

Alfa Romeo Owners Club Convention Planning Guide

March 2019 revision

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Purpose of this Handbook

To provide a starting point and reference for chapters planning an AROC national convention. This handbook contains advice from the current and prior AROC Convention Advisors as well as past convention chairs.

AROC Convention Evolution

The Alfa Romeo Owners Club has held an annual meeting since the club's inception in 1958. During the first decade the meeting was usually held in Chicago during February or March, and included a speaker and a few racecars on display.

In 1969 the meeting was in late April, outside Chicago, and a track event, concorso and rally were added. It was the first AROC convention as we know it. Experience gained from decades of conventions point to what appeals to convention-going Alfa owners, and how to fit the celebration into a few days.

While-year-after year content and scheduling are similar, moving convention sites assures that part of 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 this publication, AROC convention advisor, sample forms and collected statistics.

This guide is not an attempt to apply a cookie cutter to every convention. Use of this guide with details of proven popular activities is intended to assist the convention organizing committee with a basic framework, allowing more time and energy to create something appreciated by attendees.

With this handbook and working with an advisor, it is expected a committee will end a convention with fewer "if we'd only thought of..." experiences.

What is an AROC convention?

It fulfills a legal requirement. Although a convention is a great way for Alfa owners gather and have fun, the official purpose for the annual meeting of the Board of Directors is the mandate of an annual meeting of the members. Legally, the annual meeting of the members can be as short as a minute, but it must take place.

AROC Convention requirements

- Sign the convention contract
- Board of Directors meeting
- Annual membership meeting
- Submit a detailed income/expense report

That is the complete list of what AROC requires.

That essential point is often missed by potential hosts: there is no requirement for a track event, a banquet, that it be during summer months, or any other events that became traditions. The two aforementioned meetings are required. And that's it. The first few AROC annual meetings were held in a dealership office.

If a track event is scheduled, THEN certain requirements must be fulfilled, but there is no requirement to host a banquet, competition events, etc. Two factors make additional events a tradition:

- Proposals with an interesting events schedule are more likely to be accepted by the AROC Board of Directors.
- Attendance will increase.

Typical Features

A typical convention is held from late June through early August and usually includes the following events:

- board meeting
- track event (typically a time trial)
- autocross
- rally (gimmick and/or TSD)
- tours
- concorso
- town hall meeting
- art show
- tech session(s)
- awards brunch or presentation
- vendors
- town hall meeting
- special-interest gatherings (webmasters and editors, vintage racers, specific model groups – i.e., any popular groups planning to attend)

Every convention since the 1969 event has been a social event.

Convention attendees will congregate in the parking lot, at the bar, and any shady spot at the concorso. They will show off engine bays, discuss the origins of the Sprint and the differences among the U.S and European-market body styles.

AROC Convention Advisor

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

The Advisor sometimes confers with a prior advisor, past convention chairs and organizing committees.

To help with planning, data was gathered from conventions and assembled to provide a reference for creating budgets and establishing baselines based on prior results.

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

An organization with dedicated workers is critical. Depending on complexity of the convention it can be from 5 to 15 members. Name a Convention Chair for the organizing committee, and specialty chairs such as:

- Treasurer
- Finance/Budgets (can be the same as treasurer, but not necessarily)
- Registration
- Website/Publicity
- Publications and promotion in *Alfa Owner*
- Sponsor and advertising solicitations
- Competition events, one each (e.g., rally, autocross, time trials)
- Tours
- Hotel (meeting rooms, meals, lodging, liaison)
- Concorso
- Hospitality
- Awards

Timing

A bit more than two years before your convention is early planning time. AROC accepts bids for national meetings two 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 the dates not include the July 4 weekend as that makes it more difficult for many members to attend.

Determine if you will need outside help such as an SCCA group for any planned track, autocross or rally or other events.

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.

A digital presentation outlining the convention is required. It should include hotel information, events and locations, informative maps, and a general outline from staffing through tour destinations.

Sufficient copies for members of the Board should be distributed of an outline listing the hotel and a general description of each event. The outline may be paper or digital.

- Have hotel pricing for rooms (but not contracted prior to approval)
- Rooms for the Board meeting, vendor room and tech sessions and other events, available when needed.
- Where a track event and/or autocross will take place and the estimated charge to participants.
- Give much thought to a track day/time trial before committing. Participation has been in general decline since last selling out in 2007 and potential losses must be covered. The standard club insurance is often not sufficient for tracks. An additional rider is relatively expensive and you should consider the cost of the track's insurance as an alternative for your event. Compare and decide the source for the insurance, or even determine the event is not feasible.
- Identify the Concorso site.
- Determine preliminary arrangements and pricing for the Banquet and Awards lunch.
- Review AROC sample budget sheets, hotel and event statistics. Yours may differ, but consider why it differs. Individual events should pay for themselves. Printing and minor miscellaneous costs are often built into the convention registration fee.
- Plan by using conservative numbers that balance income and outgo. In theory the bottom line should be approximately zero net, with your profit coming from sponsorship.
- If you do not believe your staff is capable of hosting a particular event and doing it well, our advice is that a poorly functioning event is worse than not having that event. Consider help from other chapters, experts within AROC and discuss the situation with the Convention Advisor.

Two Years Before the Meeting...

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 important, along with distances from hotel to event sites.

After the Board votes and confirms that your Chapter is the host for the convention, accept the accolades and get back to work.

Congratulations! Your convention bid has been accepted.

Immediately confirm your hotel, track, autocross and concorso site reservations.

Sign the contract (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 \$500, and then split the balance with AROC-national. AROC pays for the board meeting and that expense is subtracted from seed money before sending that portion back to AROC.

Now the real work begins

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 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, planning will prevent scrambling at the last minute when many other facets will need attention.

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 know 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).

Discuss with the Convention Advisor about listening, by phone or video conference, to the convention planning sessions for the year prior to your convention.

Will you want a noted art judge or a banquet speaker? Consider pros and cons, especially the time needed for a speaker at a banquet.

Begin design and layout of a website. Study the convention prior to yours for ideas and concepts you might want to follow or change.

Establish the registration method (EventBrite, RegOnline [Cvent] or similar program). Discuss options with the Convention Advisor regarding strengths and challenges of various methods and your preferences. Standard convention registration software has not yet been established. RegOnline was our software of choice, but the company has been twice sold and grew more expensive.

Begin listing and contacting possible sponsors for your events. One source of contacts is the Alfa Aftermarket Parts and Resource list available on the club website in the Tech Library. Remember potential local sponsors such as nearby Alfa Romeo dealers, restaurants, bakeries, auto parts stores, etc.

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 convention bank account yet? You will need one soon.

12 months

- Event and specialty chairs selected.
- Art, logo, website, convention themes (visual), any plaques and related banners designed.
- Gather volunteers, identify contact people and registration recipient (registrar).
- Publicity and websites for a convention may commence after the prior convention ends.
- Consider art for a banner to be displayed at AROC events such as Amelia Island.

10 months

- Prepare a convention article series outline for *Alfa Owner* with topics, months, photos/graphics and length. Do not assume that there will be room in the magazine whenever you want it for any length of article. Discuss this with the Advisor, who will coordinate scheduling with the Alfa Owner Managing Editor.
- Design the registration form, and decide whether it is to be placed *Alfa Owner* as well as online. The registration must be submitted and approved by the AROC Executive Committee prior to release.
- Consider a pair of short (one or two paragraph) email blasts to AROC membership and ask if the Convention Advisor can arrange timing and distribution.
- Corporate budgets are most often set before the start of the year. September might be a good time to ask for sponsorship, before budgets are locked for next fiscal year.
- Send formal letters to potential sponsors for their donations.

8 months

Do you plan to have a system of accepting PayPal or credit cards? Send a logo JPEG to the AROC webmaster for inclusion on the club website.

Consider a digital folder of text and visuals for promotion on the AROC Facebook page, possibly your convention Facebook page, any threads on AlfaBB.com, and wherever it will be useful to promote.

Facebook has a feature which allows an event to be created and shared on the page and to the public. This has proven useful over the past several years. Contact the AROC Facebook page manager to coordinate.

7 months

- 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 *Alfa Owner* Managing Editor for inclusion over the next several months (plan on a two-month lead time).
- Design any tickets or lanyard tags needed for events and arrange for printing. The person's name and primary chapter should appear on both sides of a tag. Obtain any give-always to be included in a registration packet/goodie bag.
- Do you plan to build or adapt any phone apps for events? Have you considered show instructions, directions, display voting by phone app or other contemporary digital concepts? Do you prefer paper?

5 months

- Is insurance coverage in place?
- Contact sponsors and vendors who have not responded to your request.

4 months

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

3 months

- Final drafts and layout of the convention program book plus any materials to be printed.

2 months

- Double-check and re-confirm everything. Be sure volunteers are available.

1 month

- Designate a volunteer to be the contact with the Board of Directors during the meeting.
- Have materials printed

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 charged for empty rooms. The disadvantage is that the convention can become somewhat decentralized and registrations tend to substantially decrease after the main hotel is filled.
 - 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.
- Have one person at the hotel to be 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.
- Arrange for a portion of the parking lot for night security. This typically involves a substantial fee. Budget for it.
- There should be a couple of faucets for car washing. Be sure the hotel will authorize their use. Remember to have 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, microphones, sound system and projection for

- the banquet?
- What does coffee service cost? The effect is known as the \$90 coffee pot because it was not included in any agreement. Details, details, details!
- 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 cancelled at the last minute. Know the meal count deadline, and do not commit for more meals than 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” is perhaps the most frequent 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 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'. During after-hours, calls 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

Laptops, wi-fi and video conference replaced some of the formerly extensive microphone and recording equipment. A microphone is still needed for member comments and various reports. As technology evolves, coordinate equipment and room layout with the Board member(s) who sets-up monthly meetings.

Board meetings generally begin around 10 AM and runs no more than three hours (most club business is handled throughout the year).

Fourteen chairs around a table (typically arranged in a “U” shape) plus twenty-five audience chairs. Coffee, tea, water and a few pastries are appreciated but not mandatory.

Lunch breaks are no longer typical, but confirm with your Advisor.

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 efforts accordingly.
- Sample forms for cover letter, sponsorship categories and detailed suggestions are available from the Convention Advisor.
- Parts houses and accessory manufacturers want exposure, some will 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 are common 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 book, 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 intended as a major source of sponsorship and advertiser revenue. It is an effort to provide commercial supporters as much visibility as possible, and to earn the revenues necessary to underwrite convention activities at a moderate cost to participants.
- Thank supporters, with the microphone and in media, before, during and after the convention.

Vendor considerations

- Vendor fees should apply to non-sponsoring vendors. Sponsorships should include vending privileges.
- Consideration should be made to space/booth area when organizing vendor rooms. Vendor space requirement is usually greater than a table. Confer with vendors as to their needs beforehand. Address wall space and ceiling height (at least 9 feet to accommodate pop-up racks/backdrops).
- Vendors should be in one room, if possible, or in adjoining rooms if not.
- Vending room(s) need to be secured (locked) after hours with assistance in opening and closing by house security or a vendor coordinator.
- Vending room(s) should be in convenient/direct locations, preferably in the convention registration area, and needs adequate signage.
- Convention hotels/centers should have a loading dock. There should be no drayage or storage fees passed on to the vendor. Pre-shipping information should be available.
- A Vendor Coordinator (often the convention hotel chair) needs to be in place to assist in contracting as well as during set-up/tear down and vending hours. Consideration should be given to providing booth sitters or go-fors.
- Vendors should not be assessed registration fees unless they sign up to participate in events held during vending hours. Vendors should be allowed to pay for social events/banquets without paying for convention registration. Vendors should have a separate prospectus/registration form (that would afford signing up for social events and also deal with booth space needs).
- Vending room hours should be published in the convention program and possibly on signage and be reasonable. Vending room(s) should be accessible between 6 and 8 hours a day, starting on Thursday and running until at least 30 minutes after the conclusion of the Sunday lunch/awards banquet. Vendors should have access to vendor rooms, for set-up, on Wednesday. Consideration should be given to vendor promotion (other than ad space) in convention related promotions and program.

Sponsorship and Vending

Organizers should contact sponsors in a timely manner, ideally before registration is published. Consideration should be given to past sponsors and the organizers should know who they are. Sponsors should be afforded vending privileges and that affirmation should be in the sponsor prospectus/contract. Confirmation needs to be sent to sponsor/vendors in a timely manner. Major sponsorship typically affords naming rights in titles for sponsored events, in signage, in promotions and in the program.

Publicity

Alfa Owner is a primary advertising vehicle. Contacting the Managing Editor about which topics are best and when and what you have. Historically, beginning in March (sometimes January) there is a general story about convention activities, followed by other events and nearby touring opportunities. Keep generating fresh information and visuals for the Alfa Romeo Owners Club Facebook page. Include a small convention logo with the website URL to be used repeatedly on a space available basis.

A suggested website URL is AROCmeet(year). It is easy to remember, and if standardized, most members will quickly go to, for instance, AROCmeet2020. After two years, it will become reflexive.

All convention attendees must be AROC or other Alfa Romeo club members. But nine of ten Alfa owners are not AROC Members. That makes it worthwhile to do publicity within an easy drive of the convention site plus ask online Alfa-related blog and forum members in your chapter promote the club and convention. New members will never get more for their dues than finding the national convention at the doorstep.

Let local newspapers, radio and television stations know well in advance that the convention is coming and send a paragraph or two of what it is about.

Local event calendars such as Cars & Coffee, 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 website. Ask if major sponsors will promote your event as well on their websites. Send basic info to Sports Car Market magazine and other publications/media outlets/blogs of your choice.

Many non-members use local Alfa repair and parts shops. Provide a convention poster (even if a one-off inkjet 'poster') and promotional fliers to shop owners.

Convention Registration

Examine the sample forms provided plus the system and policies with a couple of your committee members.

Then begin the work.

Create the registration form

- Paper registrations are still helpful although the vast majority of registrations will be online.
- The registration form should provide a list of all events, date, and costs, and a brief description of 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, whether paper or online, should be clear, concise, uncluttered, and user-friendly. What may be obvious to those who worked on it for months, may not be to someone seeing it for the first time. After proofing it ten times, have someone who has not very familiar with AROC conventions navigate the site or fill out the form, and report any issues.
- 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 possibly expected arrival date (for registration desk planning).
- Some participants will bring more than one car. Design a means of linking each car with its activity. Cars might be switched at the last moment (which will affect track, autocross, and

concorso entries linked to registration).

- 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 shown 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). 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 Alfa Romeo clubs.

- Vendors and major sponsors who have paid a table/booth charge (if any) should be allowed to purchase meal tickets and attend events without paying the convention registration fee. At some conventions up to three banquet tickets for major sponsors have been included.

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.
- 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). The competition code is available online. Postage might be needed for post-convention refunds, and there will likely be PayPal and credit card transaction expenses.

Determine how to 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.

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 each fee-based event. The entry form serves as the ticket for a competition event. A single, stamped ID card on a lanyard has also served for admission for all events (for example, a green cover stamped/printed by that event listing provides admission).
- A registration form with 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.

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 create poor impression of a convention at the beginning.
- 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, gather 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 media is 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 event 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.
 - An option is to announce a couple of hours before the event, that everyone interested should gather and the waiting list will be read, top down, and all available tickets will be distributed. That will, however, upset schedules without assurance of receiving a ticket.
 - Another option is 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 in addition to computer(s). Notes and back-up info can be jotted by others to sort needs, identify people, have packets/goodie bags ready and maintain efficiency before someone gets to the head of the line. Be prepared for walk-in registrations (typically 5 to 15 percent). Walk-ins are not usually handled during peak hours by the lead registrar at the desk, but by an assistant, even if it must be on paper forms because the central records computer is in use.
- 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 by the best accounting method or program available to the group.
- 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.

Post-convention wrap-up

Post-Convention tasks include:

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

Convention Program Booklet

- The primary purpose of the program booklet is to describe what is occurring, where, and how to get there. A list of event descriptions, times, routes, route maps and addresses for GPS (plus perhaps a direct link to your online map and description) is essential.
- More extensive program books (souvenir type) can include several original articles and photographs about Alfas, extensive advertising.
- Examples of program booklet formats from past conventions:
 - 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, 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 shortfall in revenues absorbed elsewhere.
- There's an app for that. We have not seen that, but it will happen.
- 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 typically occurs on Wednesday or Thursday at the beginning of a convention. The meeting might begin at 10 AM and continue for three hours.

Scheduling a significant event at the same time as the meeting is discouraged, so board members and meeting attendees can participate in the event.

It is the responsibility of the convention committee to provide a meeting room that should seat the Board members, administrator and legal counsel plus an audience of about 25. The table around which the Board will sit should be horseshoe-shaped, seating at least 14 people.

Coffee, tea, water and coffee-break "nibblies" are appreciated.

Microphones

Seven to eleven should be placed on the table, one for every two people. A microphone on a stand should be placed before the audience.

Speakers from the audience will move to the microphone for their comments can be heard. The microphones will be connected to a recording system so the entire meeting can be taped for transcription of the minutes of the meeting.

Provide recording media or a method of storage, four hours worth. A member of the host chapter should monitor the recording equipment during the meeting. A volunteer should be available to run errands such as making chart copies or dealing with the hotel regarding room temperature.

The agenda outline of the meeting will be printed in *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 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, (e.g., 4C owners).

A chapter operations session or a newsletter editor session can be very helpful. Club technical advisors may be willing to host general tech discussions. Alfa-related quilting, sewing and other sessions proved popular at some conventions. Seminars need not be exclusively for “gearheads”. Seminars should not all run concurrently.

Banquet

Business items occur as part of the banquet.

- 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 includes 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, and the next year’s convention hosts will make a presentation (includes a file download and projection). Some announcements can be moved to an awards brunch/luncheon/presentation if time requires, but be aware that fewer people attend the awards brunch than the banquet.

When the business has been concluded, a banquet speaker (if any) will be introduced and begin their presentation.

After the speaker, door prizes may be given out. It tends to lengthen banquets and has faded from favor in recent years. If awarded, it has been for a few major prizes. Prizes can be donations from participants in the goody room, *Alfa Owner* advertisers, or others offering Alfa-related merchandise.

Dinner tickets can be two-part and numbered or numbered tickets, marked in ID lanyard packets, etc.

Plan to begin the program earlier rather than later, at the beginning of dessert rather than after.

Otherwise an after-dinner program can run beyond interest of attendees.

Coordinate the program schedule and timing with the AROC (national) president.

Time Trials and Autocross (speed events)

Safety

The Number One concern with any speed event is safety. The AROC safety code (part of the Moving Event Manual), 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 evening before and 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 inspect their car.

Classifications

In order to group cars with the same potential, the AROC posts classification codes for track time trials and for the autocross. They are not the same. If your chapter prefers its 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*.

Direct event registrants to the Moving Event Manual available for download (PDF) at aroc-usa.org under the Library tab.

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. The information is added to the event Excel chart (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 race tracks operate 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.

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.
- The largest groups in both the time trials and the autocross have traditionally been Class D, E and F, but are now being equaled or surpassed Alfa 4Cs and Giulias. Even Stelvios are increasing number. The mix is evolving.
- Note that the Fastest Time of Day (FTD) award winner must be an Alfa Romeo.

Autocross

- Autocrosses are more popular in some regions than others and numbers will fluctuate accordingly. West coast registrations tend to be lower than in the east, Midwest (especially Detroit), higher. Usually the number is limited by the size of the track or parking lot and how much time the organizers feel they can provide for practice. The largest groups have traditionally been Class D, E and F, although Alfas 4Cs now appear in increasing numbers.
- 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 disorienting. If your chapter has limited experience in putting on an autocross, seek help. A local SCCA club may be host many autocrosses. The Detroit chapter has run and equipped autocrosses at some AROC national meets.

- An alternative to having extensive equipment is a variant of the mirror-khana, run in elimination heats, one-on-one. It requires a large area and cones. A couple of AROC autocross veterans are experienced at setting up and conducting this sort of competition and may be willing to assist.
- Note that the Fastest Time of Day (FTD) award winner must be an Alfa Romeo.

Rally

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

TSD rallies are complex and require experience to organize. Again, you might look to the SCCA or local groups 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 activities for the day. They will not think it was funny.

Between two to three hours of driving 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 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, rally participants 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, rallyists 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.

Concorso

Judged cars have been restored to original specifications or are original to attain Certificato d'Oro (95 points or better) and best in Show. Other Alfas may enter the "Show and Shine" category. Both groups are eligible for the popular-vote Pat Braden Award.

The challenge of organizing and scoring the concorso 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 Chief Judge who will assist in the judging process.

The concorso was held on Sunday until 2007, when it moved to Saturday morning and has since remained with a few exceptions. A convention was held in 2014 which dispensed with all judging but had a very large display in conjunction a major Concours d'Elegance.

The 2007 convention concorso was held in conjunction with a major Concours d'Elegance. It worked largely because the chairs of both concours were AROC members determined to avoid the

pitfalls of such an arrangement. It takes experience and skill in planning this sort of show as the AROC concorso needs to be a 'featured, stand alone show' with its own field, entry and system, not a 'secondary' or 'side show' for the major concorso, nor dragged into its politics.

Discuss your plans with the AROC Chief Judge.

Time must be slotted for a two-hour concorso judges meeting prior to the event.

Winners are typically announced during the Awards brunch/lunch program.

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

Tours

Extended Tours

Driving your Alfa is part of the fun of a convention. Combine this with the majority of attendees being on summer vacation, and the answer is having tours of a regional flavor.

Extended tours (formerly “pre-convention” tours) typically cover three days before (or following if other local events conflict) the main convention days.

The two methods are a three-day loop of scenic roads and areas ending at the hotel, or three day-trips with each day starting and ending at the convention hotel.

The tours are a combination of fun roads to drive, scenery and places of interest, not interstate highways to a destination.

A tour day typically runs from 9 AM to 6 PM, followed by dinner. There is often an 8:45 AM meeting to review the day, road and weather conditions and any late changes.

The night before the tour (most often Saturday), a meet-your-fellow-travelers dinner has become a tradition.

On request, AROC has experienced tour planners who can assist the host chapter with logistics such as pacing, breaks, time versus distance, meals, maps and touring book layout, etc.

A wonderful restaurant that cannot handle a sudden group of fifty or sixty people is not a wonderful restaurant for tours. A fabulous scenic point with 20 parking spaces for 30 cars will not work. Remote villages of 49 inhabitants and 60 tourists arriving can also be a problem, as are cities full of traffic lights.

Day Trips

A day trip travels to local points of interests by car or bus. A bus is expensive and any empty seats make it more so. Please remember that tour registrants have likely never seen your city or its roads and that vintage Alfas with generators will not have GPS.

If this is a DIY tour, never simply “Google” directions, but drive the route as if you were a tourist seeing it for the first time, provide information of when to switch lanes, exact signage and landmarks along the course.

If leading a tour, it cannot go into downtown areas with masses of traffic lights and one-way streets. That is when you must hire a bus driver. Downtown and local subway/train loops will work for getting around if group tokens or passes are ready ahead of time. Work with the central office and make arrangements. A group of over 200 went to several places in Detroit by an overhead People Mover train loop because guards at stations had been informed to override the auto-timed doors and let our large group onto two trains.

Menus should ideally be a blend of regional dishes and generic pub food for tourists who want to immerse in the local culture and for those who prefer something familiar. If it is a four-hour trip on a

tight schedule, a dessert trio at a historic mansion restaurant is a good compromise. It's also about surroundings.

Museum tours are best when something unique to the area is included, i.e., the massive Diego Rivera murals of the DIA are intertwined with the history of the city, the power of industrialists who strong-armed the city council into having the murals destroyed, then 10,000 factory workers surrounding the building, determined to save them. There's much more to the story, but that is what makes a museum a destination and not just another wall of paintings.

During that same bus tour, there was a stop at a midtown (downtown is too crowded to keep on schedule) 42-story building. As gasps at the impressive interior began to subside, the group was informed that this "Golden Tower" actually was gold until it was scraped down to the copper base during WW II in that fear enemy planes would use the gold tower a landmark. And that in 1928 it was the smallest of three towers planned, the next one to be taller than the not-yet-built Empire State Building, more glorious and starting in late 1929. Timing is everything, and everything about the building, from the architect to the brothers who financed it, has fascinating stories that could not have happened anywhere else.

Regional stories and connections separate good local tours from generic tours that could take place in any of a dozen cities.

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 overburdened 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

- Texting is the most efficient way to alert of last-minute changes, but also have a large bulletin board available where people will gather (typically in the convention registration area). 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 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, Olympia, Washington a group of four pre-war Alfas, Detroit had a two rows of 1900s (including the three BAT cars) at the concours, the press introduction of the 8C and a full starting grid of GTAs at the track, and in Montreal, the Montreal was the featured model (of course).
- Place the featured model center stage at the concorso.
- Used parts markets often 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 recording the board meeting as it is necessary for producing the minutes of the meeting. You retain 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 this handbook, please send them to the AROC office.

Alfa Romeo Owners Club

Year Chapter/Location – Notes

2020	Rocky Mountain/Colorado Springs, Colorado
2019	Three Rivers/Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
2018	Northwest/Olympia, Washington – Northwest mountain and coast tours return to the convention hotel each evening
2017	ARCC and AROC/Montreal, Quebec, Canada
2016	Tennessee/Nashville, Tennessee
2015	Alfa Nordest/Providence, Rhode Island – Vermont-New Hampshire-Maine-Massachusetts Tour; banquet speaker Donald Osbourne
2014	Detroit/Pontiac, Michigan – simplified format with crew of four organizers

- 2013 ARA and Delta Sierra/Roehnert Park, CA (Sonoma Valley) – joint AROC-ARA convention
- 2012 ARCC and AROC, Toronto, Ontario, Canada – First international convention; passport book lanyard ID containing attendee and convention event information
- 2011 Kentucky and Ohio Valley/Lexington, Kentucky
- 2010 Capital/Frederick, Maryland - Summit Point
- 2009 Oregon/Portland, OR – Portland Int'l. Raceway Multiple Rallies, 8C2900, Mt. St. Helens
- 2008 Chicago/Oak Hills, IL – Autobahn 50th anniversary, Lakeshore Drive Tour
- 2007 Detroit Pontiac Waterford Hills 1st Saturday concorso, 1st Pre-convention tour
BAT cars, 1900s display, Pre-War Alfas, 8C intro, 6C 2500s, GTA starting grid w/Don Black
- 2006 Oklahoma/Tulsa, OK – Hallett Gilmore Museum dinner, Art Deco Rally
- 2005 Northwest/Seattle – Seattle Int'l. Raceway 8C2900, Tipo Bs, 6C1750s, Tipo 33; Spider raffle, NW regional theme throughout (first local theme convention)
- 2004 New England/ Manchester, 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 Tennessee/Nashville, TN – Tenn Raceway, local estate concorso
- 2000 Oregon/Portland, OR – PIR 8C 2900, 8C 2300, P3
- 1999 Strada Fantasma/Kansas City Hallett
- 1998 New Mexico/Santa Fe, NM
- 1997 Buckeye/Columbus, OH – Mid-Ohio race course
- 1996 Arizona/Phoenix, AZ – PIR
- 1995 Atlanta/Atlanta, GA – Road Atlanta, Don Black (speaker)
- 1994 Colorado/Denver, CO – Copper Mountain Hill climb, 'Giuliettas' EvanWilson spoke
- 1993 Capital/Baltimore, MD – Summit Point, 2000/2600s, Phil Hill, Rene Dreyfus, largest banquet
- 1992 St. Louis/St Louis, MO – Gateway Intl., Disco Volante, 1900s, Missouri River cruise
- 1991 San Diego/San Diego, CA – long autocross, TZ2, 6C 3000 CM, TC Browne
- 1990 Detroit/Troy, MI – Waterford Hills, BAT 9, river cruise, Alfa Romeo R&D tour
- 1989 Connecticut/Waterbury, CT – Lime Rock, Tipo 33, 159, 8C 2900, 1900 CSS Zagato
- 1988 Oklahoma/Tulsa, OH – Hallett Street Autocross
- 1987 Oregon/Portland, OR – Portland Int'l. Raceway
- 1986 NJ/Long Island (now NY)/Bethlehem, PA – Pocono Craig Morningstar of ARDONA spoke
- 1985 Wisconsin/Elkhart Lake, WI – Road America, 8C2300 MM, RLSS, 1750 GS, Lee Hall (AROC founder)
- 1984 Northwest/Seattle, WA – Seattle Int'l., 6C 2500, 2600 sedan, 1900 Touring
- 1983 Ohio Valley/Cincinnati, OH – long autocross, hot tub stuffing
- 1982 SoCal/Costa Mesa, CA – Riverside, 6C 1500 Zagato
- 1981 Detroit/Troy, MI – Waterford Hills, first city and evening tours/Henry Ford Museum/Greenfield Village
- 1980 AONE/Danvers, MA – Lime Rock, clam bake
- 1979 San Diego/San Diego. CA – long autocross (down a mountain), 1959 SZ, 1949 6C 2500 Cabriolet
- 1978 Capital/Reston, VA - Summit Point 6C 2500 Freccia d'Oro
- 1977 Colorado (now Rocky Mountain)/Aspen, CO
- 1976 Connecticut/Southbury, CT – Lime Rock
- 1975 SoCal/Long Beach, CA – Riverside
- 1974 Detroit/Ann Arbor, MI – Grattan Raceway
- 1973 Colorado (now Rocky Mountain)/Aspen, CO – Aspen Track, TC Browne spoke
- 1972 New Jersey/Saddle Brook, NJ – Lime Rock

- 1971 CA/Ontario, CA –Lee Midgely spoke
- 1970 Wisconsin/Elkhart Lake, WI – Road America (first convention outside of the Chicago area)
- 1969 Chicago/Elgin, IL – Meadowdale, two 8C 2300s
- 1968 Chicago/Lake Forest, IL –10th Annual Meeting 3/9/68
- 1967 Chicago/Lake Forest, IL – 9th Annual Meeting
- 1966 Chicago/Chicago, IL – 8th Annual Meeting 4/3/66
- 1965 Chicago/Chicago, IL – 7th Annual Meeting 3/30/65
- 1964 Chicago/Chicago, IL – 6th Annual Meeting 4/12/64
- 1963 Chicago/Chicago, IL – 5th Annual Meeting 2/17/63
- 1962 Chicago/Chicago, IL – 4th Annual Meeting 3/3/62
- 1961 Chicago/Chicago, IL – 3rd Annual Meeting 2/10/61
- 1960 Chicago/Chicago, IL – 2nd Annual Meeting 2/11/60
- 1959 Chicago/Chicago, IL – 1st Annual Meeting 2/5/59