



ARCC UPDATE

November 2016

President's Letter

by Alex Csank, Vankleek Hill

The weather has gone from cool to cold, the leaves have fallen, the days are getting very short and the heat is on. October was beautiful ... spoiled only by the incessant coverage and discussion about the US Presidential elections. Nevertheless, Diane and I enjoyed plenty of wonderful little road trips and events, and had many occasions to spend time enjoying the many sunny days on quiet country roads watching the foliage change in all of its splendour. Sometimes, we drove "Monty" (my GTV6), while other times we set out in the wonderful new Ural motorcycle with sidecar (named "Boris" by Diane), which a good friend was so kind as to lend us. We have been discovering that our new home is a great starting point for discovering a myriad of terrific little roads located within just a few minutes of where we live. The eastern Gatineau Hills and westernmost Laurentian mountains of Québec are just on the other side of the nearby bridge across the Ottawa River, and the Ottawa River valley area has lots to offer as well.

Diane and I also enjoyed a wonderful "Autumn Leaves" ride with Club Alfa Romeo de Montréal in October. The ride was combined with members from Club Fiat Montréal and Fiat-Alfa Romeo Québec.



Photo by Alex Csank.

Together we took a scenic ferry ride, visited a big flea market, enjoyed a relaxed lunch, stopped by one of our member's places to have a look at his collection of cars, motorcycles and other toys, and

then stopped by a Catholic Sanctuary filled with maple trees regaled in their fiery autumnal colours.



At the Ferry Dock. Photo by Alex Csank.

Afterwards, some of us continued the drive into Vankleek Hill, to get a tour and taste some great samples of Ontario's largest craft brewery, Beau's Brewery. All in all, it was a superb end to the club's driving events for the 2016 season.

As a Canadian, I must accept the inevitable snow and ice and cold weather looming not far ahead. So, I have cleared space in the garage and purchased dryer sheets and mothballs, pulled the papers and cleaned out the trunk junk to get my faithful 31 year old Italian steed put away for the winter. As always, I will make sure that all the fluids and air are topped up and that the trickle charger is doing its job before the Alfa's four month hibernation begins. I will look forward to next season's adventures in my dreams, and hope you will do the same.

Alfa Expo 17 Update

Work continues on preparations for the convention. There are still lots of details to sort out before we are ready to receive our guests next summer. There will soon be an article in the US Alfa Romeo Owners Club magazine (Alfa Owner) about why our US friends should come and visit Montréal, and our registrations will begin to arrive early in the New Year. We can use all the help we can get. Please let me know if you can help out.

As always, please keep sending me your feedback, and also your photos, articles and ideas for the newsletter. George Beston is always looking for your input for upcoming editions.

Until next month,
Rev high!

Formula One: Alfa Romeo Vince by Russ Baer, Monkton, MD

Yes, this is true, but ... it's pretty old news. I'm sure that all *Alfisti* know that in 1950 Alfa Romeo dominated the first Formula One World Championship, and most know that the first champion was Giuseppe "Nino" Farina. Most also know that Juan Manuel Fangio came a close second in 1950 (and won the 1951 championship for Alfa), but few know just how dominant Alfa was in that first series – they won all six of the European races, also taking second place in four races and third place in two races. The seventh race, the Indianapolis 500, was listed as one of the championship races though none of the drivers there raced in Europe and none of the drivers racing in Europe competed at Indy.

So, why am I writing this?

My wife Diane Swintek and I just returned from France where we stayed with my artist daughter Jennifer Goss (www.jengoss.com if you are curious) at her home in Strasbourg. One of several "tourist trips" was spent at Reims where we visited the Cathedral (one of Jennifer's favorite artists – Marc Chagall – did a number of the stained glass windows, and there is much more to be said about that cathedral ... but not here) and the Formula One course used in that 1950 race. The course was exclusively on public roads that, except for some modern roundabouts and no doubt a smoother surface, are now as they were then and can be freely driven – and yes we did drive them! The structures, which in 1950 were used for pits, timer's station, grandstands and official space, are unchanged but have deteriorated badly – the result of forty-four years of neglect. Much of the site though is in the process of being preserved and in some cases, restored by a group calling itself *Les Amis du Circuit de Gueux* (more on them later). So why do you need to know this?

Here's why. In that first Formula One championship, those seven 1950 races were run in this order, at these venues:

- The British Grand Prix at Silverstone
- The Monaco Grand Prix at Monaco

- The Indianapolis 500 at Indianapolis
- The Swiss Grand Prix at Bremgarten (near Berne)
- The Belgian Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps
- The French Grand Prix at Reims-Gueux
- The Italian Grand Prix at Monza

There are three observations that can be made after looking at this list. One of the three is not generally known: the Swiss government banned all forms of motor racing after the 1955 Le Mans disaster. The other two observations should stand out ... dramatically.

Get it?

Excluding the Swiss GP, five of the remaining six races are still being run at their original venues, although those tracks have been so modernized and the facilities so "glitified" that they would no longer be recognizable to a 1950 race-goer. And the other race - the French Grand Prix? Well, France is the only country of that group that no longer even has an F1 race! But ironically France is also the only country that still has its original race facility and road course; and that course is driven every day by both local people and by tourists such as yours truly.



Grandstands and pits. Photo by Russ Baer.

My visit to the Reims-Gueux site was a haunting experience. To me it was a shrine. It was real but somehow imaginary, remote but connected, lifeless but full of energy, glorious but pathetic. Pathetic? The pathetic part was my realization that this track and only this track – its physical plant and amazingly, the surrounding countryside – is still the direct visual and spiritual link to the birth of the mega-buck commercial spectacle known today as F1 ... and none of those mega-bucks are being used to preserve it. The group *Les Amis du Circuit de Gueux* relies on a small membership fee and donations of any sort to fund the preservation effort. On the wall of one of the pits there was a small brochure rack with information about the organization. One foldout was in English and the other one in French. Also on the pit wall was this stenciled message – two lines and not very large

(as I remember maybe fifty centimeters long) – “Honor the Pilots : Protect the Site”. The first one I saw was in English and I drew a conclusion. My less cynical family pointed out that there were identical wall stencils in French.



Pits from the other side of the track. Photo by Russ Baer.

As I walked through all the areas open to me I concluded that preservation and not restoration was the essential path. Words being used now regarding cars still in original condition in order to discourage restoration are: “It’s only original once”. This site could never be restored or developed into a so called tourist destination without ruining its intrinsic worth. Diane, Jennifer and I were the only people at the site both days for the three total hours we were there. We had made a reconnaissance stop just before dusk on day one when the two photos were taken. Doesn’t everything historic now seem to have a gift shop (even the cathedral in Reims!)? Something of that nature here would only pollute the purity of the place.

Do yourself a favor and look at some of the information available on the internet. In particular, a website: www.circuitsofthepast.nl. It shows three configurations of the Reims-Gueux track – from its beginning in 1926 until its closing in 1972 – which are still accessible and are driven (rather excitingly, I think) by a camera toting car of today. Great footage! Also you should check out: www.amis-du-circuit-de-gueux. If you care to contribute, doing so might appear complicated since payment can only be in Euros or by international bank transfer.

Toronto Chapter Fall Tour

by George Beston, Cobourg

The date of our fall tour got changed at the last minute (well OK, a couple of days ahead) due to a weather forecast that indicated rain all day on our chosen Sunday, and a warm and sunny day

on Saturday. The forecast was spot on, so moving the day was really the best choice.

Our drive to Creemore was without incident, so after leaving the very busy Tim's in downtown Bolton we had a delightful drive, enjoying spectacular fall colours in bright sunshine as we made our way north and west towards Creemore on a well chosen route over hills and hollows with a number of more challenging sections full of twists and turns.



Classics don't lose their appeal as time marches on! Photo by Adam Beston.

Upon our arrival in Creemore we were able to park together in a lot just off the Main Street. Due to the change in day, we were unable to have lunch together, so we split up into smaller groups. Given the number of restaurants in Creemore, everyone was able to find a place to have lunch with some of their fellow enthusiasts.



Photo by Adam Beston.

After lunch, many of us took advantage of a free tour of the Creemore Brewery. Rumor has it that post-tour sampling opportunities were well patronized.

Many thanks go to Maurizio Tacchi and Frank Scalesi for the effort they put into organizing this tour.

Upcoming ARCC Events

Regional representatives are requested to send your 2016 events calendars to the secretary or the editor for inclusion in the next issue.

Club Alfa Romeo de Montréal

Date	Time	Event
1 st Saturday	Monthly	Alfas & Espresso, LaSalle Alfa
May 15		Gimmick Rally
May 22		St Lambert Antique Auto Show
May 29		Road Adventure
June 11		Grand Prix Barbeque
June 19		Fathers' Day Veterans Tribute Car Show
July 24		Meet with Scuderia Alfa Romeo
August 21		Wine Tour
Sept 10-11		Lake Placid Road Trip
October 3		Vineyard Tour
October 16		Fall Colours Drive
November 26		Holiday Party

Regional Events – Eastern Region

Date	Time	Event
June 17-19		Italian Car Day, Ottawa
June 12-19		AROC Convention, Nashville
July 3		FIAT Breakout, Montréal
July 15-17		Raduno Estivo, Kingston
July 27-31		Fiat Freakout, Auburn Hills
August 6		Italian Car Day, Woodbridge
September 25		Raduno Montebello

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Alfa Romeo Club of Edmonton

Date	Time	Event

Calgary Alfa Marque Society

Date	Time	Event

Toronto Chapter

Date	Time	Event
May 23	9 am	Victoria Day Pancake Drive
June 5	10 am	Canadian Warplane Drive
June 7	7 pm	Cruise Night
June 17-19	TBD	Vintage Festival & Drive
June 26	10 am	Rattlesnake Run
July 5	7 pm	Cruise Night
July 10	10 am	Sun Collision Event
August 2	7 pm	Cruise Night
August 21	10 am	Italian Gathering
September 6	7 pm	Cruise Night
September 11	10 am	Wine Tour & Drive
October 4	7 pm	Cruise Night
October 16	9 am	Fall Colours Drive
November 26	6 pm	Holiday Dinner Party

Alfa Romeo Club - Ottawa

Date	Time	Event
April 19	6 pm	ARCO AGM
May 28	2 pm	Car Christening and BBQ
October 16	10 am	End of Season Drive and BBQ
February	7 pm	Annual Pot Luck Dinner

Club mail

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