



La Voce

June 2004

newsletter of the delaware valley alfa romeo owners club

Vince Speaks SPICA

DVAROC Tech Session at Nick Falcone Enterprises

On a wonderful spring Saturday in April, we held our annual Tech Session, hosted by Vince and Ruth at Nick Falcone Enterprises. As always, a great crowd arrived driving a great variety of Alfas. After the requisite donuts, coffee and conversation, found a volunteer to be the focus of the tech session.

Quinn de Menna had been struggling with some Spica problems on his lovely black Alfetta GTV for some time. Fortunately, he was in the right place at the right time to get some help. Before you could say thermostatic actuator, Vince had the hood open and got to work.



Anyone familiar with the oft-misunderstood and unfairly maligned Spica fuel injection system will tell you that your successful troubleshooting starts with a properly set-up system. This means starting from the beginning and systematically adjusting all the linkages and gaps to proper specifications. Having the factory tools makes this a very simple, if not tedious task. Of course, since Vince is in the business

of keeping Spica-injected Alfas healthy and in-tune, he has all the right equipment for the job. So, before he jumped to a solution for Quinn's persistent backfire, he made sure the entire system was in order.

After showing us how to properly set the throttles, pump gap and bell-crank stops, he was satisfied the system was ready for diagnosis. Even though his adjustments made things better, a quick test drive demonstrated that the back-fire had not gone away. Clearly, it was not just an adjustment problem. So, Vince dove in deeper.

In order to conserve fuel, and avoid backfire, the mechanical work of art Spica fuel injection system uses a couple of electric crutches: a micro-switch to indicate that the throttle position is at idle, and a solenoid to cut-off fuel flow. If the throttle stops are correctly adjusted, the switch will close and send power to the fuel cut-off solenoid. Vince knew the system was properly set-up, so it was time to test the electrical bits. If you put your finger on the fuel cut-off solenoid when it energizes, you'll feel it click. Quinn's car did not. A test lead do the solenoid confirmed that it was not the culprit. Rather, it was the dreaded micro-switch; dreaded because replacing it requires removal of the FI pump. (Continued on Page 4)

Mark Your Calendars!

June 19 – Tour to Concours

d'Elegance at Lehigh U.

July 10 – Tech Session: Ragtops and Roadsters, Perkasie, Pa.

Bob's Babblings

Swap Meet Switch I tried to get out a La Voce in time, but wasn't able to announce that the annual Tri-Chapter swap meet date was changed from June 20th to June 6th. If you are on my email distribution list, you got notice. Or, if you went to the web site, you would have also been notified. Unfortunately, I sometimes can't get the word out via paper on every event change. If you can, check out the calendar on the web site, I keep that up to date as any changes occur. Also, if you're planning on attending any event, it's always a good idea to give me a call to confirm. I hope the swap meet change hasn't inconvenienced anyone.

More Summer Events There is a lot going on this summer. I hope you can make it to at least one event. In June, we'll be making our annual cruise to the Concour d'Elegance of the Eastern United States, at Lehigh University. In July, we have a tech session at Ragtops and Roadsters. At the end of July, there is the convention. In place of New Hope, which is cancelled again this year, we'll be doing the ever-popular picnic/rally, which is always a great time.

Convention Update By the time you get this newsletter, it will be very close to the time you need to register for the convention to get the early discount. I've been putting off registering for some reason and today I found out the price of procrastination. When I called to make reservations at the Convention Center hotel, I was disappointed to find out that they were booked. As of this writing, NEAROC is working to recommend an overflow hotel, which should have shuttle service to the Convention Center. If you, like me, are in need of accommodations and aren't sure where to stay, give me a call or an email (mpbrady@verizon.net). By the time you contact me, I should know which hotel they are recommending.

Also, if you are interested in caravanning to the convention, there will be opportunities. The NJ, Capitol and Mid-Atlantic chapters will all be attending. I plan to drive up on Wednesday afternoon. Others will be leaving on Thursday. Still others will be leaving on Friday. Contact me if you are interested in joining up with others.

The convention is a great chance to spend time with other like-minded Alfiisti, visit Alfa vendors, tour New Hampshire, get some track or autocross time, show your car or just hang out. Our own Henry Wessells will be giving the banquet talk. You won't want to miss that. If you haven't already signed up, I hope you will.

Plea for Help! As you might have noticed, La Voce has become less and less reliable. It's starting to become a victim of the other things in my life creeping in. While it truly is a labor of love, I feel guilty that it's not published on a more timely basis. So, if anyone is interested in writing or even publishing, let me know. I could really use some help. The same is true for organizing events. When someone steps up to put together an event, like Jack Stoll has done, my life becomes easier, and the whole club benefits. So.... consider it!

Summer is prime Alfa time. Try to make it to one (or more) of our events.... Here's wishing you twisty roads with no speed limits – bob brady

Classifieds:

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

1963 GIULIA SPIDER, gray/red, restored for driving, California car, never any rust, bare metal repaint, Webers, mechanical rebuilds over 12-year ownership, \$16,000. Call Arthur (215) 985-4714 or

nomecos@netaxs.com

'57,'58 Giulietta Spiders and '81 GTV-6 parts cars. Spiders are rusty, but have many good parts, including a windshield. Some extra spares such as a rear included. GTV-6 has a good engine. Typical rust. Must sell immediately. Dave 484-515-8415

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. 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

1967 Duetto Euro car, red, has been sitting, but supposedly the engine is fresh. A couple of minor dents and needs floors/paint. Seats are nearly perfect. An easy restoration. \$2000. Contact Bob Brady 610-925-1837, mpbrady@bellatlantic.net for more information.

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

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.

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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 19 – Concours d'Elegance of the Eastern United States – 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 9:27 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 25-28 – Le Bella Macchine d'Italia – Pocono, PA For more info, go to: www.mhkaye.com

June 30 – July 1 – COMSCC School and Time Trials – Watkins Glen, NY If anyone is interested, I plan to be at 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 10 – Tech Session – Ragtops and Roadsters – Perkasio, PA** Ever wonder about how to get your body restoration done right? Come and find out. Ragtops and Roadsters is located in central Bucks County. The tech session should start around 10am. For more information and directions, contact Bob Brady at: 610-925-1837 or mpbrady@verizon.net

July 10 – 18 Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix – Pittsburgh, PA This is an excellent event and worth the drive. The races are on July 11-12, but there are events the entire week. For more information, see: www.pittsburghvintagegrandprix.com

July 11t - 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

***July 28 – August 1 – AROC National Convention – Manchester, NH** Mark your calendars now. Plan to make the trip, it will be worth it. For more information go to: www.velocissima.com

***August 8 – 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 7th so we know what food to order and how many directions to make.

August 28 – CTAROC Driver School and Time Trials – Lime Rock, Ct.

The excellent CTAROC Driver School and Time Trials will be held on August 28th this year. Lime Rock is a great, beautiful track. No experience is necessary to enjoy this liberating experience. For more information, contact Bob Brady at 610-925-1837.

September 3-6 – Lime Rock Vintage Racing Festival – Lime Rock, Ct. This event is a wonderful way to finish off the summer. It has become the Monterey of the east. For more information, contact Bob Brady at 610-925-1837.

September 9-12 – SVRA Vintage Grand Prix– Watkins Glen, Ny. If you can't make Lime Rock, you must attend Watkins Glen. Relive the roots of sports car racing in the United States. Contact Bob Brady at 610-925-1837.

September 10-12 – 100 Cars of Radnor– Radnor, Pa. Last year, Alfas were out in force. Enjoy the best automobiles in the area in a wonderful setting. The car show is on the 12th. See: www.radnorconcours.org/html/events.html

September 12 – Buckingham Concours d'Elegance– Holicong, Pa. Since New Hope is cancelled again this year, perhaps we can attend Buckingham as a club. Contact Bob Brady at 610-925-1837, if you're interested.

September 19 – Hagley Museum Car Show– Wilmington, Pa. Another great car show. The museum is worth the trip alone. Contact Bob Brady at 610-925-1837, if you're interested.

September 23-26 – SVRA Vintage Racing– Summit Point, WVa. Summit Point is a great setting to watch vintage Alfas duke it out with vintage Porsches, Loti and others. Come cheer on local DVAROC participants. Contact Bob Brady at 610-925-1837, if you're interested in going.

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

Tech Session (con't from Front Page)

While removing the pump to get at the switch was beyond the scope of the tech session, Vince did provide some helpful pointers on how to make that job easier. First, instead of

removing the pump by separating it from the engine block, it is much easier to separate the pump from its base. The fasteners holding it to the block are nearly impossible to get at, while those attaching it to its base can be easily accessed using a socket and a long extension. To make things even easier, consider removing the distributor first. The second tricky part of removing the pump involves the drive belt. Spica pumps are driven by a toothed belt, from the crank shaft. On the later cars, like Quinn's, the pulley on the pump has a raised lip on the front, perhaps to better prevent the belt from walking off (not that this was ever a problem). The earlier cars have no such lip. The problem is that the lip prevents the belt from being "walked" on to the pump, which is the standard, and easy way to install the belt. So, the trick is to replace the later pulley with an earlier one, which makes belt replacement much easier.

Although Quinn's Spica woes weren't entirely solved, he did leave with an adjusted system, the problem identified and a lot more knowledge of how the system works and should be maintained. In fact, everyone there left with a lot more understanding and respect for Alfa's approach to meeting increasingly stringent air pollution regulations without compromising performance. And that newfound knowledge is the true mark of a great tech session.

The DVAROC thanks Vince and Ruth for hosting another outstanding event. They are a great resource and we're lucky to have them active in the club. Thanks!



Jack Stoll's GTV looking great under the spring sun as Frank Gil wonders what model Alfa is parked behind....the one with the flat six mounted in the back



Ruth checks out Dave West's new toy, an immaculate '73 Porsche 911. Don't worry, there's still hope, Dave just added a Giulia Spider Veloce to his stable.



A great shot of the rear of Charlie Crother's Giulia Spider.



A rarely seen Niki Lauda edition spider stopped by for the Tech Session

On The Road...

Treasure Hunting

Visiting Carlisle and Octagon Spares

Bob Brady

For many years, I've been reading about the Carlisle Import/Kit Car show. For as many years, I've been listing it as an event of interest in La Voce. Every year, I start spring with intentions of attending, but every year I back out at the last minute because of some conflict or another. This year, I vowed to attend. So, I took a much-needed day off from work and made the trek to the fabled Carlisle Fair Grounds.

The event runs Friday through Sunday and includes a swap-meet section, a car corral (to sell your car), a show area, and vendor areas for new and kit-car wares. In addition, this year's event had an auto-cross, an on-site dyno and a number of demonstrations of kit-car craft. Needless to say, I was filled with anticipation on the drive up, even though it continued to rain. Things looked up, however, as I neared the Carlisle exit of the turnpike when the skies cleared.

I arrived much later than I wished, around 11am, and was surprised to find ample parking in the fairgrounds lot. Perusing the program, I made my plan for attacking the hundreds of vendor booths shown on the map. After changing into some hiking boots, I started my trek. I'd hoped to find a nicer license plate light for my Sprint, and thought some of the Rice-boy vendor booths might have a suitable race seat for the GTV project. Other than that, I really didn't have much of a list.

From the map and all the hype I'd read about this event, I figured it would take hours to cover it. Unfortunately, I was underwhelmed. While there were many booths in the swap area, most were selling British wares. There were a couple that had some Alfa bits, but really nothing of interest. In about an hour, I covered all of the booths... twice! The car corral was even more disappointing. There were about thirty cars for sale, but nothing of much interest. At least, I figured, the kit-car section would be fun to see, after all, this was billed as a national event. Again, I went away cold. There were about twenty kit-car vendors there. Nearly everyone had a Cobra knock-off. Some even had Cobra Daytona coupes. Among them, Factory Five appeared to have the best thought-out kits. One of the more interesting, non-Cobra kits was the British Noble, a Saleen-looking mid-engine car that sells for about \$60K.... without the drivetrain. While not a bad car, overall, I'm thinking I'd rather put that money towards a mid-sixties Ferrari, a new Lotus Elise or any number of other more-interesting cars. So, after I'd seen just about every permutation of Cobra replica available, I headed back to a couple of booths selling books.

The most interesting place I found was a used magazine booth. There were boxes and boxes of Motorsport, Road and Track, Sportscar and many other enthusiast magazines from the fifties, sixties and beyond. I almost bought a copy of Motorsport from 1968, featuring some Alfa 33s running the Targa Florio. In retrospect, I should have bought it, but a desire to keep the junk pile from growing won out.

The other book booths had a dearth of Alfa books. Those that did have some, had the usual suspects. None were bargains. There was not a Fusi anywhere in sight.

On my final lap of the booths, I ran into Central PA Chapter president Mike Mihm, who had his usual Alfa paraphernalia for sale. I asked him if attendance was particularly low this year. While he thought it might have been a little off, what I found was pretty typical, he told me.

Perhaps if I'd gone on a Saturday, at least the car show field would have had more than a few cars to look at. But, on that damp Friday, only about a dozen, mostly British cars could be found. The most interesting car in the field was a vintage Citroen, similar to a traction-avant, but larger and more luxurious.

Not wanting to let the day end so empty, I hopped into the car and headed south to make another long-anticipated journey. This time, the destination was Octagon Spares, near Red Lion.

For some years, now, I've frequented the web site of Octagon Spares. The cars they have for sale always seem to be reasonably priced, and they always have something interesting. Of particular interest to me was a 6C 2500 Cabriolet, that I think was originally purchased by the former owner of Algar Ferrari. While realistically, I had no intentions of bringing that car home, I did want to visit their junk yard and bring home some trunk hinges for the GTV race car project. (The former owner somehow thought it a good idea to remove them???)

When I arrived, I walked through the entrance to the yard and into the first of a number of interconnected buildings. Walking past a room full of dusty, vintage British cars, I found the owner. After explaining my hinge need, we went out to the yard and looked into the trunk of one of his GTVs. When we went to remove the hinges, I was embarrassed to discover that they are spot-welded to the metal under the package tray. Had I just looked at my other GTV, I could have avoided a trip. In retrospect, I'm glad I didn't as we spent the next hour talking about his collection, his experiences keeping pre-war MGs racing, Goodwood, and Alfas. I was disappointed to learn that the 6C had been recently sold to a man from Germany, where it will likely stay for some years.

Although I left empty handed again, I did walk away with a head full of great stories and another confirmed source for parts. If you ever have the chance to visit, I highly recommend it.



A Bristol is flanked by Henry Wessells' 1900 CSS and Bob Brady's Sprint at the Willowdale Steeplechase

On The Track...

Menaced by Miatas at Summit Point

Bob Brady

Spring brings flowers and warm weather, but most importantly, spring marks the beginning of the racing season. For the past few years, my spring has started with a COMSCC event at Summit Point. This year was no exception.

Earlier in the year, I was deluding myself into thinking that I might have the other GTV ready in time for the April time trials. That car remains a partially stripped shell whose only wheels are those of the dolly on which it rests. So, instead, I broke out my trusty red GTV and readied it for another season. The red car hadn't seen track time since last July when I separated the left trailing arm from the axle in turn five at Watkins Glen. While it was now all back together, it hadn't gotten much attention. I naively thought the car was pretty much ready to race when I started giving it a quick once-over. I had forgotten that one of the new tires I bought last year was destroyed in the Watkins Glen episode. I also conveniently forgot about the list I made last year of the odds and ends that needed attention. Fortunately, I started preparing car weeks in advance, so I didn't find myself doing the usual scramble the night before.

I was particularly excited this year because another local Alfisti was going to come along and do his first track event. Regrettably, he discovered some hidden structural rust that the DPO had disguised and wisely decided to skip the event. Although disappointed I was going alone, I was still excited to get away for a couple of days and get back into the swing of things. I was also looking forward to finally shaving off a few seconds from my lap times, something I didn't accomplish last year when I was plagued with mechanical problems the entire event.

I forgot to mention the other thing that spring brings, rain. Although the ride down didn't get very wet, I awoke several times during the night to the sound of a downpour hitting the roof of the Suburban. While I'd hoped the next day would be clear, I had no such luck.

While it's no fun to stand around in the paddock in the rain, driving in the rain is a great way to hone your car control skills. You can push your car to the limits of adhesion at much lower speeds. So, when you do get a little ahead of yourself, you're generally going slow enough to avoid any bent metal. Theoretically, that is true, so long as you stay on the track. Once you hit the wet grass, all bets are off. Unfortunately, there were more than a few who found this out the hard way.

Normally, COMSCC events are remarkably incident-free. Perhaps it was because it was the first event of the year. Maybe it was driver inexperience. Regardless, I can't recall attending an event in recent history with so much carnage. By the time the third session on the first day was over, there was an M3, a Miata, a Mustang and a Subaru STI all in need of some body work. Even I found myself "in a spin with both feet in" on a number of occasions that morning. Fortunately, my little red Alfa managed to keep its tires on the tarmac.

By the time the final sessions of the day came around, the sun was shining and the track was drying. Speaking with an acquaintance who drives a lovely TR4, we joked about how the sun and partially dry track would be a recipe for over-zealous driving. "I guess we'll find out who has self-control" we joked before donning our helmets.

While I'd like to say I kept my emotions in check, the drying track and nine-months away from the action contributed to me driving a little too hot. As I rounded turn nine, typically a no-brainer turn, I found my rear bumper leading the way. Once again, the brake and clutch went to the floor as I rode out the spin. I could see Mr. TR4 laughing as he drove around me. Self-control, indeed.

A few laps later and the event was done for the day. We gave our cars one last check, showered, and headed off to the traditional dinner at Avanti, in Charlestown. The dining room was abuzz with stories from that eventful day. Rumor had it that the next day would be clear. So, deciding I could use some rest, I headed back to the Chevy Suburban Motel and dreamt of dry pavement and clean driving lines.

The next morning was wonderful; cool and more importantly, dry. By then, I had swapped out the new, full-tread Khumos for the nearly bald experienced ones in anticipation of some hot laps.

The first session of the day was still a little uncomfortable. Driving in the rain hones the skills of driving at the ragged edge, but it does not help with practicing the racing line. I still found myself off-line in many places resulting in disappointing lap times. More frustrating, however, were the Miatas.

Miatas make wonderful track cars. They are light, nimble and remarkably adjustable. Also, since they have their own spec-series, parts to make them go faster abound. Over the years, I've found my GTV to be a good match to them. This year, however, they seem to have gotten faster, while I haven't. It wasn't a power problem. In fact, I could pull away from them all in the straight. No, they were making up in the turns. After dicing with them the previous day and the first session, it became clear that I was being out-braked. (Con't on Next Page)



The trusty Scuderia Brady GTV cools down after a hot session

Summit Point (from Previous Page)

This really surprised me as I've always regarded braking as a strength of Alfas. Contemplating this for a few more laps, I

concluded that the main difference between my GTV and the Miatas was their ability to keep their wheels planted.

While I braked at the threshold of lock-up, turn after turn, they continued to be able to go deeper and stop more aggressively. Perhaps it's time to ditch my 20 year old SPAX shocks? It wasn't just Miatas that were passing me, though. It seemed like nearly everyone was running faster; some a little too faster.

Near the end of the first session, I exited turn two and waved an M-powered 325i past. When he turned into three, he dropped his right rear tire off the track. Tragically, it dropped into a puddle.

The water on the tire must have been just enough for him to lose grip, because the next thing I saw was him trying to correct an impending spin. As he over-corrected back and forth, I wondered why he just didn't put "both feet in" and ride out the spin in a controlled manner. Maybe he thought he could bring it back. Sadly, he met the same fate I've seen over and over again. When he corrected his spin, and finally got grip, he shot off the other side of the track, plowed into the tire wall and rolled. At that point, the red flags went up and we all pulled off the track.

Once we were waved in, we all waited pensively to see the outcome. Fortunately, the driver came out with nary a scratch. His only serious injury was a terribly bruised ego. His car, though, was not so lucky. The roof was caved in. The rear and side windows popped out, amazingly without breaking. Nearly every body panel had some damage. Oddly, his roof rack, which he used to transport his track tires, made it out without much damage. After the expected expletives, he got to work straightening out the car. He drove to the event from Vermont and was determined to drive back. After hours of persistence, and a few rolls of duct tape, he managed to get the car road-worthy. I never found out if he made it back without incident.

The rest of the day was beautiful. The track continued to dry and my lap times continued to drop. The only other casualty was the TR4. On one lap he lost all power. When he got it back to the pits we found his engine very reluctant to turn.

After lunch, the time trials went off without a hitch. The Corvettes ripped up the track. The WRXs were remarkably slow, only a couple of seconds faster than my 30 year old Alfa. The pair of Lotus Elises were obviously being driven conservatively as their lap times were well below their potential. The pesky Miatas were all over the place. Their times ranged from a blazing 1:30 to a leisurely 1:47. And how did the Alfa do? Well, let's just say that I left pretty disappointed. I suppose I could use the excuse that my hood popped during my timed laps, causing me to be black-flagged on my last lap. That said, I thought I got in some decent times. In the end, I did no better than three years ago, and was nearly three seconds off my best. In my class, you guessed it, a Miata took first. A father and son team driving a Nissan Sentra SE-R, who I used to flog regularly, took second and third.

While it's always nice to finish an event in the top three, finishing any event without breaking or bending anything is a victory, particularly when your car is thirty years old.

Carnage is Not Normal While this particular track event had a lot of casualties, I don't want to give the impression that this is normal. As I mentioned before, time trials, and in particular, COMSCC events are

typically uneventful. In the end, it's really the driver who determines how his/her car leaves the track. Those who don't respect the speed and the physics of racing are destined for body shop bills. The vast majority of participants, however, know their limits and keep their cars, and their selves in one piece.



An injured GTV-6 (broken half shaft) sits in the grass behind the pits at Summit Point. A victim of a recent track day.

In the Garage...

Braking a Giulia

Charlie Crothers

[Charlie Crothers converted his Giulia Spider from three-shoe drums in the front to discs using parts sourced from Centerline. Since doing the conversion, he has struggled with brake bias and pedal travel. Bias was fixed by installing a brake bias valve. The answer to pedal feel was to install a 3/4" bore master cylinder, as was used on the Veloces. The only hitch was that the 3/4" bore master cylinders are no longer available. But, like any intrepid Alfisti, Charlie didn't let a little thing like a NLA part stop him. Below is his solution. -ed]

Just a quick update. I did install a new 3/4" bore Wilwood master cylinder last week in the Giulia Spider. Quite a difference to the good as far as "feel" and stopping power! The pedal travels a bit closer to the floor than I'd like to see... probably due to not replacing the rear brake cylinders. Their larger volume (compared to the later front disk brake model) combined with the new smaller MC volume is the likely cause. This weekend I will try to tighten the rear drum clearance to see if this helps some. Worst case would be to buy new smaller bore rear brake cylinders. I did have to readjust the proportioning valve setting to keep from locking prematurely... but expected this. (Continued on Next Page)

Giulia MC Retrofit (con't from Previous Page)

The Wilwood MC replacement was relatively easy...but definitely not a direct drop in. I had to make a spacer out of 1/4" aluminum plate to keep things in line. The plate though also helped with matching the different mounting bolt patterns. I also had to cut down and re-tread the push rod to fit the space.

Fortunately, the Wilwood MC comes with a top mounted bleed screw / port which I was able to use as the new outlet port ...matching the original MC. The front port piping would interfere with the exhaust header so I could not use it. This made the connecting plumbing like original ... which is still pretty tight. I simply plugged the front MC port. I was able to use the original MC brake fluid reserve can with the hose connection from Wilwood. From the engine bay one can't see any modifications.

Attached are a few photos I took of the new MC and connection detail to the original floor pedal box for you reference.



Charlie Crothers' Wilwood master cylinder retrofit for his Giulia awaits installation.



A lovely Giulietta Spider, also at the Willowdale Steeplechase. Alfas dominated the cars on display there.

In the Garage...

The Right Way

Bob Brady

As you might recall from previous La Voces, I've been working on building a GTV for track use. Last year, I made a promise that if I

didn't have the body work done by the end of 2003, I'd cut up the car and throw it away. (You can probably guess what a great specimen this GTV is.) So, last November and December, I scrambled to get it welded up. I even welded up all the rivet holes the DPO left for me... hundreds of them. By the time the ball was dropping on Times Square, I convinced myself that I made the milestone. The car would survive.

Since then, this little project has been the poster child for scope creep. Every time I attack a simple task, I needlessly over-complicate it with the simple mantra: "well, since I'm going to do it, I might as well do it RIGHT." The phrase is noble, but its result is insidious. To give you an example of just how insidious it is, read on about my forays into paint preparation.

My garage is not heated. Sure, I've got the bizzillion-BTU propane heater, but since the ceiling is un-insulated, it's pretty worthless. Because of this, my ability to do finish body work, body filler, paint, is limited to warm months. So, when April was poking around the corner, I put myself into high gear to get the car ready for paint.

At work, I'd fantasize about what color to paint the car. I even touched up some electronic photos in different colors, hung them on the refrigerator and asked my family for votes. I did all this while the car still was in a Frankenstein-like state, with a patchwork of welded panels among brush-applied white paint. (Don't think for a moment that I put that paint on!)

As the weather warmed, I pulled the car out of the garage and began prepping the body for filler. In the old days, I wouldn't have hesitated to put it over bare metal. Since being affiliated with Italian cars, however, my standards have increased. The "right" way to do it, is to apply it over epoxy primer. The "right" way to put on the epoxy primer, is to start with etched bare metal. So, when I started preparing the car, I pulled out the dual-action (DA) sander and got to work.

Removing paint with a DA sander sounds wonderful in theory. You can imagine paint being whisked away by the abrasive powers of sand paper. You can imagine all that, but when you attack a car with more coats of paint than a battleship, you quickly realize that it's going to take *days* to strip it down. Then, you start to look at the interior, the engine bay, the trunk, and all those little nooks and crannies. Sanding the car down to bare metal starts to look like an impossible task. This realization came to me just after getting most of the paint off of the left rear fender and the rear valance, a task which took the better part of a day. "Surely there is a better way," I thought.

Sandblasting appears to be a beautiful process. You can imagine paint being whisked away by the abrasive powers of high velocity sand. I did. So, after buying a couple of hundred pounds of sand, I rolled the car out into the driveway again and broke out the sandblaster. If you've ever done sandblasting with a consumer-grade kit, you'll quickly realize what an incredibly inefficient process it is, particularly for removing paint. Not only that, but it is an awful process, involving goggles, masks, gloves, sand in your hair, clothes, ears, sand in every possible orifice the car has, sand all over the driveway, sand everywhere! At least this time, I was smart enough to do it outside. When I sandblasted my first GTV, I did it in my garage. My garage door crunched for years afterwards, thanks to the sand that married with the grease in the door rails. So, after a couple of hours of blasting the trunk, I had finished about 1/10 of the total area. "Surely there is a better way," I thought.

(Continued on Next Page)

On the track...in Italy

Harrowing Historic Racing

Bruce Fernie

[Bruce Fernie published this account of his experiences at Monza last week on the Alfa-Racing Digest. Bruce has a connection to the DVAROC through Bill Shields. Bill bought his first Giulietta race car from Bruce's father, in the 70's. In recent years, Bruce raced an

extremely potent Duetto. He has since moved to Italy and now campaigns a Ti Super. – ed.]

I returned from my maiden race event as a driver at Monza a few hours ago. I had a 5 hour tow back and it was plenty of time to 'reflect'. I wanted to pen this open letter to all the other drivers like me who love everything about the sport of historic sports car competition. I just lived my nightmare. Let me qualify that, I am typing this and I walked to the computer to do so. I drove the 5.5 hours home from Monza by myself. I am A-Ok but this 51 year-old will be stiff, bruised and very achy for a few weeks. I have been an enthusiast since my teens when I was my Dad's 'crew' as he thrashed his Alfas around in club racing in the Northeast. I moved to Italy 3 years ago and it was a dream realized to race the great tracks of Europe. Anybody that knows me knows that my cars are prepared by the best to the highest standards, My 1963 Alfa Romeo Ti Super yesterday at Monza was no exception. I was entered in the Monza 300 Km (2 days of 150 km each) Coppa Intereuropa for touring cars. Now the nightmare:

Qualifying started during a total downpour; it didn't appear like it was going to let up so out I went, let's get it done. I like the wet and being sideways having learnt to drive in the hills of Vermont. The car was behaving well considering the weather. The rain had stopped and the track was still wet but the line was getting better, time for a hot lap. Down the front straight 5th 7500 rpm everything ok, into the chicane out in second and up 3rd, 4th to 5th again through the flat out slight right hand straight again flat out 7500-8000 rpm as fast as she will go. Down the slight grade 200 meter mark touch the brakes down into 4th, severe vibration from rear, car pulls hard left, both feet in, brake pedal goes to the floor, left rear wheel stops then brakes loose then stops, brake pedal on the floor, car will not respond or steer, heads for the Armco on left, rear wheel breaks loose, car steers hard right then the wheel locks again and I'm in for the ride through the chicane, miss a GTA, miss another GTA (my car seems to be accelerating as I pass the cars that are braking) it catches it's left front, spins and hits the wall solid right side, goes way up, the glass pops and comes down. Full stop, all quite.

The rescue crew was incredible, they checked me first, I was OK, tractor dragged the car behind the Armco, the medics gave me field tests, allowed me to stand and walk, it was over. This was the hardest hit I have ever had in a car or motorcycle and I consider myself very, very lucky.

The reason for this long winded note to my fellow historic racers. My car is 41 years old. It is prepared to period schedule K, series F (pre-1965) standards; I run Dunlop 500L period tires on 5.5 inch campys. The car was designed for this level of stress BUT the metal is 41 years old. We check, double check and replace everything, safety first etc. The culprit was the left rear brake caliper mount. It fractured the caliper lodged between the wheel and the axel housing and the piston and all brake system pressure blew out instantly. We were under the car doing the check, inspect and nut and bolt just 40 minutes earlier. I will rebuild the car, luckily I will heal. I will never look at 41 year old metal the same again. I am not sure what the answer is except when in doubt replace with new and crack check, crack check, crack check. Go fast, crack check, have fun and be safe. If anyone has any other suggestions I am all ears.

Thanks for listening, Bruce Fernie, Umbria, Italy



Bruce's Ti Super before the incident

In the Garage (con't from Previous Page)

Using paint stripper to remove paint sounds like a beautiful process. You can imagine paint bubbling up and falling away thanks to the chemical action of the stripper. Sure, it's yucky, dangerous, and will strip away any body work, but you can't knock "better living through chemistry." So, I bought a couple of gallons of the nastiest stripper I could find. Having worked with this stuff before, I knew how corrosive it could be to your skin. I also knew typical latex gloves were no match for it. This time, I had the right protective equipment. So, armed with a cup of stripper, dressed in my butyl gloves and safety glasses, I was about to go to work. But, then I had a thought. I looked at the inside of the fender wells. The previous owner had brush painted those gray as well. "You know, the RIGHT way to do this is to pull off all the suspension and strip the body bare," I mumbled to myself. Of course, no suspension means no wheels. To do this the "right" way I'd have to make a dolly to place the bare body on. Rationalizing further, I figured that would also be the "right" way to paint the car, as I could do the underside, as well.

So.... I went out and purchased some 4x4s and some 500lb rated casters. Another weekend went by as I made the dolly, removed the suspension bits and hoisted the car onto it. Truthfully, it really does make the job much easier. I have great access to the underside of the car. It even makes it much easier to move around in the garage. But, a month of weekends had gone by and my car still wasn't stripped. By this point, it was a certainty that this car would not be making it to the May time trials.

Now that the car was properly ready for stripping, I broke out the chemicals and went to work. Once again, what appears so easy in your imagination is not so easy in practice. Yes, the stripper does do a good job of lifting the paint. But, with three or more layers of paint to remove, it takes many applications. To make matters worse, all those nooks and crannies continue to be difficult to strip. Yes, I used the present-tense in that last sentence. As you probably guessed by now, the GTV sits on its dolly, in my garage, with an alligator-skin like finish on it, awaiting further applications of stripper. Yes, I am aware it is now June. At least I can take comfort in the fact that I'm attacking this car the "right" way.

Mark Your Calendars! (bold = DVAROC Event)

<p style="text-align: center;">June</p> <p>6 – Alfa Romeo Swap Meet – Autocraft – York, PA (717-741-0460)</p> <p>13 – New Garden Air and Car Show – New Garden, PA</p> <p>19 – Concours of Eastern US and Tour – Bethlehem, PA</p> <p>25-28 – Le Belle Macchine d’Italia – Pocono</p> <p>30-1 – COMSCC Time Trials – Watkins Glen, NY</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">July</p> <p>10-12 – Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix – Pittsburgh, PA</p> <p>11 – Italian Car Festival, Canton, OH Contact: Lee Contie (330)471-9980</p> <p>10 – DVAROC Tech Session – Restorations – Ragtops and Roadsters – Perkasio</p> <p>27-1 – AROC National Convention - Manchester, NH</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">August</p> <p>**– New Hope Auto Show – New Hope, PA (Cancelled again this year)</p> <p>8 – DVAROC Summer Picnic and Rally – Ridley Creek State Park, PA</p> <p>28 – CTAROC Driver School/Time Trials – Lime Rock Park, CT</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">September</p> <p>3-6 – Vintage Racing Festival – Lime Rock</p> <p>9-12 – SVRA Vintage Grand Prix – Watkins Glen, NY</p> <p>10-12 – 100 Cars of Radnor – Radnor, PA</p> <p>12 – Buckingham Concours – Holicong, PA</p> <p>19 – Hagley Museum Car Show – Wilmington</p> <p>23-26 – SVRA Vintage Racing – Summit Point, WVA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">October</p> <p>TBD – DVAROC Fall Picnic</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">November</p> <p>TBD – DVAROC Fall Tour</p>



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