

Mostly Ramblings of Il Presidente

(taken from the February 2008 Alfacionada)

Before getting into the meat of my ramblings, I would like to thank Dirk Stoehr for an exemplary show of sportsmanship at the TT Race weekend held at Willow Springs a few weeks ago. This was one of the most beautiful winter weekends that I can remember at Willow. Evie came up Saturday with her new Mazda 3 and did some vigorous laps during intro. On Sunday I ran in the Alfa Cup and, as usual was near the back of the grid. Dirk's car was having some brake problems and, having no chance at challenging the leader, he stayed back to race with me. By not pulling away on the straights, we pushed each other relentlessly (from my perspective) through the corners regularly changing positions. Class act. Thanks.

It took a rain of nearly Biblical proportions to hold the gathering at Annual Awards down to less than a full house – though only by 2 tables. From Bruce Colby (our Competition Director) and his wife Happy up from San Diego to the indomitable Bob Poulen coming solo from Santa Barbara and members from submerged lands to the east, the hearty arrived at our new awards venue – Delazano's in Redondo Beach Harbor. The desert people were warned that the puddles being viewed from the windows were to be avoided as one was the harbor and the other the ocean.

This was a wonderful opportunity to thank the Competition Board and their families for the fabulous and professional job they have done and continue to do. It is truly a family effort involving spouses, significant others, children, and grandparents. It never ceases to amaze me how **volunteers**, braving heat, cold, the whims and wishes of a multitude of car owners and competition drivers can run such a professional show. The members also owe themselves a round of applause for the inspiration created by their participation. Awards were a little scarce this year because of a) a reduced competition schedule and b) some winners not being club members did not qualify. The overall competition championship changed hands this year, with Paul Blankenship (relying heavily on the support of Mary) edging me and Evie out BY ONE POINT. Perseverance (showing up at every event – Track and Concorso) allowed 2 Alfisti having far from the fastest cars at the track and far from the prettiest cars at the Concorsi place 1 and 2 (BY ONE POINT). Come out and join the fun. While Paul and I will spend the year trash talking, a new contender for overall competition looms on the horizon as one of our Driving School attendees, Concorsi participant Fred Firschein has collected his first Time Trial points. Check his tail pipe for a potato.

By the time you are reading these ramblings, our first driving school of the year will be over. Shame on those of you who missed it. It is a truly a life extending event. It also creates what some feel are symptoms of addiction that could turn you into a Time Trial competitor, or like me start you racing at 67.

Continuing our policy of diverse locations of interest for our General Meetings, on Feb 23rd we will have our second annual clean car show and meeting at the famous Autobooks in Burbank (see inside) with El Porto pastries provided by our hosts Tina Van Curen and Chuck Forward. Among the most enthusiastic car people in So Cal are Tina (former Pres. of AROSC) and Chuck (my personal car deity, responsible for, among other things, 'The Best of France and Italy' and

‘Thursday Calendar Night’). After this morning meeting, we plan to walk to the corner for a special treat – lunch at the famous (and inexpensive) El Porto bakery and great Cuban sandwich emporium.

Our first Concorso of the year will be overlooking the Pacific Ocean from the campus of Pepperdine University on March 2nd. Along with the car judging competition, we will also have a Concorso de Picnic. Competition is not the issue, this is just a wonderful occasion to meet old friends, greet new friends, ogle and be ogled. When the Concorso is over (around 1 PM) we have been invited to visit World Class Motorsports’ new brick and mortar in Agoura. They have parking for over 40 cars, will provide afternoon snacks and have one of the largest and most eclectic automobilia for viewing and/or purchase. The negative is that instead of having a great drive back over Malibu Canyon to the 101, we would only drive about ¾ of the canyon road then turn left on to the (in)famous Mulholland Hwy then, if your wheels are still on, right on the equally challenging Cornell Rd to their location at the entrance (#9) to the 101 freeway.

On March 22nd -23rd, we will have our second Time Trial / Race Weekend at Willow Springs. You don’t have to be a competition driver to bring your daily driver out for 45 minutes of instructed laps during our lunch our Intro drive around. It’s only a slight next step to Novice Time Trial Driver.

PLEASE NOTE: the March and April General Meeting have been switched and the March meeting will be at Premier Auto in Irvine, where Alfa Romeo will again be the feature Marque (see details inside). Sponsored by Ford Motors, last year we had 65 Alfa Romeos show up. Bring your camera and expect to see 3 or 4 hundred additional exotics. Arrival is early, but coffee, pastries and breakfast are available. Many of us from up north travel down the night before and have found reasonable accommodations in Laguna Hills. We will then drive over to Huntington Beach to tour the Gerhard Schnuerer Collection of war-time and other old German vehicles.

Keep the wheels side down

Norm Silverman (Norman I, Rex)
Evie Silverman (Evie I, Regina)