



# ARCC UPDATE

March 2014

## *President's Letter*

by Alex Csank, Ste. Anne-de-Bellevue

Hi folks,

While many of our fellow *Alfisti* from milder climates are already enjoying the beginning of their "top-down" driving season, it looks like we have a few more weeks before those of us up here in the "Great White North" get our first chance to do the same. Nevertheless, across this vast land Alfa clubs have been planning for the upcoming season and there will certainly be some terrific Alfa events to attend in the months ahead! Here's this month's news from ARCC.

Reaching out to make contact with *Alfisti* across the country, I have been in touch with some terrific people in BC, Alberta, Ontario and even New Brunswick in the past couple of months, and we have had some great conversations.

The folks from the West Coast, who have some very beautiful and rare machines, are trying to revitalize the Pacific Coast Alfa Romeo Owners Association (PCAROA), and Don Best – our ARCC Regional Contact for Vancouver (and all of B.C.) – will be letting me know the news from his end as things develop.

From Calgary, Mark Willis and I had a nice chat on the telephone and he has volunteered to step up to the plate as our new Western VP. He is also hopeful that the 'Calgary Alfa Marque Society' (CAMS) will become more active this year.

The ARCC has never had a Regional Representative from the Maritimes. But, having bought my '69 Spider 1300 Junior many years ago from a friend in Nova Scotia, who got the car from his father in PEI, I happen to know that there are more than just a few Alfas tearing up the roads on the East Coast. So I called one of our members from Fredericton, New Brunswick and (with very little arm-twisting) I am happy to announce that Dan Nicholes has agreed to become ARCC's first Maritime Regional Representative. Thanks Dan!

No sooner had I spoken to Dan, when I received an email from Dave Semel, the President of the Alfa Romeo Club of Ottawa (ARCO), informing me that he is moving back to Halifax to be closer to his family and grandchildren and is vacating his position as President of ARCO. This is both good news and bad news, in that Ottawa is losing its President and a very active club member, but Halifax will be gaining an experienced and devoted member who may be able to shake the branches and organize a club in Halifax. On behalf of all of our members, I wish Dave a safe and smooth move and lots of great new "Alfadventures" in Canada's Ocean Playground!

In the realm of the Club's financial life, looming changes in rates charged by Canada Post will inevitably pressure us into either changing the way the Club communicates to members or increasing membership dues, or both. Fortunately, due to the efforts of John and Christine Pickering who print and distribute the newsletters, and George Beston who keeps a firm grip on overhead costs as Treasurer, we have a modest cash surplus in hand that will last through the membership year even if expenses rise above the level of revenues for a short time.

The situation does bring up the question about mailings and postal costs and what our members want regarding the newsletter and membership dues. ARCC Toronto sent out a survey to its membership, asking if members would prefer receiving their monthly Update by email or to continue using postal delivery. I would like to get your input on this subject, as we will need to make some changes in our membership fee structure for postal delivery in the future. One solution would be to offer an email only option, actually enabling us to reduce the cost of membership, with a higher-cost option if a printed newsletter is desired. For those of you currently receiving a monthly copy of the Alfa Owner, we will also need to review the cost of this option as a result of increased postal rates. The ARCC executive will be investigating these and possibly other options and I will make sure to let you all know as soon as I can about the dues for

each option. As always, I welcome your input and ideas. Just send me an email or give me a call anytime.

Finally, please don't forget to submit your Club's activity calendars so that we can print them in the next update. Recently, our official contact with Alfa Romeo has asked me to provide the company with our event calendar, and has written that there is a possibility that the company may help by assisting us with some of our events. This is a very good sign, as it shows that Alfa Romeo is very close to actually returning with new cars here in Canada, and that the company is not forgetting about its enthusiasts.

Lots more coming soon ...

Rev high!

Alex

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## ***Alfetta Testa Fisa***

**by George Beston, Cobourg**

In the January Update, I wrote up my plans, and progress to date, regarding my project to rebuild the engine in my long-serving Alfetta Berlina.

Well, as a modern philosopher once wrote, life is what happens while you're making other plans.

With the engine out and rebuild parts on order, I proceeded to remove the cylinder head to send it out for machine work. I have done this procedure before, and the last time I used a fairly powerful method. I made up a plate from 1" plywood that rested on the cylinder head studs. Fittings made up from quarter inch threaded rod and spark plug ends were tightened into the spark plug treads to pull on the head, and then nuts on the threaded rod were tightened down against the plate until the head lifted. The procedure went very easily, as well it should.

With my Alfetta's engine, the plywood plate bent into an arc, threads stripped on the threaded rod and the head didn't move. What to do? A quick look on the internet revealed that my problem is not unheard of. Suggested approaches to deal with a stuck head include soaking the studs in a range of penetrating fluids, stuffing rope into a couple of cylinders and turning the crank to push up on the head, and using the factory head removal tool A.2.0451.

I concentrated on the penetrating fluid for a while. At various times I tried WD 40, PB Blaster, and a witch's brew of acetone and automatic transmission fluid. I noticed that only one of the ten stud locations actually allowed penetrating fluid to flow

by and go down into the water jacket. In response to that, I used CLR intermittently around the studs to see if it would help, and it didn't as far as I could see. At one point I sealed off the water jacket at the water pump and intake manifold openings and applied air pressure to the water jacket via the drain plug opening on the exhaust side of the block. Of course, air streamed out from the one stud that would allow penetrating fluids to flow. With that one sealed up, there was only one other stud opening that demonstrated any permeability; a fine stream of bubbles from around the stud at an applied air pressure of 80 psi.

I also tried the rope trick as described by Pat Braden in his book, *The Alfa Romeo Owner's Bible*. With the camshafts removed, I loaded two cylinders (1 and 4) with as much polypropylene rope as I could stuff into the spark plug openings, and turned the crank so that the rope pushed on the head. Again, no response despite my best efforts on the end of a breaker bar.

Finally, I tried to use an enhanced version of my plywood plate puller system. I used a thick steel plate and made up fittings with spark plug threads on the end of 5/8 threaded rod.



*Threaded rod fitting. Photo by George Beston.*



*Ready for pulling. Photo by George Beston.*

This time the threads on the rod did not strip, but with considerable torque applied to the long coupling nuts on the threaded rod, again there was no movement of the head.

My fear was that any further applied torque might result in one or more of the spark plug threads being pulled out of the head. Since the respected factory tool is only used on one spark plug thread

and I've been pulling on all four, I concluded that this head is stuck on so badly that nothing I can do would get it off, and just trying harder would probably break something.

I surveyed a number of friends and contacts about this problem and didn't come up with any suggestions I could use. One of them was that I put the head under tension and then pound on it with my two pound sledge hammer as if I don't care if I break it. I just can't bring myself to do that. If anyone reading this has a different suggestion, I'm all ears. For now, the engine is going to sit with WD 40 soaking the studs for a good long time, or until I come up with a better idea.

I surmise that what has happened is that rust and/or deposits from the coolant has built up on the studs to the point that they are in effect bonded to the head. This is despite my consistent use of distilled water to dilute antifreeze over all these years.

Fortunately for my project, salvation is at hand in the form of a spare Alfetta engine from a car I parted out some years ago. I hauled it out of storage, prepared it for head removal and applied my 5/8 inch threaded rod fittings, this time using the plywood plate. This head lifted immediately with no resistance. I think I could have removed it by hand! Upon further examination, the spare engine is in reasonable shape – not surprising because as best as I can recall, it only has about 70,000 miles on it. In hindsight, I would have been much better off to rebuild this engine before even starting to remove the original engine from my Alfetta.

So, here I am about two months behind on my schedule with the driving season soon upon us.

Sigh ... !

## **C.A.R.M. News**

by Alex Csank, Ste. Anne-de-Bellevue

This has certainly been an "old-fashioned winter"! Thankfully, there has never been a winter which has not given way to spring ... even if it is a bit late in arriving. Here in Montreal, we decided to have a lunch-time get together with our partners in a late celebration of Valentine's Day on Sunday the 16th of February. Meeting up at a quaint and charming little Italian restaurant in the old village of Pointe Claire, we enjoyed some terrific conversation, some fine beverages and tasty foods.

Looking ahead, we will be meeting up at Garage Sylvester to have a look around and learn some technical advice from a master of the Alfa Romeo magic on Saturday, March 22. While there, we'll

share some food and drink and drool over some of the fine Italian machines being repaired and restored in the shop.

By next month, we'll be getting our cars slowly out of storage and getting them ready for the 2014 driving season ... like the rest of you, I can't wait!

## **Letters to the Editor**

Dear Alfisti

I would second Yves' warning about steering boxes!

My '69 1750 Spider Veloce was lapping at Grattan a few years ago. Every time I turned right there was a puff of oil smoke behind the car. I was about to pit and investigate when I went through a left hand corner and felt some play in the steering. At the next corner, the wheel turned 45 degrees without result; fortunately with desperate braking and good luck I missed the guardrail. As I limped to the escape road and turned right, I was able to turn the steering wheel with no effect at all on the front wheels.

The entire top of the steering box had cracked and flexed. The oil splashed out on right hand turns and hit the exhaust.

So, inspect the box regularly and fix it if you find oil leaks or cracks.

John Hoard,  
Detroit

*Editor's note: This is the first time I've heard from someone who had a steering box failure while driving his or her Alfa. I do recall an incident a few years ago during the VARAC weekend in June at Mosport. A gentleman from Georgia named Caesar was running a yellow Duetto spider. During a Friday practice session, he had an off-course incident in turn 2. When the Duetto came off the flat bed in the paddock the steering box was broken. In the rush to help him find a replacement box, I didn't ask, but it could well have broken on the track and caused the incident.*

## **Giulietta's 60th Anniversary!**



## Upcoming ARCC Events

Regional representatives are requested to send your 2014 events calendars to the secretary or the editor for inclusion in the next issue.

### Club Alfa Romeo de Montréal

Date	Time	Event
Feb 16	1:00 pm	Valentine's Day Lunch
March 22	1:00 pm	Tech Session
April 12	TBD	Spring Lunch
May 10	TBD	VEA Rally
May 24	TBD	Eastern Townships Tour
June 8	TBD	Grand Prix Barbeque
June 14	TBD	Ottawa Italian Car Day
June 15	TBD	Fathers' Day Veterans Tribute Car Show
June 28-29		Raduno Estivo
July 6	TBD	Fiat Breakout
July 12	TBD	Sommet des Légendes
July 23-27		AROC Convention
August 3		Baie d'Urfé vintage car show (VAQ)
August 30	TBD	Ride to Rigaud
Sept 13	TBD	Wine Tour
Sept 26-28		Hemmings Concours
Sept 28	TBD	Raduno Montebello
Oct 18	TBD	Fun Rally
Nov 29	TBD	Holiday Party

### Toronto Chapter

Date	Time	Event
Feb 22	9:00 am	Directors Meeting
April 2	7:00 pm	AGM
May 6	7:00 pm	Cruise Night – La Paloma
May 19	9:30 am	Pancake Drive
June 3	7:00 pm	Cruise Night – La Paloma
June 13-15	TBD	Vintage Festival / Drive
June 15	TBD	Yorkville Exotic Car Show
June 22	TBD	Europa Rally
June 28/29	TBD	Tor./Ott./Montreal Raduno Estivo
July 8	7:00 pm	Cruise Night – La Paloma
July 18-21	TBD	Grand Prix of Mosport
July 19	9:00 am	Italian Car Day
July 23-27	TBD	AROC Convention
August 5	7:00 pm	Cruise Night – La Paloma
August 24	TBD	Marque d'Elegance
Sept 2	7:00 pm	Cruise Night – La Paloma
Sept 14	TBD	Fall Tour
Oct 7	7:00 pm	Cruise Night – La Paloma
Nov 29	6:00 pm	Holiday dinner

## Alfa Romeo Club of Edmonton

Date	Time	Event
April ??		Tech Session
May 10		"Up your Hoist"
May 18		Spring Road Trip
June 14		History of Road at Reynolds
June 21		Around Town Rally
July 8		Apex Casino Meeting
July 20		European Car Show Calgary
August ??		Viva Italia
Sept 7		Concours d'Eleganza
Sept 21		Apple Harvest Leduc
Dec 14		Christmas Tree Slaughter
Jan 2015		Alfa Christmas Party

## Alfa Romeo Club of Canada

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