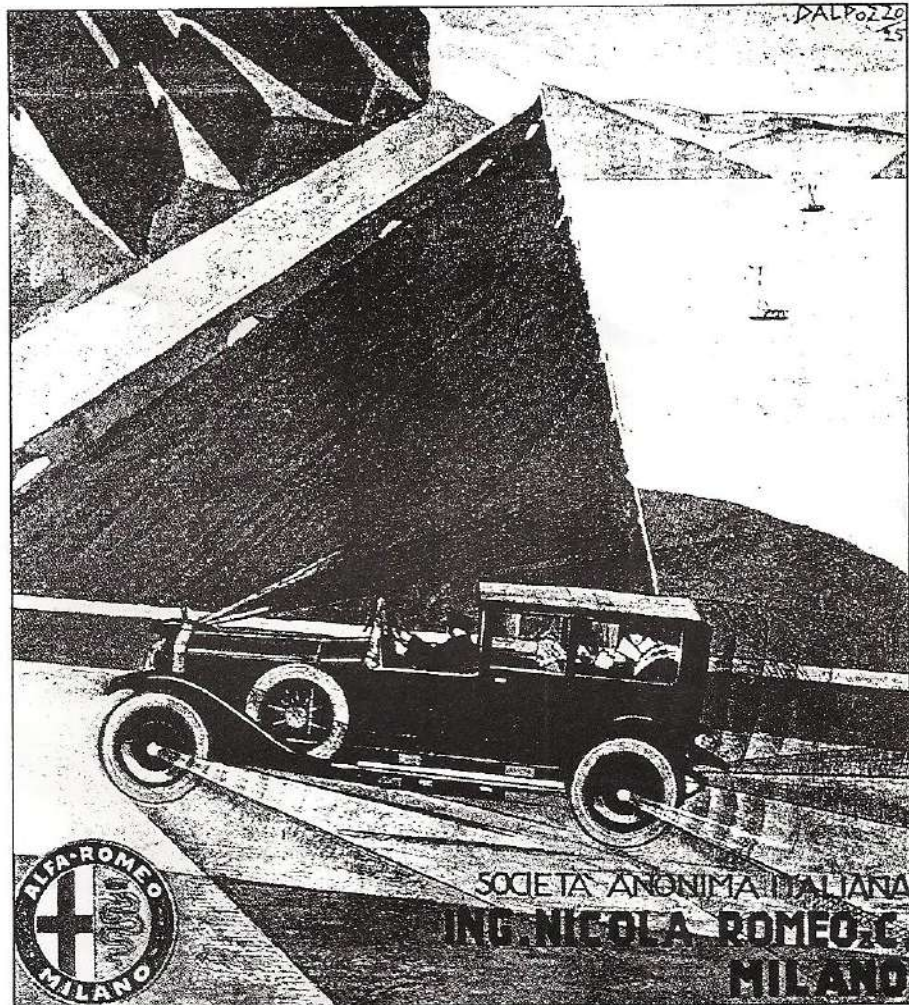


MAY, VOL. XXXI, ISSUE IX  
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# THE ALFACIONADA

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALFA ROMEO OWNERS CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



FEATURING THE COLUMNS "TO BE ANNOUNCED" BY JAY NEGRIN, "PASSING THOUGHTS" BY PAT BRADEN, LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION NEWS BY STU SCHALLER, ALFOONERY, TECHNICAL, THE CLASSIFIEDS, AND MUCH, MUCH MORE....

the inside cover

**general information**

The **ALFACIONADA** is the monthly publication of the Alfa Romeo Owners Club of Southern California, a regional chapter of the Alfa Romeo Owners Club, Inc., a non-profit organization of Alfa Romeo enthusiasts. Publication is monthly and included as part of the membership fee paid to AROSC, Inc. General meetings are held on the last Friday of every month at 7:30 PM, in the Los Angeles area. General inquiries should be sent to AROSC, P. O. Box 3621, Granada Hills, CA 91394. Membership information can be found on page 10.

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**general meeting location**

The May meeting will be held at the Glendale Federal Savings building, in Glendale. The address is 401 N. Brand Blvd, about 1/2 mile south of the 134 Freeway. We will start at 7:30, finish at 10:00, then for those so inclined adjourn to an Italian restaurant. The restaurant is one block north, on Brand Blvd.

For additional information, call Jay Negrin at 818-894-3549.

**newsletter information**

Correspondence regarding the **ALFACIONADA** should be sent to AROSC, P. O. Box 3621, Granada Hills, CA 91394.

Articles, photos, events, and classifieds submissions must be received by the end of the month prior to publication. Please include a SASE for the return of any submitted material.

Classified advertisements are free to members and \$10 for non-members. Commercial advertising rates are as follows:

Size	Half Year	Full Year
1/8 page	\$ 60	\$100
1/4 page	\$120	\$200
1/2 page	\$240	\$400
Full page	\$480	\$800

**the disclaimer**

AROSC is not responsible for the safety or practicality of modifications performed by individual members and described in these pages. We suggest you consult a knowledgeable mechanic before modifying your automobile.

## to be announced

Jay Negrin

Is it that time of the month already? Well, time to brush the dust off the old typewriter again, and send you greetings from this noble office. Let me apologize now for the loss of the meeting place in La Crescenta. We thought we had a lock on that locale until we could decide on a better location. We were pre-empted at the Clark Center by a square dance group that has been meeting there for the last 20 years or so. Squatters rights, or some such, that one set of schedulers didn't take into account when we asked for the last Friday of each month. The GlenFed locale is a stopgap only, as we continue to look for a new monthly meeting location. We continue to solicit possibilities from any of our members.

Did anyone get upset at some of the bogus articles in the APRIL FOOL'S issue of Alfacionada? I'd like to say, "Serves you right", but that is a bit harsh. Let's just say, "Gotcha!" That newsletter issue, which is becoming an institution, is put together strictly for fun and amusement. If you can think up any articles, want ads or advertisements for next year, we will probably publish it/them. We could embarrass you further if we use your own by-line.

I'd like to take some time to hawk the up coming swap meet. It will be on the last Sunday of the May, the 26th, as promised. The location has been locked in, finally. We will hold it at AR Ricambi, in conjunction with their own spring cleaning garage sale. Yes, I know that it is Memorial Day weekend, but think of the holiday Monday after as the perfect time to install those new parts, or to stash those parts that you will be installing at some future date. The invitation is still heartily extended to all members of ANY and ALL of the local chapter members, as well as all Alfisti in general. If you non-members choose to attend, be prepared to get beset with offers of membership that you shouldn't refuse.

From the "never a dull moment" section of Alfa politics. There is a tempest brewing as we speak. There is some dissension at high levels regarding articles and letters to the editor which have shown up in print in this newsletter. Until this point, there has been a fairly open editorial policy, locally. The intent is to foster an open environment for you, the members and others who read the newsletter, to express your views regarding what goes on in the club. It is, after all, your club. Without you, the

membership, there would be no club. That may be stating the obvious, but there are some who would have us believe that a newsletter has to be sanitized, perhaps to protect the readership from any "negative vibes". With a more restrictive policy, watching out for negative articles, or those submitted by non-members "out of favor" with a certain faction, we run the risk of acting as police, watching out for that which may offend some of you who read Alfacionada. I have more faith in our readership and membership than that. If anyone has purchased an Alfa Romeo, much less joined the club, that indicates a certain level of education and commitment that goes well beyond the point where you have to be treated like children. You should all be treated as adults, given as much information as you can tolerate, then make decisions based on that. Of course, the assumption here is that all of the information is correct and factual.

It would be nice to put on rose-colored glasses and make Pollyanna noises about how great things are. In a few words, "They Ain't!" If you haven't noticed, Alfa/Fiat have left North America. Getting parts may be a little harder than normal, and in some cases more prayer may be needed when placing orders. Rather than cooperating, and making things better for all members, there is bickering going on at various levels between some chapters, as well as on a national vs. chapter level also. This has to cease if we are to continue to exist, especially as a national organization supporting the marque. There are people who want to help, but are getting frozen out by some of the inter-chapter squabbles.

That is some of the not-so-good news going on. On the positive side, let me repeat for those who haven't heard, I accepted the responsibility of the presidency of this chapter to help in the healing and recovery process. I have mentioned before, that this cannot be a one man show. Even the board of directors acting for "the good of the club" cannot carry the whole club. We need more input from our chapter members to help put on events that we all can participate in and enjoy. I also extend a hand to those members of other chapters in the vicinity, and you know who you are, to participate in our activities, and ask us to participate in yours. Only "you", out there know what "you" want. "We" have to find out what those wants and desires are, so they can be acted on. So get off your feather dusters (you always wondered what it was that felt so funny that you were sitting on) and -

**GET INVOLVED IN YOUR CLUB**

## passing thoughts

Pat Braden

### POWER TO THE PEOPLE

About a year ago, I could no longer restrain my curiosity about how the AROC really works. This curiosity, coupled with a conviction that the club was faced with an unique challenge with the departure of ARDONA, prompted me to run for the BOD. The same conviction also started the "Passing Thoughts" column, originally intended simply to help our capable editor fill pages in the local newsletter.

Passing Thoughts has become much more for me, for it has allowed me a freedom to say things which can not be published in the Owner. This column is a very good example of that freedom, for which I am forever grateful to the continuing support of Gary and the SoCal BOD.

When I was elected to the national board, another member of the group confided to me that everyone runs on an activist platform, but after they're elected, they don't do anything. The situation became, in my estimation, critical just before the end of 1995 when I realized there were no plans for the AROC to respond to the distributorship's departure. That made me decide to become an "activist."

I was very pleased, at the board's annual meeting in Atlanta, to join Jim Hayes and Mike Hemsley on a "marketing committee" responsible for formulating plans to help the club grow, and respond to the absence of official marque representation in the US. The three of us worked fairly diligently and presented a plan to the president two months after the group's creation. That was a month ahead of schedule and a reflection of the urgency we attached to our mission. The plan touched on many areas, including the club's presence on the internet, ways of recruiting additional members, advertising the club, and stocking an enlarged club boutique.

We were dumfounded when we were thanked for our contribution and told that the matter would be taken up at the next board of director's meeting in Phoenix, virtually 10 months away. It was only after we vehemently objected that that our president agreed to submit the marketing plan to the other members of the board before the next annual meeting. We received a minimal and decidedly lukewarm response. Meanwhile, our president decided that the matter should also be submitted to the chapters for review. This time, however, our work was not considered a "plan" but rather "some thoughts" because we had not costed out our proposal. It became very clear that our work was destined to be deferred to a discussion in Phoenix and that our sense of urgency was not shared by the rest of the board members.

All three members of the marketing committee have resigned in protest to the obstruction of the committee's work.

My resignation letter was brief, and stated: "The terseness of this letter reflects my conviction that the people most responsible for my action will neither understand nor concern themselves with the reasons for my decision." When our president called me about the letter, his first comment was: "I don't understand why you're resigning." "That's exactly what the letter said," I replied.

The most acrimony has been raised over the proposed internet site for the club. Although there was supposed to be an internet committee, the president's actions soon after the board meeting quickly rendered any further discussion meaningless. Our president warned that there was a lot of "misleading bullshit" about Alfa on the internet, an accusation he has never chosen to defend.

The defeat of the internet proposal illustrates the kinds of frustrations the marketing committee experienced. A year ago, when I urged the board to approve an AROC site, the Alfa page in Australia was virtually the only Alfa site on the World Wide Web. There was also the Italian Car Digest, a discussion group about Alfa Romeo, mostly. I argued in Atlanta that an AROC web site would be preemptive, and establish our presence in an arena which was surely to grow rapidly. A number of us joined to presented a proposal from the moderator of the Italian Car Digest to establish an AROC internet web page. That suggestion was greeted with disdain, and quite a bit of concern that it would cost money. One of those who did not share that disdain was the publisher, who unilaterally established an AROC page soon after the board meeting. For this, he received a strong official reprimand, and was directed to severely restrict the information the site would carry. As a result, the "official AROC web page" is little more than an application blank.

As I write this, I'm looking at a printout from <http://metz.une.edu.au/~pszacsva/alfapage/> which lists 30 Alfa-oriented pages, only two of which existed a year ago. Cumulatively, these sites offer a vast fund of information and virtually instantaneous response to technical questions. Further, taken together, they form a world-wide community which is much more vital and engaging than our own AROC. One of the sites not yet listed on the

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Alfapage is Alfa Romeo's own home page (<http://www.alfaromeo.com>), newly established and running the very latest Java-enhanced software. There's a SPICA specialist ([andypet@magi.com](mailto:andypet@magi.com)) available by e-mail and you can even order Alfa parts directly from Bormioli, an Alfa dealer in Padua (<http://intercity.shiny.it/i3/bormioli/>).

Peer groups have not been so slow to grasp the potential of the web. The British AROC established its Web site several months ago, joining Alfa clubs from Sweden and Germany. Our own Oregon chapter has a remarkably comprehensive site. Even Jim Hayes (leader of the marketing committee) has an Alfa site. There are sites dedicated to the Duetto, GTA, GTV-6 and Alfa spiders in general, and Paul Negyesi's site (<http://www.team.net/www/ktud>) has just received my manuscript for the most comprehensive history of Alfa on the 'net. It will be illustrated with photos from America and Europe, including some from my private collection. As an author, I've chosen to be an early contributor to this major new medium.

Some of the members of the AROC BOD are oblivious to all of this because they are not computer literate. Some Luddites lurk, no doubt, but their objection to an active AROC presence on the internet is an exact parallel to being opposed to printing because you cannot read, then damning it as a passing fad.

Compared to our Owner, the internet contains a larger volume of superior information, with the added virtues of immediacy and interactivity. And, if you want to build a library of Alfa pictures, the net's the place to do it. Put in its most elemental form: if the Owner is your major AROC benefit (as it is to most members), then your \$45 is much better spent buying time to surf the web. Sorry, but it's true. This is an opportunity whose time has passed, unless an active AROC site, filled with technical information, feature articles, photos and want ads can be commissioned. That is a very unlikely scenario, given the present membership of our board.

I've belabored this issue simply because it so clearly illustrates the obstructions the marketing committee has encountered. Similar difficulties have beset our plans for stocking our boutique and finding ways of soliciting new members. In the case of the boutique, the marketing committee suggested a number of attractive items (from T-shirts to artwork) which could be stocked immediately and offered to club members. The idea was quickly characterized as uneconomic and unworkable. A final effort (sample T-shirts, sent gratis to the Board members) by Jim Hayes to demonstrate how easily the boutique could be enhanced was quashed by our president as a marketing ploy devised solely for Jim's own profit.

The committee's recruiting recommendations were similarly frustrated. After I had pressed for permission to have Ricambi stuff Alfa recruiting brochures in its outgoing packages, I was told that the club would be conducting a "direct mail" experiment on its own, thank you, and that it

would not grant permission for Ricambi to stuff AROC recruiting flyers in its packages. The direct mail experiment which blocked my effort was a project on which the board has never voted, and its results have yet to be announced. Nonetheless, some six months later, Fred di Matteo finally obtained permission for me to re-approach Ricambi to stuff recruiting materials. I'm too embarrassed to re-negotiate the arrangement with an organization that was snubbed by the club less than a year ago.

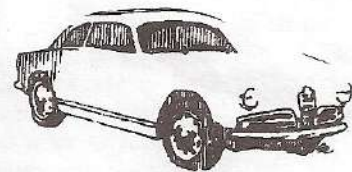
I supported our president's election because he had told me that he had a very active agenda for the club. So far, that agenda has amounted to a slogan, "power to the chapters" and three letters to the chapter presidents. I must not minimize nor trivialize the amount of effort our president has spent running the club: it is unarguably considerable. I only want to suggest that the net result of all his efforts has probably minimal impact on the general membership, and some part of that effort has been directed to delaying the work of the marketing committee. The perception that the AROC moves very slowly is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Given the small number of people actually making executive decisions in the club, we should be able to turn on the proverbial dime.

I have wondered why the club moves with such lethargy, and why the bulk of AROC members are so mute. My experience on the BOD has suggested to me that our club is structured to encourage membership apathy. In this one respect, the Board leads with great authority.

The root of the problem is that the most important club

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**Maurice Starrantino - Owner**

business is conducted in annual spurts, at the Board of Director's meeting. This meeting is held on a weekday, just before the annual convention and is typically poorly attended because of time and distance concerns for most members. Not exactly your smoke-filled room, but workably close. At all other times, the membership, and, indeed, the bulk of the Board, is cut off from the day-to-day operation of the AROC.

The lack of involvement is the source of the apathy. I think our president has correctly identified the problem, but not solved it. Characteristically, he sees the correction taking several years to accomplish. I fear there may not be a recognizable AROC in the time frame he posits.

Quarterly communications to the club presidents aren't nearly so immediate as addressing the membership directly through monthly columns in the Owner. We need a frank, open discussion of the problems facing the AROC, most critically how best to grow the club in the absence of a distributorship. The board needs a sense of consensus and a clear understanding of the memberships' desires. It does not now have that sense, and may not even want it. The membership clearly does not know how to communicate it, or perhaps even know that opinions are solicited. Most of what you read in the Owner from the board is embarrassingly self-serving, and in some instances, lies. For example, the membership was told in last June's Owner that the board would be setting aside its regular agenda in Atlanta to discuss the future direction of the club. Nothing of the sort happened.

This does not mean that the membership is prohibited from raising issues. By and large, it simply doesn't know how, and given the general lack of information about the club, neither does it know what issues need raising. The fault goes deep: one chapter president, who had failed to respond to the marketing report, was pressed about the committee recommendations. He responded that he thought the club was doing all those things already. The absence of meaningful discussion in a Letters to the Editor column is symptomatic of the efficiency with which our organization has stifled member participation.

Those few who do raise issues, are subtly but effectively quashed. Stu Schaller enjoys being a gadfly, a role often taken in the past by Fred di Matteo. Both have been effectively denied a voice to the general membership. I've received pressure to silence Stu from writing in our newsletter, (usually phrased as "I'm disappointed that someone..."). I will not censor anyone, being a devout practicing journalist. That is not a two-way arrangement in the AROC: this very column, were it printed in the Owner, would get the publisher fired. This was explained to me discretely very early in my tenure as a BOD member: "we don't wash our dirty linen in public." What I have said so far in this column is linen which very much needs washing in public.

Mute but wise is one thing. I have another fear about the Board. Very few on the board, it seems, have a vision of

what the club could be. One of the most infuriating retorts I've received from Board members is "No one complains to me so they must like what's going on." Apparently, our candidates put forth the effort to run for our Board without an agenda or a set of convictions to support it. Ask your Board member what proposals he has made to improve the club. Leadership should have vision: failing that is a dereliction of duty.

The facts are that we are a very wealthy club, with a very small membership. We should be able to do wonderful things. I am fearful that none of our leadership has any idea what those things might be.

So here we are, a club which will receive no new members from the sale of new Alfa Romeos, yet seems to lack the resolve to recruit new members actively. We have a largely mute membership which hasn't a clue as to what's going on in the club, what the important issues are or even how to get involved in the discussion. Money is no object: we have a very large cash reserve, adequate to fund every recommendation from the marketing committee and then some.

In spite of this condition, many members of our Board express satisfaction with the status quo. It is not at all clear that theirs is a majority opinion, nor one which will allow the AROC to survive as a viable focus of Alfa enthusiasm.

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## from the editor

G. Patitz

### MUCH ADO ABOUT SOMETHING

I have always thought it a bit ironic that there are people who have a sufficient interest in the marque to pay some \$45 plus for a membership and then proceed to act in a manner unrelated to the purpose of the club (i.e. technical, social, competition, etc.). I specifically refer to those individuals at both the local and national levels who volunteer to participate as club officers and volunteers and then either 1) do little or nothing, or 2) become a detriment. There are a variety of reasons for this, most beyond the scope of the newsletter....

Suffice it to say, there are reasons why the pages of this newsletter have taken a political slant as of late. Most notably they concern the role the national board plays in the future of this organization. *There are reasons why the national marketing committee resigned in total*, plans to utilize the Internet to disseminate information have been terminated, the content and appearance of the Alfa Owner heavily restrained and so on. All this is occurring at a time when the AROC is at its most vulnerable with the departure of Alfa Romeo from our market. The club has, like so many other car clubs, suffered a shrinking membership base the last few years. The loss and membership can be traced to economics as was Alfa's departure, but the reaction by the national organization has been somewhat less than underwhelming. The underlying reason is simple - it has to do with a board, and most notably a president, who have taken a reactive (several people I know would argue a negative...) posture versus a proactive one.

Do not get me wrong. I have, like most of you, better things to do than waste my time dealing with the Luddites of the world. On the other hand, like a lot of you, have a sincere interest in the marque and the club to want it survive, and even thrive. On the other hand, I am finding it increasing hard to justify giving the national organization \$45 a year in membership fees for a magazine subscription and a series of diminishing benefits (remember the membership directory - it use to be free...). Perhaps it would make more sense to write a check to the local chapter for the same amount where I see some tangible benefit....

## letters to the editor

Letters to the ALFACIONADA are encouraged. Send correspondence to: Editor, AROSC, P. O. P. O. Box 3621, Granada Hills, CA. Discourse is good.

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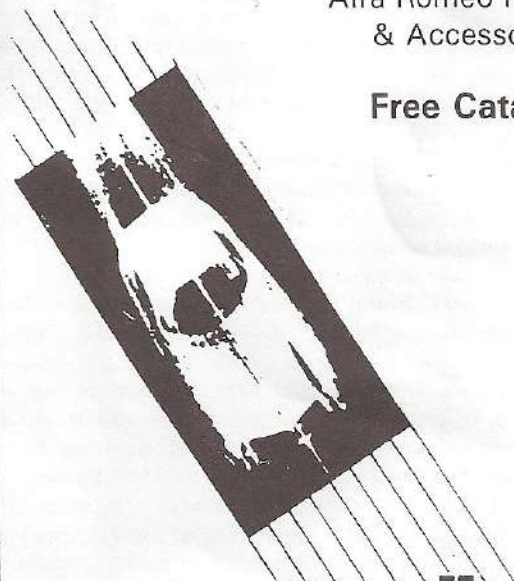
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## the history of the marque Stu Schaller

This month, we have the first in a series of articles by Stu Schaller, covering Alfa's history, from the beginning up through the period just before World War Two...

### PART ONE

In autumn of 1909, Cav. Stella, the managing director of Societa Italiana Automobili Darracq, gave the job of creating a new car, suitable for both touring and racing, to Merosi, his head engineer. The car was to be made entirely in Italy, unlike the previous models, which were for all intents and purposes, nothing more than French Darracq's, assembled in Italy.

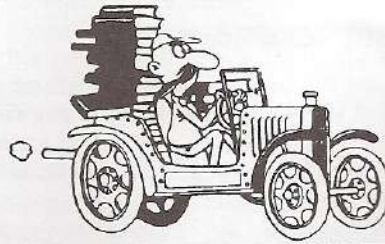
On January 1st, 1910 the management of the company radically changed. An all Italian staff was formed to initiate production of the new Merosi design, a 24 H.P. model. In June of 1911, it was decided to change the name of the company to Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili, or A.L.F.A. A badge, using the cross, the symbol of the city of Milan, and a snake, the symbol of the Visconti family, was selected to identify the companies products, and differentiate them from what had been constructed previously.

Merosi's design showed features virtually unheard of at that time, the most important of which were a single-block motor, and a driveshaft, rather than having chain drive. The prototype was ready in the fall of 1910, and had its racing debut in the 6th Targa Florio in 1911, where the car retired after leading the race for two of the three laps of the Madonie Circuit. The car remained unchanged until 1913, when the valve timing system, which was driven by gears, was replaced with silent chains. The car would now be called the Tipo 20/30. A larger model, the 40/60 and a smaller model, the 15/20 were also built in very small quantities. When the First World War began in 1915, a large cache of parts was stored away, to be assembled at a later date.

Early in World War I, the astute Neapolitan, Niccolo Romeo had obtained the Italian franchise for American Ingersol, a company that produced earth working equipment, compressors and pneumatic drills; the type of machinery needed to conduct war, which was still an earth bound affair. Shipments from America were being sunk by German submarines (it must be remembered in WWI, Italy was on the side of the allies), and it was decided to produce the equipment in Italy, under license. For a factory Romeo bought the A.L.F.A. plant in Milan, which had been sitting dormant. For a number of years the Portello works functioned as a production facility for machinery needed to conduct a war, rather than as an automotive establishment.

After the war, there was no longer much need for the type of equipment that was being produced. As there were parts sitting in storage, and a staff of skilled workers, Romeo decided to go back to producing automobiles. It was at that

moment that Alfa-Romeo was really born; and that is how the "new" cars would be badged.



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## international competition

### Stu Schaller

In 1993, Larini won the FIA Group One Touring Car championship (then known as the DTM, as all the races were still being held in Germany) for Alfa, but for the last two years, Mercedes has dominated the series. In addition to the 4 factory Alfas and the 4 car semi-factory team run by JAS, there will be a privateer car run by Giuduci. Alfa's chances look good for 1996, as they had the fastest three times in testing, on March 7th. By the time you read this, the first round of the championship will have been run, and we will know how competitive Alfa really is this year.

In FIA Group Two, Alfa has left the British series, and last year's leading teams, Volvo and Renault, along with Audi, a newcomer to this series, have lead the way in practice. I haven't seen any practice results in regard to the Italian, Spanish or German series as yet, so I can't say how competitive Alfa will be in Group Two. As all the Group Two Alfas are year old (or older) cars, I would expect other teams to win most of the races. Again, by the time you read this, there will have been races held in all three series in which Alfa competes, so we will have a better idea how competitive they will be.

## local competition news

### Randall Higa

The Button Willow Time Trials held the weekend of March 30 and 31 will be reviewed and results posted in the next issue.

## arosc galleria

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news & views  
Stu Schaller

For a very long time I've been trying to get people involved in the club, as have others. I've also written much on what I think is wrong with the club, both on the national and local levels, and how I think things can be improved. Over the years only a handful of people have even bothered to write a letter to the editor. Even fewer have stepped forward to help. The truth is, almost no one cares. As such, I've decided to no longer to include "politics" in this column; I will use this space to try and make you aware of new Alfa books, miniatures, magazine articles and services.

The April issue of the English magazine *Classic and Sportscar* has an article on the 100 best cars ever. The only Alfa in the top 10 was the 8c2300, but the Alfasud made a surprising 37th, the Giulietta/Giulias were 33rd, the 105 series GTVs were 19th, and the 8c2900s were 14th. Being English, the magazine selected 3 Jaguars in the top 10; the E-types 6th, XK120s 9th, and the D-type 10th. Their best car ever? The Mini-Cooper!

I've just received samples of some of the upholstery and carpet materials that are being imported by Matt Jones of Re-Originals. (phone 713-807-1945, fax 713-807-1946) These are exact copies of the original stuff, produced by the original

makers. In my opinion the stuff is all excellent, but a bit pricey. Matt is still importing the rubber pieces for Alfas and other Italian cars too.

For those of you looking for brake parts, and are not able to find them here, I highly recommend Alfa Stop, Box 50, Belper, Derbyshire, England DE56 1AS (phone 0177-382-2000, fax 0177 382-1900). They have things like reproduction wheel cylinders for 1900s, in cast iron (as were the originals), at around \$125 each, and reproduction 105 series rear calipers for cars with Dunlop brakes, at around \$125 each, with repair kits for two cylinders at around \$40.

Campagnolo is also reproducing some of the old wheels. 6 x 13 GTA wheels and 10 x 13 GTAM wheels now are being made, and these should be available through Alfa Ricambi.

For some reason, the new owner of the 8c2900 Viotti coupe sold recently at auction has decided to discard the body (arghh!), put on the car in 1936. The chassis will be rebodied as originally produced; the long chassis open tourer which took 3rd overall at Le Mans in 1933.

For those of you interested in Italian cars in general, there is a club in England that you should join. Dues are 15 pounds (about \$23) per year. Contact John Stafford, The Brackens, Vicarage Court, Kinver, West Midlands, England DY7 6HJ for more information.

Till Next Month,  
Stu

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# calendar

May ?	California Mille, call 415-357-1900
May 3	Santa Monica Sports Car Club Rally call 818-894-3549
May 5	FIAT/ABARTH Swap Meet, Reseda
<b>May 7</b>	<b>AROSC Board Meeting</b>
May 9-12	Mille Miglia Retro, Italy, call 415-357-1900
May 12	Group 1 German Touring Car race, Nurburgring
<b>May 19</b>	<b>AROSC Concours (Location TBD)</b>
<b>May 26</b>	<b>AROSC Swap Meet @ Alfa Ricambi.</b>
May 26	Group 1 International Touring Car race, Mugello, Italy
<b>May 31</b>	<b>AROSC General Meeting</b>
<b>June ?</b>	<b>AROSC Time Trails</b>
June 3	Santa Monica Sports Car Club Rally call 818-894-3549
June 9	Group 1 International Touring Car race, Helsinki, Finland
June 9	IMSA Sports Car Races, Watkins Glen, NY
<b>June 12-16</b>	<b>ALFA CALIENTE, the AROC National Convention, Phoenix, AZ.</b>
June 26	Group 1 German Touring Car race, Norisring
<b>June 28</b>	<b>AROSC General Meeting</b>
July 5	Santa Monica Sports Car Club Rally call 818-894-3549
July 7	Group 1 International Touring Car race, Donington, England
July 14	IMSA Sports Car Races, Sears Point, CA
July 21	Group 1 International Touring Car race, Spa, Belgium
<b>July 26</b>	<b>AROSC General Meeting</b>
Aug 2	Santa Monica Sports Car Club Rally call 818-894-3549
Aug 8	Group 1 German Touring Car race, Diepholtz
Aug 25	IMSA Sports Car Races, Mosport, Canada
Sep 6	Santa Monica Sports Car Club Rally call 818-894-3549
Sep 9	Group 1 International Touring Car race, Rio, Brazil
Sep 15	Group 1 German Touring Car race, Nurburgring
<b>Sep 21</b>	<b>AROSC Time Trials</b>
<b>Sep 27</b>	<b>AROSC General Meeting</b>
Sep 29	Group 1 International Touring Car race, Magny-Cours, France
Oct 4	Santa Monica Sports Car Club Rally call 818-894-3549
Oct 6	Newport Beach Concourse D'Elegance
<b>Oct 12-13</b>	<b>AROSC Drivers School</b>
Oct 13	Group 1 German Touring Car race, Hockenheim
<b>Oct 25</b>	<b>AROSC General Meeting</b>
<b>Oct ?</b>	<b>AROSC Concours (Location TBD)</b>
Nov 1	Santa Monica Sports Car Club Rally call 818-894-3549
<b>Nov ?</b>	<b>AROSC Swap Meet, Location TBA</b>
<b>Nov ?</b>	<b>AROSC Wine Tour</b>
<b>Nov 9-10</b>	<b>AROSC Time Trials, Willow Springs</b>
<b>Dec ?</b>	<b>AROSC Christmas Party</b>

*Interested in the Alfa Romeo Owners of Southern California club but are not quite ready to make the plunge (and a check for \$45 plus for membership...)?*

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## technically speaking

Neil Dilsworth

It all began rather simply. I was to drive a friend, Gary Boehm, to Santa Barbara one Saturday to pick up a friend and ferry him back to San Luis Obispo. I started off on a beautiful, clear winter day for what promised to be a relaxing and enjoyable drive. The weather had been unreasonable cold, leaving a clear sky in which all details stood out sharply. I found myself moving along through light traffic enjoying being out on the road after months of putting around town. My 1971 GTV seemed to get stronger as the miles passed. I took the highway 154 turnoff and caught a beautiful view of the Channel Islands from the top of the pass. Arriving in Santa Barbara I noted that I had made the trip in 15 minutes less than ever before. This was going to be a wonderful day!

I picked up my friend and we proceeded back over the pass into the Santa Inez Valley. Passing Mattie's Tavern, I asked Gary if he was interested in a little adventure. Before he could answer, I had turned off 154 onto Foxen Canyon Road. This is a beautifully scenic two lane country road that would take us all the way back into Santa Maria. Having stretched out the car and myself on the trip south, I was looking for a very scenic and relaxing trip through the hills.

The reason for my question to Gary about adventure was I had only driven this road once before many years ago and not long after I had purchased my GTV. On that trip, I had entered a blind, left turn and discovered a very surprised doe in the middle of the road. We both did some very fast thinking about which way the other was going to go. Going to the outside of the turn would put me across a ditch and through a fence so I added a bunch of left lock, the doe jumped to the right, and we missed each other. Unfortunately, the rear end was starting to come around and I was too low in the rev range to have enough power to control it. We spun to the inside of the turn, the left front corner smacking the tall earth bank, and that spinning me about 180 degrees so the right rear also impacted. I thought about that doe a lot over the next two months while the Alfa was in the shop. Well, we were not going to do anything like that this time.

The scenery was beautiful so we motored easily along. I did recognize the corner when we passed it. Miles further on the road runs through some low hills and becomes quite tight. We came up behind a 280Z which was proceeding at a flower gazing pace - second gear in an Alfa. I waited a mile before I found a place open enough so I could easily pass. I pulled out and shot passed the Z car at full throttle pulling 7000 RPM. Gary chose this moment to remark that "when you have been passed by an Alfa doing seven grand, you know you have been passed by a sports car." My reply was "I've lost power."

When I shifted into third, the engine had gone completely flat. No bang, clatter, or mechanical thrashing; just no power.

We were coasting along in neutral and all I could get out of the motor was an erratic idle. We coasted to a spot that offered a good shoulder where I pulled off and stopped. The engine died, the Z car motored past, and it seemed very quiet in the car.

The motor would not start, so we got out and began to poke around. We had two good sets of tools (after years of Alfa ownership, Gary does not travel without tools.....), a torque wrench, one wool blanket, and a beach chair in the trunk. We set up the beach chair and broke out the tools. The blanket could be very important later as it was late afternoon, we were some 15 to 20 miles east of Santa Maria, and it was going to be in the low 30's that night. I wondered how much traffic there was on this road.

Under the hood it had to be one of two things; electrical or gas. Having two people really helped here. I cranked the motor over while Gary pulled off a spark plug wire to check for spark. He quickly let out a big yelp and announced that we had plenty of spark. I pulled the cap off of the distributor and checked for something out of place or broken. We were both doing a lot of guessing about what we were looking for. Everything looked right in the distributor, so we moved on to the fuel injection pump and related plumbing. The fuel pump itself was running and the low fuel pressure warning light was not on. I pulled the return fuel line off at the filter and Gary hit the switch. True to what I have been told about this pump's capacity, an amazing amount of fuel poured out of the line, just like a small garden hose. So the fuel pump was looking fine and gas, in large amounts, was getting to the injection pump. So, the problem was in the pump itself.

This was not the answer I was looking for. Neither Gary or myself had any experience inside the Spica fuel injection pump and this hardly seemed the ideal time to try. After some thought, Gary proposed that we pop the fuel injection pump rod off the bellcrank, then he could manipulate the pump independently of the throttle butterflies. I hopped in the car, eager to try this as opposed to tearing the pump off the car right there. I engaged the starter while Gary fiddled with the pump and butterfly settings. The engine coughed and then ran! Ran reasonably well, too! I cut the engine and got out to confer with Gary. He had been holding the fuel injection pump wide open when the motor came to life. I pulled some nylon zip ties out of my tool box (I would have used my shoe laces at this point), and lashed the fuel injection pump control rod in the full open position. We tossed all the tools in the trunk, folded the beach chair, and climbed in. The engine fired up and ran roughly, but I was able to pull away and get up through the gears. The engine would not idle but ran better the faster it was turning. It was obviously running very rich, but we were moving. We proceeded onto Santa Maria while trying to figure out what had gone wrong and why our fix was working. In Santa

Maria we stopped to try it with things hooked up normally, but no luck. With the pump once again blocked wide open, we motored the next 35 miles into San Luis Obispo to Gary's garage.

Now I prepared to tear into the pump. A trip to the \$2 car wash cleaned up the engine before I pulled the pump off. I looked back through my old Alfa Owner's for the articles Joe Bensen had written on the operation and repair of the Spica pump (they turned out to be April and May of 1978). He described a type of sudden fuel failure which sounded like my problem but didn't shed any light on why our roadside fix got us running. In any case, it was better than complete ignorance, and so fortified I proceeded to pull the pump off the inspection covers and then to separate the logic section from the pump body. When I pulled the two castings apart, I was not greeted by any broken bits or pieces rolling out onto the bench - so far so good. The next step was more lengthy. If you have never seen the inside of the Spica fuel injection pump, you have missed a mechanical wonder. What modern fuel injection systems do with microprocessors and electronic sensors, the Spica system achieves in a totally mechanical manner. Engine speed, throttle opening, engine temperature, and barometric pressure, as well as special inputs for starting and deceleration, are all input mechanically through physical attachments to the engine and then via an amazing collection of pivots, levers, springs, and plungers in the logic section of the pump. Then all this information is translated into the positioning of one horizontal rack in the pump. The pump itself is like a miniature motor, with crankshaft, four connecting rods and for pistons, one pushing fuel to each injector. The length of the connecting rods can be varied because they are in two pieces and threaded together. The rack acts to vary the length of all four rods simultaneously while they are in motion. A neat trick!

Being able to vary the length of the rods means the compression ratio of the pump is variable; at higher ratios more pressure is created over a longer period of time per piston stroke, which results in more fuel being delivered. I was impressed by how small the movements of most of the mechanics were. Very small changes in position will result in big changes in fuel mixture. Of interest, the pump itself is a Bosch design that was used in the early fuel injected Porsches and Mercedes. The logic portion is SPICA's approach to controlling the pump.

At this point I had been poking around inside the pump for a couple of evenings, learning a lot about the pump, but not finding anything wrong. No broken springs or out of place pieces were apparent. There was no rust or goop from water vapor present. I had not found anything that would account for our roadside experience. I went back through the logic section several times manually manipulating all the inputs, making things work like they would on the car, and not finding anything wrong. I did not disassemble the pump itself, but it did turn freely, and with a gasoline supply I could feel each piston come up on its compression stroke and squirt its fuel out the top.

After having satisfied myself that there was nothing broken to find, I reassembled the pump and reinstalled it in the car. I was not sure what to expect when I fired her up. The engine coughed and died the first two tries and then and then caught and ran. After listening to how things sounded I shut her down, reinstalled the aircleaner and fuel injection belt cover and went out for a test drive. The car ran as strong and as happy as ever. Later that day Gary and I talked this experience over. What had gone wrong out on Foxen Canyon Road and how my working on the pump somehow had fixed it. The car had been running quite well for over a year, needing only oil and filter changes, so the breakdown had come as a surprise. Finally a knowing smile crossed Gary's face and he answered all these questions. "There was never really anything wrong," he said, "it was just tired of being ignored and just wanted to be worked on."

## Monterey Historics XXIII & Concours Italiano

Time to mark your calendar and make reservations for a fun weekend at the MONTEREY HISTORICS XXIII and the CONCOURS ITALIANO! Friday, February 16--Concours Italiano, held at Quail Lodge, has expanded the show area to the front nine holes of the golf course. The added space will allow the main display area to include the 9th fairway, turning the display field into a giant "V" shape. All parking will be close in and within easy walking distance to the main display area.

Featured designs include Lamborghini Countach, Maserati Khamsin and Alfa Romeo Guilietta SS. Also, several Bertone prototypes never before seen in the U.S. will be shown. As was the case last year, there will be an area to show your Bertone designed car. Read the enclosed list of Alfas and if you have one on the list or know someone who does contact the Concours Italiano office at (206) 688-1903. I would do this as soon as possible, so they can coordinate.

We are very fortunate to have a new hotel this year. CARMEL MISSION INN is glad to  
(Continued on page 15)

## book review

### A Review Of The AROC "Tech Notes" on the SPICA Fuel Injection System

by Jack Hagerty, ARA

OK, let's face it. Alfa doesn't have the best documentation around for the do-it-yourselfer. Hell, even professional mechanics have a hard time finding reasonable and reliable reference manuals. Adding to the frustration is a stroll past the bookshelves at the local Grand Auto or Kragens where a veritable explosion of color announces the various Chilton (mostly domestic) and Haynes (mostly imports) manuals for any car you can mention...except Alfa. Oh sure, you'll find occasional references to them in some of the "Fix Your Foreign Car" books, but trying to find whole manuals with step-by-step procedures for your little Italian jewel is an exercise in futility.

Well, our good friends at AROC are trying to do something about that. Last year they brought out the first in a (hopefully long) series of tech publications summarizing all of the extant articles from both the "Alfa Owner" and chapter newsletters on various tech subjects with the first one being on the Spica fuel injection system. This has been a personal project for long time AROC fixture Fred DiMatteo who has assembled some impressive talent to help him with this initial offering. While Fred is listed as editor, there are no fewer than seven names (including Wes Ingram) attached to this publication.

#### LAYOUT

Let's start out by seeing how this thing is arranged. I was a bit surprised when my review copy arrived to see that it was loose sheets in a 3-ring view binder (the kind with the clear pocket on the front to insert the cover page). Binding has been called the last hurdle facing true print-on-demand home publishing, but putting your product out in a 3-ring is probably the MOST expensive way to go. Even in quantity from a big discount office supply store they are going to cost you \$1 to \$2 each compared to a few cents for a "GBC" (square hole) type plastic ring or a glue-and-tape "Perfect" binding. Then again, this makes it much more like a professional manual which are almost always a binder type and lies open obediently to any page whereas a bound book like the Haynes or Chilton DIY manuals tend to sneak closed when you're not looking. Of course, professional or not, I wouldn't have picked white as the best color for a workshop manual!

A secondary benefit of being in a binder is that you don't have to open it at all with dirty hands. While the copyright notice in the beginning prohibits copying without permission, I don't think that they would mind you taking out just the page(s) with the procedure you need to make a

working copy which will be tossed when you're done. In fact, it almost begs for this, seeing as how the pages are printed on only one side. Lots of room for notes here!

A final note on layout. This isn't some cut-and-paste job thrown together from old back issues. The entire thing has been re-typed (actually scanned and formatted) and printed in a two column format. It uses a san-serif font that, while easy to read, was really too small (about 8 point or two sizes smaller than the one Dan uses to set the text you're reading now) when you're shifting between the book and the greasy hunk on the bench. I would have rather seen them go to a 10 or even 12 point font and print on both sides of the paper.

#### CONTENT

This collection starts with an introduction by Fred DiMatteo then, as mentioned, reprints no fewer than 84 articles from the Alfa Owner and other AROC Chapter newsletters supplemented by eight Appendices! The articles are arranged roughly chronologically starting with "All 1969 Alfas For USA Have Fuel Injection System By SPICA" from the January, 1969 issue of the "Owner" running through "Testing and Fixing The Spica Fuel Cut-Off" in the May, 1993 "Velocissima." And no, there weren't any entries from the "Cams" even though we were an AROC chapter through the end of 1975.

Subjects covered run the gamut from general educational "how it works" articles through maintenance and repair and even into modifications and race prepping. Some of the articles are multi-part series which are always great to find in a single place without having to juggle a bunch of back issues at the same time. A great deal of them were written by Fred and/or Joe Benson (AROC's tech editor).

In my opinion, however, the most useful aspect of the book is the Appendices at the end. The first one, in particular, is a detailed look at the theory, operation and repair/upgrade of the pump by Wes Ingram. The next six are reprints of the official Alfa factory manuals for the Spica from 1969 to 1981. Finally, in a sort of point-counterpoint, the last Appendix is by the ARDONA national service manager commenting on some of the suggestions by owners made previously in the book. Actually, this last one was MUCH shorter than I would have thought. It looks like us humble owners and home mechanics were doing OK!

Finishing the whole thing off is a cross referenced index without which the book might turn into a frustrating page flipping exercise (Damn! I know it's in here somewhere!)

Problems? Very few. I noticed a couple of places where the pages called out in the table of contents were off by one when I actually went to look up the article. Also, there are very few illustrations, in fact almost none, in the main body, but this is more than made up for in the factory reprints at the end.

*(Ed. - Available through the Galleria section of the Alfa Owner)*

# Alfoonery



("Monterey Historics" continued)

accommodate us during our great weekend. Since many of us were not satisfied with the Days Inn in Seaside I was able to and the Carmel Mission Inn. The Days Inn would have cost us \$129.00 per room per night this year. The Carmel Mission Inn will only be \$6.00 more for \$135.00 per room per night. The Carmel Mission Inn is located just south of Carmel Valley Road on Highway 1. In addition to being close to the events the Crossroad and Barnyard shopping centers are within walking distance for you ladies who like to browse. We will be able to park all our Alfas in a special roped off area; therefore, we can have another one of our very own Concours, if you like.

The Friday night cocktail party and the Saturday night dinner will both be held at the Carmel Mission Inn. I have made the management aware of Alfa being the marque in 1998 at the Concours Italiano. Needless to say, they will take good care of us at least through 1998.

Les & Lynn Fitzsimmons  
Alfa Romeo Association

*(Ed. - We will publish the reservation form and updates as soon as we receive them)*

Remember Classifieds are free to our members. \$10 for non-members. Mail your ad to:  
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the  
back  
page

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may arosc events

**AROSC Board Meeting, Tuesday, May 7th**

When the current levels of self abuse you are suffering just isn't enough.....For more information call Jay Negrin at 818-894-3549.

**AROSC Concours, Sunday, May 19th**

The first club concours of the year will be held at the drag strip adjacent to the Pomona Fairgrounds just off the White Avenue exit from the 10 freeway. Admission is \$15 wich includes lunch and two tickets for the vintage races. For more information, call Dan Ritter at 310-374-3153.

**Swap Meet, Sunday, May 26th**

As mentioned elsewhere, the swap meet this spring will be held as AR Ricambi, on 6644 San Fernando Rd, in Glendale. It is north of Western Avenue, east of the Golden State Freeway. Consult your Thomas Bros if you've never been there before. In addition to the swap meet Ricambi will be offering "garage sale" merchandise out of their back door. They have also agreed to have the front counter open during the event. Due to space limitations the parking lots will be used for loading and unloading, or actual sale of merchandise. There is ample street parking, and browsing is free, as always, but sellers will be charged ten dollars. The event begins at 9 AM, sellers can arrive earlier. Parking is in front. For more information call Jay Negrin at 818-894-3549.

**AROSC General Meeting, Friday, May 31st**

Location and speaker to be determined. For more information call Jay Negrin at 818-894-3549.

**Alfa Caliente - AROC National Convention, Wednesday - Sunday, June 12th - 16th**

The convention will be in Pheonix this year. Club discount on the hotel is valid only through May 12th, so if you want to go you better hurry if you want to take advantage of the AROC rate. Pheonix in June is another story.....

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