



ARCC UPDATE

October 2020

President's Letter

by Alex Csank, Vankleek Hill

Hi folks,

Summer has ended again. The seasons don't seem to notice our worldwide pandemic much, and the trees and other plants have draped themselves in their autumn rainbow of fiery colours, preparing to strip themselves nude as they have a wont to do during the harshest months of the cold Canadian winter. Yet, here we are, we frail humans moving quickly into a "2nd Wave", with new cases of Covid-19 on an alarming upward trajectory (as I write this), and our restrictions being tightened as we move away from the "outdoor" season. Unlike most years, our autumn club driving and social events have been reduced or curtailed and given the current situation, CARM and other clubs have either cancelled or reduced the scope of events. Our usual Holiday dinners and parties will also probably have to wait. For many, 2020 has really been a challenging year! I am very thankful to still be healthy, safe and able to pay the bills. But I know that many are not nearly so lucky. I am hopeful that the future will be brighter as we move closer to the new year.

On a happier note, Diane and I had a nice visit from my old friend Mark and his lovely better half Bev, who drove down from Ottawa in his recently acquired gorgeous 1974 GTV on a beautiful Saturday in September. Mark and I go back to our days as Canadian Navy shipmates aboard HMCS Nipigon, based in Halifax in the mid '80s. Back then, we would share car magazines and chat about some of our favourite rides. I believe that he had a nice new Acura Integra coupe then, and later had an affair with a nice MGB GT and a few other fun cars. But recently Mark had been looking for a "real" classic sporty car, and had distilled his choices carefully to discover the essence of Italian Soul that is the Alfa Romeo Bertone GTV. Asking me for some advice regarding an available car on the web in the GTA,

I asked our local contacts to see if they could find out anything about that car. Jumping into action – as *Alfisti* do – a few details were discovered and, in the interim, one of our long-time Toronto area members decided that it was time to put his car up for sale. And so, Mark purchased this beautifully and tastefully restored, lightly modified car from Ken Lee in Oakville this summer and he couldn't be much happier.



Alex and Mark with ex-Ken Lee GTV. Photo by Diane Taylor.

Giving the car a few tweaks and adjustments when it arrived, he says that he's "been driving the wheels off it". He plans on driving it "for another month or so, as it seems to like the cooler weather". Mark also wrote "...not only am I impressed with the car, but more impressively the Alfa community is very friendly and helpful." It was great to see Mark and Bev and we had a nice, socially-distanced visit on a lovely sunny afternoon in our screened gazebo. Hopefully, Mark and Bev will be joining other ARCO members for some local (and national) club activities over the coming years. Welcome aboard!

Like most of you, Diane and I will soon be taking care of our annual "get ready for winter" chores. Putting the garden to bed, stripping the gazebo of its fabric top and screens, switching the usual parking spot of the lawn mower for the snow

blower, and preparing the garage to accept its winter occupants tucked in for their winter's nap. With some careful planning, I'm lucky to have room enough to store the motorcycles, my Alfa Spider and the Abarth in our garage and still have room to access the snow blower, tool boxes, ladders and other stuff, leaving Diane's "shed" workshop untouched.

As usual, I'll be getting my Pumpkin Spice oil change done in each of my summer toys and will take care of the other winter storage preparations. As I do with any gasoline powered machine, I'll be going through my little checklist before their hibernation. Here's my summary of preparations:

1. Fill the tires to about 5 psi. higher than the stock pressure.
2. Fill the fuel tanks with fresh non-ethanol gasoline (ethanol isn't good for rubber hoses). Having a full tank will help to reduce any condensation, which can cause running problems when too much water gets into the tank.
3. If an oil change isn't needed right away, make sure the oil level is topped up.
4. Check all fluids, and make sure they are filled. If your coolant is old, you may wish to drain and refill with new coolant.
5. Remove all equipment and other stuff from the glove compartment, storage bins and trunk. Be especially careful to remove paper products, candy bars and other foodstuffs and any drinks, water bottles, touch up paint, cleaning liquids, etc.
6. If you have a Spider, put the top up while the weather is still warm enough (above about 10 °C). Make sure to latch it. A cracked plastic rear window is not usually replaceable without removing the whole top, and by then you may as well replace the whole thing... and **that** costs much more than just making sure that the top is up and latched.
7. Scatter some small pieces of Irish Spring soap-bars and some smelly dryer sheets around the interior of your car, and don't forget the trunk and even the engine compartment. I put the soap and dryer sheets on a small plastic lid (from a yoghurt container for example) to keep the soap from getting into the rugs or upholstery fabric. Rodents and other critters don't like the soap or dryer sheet smell and will find somewhere else to camp.
8. Open your side windows just a small crack (1/4" should do it). This helps to keep a little air

circulating which helps to reduce humidity and condensation in the interior.

9. Unlatch the trunk and engine cover (hood). Keep them closed but not latched. Cable pulls hold tension and can deteriorate over the winter. It isn't fun to have to open a trunk or hood with a broken cable. You can check them and lubricate them (if required) in the spring much more easily if they aren't under tension all winter.

10. I am lucky enough to have access to my cars and motorcycles over the winter in my garage. As a result, I can use one trickle charger which I move from vehicle to vehicle about once a month. Alternatively, you can remove the battery and store the battery in your basement or somewhere warm. If stored in a warm place, it should be good to go in the spring. You **do not** want your battery to discharge completely over the winter. Batteries are expensive.

Please send me your feedback, and also any photos, articles and ideas for the newsletter. George Beston is always looking for input.

Rev high!

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Alfa Romeo Quality

from Autoline Daily, September 30

Editor's note: The following is a transcript of a segment on Autoline Daily, moderated by Sean McElroy. Please bear with the colloquial nature of the text.

(McElroy) Say, has Alfa Romeo turned the corner when it comes to quality?

While customers love the styling and performance of the Stelvio and Giulia, they have been panned for sub-standard reliability and that has hurt sales.

But, in an interview with Bob Broderdorf, the head of operations for Alfa Romeo North America, he said we're going to be surprised when the latest quality surveys come out.

(Broderdorf) ... and quite frankly, as we grow our volume I'm really excited to get some of the quality scores out there in the marketplace which you haven't been able to see because most of the studies are three year studies. So, when that data comes available I think you're going to be impressed with the quality improvements of the brand and really how competitive we truly are.

(McElroy) We then asked him if the improvements in quality will be reflected in the residual or resale values of the Stelvio and Giulia.

(Broderdorf) Yeah, I think I have insight which isn't quite out yet as to what the 2021 model year residual is going to look like. I think you're going to be incredibly impressed with just how high, in terms of best in class residuals, you're going to see when we launch the 2021 model year and a lot of that is due to the enhancements and changes that we've recently made.

(McElroy) "Best in class residuals" is not a phrase we ever expected to associate with Alfa Romeo. And that represents a major turnaround for the brand. And all these changes are reflected in what's going on in the market right now. While FCA does not release its sales until the end of the quarter, Autoline understands that the latest figures will show that Alfa Romeo sales were up over last year even while the overall industry will be down. Those sales will be announced some time tomorrow.

Jenvey Throttle Bodies

Out with the old, in with the new!

by George Beston, Cobourg

Over the years, I have written of many modifications to my Spider Jr. The idea behind them has always been to end up with a strong and reliable round tail Spider. The modifications include a careful three angle valve job, porting the head, custom long duration cams, intake runner extensions and an upstream air filter arrangement. For efficiency and tuning purposes I completed a conversion to an electronic engine management system, "Mega Squirt'nSpark Extra". It has been fueling the engine since 2009 triggered by a Crane optical system, and managing both fuel and spark since about 2013, using a trigger wheel and Hall Effect sensor arrangement.

One of the critical components of this system is the throttle bodies that replaced the Weber carburetors my Spider's 1750 engine was using when it was first installed.

Rather than spend the cash on aftermarket throttle bodies, I fabricated my own.

These included a set of SPICA throttles with injector bosses added to the downstream side and adaptor plates on the upstream side to fit the air cleaner plenum from the original air cleaner. The result was pleasing at the time and fully functional.



Photo by George Beston.

Over the years I have grown impatient with these units because I somehow lost the ability to synchronize them. I attributed this to the possibility of throttle shaft bushings leaking air because the lowest idle I could get was too fast and also inconsistent. This is probably piling on, but the system also would come up with the occasional loud and startling backfire when lifting off after vigorous acceleration, and I speculated that the throttle bodies leaking air could contribute to that problem.

So, last fall I made the decision to replace my home built throttle bodies with something commercially manufactured for the purpose. My shopping exercise was very eventful. My first supplier of choice was Borla (formerly TWM) throttle bodies. When I called them to place an order, I was informed that when selling internationally, a bank transfer was required up front for payment. When I went to my community Credit Union to ask about doing just that, I was met with serious reservations out of concern that I was falling for some kind of internet financial scam. Who are these people? How do you know they're for real? And on and on. I ultimately quit on this supplier because I never actually got a detailed quote for the throttle bodies, a few accessories and shipping charges. It's a sad reflection of our times that everyone is so suspicious of others that one can't just do business.

I was also aware of the U.K. supplier Jenvey Dynamics so I decided to give them a try. Sure enough they took my order and payment via credit card over the Internet. The pair of throttle bodies and a few other items showed up in about a week.

The Jenvey throttle bodies are precisely made and well finished and do, as claimed, fit right in where Weber carburetors might have lived in the past. The only thing they lacked was the vacuum fittings necessary for my setup so that it can detect MAP, or Manifold Absolute Pressure. Apparently the idle air bypass adjusters can be used for this purpose, but because I want to retain that function for tuning purposes, I chose to drill, tap and install hose barbs into my billet

aluminum “carburetor” mounts instead. Some effort was required to relieve the mounting holes in the throttle bodies a bit so that the assembled throttle body and plenum unit would be an easy fit over the studs on the carburetor mounts.



Photo from Jenvey Dynamics.

I did some head-scratching over the use of O-ring seals on the carb mounts **and** the throttle bodies. The throttle bodies came with grooves and thin O-rings to seal to the carb mounts, and the carb mounts came with much thicker O-rings to seal to the back of carburetors. There was no way I could see mis-matched O-rings working together to seal the intake tract. So, with the intake manifold off the head I reversed the carb mounts to put their O-ring between the manifold and the mounts, and simply used new paper gaskets between the throttle bodies and the mounts.

Initial results were promising in that I got the throttle bodies synchronized easily, however a high and inconsistent idle speed was still an issue.



Ready for final reassembly. Photo by George Beston.

So, I took the throttle bodies and manifold off the head – again – and went over the vacuum system with a fine-toothed comb. I replaced all the hoses between the individual runners and the collector, and clamped and tested every vacuum hose

connection in the system to make sure there were no leaks. I also eliminated the O-rings that came with the carb mounts and used paper gaskets between the mounts and the manifold.



Mounts in place and vacuum system assembled. A needle valve to dampen vacuum fluctuations is located above carb mounts 3 and 4. Photo by George Beston.

After reassembling the system, I finally achieved a controllable low idle speed. As the old first rule of auto mechanic school says, you can't tune around a vacuum leak!



A test fit of the throttle bodies. Note the new Hall Effect throttle position sensor located at the end of the throttle shaft. Photo by George Beston.

The only program change required was to calibrate the new throttle position sensor.

My Spider now starts immediately, idles evenly as low as 800 rpm and the engine feels really strong in all situations. Also, there have been no backfires since the change to the new throttle bodies. I'm now looking forward to using them for many seasons to come. My plan has finally come together!

I can't be sure of exactly where my problem was with first set of throttle bodies, so I'm not getting rid of them any time soon. On a slow day I may do

some testing on them, but that can wait until winter.

As an aside, I can't pin any blame on the O-rings that come with the aftermarket aluminum carb mounts. Discussions on forums seem to suggest that the purpose of the thick O-rings in conjunction with the Thackeray washers provided is to dampen vibration that might reach the carburetors. I wonder if they are also intended to provide a thermal break between the carbs and manifold, which the original rubber mounts would surely do. I notice the use of O-rings in similar applications on other engines, so presumably they can do their job of sealing the intake system from vacuum leaks. In any case, the fuel injectors I'm using are not affected by engine vibration or heat from the intake manifold so I'm comfortable just putting the system together with paper gaskets.

Alfa Romeo 155 GTA

It may have been a dull road offering, but in racing form the 155 was anything but boring from MotorSport, September 2020



Photo from MotorSport.

Motor racing has a way of changing perceptions. Success on the track can rejuvenate the appeal of even the most humdrum of models. Racing did exactly this for the Alfa Romeo 155, a model that risked being a flop before its exploits in touring cars gave it a dose of credibility ... and notoriety.

The 155 did it all: won championships, spawned homologation specials, revolutionised Super Touring and bent the rulebook as it went.

But before all that the 155 was actually a culture shock when it was first unveiled in 1992.

Alfa Romeo needed a cash injection in the mid 1980s. Ford was willing to buy a stake, but would very likely shift production away from the home country. Fiat didn't like this idea, and instead bought Alfa Romeo entirely in 1986, preserving jobs and facilities. Sounds great, apart from that it now meant Alfa was a smaller cog in a much larger company.

The 155 was the first new model unveiled under Fiat ownership. It shared its chassis with the dreary Fiat Tempra and was switched to front-wheel drive as opposed to the rear drive style of independent Alfas. Its boxy lines gave it an excellent drag coefficient, but did little else to turn heads. Until Alfa took it racing.

Over to works race team Alfa Corse, which set about stiffening the chassis by seam welding them to within an inch of their lives, ditching any brackets or cost-saving parts Fiat had used. The first cars raced in the Italian Superturismo Championship. But it was when Alfa decided to enter the British Touring Car Championship for 1994 that things got far more interesting and controversial.

BTCC homologation regulations at the time demanded that manufacturers create at least 2500 road-going variants of the models they would race, and in that Alfa spotted a loophole.

So Alfa Corse went to work creating a new souped-up 155 called the Silverstone. It did away with the standard 1.8-litre Twin Spark engine, replaced by a block Fiat had been using in rallying, together with a modified cylinder head which was rotated 180 degrees to improve cooling and weight distribution. But the biggest change was in the aero. The Silverstone came with front and rear spoilers. Only small ones, but the clever bit was the adjustable kit that was supplied in the boot that allowed customers to make them much larger.

When fitted, the extended aero provided almost no benefit to the road car, but was transformative for the race car. When Alfa rocked up to the first round of the '94 BTCC at Thruxton with both the rear wing a chunky splitter fully extended – acting to suck that car down onto the track – more than eyebrows were raised. Gabriele Tarquini was unbeatable for the first five races before Ford finally got a look in.

Alfa's rivals accused it of "taking the mick" and a flood of protests ensued. And then came the fifth round, at Oulton Park. BTCC officials ordered Alfa to run with the wings retracted. Alfa argued that if the road car could be adjusted that way, so could its race car. It kicked up so much fuss that the team simply packed up and withdrew from the meeting in protest. Alfa returned for the rest of the season, accepting a compromise to run with the wings in place until July, and then retract them. Tarquini won a further three races to waltz to the title.

In line with advice provided by provincial and federal government agencies, we have cancelled or postponed all events for the present time. Please watch for announcements from your local clubs for resumption of normal activities. Stay home and stay safe!

Upcoming ARCC Events

Club Alfa Romeo de Montréal

Date	Event
May 2	Fun Rally
May 16	Auto-Slalom, Sanair
May 24	Lunch, Orange Julep
June 13	Balade Trois Rivières et La Tuque
June 20	Ottawa Italian Car Parade
July 5	FIAT Breakout, Montréal
July 11	Sommet des Légendes, Mont Tremblant
July 22-26	AROC Convention , Colorado Springs
August 21-23	Raduno Estivo, from Montréal thru Ottawa to Toronto
September 10-13	Alfas at the Glen, Watkins Glen NY
September 19	Amici Perth Raduno, Perth
October 17	Fall Colours Tour
November 21	Christmas Dinner

Alfa Romeo Club - Ottawa

Date	Event
June 20	Ottawa Italian Car Parade
July 22-26	AROC Convention , Colorado Springs
August 21-23	Raduno Estivo, from Montréal thru Ottawa to Toronto
September 20	Amici Raduno, Perth

Calgary Alfa Marque Society

Date	Event
July 22-26	AROC Convention , Colorado Springs

Alfa Romeo Club of Edmonton

Date	Event
July 22-26	AROC Convention , Colorado Springs

Toronto Chapter

Date	Event
April 2	AGM, Scuderia Ferrari Club
April 26	ICD Go Karting, Downsview Park
May 7	Cruise Night, La Paloma, Woodbridge
May 18	Victoria Day Pancake Run, Cookstown
May 23	Swap Meet, Pinarello Motori, Woodbridge
June 4	Cruise Night, La Paloma, Woodbridge
June 7	Rattlesnake Run, Halton Hills
June 19-21	Ottawa Italian Car Parade
June 21	Vintage Festival, Cdn Tire Motorsport Park
June 28	Keswick Drive, Keswick
July 2	Cruise Night, La Paloma, Woodbridge
July 12	Sun Collision Drive and BBQ, St Catharines
July 22-26	AROC Convention , Colorado Springs
July 25	Niagara Drive & Wine Tour
August 6	Cruise Night, La Paloma, Woodbridge
August 9	Italian Car Day, Woodbridge
August 21-23	Raduno Estivo, from Montréal thru Ottawa to Toronto
September 3	Cruise Night, La Paloma, Woodbridge
September 10-13	Alfas at the Glen, Watkins Glen NY
September 19	Amici Perth Raduno, Perth
September 27	Alfas and Fiats at the Forke
October 1	Cruise Night, La Paloma, Woodbridge
October 18	Fall Colours Drive, Singhampton
November 21	Holiday Dinner Party, Woodbridge

Unofficial Cruise Nights are held every Thursday evening from May to October at La Paloma in Woodbridge.

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