

# THE KNOCK OFF

February 2023 Issue

# MOHUD ON FACEBOOK MOHUD ON THE WEB

### THE REPORT – Eric Smith

I was happy to preside once again over a very successful evening where MoHud held our annual meeting and gave out awards for the 2022 competition season that was. The Saratoga Auto Museum once again provided a spectacular background for our event, as some very interesting cars were in attendance as part of the museum's "Bond in Motion" display. Whereas last year it was quite intimidating to eat your Italian buffet meal next to 6- and 7-figure valued Porsches, this year it was far more relaxing to not nave to worry about getting some ziti on the two crashed Aston Martins that were in the main area where we dined.

The annual meeting portion of the event proved once again that MoHud is well positioned for success. The 2023 officer slate was elected, the treasurer's report provided a picture of stability, and the membership report pointed out the challenge of the decline of member numbers MoHud has experienced in the last 5 years. Encouraging folks to explore membership and being good ambassadors of our region and programs was suggested.

The MoHud Region leadership for 2023 was elected as follows:

- Eric Smith Regional Executive
- Sal Baisley Assistant Regional Executive
- Paul Malecki Treasurer
- Shelby Blanchette Secretary
- Chip Van Slyke Director at Large
- Russ Burckhard Director at Large
- We thanked Bruce Kosakoski for his decades of

service, most recently as a director at large, as Bruce decided to step down from that position this year.

Out of all the individual award winners for Track, Road Racing, and Solo programs, I'd like to give a special nod to our region's award winners who were recognized for their service to their fellow members. The two awards we give for this recognition are the "Spirit of Competition" Award, and the "Member of Excellence" Award.

- Aashish Vemulapalli Spirit of Competition co-winner
- Adam Wright Spirit of Competition co-winner
- Salvatore Baisley Member of Excellence

The **Spirit of Competition** Award (formerly known as "The Riggi Award") is meant to recognize those members who were instrumental in helping fellow competitors participate in our region's and SCCA's events. Both Aashish and Adam were recognized by fellow members for their efforts on behalf of MoHud and its members to develop a time trial program that MoHud members can be active in.

The **Member of Excellence** Award (formerly known as the "Lewis-McClumpha Award"), is meant to recognize those MoHud members who give of their talents and time to benefit the region, its members and the SCCA. Sal was recognized for his efforts in being part of the administration of our region, his support of our efforts to run programs for both Solo and Time Trials, and his participation in many competitive and volunteer events.

Congratulations to Aashish, Adam, and Sal. Well deserved.

I'd also like to recognize the following members who helped with awards and presentations to make our evening successful:

- Paul Malecki, Chip Van Slyke
- Aashish Vemulapalli, Greg Rickes, Sal Baisley
- Russ Burckhard

Here's to a successful 2023!

Eric "EJ" Smith RE, MoHud MoHud.RE@gmail.com

# **Letter to the Editor, from Greg Rickes**

If you ever wonder about the relevance and visibility of The Knock Off here's a brief testimonial from Alan Claffie, editor of the DC Region's monthly newsletter "Straightpipe". Though couched in recent content it applies to the long-standing tradition of the publication.

"Just read your C&D SS recap in the Knock Off. I wish I could recruit writing talent of this level for DC region. So well done.

I'm just impressed that MoHud can produce content monthly and I'm pulling teeth to have anything to go to print with quarterly."

Alan's not exactly a stranger to MoHud; his father Bob was a MoHud member and SCCA racer from over Pittsfield way, and long before Alan was old enough to drive he was at MoHud and BMSC autocross events. These days he's a frequent autocross, track day, and time trial driver in the Washington DC area, and has even been known to make a day trip up to Lime Rock for Track Night in America.

# 2022 Mohawk Hudson Region Time Trials Championship Trophies and Awards – *Aashish Vemulapalli*

On January 14th, 2023 awards and trophies were presented for the inaugural MoHud Time Trials Championship at the annual banquet. The setting at the Saratoga Auto Museum on an evening where Skip Barber was also honored with the region's first

Lifetime Achievement Award was a great way to cap

off our very first season.

The season comprised of three events. The Time Trials National Tour at Thompson Speedway as well as two Time Trials events hosted by the Connecticut Autocross and Rally Team made up the schedule planned by the Time Trials committee. In addition to the events on the schedule, our members also represented MoHud at events held at Carolina Motorsports Park, NCM Motorsports Park, New Jersey Motorsports Park, Pitt Race and Road Atlanta.

Fourteen region members competed in the first season across 10 Time Trial classes. We averaged over 10 members at each event and our members also gained experience working roles at events in addition to their driving duties. At the final CART Time Trials event, MoHud members worked grid, tech, instructed as well as manned corners as the



Max LuxRamos - Time Trials Volunteer of the Year

event was short of flaggers. This led to a great experience had by all attendees and we received positive feedback for our roles at this event.

Here are the award winners for the season: 2022 Volunteer of the Year – This was awarded to Max LuxRamos. Upon learning that the event was short of flaggers, Max showed up to Thompson and managed a corner all by himself. This was his first event flagging and he did admirably well with guidance from Sal Baisley.

2022 Driver of the Year – This was awarded to Matt Huchro. Matt attended all three Time Trials events in the calendar and placed first in class at each event in crowded fields. In addition, he showed a marked improvement in his lap times over the season from his first time out to the final event of the season.

2022 Mohawk Hudson Track Star – This was awarded to Jim 'Iceman' Mulder. Driving what many consider a grocery getter, Jim showed consistent improvement at each event and was also a regular at Track Night in



Matt Huchro - Time Trials Driver of the Year

America events. He also represented the region and performed very well at several

other Time Trials National Tour events where he finished on the podium several times.

Here are the class trophy winners:

Unlimited 1 – David Burnham won this class. Dave attended all the events this season finishing on the podium twice.

Max 5 – Salvatore Baisley won this class. Sal attended all the events winning the class at one and finishing second in another. At the final event of the season, Sal stepped down as a competitor as the event needed workers.

Max 4 – Adam Wright won this class with son, Aaron Wright finishing second. Adam finished on the podium at all events winning twice. Aaron attended two events finishing on the podium once.

Max 3 – DJ McArdle won this class. DJ attended all the events and finished on the podium at all events that also included a first place.



Jim Mulder Mohawk Hudson Track Star (with DJ photo bombing)

Max 1 – No trophy was awarded in this class. But honorable mention goes to E. Jeff Baertschi who attended the Time Trials National Tour and won the first place trophy for Max 1.

Tuner 5 – Daniel Gorss won this class. Dan and his Mazda 2 made an appearance at two out of three events in the season and finished on the podium at both.

Tuner 4 – The winner of the largest class is Nigel Boyce. Nigel attended all events as well as some additional Time Trials National Tour events. Tony Tovsen took second place. Tony attended two events and hit car trouble as he was planning to head out for the third. This class also had Dave Cowie and Aashish Vemulapalli (who withdrew from the final results) competing in it.

Sport 4 – Jim 'Iceman' Mulder won this class with consistent performances at all events

and adding bonus points by attending additional events. Matt Huchro finished in an equally impressive second place with three wins from three events.

Sport 1 – Michael Park won this class. Mike attended all the events finishing on the podium at all events that included two class wins.



# Solo Report – Russ Burckhard

I hope everyone has had a safe and Happy Holiday season. There is not much new to report on. The Solo Advisory Committee met recently to tie up the 2022 season.

We went over the supplemental rules. A discussion about possibly changing the way the events are scored happened. We are looking into possibly making our events scored as if they were two-day events. This would not change the way the event is run. Competitors would still run two heats as we always have (except for the Covid era events). The way that points are awarded is the big difference. The best time from the first heat would be the result for that heat and then it would be added to the best run of the second heat. The combined total would be where the points would be assessed. This style of event requires more consistency throughout the day. Look for more info on this as we get closer to the season.

We have also had a change of our Solo Advisory Committee members. I would like to thank Sal Baisley, Miguel Teixeira, and Adam Wright for their service and want to welcome Nigel Boyce, Tracey Burckhard, William Fish, and Ken Relation for coming on board.



# Treasurer's Report - Paul Malecki

Mohawk Hudson Region Annual Financial Report for 2022
As verified by Treasurer Paul M. Malecki, pursuant to Not-For-Profit Law §519(a) (1-4)

Balance in the Club's account at Citizen's Bank on January 1st, 2022: \$28,420.75

Balance in the account on December 31st, 2022: \$33,310.80

It should be noted that as of December 31<sup>st</sup> the Club had obligations of \$795.20, representing shares of 2022 TRSS surplus owed, and since disbursed, to Patroon BMW Club and Saratoga Aumtomobile Museum. Thus the available balance was \$32,551.60.

Revenue amounted to \$20,112.41, while expenses totaled \$15, 222.36, for an increase of \$4,890.05

As stated in previous annual reports, the year's summary does not usefully portray the Club's "activity year," which runs from March 1<sup>st</sup> through the end of the next February. A fuller report of the income and expense of the Club's programs for the 2022 activity year will be presented to the Board of Directors at their March, 2023, meeting.

/s/ Paul M. Malecki 11 January 2023

# **Membership Report** – *Jim Garry*

As of January 27<sup>th</sup> Mohawk Hudson Region has 310 members.

# **New Members**

None

# Significant Anniversaries

Ron Gallo – 5 years. Ron is a MoHud autocrosser.

John Sheridan – 50 years.

Greg Rickes fills us in on this extraordinary SCCA member:

John started racing in a BugEye Sprite, later had a Mustang A Sedan and a Spec Miata. Racing became a family affair for the Sheridan clan, as both his brother and nephew joined him on the track. After he wrapped up his racing career, John served as Race Steward.

John's dedication to the SCCA included serving MoHud as Regional Executive and then as Area Director on the club's National Board of Directors.



# 2022 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REPORT, presented January 14th, 2023

This report is a requirement of our By-Laws. The data that was used to create the following annual membership report for 2022 is provided by the SCCA National Office. This information is accessible to the Membership Chairperson & other executives of the Region via our personal member accounts on the SCCA website and is made available to us in a variety of spreadsheets.

Here are some relatively recent historical membership numbers for our region.

As of today Mohawk Hudson region stands at 309 members.

Between June 2016 and August 2017 we remained above **500** members with our all-time high being 580 members in May of 2017. However those numbers were not truly representative because they included free one-year memberships that were gifted to Teen Street Survival students by the National Office. It should be noted that for a time, our Street Survival program held four schools per year. This greatly boosted our numbers but with non dues paying members who, with few exceptions, were not interested in SCCA except for the teen driving school.

The good news is that after the free membership policy was eliminated by the National Office, we nevertheless remained above or near 400 members until late 2019.

Since then we have experienced a consistent decline in membership:

- We fell from 426 in early 2018 to 394 by December of that year.
- And then we further dropped to 369 in December 2019.
- The decline continued and reached our membership nadir of 296 in December 2020 with an unhealthy boost from the Pandemic.
- We rebounded a little during 2021 and finished that year with 328 members.
- Unfortunately in 2022 despite reaching a high of 338 in March, our numbers consistently ebbed until we ended the year at 310.

Our Board of Directors will certainly consider & react to this predicament as we move forward in 2023. But it's important to point out that everyone in Mohawk Hudson Region, and especially the members at tonight's festivity should consider ourselves to be ambassadors for the club. We all have the ability to be part of the effort to increase membership by telling our friends, relatives, and co-workers about SCCA and providing them with the SCCA link for easy joining.

Why is it important to improve our numbers?

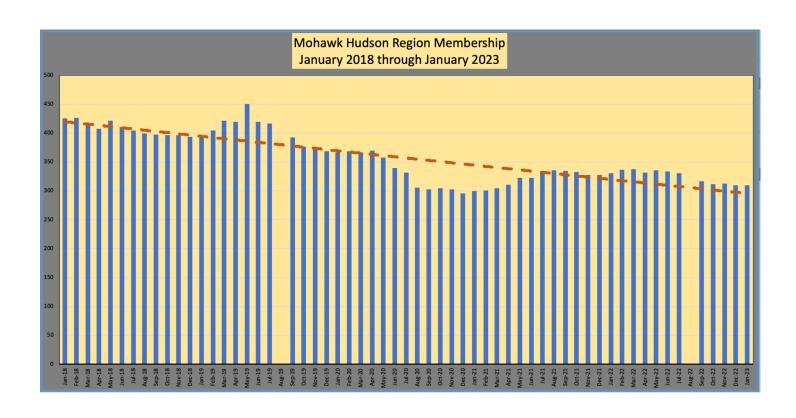
- More members means more attendance at our events which in turn means more fun, more competition, and more people to take turns staffing critical work positions.
- More members means more income. MoHud's regional dues are \$20 per year.
   An extra one hundred members adds \$2000 to our treasury which allows us to subsidize events like tonight's gathering, pay for a location to hold our monthly

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- membership meetings, fund the purchase of equipment, maintain & fuel our equipment vehicle, and continue to support all our programs.
- Finally, and more importantly, a greater enrollment provides a larger pool from which to draw to fill our leadership positions like RE, Assistant RE, Treasurer, Secretary, board members, various program chiefs, and for an editor for our monthly publication for which we presently only have a small revolving group of temporary editors.

In closing, we love our club, we enjoy taking part in activities together, and we all wish to continue these activities. This can best be carried out with a larger contingent of members.

Jim Garry Membership Chairperson January 14, 2023



# Minutes of the Mohawk-Hudson SCCA Region Board Meeting December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Start 7:05 PM

Location: Zoom

Officers Present: Eric Smith, Bruce Kosakoski, Shelby Blanchette, Paul Malecki,

Salvatore Baisley, Chip Van Slyke

Total Members Present: 7

### **Street Survival- Eric Smith**

- Do we move forward with spring street survival with no Chair or Co-chair?
- Need a solid plan to fill positions
- Not sure if we will get support from BMW Patroon
- Get a description from Jim Garry on what the position entails.
- Put the word out that we need Street Survival positions filled at next membership meeting.
- Salvatore Baisley and Eric Smith discussed moving into the chair and chief of instructor position, respectively, as a plan B
- Paul and Diane Malecki also volunteer to be plan B if we cannot get those positions filled
- We should create a third position for course set up
- Bruce Kosakoski made a reference map for future events
- There is an event on Motorsports reg for instructors to remind them they have signed up to volunteer
- Information will be sent to Paul Malecki so he can put an informational booklet together for open positions
- Bruce Kosakoski will refine the map for course set up
- We should have someone shadow course setup, instructor position and chair position; this way we have back-up to take over in case of an emergency or to lighten the load
- Eric Smith and Shelby Blanchette offer themselves up to shadow
- We all agree to move forward with the event
- Will reach out to tech party coordinators to remind when we have spring Street Survival to avoid conflict of dates
- Will check to see if paperwork for reimbursement from last event has been filed

## **Banquet Update- Salvatore Baisley**

• Figure out the award budget for Time Trials

Meeting adjourns at 8:20 PM

Meeting minutes recorded and submitted by Shelby Blanchette

# Minutes of the Mohawk-Hudson SCCA Region Monthly Membership Meeting and Awards Banquet January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 7:30 PM

Location: Saratoga Auto Museum

Officers Present: Eric Smith, Shelby Blanchette, Paul Malecki, Sal Baisley, Russ

Burkhard, Chip Van Slyke Total Members Present: 33

Shelby Blanchette makes a motion to accept slated officers as follows Eric Smith; Regional Executive, Sal Baisley; Assistant Regional Executive, Paul Malecki; Treasurer, Shelby Blanchette;

Secretary, Russ Burkhard and Chip Van Slyke as Directors at Large. Rich Welty seconds motion and all members in favor.

# **Treasury Report- Paul Malecki**

- Balance on January 1st, 2022 \$28,420.75
- Balance on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 \$33,310.80
- Balance as of January 2023 is \$32,551.60
- 2022 revenue amounted to \$20,112.41 while expenses totaled \$15,222.36,
   Mohud earned \$4,890.05 throughout 2022

# Membership Report- submitted by Jim Garry

- 309 members as of today
- All time high was May 2017 with 580 members, but this included temporary memberships for Street Survival students
- Membership has steadily declined over the years, during the pandemic in 2020 we were at 296 members
- We finished 2022 with 310 members
- We are all ambassadors for MoHud and should be trying to recruit new members.
- More members makes for more competition, income, opportunities and a larger pool for future officers/board members.

Eric Smith makes a motion to adjourn meeting. Sheri DeJan seconds motion to adjourn. Meeting ends at 7:50 PM

Annual banquet and awards followed

Meeting minutes recorded and submitted by Shelby Blanchette

# The Car & Driver Showroom Stock Challenge: Small Cars, Epic Tales - Part 2 (continued from last month)

## by Greg Rickes

### 1975 Season

Now with the upper-hand over the "unwashed masses" there was strong pressure from One Park Avenue to call it quits while they were ahead. Some would say against better judgement, Challenge IV took its usual spot on Lime Rock's Fall calendar.

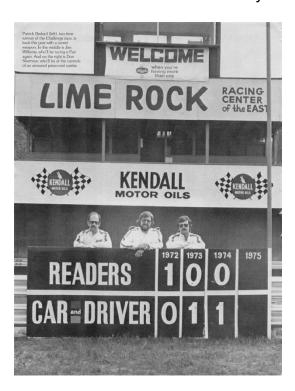
To the perceptive, the winds of change were in the air. What started as a concept for bare-bones econo-boxes was morphing into a venue for more performance-oriented (and expensive) cars, typified by VW's Scirocco, a sleek sports coupe,

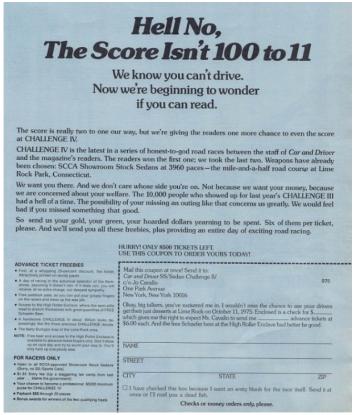


and its German counterpart, the Audi Fox. Front-wheel drive cars were also becoming more prominent, including Honda's Civic, the VW Rabbit, and a brace of ungainly looking French Renaults.

Upping the ante even more it was rumored that VW was behind the entries for Lime Rock Favorite son Sam Posey and up-and-coming Camel GT star Al Holbert, both in Sciroccos, as was Pat Bedard.

And then the rain came. And stayed.





While Bedard, Sherman, and Posey struggled with their cars (it was the first time Sam Posey had ever raced a front-wheel drive car, though the family collection did include a classic Citroen Traction Avant) and the diabolical conditions, Holbert got off to a

promising start, winning the first qualifying race. Also making the most of the opportunity was a young racer named Paul Hacker. Hacker's father had been a dirt track legend in upstate New York and Paul shared his enthusiasm, though in a somewhat different genre. Though he'd done a little bit of dirt track



racing with his brother Karl, Paul had extensive experience racing on the frozen lakes of upstate New York, where track conditions changed every lap and whoever could find grip was king. Paul had only a few years of road-racing experience but he'd already been a consistent Showroom Stock winner, and the new Scirocco suited his style and ambition.

In spite of the dire conditions the hillside, and the Car & Driver High Roller Enclave, were packed as usual. When the main event got underway Paul Hacker raced to the front, while now it was Holbert struggling with the conditions (he'd tangle with Challenge I winner Bruce Cargill and eventually finished seventh).





Always a contender but never a winner Don Knowles finished second in a now unfashionable Opel. Third was a stunning result for an ungainly looking Renault 12 expertly driven by Frenchman Patrick Jacquemart, who it turned out was actually a test driver for the French firm. Don Sherman had his best Challenge finish, in fourth. Of the rest, Posey was tenth (taking home the princely sum of \$180), while Bedard never found his mojo and ended up 20<sup>th</sup>. For Paul Hacker it was a big boost towards his goal of being a full-time professional race driver. So the tally was now tied, again, with 2 wins for C&D, 2 for the weekend warriors from Mohawk-Hudson Region SCCA! What next?

## 1976 Season

There would be one last tie-breaker, Challenge 5, October 1976.

The racing landscape in Showroom Stock had already changed dramatically. In some ways the C&D Challenge was the victim of its own success. More and more

manufacturers wanted to get in on the concept. The performance envelope expanded from basic econ-boxes all the way to marquee brands. As the performance went up, so did the cost. In response to the clamor of its members the SCCA went down the path of expanding Showroom Stock from one small group of cars to an array of classes. The balancing act for C&D became exponentially more complicated. For Challenge V they tried to stick close



to the prime directive, including only Showroom Stock B and C (the original framework) classes.

Taking up what VW had started the previous year, SAAB saw an opportunity ripe for exploiting. Not only did they outfit Pat Bedard with one of their new 99s, they upped the ante by bringing SAAB factory test driver and World Rally Championship winner Stig Blomqvist as their not-so-secret weapon.



Gratefully for the masses who populated the hillsides of northwestern Connecticut Fall weather returned in all its glory. With a backdrop of rich hues of yellow, red and gold Bedard and Blomqvist sent the message early that this was going to be a two-car race, everyone else would have to settle for the left-overs. MoHud's Paul Hacker would end up fifth, while Tony Hilferty in his Opel never made it out of the consolation round.

Though it was the first time Blomqvist had ever seen Lime Rock's rolling terrain to him it was just another road to master, and even without the rallye navigator he was





accustomed to having alongside he made it look easy. It was a race punctuated by grinding crashes.



Bedard made a game effort, but the Swedish folk hero was not to be denied victory.

How to call the final reckoning? Bedard had won two for C&D, while those who read carefully will recognize that only Mohawk-Hudson Region produced the talent that could get the better of One Park Avenue as Cargill and Hacker upheld the

honor for the "weekend warriors". What of the representative from Trollhattan?

Clearly the Swede was not out of the same mold as your usual SCCA club racer. By the same token he'd never had a seat in the editorial suite at One Park Avenue. Who knows if he even read the magazine? There was a movement to make Stig Blomquist an honorary MoHud member, though whether that ever reached fruition is just conjecture. Maybe it all ended in a bit of draw then, 2-2-1?

And so, with the last free beer quaffed, and the High Roller Enclave consigned to history, an epoch reached its conclusion.

They were raucous, rambunctious days, the likes of which will likely never be seen again. For those who were part of it there will always be the priceless memories.

(1975 and 1976 B&W photos: Joe Cali)

(color photos: Pete Watson)



Post-Script: Sadly Mo-hud's Bruce Cargill and Paul Hacker have both passed on, depriving us of first-hand recollections of those halcyon days. Two-time winner Pat Bedard advanced his career from Showroom Stock Sedans all the way to Indianapolis 500, where he suffered serious injuries that ended his racing endeavors. Following a long career at Car & Driver he retired to his native lowa.

Statistically MoHud's Cargill and Hacker were always in the thick of the action. In three appearances Cargill was 1<sup>st</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Hacker was DNF,4<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

By contrast Bedard was bust or win: in 5 races he was DNF, 1st, 1st, 20th, and 2nd.

After his win at LRP Stig Blomqvist returned to the World Rally Championship, where he scored notable wins for both SAAB and later the revolutionary Audi Quattro. Still active today, Blomqvist runs a winter driving school on the frozen lakes of his native Sweden.

Continuing the family tradition of motorsport his son Tom was part of the Myers/Shank Acura team in the DPi division of the IMSA WeatherTech Championship, scoring a win in the 2022 Rolex 24 at Daytona and then going on to take the overall season title in the IMSA series.

P.P.S. – The Race That Never Was. As part of its noble commitment to grass-roots level racing Mohawk-Hudson Region made a valiant attempt to keep the Showroom Stock Challenge going. In 1977 plans were made for a race for Showroom Stock B & C

class cars to be run in conjunction with the Skip Barber Racing Series at Lime Rock. For unknown reasons the idea was not embraced by the drivers, and with a poor entry the event was cancelled, but not before the commemorative dash plaques had been printed.



