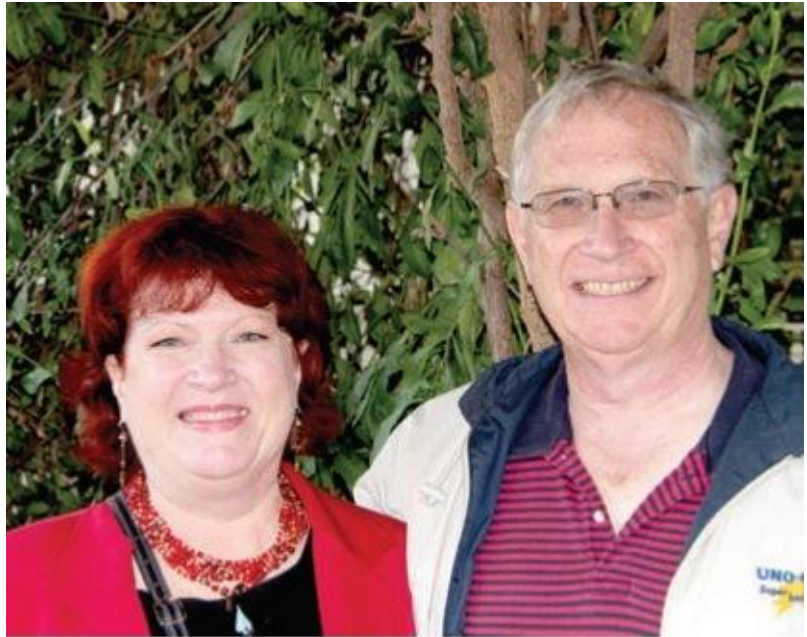


FROM THE TOP ... *the Word from Il Presidente*

(taken from the May 2012 *Alfacionada*)

My better half just doesn't understand that my idea of "nesting" is getting the garage just the way I want it. She has some unfathomable idea that the house should take priority. I got my way a few times by saying we couldn't do the projects she wanted because the necessary tools were still packed up in some undetermined box. However, my credibility ebbed as more boxes were unpacked. It is nice to note that it is now physically possible to walk around both Alfas.

Speaking of Alfas, Jeff the contractor guy next door and Jeff the neighbor on the other side actually recognized our Alfas as Alfas! We love the new neighborhood. Turns out Jeff, the neighbor, had owned a Spider and a Milano. Wouldn't be surprised to see him wander over anytime there is a gathering of Alfisti in the driveway.



Il Presidente Mike and First Lady Chris

Have you started thinking about Monterey yet? The First Lady has advised me that we are going this year, so we are busy getting our act together. She initially pushed for motoring up in modern car comfort, but changed her mind when we went to sign up for Concorso Italiano. It seems our Japanese Alfa would have to pay double and would not be allowed to park on the grass with the real Alfas. The bottom line is we are committed to taking the Sprint to Monterey in August.

The Ojai Road Tour seemed like a perfect warm up event for the Sprint, but the car needed a little tender loving care first. People sometimes ask if I'm restoring it, but preservation is a never ending process with a 50 year old car. It seems like the tailpipe rusts out every 15 years or so – so I consider it routine maintenance. Centerline said they had some on order and would get them in a couple of weeks. Figuring that was Eyetalian for maybe in a few months, I asked the locals where the good muffler shop was and was referred to an excellent shop that patched up the hole no problem. Spring is that wonderful time of year when we can forgo air conditioned comfort and take a vintage Alfa without melting. We took the back roads to Hwy 118 East and then I-5 to Valencia. Oddly enough, the drive time to Valencia would have been about the same from our old house in South Bay. We met up with the group and our dedicated organizer, Steve Edelman, filled us in on the latest weather and road reports. He had reviewed the situation and developed a last minute Plan B route to reduce the risk of encountering snow-closed roads. I figured we would end up mostly following the group up the freeway to Gorman, but Steve had a different plan entirely. (The Sprint and its near-stock 1300 engine cruise comfortably at 70 mph, but not much more.) Soon we were in the twisties and the snow. Simply beautiful. Then it started to sprinkle and slowly we realized that we were actually seeing snow flurries. The Sprint was quite happy with the minor proviso that the engine didn't get warm until we were approaching Ojai. Talk about micro climates, we dined alfresco under a large oak tree and were quite comfortable. Afterwards, we invited the whole group to our new house for a little wine & cheese.

Next month is the Spring Tour. I'm sure Jim & Elyse have detailed event info in this issue. Reserve your room early! It is always a well-attended and fun event, so prepare to pack up the Alfa and make one more trip before air conditioned comfort becomes a necessity. I'm not privy to the details yet, but the event will start in the Long Beach area and will generally stay close to the coast.

Remember, if the women don't find you handsome, they should at least find you handy. And don't forget the duct tape, a handyman's secret weapon.

– *Mike & Chris*