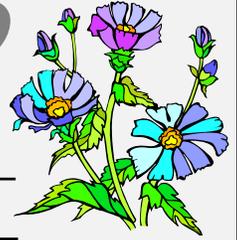




La Voce

Spring 2005

newsletter of the delaware valley alfa romeo owners club



Tech Session Delivers!

Sun, Alfas and Donuts Converge on Falcones

Vince, Ruth and I looked at the time, 9:50. We looked at the parking lot, two Alfas. We looked at each other. "Hmm, it looks like it's going to be a sparse tech session," Ruth said. A little nervously, I replied, "Well, it's still a little early." Then, the cars began to pour in.



Jack Stoll, with the help of his son, brought **both** his Giulietta and GTV. (*The fact that Jack actually drove his cars tells you what a wonderful spring day it was.*) Bill Conway brought his Alfetta, but promptly covered it to avoid further sun damage to his fragile paint. Quinn DeMenna's was less shy. He let his black Alfetta Sprint Veloce glisten in the sun. The new engine sounded great! The addition of Henry Wessell's Alfetta GTV, which was in the lot, might have made this the first time in decades three Alfettas have been seen in the same place. Following right behind Quinn, was Charlie Crothers in his Giulia Spider, enjoying some al fresco driving. Fred Sacks and Dave Burroughs also brought Spiders. Fred seemed to have convinced himself not to sell his car, after all. Ed Jones made the trek from Stroudsburg in style in his 164. Dave West took the opportunity to get

to know his Giulia Spider Veloce some more. All in all, the showing turned out great. The lot was full of Alfas of all varieties and the shop was even fuller with a great bunch of Alfisti.

This year's topic was engines, and Vince had some very interesting pieces for show and tell. Our favorite was the "two-piece" crankshaft. Alfas have a reputation for nearly indestructible bottom-ends. Unfortunately, the owner of this crank found out what can happen when one ignores the details of these Italian masterpieces. In this case, the crank was ground but the radiused transitions from the bearing journal to the crank throw weren't reproduced. The sharp transition led to a stress-riser, causing the crank to fail. Remarkably, the car still ran, but the owner's plans for driving to last year's convention were scrapped. (Continued on Page 4)

Mark Your Calendars!

June 5 – Swap Meet – Autocraft – York, Pa.

June 5 – Italian Car Show – Headhouse Square – Phila. Pa.

June 12 – New Garden Air Show – New Garden, Pa.

June 19 – Tour to Concous d'Elegance of Eastern U.S. – Lehigh, Pa.

Bob's Babblings

Apologies As I try to crank out this latest La Voce, I find myself in a familiar situation: DVAROC events coming up quickly while I suffer writer's block. Like too many newsletters, I started this one weeks ago, but find the deadline bearing down hard, with little written.

With the reliability of the newsletter a bit dodgy, I highly recommend that you visit our website for updates or better yet, send me your email address so I can put you on our distribution list. If you prefer to avoid computers, feel free to give me a call to get the low-down on what's going on.

Bill Conway and Autoweek A few weeks ago I was contacted by Autoweek magazine for some leads on some nice GTV-6s and Alfettas, among others. Naturally, I directed them to Mr. Low Mileage Alfa, Bill Conway. He reports that they spent the entire afternoon with him photographing and learning about his GTV-6 and Alfetta Sprint Veloce. So, look for those cars to be featured in a future Escape Roads section of Autoweek. Congratulations, Bill.

Amelia Island In case you didn't know, Amelia Island featured Alfa Romeo this year. From the reports I've read and the photos I've seen, it looked like an incredible event. I have never seen such a wide variety of top-notch Alfas on display. If anyone went, I'd love to get a few words on it to publish. For some photos, see: www.ameliaconcours.org

Upcoming Events As I write this, the weather outside is absolutely gorgeous. The Millville Wheels and Wings Show, vintage races at Summit Point and Carlisle Import Show should be great successes.

What was supposed to be a DVAROC at Millville unraveled as my racing season came to an abrupt end and Marie and I decided to make our complicated lives much more so. Charlie Crothers and a couple of others were hoping to make it. I hope they (and perhaps you) did.

June, however, is shaping up to be a very busy month. On the 5th, you have your choice of either the **swap meet/open house** at Autocraft in York, or the **Italian Car Show** in Philadelphia. I, myself, haven't decided which one I'll be at. The latter event is still in the organizing stages. It's pretty certain you won't get another La Voce before then. So, if you're interested in going (it should be great), please contact me so I can keep you informed.

The following week, we have our annual afternoon at **New Garden Airshow**. This is always a pleasant event with lots of interesting cars in the field and in the museum, not to mention the aircraft. Please join us for breakfast at my house and an afternoon of cars and planes.

The week after, we'll **tour to Lehigh** for the Concours. This could be our last trip to this event, so plan to attend. I'll try to update the route to make it more interesting.

July is a bit light on events, at the moment. We're trying to set up something later in the month.

The big event I want everyone to try their best to attend is the **Vintage Grand Prix at Watkins Glen**. This year, Alfa Romeo is featured. I've already seen the field of race cars start to swell. Even if you can't race, there are many events in which you can participate and enjoy. Please contact me to coordinate going to the event. For more information see: www.alfasattheglen.com and www.grandprixfestival.com. I really hope you can get to this one, it will be unforgettable.

What's Your Email Address? More and more, I find that member's email addresses on my distribution list are not being updated. To get up-to-date information on club events, please get on this mailing list. To do so, contact me at: mpbrady@verizon.net

I hope to see you at an event, or at least driving around, soon! - bob

Classifieds:

1958 Alfa Giulietta Sprint, Excellent mechanicals, rebuilt brakes, new exhaust, decent interior, rust-free body, bare metal strip and now in primer. Some chrome done. \$9000 obo. Randy (609)-261-7547.

1984 Spider Veloce Silver w/ blue leather, 5 spd, 42K miles. Same owner since 1994. Recent full service by Falcone. New canvas top and clutch. Paint good, some minor chips and dings. Some rust on rockers. \$7900 OBO. Call for pictures and records. Tony (610)878-4547.

anthony.villano@zlbbehiring.com

1991 Alfa Romeo 164 L. Graphite, blue leather, auto, recent insp, runs well, fair cosmetics. 132k. \$1750. 610-388-2438. After 6pm. Robert

1988 Milano Platinum, 125K miles, auto, limited slip rear, leather etc. Would be a good driver, convert to racer or as a last resort for parts.

\$1200 OBO. Adam: 267-307-8483, adoherty@sas.upenn.edu

1991 164B, 130K miles, tapped in rear but trunk-lid is fine. Right rear door is jammed shut and the right rear quarter is bent, but all other sheet metal is in good shape. Automatic is in good shape. Great for a parts car, can make some decent money on this if you have somewhere to put it to strip... I don't. \$750 OBO Adam: 267-307-8483,

adoherty@sas.upenn.edu

Wanted: A 1962-65 Giulia spider or Speciale. It must be a nice car that I can get into and go for a drive or club activities. I'm too old for another project. This is a very serious inquiry from a Alfa member in N.E. Ohio. Please contact Joe at 440-895-1358 or jjweh@peoplepc.com.

1994 Commemorative Edition Spider #75/190, Kenny, 973-278-8300 days, 201-224-4647 eves.

1992 164L, 5 speed, Green/tan leather, 79000 mi. Outstanding example. Two-time 1st Place winner at New Hope Concourse. Original owner; all service receipts; original window sticker. New timing belt and tensioners, recent clutch and Stebro exhaust. Best 164 available anywhere! \$9900 Call 609-683-5794 <gajanssen@msn.com>. NJ

1993 Alfa 164 L, Dark Green/Tan, Auto, 100k mi, Purchased new from Algar, all service done at Algar or Sals w/ recpts, car is in exc shape cosmetically and mechanically, paint looks new, no accidents. Dave 302-993-7800 or davidbeck@sprintmail.com \$7500.00.

1983 Alfa Romeo GTV-6, Maratona w/3.0, 98K, complete Verde drivetrain, hit in front, needs fender and front valence, have parts to repair, interior near mint, rest of car is very nice except paint is wearing thin in parts, \$2000 obo. Domenick Billera, 610-838-9970

Alfa Romeo Milano Verde, I have two that I need to sell. One is black and is somewhat rusty but runs and drives well. The other is gray, and is in better condition, but has not been running. Contact: Domenick Billera, 610-838-9970

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

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 **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 are 105/115 series parts, but I also some 101, 102 and 106. In addition, I have a couple 1750 and 1600 engines as well as some spare 5spd transmissions for sale. Contact Bob Brady 610-925-1837, mpbrady@verizon.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

Events Calendar: * Indicates DVAROC Event

***June 5 – Tri-State Alfa Swap Meet - Autocraft – York, PA** The 8th Annual Alfa Swap Meet / Autocraft Open House will be held at Stahlman's Autocraft, 1508 South George Street, York, PA, on June 5th from 10am until about 3pm. Complimentary buffet lunch will be provided. Bring your Alfa goodies...new or used parts, books, models, whatever, and plan on swapping and/or selling with the rest of us. For questions or directions, call Erich or Andy at Autocraft 717 845 5314, or Mike Mihm 717 741 0460, or call Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837

***June 5 – Italian Car Show - Headhouse Square, Philadelphia, PA** The Fiat-Lancia-United club has asked the DVAROC to join them in displaying Italian cars in Old City, Philadelphia. The event will run from about 11am until about 3pm. Show off your Alfa and enjoy the company. For more information and to RSVP, please contact Thad Kirk at 610-324-7085 or thadkirk@hotmail.com. If you can't make the swap meet, try to make this one.

***June 12 – New Garden Air Show – New Garden, PA** Enjoy an afternoon of vintage aircraft and vintage cars in the midst of beautiful southern Chester county. The DVAROC will show its Alfas among the other local car clubs. There is also an interesting museum of transportation there with several oddball motorcycles and race cars. We will meet at Bob Brady's house at 8:30 and drive en mass to the show, a few miles away. Arrive earlier if you want some espresso and croissants. Please RSVP to Bob before June 11th, so we know to wait for you and have a display pass for your car. To get to Bob's house, take Route 1 to Kennett Square, PA. Take the exit for Route 82, North (away from Kennett). Take the first right as you crest the hill, Spottswood Lane. Bob's house is the third on the left. RSVP: Bob Brady at (610)925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net.

***June 19 – Concours d'Elegance of the Eastern U.S. – Bethlehem, PA** Our annual tour through Bucks County will start at Friendly's parking lot, at 168 Easton Road (Rt. 611), in Horsham, Pa. From there, we'll drive to the show. Their phone number is: 215-674-8677. We'll leave **promptly at 9:00 am**. To find out more, see: www.concourseast.org Please RSVP if you plan to tour with us, so I can make the right amount of copies. Contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net for further information or to RSVP. Hope to see you there!!!

June 24-27 – Le Bella Macchine d'Italia – Pocono, PA This annual orgy of Italian automobiles is always a special event. There are concours, track events and socials.. For more info see: www.mhkaye.com/index.htm

June 29-30 COMSCC School and Time Trials – Watkins Glen, NY If anyone is interested, I will try to attend this track event. 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. The Glen is a great track to drive. A great warm-up event for the convention. If you are interested in going, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net

July ???? DVAROC Event – TBD We don't have anything set up yet, but we'll have some sort of event in July. If you have any ideas or what to help set one up, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net

July 9 – 17 Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix – Pittsburgh, PA This is an excellent event and worth the drive. The races at Schenley Park on July 16-17 and feature older cars. There will also be vintage races at BeaveRun race track, nearby, on , July 9-10. These will feature newer, but still vintage cars. For more information, see: www.pittsburghvintagegrandprix.com

July 10 – 19th Annual Italian Car Festival – Canton, OH I have a brochure for this event. It looks like a nice event to attend, but a bit of a distance. If interested, contact Lee Contie at: 330-471-9980 or lcontie@neo.rr.com

August 6 – Glenside Car Show – Glenside, Pa. We're still getting information on this event. Stay tuned.

***August 7 – Summer Picnic and Rally – Ridley Creek Park, Pa.** Enjoy an afternoon of picnicking and driving as the DVAROC hosts its third annual summer picnic and rally. We'll meet at Ridley Creek State Park at 10am. Drive to the Bishops Mills Historical Institute Headquarters on Sandy Flash Drive, off of the West Chester Pike entrance. From there, look for signs to our picnic site. Each participant will drive the course and be timed. The course is about a 15 minute drive (at posted speed limits... really) and will take you through scenic countryside. The winner of the rally will be the driver who most closely matches his/her time. The coveted DVAROC Driver's Trophy will be awarded. Lunch (hoagies and chips) and drinks will be available for \$8/person. Please RSVP Bob Brady at (610)925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net by August 6th so we know what food to order and how many directions to make.

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@verizon.net

Tech Session (con't from Front Page)

Vince showed us lots of other details, as well. By the time we were done, we all had crankshafts spinning in our

heads. We even had a chance to check out the MG-TC in his garage. Its owner was last seen asking Jack about his Giulietta. Maybe we've hooked another one. Once again, Vince and Ruth put on a great event. And, once again, Mother Nature treated us to a spectacular day. I want to thank everyone who made the event. I hope you had as good a time as I did. I also want to extend the club's most sincere thanks to Vince and Ruth who continue to open their shop to us every year. We really appreciate it



The famous two-piece Alfa Romeo crankshaft.



Vince highlights the finer points of Italian crankshaft design.



An increasingly rare sight, a drivable Berlina



Dave West attempts to show off the engine of his Spider Veloce. This is what happens when you spend too much time around Porsches!



Bill Conway gives a momentary showing of his Alfetta. Seconds later, the cover was back on, and Bill was able to relax.

Alfa Romeo Drivers Wanted

- Join a private drivers club
- Schedule track-time at your convenience
- Just a short drive from your garage



800-795-2638 | www.alpinesignature.com

Winter Lunch a Winner



Quinn DeMenna, the Burroughs, Fred Sacks, Frank and Antonio Gil (sandwiched between the Bradys), the Stolls, Mary Nomecos, Arthur Jones and Charlie Crothers pose inside the comfy confines of Café La Fontana, taken over by the local Alfa Romeo nuts

It seems like forever, but just a couple of months ago we held our winter lunch. Through the hard work of Frank Gil, who organized the event, about twenty Delaware Valley Alfisti enjoyed a warm break from some cold weather. Café La Fontana treated us to a variety of delicious Italian dishes including: antipasto, salmon, eggplant and tortellini. When the last of the tiramisu had been finished, Frank broke out the door prizes. Afterwards, we adjourned to the chilly parking lot to admire the brave Alfas that made the trek and take photos.

Thanks, Frank, for doing a great job, we appreciate it.



Let the door prizes begin. And the winner is...



.... Dave Burroughs and Fred Sacks!



A fine collection of Alfa Romeos braves the salt covered parking lot.

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Adventures in Vintage Racing

Bob Brady

In the last edition of La Voce, I announced my recent acquisition, a '73 GTV racecar. In that article, I told how I was beginning preparation of the car to eventually compete in the vintage races at Watkins Glen this year. Well, like many of the best-laid plans, this one did not go quite as expected. Read on to learn of my trials, triumphs and tragedies.

The Good – Race Prep 101 When I purchased the GTV, I knew it was going to need some updating in order to compete in the SCCA vintage series. While the car was raced in Improved Touring (IT) class in the 80's, it was out of date with current safety requirements.

The first order of business was to update the roll cage. The car came with a bolt-in cage manufactured by Safety Devices in the U.K. While the previous owner welded the cage to the tub, it was still lacking a number of features including: a horizontal "dash" bar, additional side bars, and bars extending forward to the firewall. A few (ok, more than a few) hours of cutting, grinding and contorted welding later, the cage was finished. Not only was it now legal for vintage racing, but was also Production class legal. The next order of business was the fuel system.

Years ago, only cars competing in the very top levels of competition needed fuel cells. Over the last three decades, safety requirements have continued to increase. When this particular GTV last competed with the SCCA, IT cars didn't need fuel cells. Now, nearly every race car, including vintage, must have a fuel cell to compete.

The primary difference between a fuel tank and a fuel cell is rupture resistance. A fuel cell is typically constructed with a flexible bladder, filled with replaceable foam. Surrounding the bladder is metal container. Fuel cells also have check valves preventing fuel from spilling in rollover situations. While the drag racing guys can get away with plastic fuel cells, any road racer must use a cell certified by either the FIA or SCCA.

A year ago, I bought a fuel cell for the white GTV race car I was building (remember the rivet queen?). At that time, I decided to go with a 10 gallon cell as the fuel-injected Alfas have starvation problems. Unfortunately, fitting any cell greater than 8 gallons requires cutting out the spare tire well in a GTV. That was no problem for the rivet queen, but this new car was just too nice to butcher. So, with the sound of Marie in the background saying, "Don't you already have a fuel cell?" I sent off another order to PitstopUSA. Ca-Ching.

Fitting the 8 gallon cell to the GTV was pretty straightforward. It still required cutting out the hump in the spare tire well, a two minute exercise with the air chisel. To secure it, I used a couple of 1"x 1/8" steel straps that bolted the cell to the trunk. Some Aeroquip braided fuel line and a hundred-or-so dollars in fittings later, I had a properly plumbed GTV.

Since the stock fuel tank was no longer needed, I removed it. In its place, I fabricated an aluminum cover, complete with beaded ribs. Not only did this give me an excuse to use the metal beading machine I bought a few years ago, but it stiffened the cover and most importantly, looked way cool. Next stop on the list was the fire system.

Like the cage and the fuel cell, requirements for fire systems have changed. On-board fire systems have become the requirement, replacing hand-held fire extinguishers. While Halon was the standard choice years ago, today foam is becoming a popular substitute. Both types of systems are effective and about evenly priced. Halon offers the advantage of not causing a mess. Some foam systems offer the advantage of self-recharge. The latter feature was particularly attractive to me, so I purchased a FireCharger system. Ca-Ching.

The FireCharger system went in without a hitch. I plumbed one nozzle to spray at my legs, where most interior fires occur, and one each

to the intake and exhaust sides of the engine. To top off the installation, I fabricated a bracket for the pull-handle. Not only did the bracket make for a clean installation, its fire-engine red finish made it look very cool. With the cage done, fuel cell installed and fire system complete, the car was almost ready, almost.

The list of items to finish before the car could pass tech inspection was shorter, but still included: installing a new window net and driver harness, securing the back of the seat to the cage, replacing the oil pressure gage line with braided hose, installing a transponder (required for the SCCA so they can electronically keep lap times), etceteras. Ca-Ching, Ca-Ching, Ca-Ching. As my wallet steadily became lighter, the days before my first SCCA driver school flew by.

The Bad – Race Prep 102 With school two weeks away, it was time to have the car inspected. SCCA race cars must pass an annual inspection by a trained scrutineer in order to be allowed on the track. Normally, people have their cars teched at the track or at a tech session event. In my case, however, I wanted to have enough time to fix any issues. So, one Saturday, I took the little red GTV to a local scrutineer's house near Lawrenceville, NJ. As it turned out, he is a closet Alfa fan. The car passed with flying colors, so far, so good. When I got the car home, I took it for a drive around the neighborhood. I wanted to understand why it was overheating the night before when I loaded it on the trailer. After a few minutes of making friends with my neighbors, the temperature gage shot up again. I opened the hood to investigate. The engine was clearly hot, but when I put my hand on the upper radiator hose, it was cool; same with the intake manifold. When I opened up the radiator cap, I discovered why. The radiator was dry! Fortunately, I hadn't run the car for very long. Unfortunately, when I went to fill the radiator, Marie pointed to the stream of water pouring out the front. I had planned on replacing the radiator, but hadn't planned on doing it quite that soon. Ca-Ching.

Up until that point, I really hadn't had a chance to go over the car. My efforts had been focused on updating the safety equipment and getting it past tech. Now, I had one more week to make it reliable.

The grass is always greener on the other side. I always thought having a dedicated race car would take some of the stress away from racing. After all, if something happens to it, it's just a race car? Also, I could further prepare it and make it more competitive since I wouldn't have to keep it street legal. Of course, the downside is that it can't be tested on the street. So, any shaking down of it needs to happen at a track. For me, that means at least a three-hour drive.

The Ugly – SCCA School #1 – I knew I was pushing things. I had a car I'd never really driven before on the trailer behind my Suburban. My crew, Jack Stoll and my 12 year old son, Matthew smiled in blissful ignorance. In order to race at Watkins Glen in the fall, I'd have to complete two SCCA drivers schools and complete two races. We were heading South to Summit Point for school #1. It was March, cold and damp. At least it wasn't raining.

When we arrived at the track, I was a bit overwhelmed. I'd been doing time trials for a number of years, but this was a whole new level of organization and intensity. After making our way through registration, it was time to get my gear and car teched. Then, I had to hustle to the classroom for a couple hours of instruction. We turned in our written exams at the end.

By the time we made it to our hotel, I was exhausted. Around midnight, someone attempted to enter our room. The front desk had given out our room to someone else! The commotion lasted for quite a while as my plans for a good night sleep evaporated. (Continued on Next Page)

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

(con't from Previous Page)



My Crack Crew Chief, Jack Stoll takes a break between sessions.

The next morning, Jack and Matthew checked the car out and got it ready, while I was back in the classroom. The first session on the track was uneventful. It took some time to get comfortable with the handling of this new GTV. It drove like a go-kart, save for the nearly locked rear, which made the tail want to come around when you put the power down. And speaking of power, The car didn't seem to have any. Sure, it pulled strong to 5000 rpms, but past 6k, it just ran out of steam. This was particularly disappointing as the previous owner told me what a strong motor it had. My nearly stock GTV, the other red one, pulls strongly past 7000 rpm. To add insult to injury, the idiotic nearly-unmuffled side-exiting exhaust tripped the sound meter at 105dB. 103dB was the limit. At least I was able to fix that problem by shifting into 5th gear down the straight.

Brakes were another problem. The car didn't want to stop. I also added the seating position to my list of things to fix. The driver seat was too far back and I had no way of bringing it forward as it was bolted to the cage. Despite all those issues, it made it through the first session fine.



At speed, getting used to the new toy.....

The second session was another story. As my speed began to climb, I got into the groove. Then, while driving through turn 10, the one that leads on to the main straight, I found my rear coming around. Not able to recover it, I "put both feet in" and spun safely into the gravel trap. What a mess that made! I truly felt bad as I dropped the car off with Jack and Matthew. While I was back in the classroom, they changed the tires that had pebbles stuck in the bead and did what they could to pick the pea gravel out of that beautiful cast aluminum sump.



They don't call them gravel traps for nothing. I got to put those new tow hooks to use.... Unfortunately.

We continued the cycle of on track sessions followed by classroom debriefs throughout the day. I began to get more and more comfortable with the car. I did manage to spin again, but this time I stayed on the tarmac. By the end of the day, I was feeling pretty good. Sure, the oil pressure was doing some funky things like pegging when I started it and dropping below 20psi at idle. At speed, though, it kept to a steady 60psi. When we put the car away for the night, we were feeling pretty good. That good feeling wasn't to last.

The next morning, I turned the key to warm the car up. As it did the previous day, the oil pressure pegged the gage. Just about then, Jack and Matthew yelled out that we had a problem. When I looked under the car, I saw a giant puddle of Castrol Syntec. When I had Matthew try to start the car I could see oil pour out around the oil filter.

Since I'd seen others have problems with leaky oil cooler fittings, I decided that that must be the problem and went to work removing it. The clock was ticking. I needed to get back to the classroom and shortly thereafter, on the track.

Jack and Matthew were great. They put up with my panic and helped me get the fitting off despite me lacking the proper sized wrench for it. (That got added to my "to do" list.) Finally, we were able to put the oil filter back. Matthew turned over the engine and.... oil poured out again. The oil filter had cracked from the high pressure. In a last ditch effort, we replaced the oil filter, hoping we could get it started. Luck wasn't with me, though, and the new filter promptly ruptured when the engine was cranked. For me, school was over.

It was a long ride home. I had plenty of time to think about how to recover. First, I needed to solve the high oil pressure problem. Equally important, though, I needed to figure out how I was going to get two schools in before the end of May. The wheels were turning.

The Good, The Bad, The Ugly – Race Prep 201 After the car was safely home, I got to work right away. Off came the lower sump. Out came the oil pump. Just as I suspected, the pressure relief valve in the pump was stuck. I made several attempts to gently get it free, then I resorted to less gentle methods. Out came the torch and then out came the stuck valve. Several people sell Alfa oil pumps modified with a ball instead of a plunger which makes sticking pretty much impossible. After seeing the prices, thanks in part to the low Dollar, I opted to use my old one. I figured if it was good enough for AutoDelta, it was good enough for me.

At this point, you might be asking why the oil pump plunger got stuck? Well, what I didn't mention was that when I dropped the sump, mixed in with the oil were little shards of copper. Most of these didn't get past the screen on the oil pump, but some smaller ones did. And, where might little bits of copper come from, you might be wondering? Well, engine bearings are made of copper, below the silver babbit coating. Now, I had a dilemma. (Continued on Next Page)

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly (con't from Previous Page)

The next event was only two weeks away. I could pull the engine, check all the bearings, and put it back. Or, I could button it back up and run it, as is. Decisions, decisions. After a bunch of correspondence, some careful inspection of the bottom end of the engine that was visible with the lower sump removed and confirmation from the previous owner that the oil cooler he installed was from another car, I opted to run it. To be sure it wasn't going to self-destruct, I ran the car while carefully listening for knocks. Afterwards, I opened up the oil filter and looked for bits. With no knocks and a clean filter, I put it back together and declared it fit for racing. The oil cooler remained disconnected.

Before making my way back to Summit Point, I also took care of the "to do" list from the previous event. The seat got adjusted, the fan got wired, and the points ignition got replaced with a Marelliplex. That last addition cured the difficulties I had starting the car all along. I don't know why anyone would still want to use points. With all that done, the little red GTV and I were ready for another go.

The Bad, The Ugly, The Good – COMSCC Time Trials at Summit Point's Shenandoah Circuit The next event was a time trial with the Corvettes of Massachusetts Sports Car Club (COMSCC). I've been time trialing with this organization for over five years now. They are well-organized, safe, fun and a great bunch of people to hang out with. If you're interested in getting some track time, COMSCC is an excellent choice.

It was with a similar pitch that I roped in one of the parents of my son's Boy Scouts troop to go racing. It didn't take much convincing. Not only did this guy sign up for the event, but he soaked a small fortune into his Corvette ZR-1 and even bought an aluminum trailer to tow it. He was hooked before he even set foot on the track.

The sealer on the concrete pit area of the Shenandoah Circuit wasn't even dry when we pulled in to set up. The tower facilities were finished, but the food area and showers were still under construction. When completed, this will be a first class venue, particularly for club events.

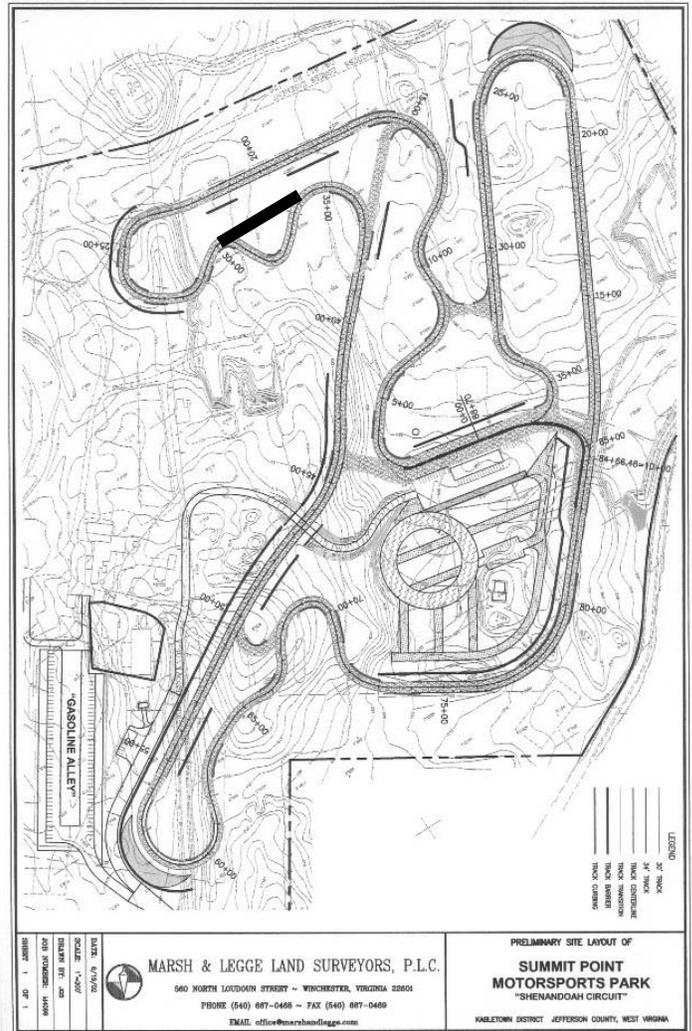


A corner worker's Alfa found at Summit Point in April

The track is the newest addition to the Summit Point complex and offers a number of configurations. We planned to run the longest, about 2.1 miles. It has many, many turns and two main straights. One of its most controversial features is an "exact" replica of the Nurburgring's carousel. The controversy lies in the fact that the bowl is only wide enough for one car and if you slide out of the bowl, you are almost guaranteed to be in the dirt. It's also a bit bumpy. Longer cars, such as Doug's ZR-1 can't take it flat out as their spoilers scrape on the concrete surface. In my GTV, however, I could go as fast as I dared!

We were the first club to do an event this new course. The racing line hadn't even been established but there were some instructors from Summit Point on hand to help us out. In the first session, I found myself pretty disoriented. It didn't help that it was raining and that this GTV didn't have working windshield wipers. Worse, the inside of the windshield was fogging because, you guessed it, it didn't have working defrosters either. At least I managed to stay on the road and the car didn't break. When the session was over, I high-tailed it over to the OG Racing store at the main track for some Rain-X anti-fog. That worked like a charm.

The next session was delayed due to thunder. When we finally got back on the track, I was able to start concentrating on driving since I could now see.



Exiting the pits, you immediately turn left. Then, you snake through a series of S turns which look innocent enough, but are extremely difficult to navigate properly. Done right and you're properly set up for the long left-hander which leads on to a short straight. After about five seconds on this straight it's time to brake and work the next two lefts. The second of these is a blind apex and exits on to a short downhill section. I found myself struggling with these turns all day as the GTV's front tires complained loudly. The short downhill was followed by a very short straight which had about a foot of drop off on either side thanks to some last minute paving and grading (*originally, the course had a sharp kink here which was thankfully eliminated*). This was not a good place to go off! (Continued on Next Page)

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly (con't from Previous Page)

The right turn is perhaps the most important on the course as it leads on to a very long uphill straight. Again, it was deceptively complex to hit just right, partly due to the camber change of the surface from the inside to the outside. The uphill straight actually kinks right, just before going under the bridge. In the GTV, this was a flat out run in third, shifting to fourth at the bridge. In a really fast car, I'm sure the kink would provide some challenge. At the top of the hill, the track levels out and has a dip just before you enter the carousel. This part is lots of fun as you can exploit the down force the dip provides to really get on the brakes. Then, in a blink of an eye, you're diving into the high banked bowl of the carousel. By the end of the event, it was feeling like the GTV was airborne as it dove into the bowl. The banking in this portion allows you to take this portion with unnatural speed. It is bumpy. You struggle with keeping the steering straight. You feel the rubber of your tires getting abraded away. Your neck strains as you try to look around the A-pillar and focus on the exit while the g-forces pull your head in the opposite direction. The only critical thing here is to make sure you're pointed straight as you exit the banking. If not, you're likely to spin as the pavement drops away. Still in third, it took gentle use of the accelerator to not break the car loose as I drove through a set of uphill S turns which led to a tight, decreasing radius right at the crest of the hill. This left was a struggle. Go in too hot, and you can't get the car set up for the next two lefts which lead on to the back straight. Finally, I realized that I needed to come to a near complete stop, in second to get a proper line on the next turns. Many others also struggled here, covering their cars in mud as they slid straight off this turn. The next two lefts are flat out turns. The exit of the second sends you drifting to the very edge of the asphalt on the long back straight. This section concludes with an increasing left which has a very late, blind apex. The only real issue is that the entry to this turn is slippery. Many times I was caught off-guard as I locked the wheels going in. More than a few others had similar problems as they tilled the newly graded run-off area soil. If you exit this turn right, you'll find yourself drifting just to the right edge of the entry to the short straight ahead. At the end of this straight is another pair of tricky S turns that go downhill. I found these to be a lot of fun, like skiing. The only issue is that these exit on to the pit straight which is bordered by some tires and some very unforgiving concrete barricades. After a few sessions, I found myself driving a line which put the pretty red GTV's body within inches of the tires. I had to be a little careful here because of the nearly locked limited slip rear axle as a just a little too much throttle would bring the back end around.

It takes a lot of words to describe one lap of this circuit as it is that complex. In the end, though, it is extremely challenging and rewarding with something for everyone. I look forward to driving it again.

As the first day of the event progressed, the track dried as the weather slowly improved. I wish the same could be said for the GTV. Session after session, the teething pains continued. The third time out, on about the third lap, I listened to those four Italian cylinders scream and then go silent. Coasting on to a piece of pavement not being used for our event. I sat and wondered what was wrong as the smell and smoke from burning paint wafted into the cockpit. Opening the door, I glanced at the red hot exhaust. At the conclusion of the session, the tow truck came out to pull me in. Again, those tow hooks were getting more use than I ever intended.

(Stay tuned for the next edition of La Voce, when Adventures in Vintage Racing continues... and comes to an end.)

**Make Your Plans Now, to Attend the
Watkins Glen Vintage Grand Prix,
Featuring Alfa Romeo**

The Sportscar Vintage Racing Association (SVRA) has chosen Alfa Romeo as the "featured marque" for the Watkins Glen Vintage Grand Prix September 8-11, 2005. A committee has been organized to spearhead the large expected turnout for Alfa Romeo vintage racers and Alfisti from around the country.

The comprehensive web site, serving as the central clearinghouse for information about this event, is located at www.alfasattheglen.com. There are a multitude of activities planned for both Alfa Romeo street and race cars at both the track and in the village of Watkins Glen, so many that the lack of things to do and see will not be a problem. www.grandprixfestival.com will cover the numerous events (rallies, tours, car shows) organized by the village of Watkins Glen.

We hope to attract many historically important street and competition cars from all eras and with luck, perhaps some of the newer cars not currently imported to the US. All Alfas will be welcome to gather at Watkins Glen, cheer on their brethren on the track and to participate in the events downtown. To properly publicize this unique event, we are contacting the Newsletter Editors for all AROC chapters. Thanks in advance for your help.

Les Smith (AROC #5461)

More Info: (From the AlfaRacing Digest)

I saw the event poster last night and it is pretty nice. I think it portrays the Alfa that won the first event at the Glen on the old street course. It is a blue car and of course has a roof. I really am not up on the earlier models, so I apologize to those who maybe in the know. I was really hoping the car would be a Trans am GTV, but then again what do I know. Also if you know of anyone who is driving an Alfa there and is not racing and wants to take part, there is what is called the Tour de Marque. For \$125 you get lunch for two at the track, two laps on the race track, two laps on the original course, downtown parking, Admission for two at the track, and a special parking area only for Alfas while at the track. Sounds like a deal to me. Rob, I will let the local chapter know about this. More details are on www.grandprixfestival.com, and www.alfasattheglen.com.

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

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Mark Your Calendars! (**bold** = DVAROC Event)

<p style="text-align: center;">April</p> <p>2-4 - COMSCC Time Trials, Summit Point, WV</p> <p>9 - DVAROC Tech Session – Nick Falcone Enterprises, Bala Cynwyd, PA</p> <p>30-1 Mid-Atlantic AROC Driver School, VIR Raceway, Danville, VA (www.mid-atlantic-aroc.org)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">May</p> <p>1 – Artistry in Motion</p> <p>7-8 Camden Harbor Vintage Race – Camden, NJ – CANCELLED</p> <p>20-22 – Jefferson 500 Vintage Racing and Italian Car Tour</p> <p>20-22 - Wheels and Wings - Millville, NJ</p> <p>20-22 – Carlisle Import/Kit Car Show – Carlisle, PA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">June</p> <p>5 – Alfa Romeo Swap Meet – Autocraft – York, PA (717-741-0460)</p> <p>5 – Italian Car Show – Headhouse Square – Philadelphia, PA</p> <p>10-12 - Vintage Car Happening - VIR - Danville, VA (www.virclub.com)</p> <p>12 – New Garden Air and Car Show – New Garden, PA</p> <p>19 – Concours of Eastern US and Tour – Bethlehem, PA</p> <p>24-27 – Le Bella Macchine d'Italia</p> <p>29-30 – COMSCC Time Trials – WGI</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">July</p> <p>9-17 – Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix Festival – Pittsburgh, PA</p> <p>8-10 – Italian Car Festival, Canton, OH Contact: Lee Contie (330)471-9980 or lcontie@neo.rr.com</p> <p>TBD – DVAROC Event</p> <p>28-31 – AROC National Convention - Seattle, WA www.alfapotlatch.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">August</p> <p>** – New Hope Auto Show – New Hope, PA – CANCELLED</p> <p>6 - Glenside Car Show - Glenside, PA</p> <p>7 – DVAROC Summer Picnic and Rally</p> <p>TBD - CTAROC Driver School/Time Trials - Lime Rock Park, CT</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">September</p> <p>2-5 – Vintage Racing Festival – Lime Rock , CT</p> <p>8-11 – SVRA Vintage Grand Prix – Watkins Glen, NY (www.grandprixfestival.com) (www.alfasattheglen.com)</p> <p>9-11 – 100 Cars of Radnor – Radnor, PA</p> <p>11 - Buckingham Concours d'Elegance, Holicong, PA</p> <p>18 – Hagley Museum Car Show – Wilmington, DE</p>



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