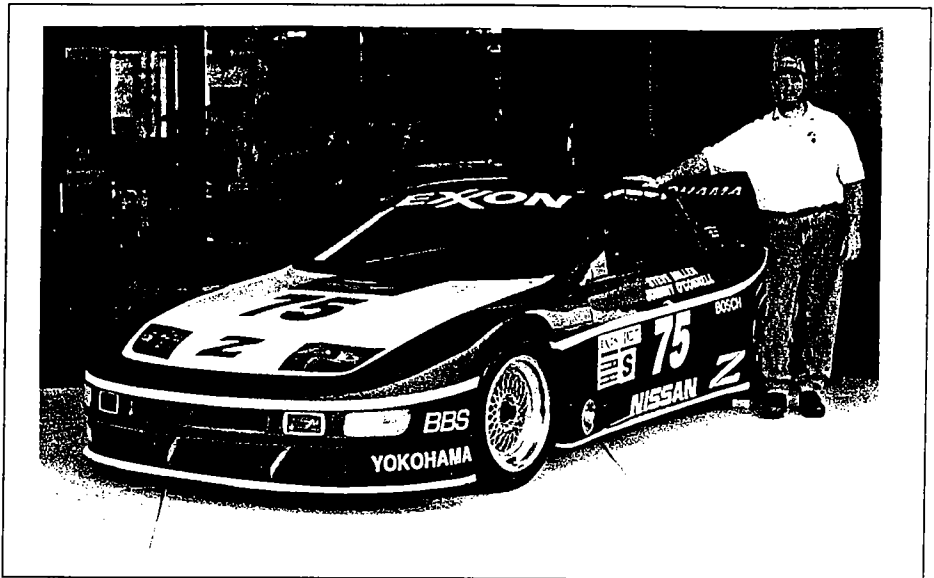
Mike Taylor  
3402 Century Circle  
Irving, Texas  
75062

Z Club of Texas  
New Club Information  
(817) 329-1641

# **“So You Want To Start a Z Club...”**

## **A Few Words of Encouragement.**

Do you ever find yourself waving fellow Z car drivers as you pass one another on the street or cutting back through the parking lot admiring someone else's Z? Do you ever find yourself on the way back to your Z car after a day of shopping and another individual is oggling over your Z car? That's how my love for the Z car started. My father purchased a 1977 280Z when I was 12 years old and I was in awe from the moment I sat in it. The car had a mystique about it that drew me nearer to it. I would find myself in the driveway sitting in the driver's seat pretending I was cruising down the highway, shifting through the gears, as cool as can be. I knew I



had to have my own Z car one day. Well, I didn't get my first Z car until I was 21 years old. Sure enough I purchased a 1977 280Z just like my father had. It was like a dream come true. Immediately I started the restoration of the interior and the mechanical. Hitting the junk yards and aftermarket shops. Customizing my Z car. One day when I was attending one of my college courses, I was walking through the parking lot and noticed a nice 260Z. I decided that I was going to leave a note on the windshield and hopefully the owner would give me a call back. It was a long shot I thought but from what I could tell by the up keep of the vehicle the owner seemed to like his or her Z very much. The next day I received a call and before I knew it we were having lunch together and sharing Z stories. I mentioned to him that I was getting ready to have the paint and body done on my Z car and he gave me the name and phone number of a guy who did just that, painted Z's. He said that the guy was a Z fanatic but I have to admit that at the time I thought there was no greater Z fanatic than myself. But regardless of my personal belief I gave the guy a call and made an appointment to discuss the possibility of having him paint my Z. Expecting to spend only 30 minutes at his house, I was surprised to find that I had spent a better part of 8-hours hanging out with him and talking Z cars. I have to admit that I left his house thinking that I met a brother from which I was separated at birth. We became good friends from the start. A few months later we were lounging around the smoke pit one evening, having a brew and enjoying our Z's and the crazy idea came up of gathering a few Z cars and having a photo shoot. Little did we know what would become of that photo shoot several years down the line but the Z club we started hosting the National Z Car Convention in 2002! Sometimes I wonder if I had never left that note on the 260Z that day, would the club ever have started or more importantly, would I have ever met Trey Tolbert who I consider one of my best friends? The most important note you need to make in starting your own Z club is that it's the car that pulls the people together but it's the people that make the club successful. This guide is designed to offer you tips & ideas from individuals who have been down the path you are about to enter in starting your own Z club. Use any, all, or none of the information offered to you from this guide. Make it your own club. One of a kind. Have fun with it. Keep one last thought in mind, it's one that a friend in Houston wrote me in a letter: "You are going to have ups & downs when getting your own Z club started. There will be times that you want to give up on it. But I encourage you to keep at it because one spring day you will be on a road trip with a caravan of Z cars, cruising down the highway and you will be glad that you stuck with it."

**Richard B. Boehmer**

(Co-Founder & First President of  
Z Sport/Z Car Club of San Antonio TX)

## SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON INCREASING YOUR INSANITY

Milt covered some key topics about starting your own Z Car Club. He's very knowledgeable on this subject and has experience starting a club way up thar in the Northlands [where they speak a foreign language but insist it's English...Oh, well....].

This section relies on memory for some more tips about how to start and help your Z Car Club grow. Naturally, with the Z Club of Texas having started in late 1986 and this 'founding father' having hit the 1/2 Century mark in August, 1992, can't vouch for the veracity of the facts presented here [understand the second thing to go with age is the memory...can't remember what the first thing to go is...!].

Our Club was started in late 1986 by Steve Vorenkamp, a then recent transplant from Houston [who currently resides in College Station, Texas]. Steve was a member of the Houston Z Car Club, decided he wanted to continue 'Clubbing' in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex and set about establishing a Z Car Club.

He made some initial contacts with other local car clubs. He contacted several Z owners and pulled us together at his home for our first few monthly meetings. Thanks to his wife Linda's understanding and congenial nature, we were off to a flying start.

As you can see by the chart in the section "Anatomy of Club Membership", our Club started 1987 with TWELVE MEMBERSHIPS, of which FIVE were FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS, bringing our total to SEVENTEEN MEMBERS!

How did we get to our current 500+ members? Sure glad y'all asked!

### WHAT ESSENTIALLY IS A Z CAR CLUB?

- o Your Club is an extra-curricula activity for people brought together by a common denominator made up of metal, wire, glass, rubber, etc.
- o As an extra-curricula activity, your Club WILL take a lower priority versus your members' other responsibilities: family, job, etc....

### WHO JOINS/WHY JOIN A Z CAR CLUB?

- o A successful Club will be diverse, both in types of Z's and members.
- o Members will have different personal agendas and goals for joining:
  - from Z Car "fanatics" to "enthusiasts" to "It's a nice car";
  - only to take advantage of sponsors' discounts;
  - those wanting referrals for honest service on their Z;
  - pursue hobbies [autocrossing, 'shade-tree' mechanicing,...];
  - socializing and having fun;
  - happen to own a Z and are 'joiners' by nature;
  - etc.,.....etc.,.....etc.....

## WHAT HOLDS A Z CAR CLUB TOGETHER AND HELPS IT GROW?

- o **THE MEMBERS** - people are the most important key to survival!!!!!!
- o **Fun and humor** - makes people want to be part of your Club -  
keep it serious and you'll never have "growing pains".
- o **Communications** - keeping everyone informed builds participation.
- o **Organization and efficient administration** - makes members and  
prospective members proud to be associated with your Club.
- o **A variety of events**, not ALL related to Z's, to cover members' needs:
  - autocrossing
  - car shows
  - road rallyes [Gimmick and/or TSD]
  - tech sessions
  - parties, picnics and other social events
  - charitable work as a Club
- o **Publicity** - if folks don't know y'all exist, y'all can't grow.
- o **Sponsorship** - savings on parts/service with reputable dealerships and other companies is a very important ingredient of a Club's overall success.

[Please Note: Many active Z Club Members may say a discount is not that important to them, they joined for other reasons. May be true, but DISCOUNTS are a real motivator for the majority.]

- o **Consistency** - keeping events on your calendar EACH year builds  
a loyal following and fosters stability. This also is VERY  
IMPORTANT concerning meeting location, day of week and time!

## **WHAT DESTROYS A Z CAR CLUB?**

Input from many Car Clubs [not just Z Car Clubs] who have either disbanded or have been severely reduced in size and/or activities indicate the following are some of the more common cause of their unenviable situation:

- o **Cliques** - a few members banding together to run a Club as their own private entity to meet their common but narrow agendas will eventually doom any Club to stagnation at the best and failure at the worst.
- o **Loss of Credibility** - Club functions canceled too often for no good reason(s) and those agreeing to serve in various capacities abdicating their responsibilities make a Club a farce.
- o **Non-involvement of members** - produces the SAME OFFICERS serving a few annual terms which leads to cliques, stagnation & burnout.
- o **No growth** - new members bring fresh ideas, vitality and diversity.  
If your Club is not active and a fun place to be, don't expect to attract new, ACTIVE members.
- o **Politics** - remember where your Club stands on an individual's personal priority scale - the Club should be fun, not a chore!
- o **Isolation** - keep in touch with other similar Clubs to use their ideas and experiences so as not to 'reinvent the wheel.'

## **CONCLUSION:**

**FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ANY EXISTING Z CAR CLUB FOR MORE INFORMATION, SUPPORT AND/OR IDEAS TO HELP YOUR LOCAL MOVEMENT.**

**WE ALL HAVE HAD DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES - NO TWO CLUBS ARE EXACTLY ALIKE [DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHY, WEATHER, LOCAL INTERESTS, ETC].**

**WHATEVER HAPPENS - JUST REMAIN FOCUSED ON YOUR OBJECTIVES AND YOUR CLUB WILL PROSPER!! TONS OF LUCK AND KEEP IN TOUCH!!!!!!**