



La Voce

September 2003

newsletter of the delaware valley alfa romeo owners club



Rally at Ridley Creek

August is normally the time for the New Hope Auto Show. This year, it was cancelled for the first time in memory, due to construction at the high school grounds where it is held. That left a void in our August schedule, which was quickly filled with our own event, the second annual summer picnic and rally.

On an overcast Sunday morning, we fired up our vehicles of affection and gathered among the pastoral surroundings of the Ridley Creek State Park to drive, share a meal, and talk about our favorite subject, Alfa Romeo.

Not surprisingly, the field was dominated by Spiders. Ed Jones and his wife made the trek down from Stroudsburg in his Duetto. Three, Series 4 Spiders joined the fun: Murry Miller's black one, Bill Conway's yellow one, which just turned 900 miles, and new member Dan Newton's white one. Frank Gil brought his Verde and I drove the Sprint. The other Joneses, Arthur and Mary Nomecos as well as the Ciro's opted to fly Lufthansa instead of Alitalia. But, we forgave them and let them join us as they both had good excuses for why they arrived Alfa-less. By the time we were ready for the first run, the sun had burned through the morning pall and the day was looking great.

The course of the rally was altered from last year in an attempt to prevent drivers from losing their way. We also corrected those tricky right hand turns, listed as lefts. The revised course retained the park as the epicenter, but was simplified and shortened a bit, to about a half-hour's worth of driving. It also added a twist. Valuable bonus points could be earned by correctly answering questions about some of the sights along the route. As before, the course was run once before lunch, then again after lunch, in reverse. The object of the game was to match the elapsed times of each run. Correctly answering the

questions shaved minutes from the elapsed time differences. Those bonus questions would prove to be critical.

Before the intrepid rallyists were off, there was a last minute substitution. Bill Conway pointed out that his Spider just turned 900 miles on the way to the event. Driving the rally would spin his odometer with reckless abandon. He simply couldn't bear to let that happen. So, Bob Brady graciously let him use his Sprint. Unfortunately, he forgot to mention that it pulls violently to the left upon hard braking and pops out of reverse unless you hold the gear lever (*they're on the list to fix - ed.*). Nevertheless, Bill was quick to adapt and drove without incident.

The Le Mans' style start was a bit anti-climatic. The Netwons walked leisurely to their cars, as did the Joneses, the Gils, and just about everyone else. No one can ever accuse the DVAROC for being overly competitive!

Remarkably, about a half hour later, the Alfas returned. No one took an hour-long detour, like last year. No one got lost. Everyone arrived back at the park with smiles. Perhaps this was partly due to making sure that all navigators were old enough to read, this year. With everyone safely returned, it was time for some hoagies, Italian, of course, and some chat. (See "Summer Rally on Page 4)

Mark Your Calendars!
October 26 – DVAROC Fall Picnic
Brookside Farm, Paoli

Bob's Babblings

Bob Brady

Fall is Alfa Season! While many will claim that summer is the best season for Alfas, I think fall is better. Temperatures have fallen to levels which make driving un-air-conditioned cars a comfortable affair. The changing colors of autumn make for the perfect landscape through which to drive. And, fall means it's time for our annual picnic.

As has become tradition, Henry and Nancy Wessells have cordially invited us to their home on October 26th for an afternoon of fine company, delicious food, and a lawn full of colorful Italian sculptures.

I understand that this year we're a bit later than normal. But busy schedules have forced us to the later part of Indian summer. On the bright side, we don't have the usual conflict with the AACA fall meet or the Radnor Hunt events.

Please plan to make this exceptional event. We'll hold it rain or shine. Please think positively to ensure some good weather... we deserve it!

Elections I almost forgot. Our fall picnic is also our annual elections. So, if you're interested in any position, or would like to volunteer in any way, please let me know or show up to the picnic!

Our Electronic Outlet I know, you're tired about hearing about the web and email, me too. But, I just wanted to remind everyone that La Voce is available online at: www.dvaroc.org. The nice thing about that is that you can see all the photos in living color. This edition, in particular, is really worth the visit. In addition, I know there are a lot of you out there who haven't sent me your email address. Again, sometimes events come up fast, or changes occur. So, if you'd like to be in the loop, send an email to me at: mpbrady@verizon.net.

One last thing about the web and I'll stop. I want to thank both Michael Berube and Ed Jones for stepping up to help out with the site. Of course, I haven't had a chance to discuss it with either of them yet, but by way of this column, I'm announcing that you're both hired. I'll try to get us together in the near future.... hey, how about at the picnic? hint, hint....

Un-events I want to apologize for the evaporating Tech Session and Lunch that were tentatively scheduled for July and September. I didn't get the time to arrange the first and couldn't promise a large enough turn out to make the second one happen. I hope that didn't inconvenience anyone.

I hope everyone survived the rough September better than I did. Anyway, get those cars out and drive them. Remember, if owners of 6C 1750s don't mind getting them wet, you shouldn't either! - Hope to see you soon and hope all is well - bob

Classifieds:

1971 Alfa Romeo GTV 1750 - Butterscotch Yellow over Black - 76,000 miles. Looks and runs great. Nice older restoration, with a generous amount of new parts. Spec fuel injection was recently rebuilt, car is running at its best. Asking \$8000 Any questions please call me at 215-783-3225. Bernie.

1984 GTV 6 Maratona - Silver Black as they all are, everything power with sunroof, factory ground affects, 33,000 original miles. Car has been repainted but hard to notice. Excellent job was done. Excellent condition inside and out and is in great running condition. In my opinion this is one of the nicest GTV 6 out there right now. It took me two years to find one that would suit me and unfortunately I am forced to sell it. Asking Price \$ 8500 Call Bernie at: 215-783-3225.

1989 Milano (Gold) 110,500 miles Silver/Tan cloth. Expertly maintained. New timing belt, water pump, brake pads. Recent battery, radiator, etc. Repairable rust on both rear wheel arches. Best offer. John Blankin - Tel (267) 250-6520.

1964 Giulia Sprint Speciale Resto needs to be completed. Solid body, in primer. 95% of chrome done. \$10K obo, Jeff Kollar, 610-746-0317

1962 Giulia Spider needs total restoration or for parts. \$1000 obo, Jeff Kollar, 610-746-0317

Giulietta, Giulia Spider, Sprint, SS Parts: Engines, Veloce bits, trim, body, interior. Call for details. Jeff Kollar, 610-746-0317

1988 Milano Verde Parts: Parting out '88 Verde. Engine, front Recaros and window switches gone. Many good parts left incl: doors, hood, trunklid, flares/skirts, spoiler, etc [Dan Scolaro](mailto:Dan.Scolaro), 215-782-1478

1976 Alfa Spider: Restoration in progress. Engine and transmission rebuilt, seats upholstered, body work completed, ready for final paint, parts rechromed, new windshield. Over \$8,000. invested; asking \$6,000. Call 610-933-7171 or E-Mail: whiteleila@msn.com.

1974 GTV: disassembled, custom cage & flat floors with bars for seats and undercarriage bracing by S&W in Spring City, PA. **All** parts are boxed and will go with car. 5 new OEM steel wheels widened to 6" with Stahlflex 3011. In storage for 15 yrs. Rebuilt engine (Spica) with maybe 5kmi. Extras available incl: (will not be sold separately until car is sold): pair 45DCOE's w/manifold, Spruell headers (new), Switters close ratio gear box, SAFE fuel cell and Life Line Halogen fire system both SCCA legal) Sparco seat Brembo lightweight calipers (new), Car is at Nick Falcone's, Bala-Cynwyd, PA, 610-664-0944

1983 GTV-6 19K miles Silver/Blue, Bill Conway, 973-839-9239 Bill.Conway@neclease.com

NOS Parts I have hundreds of NOS Alfa parts. Most of them are 105/115 series parts, but I also have some 101, 102 and 106 series parts. For an inventory and some prices, go to:

<http://members.bellatlantic.net/~mpbrady/newpartsinventory.htm>

In addition to the new parts, I have a couple 1750 and 1600 engines as well as some spare 5spd transmissions for sale. Contact Bob Brady 610-925-1837, mpbrady@bellatlantic.net for more information.

Car Storage: I have Barn Storage space available for rent. Winter storage for your Spider or that project car you don't have time for. Dry, clean and secure at \$95 a mo. Located south of Bethlehem just across the Bucks County line. Domenick Billera, 610-838-9970

Wanted: 1967 GTV, prefer original car. The nicer the better. Will pay market price. Day(908) 686-8236, Evening(973) 635-1932, email MWSINC2426@aol.com

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Classified ads are free to DVAROC members.

The DVAROC web address is at: www.dvaroc.org

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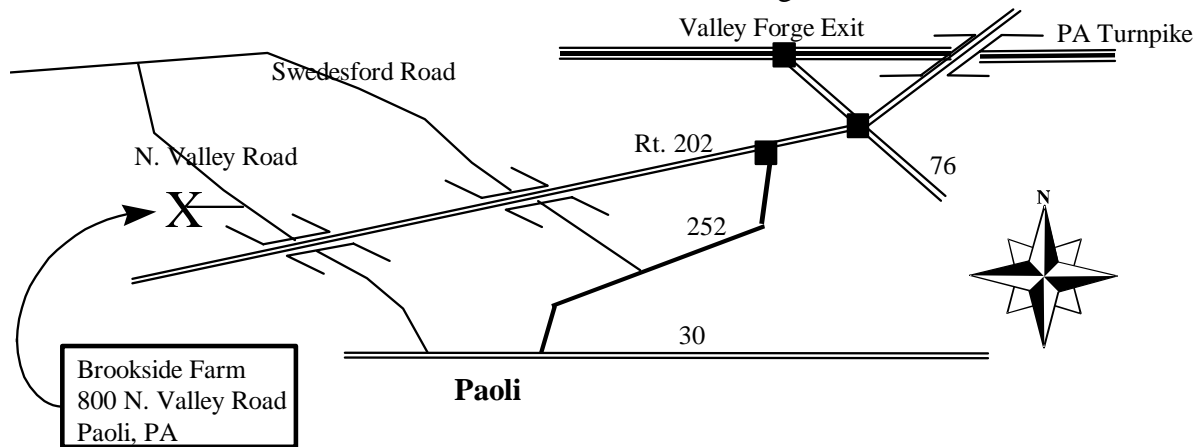
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Events Calendar: * Indicates DVAROC Event

*October 26 -DVAROC Fall Picnic - Brookside Farm - Paoli, Pa

Fall is picnic time for the Delaware Valley Alfisti and their friends. Join us at the Wessells' Brookside Farm for a wonderful afternoon among beautiful cars, lovely scenery, and an outstanding group of people. The event will start at 12:00 and finish at 3:00. In addition to gathering our cars together on the lawn and eating lunch, we'll hold our annual elections. Gourmet bag lunches will be available for \$10. Choices are: Ham and Cheese, Chicken Salad, Curried Chicken Salad, or Roast Beef on Wheat, Sourdough, Croissant or Focaccia. Lunches will include a pasta or potato salad and a desert. Drinks will be provided by the club. If you can't bring your Alfa (or don't presently have one), bring a part, picture, or emblem. Or, borrow one of my Alfas for the event. Please **RSVP by October 24** and place your lunch orders with Bob Brady at: (610)925-1837 or bbrady@rodel.com. **Note that this is rain or shine.** Don't miss this great event! See directions below:



From the PA Turnpike:

Take Exit 24, Valley Forge. Go South on 76. Exit onto 202 South towards West Chester (not towards King of Prussia). Exit onto 252. At the light, turn left and go under 202. Just after the underpass, 252 veers right. Follow 252 South to Swedesford Road (traffic light). Turn right onto Swedesford road. Drive under 202 again. Turn left on North Valley Road. 800 N. Valley Road is about ½ mile on the right. If you get to another underpass, you went too far.

From Route 30:

Drive to Paoli. In Paoli, turn on to N. Valley Road (the Paoli train station is on this road). Follow N. Valley Road North. Drive through an underpass. 800 N. Valley Road is about 200 yards from the underpass, on the left.

October 17-18 – VSCCA Fall Finale – Lime Rock Park – Lime Rock, Ct.

Come out to see the vintage racers make their last appearance in the northeast for the year while you enjoy the beautiful Berkshires scenery.

*November 9 – DVAROC Fall Tour – Bucks County, Pa.

I'm tentatively scheduling this event now. We'll likely tour northern Bucks County and stop at a restaurant for lunch. Please contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net if you're interested and if you can help organize. This could be your last chance for a drive before the weather gets yucky!

November 12-13 – COMSCC School and Time Trials – Lime Rock, Ct.

If anyone is interested, I might be persuaded to attend this track event. It will likely be the last opportunity to get some track time for this year. If you have never driven Lime Rock, you must. The first day and a half will be lapping sessions with instruction (if you wish). The second day will have time trials in the afternoon. You need not have an Alfa and you need not have experience. If you are interested in going, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net

Other Events???

If you have a particular interest, know of an event that might interest other Alfisti, or just want to get involved, please contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net

Summer Rally (con't from Page 1)

Over lunch, Ed Jones showed us a video that was take at La Bella Macchina by Car and Driver. Ed's pretty '69 GTV showed prominently in the piece. Once our tummies were satisfied, it was time for round #2.



The Gang: Dan Newton, Mary Nomecos, Bob Brady, Frank Gil, Murry Miller, Mrs. Newton, Mrs. Ciro, Joe Ciro, Katy Sumrow, Bill Conway, Arthur Jones, Mrs. Jones, Ed Jones



Bill Conway receives the DVAROC Driver of the Year Award



After the first run, our contestants enjoy a hearty picnic

As usual, there was a little confusion about how the course was to be driven in reverse. We had to remind some that "reverse" didn't mean driving backwards. Others were in a state of panic, trying to figure out how to re-interpret the directions to run the course the other way around. They were quickly relieved when it was pointed out that the directions on the reverse side were already altered for them. (Our rallies are

intentionally made idiot-proof to make sure everyone has a great time. – ed.>) Weighed down from a delicious lunch, our teams were even less eager to run to their cars. But, again, they heeded the call and were off.

The collective driving and navigation skills of our club have clearly improved. The tricky reverse run didn't slip up anyone. Again, right on time, the cars drove up the hill and returned. A couple of contestants, who shall remain nameless, figured out the trick to these types of rallies; drive the first run leisurely, drive the second run fast, and then wait near the finish to match times perfectly. Fortunately, the event steward was on to their tricks and stopped the clock when they crested the hill, foiling their chicanery. Once all had arrived, it was time to award the bonus points and determine the winner.

In the end, it was the team of Bill Conway, Katy Sumrow and Emilie Brady, driving Bob Brady's Sprint that dominated the finish. Not only did they exactly match their elapsed times from runs one and two, but they also were the only team to correctly answer all four bonus points. Because of his masterful display of driving prowess, he was awarded the coveted DVAROC Driver of the Year Award. Like Joe Ciro, the winner last year, Bill will retain this valuable trophy for one year, when we'll run the rally again.

Despite the questionable weather early in the morning, the day was terrific. The sun shone brightly. The picnic was perfect. And, no one got lost! This event is turning into one of our most fun. I hope you can make it next year, when we'll probably move it back to July.



The Jones's depart for the first leg of the rally in their Duetto



*This La Voce's teaser: 166s were on sale at the Radnor Hunt Show. They look **much** nicer in person than in photos!*

A Fabulous 100 Motor Cars of Radnor Hunt

Aficionados of the automobile were in agony this September, for on the 14th there were three significant events occurring in the Delaware Valley, simultaneously. In Bucks County, the Buckingham Concours d'Elegance provided relief from those left wanting in the wake of the cancellation of New Hope. For those south of Philadelphia, the Hagley Antique Car Show treated its guests to a wide variety set among the interesting Hagley Museum. For Alfisti, however, the choice was clear. The 8th annual 100 Motor Cars of Radnor Hunt was the place to be as Alfa Romeo was one of the featured marques.

The Radnor Hunt event is really a weekend-long celebration of the automobile in its finest forms, which culminates with the Concours d'Elegance on Sunday. To accentuate the focus on Alfa Romeos, our own Henry Wessells helped build the weekend into a particularly special event for 1900 owners. He, along with 1900 guru Joost Gompels prepared special technical sessions for owners of that series and interested parties. They also made a special effort to bring in a large field of Alfas, again with the focus on 1900s. Their efforts paid off handsomely.

On Friday, 1900 owners from across the country gathered to discuss history and share technical information. That evening, they joined other enthusiasts for a welcoming barbeque. The next day, the annual rally through southern Chester County was run, in the rain. Not only did it rain on Saturday, but at times it came down in torrents. Most would have understood if the participants opted to keep their prized Alfas in dry comfort. These owners, however, were true enthusiasts. Some, like 6C 1750 owner Willem van Huystee even braved the rain without a roof. These Alfa owners truly understand that these special automobiles were meant for driving, in all conditions. In the end, over sixty cars participated in the rally, which ended with a lovely lunch. As if that didn't make for a full day, there was an art show, featuring many original paintings of Alfa Romeos, and a black-tie gala with special guest Bob Bondurant. The best was still to come.

Early Sunday morning, my son and I arrived at the hunt to help prepare for the Concours. As with the entire weekend, the sky was menacing, but at least it was devoid of rain. After parking the Sprint in a place where it would hopefully attract other Alfas, we went about setting up. One hundred rare and majestic vehicles had to be lovingly arranged on the dew-soaked lawn. First to arrive was Peter Markhowski in his elegant 1940 6C 2500 Cabriolet with coachwork by Graber. This outstanding two-tone gray convertible was the last in a line of exclusive pre-war Alfas. It looked as though it belonged along Lake Como with Mercedes 500Ks and Hispano-Suizas. This day, it belonged among the terraces of Chester County hunt country. My son Matthew perked up from his funk at spending the day away from his Game Cube when Peter invited him to ride along. I must confess, I was a bit jealous.



Peter Markhowski's thoroughly elegant 1940 6C 2500 Cabriolet

Next to arrive were some of the 1900s. Timothy Gallagher brought his lovely 1953 Pinin Farina coupe. The PF body evoked elements of the post-war 6C 2500s, with its large horizontal front bumper, wide air inlets, and sculpted hood line. In profile though, it was very similar to the Touring-bodied 1900s.



Timothy Gallagher's '53 1900PF. Note the contrast between it and Henry Wessells' '53 1900CSS by Touring behind it.

Former DVAROC member, Scott Klion brought his '57 1900CSS with body by Touring. Much less seen, this "Series IV" car evoked the exuberance of the later fifties. Its svelte, chiseled form speaks of innocence and energy, not unlike the difference between a '54 Chevy and a '57 Chevy, if that comparison doesn't offend too much. Scott's car became the first of many to be parked on the side as the vintage machines started to back up and the logistical puzzle of arranging the 100 cars in very specific order, arriving in very random order, kicked into full gear.

Willem van Huystee adroitly avoided the traffic jam in his '33 6C 1750 by making a b-line across the uneven lawn to his spot. I must tell you the sound that super-charged straight six made when he opened the throttle to "clean the plugs" was fabulous! It's roar was Formula-1-like but had overtones of gear-train from the blower. If you were at the fall picnic two years ago, you would have remembered this car. (con't on Next Page)

Radnor Hunt Concours (from previous page)

As he did then, he drove the car from Lancaster to the Radnor event. This particular 6C sees use in many vintage events, including the Mille Miglia.

By now, I was in full traffic cop mode, helping Jaguars, Cunninghams and GT-40s find their way to their display spots. Then, out of the corner of my eye I saw what I first thought was a 33 Stradale. Another glance revealed that it was George Fogg's TZ-2, the first I'd ever seen in person, being driven in by Paul Glynn.



George Fogg's TZ-2 Sits Ready to Pounce

The first thing that strikes you when you witness a TZ-2 in person is how low it is. Like many race cars of the sixties, it looks much larger in photographs than it is in reality. From every angle, this thoroughbred looks ready to pounce. From the front, it sits low, really low. With the possible exception of the sight of a speed bump, it looks fearless. Its grillwork is purposeful, yet elegant, with delicate trim forming the outline of the Alfa shield. From the sides, the curves are sensuous. Its skin shows subtle ripples in the glistening sun, belying its fiberglass construction. Nevertheless, it was clearly fabricated with the care of artisans. Inside, it is well outfitted, surprisingly so for a purpose-built racecar. Car seals still decorate the steering column, reminding all that this particular car saw the eyes of many an FIA scrutineer. As if the TZ-2 wasn't enough, its owner brought yet another Zagato-bodied Alfa to the party, a 1955 1900C.

A 1900 Zagato is immediately recognizable by its prominent twin hood scoops. Where Pinin Farina and Touring 1900s are clearly graceful, the Zagato cars are decidedly more radical looking. They look more at home in competition than on a drive to a seaside café. While the exterior was less appealing to me, the interior of the Fogg car was sensational. Not only was the butterscotch leather beautiful, but the ladder back seat frames which were covered in it were marvelous. The much-touted seats found on '69 GTVs have nothing on these works of art. As impressive as this car was, it didn't steal the show. That task was left to its unrestored twin.

After spending 40 years in a garage, the 1956 1900 Zagato of Ed Leerdam emerged in the Florida sun. I overheard one boy in the crowd ask his father why everyone was ogling over this beat-up old car amongst the many perfectly restored garage queens on the field. The answer was obvious after spending a few moments looking it over. It was a living piece of history. From the crudely welded framework over which aluminum panels were attached to

the crack in the air cleaner which received a repair many many years ago, this car was a grand survivor. In the years following the run-up in values of rare Alfas, Ferraris and their ilk, unrestored cars are nearly impossible to find. They have particular value for marques such as Alfas where details were often undocumented. These unrestored cars have the unique ability to provide direction to the others undergoing restoration. This particular car was precious.



An unrestored 1900 Zagato visits the Concours from Florida

The 1900 Zagatos were not the only pair of "before and after" cars. Willem van Huystee's 6C was joined by another. This one showed paint lovingly worn through in spots no doubt from years of careful polishing. Like the 1900 Zagato, this one was a piece of history. I was particularly fascinated by the trunk lid. When the driver of the car opened it, the crude wooden frame could be seen. It looked as if it was built from pallet wood. The carefully fabricated aluminum skin was attached to it with what looked like carpet tacks! One could easily imagine a car like this undergoing "restoration" and having those crude details replaced with much more precise, but historically incorrect, attachment methods. (Continued on Next Page)



Scott Klion's '57 1900CSS in front of Wicker Francis' '60 Veloce. Note the similarities in design.

Radnor Hunt Concours (from previous page)

The third unrestored Alfa was perhaps the best preserved. This one, a 1925 RLSS owned by Philadelphian Frederick Simone

sported original paint. The RLSS was a not often seen glimpse into the very early days of Arese. Like all of the RL series cars, this one featured a straight six cylinder engine with valves actuated by pushrods. The body was by Thorton which was fabricated in an era when few automakers provided both chassis and coachwork. What was particularly beautiful about this body was its pointed grill, with Alfa badges flanking each side. (A photo of it is on the back cover of this newsletter. – ed.)

In a field of superlatives, the distinctive Giulietta SS and the gorgeous Giulietta Spider Veloce owned by Wicker Francis could have lost mention. That was not the case. Wicker's car took first honors among the post-war Alfas, besting the TZ-2. That feat is testament to the quality of his restoration. The car is simply stunning.

After the field of dreams was in place, it was time for me to enjoy the rest of the show. By then, Matthew had become the sidekick of the site manager, driving around with him in his Kawasaki Mule. I ran into Bill Conway and together we found the beer tent. He brought his latest time capsule, an Alfetta Sports Sedan with 19,000 miles, or something like that.

The Sprint worked like a charm, luring all sorts of Alfas to congregate around it, in the parking lot. Among the more interesting ones were a Montreal and a Giulia TI Super.

The show was really a wonderful event. The cars, of course, were outstanding, but the cordial atmosphere and vendor distractions also contributed to a pleasant experience. What a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon!



A 1925 RLSS – Not something you see every day



Conrad (Bud) Brickman's 1952 1900 Touring-bodied coupe.

What's Wrong With This Picture? – Lessons Learned in Suspension Engineering... and Other Opportunities to Bond With My GTV



Within 24 hours of mailing out the last La Voce, I received a phone call from Dave West. "Nice trailing arm," he said. And with that, he became the winner of the "guess what's wrong with this photo" contest. Dave correctly noticed that the left side trailing arm of my GTV was no longer attached to the rear axle. In fact, the steel brackets that normally keep the trailing arm and rear axle one, had torn in half. Now, as you might imagine, when that happens, it makes for an exciting few moments. If it happens entering a turn 5 at Watkins Glen at full tilt, it is even more exciting. My first reaction to the "pop!" and resulting spin was that I blew a tire. As I continued to spin, I thought it sounded more like a cracked wheel. Fortunately, I didn't hit anything and the other cars on the track managed to avoid me. Unfortunately, I wasn't going to be able to drive the second day of the event, and would miss the time trials, again.

For most normal people, the sight of torn steel is not something that elicits good feelings. For some, however, spectacular failures are exciting opportunities to learn something. I admit it, the mechanical engineering nerd in me leans toward the latter category.

As you might recall, one of my summer projects from last year was designing and building a Panhard rod for my GTV. Being inherently cheap, ahem, thrifty, I decided to make my own instead of buying one from the usual sources, such as Jack Beck. Being a lazy engineer, I measured Bill Shield's Panhard rod assembly and used that design as a starting point. (Continued on Next Page)

Lessons Learned (From previous page)

I wanted to make mine adjustable, however, as well as wanted to keep a functional parking brake, which his did not allow. After the conceptual design was finished, I detailed it out. I even did some calculations to make sure the body mount assembly was strong enough. For the rest of the system, however, I relied on some “intuitive” engineering. That would prove to be an unfortunate shortcut.

Functionally, it was a great success, transforming a car that lifted and spun its inner rear wheel in turns to one that was firmly planted. The “toe of the boot” at Watkins Glen went from being a dirt track experience to a full-throttle, attack the hill affair. My lap times continued to drop. So, it would appear, life was good.

My first hint that my shortcuts would lead to problems came to me at Summit Point. After a day full of unrelated car problems, I noticed that the floor of the trunk had sprouted a two-inch long crack down the center.

With Lime Rock just a week later, and with a pile of other problems to fix, I let the crack go. Even though the second day of the event there was run in the wet, with correspondingly much lower cornering forces applied to the car, the crack had grown to about eight inches long!



The Crack – post Lime Rock, now a full 8” long!

As soon as I returned from Lime Rock, the GTV was back up on jack stands. I considered the crack to be an opportunity to finally finish the trunk. When I painted the car a few years ago, I didn’t bother with the inside of the trunk. Now was my chance. I forgot to mention that my gas tank had by now formed a crack where it was seamed together. It held gas, mostly, and didn’t pose any, real, immanent danger. But, since I’d have to weld up the trunk, I’d have to take out the gas tank which would give me the opportunity to fix that too! Lots of opportunities, these Alfas.

Well, like every project I’ve undertaken with this car, this one snowballed a bit. Running a weld bead down the crack was simple enough. But, that wouldn’t solve the underlying problem, that the Panhard rod was putting too much load into the trunk floor. So, I added a reinforcing plate behind the trunk to beef it up. I also added some reinforcement to the floor of the trunk to keep the crack from re-emerging. There was also a little rust hole in my spare tire well that needed a patch. And, like every rust

repair, that “tiny” hole wound up being a 12” long repair. With the trunk now reinforced and devoid of any unwanted cracks and holes, I broke out my can of paint, now four years old. Remarkably, it was still good, and matched to boot! Speaking of “boot,” now was a good opportunity to paint the inside of my trunk lid, which I also avoided when I did the car.

So, after an hour or so of sandblasting, the inside of the trunk lid was ready for priming and painting. Like any paint work, the time it takes to get to the point of putting the final coat on is 90% of the whole job. So, after about four hours of pre-work, I spent five minutes putting on the final coat of clear and was done with it, finally. Or, so I thought.

Just when I flipped over the beautifully painted trunk lid, I noticed some scratches on the top of the lid. Apparently, some sand got between the top of the lid and the surface it was laying on. So, now the inside was beautiful, but the outside now sported scratches. More opportunities... but they’d have to wait... I was prepping the car for the Glen. Remember, this was before the trailing arm brackets broke. Confused? Read on....

The last bit to finish to get the car back on the track was the gas tank. I didn’t want to weld my cracked tank, so pulled the one from my “spare” GTV, which appeared to be “like new.” Ha!

While removing the awful primer the DPO put on the tank, I discovered two screw-driver-sized punctures. I was going to have to weld a gas tank after all. I won’t bore you with the details, but a few seconds of welding later, the tank was ready for paint.

It all went back together like a charm, and finally, I had a lovely trunk, worthy of any concours judge. So, it was off to Watkins Glen. This time, we made a family vacation of it.

The first day was great. The car ran like a charm. I was getting faster and faster. My tires were holding up. The gods were smiling. And then, after about the third lap of the last session of the day, “POP!” All things considered, it happened in probably the best of all places. A few seconds before, and I would have probably launched the car going through the “bus stop” chicane. A few seconds later, and I would have careened down hill, into the unforgiving Armco. So, indeed, I felt fortunate to pack up the car without a scratch. The only damage other than the brackets was a shredded tire. (*This was an expensive year for tires!*)

After the Glen, the car sat on the trailer for about a month, as we went on vacation and I was distracted with other duties. Finally, I pulled it off the trailer and put it back up on jack stands, an all-too-familiar pose. Did I mention that the car collected three inches of water in it while it sat outside?!

Once back in the garage, I pulled the rear axle to perform the repair. To my horror, both trailing arm brackets on the side that broke were cracked in several places. If it didn’t snap where it did, it would have surely snapped at the site of one of the other cracks. So, “what went wrong?”

Bothered by the failure, I did some analysis. After looking at the loads, I concluded that it could not have broken from being over-stressed. (Continued on Next Page)

Lessons Learned (From previous page)

Looking closer, the cracks provided the clue. When a crack forms, the stress encountered at the root of the crack can be many times that of the un-cracked part. This is why wrappers often come with a small slit in them to aid in their removal. The cracks

that formed on the brackets provided the site for the “stress-riser” to occur. The brackets didn’t “snap” they tore. But, why did they crack in the first place?

The brackets are stamped steel affairs. They curve up about 4mm on edge, providing stiffness. Unfortunately, they were never designed to take the load of the car’s lateral forces. That was the job of the “T-arm” assembly. With the Panhard rod, all the lateral load transfers through the rod, to the trailing arm (where I attached the rod) and then up through the trailing arm brackets. While I did reinforce the brackets, I didn’t provide much reinforcement for their lateral movement.

Each time I drove through a turn, the cornering forces would force the brackets to flex. The 4mm lips became overstressed and eventually formed cracks. Then, the cracks provided the stress risers to finish tearing the brackets apart. Isn’t failure analysis fun?

So, with my newfound enlightenment, I proceeded to redesign the brackets and repair them. I started by using slightly thicker material. Then, I provided stiffeners from the axle tube to the trailing arm, giving the new brackets a lot more lateral stiffness. Then, I added gussets to the sides of the brackets, distributing the load from them to the axle tube. (*Had I paid more attention to Bill Shield’s installation, I would have recognized that his had gussets welded between the brackets and the axle tube for exactly that reason.*) Finally, instead of the 4mm lip of the original brackets, I added 10mm stiffening sections.

Repairing and rebuilding the brackets didn’t really take too long, about four hours. And, it’s exactly the kind of work I love to do. Of course, opportunities were just around the corner.

When I removed the rear axle, I noticed that the metal cover that mounts to the driveshaft yoke and protects the axle seal was bent. Of course, when I went to straighten it, it popped hopelessly off. This wouldn’t be much of a problem if you are an Alfa shop and have the special socket to remove the pinion nut, but of course, I am not, and do not. But, I do have a welder and can’t think of a better way to spend an afternoon than fabricating a special socket (unless it’s failure analysis, of course).

So, a few hours later, I had the tool made. It wasn’t quite Snap-On quality, but it would do the job. Remarkably, it worked like a charm. The next problem was how to reattach the pinion seal shield.

After many attempts at re-staking it on to the yoke, I remembered that I have a welder. So a few tack welds later, and the now straightened shield was ready for reinstallation.

One of the other opportunities I encountered while removing the broken trailing arm brackets was the chance to replace one of the rear hard brake lines. I very consciously took care not to nick the hard line with the angle grinder I was using to remove the brackets. Of course, a momentary lapse yielded exactly what I was trying to avoid. No matter, it was just one more thing.

While I had the rear axle out, I also took the opportunity to remove the 25 years of accumulated grease on it and make it look shiny and pretty. I should know better than to underestimate the amount of work it takes to remove grease. Cleaning up the rear took nearly as long as it did to repair the brackets. But, in the end, it looked pretty, so it was all worth it.... right?

Reinstalling the axle and rear suspension was uneventful. I’ve gotten quiet good at it. This is the second time in as many months. Letting the car back on the ground, I readied it for a test drive. Turning the key produced the familiar sound of the electric fuel pump. Then, the not-so-familiar smell of raw gasoline wafted to my nose. Looking around back, I noticed that my fuel pump was now leaking. It had survived being cooked in a pan of gasoline ignited by an errant spark, but that’s another story. But, now, a year later, it had finally given up the ghost. Another opportunity.

So, digging into my parts cache, I plucked out a new Bosch fuel pump and installed it.

Back into the driver seat, I once again, turned the key. This time, the sound was as expected and the gasoline stayed where it was supposed to be. Then, I turned the key further to bring the little gem back to life. Nothing. “Arrrrggghhhh!!!”

Figuring that it was just the sticky starter solenoid that reared its head at Lime Rock, I gave it a whack. Still, nothing. Out came the multi-meter yielding a dead battery. Why my battery discharged is a bit of a mystery. I suppose that’s another opportunity.

The next day, after charging, I took advantage of the best of all opportunities, an opportunity to drive my Alfa. It worked like a charm!

La Bella Macchina d’Italia

Ed Jones provided some great photos from this event in July...



A 33 Stradale!



The Jones Stable including his '69 GTV featured in the Car and Driver coverage of the event.

In this issue: Suspension Engineering, Summer Picnic and Rally, Radnor Concours, and more



No folks, this is not a reflection, but rather the grill of an RLSS on display at the 100 Automobiles of Radnor Hunt



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