

Golden Anniversary: Al Zim's 50 years with Maverick Region

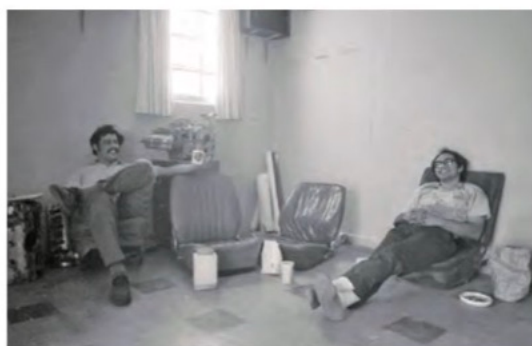
As told to Carey Spreen

Photos courtesy of the Author



Mr. Zim (you can call him Al) was always interested in cars. His first heart-throb was a 1958 Volvo PV444. Soon his parents bought him a two-year-old Volvo. Eventually, "work" on the Volvo was necessary. Al was attending Wilmington College in Ohio, and there was one sports car shop in Wilmington, which Al frequented for parts and advice. He spent many days in the parking lot "fixing" things that should have been left alone. At the start of his sophomore year, he convinced the sports car shop owner to hire him.

The shop could be considered a "hole in the wall," but was one of the few shops that catered to Porsches. Although Al was enamored with Austin-Healeys, he was often reminded that Porsche was the only way to travel. He soon acquired a Speedster and an SCCA competition license at the Nelson Ledges racetrack. He drove it to the track, put in four hours of racing, and drove back, all on Blue Streak race tires.



Al and Ed circa 1976

In September he began a Masters program at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He used the Volvo as a tow car and the Speedster as a race car, but also had a home-built Formula V and a 1956 Porsche-powered VW. With no place to work on the cars, the racing program sputtered to a halt, and he had sold them by graduation 1966.

Newly married, Al was accepted into a PhD program at North Texas State University (now UNT), and joined Maverick Region. Al recalled that first Maverick meeting, where everyone present except Al (and one other person) were wearing sport jackets. He was asked to sit in the back of the room. Not an auspicious beginning, but he hung in there!

Ed Mayo, whom Al had met at college in 1960, was teaching high school auto shop in Cleveland when Al invited him to Texas to visit. When Ed arrived in late fall, he was amazed at the layers of clothing that he no longer needed. He was also amazed at Al's rust-free 1958 Speedster. "\$750.00 is what I paid for it - you can have it for that," said Al. Ed drove the Speedster back to Cleveland, where it was 22 degrees. Within a year Ed had moved to Texas, joining Maverick Region in 1967. But that's another story . . .

Al was now an Associate Professor at Tarrant County Junior College, now known as Tarrant County College. Ed worked as a mechanic at the local Porsche dealerships. They began to work on Porsches together in Al's detached garage.

At one point they heard about a 550 Spyder (550-047) for sale for \$1500.00 in Arlington. Al purchased the car, and before he even drove it, Bill Jones (Jones Autowerks) bought it for \$1600.00. Turns out that it had placed sixth at the 1955 24 Heures du Mans, driven by Glockler and Juhan, and Carroll Shelby's name was even on the Texas title. A seven-figure retirement program had slipped through his fingers.

Their shade tree work continued until 1974, when one of Al's neighbors complained that they were illegally running a business from a residence. The result was a new location in Euless that had formerly processed chickens, and POR-SHA was born.

Unfortunately, Porsche AG did not appreciate the use of such a similar name. Federal legal action ensued, with the judge's statement that if the sign was not off the building by Monday morning, Al would be in federal prison. To this day neither Al nor Ed can legally use the word POR-SHA. With a move to Bedford in 1979, the doors opened as "Zim and Mayo." Later, Zims Autotechnik signified the separation of Ed and Al.

A meeting at Zims in 1988 resulted in the Tub Club, a 356 organization. Al recalls that, when naming the group, there was some concern that "Tub Club" might be confused with a seedy Dallas location which rented hot tubs by the hour. Fortunately, the name prevailed and the hot tub rentals did not. The Tub Club has about 80 members currently.

Al owns a 1957 356A coupe, a 1961 356B coupe, a 1985 491 widebody Carrera coupe, a 1986 491 widebody Carrera Cabriolet, and twin 1988 G50 Carreras, a coupe and a cabriolet. Al tends to keep a low profile so we don't get to see him very much, but when we do, there is always a story.

So, congratulations Al, on achieving an impressive milestone with Maverick Region. We are honored to be able to count you as one of our own. 🇺🇸



Al in his current office at Zims Autotechnik