



La Voce

Spring 2003



newsletter of the delaware valley alfa romeo owners club

Wonderful Winter Lunch

The snow, rain and darkness of winter can temper even the most enthusiastic Alfista. Fortunately, the DVAROC has the proper antidote, an Italian lunch among friends.

Despite the cold drizzle, a nice crowd made it out to Café La Fontana, in Hatboro for our annual February gathering. Once again, Frank Gil organized a lovely event. Seasoned members rekindled friendships and newer members forged acquaintances. Everyone enjoyed the delicious plates of mussels, gamberoni and mozzarella. After we had our fill of appetizers, it was time for roasted pepper soup and Caesar salads. Then, with our appetites satisfied, it was time for pasta and main courses of salmon, pollo or Penne Puttanesca. At that point, most of us were ready for naps, but fortunately the espressos and deserts followed, giving us a much-needed lift.

Frank went the extra mile this year and gathered an amazing selection of door prizes, from Alfa Romeo earrings to books on our favorite subject matter. Murray Miller took home the earrings and the Stolls and DeYoungs took home books. Yours truly had the good fortune to be given perhaps the most useful prize, a Giulia GT parts manual in beautiful condition. (*Thanks Arthur and Mary! – ed.*) With our stomachs and hands full, we bid the cozy restaurant arrivederci and headed across the street to admire the Alfas that braved the threatening skies. (Continued on Page 4)



Terrific Tech Session

As March gave way to April, thoughts shifted from keeping our Alfas cozy and salt-free to getting them ready for spring. With that in mind, the DVAROC held their annual Tech Session at Nick Falcone Enterprise in Bala Cynwyd on April 5th.

About a dozen interested Alfisti converged that Saturday morning to enjoy donuts, coffee, conversation and a drink from the font of Vince's knowledge. This year, we peered under the beautiful aluminum cover that graces most Alfa four cylinder engines and journeyed inside. There, we first encountered those lumpy shafts of steel that are shrouded in mystery.

Alfa camshafts come in all varieties, from mild-mannered to rough and ready and everything in between. The most obvious difference is in the size of the lump, or more technically, the lobe. The less obvious difference is in the shape of the lobe. Some lobes are pointy, like the Alps, giving short valve duration (the time the cam keeps the valve open). Others resemble the Appalachians and are rounded. In general, the larger the lift and the longer the duration, the better the head breathes and the more power the car makes. But, like all generalities, this one is false. That cam with the lift so large that it requires the head to be ground for clearance might seem like it would give gobs of power. In reality, however, it might only deliver on its promise sky high revs. While that might seem okay, ask any Giulietta Veloce owner how much fun it is to drive around town with such a cam. The other downside to big lift, we learned, is increased wear. We found that out on the next stop of our Alfa head journey, the cam follower. (Continued on Page 5)

Mark Your Calendars!

June 1 – New Garden Air and Car Show, New Garden, Pa.

June 14 – Tour to Concours d'Elegance at Lehigh U.

June 15 – Alfa Swap Meet, York, Pa.

Bob's Babblings

Bob Brady

Events for Everyone Take a look at the events calendar on the following page. We've plotted out the entire year to help you plan ahead. We tried our best to provide something for everyone. If there's still not something that interests you, please talk to me and we'll see what we can do. It was great to see some new faces at the tech session. I know there are a lot of old faces that haven't been seen in a while. We'd all like to see you soon. And speaking of events, New Hope has been cancelled due to construction this year. In its place, we moved the summer picnic/rally to August. I'd like to do a tech session on restoration in July. If anyone knows of a good shop in the area who might be interested in hosting, please let me know. If worse comes to worse, we can do it at my garage. I can show everyone how **not** to do restorations! Lastly, if anyone is planning on attending the national convention in Florida this year, please take some photos for me to publish. Next year's convention is in New England, so even I don't have an excuse to attend.

Thanks There are a few behind the scenes members who deserve special thanks. First, Arthur Jones, Mary Nomecos, Dan Scolaro and Charlie Crothers need special mention. They are our activities committee and without them we would not have a year of events already mapped out. In addition, I want to thank Vince Votto, Ruth Wolf and Frank Gil for organizing and running our tech session and winter lunch. Without them, we would not have had those great events. I also want to thank Alex Valdes for sending me the great photos of the tech session. Without them, the article in this edition would be pretty bland. Finally, I want to thank my wife Marie, who despite my one track mind, my garage full of projects, the hours I spend holed up in the basement cranking out La Voce, and my jokes at her expense puts up with me. Thank you. Believe me, you wouldn't have a president or a newsletter without her.

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. Bermie.

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 Restoration needs to be completed. Solid body, in primer. 95% of chrome redone. \$10,000 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@msn.com), 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

1963 Giulia Spider bare metal restoration, acid dipped body, all components rebuilt or replaced, completely original and correct, driven in '92 California Mille Miglia, '98 Greenwich Concours award, '98 Lehigh Concours award, \$25K. Josh Landsman (973)334-3360.

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

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

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

La Voce - is attempted to be published six times per year, in: winter, spring, June, July, September and December

Commercial Ads should be coordinated through Bob Brady.

Rates, per edition, are:	1/8 page - \$ 20
	1/2 page - \$ 60
	full page - \$100

Classified ads are free to DVAROC members.

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

Send web classifieds to: classifieds@dvaroc.org

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Events Calendar: * Indicates DVAROC Event

***June 1 – New Garden Air Show – New Garden, Pa.** If you came last year, you know what a great event this is. If you didn't, make plans to attend this year. 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 masse to the show, a few miles away. Arrive earlier if you want some espresso and croissants. Please RSVP to Bob before May 31, 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, Spottwood Lane. Bob's house is the third on the left. For more information or to RSVP, contact Bob Brady at (610)925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net.

***June 14 – Concours d'Elegance of the Eastern United States – Bethlehem, Pa.**

Once again, June in the Lehigh Valley is the time to celebrate the automobile. The DVAROC will drive en-masse to this wonderful event. Our tour will take us through scenic Upper Bucks County. It will start at Friendly's parking lot, at 168 Easton Road (Rt. 611), in Horsham, Pa. Their phone number is: 215-674-8677. We'll leave **promptly at 8:39 am**. The concours is truly a spectacular display of automobiles. To find out more, go to their web site at: www.concourseeast.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@bellatlantic.net for further information or to RSVP. Hope to see you there!!!

***June 15 – Tri-State Alfa Swap Meet – York, Pa.** Sunday June 15, 10 am - 3 pm: 6th Annual Alfa Swap Meet / Autocraft Open House. At Stahlman's Autocraft, 1508 South George Street, York, PA. Complimentary buffet lunch provided by Jerry Stahlman, owner of Autocraft Services. Bring your Alfa goodies...new or used parts, books, models, whatever, and plan on swapping and/or selling with the rest of us. If you have any questions, or need directions, call Erich Stahlman or Andy Kaufmann at Autocraft 717 845 5314, or Mike Mihm 717 741 0460, or call Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837.

June 28-30 – Le Bella Macchine d'Italia – Pocono, Pa. If you can't make the AROC Convention, consider this local celebration of Italian automobiles. For more info, go to: www.mhkaye.com/Pocono_2003.htm

July 2-3 – COMSCC School and Time Trials – Watkins Glen, Ny. If anyone is interested, I will be at this track event along with a couple of other GTV owners. 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. If you are interested in going, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net

***July ?? – Tech Session on Auto Restoration – TBD** We want to organize a tech session on restorations. If you have any interest in helping with this, please contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net

***August 17 – Summer Picnic and Rally – Location TBD** Last year we had a great time. Since New Hope has been cancelled this year, we are moving this event to August. We are trying to work out a new course, but if all else fails, we'll return to Ridley Creek State Park again. Stay tuned for more information.

August 29 – Sept. 1 – Lime Rock Vintage Festival – Lime Rock, Ct. Not at DVAROC event, but a great event nonetheless. Contact Bob Brady if you are interested in attending.

September 13-14 – Radnor Hunt Concours d'Elegance – Radnor, Pa. The cars are invitation only, but some great ones show up. See: www.radnorconcours.org/ for more information.

September 14 – Hagley Museum Car Show – Wilmington, De. If you've never been to the Hagley, this is your chance. In addition to the cars, the museum is incredibly interesting.

September 14 – Buckingham Concours d'Elegance – Buckingham, Pa. A little lower on the food chain than Radnor, Buckingham is a great event to attend. Next to New Hope, this is the one to see in Bucks County. Since New Hope is cancelled this year, this is **the** one to see. For more info, see: <http://207.218.99.170/>

September 26-28 – Vintage Races – Summit Point, Wva. I'd love to have the DVAROC attend this as a group. See historic Alfas competing in beautiful West Virginia countryside. Camping at the track is a great way to attend this event. If you are interested in going, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@bellatlantic.net

***October TBD – DVAROC Fall Picnic** Our premier event. Stay tuned for details.

***November TBD – DVAROC Fall Tour** Nothing is firm yet. If you have some suggestions, contact Bob Brady.

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

Winter Lunch (Continued from Front Page)

As could be expected, cars with steel roofs dominated the parking lot. Darrin Hoffman brought the only soft-top, his handsome blue Spider. Dan Scolaro opted to keep the 2600 away from the salt and brought his champagne Milano instead. Frank Gil drove the other Milano, his beautiful and potent black Verde. The DeYoungs didn't let the wintry skies scare them. They traveled in style and comfort in their GTV-6. Parked next to that relatively modern Alfa coupe was my Giulietta Sprint. Together they represented thirty years of evolution of Alfa Romeo Grand Turismos.



Antonio Gil: Like father, like son

Although many of us could have chatted in the parking lot for much longer, the setting sun and chilly wind had us reaching for our keys. With some final photos and promises to see each other soon, we slipped into our cozy Italian coaches and made our ways home. The simple formula of fine food, good friends and a few lovely cars to look at made for another successful winter thaw.



Murray Miller wins the Alfa Romeo earrings from Frank Gil



Jack Stoll proudly shows off his "Fantastic" door prize

Tech Session (Continued from Front Page)

Cam followers might seem like simple devices. At first glance, their tops appear to be flat. But, on further examination, one finds out that they are actually slightly domed. As the cam lobe pushes the follower down with every other engine revolution, it rotates it slightly. This rotating action is important for reduced cam and follower wear. Followers that are worn are easy to spot by the marks on the top of them. Where there are worn followers, worn cam lobes are close behind. Vince showed us how to place a straight edge across the top of the follower and look for light between them. If no gap can be seen, the follower is flat and must be replaced. (Continued on Next Page)



Professor Votto lectures interested students on the proper way to evaluate a cam follower

Tech Session (Continued from Page 4)

Vince next toured us through the bits that reside under the follower. First, he showed us the classically simple Alfa Romeo valve adjusting mechanism, aka. the shim. Then he pulled out his genuine Alfa valve spring compressor. This handy device conveniently fits on to the top of the cam cap and allows simple removal of the valve keepers, valve springs and the valve. He showed us how those lumpy, high lift cams can require different springs that don't bind under high lift. He also pointed out that although "high performance" springs can allow an engine to rev higher without valve float, their increased stiffness can also cause the followers and cams to wear faster. Again, we learned, everything is a compromise.

When we toured the valve and seat, we learned how they work together to seal the cylinder during compression and firing. We also learned how regrinding the seat and valve with multiple facets can improve breathing and hence power. Vince even chocked up a valve on his grinder to show us how it is done.

While most mere mortals would have had their brains bursting from the wealth of information learned about the head, Vince was encouraged by the diehards in attendance to go further. So, under the head and down into the block he went.

In the block, Vince toured us through the oiling system. He pointed out the strengths of Alfa bottom ends, nitrided cranks, five main bearings, deep main bearing webbing. Additionally, he showed us the few trouble spots, the staked in crank plugs, and the lack of direct oiling to all the main bearings. By the time noon approached, even the most inquisitive were satiated.

Once again, the DVAROC wants to extend its appreciation to Vince and Ruth for hosting another entertaining and informative tech session. Our club is truly gifted to have such an excellent resource within our fold. Thanks!



For some, the Tech Session came just in time. Here, Bill Conway arrives via flatbed. Although with 300,000+ miles on the original engine, his Milano owes him nothing, he was about ready to trade it in for a ride home. While the offer was tempting, I decided to keep my marriage intact and wisely passed.



No one can question Vince's commitment to Alfa Romeo



It's not all cars at Falcone's. Here Emilie Brady shows off her Hibiscus and grapefruit-sized lemon from Nick's greenhouse in the back.



Vince dives into the head as the crowd looks on.

In the Garage... On the Road... On the Track...
 In the Garage... On the Road... On the Track...

Time Trial Season Begins!

Bob Brady

About thirty miles from home, driving down the northeast extension, my concentration becomes diverted from the road ahead and the music on the radio. A whine, the sickening whine of automatic transmission fills the cabin of the Suburban. My stomach gets tight. I glance at the odometer just turning 268,000 miles and start making contingency plans. I really don't want to disturb Marie at 9:30 with a call to come pick me up. I suppose I could put my AAA membership to use. "But how would they deal with the trailer loaded with the GTV?" I feather the throttle; the whine changes pitch. I drop it down to 65, from an irresponsible 85+. The whine quiets down a bit. Ten minutes later, it, like a slipping clutch, subsides. "Maybe I'll make it home after all," I reassure myself. An hour later, I back the trailer with the little red GTV on top up the driveway as Marie and the kiddies run out to greet me. With great relief, and great satisfaction I bring two months of a labor of love to close. The next time trial won't be until July.

March Madness While snow was still on the ground, the track events calendars were being published. The trend of less desirable dates continued this year. COMSCC's Summit Point event was moved to early April. The CTAROC's Lime Rock event was moved to the week after Easter. When I added in the obligatory children's sports and scouting events and a tech session, the month of April looked completely booked. If I'd have any chance at all of making both Summit and LRP, I'd need to get the GTV prepared in March. At least there wasn't much to do, or so I naively thought.

When I started surveying the GTV for what would be needed to get it track-worthy, it hadn't been on the road since the November tour. To make matters worse, I put it away wet that day. Sitting idle in a cold, damp garage for months took an unexpectedly hard toll on it. Scratches that remained rust-free for years, now bloomed. Perusing the engine bay revealed a worsening oil leak from the head gasket. That rear pinion seal leak hadn't cured itself either. There was also a cooling system to refurbish, gages collecting two year's worth of dust to install, a brake bias problem to fix, and the usual laundry list of routine prep work that was needed. March was **not** going to pass by leisurely.

It's Always Something, Part 1 The first order of business was to get the radiator cleaned. For the last few years, I've had very marginal cooling, particularly at Watkins Glen. This year, I vowed, I'd fix it. That actually turned out well. A local radiator shop pulled the tanks, rodded it and reassembled it at a very reasonable cost. While it was out, I settled my internal debate and decided to replace the head gasket. With the head off, I figured, I'd have better access to install the gage senders. While true, it turned into more of a project than planned.

Like most Alfa four cylinder engines, mine has roll pins installed between the head and the block to prevent pesky oil leaks from the o-rings. As it turned out, the head was drilled where the roll pins fit, allowing oil to get by them. I was faced with a number of not-so-pretty options. Remarkably, I was able to remove the existing roll pins with ease by using a pair of vise grips to compress them. An operation I expected to be a mess turned into a five-minute affair.

I wanted to replace the o-rings with hollow dowel pins. That seemingly simple task became very complicated when I discovered that they were not as commonly available as I'd expected. Going to plan B, I sought out some aluminum tubing to make my own. A few hours and a number of hobby shops later, I picked up the tubing. Later I found out that it was available at the Sears Hardware, five minutes from home. It didn't matter, as I found the tubing to be too weak for the application. Frustrated, I punted again and went back to the roll pins. This time, however, I inserted them into the head, whose holes are slightly smaller in diameter than the matching holes in the block. In order to get the roll

pins in, I had to make a tool to compress them, which worked like a charm. The only problem with this approach was ensuring that the o-rings were aligned properly when the head was installed. After some nervous moments, I set the head down and torqued the nuts. In the end, it was nice to have the head off and on the bench. I was able to fix some cam timing problems, adjust the valves, replace the valve cover gasket, and clean everything up, with ease.

While the head was off, I was also able to easily install the sender for a new oil pressure gage. A companion oil temperature gage sender was installed in the lower pan. Removing that gave me the opportunity to clean it up. While it was off, I took the opportunity (there are always "opportunities" when working on cars) to drill the pan, sender and drain plug for safety wire. Now, not only has the likelihood of dumping seven quarts of Syntec on the ground been greatly reduced, the car looks way cooler to boot. The last sender, for coolant temperature, should have been the easiest. As it turned out, that simple device took nearly two weeks to get installed, thanks to the difficulty of finding the right bushing. Even after I found one, ordered it and received it, I had to heavily modify it to have enough clearance for the probe to be in the coolant stream. It's always something. Even the seemingly simple task of mounting the gages turned into an ordeal.

I take complete responsibility for the problems encountered with drilling the gage holes. I should have planned things out better, but in a rush dove in without checking what was behind the dash thoroughly. What I found, as the hole saw made its way through the wood and foam, was some errant sheet metal. As it turns out, parts of the dash foam are backed up with metal. Not that the metal was any match for the hole saw, but it did make installing the pretty aluminum back-up panel more difficult. Again, in a rush, I wound up hacking the plate to fit. Not that anyone will ever see it, mind you. But, I know the hack job exists. On the bright side, the extra fuse box I installed last year to replace the stock one for the fuel pump and fog lights made electrical installation a snap, as it had spare slots. For once, forward planning paid off. With the radiator, head and gages finished, the only non-routine task left was installing a proportioning valve.

Brake Bias Ever since I installed the Panhard rod last year, my brake bias was out of whack. While the car used to have severe rear brake lock-up, it now locked the fronts to the point that I couldn't dive into turns with confidence. The standard solution for this is to install a brake bias valve, nothing more than an in-line, pressure relief valve that adjusts the pressure between the front and rear circuits.

GTVs and Spiders actually come from the factory with bias valves installed. While the Spider's are adjustable, the GTV's are oddly not. Regardless, neither is cockpit adjustable, which is something I wanted.

Bias valves come in two basic varieties, infinitely adjustable (with a knob) and discretely adjustable (with pre-set values). Since I wasn't sure how much bias I needed, I went with a Wilwood knob style unit.

Installing it was relatively straightforward. The rear circuit brake line was removed. It was replumbed to enter the cockpit next to the center tunnel and then back out to the rear T fitting. I made a simple mounting bracket for the valve to complete the installation. The only tricky part of the whole operation was flaring the brake tubing. But, after my experiences in replumbing the Sprint, even that was a snap.

Now that the major work was finished, all that was left was an oil and brake fluid change and a general inspection. Seven quarts of Castrol Syntec, a liter of ATE Type 200 brake fluid, a gallon of anti-freeze and a gallon of DI water later and I was ready for a road test.

The Knob of Death I started the car with anxiety. I partly expected oil to spew out of the head gasket, not knowing whether the o-rings were in their place when I put the head on. But, as good fortune would have it, the car growled to life without any incontinence. Even the valve cover stayed dry. The gages sprang to life. (Con't on Next Page)

Time Trial Season (From Previous Page)

My stock, electric oil pressure gage read a typical 55 psi, while the new mechanical gage displayed a comforting 80 psi, cold. As the engine temperature crept up to operating range, it was time to hit the road.

By the time I pulled out of the garage, it was dark, cold and drizzling. No matter, I needed a test drive. With the brake bias set to give full pressure to the rear, I pulled onto the main road with trepidation. Each time I hit the brakes, the rear predictably locked up. Consequently, each time I adjusted more bias to the front. After doing this a half dozen times, the rears were still locking. Once again, I turned the knob a half turn, hit the brakes, and found myself in the opposite lane, in full opposite lock, heading for a tree. Luckily, the road was empty. After that, I gingerly pulled into the local High School parking lot to adjust the brakes in a more benign environment. It took another few turns before all four wheels would lock simultaneously. Surprisingly, the difference between front, rear, and four-wheel lock was less than a quarter turn. The next time I took my kids for a ride, I introduced them to another "Do Not Touch!" item, the proportioning valve, now fondly referred to as "The Knob of Death."

Ouch! While I spent March making sure the GTV was ready for track duty, I didn't give the towing rig much attention. Since the Suburban sees near daily use, that wasn't a problem. The trailer, however, hadn't moved in ten months. So, the night before we were to leave, I hitched it up and took it for a ride over some bumpy gravel roads, figuring the shaking would loosen up any frozen brakes. The strategy paid off. After a few spirited, shaky miles, the trailer brakes sprang to life. Satisfied, I made the tight turn on to a little wooden bridge, and headed for home. I shut my eyes as I heard the crunch. Apparently I made the turn a bit too tight and managed to strike the bridge with the trailer. Bruised but not deterred, I pulled the dented trailer into the driveway and added another item to the "to do" list.

West Virginia Bound! Summit Point is a wonderful track to visit. It is nestled in the rolling hills of West Virginia, a few miles from Charles Town, and just a few more from Harpers Ferry. The terrain on the way to the track seethes Civil War. With rocks jutting out of the undulating hills, it's easy to imagine Johnny Reb lying in wait for the Yankees. Once at the track, you'll find ample wooded areas in the infield for camping as well as clean bathrooms and hot showers. Since Marie and the kiddies had off for spring break, we took the opportunity to turn my track time into a family camping adventure.

The Tuesday afternoon we left was gorgeous. The ride down was a smooth, easy three-hour trek. Matthew and Emilie barely made a peep. We set up camp in the grassy area, within sight of the pits. By bed time, the parking area was spotted with all manner of RVs, trailers, and cars, some from as far away as New Hampshire.

Track Time Normally COMSCC events draw sixty or more entrants. For whatever reason, this particular event only had 31 people signed up by the preceding week. That translated into more track time than you could stand. To accommodate the light turnout, they changed the format from the usual four run groups and 20 minute sessions to two groups and 45 minute sessions. That added up to 3 ½ hours of potential track time, in just the first day!

After going through tech, and nearly failing due to my wooden steering wheel, and attending the mandatory drivers' meeting, it was time to do what I came there to do, drive.

Pulling onto the front straight, the scream of my Alfa twin cam ignited my adrenaline. With each up-shift, the air horns with foam socks gulped in air in full baritone note. As turn 1 approached, I got on the brakes early to bring the Porterfield RS-4s up to temperature. Then, it was into second gear and back on the throttle as I pointed the car right, towards the apex. Drifting out to the edge of the pavement, I exited turn 2, really just an extension of turn 1, and headed up the slight incline towards familiar landmarks. Entering turn 3, I planted my right front tire onto the edge of the track, where the access road intersects it and tossed the car left, with my right foot planted to the floor. I could feel my tires coming up to temperature now. The radius of my four

wheel drift tightened as grip improved. Now past 3, I crested the hill and headed down the chute. Downhill and off camber, turn 4 is no place to lose nerve. Braking or even lifting throttle here can send you off track into an unforgiving tire berm. Just past the apex of 4, I tested the brake bias, keeping the tires just short of locking. Turn 5 lies at the bottom of the hill and is a tight left hander. I entered it downshifting into third unsettling the rear. Unwinding the steering wheel, the car settled and it was back on the gas for a couple of seconds. I tried to recall the line through the "carousel," (turns 6 and 7) the increasing radius right that I was now entering. The path of rubber showed the way. Remembering that the key to taking this turn well is to keep the steering wheel steady, I picked an arc that seemed too wide, knowing that track ahead would unwind to accommodate it. The tack was close, but a little too tight. Perhaps I just wasn't going fast enough. Regardless, I apexed 7 a bit early. My tach pointing past "75", I upshifted into fourth. Relaxing a bit, I hit turn 8 and then took turn 9 way too wide. Exiting that long, uphill right I recalled that the key to success last was to plant the right rear tire on to the inside curb. This time, I was off by at least ten feet. No time to worry about that mistake, I needed to set myself up for the final turn, 10. Passing right under the middle of the bridge, it came into view. A little touch of the brakes and then back on the gas, glancing off the inside curb, I drifted out nicely and headed down the front straight. Remembering to breathe, I checked my gages and shifted into fifth as I passed the start/finish line. The first lap of the season was complete.



My little red GTV at full-tilt around Summit Point Raceway

This was my first outing at Summit with the Panhard rod installed. Where before I found myself lifting the inside rear, struggling to get traction, the car was now firmly planted. The cooling problem was also solved. Engine temperature stayed cool. Oil temperature rose as the laps accumulated, but never raised a concern. Oil pressure, though it dropped with temperature, never went below a healthy 50 psi. The only issue was that the car felt a little squirrely under heavy braking. But, even that was an improvement over the way it was the prior year. Everything was looking up.

It's Always Something, Part 2 Just as I approached the bridge for the tenth time in the first session, the cockpit filled with smoke! I immediately thought of Bill Shields' experience at Summit a few years ago when his oil filter backed off, creating a similar effect. I glanced down at my oil pressure gage, while backing off the throttle. Oil pressure, thankfully, was fine. Once back in the pits, I popped the hood to find that my dipstick tube had come out of its grommet. (Continued on Next Page)

Time Trial Season (From Previous Page)

With the session nearly over, I leisurely waited for the car to cool, then replaced the grommet with some hose and clamps. By that time, it was time for another 45 minute romp.

The second session was without incident, but my expectation of shaving seconds off of last year's times (I was counting on that new rear suspension) was dashed. Annoyingly, I was two seconds off pace.

Before running the next session, I fiddled with tire pressures in hopes of picking up some time. After the first lap, however, the black flag was out, pointing at me. Once in the pits, it was obvious why, my rear quarter window latch had come undone. The window was literally swinging in the wind! A quick application of race tape and safety wire later, and I was back on the track. A bit frazzled, I nonetheless pushed things to the 10/10's limit in search of quicker times. Low fuel pressure ended my session early. Regardless, my best time was still no better than last year's. The other nagging problem was a cockpit full of gas fumes from a dysfunctional vapor recovery system.

Over lunch, I replumbed the fuel venting system. In addition to the fumes, I figured it also caused the low fuel pressure. Session four was less stinky, but my quest for quicker laps was still without success. I even wound up spinning in turn 1, as I pushed things to 11/10ths. When finished, I discovered a rear wheel covered in gear lube. Also a crack was forming right down the center inside the trunk. Those enduro-length track sessions were taking their toll. Deciding that neither issue was fatal, I went out for the final session of the day.

I was determined to break my previous best of 1:35. This time, I pushed things even further. I braked later into turn 1. Buried the tach past 7500 exiting 2. Didn't brake for 3 and didn't lift (much) before 4. From the entrance of the carousel through the entrance to turn 10, my foot was floored. I used every inch of track, and then some. I even went off in turn 1 again, this time covering the car in West Virginia "moon dust." With all that effort, I was rewarded with... a 1:36. To make matters worse, I now had a rear tire with sections of tread missing, exposing the cord. I was physically and emotionally spent. Even though I went through the motions of trying to find a spare, I knew I was going to throw in the towel. "Besides," I reasoned, "It's supposed to be cold and rainy tomorrow." In a funk, I loaded the car onto the trailer, as the mental "to do" list grew.

On the positive side, we had a great next day touring Harpers Ferry. Despite some disappointment at not being able to compete, in the back of my mind, I was relieved. Lime Rock, was exactly one week away.

Another Mad Dash I took the day after we arrived home off from work. I needed tires and rear axle seals, at a minimum. My first call was to Tire Rack, for a new set of Kuhmos. Then, I called Falcone's to see if they could fix my rear. They were more than accommodating. Back in the garage, I pulled the rear and delivered it to Vince. While I was at it, I gave them my drive shaft and a new U-joint to install. Back home, I took the opportunity to make some more upgrades.

While the Panhard rod succeeded in keeping my rear planted, it was still wagging a bit. Going into turn 5, another driver in a Corvette commented that he thought my rear was going to fall off. I replied that he should have seen it **before** I made improvements, and then commented under my breath that he only got to see that because he was behind me. Those comments gave me the incentive to break out the polyurethane bushings that had been collecting dust. Replacing trailing arm bushings is an ordeal unto itself. I won't bore you with the details, but suffice it to say it consumed much of my weekend.

On Monday, I picked up my now sealed rear from Vince. After work on Tuesday, I put it back in, along with new limit straps. Checking the brake pads, I was alarmed to find that the rears had large sections missing. Fortunately, I had a spare set and promptly installed them. Summit had really taken its toll. Then, just as I was about to finish up for the night, I noticed that the upper right front suspension arm had extruded its rubber bushing out of place, another upgrade opportunity. With two days to go before Lime Rock, I dove in.

Many hours more than I could have ever imagined, the upper arm was out. The rubber from the bushing wedged it into place. I finally resorted to a red-hot screw driver, and melted the rubber out. Now I had

to make a decision to put another rubber bushing back in, or upgrade. Of course, I chose upgrade.

One common trick, is to replace the compliant upper arm bushings with spherical bearings. Coincidentally, the bearings used on the lower arms fit just right into the uppers. I just happened to have a spare set of lower arms in my stockpile. More hours later, it was in. Bleary-eyed, I went to bed, leaving the other side for the next day.

At work on Wednesday, I was worthless. Sore and exhausted, I dreaded heading back into the garage to finish the car. When I got home, I chose sleep over work.

My original plan was to leave for Lime Rock on Thursday afternoon. That morning, instead of work, I headed into the garage. Replacing the bushing in the left side was fast and easy. I was ahead of schedule, and had time to capitalize on a few more upgrade opportunities, including dialing in more negative camber in an effort to get those Kuhmos to wear more evenly in the front. By noon, it was ready for a road test and a lame attempt to heat cycle the new tires.

What a difference those new bushings made. Before, the car squirmed under heavy braking. It was now rock solid. Turn-in was dramatically improved, as well, a combination of less compliance and more negative camber. It always drove like a go-kart, but now it **really** drove like a go-kart. I declared it ready for action, loaded it onto the trailer, and took a shower.

On The Road Again With the departure time now in the late afternoon, I had to change my route to avoid NYC traffic. The drive up the turnpike, past the Poconos and up through Poughkeepsie was scenic and relaxing. Traffic was nearly non-existent. The price for peace was a little longer transit time. At 8:55, I called my hotel and asked them to wait for me. The woman on the other end thanked me. She had forgotten I had a reservation and was about to leave! Not long later, I arrived at the rustic Salisbury Inn, a row of cabins that was stuck in the forties. I opened all the windows in a vain attempt at cooling it below 90. On one side, the road noise intruded, while on the other side, dogs barked and howled at the moon. Nevertheless, I managed to dream of the day ahead.

I Love Lime Rock Friday was a picture-perfect spring day in New England. The beautiful bloom surrounding the track was only rivaled by the collection of cars in the infield. Alfa Romeos of all hue and shape were in attendance, though nothing exotic graced the paddock. GTV6s outnumbered all the others, combined. There were also, the usual Ferraris, Porsches and other marques. But, among the typical were two Lancias of special note, a Delta Integrale and a Fulvia HF.

As much of a pleasure it was to view the cars, getting back together with old acquaintances was even better. Brian Shorey, Nick Fonte, Bill LeClair and John Legelis from the New England AROC and myself set up our own scuderia in the paddock. Brian's enclosed trailer again, made a perfect clubhouse, just like last year. Nick, unfortunately, forgot his espresso maker, this time, but still brought his unbelievably fast Alfetta Sports Sedan.

The organization of the event was not quite up to the very high CTAROC standards. The run groups seemed to be a bit out of whack. Attendance was also down, contributing to a rumored \$4000 bath that the club was taking. On the bright side, we all were treated to extra track time. And, any minor inconveniences were quickly forgotten as soon as we hit the track.

Everyone was required to drive with an instructor, until signed-off. (Continued on Next Page)

Time Trial Season (From Previous Page)

I was fortunate to have a fellow COM competitor and WRX owner as mine. It was only a few days ago that we were both at Summit. Frank did a great job of reacquainting me with the track. Within a couple laps the combination of a freshened car and great instruction had me ticking off fast, consistent laps. Everything felt great and I was sprouting a permanent grin. I love Lime Rock.



A very cool Super, formerly owned by Mike Valant.



A potent 3 liter GTV-6. Even Nick could not outrun it.



A very pretty Giulietta Spider. One of a few in attendance.

Some Hot Laps Session after session, things just got better. My GTV performed flawlessly. The only issue was a chunked front tire. I guess I should have gotten them shaved. No matter, I replaced them with the used spares had, courtesy of the last event. Nick had similar problems. He delaminated a left front and had to switch to three-year-old R1s that Brian brought. As much as he bragged about the Hoosiers last year, he was ecstatic about the R1s. The only Alfas that could approach him were a couple of hot 3 liter GTV-6s.

By the end of the day, I had achieved my goal of shaving a couple of seconds off my previous best. I also had a chance to tour the "escape road" as I went into turn 1 a bit too hot. Nick, Brian and the others all were equally pleased with theirs and their cars performances. With the exception of a blown head gasket on a super-charged GTV and a rod knock from a Corvette, the day ended with no incidents.



Nick Fonte's Sedan leads the pack down "no-name"

Fun In The Rain As beautiful as Friday was, Saturday was miserable. Cold and drizzly, many packed up and left. Former DVAROC member, neighbor, and fellow red GTV owner John Jeffries managed to visit. He joined us in Brian's clubhouse for coffee and donuts as we jumped around to keep warm. Despite the yucky weather, it was a great opportunity to learn the "wet line" and hone car control skills.

The wet line is much different than the dry line around LRP. Basically, you drive the perimeter. The scary part was that you had to periodically cross the dry line, which due to layers of rubber, is like ice. This wasn't a big problem for most turns, but the up and downhill turns required gentle hands and feet and a bit of nerve. Nick was sliding his Sports Sedan all over, desperately trying to find grip. I was having a great time pretending my GTV was on steroids, breaking the rear wheels loose on the uphill turn, lap after lap.

After lunch we were disappointed to learn that because the field had shrunk so much, the time trials were cancelled. The only good thing about that was they allowed us to change groups. Nick, Brian and myself finally got a chance to go out together and play.

After several laps of intense pressure by yours truly, Nick went for a brief excursion down the escape road. That allowed me to get in front of him. A couple of laps later, he was right on my tail. From Big Bend through No-Name, I was able to distance myself, but from there back, he was able to reel me back in. We played that game for a few laps until I glanced in my mirror exiting the left-hander and saw his sedan spinning. Shortly after, the session ended.

All in all, despite the rain, it was one of the best times I've ever had on the track. The combination of a challenging course, lovely scenery, beautiful cars, and great people made for another outstanding event. As disappointing as Summit Point had been, Lime Rock made up for that, and then some. I still get grins thinking about it. Thanks, CTAROC for putting on another great event.



My freshened and faithful GTV rests between sessions.

In this issue: Winter Lunch, Tech Session
A Year of Events.... and more



Nuvolari at the Milli Miglia, 70 Years Ago!



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