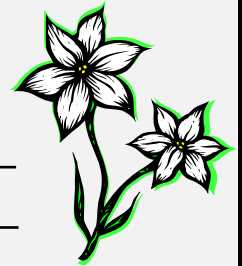




La Voce

Spring 2006

newsletter of the delaware valley alfa romeo owners club



Warm Winter Lunch

A gaggle of hearty Alfisti descended upon Café La Fontana in February to break the winter blues with some tasty Italian food and warm company. More than a dozen brave souls made the event. There were familiar faces, such as the Stolls, Gils, Jones, Burroughs, Pat Carzo and Fred Sacks and his son. And, as usual, some less familiar faces made the event. This year, long lost DVAROC member Barry Cross joined us with his family and 164. He shared some great stories of his Alfas and other Italian car in his stable. One of the most entertaining of them was the tale of a cross-country jaunt in his new Maser.

Barry wasn't the only one who brought his Alfa out to play. The Burroughs brought their lovely, white Spider which was complimented nicely by Frank Gil's black Quad. As usual, the Brady's stuffed their daughter into the back of the GTV and braved the not-quite salt-free roads. Not surprisingly, Jack Stoll kept his Alfa collection home in their comfortable cocoon despite the cloudless sky.

Inside La Fontana, we enjoyed delicious appetizers of gamberoni, calamari and bruschetta. Those were followed by warm soup and fresh salads. Then, the entrees arrived.

Plates of Penne con Pollo, Linguini Scampi, Medaglioni di Maile and Ravioli al Peppe e Formaggio filled the air with the tempting aromas. By the time the desert menu was brought out, espressos were needed to revive the satisfied diners.

After lunch, it was time for door prizes. As usual, Frank Gil searched far and wide for some great books and other Alfa trinkets which made for lots of smiles. When the festivities were over inside, it was group photo time outside.

Mark Your Calendars!

- April 22 – Tech Session –
Nick Falcone Enterprises–
Bala Cynwyd, Pa.**
- May 6-7 – Camden Vintage Grand
Prix, Camden, Nj.**
- May 20 – Ragtops and Roadsters
Open House, Perkasie, Pa.**

Bob's Babblings

Upcoming Events The blooming flowers and shirt-sleeve weather make it hard to ignore that spring is upon us. Although we're off to a slower start than usual, the calendar of events will fill up as the months go by. In April, we'll kick off the driving season with a **Tech Session** at Nick Falcone Enterprises. This year's subject is tentatively: "How to maintain a vintage Alfa Romeo as it was intended." Even owners of newer Alfas will appreciate the myriad of important maintenance items that are necessary to keep your Alfa Romeo happy and healthy. They're not Toyotas, after all.

In May, we hope to participate in the **Vintage Grand Prix Festival**, in Camden. There is a car show which includes a driving tour to nearby New Jersey locales that is part of this event. I'm still trying to secure some Italian Car only parking. I'll keep you posted.

Later in May is the **Ragtops and Roadsters Open House** which should be a lot of fun. That day coincides with a fair in Perkasio, where Ragtops is located. We had a great time there for the tech session a couple of years ago. This should be just as fun.

June will likely be packed. Just take a look at the events calendar at the end of this La Voce. I will probably alter the tour to the Concours d'Elegance of the Eastern United States unless I hear that the event will improve. It has been going down hill for the past few years and I think we might be better served just doing a tour in its place. Pat Carzo has answered the call and is helping to organize several events for us. One that is particularly exciting is a **Wine Tour** to local wineries. We haven't set a date, yet, but it sounds like a fabulous way to spend an afternoon. In addition, we're working on setting up some regular dinners or weekend breakfasts. The dinners will likely be during the week and will have an Alfa related video or speaker associated with them. The breakfasts, well, they'll be a good excuse to get out of the house for a morning ramble and hang out with local Alfisti.

Other Signs of Spring My phone has been ringing a lot lately. You can surely tell it's spring. Every night, I get another call from someone needing this part or that or asking how to fix this or that. I'm also helping Bill Shields search for that perfect Spider for Robin and him to enjoy. I hope that means we'll be seeing a lot more cars on the road and a few new faces at DVAROC events.

On another note, ground has been broken for the site of the 2007 Chester County Alfa Romeo Hillclimb. If you don't know what I mean, just ask Charlie Crothers. Related to that, I'll be cleaning out my garage this summer and downsizing. So, if I can interest you in an engine, a "slightly" damaged GTV race car or perhaps some alternator cores, please stop by.

Thanks! I want to extend my thanks to Pat Carzo for helping out with setting up events, and Quinn deMenna, Bill Conway and Jim Itin for giving me material for this edition of La Voce.

Standard web plug and email Address Plea If you haven't been to our website, please visit it from time to time. Its address is: www.dvaroc.org. To get up-to-date information on club events, please get on the email mailing list. To do so, contact me at: mpbrady@verizon.net

Get out and drive! -bob

Classifieds:

1981 Spider, runs great, recent inspection, cream with brown interior, no cuts in seats, worn looking...top is good, need window...new tire, new quad rims....118k miles.. call for more info, pics,,, South Phila...Rob Simiriglio 215-380-6143

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

billconway@comcast.net

1992 Alfa Romeo Spider Veloce. It is in FAIR to GOOD condition. (I value it at that so as not to over- estimate it. It runs beautifully, but it does have a chip or two in the paint. Heck, the speedometer WORKS! :-P) You can see some pictures here:

<http://homepage.mac.com/amichalski/PhotoAlbum21.html> Please call me at (877) 444-6188 (That's toll free. I am in Wilkes- Barre, PA.) and we can discuss it. Asking \$8,000

1991 Alfa Spider Convertible, red/tan interior/black top. 5 Speed, A/C, 71,000 miles. Recent PA inspection, new clutch, almost new tires, and new muffler. Good mechanical condition, excellent paint and body with no rust. Car has been garage kept and driven only 1000 miles per year during the last 6 years. \$6,900 or best offer. Please call 610-239-0303 or Email ron@lcr-inc.com

'91 Black Spider 23K miles, 2 tops, auto \$10,000 **'86 Black Graduate** good condition \$5,000 **'84 Black GTV6** good cond. \$3,500 **'91 164L** auto good condition...\$2,500 **'69 Jag 2+2** good condition.... \$10,000 **2 SeaDoo ('89 & '91)** with Trailer...\$3,500, Various Hub caps , Misc.

parts – Timing belts, Bearings, Sway bars, Gears, Steering , Glass, Clutch, Shocks, Emblems Send part number of item needed and I'll look it up. Pat Carzo 302.575.0725 or pcarzo@carzoandassociates.com

1975 Spider. good body rebuilt engine. aftermarket headers and rollbar. spare set of camponola wheels.\$5000. Randy (609)-261-7547.

1984 Spider Veloce Silver w/ blue leather, 5 spd, 42K miles. . good condition. Same owner since 1994. Recent full service by Falcone. New canvas top, leather seats and clutch. Paint good, some minor chips and dings. Some rust on rockers. \$5900 OBO. Call for pictures and records. Tony (610)878-4547. anthony.villano@zlbbehring.com

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,

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,

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.

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.

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

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 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

*April 22 - DVAROC Tech Session - Nick Falcone's - Bala Cynwyd, PA –

Spring is the time to get your Alfa back on the road. Come to our annual tech session at Nick Falcone's on Saturday, April 22nd, at 10:00 am. Falcone's is located at 161 Rock Hill Road, Bala Cynwyd, Pa. Their phone number is: (610) 664-0944. Our tentative topic is maintaining a vintage Alfa as it was intended, but if you have another preference, please contact Bob Brady at (610)925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net

April 29-30 Mid Atlantic AROC Driver School – VIR Raceway - Danville, VA

MAARC will be share VIR's challenging North Course with racers from VSCCA. MAARC will hold a driving school for *intermediate and advanced students* and—in separate run groups—the vintage racers will practice and race. For more information, see: www.mid-atlantic-aroc.org and click on the link for "Driving Schools."

*May 6-7 – Camden Vintage Grand Prix – Camden Waterfront, NJ

VSCCA vintage racing comes to the Delaware Valley. This will be a three-day festival with music, power boat racing, a car show and cruise and, of course, a vintage automobile race, all on the Camden waterfront. We're trying to secure an area where we can display our cars and enjoy the race. The car show looks like a lot of fun. Stay tuned for registration information. In the mean time, see their website for more information at: www.vintagegp.info If you're interested in helping or going, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net

May 7 - Artistry in Motion Car Tour and Show – Lancaster, PA This event helps support the Lancaster Museum of Art. Entry forms are due by April 24th. If you are interested, see: www.artistryinmotion.org. Or, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net

May 19-21 – Carlisle Import/Kit Car Show – Carlisle, PA If you're in need of a part or even another car, spend a day, or two at this annual orgy of cars and parts. For more info see: www.caarlisleevents.com

*May 20 – Ragtops and Roadsters Open House – Perkasie, PA

Ragtops and Roadsters specializes in the restoration and maintenance of vintage British motorcars. But, don't let that fool you. They are Alfa friendly and even hosted a tech session for us a couple of years ago. In addition to the open house, the town of Perkasie, where Ragtops is located, is having their Olde Towne Celebration that day with "Hot Ribs and Cool Jazz." The open house starts at 9am; the festival... well that's an all day/night affair. If you're interested in going, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net

*June 11 – Italian Car Show - Headhouse Square, Philadelphia, PA

The DVAROC, NJAROC and others will join the Fiat-Lancia-United club 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 register (not necessary, but recommended), please contact Thad Kirk at 610-324-7085 or delvalleyflu@gmail.com or go to <http://fludelaware.italiancarclub.com/> This was a wonderful event last year. Don't miss it this year. If you're interested and want more information, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net

*June 11 – Tri-State Alfa Swap Meet - Autocraft – York, PA

If you can't make the car show at Headhouse Square, consider attending the 9th Annual Alfa Swap Meet / Autocraft Open House will be held at Stahlman's Autocraft, 1508 South George Street, York, PA, on June 11th 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. I hear this year they're going to give away a Fiat Spider. 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 or mpbrady@verizon.net

*June 18 – Spring Tour - Somewhere, PA

Traditionally, we tour through Bucks County on our way to the Concours d'Elegance of the Eastern United States. This year, however, the event has moved off of the campus of Lehigh University. Also, since the show has gone downhill over the last few years, we might decide to do a tour to somewhere else. So, hold the date and get your Alfa Romeo ready for some driving. Just stay tuned for our destination. If you have any ideas or suggestions, call Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.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@verizon.net

It's cold outside...

Quinn deMenna

I've had my 1979 Alfetta GT for eighteen years and, frankly, I don't remember if the heater has ever worked. It never much mattered to me because I rarely drive it in the winter. This winter however, I finally got the bug to take the heater face apart and find out what was going on. The hoses looked like they were going to blow anyway, so it seemed as good a time as any. What I first thought was just going to be a boring winter project fixing hoses, turned into something much different.

Now I am not an ace mechanic, but I am usually willing to give most things a try. I am always encouraged by those Alfa Owners who can restore their seemingly hopeless cars. With a little time and patience it's amazing what anyone can do. The first thing was to search the internet for forums that may have addressed the Alfetta's heater. I didn't find much on the internet except for a diagram of the heater assembly. Then I began to take things carefully apart, making notes of which wire was which and how things come apart.



After taking the radio console out with a lot of yoga maneuvers under the dash, I was able to remove the heater face plate. These late model 1970's Alfas were notorious for using plastic for everything in the interior. Of course the entire heater face plate is made almost entirely of plastic. Three of the control levers have cables attached to the plastic housing that operate the two defroster flaps and the third controls the heater valve. All three of these cable clamps had broken off from the housing. The heater valve was in the closed position and the levers were not moving the cables.

I searched on eBay for another housing, but didn't find anything. I figured that any other 26-year-old plastic would be just as brittle. I decided to add a little sheet metal to the housing to give a solid base to attach new cable clamps. With shears in hand and a little sheet metal origami, I made box triangles that are epoxyed and through-bolted to the plastic housing. This provides a solid base to attach the cable clamps. Once the heater face plate and radio console are in place these repairs are hidden from view.



A little sheet metal, a little epoxy and the brittle Italian plastic bits are better than new



A view from below of the completed, reinforced heater assembly. None of the repairs are visible from the normal cockpit view.

Now that I can control the defroster vents and the heater temperature I might just venture out for a winter drive. Better yet, I'll just find another challenge to work on.

Letters to the Editor...**Wheel Bearings and Tools for Loan***Jim Itin*

I recently completed a rear wheel bearing replacement on my Milano. Sounds trivial, but this is a much bigger deal than on the 105 and earlier series Alfas. Not only are the bearings a lot more expensive (\$45 - \$50 each, plus \$15 for a bearing retainer for each side), but I ended up buying about \$150 worth of new tools, including an absolutely necessary special Alfa tool for removing / re-installing the bearings. Which brings me to my point. If anyone is in need of rear wheel bearing replacement and would rather try the DIY route instead of spending a few hundred bucks at a shop, I could probably help out with the tools and experience. I think the same wheel bearings were used for Alfetta's and later Alfas (not sure about 164's, but could be the same).

Let me know if there's any interest.

Jim

Famous Italians Meet on the Street*Bill Conway and Quinn deMenna*

The event was a delivery of instruction sheets to Quinn, so he can install Euro bumpers on his Alfetta, that should make for some nice reading, as he bought two fronts. This was discovered as he matched them up to my car.

We decided to meet at the Radnor Hotel and would you believe, the Ferrari Superamerica on the cover on the Autoweek issue with my car was parked in front. Funny, the other owner thought it was too.

That's what made this day so amazing. I was heading out to meet Bill Conway on Sunday morning for coffee and to take a look at his Alfetta. I really wanted to see Bill's car because I had recently bought a pair of Euro bumpers for my 1979 Alfetta and I was interested in looking at Bill's car to see how they are attached. Bill also had instructions from Shankel on how to attach those light weight stainless bumpers to an American Version car.



Bill Conway displays the cover of AutoWeek with the photo of the same Ferrari SuperAmerica on it. Inside that edition, Bill's beautiful bronze Alfetta was featured. What an amazing coincidence!

I had planned to meet Bill at the Radnor Hotel so I headed out with my bumpers remembering that AutoWeek June 2005 issue

featuring Bills' beautiful copper metallic colored Sprint Veloce with the New Ferrari Superamerica on the cover. As I pulled up to the Porte' cochere of the hotel I could see the tail of the Giorgio Giugiaro design on Bills pristine Alfa Romeo and to my amazement parked in front of him was the cover story Ferrari. Think of the chances of these two cars would be parked next each other?

Scenes from the Winter Lunch

Master of ceremonies, Frank Gil awaits with anticipation the next door prize winner. Fred Sacks, on Frank's left, unwraps his prize.



Barry Cross shows off his new Alfa Romeo book.



Emilie Brady and Antonio Gil see if they can toss Antonio's brother, Vicente into the fire



The "Rivet Queen" as she looked in 2000 when I rescued her from a garage in Queens. Note the nifty Pep Boys special tail lights. At this point, she was clad with aluminum in the most unusual places, was missing large sections of metal that Bertone intended her to have and was pierced with hundreds of pop rivets. I can't say the owner lied when he said it was "rust-free," however. He just neglected to mention that it was also free of large sections of metal.

In the Garage...

Ressurrecting the Rivet Queen

Bob Brady

I just went through five years of La Voces. The last time I wrote about the "rivet queen" was in June 2004. At that time, I was experiencing "scope creep," removing all of the mechanical bits from the body so it could be "properly" stripped. Sometime in the months that followed, I was struck with a momentary spark of reason. After working on this shell of a GTV, on and off again since 2000, I convinced myself (and more importantly, my wife) that it was time to throw in the towel and buy a completed racecar. 2005 was going to be a banner year for vintage Alfa Romeo racing and I was determined to participate. Well, I won't go into **that** story again, but when I brought the "broken" GTV back from the racetrack last April, the rivet queen was patiently waiting in the back of the garage for me to get back to work on her.

The process of turning that almost thrown away car into a track-ready car has been agonizingly slow. Some of that is because life has gotten very complicated, but much of it is self-imposed. Instead of spending my hour of evening free time in the garage, steadily making progress, I spend it on the couch. Instead of playing with cold hand tools in the dampness until my fingers go numb, I write La Voce next to a warm fire. Maybe I'm just getting old.

Work has not ceased entirely, though. It's actually starting to take shape nicely. Along the way, I've learned a thing or two and have felt the satisfaction that only handicraft can produce.

"No More Red Alfas" Over the summer, I managed to finally finish the extensive bodywork that the car required. This GTV earned her name because the previous owner cut large sections of sheet metal from it and replaced it with panels of pop-riveted aluminum. Not only did I have to weld in many panels with proper replacements, but I also had to tediously weld shut about 3000 holes left from the pop-rivets. The latter exercise rivaled sorting nuts and bolts as therapy. It was now ready for primer.



It's amazing what some sheet metal, a few hundred feet of welding wire and a few gallons of paint stripper can do. Here the now whole, rivet queen sits naked, ready for primer. This was taken last summer.

I've been using PPG auto paint exclusively since restoring my first Alfa. That wasn't really by choice. While living in Texas, I had wanted to use DuPont Chroma to paint my first GTV. Unable to find a DuPont dealer, I went with PPG and have been satisfied ever since. Typically, I've used the Concept line of acrylic urethanes which are easy to work with and incredibly durable (my red GTV's finish has proven to be impervious to sticker bushes as well as brake fluid!). The only downside of Concept is its price. A gallon of Concept can easily set you back a couple of hundred dollars.

Now, given that the rivet queen will never be unblemished, and since she will likely get a few battle scars racing, I just couldn't rationalize top of the line paint. So, I chose PPG's Omni line of acrylic urethanes. I thought the store made a mistake when they rang up the paint; it was about ¼ the price of Concept. I'm told the biggest difference with this paint is that it's just not as durable or colorfast as Concept. I haven't seen any issues with it, however. A couple of years ago, I used it to paint Marie's horse trailer. That paint seems to have held up every bit as well as Concept. For the rivet queen, it was just the ticket.

Oh, I almost forgot to mention the color. Over the past years, I toyed with many colors for this car. I even took a GTV photo and reproduced it in every color imaginable with the computer. A rainbow of GTVs hung on our refrigerator amongst the kids artwork for some time as everyone took turns voting for their choice. For a long time, orange and yellow were leading candidates. At some point, I told the kiddies I'd paint it yellow with purple polka dots. Eventually, I nixed that idea as it wouldn't have that vintage look. And, after seeing too many yellow GTVs on the race track, I decided I needed something different. Then, one day, when I looked at the Azzurro Le Mans piece of sheet metal I welded in the front valance, it hit me. Le Mans blue would be a beautiful color. Marie was even satisfied as it wasn't red. I took the trunk lid I had in that color with me to the paint shop for them to match. Oddly, it came up as 1973 Mack truck blue..... oh well.

To maintain that cool vintage look, I kept all the interior body surfaces, including the engine bay in grey epoxy primer. My only regret in doing that is the epoxy is not a gloss finish and is therefore not as easy to clean up. (Continued on Next Page)

Ressurrecting the Rivet Queen can't



The queen in her new colors, Azzurro Le Mans – Color AR548

The Great Switcheroo I now had a lovely blue GTV shell on one side of the garage, and a twisted, but complete, red GTV on the other. It was time for some parts swapping.

The front suspension went on first. I should have known better, but it wasn't quite as simple as unbolting parts from one car and moving them to another. Every part I pulled, I felt obligated to clean up and paint. After all, why put dirty parts on a new car? This, of course, quadrupled the time required for assembly.

When I attempted to install the suspension pieces, I also discovered that the hard hit I took with the red car did some bending of the suspension. I wound up having to straighten the sway bar and use other spares for the control arms. I also had to replace the shocks as the left one was dented and damaged. The new Konis were sourced from Performatek who is very supportive of the Alfa community and has great products.

The steering box in the red car was also trashed. It cracked when I hit the tire wall. Much has been written about the jointed steering columns versus the solid ones (GTVs used the jointed ones while Spiders and maybe Berlinas used boxes rigidly joined to the steering column.) Many believe that steering box failures can be avoided by using the non-jointed boxes. After mulling it over a while, I decided to use the jointed box as I felt the additional stress from the column shaft on the box could make it crack. Time will tell if that was a good decision. With the front suspension complete, it was time to hit the rear.

Many extol the virtues of a shimmed limited slip differential. The red car's rear was shimmed so tight it was nearly locked. Personally, I found this made the car handle like a dirt-stocker instead of a sports car. I also think it contributed to me losing traction which led to the roll. So, the rear axle was one piece that wasn't going to get swapped.

The other major change to the blue car was the installation of a Panhard rod to locate the rear. I really liked how that change transformed my other red GTV's handling, so I built another for the blue car. I made some changes in the design, however, to improve it. First, I added a reinforcing bar across the trunk so I wouldn't tear it up, like I did, at first, in the red car. Second, I reinforced the brackets on the axle in order to avoid that tearing up as it did on my red car, as well.

Finishing the rear suspension wound up taking much longer than I ever thought. Apparently, my memory of having done a lot of fabrication work over the years was more of a dream. When I went to actually assemble it, I realized how much I **hadn't** yet done, whoops!

Finally, though, the rear was installed and properly located. The car now had wheels on it and could be taken off jack stands and rolled around, making life much easier in my garage. It was time to pluck the engine.

For whatever reason, I never seem to be able to remove and install Alfa Romeo engines as easily as others claim. Last summer, at Watkins Glen, I peripherally helped Wil Painter replace his engine. Even in the grass, it was a piece of cake. Why, whenever I do it in the confines of my own garage it's so difficult is beyond me, but it is.

Getting the engine and transmission out of the red car wasn't so bad. Perhaps it was because I wasn't too concerned about scratching and denting the already bent body. Getting it in the blue car, on the other hand, was an exercise in frustration.

Yes, I had the rear of the car jacked as high as I could. Yes, I moved the hoisting loop on the engine forward just like everyone says to do. But that *!?!@! shifter nub and that cross brace under the engine make it nearly impossible to drop it in. I must have tried in vain for 45 minutes before my son wandered into the garage to help me. Even then, it took 2x4s and strained muscles to finally drop it into place. As expected, I did nick the fresh paint, but just a bit. When it was finally bolted in, it was time for a beer, or six.

Swapping the pedal assembly and brakes was a piece of cake. Things were progressing nicely. Then, hockey season and the holidays hit and weeks went by without me even opening the garage.

Buying Doesn't Count Over the years, whenever I get bogged down with life's interferences, I find comfort in buying parts. The blue GTV was no exception. Starting some years ago, I began stocking up on all those bits I knew I'd need to finish the project. So, my garage filled up with boxes of suspension bushings, brake lines, gages, switches, Aeroquip fittings and all sorts of goodies. While buying all this stuff made me feel like I was actually making progress, all it really accomplished was rack up bills and take up space. Worse, a couple of times, I had forgotten that I bought something and bought it again. I'm sure the suppliers of racers and restoration hobbyists understand the psychology of this well. I've seen many other's garages filled with unopened boxes of parts lying next to still-born projects. Even the guy I bought the GTV from gave me boxes of unopened parts that he intended to use on the car.

One way to avoid this mess is to work on, and complete, one system at a time. So, if you haven't yet finished the body, don't bother stocking up on brake components. Another way to minimize the damage from this behavior is to spend the time planning. More times than I'd like to admit, I've bought stuff in anticipation of using it only to change my design later. Finally, if you can't resist the temptation, at least do yourself a favor and keep your parts inventory organized. At least you'll avoid double or triple buying. (Continued on Next Page)

Ressurrecting the Rivet Queen con't

The Most Satisfying Work For me, there is really nothing more satisfying than metal fabrication work. Welding, in particular, is pure joy.... Really! I've always wanted to be able to fabricate panels, but my attempts over the years aren't quite up to Chip Foose standards. With the rear bulkhead missing and the need for a dashboard, I now had another opportunity to see what I could do.

One of the odd things the previous owner did to this poor GTV was to cut out the entire rear bulkhead. When I bought the car, the package tray was fabricated from some lovely mahogany and, you guessed it, pop-riveted into place. For years I had visions of fabricating that bulkhead out of aluminum, just like the "real" GTV race cars like Roman Tucker's. I even took photos of fabricated bulkheads whenever I walked through the paddocks of vintage races to get ideas. My practical self, however, knew that fabricating a bulkhead would be a lot of work. When I cut up that rusty GTV last year, I purposely saved the bulkhead, figuring it would be much easier to weld it in than start from scratch. Well, when the time came to do the work, my artistic side won out.

Starting with some large sheets of paper, I made templates for the package tray and the bulkhead. Then, out came the metal snips and a sheet of aluminum. I've always wanted to own a metal brake, but never could rationalize the cost. So, the bends in the metal were made with my old stand-by, some angle iron, a bunch of large c-clamps and a mallet. Before long, the metal was really taking shape. To stiffen things up and more importantly, to make it look cool, I broke out my cheapo metal beading kit I bought some years ago but rarely used. With that, I put in some strategic beads, making the new bulkhead almost look like it came from the factory. With some other pieces of aluminum, I boxed in the areas around the shocks so they could be accessed easier. Then, out came the rivet tool. A hundred or so pop-rivets later and the bulkhead was finished. Hence, the circle of life was complete. The rivet queen now had her rivets back!



The finished aluminum rear bulkhead. Note the beading.

The other major piece of fabrication was the dash board. Once again, I toyed with just cutting up one of the ones I had laying

about. But, I was really enamored with the look of an aluminum dash in black crinkle finish. So, out came the paper products to form a template. Then, out came the tin snips and aluminum. Like making paper dolls, I cut, bent, fit, cut, refit and formed the dash. For that really slick look, I broke out the shot bag, hammer and dollies, and got to work making a binnacle for the center-mounted tach. In what seemed like no time, I had it roughed out. Some time later, it took its final shape. A few pop rivets later, and it was joined to the rest of the dash.

I added a lower bend in the dash to stiffen it up. Because of the length and the short overhang, this was beyond my angle iron and c-clamp method, so I borrowed a brake. One of these days, I simply must get one. They are a wonderful tool.

There were many recommendations for crinkle paint. Most claimed the Harley-Davidson crinkle paint was the best. Out of convenience, I used Krylon. It worked like a charm. Although it was cold in the garage when I sprayed it, I was able to get it to crinkle just right with a heat gun. Except for a small spot where I let the paint puddle, the dash looks fantastic, particularly with that lovely Jaeger tach in the middle.



The aluminum dash, as it looks today, awaiting the rest of the gages.

The Welding Never Ends Before I painted the car, I thought I was finished with any metal work. As usual, I was wrong. After I finished the dash, I realized I needed to weld in some tabs for it to attach to. It was really no big deal, but it meant some touch up work.

Then, I realized that I hadn't provided a mount for the kill switch. So, out came the welder and the touch-up job grew. Then, I went to mount the seat in the car. Like so many things, the previous owner cut out the mounting bosses for some reason unbeknownst to me. This meant fabricating new bosses, welding them in place, and you guessed it, more touch-up. Mounting the seat was a great example of a project gone awry. While I could have simply bought seat mounts and bolted them to the floor, I had to do it my way. (Continued on Next Page)

Ressurrecting the Rivet Queen con't

So, out came the steel, then the cut-off saw, followed by the angle grinder (one of my favorite implements of destruction.... Ahhh, I love the smell of burning metal in the morning), then the welder. Many hours later, I had four lovely seat mount bosses in hand. It would take yet another hour before they were welded to the car. After that, I struggled with getting just the right hardware. So, after a few trips to the store later, I had a seat mounted. Why I have this innate need to reengineer things all the time is not clear. Perhaps I secretly don't want to ever finish the car. Or, more likely, when that rare hour or two of free time comes up, I jump to do something rather than spend time designing and planning. Sometimes you just gotta work with your hands.

Next Stop, Electrical With the major components installed in the car, the next phase is electrical. Plumbing the fuel system, the fire system and the brakes all requires the wiring to be routed so that they don't try to occupy the same space.

While the simplest approach would have been to take any one of the half dozen or so wiring harnesses I have taking up space in my garage and use that, the need to do it my way erupted.

The decision to build my own wiring harness almost makes sense. Few of the devices included in the factory harness will be needed. Furthermore, the harnesses are thirty years old and could become reliability headaches. And, most importantly, building my own will be oh, so much more satisfying.

Before I started to buy wire and go to town, (well, almost, I **did** buy a number of different switches, fuse blocks and connectors in anticipation of this moment), I did some research. After reading some advice on wiring cars, boats and airplanes, I decided to go the aircraft route. I figured if it's good enough for flying, it will be good enough for racing.

What I found is that the wire should not be bare copper conductors, rather it should be tinned or silvered so that it doesn't corrode. Check out that wire they sell at NAPA. It is bare copper. Is it any wonder you need to rewire your trailer every few years? Aircraft wire is also typically sheathed in Tefzel, which is more abrasion resistant than the normal PVC sheathing found in most automotive wire. If you shop around, it's not even much more expensive.

Terminals are another area where details matter. While I've used solderless crimp connectors for years, I've always wondered how fatigue resistant they are. AMP manufactures PIDG solderless terminals which are designed to grip until the wire breaks. Again, if you shop around, you can get these connectors at about the same price you'd pay at your local auto parts store.

Switches are also important. Some switches are designed for AC current and don't work well with DC. Make sure the switches you use are rated for the proper **DC** current load.

When it came to fuses, I tossed the vintage look out the window and went with modern spade fuses. Not only are they more reliable, they are easier to tell if they've burned out.

While I now know **how** to wire the car, I still needed a plan for how to hook everything up. I started by importing a wiring diagram I had from a CarDisc CD and modified it using Microsoft Paint. When I was done, it was so simple, that I decided to make a completely new wiring diagram. By knowing

the current draws of the various devices used, I was able to size the wire and corresponding fuse for each circuit. When I finally had my wiring diagram complete, I placed my order for wire and terminals. Now that's a switch (no pun intended).

The 2006 Racing Season Last summer, I had every intention of having this car on the track in the spring. Of course, in 2003, I had every intention of getting it on the track in 2004. Ditto for 2004. Well, like most of my projects, it's been backburnered several times. At this point, I'll be delighted if it makes it to a time trial before the year is up.

Up until a few days ago, my standard line was that the car was about a solid week's worth of work away from being on the track; you know, just 80-100 hours away. Well, I made the mistake of planning out the work it needs to get done, the other day. You guessed it, the list is a mile long. With my children's hockey seasons over, I might stand a chance at finishing it. Then again, with spring here, the lawn is growing, the house needs repairs. And then, there's that other "little" project we've got going on (more on that later). But maybe, just maybe, if I take some days off, stay focused, remain motivated and stop reengineering things, I might have the little blue GTV on the track this summer. Wish me luck!



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

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