

KNOCKOFF



Official Publication of the Mohawk-Hudson Region Sports Car Club of America

Remember when?

*Lots warmer & no one wore a coat.
Last year's trip to the go-kart track was a
family-event planned by MoHud.
This year, even more fun!*



Russ Burckhard and his family look like they enjoyed the evening.



Peter Kroth took a spin.



Marianne & Johannes Krauss, NYR and MoHud's Dave Wachtel, Roly Heacox and Clark Nichols catch up on news and events.



Three of the Karl clan; Cassidy, grandpa Bob Karl Sr. (BK) and Evan sure look like they had fun.

Don't forget...
Next Membership Meeting
Wednesday, February 3rd
7:30 pm
Orchard Tavern

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The KnockOff is the official publication of the Mohawk-Hudson Region, Sports Car Club of America. Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the Mohawk-Hudson Region or of the Sports Car Club of America.

The general membership meeting is held on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm at The Orchard Tavern, 68 No. Manning Blvd., Albany, NY.

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RE REPORT

Kudos' to our Treasurer Chip VanSlyke. At the January meeting, Chip presented us with an excellent report on the history of our finances over the last decade. It was very enlightening and answered a lot of questions the members had.

I am happy to report that Ron Bass has been approved by the board of directors to replace Peter Kroth, who did not stand for reelection last year.

The region has decided to pursue a PDX this year. DJ McArdle will be chairman. His goal is to provide us with a low cost event which will attract novices. If you have ever wanted to drive on a track, this could be your opportunity. Come to the meeting or read the next KO for more details.

COMPETITION REPORT

Each driver should have received an email from National asking whether you would rather receive the GCR in paper or electronic form. Please let the National office know which you would prefer.

The GCR has been rewritten for 2010 and it is available online now. Check it out.

Tom Campbell is now the Chairman of NeDiv. He has written a letter to NeDiv National drivers asking for their thoughts on NeDiv National racing. A copy of the letter is in this month's KO. If you have any opinions or suggestions, please email Tom and/or me. Your opinions will be expressed at the March Roundtable.

RE's Monthly Quiz

The photo to the right comes from a MoHud member's archives. Guess who is it? Where is it? When was it? Get your answers to RE Jack Hanifan via email address below.

jackhanifan@hotmail.com





Tom Campbell, Chairman
NEDIV Council

Open Letter to the NEDIV National Drivers

The NEDIV Race schedule for 2010 was recently published. Since then there has been concern expressed by some of the National drivers that there are no double National race events on the calendar.

This issue was discussed at the NE Division meeting in November prior to finalizing the schedule. Although there were a number of double Nationals requested, in the end the regions, as represented by the Regional Executives, decided that there should be none on the schedule for 2010.

The issue of having 3-day double race Nationals has been debated within the division for many years. The arguments are primarily driver preference and regional finances. It has long been stated that many drivers don't want to extend the weekend by the extra day (at least not on non-holiday weekends) and that they don't want to be disadvantaged if they can't attend the double event and have to travel to two separate single events. More recently a strong viewpoint is emerging that the double race weekends are less expensive for the drivers than two separate, single events and that the economics are changing some of the driver's preferences. Undoubtedly both sides of that issue exist, as well as several positions between the extremes.

The other stake-holders in this issue are the racing regions – those that host the National races. Total participation in National racing has been declining by about 10 – 12 % per year for the past 4 years. Combined with increasing costs (track rental, insurance, etc.) it has become more difficult for the regions, especially those hosting the smaller events, to break even financially. The same trends exist in Regional racing but consistently greater numbers of entries per event make it more economical to host a Regional race. The regions believe that large double race National events will draw entries away from the smaller single race events to the extent that the single events may no longer be financially viable. The recent feedback from the drivers who are lobbying for the doubles as being more economical are validating this concern.

Many of the National participants are "local" drivers who enter the one or two Nationals at the tracks closest to them but don't travel to the majority of the National races. If their local track loses its National these drivers won't fill the void with another National event at a more distant track. On the other hand are the drivers who only enter enough Nationals to qualify for the Runoffs. These days that can be accomplished by only entering two double race events. However, of the 450 drivers participating in the 2009 Nationals in the North East, only 75 actually attended the Runoffs. Does it make sense to design the National racing program for that limited population.

For the 2010 season two of our historical National race events, Summit Point and Mosport, were dropped by the host regions for financial reasons. There remain 7 National races, all single race events, nicely distributed geographically and on the schedule.

So, that is the dilemma – more doubles to provide economy to some of the drivers at the cost of having fewer National races by forcing more regions/tracks out of the National racing schedule.

This issue will be discussed further at the Division's annual Round Table meeting in New Jersey on March 13 – 14. This is a rather straight forward issue but with no easy solution. It is very important that the decision makers, the RE's in the division, hear from more of the National drivers, hopefully from the full spectrum of viewpoints, so that they can make well informed decisions. Better yet, the drivers are invited to attend the Round Table to present their views and participate in what will be a lively debate.



February 2010 Report

I hope everyone had a nice holiday season and got all of the parts they need to get their cars ready for the upcoming season. Plans are underway for another full season for the SOLO group. We are looking at an eight points-events season. We are also planning on two schools and Jim Garry is going to hold a Test and Tune out at Seneca. We are also planning on helping out the Adirondack Corvette club with their annual charity event. At the last meeting, the go ahead was given for a PDX and a Rally Cross. DJ is working on making the PDX happen sometime this summer and Dave Kosla is working on getting the Rally Cross on Lake Onota in Pittsfield Mass for a February 28th event.

I have been working on this year's budget and am happy to report, barring any increase in the lot rentals, the entry fees will not be going up this year. We had an increase of insurance fees from SCCA, but not enough to need an increase in our fees. Unfortunately we will have to watch this in the future and may need to react to the increases in the future. One of our major expenses this year is for the replacement of our loaner helmets. The ratings on some of these helmets have become outdated and so they need to be replaced. Fortunately we only need to replace about half of them. We will also need to get a holder for the display to get it up off the ground. The other budgetary items are mostly just upgrades or maintenance items. If we can keep participation where it has been or improve on it, we should be able to add to the bottom line of the club again this year.

January Monthly Meeting Minutes (1-6-2010)

Meeting was called to order by R.E. Jack Hanifan at 7:30 PM.

Secretary

Meeting minutes from the November monthly meeting were approved. The position remains vacant at this time. (Ron Bass accepted the position of Secretary after the meeting and was approved by the Board.)

The Knockoff

Lisa Hanifan reported that the latest issue is posted online. A mailing was sent in November about the Knockoff being online. Lisa received approximately 14-15 replies from the mailing.

Treasurer

Chip Van Slyke did not have a monthly report available for the meeting but had a decade summary report to be discussed in New Business.

Membership

Dave Wachtel reported current region membership is 331 members.

Web

Dave Wachtel reported that the domain name has been fully renewed and that spam cleanup continues. He is looking at new software for the web site.

Solo

Russ Burckhard did not have a report for the meeting but advised that a tentative 2010 schedule was being discussed.

Activities

Jack Hanifan reported that Activities Director Pete Smith is planning the annual Golf Tournament and the annual Go-Kart Night. The membership agreed that we should look at other options for 2010 to help control cost for the 2010 Annual Banquet but that it should remain on a Saturday night. Russ Burckhard will begin planning for the event.

Competition

Jack Hanifan gave a recap of the annual awards from the Annual Banquet:

Paul Hacker Memorial "Driver Of The Year": Adam Figarsky

Rookies Of The Year: Hilton Tallman & Demetrius (Mickey) Mossaidis

Dave Riggi Memorial Trophy: Charlie Campbell

Regional Champion: Michael Lo

Jack advised that the NARRC Banquet is scheduled to be held at the NEDiv Round Table March 12-14, 2010.

Saratoga Auto Museum

Tom Campbell reported that the Corvette show is now open. The annual car show is scheduled for May 16, 2010

Old Business

None.

New Business

Jack Hanifan has been appointed to the SCCA Court of Appeals.

Tom Campbell is the new Chairman of the NEDiv Council. He has sent an open letter to all NEDiv National drivers looking for feedback on the schedule of National races in the division for 2010. There will be only 7 Nationals in the division with no double-nationals and no nationals at Mosport or Summit Point.

PDX - The region is looking to host a PDX in 2010 possibly at Lime Rock Park. D.J. McArdle will be chairing the event and will begin organizing.

RallyCross - Dave Kozla is looking to host a RallyCross on Onata Lake in Pittsfield. Scott Beliveau from New England Region has agreed to serve as Safety Steward for the event. Russ Burckhard and Bruce Kosakoski have agreed to assist Dave in chairing the event and will have the event included in the 2010 budget.

Finance Report - Chip Van Slyke gave a report with a review of total finances over the last 10 years after membership voiced concerns about our ability to host a race during the 2010 season. He will have a budget ready for vote at the February meeting.

2010 National – The region has agreed to co-host the 2010 National at Lime Rock Park with Northern New Jersey Region. The event will be held May 14-15, 2010. In addition, that weekend will include the Pro-IT race and a \$210 Restricted Regional race.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Minutes taken and submitted by Eric Kroth

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SOLO

by Rocky Entriken

Reprinted with permission from the opening section of Rocky Entriken's annual book, "Solo Stats" which is the complete competition record of the Solo Nationals.

No one is really sure how sports car drivers came up with the idea of driving between pylons for the fun of it.

The competition has been likened to the equestrian "gymkhana" practiced by Her Majesty's cavalry in India during the days of the British raj. Or perhaps it was a small-scale and less hazardous copy of the road races of the day, in emulation of heroes such as Stirling Moss or Phil Hill.

Through the 1960s, it was largely a sport played strictly on a local level by individual clubs. Known variously as gymkhana, autocross or slalom, its rules and class structures varied widely from one local sports car club to another, from one city to another.

In 1967 Vern Jaques, a member and later Regional Executive of San Diego Region, undertook to put solo events under one banner. Actually it began as a quest to bring hillclimbs to his region. What it developed into was an attempt to codify the Sport Car Club of America's rules for hillclimbs and race track time trials. Somehow the "semi-speed" events became included at the insistence of what SCCA then called its Board of Governors (now the Board of Directors).

With the variety of names for the various competitions, SCCA also saw the need to invent a new title: Solo — defined as a one-car-at-a-time competition. The hillclimbs and time trials which had a higher level of speed and hazard became Solo I while Solo II became the umbrella title for autocross/ gymkhana/slalom events.

In 1970, SCCA took the first steps to making Solo II a national sport. With the backing of the Jos. Schlitz Brewing Co., the Schlitz Cup series was created. Although it lasted only that one year, it came with a rulebook issued by SCCA headquarters defining rules and classes. That rulebook was so thin it fit nicely in a shirt pocket.

The Schlitz Cup actually was not so much a national series as an attempt to conduct several local series under common rules. Selected SCCA regions were awarded a Schlitz Cup to do a three-event series, and the rules in California were essentially the same as those in Carolina — a first for the sport.

The early rules divided cars into three categories based on their level of preparation. "Stock" was for cars little changed from the way they rolled off the showroom floor; "Prepared" was for those which had been set up to road racing specifications; "Modified" was for cars purpose-built for road racing (formula cars and sports-racers) or other wildly altered vehicles.

The huge gap which developed between Stock and Prepared was filled in 1983 with the creation of "Street Prepared" for cars which may have added certain "bolt-on" modifications but essentially were still street-legal. As Street Prepared evolved into something beyond that concept, the new category of "Street Touring" appeared in 1999 for cars mildly modified but still intended for street use. A year later "Street Modified" made its appearance — wilder modifications allowed but still streetable.

1997 saw the addition of karts to Solo II in the form of Formula 125 — a class for 125cc shifter karts and 100 cc clutch karts. Right behind it came a

program for underage drivers, Formula Junior, using karts powered by 5 hp motors. Currently there are two FJr classes divided by driver age and engine type.

Distaff drivers quickly made it known that a single token Ladies class was not sufficient. In 1975, there became four Ladies classes, and a fifth was added the next year, but it still was not enough. 1979 saw the creation of a full set of ladies classes matching the open classes one to one.

Today there are 35 separate open classes in the Solo rulebook – nine Stock, four Street Touring, six Street Prepared, two Street Modified, six Prepared and eight Modified (including F125 and FSAE), plus the 35 duplicate Ladies classes and the two Formula Juniors. Seventy-two in all – a place for just about anything built with four wheels (some of them considered “supplemental” classes). Or as one region puts it: “Every car is a sports car – sometime.”

In addition, local regions may create additional classes such as popular street-tire classes which forbid the use of the super-sticky gumball “street” tires that have come upon the scene. FJr also is considered a strictly regional-level pair of classes.

While the Schlitz Cup imposed the first national rules on the sport, the events then were still local in nature. But in SCCA’s Midwest Division a new concept had begun in 1967 – a divisional championship event which would attract drivers from throughout the division’s 12-state area.

Within a few years, several other divisions copied the idea. By 1972 SCCA mandated that all divisions should conduct such an event, for the following year would see the first ever SCCA

National Solo II Championship and the Divisional was the steppingstone to the National.

In 1992 a new level was added to the hierarchy of Solo II events with the advent of the SCCA Solo II National Tour. A misnomer really, as it is not a touring series, but rather several individual two-day events around the country organized in the National Championship mold. Like Divisionals, they also stand as qualifiers for the Nationals.

That first National was conducted at the old Mid-America Race-way in Wentzville, Mo., west of St. Louis. It was not exactly an artistic success, becoming all too obvious a demonstration that organizing a championship of this scope was more than putting on the average weekend autocross.

More than 35 years later, the Solo Nationals is a well-coordinated event. Planning for the next begins even as the current one is being run. No longer awarded to a single SCCA region to conduct, it now draws on the talents of competitors and organizers nationwide.

From that inaugural event at Wentzville, the Nationals roamed middle America in the ’70s before finding a somewhat permanent home in the ’80s. The second National Championship was held at Lake Geneva Raceway in Wisconsin (one of only two Nationals designed to be a one-course event).

The third was run in Salina, Kan., at Airport Park (now the East Crawford Recreation Area), which was the local municipal airport before Schilling Air Force Base passed into the city’s hands. For the first time Nationals competitors got a taste of airport concrete and they liked it!

From there, the Nationals went to the access roadways of the Ohio State Fairgrounds in Columbus, Ohio (the other one-course event, and asphalt again); Greater Southwest Raceway, an ex-airport in Fort Worth, Texas; Sunflower Aerodrome, the former Hutchinson Naval Air Station in Kansas; and then back to Greater Southwest, which soon afterward became an industrial park and no longer useable for Solo events.

The Nationals returned to Salina in 1980 and 1981, but for the 10th anniversary it was decided to go to the Big City, and the 1982 Nationals were held on parking lots of Marriott's Great America amusement park in Gurnee, Ill., north of Chicago. It was, in fact, the only National Championship of this "parking lot sport" actually held on true parking lots, and the last to be run on asphalt until 2006. For the next 23 years, airport concrete became the Nationals norm.

Salina's small-town hospitality was well remembered by the competitors, and the event returned to the central Kansas community where it remained for another 12 years. By 1986, the Nationals had outgrown the former airport site, about to be developed as a city park. The event moved across town to aprons of the city's current airport – the former Schilling AFB, a hardpan from which Strategic Air Command bombers once had flown.

After 15 years in Salina, the event once again outgrew its host's capabilities and moved 120 miles east to the Kansas capital of Topeka and another former Air Force Base, Forbes Field. Like Salina, the Topeka site presented a massive concrete apron on which to conduct the championship, but also offered an even more spacious paddock area, which was becoming increasingly necessary as the event has grown.

Forbes was a wonderful host for 11 years, so much so that SCCA moved its National headquarters to the industrial park in late 2002, but eventually decades of freeze/thaw cycles (along with upward pressure due to a groundwater problem - Ed.) left the ancient concrete almost unusable for competition.

" The fifth year of the new millennium also brought a brief pause in the concrete era. In 2006 the event moved a mile south to a giant new slab built of racetrack-quality asphalt at Heartland Park Topeka. In 34 years of Nationals history, it was only the fifth time on blacktop.

The Club Racing Runoffs also moved to a rebuilt HPT in 2006, bringing both of SCCA's major national championship events to the same site for the first time. It seemed quite a coup for the track adjacent to SCCA's headquarters, but the marriage would last only three years for both events.

Dissatisfaction with the site on the part of both autocrossers and racers led to both events leaving for new homes in 2009. The Solo Nationals' 11th site will move just a couple of hours north to the even more spacious Lincoln Airpark in Nebraska.

The inaugural event in 1973 attracted 224 entries and sponsorship from British Leyland, manufacturer of Triumph and MG automobiles, which remained the title sponsor through the wanderings of the '70s. When the nationals came back to Salina in 1980, it was with a new sponsor, Bosch spark plugs. Pirelli Tires sponsored the 1982-84 events, Long-running sponsor Yokohama Tires supported the event from 1985 to 1993.

Yokohama used its association not only as a proving ground for its performance tires but also to help put before the public the name of a company which had been virtually unknown. Under the Yokohama banner, entries in the annual event rose

to a record 733 for the 20th anniversary event in 1992. Involvement of female drivers increased from just 22 in 1973 to 148 in 1992.

Milestone years always produce marked spikes in participation, then the entry count falls off slightly for a couple of years before picking up again.

1995, the first year in Topeka and the first year of backing by the current sponsor, The Tire Rack, saw the entry climb to 762.

That 1973 event was little more than a glorified weekend autocross, resulting in the crowning of 15 first-time national champions. Today's Nationals spans a week of activity, with competition covering four full days and ending with more than five dozen new national champions.

Trophies in the formative years were presented a few minutes after the competition ended, with drivers standing in a corner of the event site still gritty and grimy from the day's activity as the sun disappeared over the horizon. Today, the presentations are done in a banquet setting, and the gathering is more a convention of the Solo community.

For the Silver Anniversary in 1997 there was talk of 1,000 drivers, although perhaps more wishful thinking than true hope, since only once had the entry even passed 750. But 920 drivers flooded Forbes Field, including 183 in the ladies classes, to the delight and some concern of the event organizers. Would it even be possible to move that many cars through the courses in four days? But in sharp contrast to those early days, the smooth and practiced organization saw each day's activity completed with time to spare.

The 30th anniversary Nationals in 2002 put 1106 drivers on course and an entry limit of 1200 was announced for future Nationals, raised to 1250 a

year later, although it has yet to be reached. The 35th anniversary in 2007 raised the participant record to 1157.

Not for nothing is the SCCA Solo Nationals claimed to be the world's largest sports car championship, and more recently it can lay claim to being the largest single motorsport event in the world since the car count now even exceeds the largest of NHRA's national events.

2005 brought another significant change to the Solo program, with all of the events previously known as Solo I moved under SCCA's Club Racing banner, taking new names of Performance Driving Experience and Track Trials. Very quietly, the sport that had been known as Solo II throughout the years now became simply "Solo."

Although the Solo Nationals have shown growth over the past quarter-century, matched by the growth in the sophistication and talent of the top competitors, Solo remains an "everyman" sport that anyone off the street can play. The competition may be tougher at the National Championship level but the same camaraderie of the average weekend event prevails.

For most drivers, the average Sunday autocross quite sufficiently satisfies the need for speed. If more than 1000 drivers strive to the Nationals each year, an estimated 100 times that number have no interest beyond wringing their daily driver around some cones on a Sunday afternoon. There are drivers who pour thousands of dollars into their cars, but there are many more whose idea of preparation is 10 more pounds of air in the tires.

In a sport where a driver can spend all day on a slab of pavement to get in three or four minutes of seat time, it becomes obvious that Solo is as much a social occasion as a competition exercise. It is a day spent with like-minded friends in a common

activity, where the driver in a stock Volkswagen stands equal to the driver in the sleek formula car.

Newcomers are gladly welcomed into the fold, learning that not only is talent and skill the major component, but also that two autocrossers can easily spend a half-hour analyzing something that takes place in 10 seconds.

For it is at the average weekend event that Solo truly lives. In some centers a Sunday Solo may draw 250 cars, in other less populated locales maybe 25 is a successful event. But it matters not how big the event is. What matters is people having fun with their cars and their friends. That is the essence of Solo. ■

Monthly Membership Report 01/25/2010

Please welcome these new members to the region.

| Name | Joined | City | State |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-------|
| Ezekiel Wright | 01/11/10 | Greenwich | NY |

INTERESTS REPORT

Solo

| | | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| Ezekiel Wright | Greenwich | NY |
|----------------|-----------|----|

ANNIVERSARY REPORT

| Name | Joined February | Years |
|----------------|-----------------|-------|
| Peter L. Nixon | 02/16/90 | 20.0 |
| Diane Gurdak | 02/23/95 | 15.0 |
| Pamela Johnson | 02/10/05 | 5.0 |
| James Wiehl | 02/10/05 | 5.0 |

There are 338 members in the region - no change from the last report.

Web Report

New member Ezekiel Wright is investigating the use of Wordpress software for content management on our web site. This may be a means of opening up the web site for member supplied content. Stay tuned...

Dave Wachtel

Membership chair/Webmaster