

# *Romeo & Giulietta*



NEW MEMBERS NIKKO AND PAULA REYES AT THEIR PREWEDDING PHOTO SHOOT

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

ALFA UPGRADES PART TWO

NEW MEMBER PROFILE

## Rich Precario

Here it is the end of August and San Diego is back on Covid-19 lock down. Our last driving event was in June. July and August have been completely virtual. We've had a couple of Zoom social hours but no in-person events in either month. The pandemic has put a clamp on all of our normal activities, hopefully things will loosen up in the coming months and we can get some driving tours back into the club activities.

This brings up a thought on how to get more involved in the club, look into getting on the Board of Directors (BODs) as a member at large. This is an ideal time to check out the BODs activities while all the meetings are virtual and via Zoom. If you're interested in the cars, the social events, the technical aspects, the workings of the national club, or the other things the club normally does, attend a Zoom meeting and see if you're a good fit for the board. Get involved in the decision making at the BODs meetings, have your opinion heard, and see how the board operates. Whether you're a new board member or a longtime member, everyone has their point of view heard and considered. New members, with new ideas, always bring new energy to the club. If you've ever thought of starting your own business, the BODs operates in a similar manner as a small business, it is a glimpse into the activities and methodologies involved in running a small business. You get the business experience without taking any risk. You can get your feet wet with no significant cost in time or money. Sit in and get a feel, if you enjoy it keep on attending, if not just stop attending. No strings attached to this opportunity. Also, if you enjoy being part of the BODs, positions besides "at Large" will be opening up for this year and next. My tenure in my current position will be ending at the end of this year, additional position(s) will also become available next year. Let me ([rprecar1@san.rr.com](mailto:rprecar1@san.rr.com)) or anyone on the board know you would like to attend and we'll send you the Zoom logon information.

Hopefully the pandemic will end soon, when the situation returns to last year's norms, the Board of Directors meetings will return to in-person meetings. I must admit, in-person meetings are a little more fun.

Usually an optional pre-meeting dinner at a near-by restaurant precedes the meeting, these are fun. A very nice location for the BODs meetings has already been identified; the transition to in-person meetings will be seamless and easy.

Another opportunity currently available is participating in the committee to bring the 2022 National Convention to San Diego. Lance Dong is heading up this endeavor; he has a multitude of volunteer positions available for members of the club. Contact him ([araknd@gmail.com](mailto:araknd@gmail.com)) and see how you can be involved.

Think about attending a BODs meeting via Zoom, see if there is anything for you, enjoy it and join the BODs, or if you're not enjoying it, just opt out. It's very easy, no commitment. See if you like it. Try it.

That's all for now, think about getting involved with the BODs or the 2022 Convention Committee. It's a good way to be part of the club while we get back to the normal Club activities and events.

## *New Member Profile*

### **Nikko Reyes**

Nikko says that it was love at first sight when he saw the Alfa Romeo commercial during the 2017 Super Bowl. That commercial was what brought me to check it out at the dealership. It was the first test drive that sealed it. Awesome handling, quick responsive power, the simplicity and luxurious interior, the beautiful lines of the exterior and that aggressive unique grill. I still get excited talking about the car. In April, 2017, he purchased a red, Giulia TI Sport. It is Nikko's first Alfa. Nikko's first cars were hand-me-down family vehicals; 1996 and 2000 Honda Civics and a 1995 honda Accord. The first car that he purchased himself was a 2012 Subaru Forrester. He was living in Chicago at the time and felt that he needed an AWD vehical.

Nikko is an operating room registered nurse and works at Scripps Green Hospital in Torrey Pines, Sharp Memorial Hospital in San Diego and in the Advanced Surgical Center of North County in Escondido.

*More D.I.Y. fun in the garage...*

Dan Milhone

*(In part 1, in the last edition, I covered some of the work recently done on my car, at home. With fuel lines and vacuum hose replacements completed, here's what I've been up to recently on the '86 GTV6 & '73 Spider.)*

**POLYURETHANE SUPENSION PARTS**

Continuing with the “all rubber parts should be checked” agenda, next on the list was inspecting all of the suspension bushings. Especially after a friend noticed that, when he pushed down on the rear bumper, the car didn't move as expected. It was stiff and kind of “notchy”, with an intermittent squeak. We got it up on the lift, and I could see that everything, including the rubber parts on the sway bars, looked like they had been there a long time. It didn't seem to be a major project, so a shopping list was needed.

I had an old catalog, and it listed everything needed, including some things I hadn't thought about. The direct replacement (black rubber) parts were very reasonably priced. Also offered were polyurethane versions, claiming longer life and better performance, at a higher price. After some reading, I went with the upgrade parts. The catalog shows that my car uses them in these areas:

<b>Watts Link</b>	<b>DeDion Pivot</b>	<b>Front and</b>
<b>Rear Sway Bars (mounting and drop links)</b>		
<b>Upper Control Arm</b>	<b>Caster Bushings</b>	<b>Shock</b>
<b>Absorber mounts</b>		

A Spider doesn't have the first 2 items. GTV6, Milano and Alfetta use the Watts and DeDion. But a Spider/GTV job would require trunion, trailing arms and likely some other rubber parts.

My GTV6 uses a pivot mechanism (the Watts Link) to control the up-and-down /centering movement of the back end. NASCAR uses a similar set-up, but I think they call it a Z Bar. Mine uses qty. 4 of link-end bushings and one large center piece. We removed it from the car, and the rubber was definitely in poor shape. Replacing these pieces was not difficult. A hydraulic press was not

needed, just some sockets, the grease provided and a big bench vise. This should fix the rear travel issues.

The other unique item is the “De Dion Pivot” bushing. This was a bit more work, but still do-able. Check a service manual first, if you have to replace one.

It looks like most post-1960's Alfa sway bars have 2 pivot bushings for bar-to-frame attachment and then some version of a dual pivot link at the end that connects to the suspension. The Rear sway bar section was not difficult. But the front bar was much more work. It requires the cutting off of pressed-on metal sleeves using a Dremmel Tool with a bunch of cutting wheels, without going too far and nicking the inner bar. Wrestling this long and unwieldy bar was no fun. Take it to a machine shop unless you're willing to spend some time doing it. It looks like the same procedure might be required for other models. Do your homework on that one. It's do-able, but kind of a P.I.T.A.

Front and rear sway bars can be a variety of diameters in thickness, so measure your respective bar diameters – in millimeters. Don't assume that the “factory spec” diameter is exactly what you have. Plus, it only takes a minute. An \$18 Harbor Freight digital micrometer is fine. Look for numbers in the 20 to 32 mm range. Different diameter bar = different sized mounting bushings required. If a thicker sway bar upgrade (for better handling) is in your plans, this is the time to do the bushings too.

I didn't replace the Upper Control Arm bushings at this time, but I'll change them when I do some front-end work in the future. The Caster Bushings were so accessible that I changed them while I was under the car. I didn't order the poly shock absorber mounts, since the car has fairly new Koni shocks, with new rubber, but I may add them later.

Results: The car has a noticeably improved feel. Words like **predictable** and **smoother** come to mind. Bouncing the rear bumper now gives consistent travel, up and down. No squeaks. I like it.

So, here's the question. Were the Poly parts an improvement over new black rubber parts? I have no

baseline for a comparison, since I never drove a brand new 1984 GTV6 (or even a used one with all new rubber parts). I'm sure that the standard replacement rubber parts would have done an acceptable job. But water, grit and ozone will age rubber, and the poly parts will hold up much longer, period. The next owner will benefit from that. And since the improvements were so noticeable, I'm pretty sure that the poly is a better performer, along with the extended life.

I ended up ordering these parts from Andy at **PERFORMATEK** in Massachusetts. He took the time to help me with a bunch of questions. He even sent a diagram of how to cut off those evil metal sleeves. As usual, use the source that you like. Note: I did some looking, and the prices didn't vary much between vendors, i.e. price shopping might be a waste of time. There are still some good suppliers out there, and I'd go with the people who can answer your questions and provide advice.

#### **INJECTOR SERVICE**

While replacing the vacuum lines (in the previous article), I read that the o-ring seals for the injectors can dry out and can create a vacuum leak. My car uses electronic injectors, and I found a place (FIC in Tracy, CA) that would completely clean and re-balance (flow rate matching) my injectors for \$35 each. Much less expensive than buying new-old-stock (or rebuilt) ones. I installed new upper & lower o-ring seals and put it back together. The old o-rings looked to be original, and some of them had cracks. Results were 1) A bit smoother idle and 2) roughly a 2 MPG improvement. When I had the car smogged last month, it made very similar numbers as it did 2 years ago. I expected a measureable improvement, but "PASSED" is still OK. It makes one wonder about the calibration accuracy of these 2 different Calif. Test Stations.

I don't know if older (SPICA/mechanical Injection) injectors can be similarly refurbished. Another Member told me that he heard that they really can't be serviced.

If you find someone who can, it might be worthwhile. There may be a lot of cars out there with injectors that have never been touched. Maybe a call to Wes Ingram (SPICA rebuilder guru in Washington) could help. Four new ones might be expensive. If you know of a rebuilder, let George Hershman know, and he could post your findings in the future. Sharing good sources.....

#### **ALIGNMENT**

The car drifts a bit to the right at higher speeds and the steering wheel has some vibration. It could use new tires, but this seemed more mechanical. I moved the rear wheels to the front, but the problem stayed. So, it's probably not a bent rim. A reputable alignment shop looked at it, and told me, "I can adjust it to get **closer to correct**, but you have loose bushings and ball joints. Not really dangerous yet, but definitely "worn". The whole front suspension looks to be original. The upper ball joints are held in place by rivets, meaning they are factory installed. A complete front-end service is now on the schedule. I need to look into what that entails, and hopefully it can be done at home.

#### **STARTER AND ALTERNATOR FRESHEN UP**

For the '73 Spider long-term project, I took the alternator and starter to a local shop for a going through. I told them these pieces are for a restoration, and he said that he would do a bit of extra work on the cosmetics. They rebuilt both items, replaced the bearings, bushings etc., along with some modern updates. And they ended up looking exceptionally nice, almost like new. The price seemed reasonable for this quality of work. If you need this type of service, and don't have a good source, I used Richer Auto & Truck Electric in Oceanside. Family owned, 30+ years in business.

As always, work smart. Safety before convenience.

## ***Officers for 2020:***

- **President: Rich Precario**  
(rprecar1@san.rr.com)
- **Vice President: Ed Aenlle**  
(eduardo.aenlle@gmail.com)
- **Secretary: Nora Aenlle**  
(leonoraja@gmail.com)
- **Treasurer: Vince Ruggiero**  
(vruggiero@aol.com)
- **Membership: Scott Currier**  
(chcurrier@cox.net)
- **Event Publicity & Newsletter: George Hershman**  
(ghhershman@gmail.com)
- **Web Master & Digital Communications: Lance Dong**  
(araknd@gmail.com)

## ***Members at Large:***

- **Barry Armstrong**  
bcarmstrong@protonmail.com
- **Terri Kragen**  
(terri@gordoncruselaw.com)
- **Jason Minos**  
(jason@alfissimo.com)
- **Robert Piacentini**  
(robert@piacentini.us)
- **Arnold Torma**  
(atorma@cox.net)