



Newsletter

Messaggio dal Presidente:

February 2012
Volume 21 Issue 2

Inside this issue:

January 2 Drive	2
January Meeting Notes	3
In Honor of our President	3
On the News Stand for February	4
In Search of the Snowy Owl	4
Events Calendar	5
Club Contacts	5

Greetings and let's hope the snow is over until next winter.

I received good news recently when the Spring Thaw organizers notified me they have added an additional 15 cars to the field! I am really under the gun now to prepare the car for April.

I frequently chat with a co-worker about vintage European cars. We were discussing the cost and performance of the contemporary car offerings, which are priced well beyond most people's means. It seems the current trend in sporty cars is to continually increase horsepower, electronics, and luxury.

I remember when I purchased my first sports car, a new 1973 124 Spider. The sticker price was about one year's pay. So too, was the cost of the 1971 VW camper I purchased new. Currently the only new sports cars affordable, costing about a year's pay, for a non-professional working stiff are the Miata and the stripped BMW Z4 version (seems the Honda S2000 has been sacked). I tend to think that sports cars must be convertibles-my personal preference. Perhaps the new MINI roadster should be included.

And the problem I have with the current offering from Europe is that the super cars are so powerful that most are only offered in a hardtop version because of the danger of crashing them (I read that somewhere...). Which brings me to my point for this essay. David LaChance, editor of Sports & Exotic Cars, speaking about his old Triumph Spitfire: "But of course I loved it. How could I not? It felt fast even though it wasn't. It was beautiful. It had character."

I hold contempt for the current fixation on super cars with super horsepower. The fact is that most people are not qualified to drive one in the manner the cars were built to be driven! Just look at the two most recent news accounts: the multi-supercar pileup in Japan and the man here in the states who crashed his new Lamborghini having owned it less than 24 hours! Some people will take a performance driving class and I am sure that is a big help.

Sure some will claim that I am just trying to justify my vintage, inexpensive, low performance cars. I will be the first to admit it would be fun to drive a supercar once. To be fair, some people only buy these cars for the purpose of exhibiting their status or to add to a collection and I am fine with that, but for a thrilling driving experience all you need is a twisty road and a vintage sports car! Even if I could afford the initial cost, expensive upkeep and maintenance, insurance and proper storage these cars deserve, would the driving experience be so much more?

Several of us have driven Oregon's Highway 47. That road is about the limit for my

Messaggio dal Presidente (con'd)

driving skills. I have driven it in both my 124 spider and my 500. I was able to scare myself in either car! It goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that I don't need a car costing six figures to kill myself.

Many vintage European cars are available for under \$10,000 and will provide a very pleasant driving experience. So I feel we are very fortunate to have them around to use and enjoy. While these cars are labeled as under-powered they are the perfect choice for those of us who have not attended a performance driving school, yet want an exciting ride on those back roads. So, let's be happy that we have vintage cars that are affordable and still a pleasure to own, car for, and drive-I know I sure am!

Not much happening this time of the year in the way of driving events, but the NW Vintage Yahoo Group is planning a one day tour on Sunday, February 12th. That isn't much notice but that is the way it will be with the Group-someone will decide her or she wants to go for a drive and that person will post it on their email list for their members to see. I simple reply email is all the response needed to get involved. Look for a link to NW Vintage Yahoo Group on the links page at our website. The Group may also start their own 'cars and coffee' type of weekend, informal get gatherings in a month or two.

The club received a donation of new and used parts for various FIAT Auto Group cars. Once I have them inventoried, we will schedule an event to give club members the opportunity to get those parts they may be able to use. I have a proposal before the board to establish how we will make the parts available to members. We owe a big 'thank you' to Pete at Performance Motors in Lynnwood for the donation. He is focusing his work on contemporary European cars now.

Sometime in the next few weeks we will need to have a planning meeting for our car show in April. The Rians and Pruczinskis will be attending the organizers' meeting at the drive-in soon and we'll then hold our own meeting.

George is working to arrange a special guest presentation for the March meeting in Kenmore – stay tuned for details! Now is the time to pay your 2012 dues – still just \$25.00. The February meeting will be devoted mostly to finishing our 2012 event schedule and socializing – hope to see you there.

Ciao

Bert

2012 NWARC New Years Drive

Our friends at the Alfa Romeo Club invited us to participate in a New Year's drive and lunch with them on January 2. The weather was reasonable and the route through the Tulalip Reservation, LaConner and the various islands made for a very enjoyable drive. The driving instructions kept us from getting off track (except once) and 'Chamber of Commerce' quips added to the charm of the northwest area of the state.

We met at the Lynnwood Starbucks to get acquainted and receive our driving instructions. We headed up I-5 for 15



miles and then turned west. The tour included Stanwood, Camano Island, Conway and La Conner. We took the loop drive through Washington Park, which many of us didn't know existed. Great views!

The drive ended in Anacortes, where we were treated to a choice of four gourmet sausage sandwiches. A couple of young entrepreneurs operating their business "The Jucy dog" were serving four different sausage treats (M4Sir, Slawanya, Nealbasa and The Wurst). The organized part of the day ended with a drawing that provided something to nearly everyone there. Definitely a worthwhile trip!



January Meeting Notes

January 4, 2012- The North meeting of F.E.N. was held at Mia Roma in Kenmore. President, Bert Cripe, called the meeting to order promptly at 7:30 p.m. Sixteen members were present. Fred Russell, editor of the Alfa Club Newsletter, was introduced. He spoke briefly of the great drive the Alfa Club sponsored on January 2nd. There were 72 people who attended: 37 cars, including two Ferraris. They had perfect weather. Diana Cripe commented on the great barbecue. Fred advised that it was a local vendor and will be used again.

Treasurer Terry Zeitner reported that we are solvent and the bills paid, including the website. Terry also reminded everyone that 2012 Dues are now due.

Dan said that he will call Jose and find out the date of the annual, XXX meeting. Our All Italian Car show this year is the 4th Sunday in April. (April 22nd)

Bert reported that at the Tacoma meeting on Tuesday, they had 7 members and two guests. Our regular meeting next month in Renton will be the only meeting for February. It will be held as usual at Amanti's.

Bert distributed the awards for the December Pasta Sauce Challenge; Charlie Bernert Won 3rd place; Gary Reed, who was 2nd place was not present.; Suzanne (Sooz) Rian was presented with the 1st place award.

Bert cited statistics that the newsletter isn't being read as much as one would expect for a membership this size. A discussion followed and it was determined that we will continue the newsletter on line as we are doing now.

The calendar for 2012 was presented briefly. It is subject to change and will be discussed further at next month's meeting.

April 7th- F.E.N. Spring tune-up rally. April 21st is the annual Tulip Rally, strong suggestion that you register online early. Registration is \$12 before April 16 for any car.

May 19- Spring Primavera tour sponsored by the Pruczinski's.

June 2nd- LeMay museum

June 17th is the IBCM Father's Day show in North Vancouver B.C.

June 24- possibly the Columbia Gorge Rally with the MGA club

June 30- Greenwood Car Show & historic weekend

July-14-Alfa Club Viva Italia Car Show. Location TBD

January Meeting Notes

(con'd)

July picnic-date and place to be determined (Charlie & Vicki's?) or Greg and Elinor's?

July 19,20 &22-Miafirori Oregon

Aug-to be determined

Sept. 22 &3-Festa Italiana, Seattle Center

October- Date to be set- Fall Color Tour-the Rians

November- to be determined

Dec 1- Alpha Christmas party

Dec 8 or 9- Our Xmas party

Next month we will discuss the calendar in depth and Alfa club will try and finalize their 3 day September run by then.

In honor of our President

When I was a little boy (many years ago!), my mother always told me that if you can't say something nice about someone then you should not say anything at all. It seems to me that too many people just don't seem to abide by this rule very well at all. All too often all we seem to hear about is people complaining about other people in some way or another. Why is it that we find it so much easier to complain than to complement?

If you thought that this story was about the President of our country you guessed wrong. I will say one thing nice about the President of our country though. If there is one single thing that our President has done right since he took office, I personally believe that he did the right thing by allowing Chrysler to enter into an agreement with Fiat. I know that there were many people at the time that were strongly against this and still are today, but I personally believe that it was the right decision to let Chrysler merge with Fiat. Taking the advice of my mother, I won't say anything more.

The President that I want to honor is the President of our own club, Bert Cripe. I joined Fiat Enthusiasts Northwest in September of 2009 shortly after I bought my 1981 Fiat Spider 2000 Limited Edition #740/1000. I met Bert at the Italian Conquers De Elegance on that extremely rainy day. That happened to be the last Italian Conquers De Elegance to be held as well unfortunately. That is another story however.

I remember that Bert was very friendly, approachable and helpful. I had no idea at the time that he was the President of the club. Due to my pleasant experience with talking to Bert and a few other members of FEN, I decided that I should join this club and see what they are all about. After all, if they like Fiats, how bad can they be?

Fast forward now to the present time. During these three plus years I have seen just a fraction of all the hard work

On the News Stand (con'd)

that Bert (and his wife Diana) have done for our club. There is much more work and time involved in everything that we do beyond what is seen in the finished product. You know what they say, easy to say but not as easy to do. I personally want to make sure that Bert knows that he is greatly appreciated for everything that he has done for our club in the past as well as the future. Without people like Bert Cripe, there would be no Fiat Enthusiasts Northwest.

I do believe that constructive criticism is necessary and we can't and don't always agree with each other on all things. That is always going to be the case. It would be boring if we were all the same. Let's try our best however to not overlook the good things that we do and to let people know that we appreciate the good things that they do. I would also like to ask that we continue with constructive criticism but try our best not to just "complain." There is a difference between complaining and giving constructive criticism.

So, here is to Bert Cripe, for the many years of dedicated service, hard work and endless hours of time that he has contributed to our club so that we can all enjoy a club that gives us all a fun and enjoyable place to appreciate our cars and each other as friends. I pray that Bert has no plans on leaving the club any time soon. I don't know what we would do without him.

With great respect and appreciation,

George W Baumann

Vice President

Fiat Enthusiast Northwest

On the News Stand for February

This month I want to share the following offerings with you:

Auto Italia, issue #191 (British): Spain's SEAT was only one of many companies, in many countries, licensed to manufacture FIAT automobiles. On page 50, is a story about Yugoslavian built model 600 cars. While the 600 was discontinued by Fiat in 1969, production in Yugoslavia continued until 1985! The displacement was increased to 767 cc and the car was sold as a Zastava 750. This was truly an "every man's" car there for many years. For someone seeking parts this may present a new location to hunt for them... Also in this issue, on page 42, are a couple of photos of a milk delivery truck based on the Topolino. This is not a standard Furgone truck of which photos are readily available on the web. This vehicle has a larger body 'grafted' onto it just aft of the windshield. And finally on page 64 is a description of a UK club for contemporary Abarth car owners. Pictured are a couple of 500 and a Punto based versions of the performance cars.

Thoroughbred & Classic Cars, issue #462 (British): An article about the Lancia Fulvia HF 1600 Competizione. This is of interest not just because of the make, but because the car was designed by Tom Tjaarda, who you should know designed the 124 Spider while employed at Pininfarina. Tom is an American and was the featured guest at the ItalianCarFest in Grapevine Texas in 2006. Besides Pininfarina, he has been employed by Ghia, FIAT, Ford, Italdesign and other firms. He owned his own company for a few years. The article is also of interest since it mentions some of the business relationships of Ghia, Ford, Chrysler, VW, and such people as Alessandro de Tomaso and Giacinto Ghia.

The article hints at the fact that when you look at the history of the Italian automobile industry, you will find many links between the various players. These connections even stretch across much of Europe and link many companies. Once you delve into this network and see how so many cars (and companies) are linked you realize that these cars are truly 'brothers under the skin'. I have seen photos of FIATS, Alfa Romeos, and Peugeots coming off the assembly lines side-by-side at Pininfarina. Thus I believe the idea of criticizing one brand, while lauding another becomes is illogical, at least in terms of the quality of the 'standard' brands aimed at the everyday consumer.

In Search of The Snowy Owl, January 2012

Since we're old, we can do as the parents did before us and go on a Sunday Drive.

We set out to go north to see the Snowy Owls, which had been spotted in Skagit and Whatcom Counties. No coats were needed and the sunshine was very bright. It was a gorgeous day for a drive, as we drove north through the Tulip Reservation and out towards Camano Island. The article we read talked about the owls being easy to spot because of their white heads and the fact that they sit lower towards the ground than other birds of prey, such as hawks. We counted at least 15 gaggles of Snow Geese, having from 20 to 200 geese in them. Then we quit counting. One gaggle had about 10,000 geese and it was amazing to see and hear. We tried to get a picture with our little lens. We saw many hawks and several eagles. Winding our way through the beautiful farmland around Roxwell Store and Best Road brought back memories of the Tulip Rally. Most fields were plowed and we believe that is why the Owls were not around because we don't think field mice and Voles would hang out in a plowed field. A yellow crop

In Search of The Snowy Owl, January 2012 (con'd)

duster airplane we saw didn't look like Walt Disney's 'Pedro' at all because he had a very blunt nose which did not extend forward beyond the wings. Very cute!

Mount Baker couldn't be seen because of the clouds, but Mt. Erie and Pilchuck poked up and Rainier to the south was majestic as always.

We spotted several hunters walking by carrying their rifles. We just hope they were careful.

Just outside Conway, we spotted two eagles sitting in a field, which did not look like normal eagle behavior. We think maybe one eagle was injured and the other standing guard. We said a little prayer request for help for the bird.

As we wound up our trip, it was just in time for dusk to see the orange sunset, and the trees without leaves silhouetted against the sky. We love this time of day!

Well, we didn't see one owl, but it doesn't matter. We feel privileged each time we see an eagle. Dan and Sooz Rian

Events Calendar

Since we will be finalizing the calendar for 2012 only the Regular Club meeting is shown:

Wednesday, February 1 @

Amante Pizza and Pasta

4201 NE Sunset Blvd

Renton, WA

Club Contacts

President: Bert Cripe 360-731-8758,
spiders@wavecable.com

Vice-President: George Baumann 425-235-1202,
cecilia66536@yahoo.com

Treasurer/Membership: Terry Zeitner 425-640-2994,
tmzeitner@gmail.com

Contacts (con'd)

Secretary: (North) Sooz Rian 425-483-5402,
dsrian@frontier.com
(South) LeRoy Mietzner 425-836-0310,
Leroy@mietzners.net

Board Member at Large: Darsie Bell,
darsella@gmail.com

Newsletter: Mike Wayte, 206-932-7479,
mikejwsr@comcast.net

Membership

Members receive a monthly newsletter that includes club announcements, meeting summaries, interesting articles, club event information and more. Copies of the newsletter are distributed to paid members. Distribution is via the internet to those members with internet access and mailed to members without access. For membership information visit the membership page or contact us.

Membership dues are \$25.00 a year per person/couple. Checks can be made payable to "FIAT Enthusiasts Northwest". Online membership signup/renewal is available through Paypal. Please see our website for details: <http://www.fiatnorthwest.org>