

# UNA NOTIZIA

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 1

THE ALFA ROMEO OWNERS CLUB OF OKLAHOMA

JUNE, 2014

## Celebrate July 4 With Food, Fireworks, Alfas

**I**t [Independence Day] ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more. John Adams, July 3, 1776. Well, John, the Oklahoma Alfa Club is fulfilling your wish--at least with the games, sports and illuminations.

The party begins around 6:00 at the Simmons, 922 S 263 W Ave, Sand Springs, although you're welcome to come earlier to swim, play bocce or discuss Alfas and other cars with friends. Bring side dishes, desserts and drinks to go with the grilled hamburgers--and fireworks if you'd like. Fireworks will begin at dark and the second-floor deck is a great place to watch, not only the fireworks on the Simmons driveway, but also fireworks around the lake.

Remember that the highway over Keystone Dam is still closed, so you'll need to exit at Highway 97 in Sand Springs and go south to Highway 51, turn west and head towards 263 West Ave.

If you haven't already RSVP'd, please email Claudia at rockytop60@aol.com and let her know you're coming. RSVPs aren't required, but will be very much appreciated.



The next generation: At the June 1 SCCA Autocross, four-year-old Madi Perlinigere discovered she's only a year away from being able to drive her own junior race car.

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## Coming in August

BEER TOUR, FOLLOWED BY  
DINNER AT HEY MAMBO.  
DATE TBA



Fireworks will light up the sky July 4 during the annual Alfa Club celebration. Festivities will include swimming, bocce, slot car racing, food and plenty of car talk.

## Member News

Welcome to new members: John Cravens, 2644 E 22nd Street, Tulsa, 74114, 918-398-7425. John owns a 1977 Spider; *John and Erin McDermott*, 3121 E. 33rd St., Tulsa, 74105, 918-728-7049 The McDermotts own a 1969 Spider; *Ray Smith*, 8251 S. Sandusky Ave., Tulsa, 74137, 918-346-7606. Ray owns a 1965 Giulia Spider.

Congratulations to *Dani Perlingiere* on her graduation from the University of Central Oklahoma in May. Dani is now employed by the Oklahoma Thunder.

## Fall Fling

So we're getting ready to celebrate the Fourth of July. But it's not too early to start planning for the Alfa Christmas in November, Fall Fling in Eureka Springs.

The dates are Oct. 31-Nov. 2 at Inn of the Ozarks. The hotel is now accepting reservations for the weekend. Call 479-253-9768 and ask for the Alfa Club block of rooms.

Oklahoma Alfisti will be joined by members of the Kansas City and St. Louis Clubs, as well as Alfisti from other states. It's an Alfa Overload weekend, so make your reservations, mark your calendar and stay turned as plans develop.

## Considering Hot Springs, AR

by Keith Kelly

Recently I had the opportunity to drive to Hot Springs, AR. I have been to Little Rock, all on interstates, but I had not been south of there.

I purposely avoided as much interstate as possible and wound up traveling some spectacular roads through the Ouachita National Forest. Going down, I left I-40 before Ft. Smith and took, Highway 71 through Boles and then turned east on Highway 270.

Hot Springs itself is a very nice town that bears much more studying. It is similar to Eureka Springs but there are significant differences. I would say that Eureka is 100% designed to cater to tourism, where Hot Springs is larger, with a more diverse economy and may only be based on 50% tourism. I am sure I am off on my percentages but you get the idea. There seems to be a lot to do in town and the surrounding area (shopping, lakes, roads, etc.), but due to the typical wedding event schedule, I had little time to explore. I do know that they have a district, as the city name implies, with several different, natural hot spring spas.

The other bonus was the drive home. This time I headed north on Highway 7. Turns out that this is the Ouachita National Forest Scenic Highway 7, for which it is aptly named. From Plainview I trickled my way through some country roads back to I-40 west of Ft. Smith. Another great drive prior to the interstate.

It was a very nice weekend drive and perhaps something to be considered as a "Eureka Springs South" sometime in the future if there is enough interest. I know there are people in the Club that are far more knowledgeable about Hot Springs than I am who could suggest activities for a wonderful trip. And such a weekend may expand to attendees from Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and even Mississippi.



Keith's Ferrari is parked in front of one of the scenic spots he discovered on a trip to and from Hot Springs, Arkansas.

# Scenes from an Autocross

Alfa Club members were on the SCCA Autocross Course, Sunday, June 1. James and Jamie Perlingiere drove Italian cars; Doug and Max Harris in Doug's modified 240Z. Other Club members watched before heading to the annual Kart Race at JRP.

The editor has no official times from the autocross, only the word that Jamie Perlingiere had a faster time than his father James.



James Perlingiere in his Fiat Abarth at the start line, ready to autocross.

Max Harris holds the hood of the Harris autocross car as his father Doug shows the engine to an interested person.



James coming through a gate on the course.



Two views of Jamie Perlingiere as he drives the autocross course in the Perlingiere Alfa Spider.

Claudia Oswald, David Simmons and Karl Schmid watch the action during the SCCA Autocross, June 1.



Doug Harris starts one of his autocross runs.

# Vintage Driver, Vintage Car: Racing at Indy

by Les Neidell

When SVRA (Southern Vintage Racing Association) announced its 2014 schedule, everyone in the Vintage Racing community gasped. For the first time amateur drivers were to be allowed on the "oval." Unlike most other vintage racing events, applications had to be screened first, as SVRA assumed (rightly) that anyone who could go would want to go. And they were correct. About 700 competitors descended on Indianapolis for racing the second weekend of June.

## TEAM NEIDELL

Our "team," and our two cars, 1959 Kellison and 1968 Corvette, were among those accepted, and, I as team "go-fer" made arrangements for this adventure. As usual, I rented a house to accommodate what eventually became two couples and five men.

Prior to Indy, our team competed at Sebring and Homestead in Florida. I haven't driven competitively for about ten years, as cars are going faster now than they ever did when I was regularly driving, and, while probably wiser, my reflexes just didn't seem as sharp as I remember.

My plan was to take a few practice laps at Sebring in the Kellison anyway. However, Tony Parella, the president of SVRA advised me that Sebring was likely "too fast" for me and suggested I would be welcome to drive at Indianapolis. That was an offer I couldn't refuse!

And our car plans changed. Our mechanic friend and team member, Scott Young (Tulsa Jaguar club) was just completing the refurbishment of Cale Yarborough's Oldsmobile with which he won the 1978 NASCAR championship, so we subbed this for the Corvette, whose class was way over-subscribed, with more than 120 applicants.

## A CAR OLDER THAN LES

And, we had acquired a 1933 Plymouth tribute race car through auction. Unfortunately it had been in private collections and museums since it was completed some time in the 1950s. So while it had very miles

showing (2200 or so) its mechanical condition was suspect.

Joan was quite relieved when I hung up my racing helmet, and suggested that if I "found a car older than me" I might again race competitively. Oh my - a 1933 Plymouth certainly fit the bill, especially one that already had numbers on it!

I spent two months before Indy prepping the Plymouth, and trying to meet minimum SVRA safety standards. (Remember in the "old days" the premier safety thought was that the driver should be thrown out of the car as it was turning over, rather than having roll bars and harnesses to keep the driver IN the car.) SVRA wants cars to race as they were "in period," so adding roll bars was not an option. Seat belts are required, as is a fire system, dual springs on accelerator and a number of other items that attempt to make vintage racing less hazardous, yet keep the spirit of the era in which the cars competed.

Two different events were offered for Pre-War vintage cars. One was an "exhibition," (more about what that meant later) on the famed Indianapolis Oval, while the other was an actual race on the newly refinished Indy infield course.

## TESTING THE PLYMOUTH

When the Plymouth was minimally completed I took it to Hallett for a COMMA event, but it was declared too slow and unsafe for use with modern cars. (If you haven't been to Hallett recently you've missed the incredible increase in speeds modern technology gives to drivers. New Corvettes routinely complete a lap in less than 1:30, with drivers who barely know the difference between the brake and the accelerator.)

My daughter, Shara, was allowed to drive a couple of parade laps in the Plymouth, and then I was given two laps on the open track, provided I didn't do anything "stupid." I got the Plymouth up to 55 mph once or twice; it didn't fall apart and it stopped when necessary, so I confirmed the test to be



Les Neidell fastens his racing gloves as he prepares to race at Indy.

a success.

I entered it in the Oval Only exhibition at Indy, with the expectation to run a practice session to see if it might hold up in the Pre-War race on the road course as well. (I had the list of Pre-War competitors available, and knew, relative to the other car classes, it was under-subscribed with only approximately 25 entries each in the Oval and Road Course events. So a late entry was going to be accepted.)

Of course, it rained (not exactly true - buckets came down) during my practice time, but as excitement grew about the competition I succumbed and entered the Pre-War Road Race, which preceded the Oval exhibition. This meant that if the Plymouth broke during the race I would not drive on the Oval.

#### TWO CLASSES: FAST AND SLOW

Pre-War races are, to put it mildly, unusual events, with widely varying car and driver capabilities. Exactly 20 cars started (there were a few casualties during practice and qualification,) ranging from a 1928 Riley, to two post-war cars (that had no other place to run,) a 1947 Kurtis Kraft Midget (that ran a modern Chevy V-8!) and a 1952 MG TD full race car. Also in the race was a 1931 Alfa Romeo P3 and a 1939 Mase-

rati 4CL. These later two cars were specially prepared factory cars during their heyday, and each had highly skilled teams and drivers. At the other end of the scale were us, and Lou Marchant. 82 years old, driving a 1934 MG J2.

During qualifying and practice it became quite apparent that two classes of cars competed in Pre-War - simply fast and slow. Or those who were in it to "win" and those who were in it to say they've been there. I was in the latter group, due both to driver capabilities and the car itself.

With the exception of my Plymouth, all the cars were proper road race cars, each with interesting quirks, but more or less suited to an asphalt road race course. My Plymouth, on the other hand, feasted during its competitive days, on dirt tracks in the upper Midwest. Joan and I, during our New York City days, frequented the Freeport, Long Island track, and I often marveled at the reverse lock steering as competitors slid around the Freeport oval, mostly staying away from each. It was MY first time to experience the necessity of reverse lock steering, as the Plymouth bounced and skidded around the Indy Road Course. All my years of experience driving European sports cars was simply wrong for the Plymouth.

Its short wheel base, unyielding suspension (FORGET tapping the brakes to set up a corner) and skinny 17 inch tires was simply a new experience. And I was extremely worried that the other 19 competitors would not expect the behaviors I and my Plymouth exhibited. The absolute inability of the Plymouth to "stick" was both exhilarating and worrisome.

Despite having only about 70 horsepower and weighing in near 3000 pounds, I managed a 13th place finish, second in the group of slower cars. I was quite proud of my 2:52 time in the race, an improvement of some 5 seconds over my qualifying time and almost 15 seconds faster than my practice time. The fastest lap time in the Pre-War race was achieved by the Alfa P4, 2.04 and some change, just beating out the Maserati by some 3/10 of a second.

To place these times in perspective, David-ran 2.00 flat in the Kellison, while the NASCAR achieved a 1.51. Or a full race 1966 Alfa GTV ran about a 2.05.

### THE INDY ROAD COURSE

The Indy Road Course uses quite a bit of the Oval, so on Saturday, the road course was closed, Oval Only "exhibitions" began. The "oval" at Indy is really two long straights and two short straights, all connected by different types of 90 degree turns, varying degrees of banking, and of course, a BIG wall at turn 4.

The "rules" for Oval exhibition were hammered into our heads by the stewards: the course was "green" only on the long straights, all passing was to be done on the right (uphill) side. The course was yellow everywhere else, with absolutely no passing in the short straights. And of course, STAY OFF THE WALL. Well, the last advice was shattered by, whom else, a Porsche speedster driver, who managed to leave 200 feet of black stuff on the turn 4 wall. And I was terrified when a Pre-War Indy car driver chose to take the inside passing route between me and a third car on the short straight after turn 2.

The road race Pre-War drivers were augmented by about another 15 cars, principally former Indy racecars, on the oval. And it was one of these cars that had rapidly (and in apparent disregard

of the rules) passed me. I observed that many of the Indy car drivers simply ignored the rules. These guys were still a little "po-ed" over SVRA imposing their road racing safety requirements, and outlawing the period driving accessories (leather helmet and flowing white uniform) they usually wore. Since it was "exhibition" only, no lap times were officially recorded.

For many of the drivers, driving on the oval appeared to approach a religious experience. I was never one to sit in front of a tv for many hours, watching cars speed around. I have a new respect for the drivers, since the oval is really quite narrow and the banking isn't that high. At the speeds approached today, 220 mph plus, exciting things can happen very quickly. At the 80 mph top speed of the Plymouth, it was less than an earth shattering experience. At the 150 mph of the Olds NASCAR (which I can't and don't drive) it can get tricky, especially with a lot of cars on the track.

The Plymouth was to get three oval track times, while our two other cars had one oval experience each. Since we had four drivers with us this time, on the second round I gave my seat to the driver who wasn't scheduled in the other two cars so he could have the oval experience. About this fifth lap the Plymouth spun a rod bearing, ending my opportunity for another oval drive.

### MORE RACING TO COME

This year David will fly in from his European home for four vintage events. Coming up is Watkins Glen (first week September) and Austin Circuit of the Americas track. In each of these I will be driving the Plymouth. Going to be a GREAT year!!



Les, son David and Jeff Henning wait for one of their cars to come in during the Enduro for a fuel stop and driver change.



Les Neidell on the Indy Oval in his 1933 Plymouth. Les will be driving the Plymouth in more vintage races.



Les on the grid in the 1933 Plymouth.



The Alfa and the Maserati on the grid--as close as Les got to them, he said!

## Get to Know. . . Jeff Lang

by Keith Kelly

I have been around Jeff Lang for many years. We have talked at numerous Alfa parties, Eureka Springs weekends and we have even run a rally together.

But it was not until I had the opportunity to swing by his house in Central Arkansas that I found I had much more to learn about Jeff. Jeff grew up on the Pacific coast, traveling from California to Washington State specializing in starting and operating small, high end, niche market saw mills. He did try his hand at a saw mill in the Northeast but found that he was a west coast person and returned to Oregon.

While there, Jeff was asked if he wanted to buy a commercial shrimping boat and he said: "Sure!"

After several years of living the "Deadliest Catch" lifestyle, Jeff went back to the saw-mills, continued to move around and wound up living in Arkansas. He also has some acreage in Central America that he visits

If you choose to visit Jeff, he will have to drive out to guide you in because Google Map does not go that far back into the country. When you do arrive, you will find a

wonderful house set in the woods and on the shore of Lake Lang.

Jeff has stocked the lake with several types of fish, with each type staking out their territory in the lake. I have not had the experience of feeding catfish in a captive setting before now but Jeff says they are a lot like dogs. All Jeff has to do is walk to the water's edge and the catfish nearly crawl out trying to get to him as he throws them food. Jeff has studied, and follows, an extensive regime of managing the fish to ensure a sustainable environment for his fish menagerie.

Then he takes you to his Shop where he has a '74 GTV, a GTV6, Milano and a couple of 164s. Jeff is fully self-sufficient and does all his mechanical and body work, up to the final finish coat of paint. Jeff gets a lot accomplished on his own because he has to... he does not have the Alfa support system that we have in Tulsa, at least not close by anyway.

Which brings me to the point that every time you see Jeff, don't forget that he traveled three hours (one way) to get to the Tulsa area. Now, that is dedication. So, take the time to get to know Jeff, he is a very interesting person and a significant member of our Club.

### *How to Join Us*

The easiest way to join AROCOK is through the National Alfa Romeo Owners Club website:

- Go to: [www.aroc-usa.org](http://www.aroc-usa.org).
- Click on "Join/Renew" under the banner.
- Fill out and submit the required information.
- Affiliate with the Oklahoma Club.
- *Dues Note:* AROCOK has a \$5.00 add-on to national AROC dues, which comes back to the Club as part of the dues split with National. Base dues for AROCOK are \$65/year.

### **Stay Informed**

To keep up on the latest AROCOK events, visit our website: [www.arocok.com](http://www.arocok.com).

Click the Facebook icon to see photos of Alfisti in action at Club events.

### **See Your Name in Print**

Please send article ideas--or better yet, articles--to Eileen Simmons, [simmons5@cimtel.net](mailto:simmons5@cimtel.net).