

# **AROC Convention Planning Handbook**

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# Alfa Romeo Owners Club Convention Planning Handbook

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## **Purpose of this handbook**

To provide a starting point and reference for chapters planning an AROC national convention.

This manual contains advice from the current and prior AROC Convention Advisors as well as past convention chairs.

The Alfa Romeo Owners club has held an annual meeting since the club's inception in 1958. In the early years the meeting was usually in Chicago in February or March and included a speaker and a few race cars on display.

In 1969 the meeting was in late April, outside Chicago, and a track event, concours and rally were added. It was the first convention as we know it. Since then, a lot has been learned about what appeals to convention-going Alfa owners, and how to fit it all into a few days.

While-year-after year content and scheduling are similar, the moving convention site assures that each organizing committee will be new to the task. Putting a unique stamp on your convention with new concepts and better methods is encouraged. Repeating easily avoided past errors is not. That is why there is a handbook, an AROC convention advisor, sample forms and collected statistics from past conventions.

What this handbook is not is an attempt to apply the sharp edge of a cookie cutter to every convention. On the contrary, by using this handbook with details of proven popular activities to more confidently shape an enjoyable convention, the organizing committee will have the time and energy to create something novel if it wishes. At a minimum, with this handbook, it is expected a committee will end a convention with fewer "if we'd only thought of..."

## **What is an AROC convention?**

Although the convention provides a great way for Alfa Owners to get together and have fun, its official purpose is to provide a location for the yearly meeting of the board of directors and the annual meeting of members. The Alfa Romeo Owners Club bylaws mandate an annual meeting of the membership. Legally, that can require only a minute or so (and it does, Saturday evening) of a four-day weekend before it's back to the discussion of issues of club interest and the many social, competitive and educational activities that can take place in and around Alfa Romeos.

More details follow, but a typical convention held in late June or July includes the following events: a board meeting, a track event, an autocross, a rally and/or tour, a concours, then closes with an awards luncheon or brunch Sunday morning.

Every convention event is heavily social, but dinner Thursday and/or Friday night, a banquet on Saturday with a featured speaker and an awards brunch/luncheon Sunday are particularly so.

Filling out the schedule are, for example, tech sessions, gatherings of newsletter editors, vintage racers, Giulietta owners, restorers and assorted groups and interests. There's also a lot of shopping for Alfa-related items in the vendor rooms.

Convention attendees will congregate in the parking lot, in the bar, and any shady spot at the concours. They will show off their Alfa's engine compartment, discuss the origins of the Sprint and the differences among the four 1900 body styles.

At least one speed event is required, as that is part of what owning an Alfa is all about.

## **AROC Convention Advisor**

The AROC Convention Advisor is a resource person, not a convention dictator.

The current Liaison helped plan and execute three AROC conventions with his chapter, was present for the presentation of proposals for over thirty other AROC conventions, and participated at almost every one since 1980. He sometimes confers with the prior liaison, Joel Edinburg, who has the most extensive experience in working with chapters developing an AROC convention.

To help with planning, extensive data was gathered from prior conventions and assembled into charts and methods to provide a look at the past as a reference to create budgets and establishing a baseline for many aspects based on prior results. These forms and records are available upon request to chapters planning their bid to host an AROC national convention. *Hotel contracts are complex and favor the hotel. It is recommended that someone familiar with hotel convention contracts, usually a professional at this or a club member who does this for a hotel chain, assist your chapter.*

## **Personnel**

- Organization and a large number of workers are critical. Name a Convention Chair for the organizing committee, and fill the following specialty chairs:
- Treasurer
- Finance/Budgets (can be the same as treasurer, but not necessarily)
- Registration
- Publicity
- Program Editor
- Sponsor and advertising solicitations
- Speed events, one for each
- Non-speed events (rally, tour)
- Hotel (meeting rooms, meals, lodging)
- Concours
- Hospitality
- Awards

## **Timing**

A bit more than two years before your convention is early planning time. AROC accepts bids for national meetings 2 years before the meeting will occur.

## **25 months prior...to one month after**

Pick the date you would like to hold the convention. The Board of Directors requests it **not** be over the July 4 weekend as that makes it difficult for many members to attend. The convention chair should have an outline of the schedule prepared a month prior to submitting a convention proposal. Upon request, the AROC Convention Advisor can assist with catching obvious problems, conflicts or omissions before a bid is submitted.

Hotel information, maps or sketches of the event locations, and general information on the proposed location should be available. Chamber of commerce or visitors bureau are good sources. Sufficient copies for the members of the Board should be available as handouts.

- Have hotel pricing for rooms
- Be sure the hotel has rooms for the Board meeting, vendor room and tech sessions available when needed.
- Know where the track event will take place and what it will cost participants.
- Have the autocross site arranged and know what it will cost to participate.
- Identify the Concours site.
- Determine preliminary arrangements and pricing for the Banquet and Awards lunch.

## **Two Years Before the Meeting...**

With your best foot forward, present your proposal to the Board. You may have competition, so be thorough and complete. Have as many answers to questions as they may ask. Prices are particularly important, along with distances from hotel to event sites.

After the Board votes and they tell you that your Chapter is the host for the Convention for 2 years hence, accept the accolades, and get ready to get back to work as soon as you return home.

### **Congratulations! Your convention bid has been accepted.**

**Immediately confirm your hotel, race course, autocross and concours venue reservations.**

**Sign the contract (which will be sent to the convention chair) with AROC and then you will have the option to receive \$2,000 in operating seed money, sent to the chapter treasurer.**

**In short, your chapter will repay the \$2,000 at the convention end, keep the next \$350, and then split the balance with AROC-national. AROC pays for the board meeting and therefore, that expense is subtracted from the seed money before sending that portion back to AROC.**

## **You've been accepted...**

As soon as you return home, confirm hotel room numbers and pricing, meeting room availability, track and other event locations.

Many hotels and conventions sites and tracks plan two years in advance. Once you have these agreements in place, begin planning sessions for your chapter members and any others from whom you will need assistance; e.g., track workers, instructors, someone to prepare a rally or tour of the area, a source for awards. While these will not be needed immediately, they should be given a heads-up so neither you nor they will scrambling at the last minute.

Determine if you need money for deposits. If so, ask the National Office for the \$2,000 seed money that is offered. The check will be sent to the chapter treasurer. Let the AROC Administrator if the check needs to be made out to the convention name (the check should be deposited in a separate convention account from the general chapter funds).

Begin listing and contacting possible sponsors for your events. Remember local sponsors.

## **13 months prior to the convention:**

Re-confirm final dates and locations. Then review your proposal and make any changes for a report to the board of directors. An update will be expected at the Board meeting one year prior to your event.

Do you have a separate bank account yet? You will need one soon.

## **12 months:**

- Specialty chairs selected.

## **11 months:**

- Artwork, letterhead designed.

## **10 months:**

- Rally the chapter, gather the volunteers, identify contact people and registration recipient.

## **9 months:**

- Prepare a convention teaser story to send to all newsletter editors for placing in their local newsletters. Get a listing of the editors from the Chapter Newsletter Exchange person.
- Design the registration form to be placed in the Alfa Owner magazine. It must be submitted to and approved by the AROC Executive Committee before printing. Begin writing articles to be included in *Alfa Owner* promoting the convention and discuss now with the editor a publication schedule and article length for each article up to the convention. Send a copy of any agreed-upon schedule and article lengths to the Alfa Owner editor. Do not assume that there will be room in the magazine whenever you want it for any length of article.

## **8 months:**

- Send the teaser to the newsletter editors. Set up a web site with convention information. Do you plan to have a system of accepting PayPal or credit cards? Online registration? Logo JPEG to the AROC web master for inclusion on the web site? Begin a digital folder for threads on AlfaBB.com

## **7 months...**

- Send formal letters to potential sponsors for their donations.
- Send letters announcing the availability of 'goody room' space to possible vendors.
- Send final version of the registration form to Alfa Owner for inclusion starting in February or March issue (depending on convention dates).

## **6 months...**

- Send articles promoting the convention to the Owner for inclusion over the next several months (plan on a six-week lead time).
- Design any tickets or lanyard tags needed for events and arrange for printing. Obtain any give-aways to be included in the registration packet.

## **5 months...**

- Is insurance coverage in place?
- Telephone any sponsors and goody room participants who have not responded to your request by mail.

## **4 months...**

- Keep reviewing budgets, income, expenses and hotel rooms each month to be certain that no part is out of alignment nor any adjustments missed.

## **3 months...**

- Final drafts and layout of the program book plus all materials for the printer.

## **2 months:**

- Double check and re-confirm everything & be sure your volunteers are available.

## **One month away!**

- Find a volunteer to be the contact with the Board of Directors during the meeting.
- Use classified ads or auto section/lifestyle articles in the in the city newspaper/local media/local events lists

## **AROC National Convention:**

- Have a great time

## **Month after:**

- Complete financial records and summaries
- Convene leadership to critique convention, submit additions and changes to the Convention Planning Handbook to AROC Convention Advisor.

## SPECIFICS

### Hotel

The thrust of these paragraphs is to say that the resort convention booking business requires expertise. Lacking experience, contracts can be loaded with future problems for the host chapter. Use of an experienced, knowledgeable person who understands negotiating hotel, banquet and convention contracts is strongly advised.

- Standard hotel contracts include a clause for the host chapter to pay for any rooms reserved in a block but not sold. Do not reserve too many rooms merely to get a better banquet price.
- Two basic methods of reserving hotel rooms have been used with success by AROC host chapters:
  - Reserve a smaller number of rooms or use a smaller hotel and have a list prepared of nearby hotels for after the main hotel is sold out. The advantage is that the host chapter is protected from being charge for empty rooms, the disadvantage is that the convention can become somewhat de-centralized.
  - Begin small and add blocks of rooms as needed. Use the chart provided by the Convention Advisor showing typical room-nights sold for conventions of various sizes, and the monthly sales curves from nine months prior to the final count. This manages risk of the chapter being billed for many unused rooms, but a minor drawback is that hotel can sell any unclaimed blocks rooms to another group at any time.
- It is very helpful to have one person at the hotel who is your main contact for any problems and can be called by attendees if they have problems with acquiring rooms or pricing.
- Be sure to look at the actual meeting, banquet, and lodging rooms, and the location of the parking areas. Do not rely on floor plans and drawings.
- Alfa owners want to show-off their cars. Arrange for a portion of the parking lot, near the front of the building for night security.
- There should be a couple of faucets for car washing. Be sure the hotel will authorize their use. Remember to bring hoses.
- Know what is included at the hotel, because often the basic price is only for a basic shell.
  - Are the tables for the vendor room extra, and how about a microphone for the Saturday banquet.?
  - Are overhead projectors or slide projectors available?
  - What does coffee service cost?
  - Can arrangements for lunch for the Board members be made, or must they use the public restaurant?
  - The food service will expect an attendee count at least a day prior to the banquet. They will not deduct the cost of meals that area cancelled at the last minute. Know the meal count deadline, and do not commit for more meals than you think you can sell.
- The hotel usually provides some rooms at no charge. Determine who will be assigned to them: chapter president, event chair, others. Should one be used as a hospitality room for early arrivals? Be careful to check your room-count estimates by day. They relate to the events that will take place on that day and when people will be arriving for those events.
- 'Hotel central reservation services' has often been a problem for convention organizers. The central registration person will often see only that the hotel has been fully booked and report that no rooms are available, when in actuality there are 150 empty rooms reserved by the convention chapter. For this reason it is best to have members call the hotel directly. Be aware that hotel switchboard hours are not 'around the clock' and during after-hours, all calls directly to the hotel phone number will be automatically (and without warning) switched to Central Reservation Services.
- Ask questions about the smallest details, and be sure everything is in writing.

### Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors meeting requires extensive microphone and recording equipment. This may be available through the hotel. It may not. In either case, check out pricing, as it can be very expensive (especially through the hotel). If you have a tech-savvy person available (it is not really hard), you may not have to pay for a person to manage the recording process while the board is meeting. If not, you will have to pay the company supplying the equipment for a person. The Board meeting generally begins around 8:30 AM and runs most of the day. It can run

into early evening if the agenda is long or if details are discussed at length.

## **Sponsors/vendors/program advertisers**

Before soliciting commercial support for the convention, think through what the event committee can offer, which companies might respond favorably, at what level, and organize your efforts accordingly.

Sample forms for cover letter, sponsorship categories and detailed suggestions is available from the AROC Convention Advisor.

Parts houses and accessory manufacturers all want exposure, and some will actually be present to sell their wares. You can provide several vehicles: advertising in an expanded registration program, identification on the registration form or event poster, the sponsorship (or co-sponsorship) of an event, or a prominent location for a banner (banners have become a standard practice for promoting sponsors at events). In conjunction, a major sponsor might want to introduce a special guest or wave-off the first car. Offer it; in moderation, that is just fine. The Alfa Romeo family is diverse.

If you decide to publish a glossy, color program, consider making the program advertising part of the event sponsorship and increase the price accordingly. On the other hand, smaller retailers on the opposite coast, who otherwise might not be associated with the convention, might be persuaded to pay \$50 specifically for a program 'business card' ad. Do not forget local boutiques, and restaurants that might want to include a coupon in the program or goodie bag. Local businesses might also advertise in *Alfa Owner* just prior to the convention.

This is not a scheme to accumulate a mountain of sponsorship and advertiser revenue. It is an effort to give commercial supporters as much visibility as possible, and to earn the revenues necessary to underwrite rich and diverse convention activities at a moderate cost to participants.

Thank supporters often, with the microphone and in print, before, during and after the convention. They deserve it.

## **Publicity**

*Alfa Owner* magazine is your primary advertising vehicle. The Editor will be helpful. Talk to the editor about which topics are best and when and what you have. Historically, beginning in March (sometimes January) there is a story about convention activities, followed by one about the track event and another about nearby touring opportunities. Shorter accompanying stories can be about the banquet speaker and a featured model, if any.

In December, send an abbreviated convention story to chapter newsletter editors to use after the first of the year. Also include a small convention logo with telephone number. It can be used repeatedly on a space available basis. Remember, newsletter editors are often looking for a good article and to provide useful information for members. Make it easy for them to reinforce the convention publicity (but not the identical article) that appears in *Alfa Owner*. Almost all convention attendees will be AROC members. They know there is an annual convention and you will reach them through the *Alfa Owner*. But remember, eight out of ten Alfa owners are **not** AROC Members. That makes it worthwhile to do publicity and 'trolling' within an easy drive of the convention site.

The bigger newspapers have an auto editor. Let them know, well in advance that the convention is coming up. Then, check again six weeks prior to the convention. A story and picture of a Sprint Speciale from a club member might result. The editor might use the four or five paragraphs you submit. That is at no charge. Radio talk stations, local event calendars, Chambers of Commerce tourist magazines are all source of publicity. It helps to have a chapter member who is a Communications or Public Relations professional handle your publicity.

Send a convention logo to the AROC-national board member in charge of the web site. Include mentions (or maintain a presence) on the Alfa Bulletin Board. Ask if major sponsors will promote your event as well on their web sites. Consider an event listing in *Hemmings* and other sports car-related publications. Remember Keith Martin of *Sports Car Market* magazine in Portland. He might help publicize the convention. Refer readers to the convention web site, the chapter president or convention chair for specific information. A new member will never get more for his \$60 than to find the national convention on their doorstep.



A few Alfa owners who see the auto page item, or the ad, may not register and instead cruise the hotel parking lot or walk through the concours. You will not know who they are now, but they might surface a later date. The local publicity is worthwhile.

Those eight-out-of-ten also use local Alfa repair and parts shops. Give a convention poster (even if a one-off inkjet 'poster') and a dozen fliers to the shop owners.

Visibility in the nation auto magazines probably won't result in convention attendees, but it'll show Alfa followers that the club is alive and well. Road and Track has a brief calendar of events, and Hemmings invites (at no charge) notices of club activities. Try to use them, with plenty of lead time.

## **Convention Registration**

First, talk through the sample forms, the entire system and policies with a couple organizing committee members. Then begin the work

### **1. Create the registration form**

- The registration form should provide a list of all events, date, and costs, and a brief description of any new or unusual activities. Indicate which events have limited capacity, and may require a waiting list. Remember to include everything from when the Board meeting will take place, to when the rally and/or tour will start so attendees can see if there are conflicts in their plans.
- The form should be clear, concise, uncluttered, and user-friendly. What may be obvious to you, who worked on it for months, may not be to someone seeing it for the first time. After proofing it ten times, give it to someone in your office or a friend. Then ask what it says.
- In addition to the name, address, and number of attendees, you may need to ask for the Alfa model, names of family members attending (for name tags), and expected arrival date (for registration desk planning). Warning: Pre-printing the registration fee occasionally causes registrants to fail to include payment
- Some participants will bring more than one car. Design a means of linking each car with its activity.
- To encourage early registration for event planning purposes, establish a pre-registration deadline of about 3 to 4 weeks before the convention and charge a reasonable 'late' fee after that date (this is often handled as an 'early' versus 'regular' fee).

NOTE: Non-AROC members from the US must join AROC to register for the convention with the exception of the Alfa Romeo Association (ARA, a northern California club). All members of foreign Alfa Romeo clubs are also welcome without joining AROC. Examples include the Alfa Romeo Club of Canada, the Australia and New Zealand Alfa Romeo Clubs, and any of the European clubs.

- Vendors who have paid a booth charge (if any) should be allowed to purchase meal tickets without paying the registration fee. At some conventions up to three banquet tickets for major sponsors have been included. Consider your options and what works best for you.

### **2. Establish the registration budget**

- The registration budget is based on expected attendance.
- Email registration confirmation helps reduce mailing costs. Email also provides a convenient avenue for sending any major convention updates. If you will be confirming by e-mail, remember not everyone uses e-mail. Also, consider what you will do if the confirmation is not received or there has been an error. For each registrant you will need supplies including envelopes and labels, nametags, information sheets, tickets, and entry forms.
- Each registrant should receive a confirmation of their registration and a packet of materials upon arrival. Historical data may be helpful in determining this part of your budget.
- Communication with chairs is necessary. Items such as rally instructions and autocross maps may be provided by the chairs of those events, from their budgets (or a separate printing and publicity budget). Duplicating the competition code can be expensive. Postage will also be needed for post-convention refunds, and there will be telephone, fax and possibly PayPal and credit card transaction expenses.

### **3. Determine how you will respond to registrants**

The response to the registrant should contain a list of all events for which they signed up, the price of each, total cost, amount paid, whether they were placed on a waiting list, and balance (or refund) due. State it explicitly if a refund is coming.

For pre-convention cancellations and refunds, have a firm policy and state it clearly on the registration form or in the registration response. Generally, if there is a waiting list for an event or there is no financial loss to the club, the refund request should be granted.

Some registrants include only partial payment, saying they will mail the balance later. Require full payment for registration. Note that event and meal tickets may not be available later.

### **4. Create the registration packet.**

Each registration packet should contain:

- ID tags, which can be made on card stock by computer, cut to size and inserted in a packet of a lanyard. Name of each registrant should appear at the top of both sides of the ID card.
- Schedule of event times and locations (in the program or reverse side of the ID tag on a lanyard).
- If used, tickets for every fee-based event. The entry form serves as the ticket for a competition event. In recent years, a single, stamped ID card on a lanyard has served for admission for all events.
- An updated registration form showing an up-to-the-minute listing of the events signed-up for and if there is a waiting list for any event.
- At your option, information on local attractions, maps, vendor information, merchant coupons, etc. Tourism offices will be glad to help.
- Organize a packet stuffing party about 2 weeks prior to the convention. One group should stuff, while the other provides quality control by verifying that each registrant receives the appropriate items.

### **5. Convention Registration Desk Volunteers**

- A knowledgeable, organized convention registration desk staff is critical to smooth operation of a convention. It all begins here for attendees. Shortcomings leave a poor impression of the convention, in general.
- Establish generous desk hours, even if shifts are required. The registration desk is often a central meeting area for attendees, a place to go between events, check for messages, get last minute information, instructions and directions.
- Keep a bulletin board updated with current information and old info removed.
- When the registrant picks up their packet, both the person working at registration and the recipient should verify that all tickets are present. Try to resolve any problems with the packet as soon as possible, such as over- or under-payment from math mistakes, etc.
- While a computer is essential, make certain that back-up disks are available, plus an old-fashioned system with pen and paper to be used for temporary notes when three different people are trying to make computer entries at the same time, and for any 'worst case' electronics scenario.
- Urge registrants who are giving-up tickets to use the bulletin board to avoid brokering tickets through the registration desk.
- After registration packets are picked up, it is difficult to coordinate giving returned tickets to people on a waiting list.
  - One possible solution is to announce that a couple of hours before the event, everyone interested should gather and the waiting list will be read, top down, and all available tickets will be distributed. That can upset schedules, however, without any assurance of receiving a ticket.
  - An alternate might be to offer the tickets at 15 minutes before the official time of the event, top down on the waiting list, first come, first served. Driving events would work this way, as many on the waiting list would come to watch.
- Have standard office supplies (pens pencils, paperclips) on hand. Be prepared for walk-in registrations (from 5 to 15 percent at recent conventions).

- Be prepared for changes: cancellations, exchanges and additional tickets needed. Run the desk like a retail sales counter, recording and reconciling every transaction with receipts. Count receipts daily and balance with daily transaction records.
- Cancellations: Choose a policy, publish it, and make sure it is clearly understood by the desk staff. If a cancellation does not incur a financial burden on the club, it should be given. Canceling a meal a few hours before it is to be served, with no waiting list, will impact the bottom line for the convention.

## 6. Post convention wrap-up

Post-Convention tasks are:

- Distribute refunds
- Prepare a registration report with summary of paid registrants and number of participants at each event. It is required for the convention report and will assist future organizers.
- Optional post-convention web site photo review (much appreciated by attendees).

## Convention Program Booklet

- The primary purpose of the program booklet is to describe what is occurring and where, and how to get there. A list of event descriptions, times, routes and route maps is essential. More elaborate program books (souvenir-type) can include several original articles and photographs about Alfas, extensive advertising, and color.
- Examples of program booklet formats from the past dozen years:
  - Binder with removable sheets covering event information, maps, sponsor promotions, and area touring opportunities
  - Stapled B&W sheets with brief descriptions of events and their locations
  - Full-color covers plus some full-page color ads, the remainder half event information, maps and articles/ half advertising. *Note: a 'souvenir' booklet is attractive, but time consuming and expensive. The individual in charge should be a professional at layout, graphics and magazine production. Otherwise, the program booklet will be expensive, but not kept by many. A lot of energy will also have to be applied to ad sales, or the short-fall in revenues absorbed elsewhere.*
- Whichever program type you choose, plan to be able to insert at the registration desk a sheet listing last minute activity and schedule changes. Consider that changes will occur to be a given.
- Vendors and advertisers should be given copies.
- Advertising copy: This can be difficult. Your program editor will have to nag, repeatedly, and in some cases will have to provide graphic design services.
- If you are doing a Souvenir-type book, have a conversation with your printer regarding printing and deadlines well in advance.
- Set a program book quantity by checking historical convention attendance figures and base your estimate on a similar convention. Will everyone receive a book or one per registration form?

## Board of Directors Meeting

The meeting of the AROC Board of Directors usually occurs on the Wednesday or Thursday at the beginning of the convention. The Board gets together only once a year (other than perhaps a phone conference), so there is a lot to talk about. The meeting usually begins at 8:30AM and continues until at least 5pm.

Scheduling a significant event early on the evening of the board meeting should be avoided so everyone, board members and meeting attendees alike, can participate in the event. In the worst case, an event might be over before the meeting is completed.

It is the responsibility of the convention committee to provide a meeting room that should seat the Board members and an audience of about 35. In the morning, coffee, tea, and possibly morning coffee-break nibbles should be provided. In the afternoon, soft drinks should be available. The Board may plan work through lunch. To address this eventuality be prepared to take lunch orders at a morning break for delivery at around noon.

The table around which the Board will sit should be horseshoe-shaped, seating 20 to 25 people. Microphones

should be placed on the table, one for every two people. A microphone on a stand should be placed before the audience. They will move to the microphone so their comments can be heard. The microphones should be connected to a recording system so the entire meeting can be taped for transcription of the minutes of the meeting.

Provide plenty of tapes or other common recording media, 9 or 10 hours worth. A member of the host chapter should monitor the recording equipment during the meeting, changing media as necessary. A volunteer should be available to run errands such as making chart copies or dealing with the hotel regarding room temperature.

The agenda of the meeting will be printed in the *Alfa Owner*, generally in May. In addition to the business discussion, new board members will be installed and election of officers will take place.

## **Tech Sessions and Seminars**

A convention might include several tech sessions or seminars. Each should last about an hour to 90 minutes and can be on any open afternoon or evening. Groups of owners of specific models are popular, Montreal owners for instance. A chapter operations session or a newsletter editor session can be very helpful. Club technical advisors may be willing to host general tech discussions. Quilting, sewing and other sessions have also proven popular at some conventions. Seminars should not all run concurrently.

## **Banquet**

Several business items occur as part of the banquet.

First and foremost, the annual membership meeting takes place. Although short, it is an important part of the convention. The club president will summarize the business that has been resolved at the Board meeting. This will include retiring, returning, and new board members; the introduction of club officers, 25-year and 50-year member awards will be presented.

Typically, the audience will be told the location of the convention to be held 2 years hence. The newsletter recognition awards will be announced. Some announcements can be moved to the awards brunch/luncheon if time requires, but be aware that fewer people attend the awards brunch than the banquet.

When the business has been concluded, the banquet speaker (if any) will be introduced and begin their presentation. After the speaker, door prizes can be given out. The number of door prizes depends on the industry of the local chapter. It is nice to have something for at least 50 percent of the attendees.

Dinner tickets can be 2-part and numbered or numbered tickets can be given out to each attendee in their packet, etc. Prizes can be donations from participants in the goody room, Alfa Owner magazine advertisers, or others offering Alfa-related merchandise.

Most banquet attendees will have spent the day out-of-doors, at the autocross, rallying, or touring. They may have returned to attend tech sessions or seminars. Plan to begin the program earlier rather than later, at the beginning of desert rather than after. Otherwise a the after-dinner program could run beyond the ability of our members to endure. Keep the activity moving along.

## **Speed Events**

### **Safety**

The Number One concern with any speed event is safety. The AROC safety code, which includes requirements for helmets, roll bars, and seat belts, must be followed.

Cars must pass a technical examination to ensure compliance with the code. While a check of key mechanical and safety components can be carried out the morning of the event, a more thorough exam will have to be completed prior to the convention. That can involve Alfa service shops or experienced and objective racers.

However, because most participating cars are driven to the convention, urge owners to take time just prior to the time trials or autocross to give their car another thorough inspection.

## **Classifications**

In order to group cars with the same potential, the AROC publishes classification codes for track time trials and for the autocross. They are not the same. If your chapter thinks it has a better classification code, registrants must receive a copy of it 60 days prior to the event. This requirement can be met by publishing the code you will use in *Alfa Owner*.

While there is no requirement to provide participants with a copy of the AROC codes, it would be helpful to put one in the registration confirmation mailing and refer to the code download (PDF) available on the [www.aroc-usa.org](http://www.aroc-usa.org) web site.

Rather than have contestants simply record their total points on their entry, it is preferred to have them sign and return a form with each modification circled. An email derivative has come into popular use. This information is then added to the event Excel chart (Excel because it widely used and can be edited by the registrar and event chair). A sample form of typical categories is available from the AROC Convention Advisor.

An increasing number of racetracks are operating under noise control restrictions. If decibel levels are restricted, or full mufflers are required, publicize the fact well in advance so that participants can prepare for it.

## **Insurance**

Track and autocross events often require insurance beyond the standing national coverage. Check with the National Office Administrator to determine the limits of liability available from the insurance carrier for AROC. Some tracks require organizers to purchase their insurance; if so, it should also meet club requirements.

In the past, about 50 to 70 cars have participated in both the time trials and the autocross (autocrossing is more popular in some regions than others). Usually the number is limited by the size of the track or autocross course and how much time the organizers feel they can give to practice and fast laps. The largest groups in both the time trials and the autocross have been Class D, E and F.

## **Time Trials**

The time trials will almost always be at a racetrack. Track management, the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) or an experienced car club can provide advice and assistance.

## **Autocross**

Putting on a safe autocross requires particular care. Participants are often inexperienced, and ad-hoc course locations that include parks and shopping centers can be hazardous. If your chapter has limited in experience in putting on an autocross, look for help. A local SCCA club may be doing a lot of autocrossing. The Detroit chapter has run and equipped autocrosses at some AROC national meets.

Note that Fastest Time of Day (FTD) winners in both time trials and autocross must be Alfa Romeo.

## **Rallies**

Generally, there are two kinds of rallies: Time-Speed-Distance (TSD), and gimmick or 'observation' rallies. They are sometimes held at the same time during the convention, although one or the other may be the event of choice during a particular convention, accrioding to local preferences.

TSD rallies are complex and require experience to organize. Again, you might look to the SCCA for help. If you choose to hold both types at your convention, do not have them on the same roads, or they may conflict in a way that interferes unfairly with TSD participants.

Do not become so absorbed in laying out a complex gimmick rally that some participants get lost and miss part of the remainder of the activitie for the day. They will not think its was funny. Between two to three hours of driving is a is a good length. It allows for slight off course excursions, without making anyone late for other events or tiring the driver and navigator.

Generally, there will be about 60 to 100 rally participants, 10 to 15 will select the TSD if it is offered (local exceptions do occur).

At a pre-rally meeting you can hand out instruction sheets and group participants by experience, if desired, or by expected participation in later events.

### **Scheduling rally and the autocross on the same day**

This often occurs. Rallies, typically, get an early morning start, with the autocross starting mid to late morning on the same day.

If the autocross has many expected participants, will start at the same time as the rally, and will probably run long into the afternoon, rallyers who want to autocross should be identified and allowed to run the autocross first if they wish. Some rallies start from a far end of the autocross lot, allowing competitors to immediately move from autocross to rally.

If the autocross has a noticeably later start than the rally, rallyers may participate in the autocross after completing the rally. They will probably miss the driver meeting and not have an opportunity to walk the course, but course maps and comments from organizers prior to their runs can help.

Finally, remember to provide 2 trophies for each award winning rally team. Team members may not share the same trophy shelf, or even the same house. Some conventions have had a separate category for more than two people in a car, noting that extra sets of eyes are an advantage.

### **Concours**

The challenge in organizing and scoring the concours is to encourage the inclusion of a wide a range of Alfa models as possible and yet recognize quality restoration and preparation. AROC has a both a concours procedures manual and a concours chair that will assist in the judging process.

The awards lunch sometimes follows the concours, so remember to enlist the help of as many as possible for judging. They normally have to hustle late Sunday morning, and scores are typically tabulated while the other awards are being given. Winners will be announced during the Awards lunch program.

Some recent conventions have moved the concours from Sunday to Saturday, preferring an early Sunday tour and more time to tabulate scoring from the concours.

A nice touch is to put a large ribbon on top of windshields of winning cars so they can be easily identified.

One AROC convention was held in conjunction with a major concours. It worked largely because the chairs of both concours were AROC members determined to avoid the many pitfalls of such an arrangement. It takes experience and skill in planning this sort of show as the AROC concours needs to be a 'featured, stand alone show' with its own rules and not a 'secondary' or 'side show' for the other concours, nor dragged into its politics.

### **Building your Chapter**

Sunday afternoon, after the parking lot is empty, you will ask yourself (if still awake) what the convention did for your chapter. You might have picked up eight or ten new members, which is good, and chapter leadership will know a few members better, but...

Prior to the convention, consider assigning someone the task of membership development. Every chapter should be called, twice, and consulted about the convention. Urge everyone to help in some way, and at least to attend. Call again, show them they are needed and wanted. After all, a nearby convention is the best opportunity you will ever have to energize your members. Be alert to member burnout among the core group during the convention planning. Plenty of helpers and the willingness to delegate reduce that possibility. Some convention leaders have been known to 'take off a year or two' after being over-burdened with tasks.

After the convention, do not let the newly involved members drift away. organize a post-convention party. Then, put some extra effort into fall and early winter events. Get on the phone, again. Make the relationship stick and you will have the next generation of chapter leaders.

## Miscellaneous

- Have a large bulletin board available where people will gather. It will be used for last minute changes in location or scheduling, cars for sale, notes of attendees looking for no longer available tickets to the banquet or parts for broken down cars, or someone looking for a rally partner. If a particular model is being featured (see below) it is a great place for photos of owners of cars. St Louis did this with the 1900, and it was nice!
- Consider featuring a model. St Louis had the 1900, Baltimore the 2000/2600, Colorado in 1994 the Giulietta (t0th anniversary of its release), Detroit had a two rows of 1900s (including all three BAT cars) at the concours and a starting grid GTAs at the track. Only a handful of cars will show up, but it provides another area of interest at the convention. Place the featured model center stage at the concours.
- Used parts markets sometimes work, sometimes not. Set aside a spot in the parking lot to keep the process confined but readily available.
- Find a volunteer or two to take organizing committee notes, get correspondence out (including thank you notes), run errands and keep you on schedule. It will take pressure off the committee chairs and frazzled registration desk workers.
- Promote 'Ask me, I live here!' by providing host chapter members with shirts and or buttons identifying them as local.
- Create a convention logo that will also work as a simple, one color design. The more colors the more expensive it is to reproduce in all forms. It may look fine on paper, but what will it look like printed on a T-shirt or large on the front of a sweatshirt or embroidered on a golf shirt?
- An event poster is a labor of love. The artwork must be very good and, even then, you will not sell enough copies to cover the cost. With electronic print files, taking orders with a few posters on display is an option.
- Give your sponsors tangible rewards, something they can put on their office wall such as a plaque or certificate.
- If you need more help, ask adjacent chapters to participate. In 1986 New Jersey and Long Island put on the convention jointly, sharing the responsibilities by location and interests.

## Post Convention Report

A financial summary of the convention must be sent to the National Office and a verbal report given at the convention held the following year. Among the information it should include:

- total attendees
- attendees by event
- financial report by event
- total profit or loss

A sample Income/Expense Report form is available from the AROC Convention advisor. It is an extension of the Budget form, making the transition from planning to reporting easier.

## In Closing

We hope that you will make some money on the convention. National pays for the taping equipment for the board meeting as it is necessary for producing the minutes of the meeting. You keep the first \$350 profit, repay the convention seed money to the national office, and split the remaining profit with national 50/50 percent.

If you have any suggestions for improving the manual, please feel free to send them to the AROC office. We update the manual as appropriate.

**Alfa Romeo Owners Club**  
**CONTRACT FOR NATIONAL EVENT**

This agreement, made the date shown below, by and between the ALFA ROMEO OWNERS CLUB, an Illinois corporation with principal offices at P.O. Box 12340, Kansas City, MO 64116-0340 (hereinafter called "National"), and the \_\_\_\_\_ a corporation organized under the laws of the state of \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter called the "Chapter");

Whereas the National selects a Chapter to put on and host a convention in various locations; and

Whereas the Chapter has requested that it be selected and has been chosen to host such a convention;

Now, therefore, this agreement and the promises and mutual covenants of the parties:

1. This event shall be held in \_\_\_\_\_ (city) on \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(day/month/year) (day/month/year)

If there is a net profit from the event, the first \$350 is to be retained by the host Chapter.

2. If the Chapter has requested and received "seed Money" for the expenses of this convention, said advance will be repaid to National after the payment pursuant to paragraph 1.
3. The balance of the net profit, if any after the payments pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2, will be shared equally (50/50) between the Chapter and the National.
4. The event pricing schedule you submitted in your proposal is attached to and a part of this contract. Should you need to change any pricing for this convention, please notify the AROC President about the change and the reason for it. The Board of Directors will have to authorize the change(s).
5. It is specifically agreed by and between the parties that the National's liability for this convention is limited to the amount of "seed money" advanced to the Chapter, and that any expenses or obligations in excess thereof will be borne by the Chapter.
6. The parties also agree that a full accounting of moneys received and expended for the convention will be made by the Chapter to National within ninety (90) days after the conclusion of the convention.
7. The Chapter specifically agrees that any and all contracts, written and implied, verbal or otherwise, shall be made only in the name of the Chapter and not in the name of National.



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CONTRACT FOR NATIONAL EVENT**

8. The Chapter also agrees that, in putting on this convention, the Board of Directors of National will be consulted as to any matters pertaining to the convention where problems exist. The national agrees to promptly provide assistance in the form of advice and guidelines.
9. The Chapter also agrees that all rules of the National promulgated for such conventions, such as (but not limited to) safety for auto events and requirements for insurance, will be strictly adhered to and followed.
10. This agreement shall be governed by the laws of the state of \_\_\_\_\_, and any modifications of this agreement shall be made only in writing and signed by representatives of both parties.
11. The Chapter has requested, and hereby received, a "seed money" advance in the sum of \_\_\_\_\_.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties have put their respective signatures this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

(date) (month) (year)

Attest:

ALFA ROMEO OWNERS CLUB:

\_\_\_\_\_  
AROC Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

Attest:

ALFA ROMEO OWNERS CLUB:

Chapter

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

<b>Year</b>	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Track</b>	<b>Event Notes</b>
2011	KY, Ohio Valley	Lexington	Lexington	
2010	Capital	Frederick, MD	Summit Point	
2009	Oregon	Portland	Portland Int'l. Raceway	Mutiple Rallies, 8C2900, Mt.St. Helens Tour
2008	Chicago	Oak Hills, IL	Autobahn	50th anniversary, Lakeshore Drive Tour
2007	Detroit	Pontiac	Waterford Hills	1st Saturday concours, 1st Pre-convention tour
2006	Oklahoma	Tulsa	Hallett	BAT cars, 1900s, Pre-War Alfas, 8C intro, 6C2500s, GTA starting grid w/Don Black
2005	Northwest	Seattle	Seattle Int'l. Raceway	Gilmore Museum dinner, Art Deco Rally 8C2900, Tipo Bs, 6C1750s, Tipo 33; Spider raffle, NW regional theme throughout
2004	New England	New Hampshire	NH Dragway	Henry Wessells spoke
2003	So. Florida	Ft. Lauderdale	Moroso	No more July 4th weekends
2002	So. Cal	Costa Mesa	CA Speedway	Huntington Beach BBQ
2001	Alfa Tennessee	Nashville	Tenn Raceway	Local estate concours
2000	Oregon	Portland	PIR	8C2900, 8c2300, P3
1999	Strada Fantasma	Kansas City	Hallett	
1998	New Mexico	Santa Fe	—	
1997	Buckeye	Columbus, OH	Mid Ohio	
1996	Arizona	Phoenix	PIR	
1995	Atlanta	Atlanta Road	Atlanta	Don Black spoke
1994	Colorado	Copper Mountain	Hill climb	'Giuliettas' Evan Wilson spoke
1993	Capital	Baltimore	Summit Point	2000/2600s, Phil Hill, Rene Dreyfus
1992	St. Louis	St Louis	Gateway Intl	Disco Volante, 1900s, Missouri River cruise
1991	San Diego	San Diego	Long	Autocross TZ2, 6C3000 CM, TC Browne
1990	Detroit	Troy, MI	Waterford Hills	BAT 9, River cruise, Alfa Romeo R&D tour
1989	Connecticut	Waterbury	Lime Rock	Tipo 33, 159, 8C2900, 1900CSS Zagato
1988	Oklahoma	Tulsa	Hallett	Street Autocross
1987	Oregon	Portland	Portland Int'l. Raceway	
1986	NJ/LI jointly	Bethlehem, PA	Pocono	Craig Morningstar of ARDONA spoke
1985	Wisconsin	Elkhart Lake	Road America	8C2300 M, RLSS, 1939 1750 GS Lee Hall, AROC founder
1984	Northwest	Seattle	Seattle Int'l.	62500, 2600 sedan, 1900 Touring
1983	Ohio Valley	Cincinnati	Long	Autocross
1982	So Cal	Costa Mesa	Riverside	6C1500 Zagato
1981	Detroit	Troy, MI	Waterford Hills	SZ, TZ in autocross and time trials, Henry Ford Musuem/Greenfield Village
1980	AONE	Danvers MA	Lime Rock	Clam bake
1979	San Diego	San Diego	Long	autocross 1959 SZ, 1949 6C2500 cabrio
1978	Capital	Reston VA	Summit Point	6C2500 Freccia d'Oro
1977	Colorado	Aspen Colorado		
1976	Connecticut	Southbury	Lime Rock	
1975	So Cal	Long Beach	Riverside	
1974	Detroit	Ann Arbor	Grattan	
1973	Colorado	Aspen	Aspen Track	T.C. Browne spoke
1972	(Mega)	Saddle Brook, NJ	Lime Rock	
1971	CA	Ontario	Ontario Motor	Lee Midgely spoke
1970	Wisconsin	Elkhart Lake	Road America	
1969	Chicago	Elgin IL	Meadowdale	Two 8C2300s
1968	Chicago	Lake Forest		10th Annual Meeting 3/9/68

1967	Chicago	Lake Forest	9th Annual Meeting
1966	Chicago	Chicago	8th Annual Meeting 4/3/66
1965	Chicago	Chicago	7th Annual Meeting 3/30/65
1964	Chicago	Chicago	6th Annual Meeting 4/12/64
1963	Chicago	Chicago	5th Annual Meeting 2/17/63
1962	Chicago	Hinsdale	4th Annual Meeting 3/3/62
1961	Chicago	Hinsdale	3rd Annual Meeting 2/10/61
1960	Chicago	Chicago	2nd Annual Meeting 2/11/60
1959	Chicago	Chicago	1st Annual Meeting 2/5/59