

The Mo-Hud

# Knockoff



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Newsletter of the Mohawk-Hudson Region, Sports Car Club of America **February 2020**

## The REport

### **SCCA National Convention** *One Team. One Experience*

This year the SCCA is focusing on increasing membership and how we can collectively and collaboratively impact member experience, program experience, and leadership experience. In support of this, there were over 100 sessions at this year's convention.

One of the most interesting sessions I attended was *Reinventing Your Region* presented by Jim Cantrell. Many of us have had the experience of having to reinvent ourselves or our careers. What about reinventing an SCCA region? Jim Cantrell, a well-known entrepreneur, founder of numerous startups, management turnaround consultant, racer, and SCCA member walked us through the challenges of turning around a dormant SCCA region as a Regional Executive and described how they creatively solved resource issues and adapted to the changing world around them. He gave us some ideas and advise that can be utilized by any region.

Some of the other sessions I attended were:

*Marketing 203: Using social media to grow your region*

*Best Practices to Supercharge Your Email*

*So You Want To Be a Writer*

*Car Racing: Family journey or professional career*

The convention wrapped up on Sunday with the Tire rack Street Survival Summit. A lot of helpful information was presented. Former Indycar driver, Scott Goodyear was the keynote speaker and it was announced that **Mohud** was selected as a **Tire Rack Street Survival Region of the Year**.

*For the good of the sport*

*- Jim Bucci*

Regional Executive

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## Mohud Special Awards for 2019

At the MoHud Annual Meeting & Banquet, we recognized several notable members for their contributions this year...

### **The Mohawk-Hudson Region Member of Excellence Annual**

**Award** – This is our region's most prestigious award. It recognizes a member of the region who has contributed greatly in time and effort to our region and to our sport. The recipient may be nominated by a member. However, the final determination will be made by the Awards Committee.

This year's nomination was presented to the awards committee by Peter Kroth. The following are Peter's words:

"For years, he has represented our region at numerous tracks. This year alone, he has been to Palmer, Thompson, New Hampshire, Lime Rock, Summit Point, Virginia International, NJMP, Montreal for Formula One, and Brooklyn for Formula E.

Nothing will speak more of his dedication to the sport and to his fellow club members than seeing him actively intervene at the SCCA Runoffs, on behalf of a driver who needed assistance after blowing an engine. He recognized a competitor in a psychological "bad place" and assisted in activating the necessary resources to help this driver.

As marshals, we do not work for recognition. However, when it is earned, recognition must be given. Thank you for your service to the sport, the club, and to our region."

**The recipient of the inaugural Mohawk-Hudson region Member of Excellence Award is Rich Alexander.**



Rich was on extended duty Awards Night, but we do have a shot of him with the aforementioned Peter Kroth and buds after a long day of flagging..

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## Mohud Special Awards for 2019- II

### **The Mohawk-Hudson Region Spirit of the Competitor Award -**

Presented to a Mohawk-Hudson Region member who has given of their time, talent, and resources to help another MoHud member to get "on track". The recipient(s) will be determined by nomination by a fellow competitor, by a member of the region, or by the Awards Committee.

This year's recipient of the Spirit of the Competitor award was nominated by Aasish Vemulapali. Aasish writes:

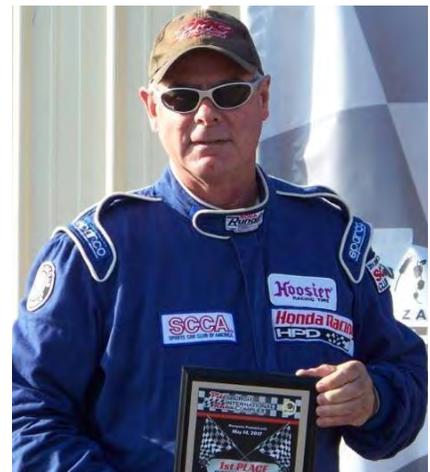
" On multiple occasions this year, he helped me out of a pinch to get going and compete. I was told I had the wrong lug nuts and the tire shop refused to install wheels on my car. It was he who I called at 7PM a day prior to heading out to Pitt Race, and he asked me to stop over right away and handed me lug nuts.

Then at another point this season I was in danger of not doing a practice session prior to nationals as I had a stuck caliper and having never replaced a brake caliper in the past, I was about to cancel my test session. He swings by and replaces the caliper all by himself and then helps me bleed the brakes.

Before I head over to nationals, he stops over with a set of specific wrenches I'll need in case I have to replace a caliper at the nationals and also hands me a copy of Going Faster to read. He also offers racing tires and a tire trailer if I want to take it and I probably would but for the Time Trial rules restricting me to running street tires.

Yet another story, midway through the season I'm having a crisis of sorts and not sure if my car is handling well. I'm getting a lot of understeer driving it the way I'm used to. I'm at Watkins Glen and he calls an instructor friend of his who is also there to instruct, to help me out. Needless to say, that ride around the track was an eye opener and gave me the mental adjustment I needed. There he was looking out for me again."

**The recipient of the Spirit of the Competitor award is Greg Goss.**



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# Mohud Special Awards for 2019- III

## The Mohawk-Hudson Region Worker Appreciation Award -

The Worker Appreciation Awards are a long-standing MoHud tradition. Several years ago they were all but forgotten but are now once again being presented at our annual awards banquet. This year the approach taken has been to view this as more of an "unsung hero" award. Rather than asking members to submit their worked events, the award committee has decided to recognize someone who has given of their time, talent and energy to help MoHud and MoHud events and members in different ways. Traditionally these awards have been given to flaggers and other race workers. Going forward, we envision this award being one that is determined by the award committee, and any MoHud member is welcome to nominate a member regardless of their program specialty.

This year we have chosen to recognize a long-time member who for many years has been involved predominantly in the Solo program but has also helped in other capacities, including with Tire Rack Street Survival. This member is typically a quiet and unobtrusive but capable and necessary presence at these events. He generally flies under the radar and doesn't look to be recognized but he provides a valuable service, ensuring safety at these events. He is regularly the safety steward for Street Survival events, even when the Street Survival coordinators forget to ask him until the last minute. The Award Committee wants to recognize and appreciate this year's awardee for his dedication to working MoHud events.

Trish Bucci  
Award Committee Chair

## The recipient of the 2019 Worker Appreciation Award is Arn Beebe.

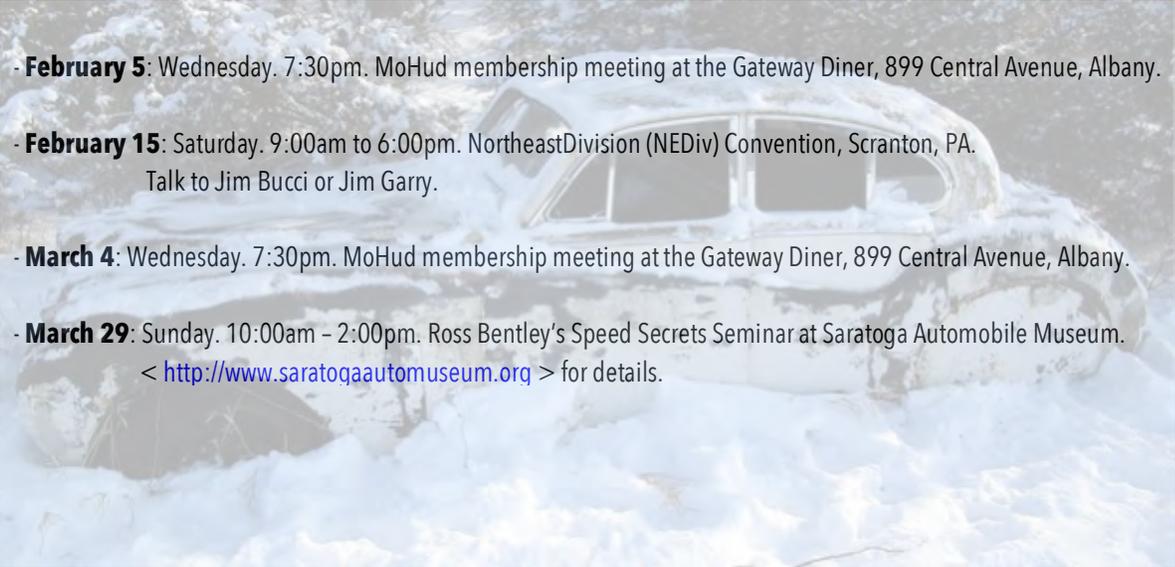


Fox-body Mustangs. People either love'm or hate'm.

Arn loves his – when it runs well...

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## Coming Events: February and...

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- **February 5:** Wednesday. 7:30pm. MoHud membership meeting at the Gateway Diner, 899 Central Avenue, Albany.
  - **February 15:** Saturday. 9:00am to 6:00pm. NortheastDivision (NEDiv) Convention, Scranton, PA.  
Talk to Jim Bucci or Jim Garry.
  - **March 4:** Wednesday. 7:30pm. MoHud membership meeting at the Gateway Diner, 899 Central Avenue, Albany.
  - **March 29:** Sunday. 10:00am – 2:00pm. Ross Bentley's Speed Secrets Seminar at Saratoga Automobile Museum.  
< <http://www.saratogaautomuseum.org> > for details.

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## 2d Annual MoHud Runoffs- January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### Hot Wheels on a Cold Night

The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual MoHud Runoffs, preceding the Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony at the German American Club in Albany, started off with 62 spec racers being picked up at tech. Not all cars ran the course, as some were immediately put away as gifts to grandchildren or as 401K investments.

Winner in the "Adult" class was Chip VanSlyke, with a self-reported 24' 8" first run and a 20'4" second run. His car has been impounded and will be torn down as per usual SCCA procedures. Johnathan Burckhardt set the best distance in the 13-18 group at 8 feet, with the 7-12 class tied, as both Oscar and Marisol VanSlyke turned in sheets with 6' and 7' runs.

While the competitors appeared to be following the General Competition Rules as handed out, there were rumors of some participants using butter from the banquet tables to grease axles, while one old-time racer felt that there was a definite smell of graphite emanating from a certain entry. The Stewards of the Meet have noted all comments in the spirit of the event, and are already making plans for next year's Runoffs. A 1976 Bugatti Chiron and 1996 Porsche Carrera have already been delivered to the tech garage for race prep, with more cars to be acquired as the year rolls along.

The Annual MoHud Runoffs are supported by [paul@paulmaleckilaw.net](mailto:paul@paulmaleckilaw.net) .

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## 2019 SOLO Trophy Presentation – Russ Burckhard

**Welcome** to the Solo portion of the 2019 Mohawk Hudson Awards Summary. This year we had 1 Test and Tune, three points events, and helped with 2 Street Survival events at SPAC.

I would like to thank our site owners. The Empire State Aerosciences museum (<https://www.esam.org/>) and the Schenectady County Airport. We held our first weekend event, held a sweeping party to keep the lot clean, and then we were notified that we would not be able to use the facility the rest of the year due to a repaving project at another airport. This required the planes from that airport to park where we normally would run. This left us without a season for the second year in a row. We were given a tip that the Berkshire Mall might be available and after a bit of effort, we were able to put on 2 events there. We are hopeful that both of these sites will be available to us next year.

Even with just the 3 events, our average attendance only dropped by 6 participants this year to 69. We had a total of about 127 different people all together. This is a drop of 37 participants Most of this was due to us crossing the border into Massachusetts and getting some of the locals. This year we increased from 22 to 27 competitors that made every event. We had another 23 that only missed one event. This year the Novice class dropped to just 33 entrants. This is about 20 less than what we had last year. The Street (formerly Stock) class dropped to 35 different competitors this year. This is a loss of about 15. The Street Touring class dropped to 24 competitors this year. Mostly due to the Street Modifieds getting put into Prepared/Modified, Street Prepared gained a couple, Prepared/Modified gained 10 mostly due to the class restructure, and Pro class dropped 2. CAM, Classic American Muscle stayed the same, and the Kart class dropped 8. Most of the classes were consistent in size with the exception of Street which was our biggest gainer with 11 more than last year.

There are a lot of people I need to thank. All of our Safety Stewards that kept all of us safe this year. All of our Chiefs; Miguel Teixeira, with the help from Saul Morse and Sheri Dejan took care of registration. Course design was great again this year. Jon Kirschman had to deal with another new site. Eric Smith added pre-registration this year to his duties as the Timing and Scoring Chief and continued to get the results up quickly. Carmine Russo did a great job again as Chief of Tech with the help from Ian Wallace. Lyndon Peck kept the events staffed as the Worker Chief with help from Moises Samaniago. Joe Cassidy continues to do a great job as Waiver Chief. Tracey Burckhard as Kart Chief. Also thanks to everyone else that has helped out with the events. I would also like to thank my fellow Solo Advisory Committee members; Andy Furlong, Aashish Vemulapalli, Adam Wright, Bruce Kosakoski, Eric Smith, Lyndon Peck, Miguel Teixeira, Russ Gorman, and out-going member Tom Moeller for planning the season, updating the rules, and picking the trophy winners. A special thanks to all of the competitor/workers at every event. We couldn't do it without you. We also need to thank the Board of Directors and all of the Mohud members. We couldn't do it without your support

Before we get to the trophies, I must thank my car owner: my wife Tracey. If you remember last year, she beat me at the last event we attended at Poughkeepsie. If you don't remember, just ask her. She will tell you. She also beat me at the first Berkshire Mall event. To prevent that from happening again, I had to throw her off of her game and so we bought a new car. So far this has worked.

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# SOLO Trophy II

## Driver of the Year

This year's Driver of the Year had some of the usual suspects at the top of the list. Jon Staude, Scott Monti and Chris Keenan and a new possibility with last year's novice driver Brian Borie. Missing from the list is Last year's Driver of the Year winner Nick Austin. He had to go and get married this summer making him miss a couple of events, taking him out of the running. I am sure this year's winner as well as the rest of us would like to congratulate him and his new wife Nicole. Hopefully for our sake this will slow him down. The worst of those 4 drivers averaged 5<sup>th</sup> on the Pax. Two were in Street and the other two were in Pro. There were a lot of similarities between the 2 classes. Both class winners had 2 wins and a 2<sup>nd</sup> in class each. Both class runners up missed an event but still had a 1<sup>st</sup> and a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish. This might have been a different speech if they had been able to attend all three events. The winner had two firsts and a second overall Pax finishes for an impressive average of 1.3, The 2019 Driver of the Year is **Scott Monti**.



## Class Trophy Winners

Before I get to the Class Trophy Winners I will give you the reason that I wanted to announce the Driver of the Year first. Last year we placed an image of the car that the Driver of the Year used on the Championship shirts. We did that again this year and I didn't want to give the winner away.

### Street

- 7<sup>th</sup> place from CS      *Sean Thompson*
- 6<sup>th</sup> Place from ES      *Mike Saptura*
- 5<sup>th</sup> Place from ES      *Matt Huchro*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place from DS      *Ian Wallace*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place from FS      *Ken Relation*
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place from FS      *Christopher Keenan*
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place from DS      *In a close battle by 5 points, Brian Borie*

### Street Prepared

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place from CSP      *Jonathan Scavone*
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place from ASP      *By 5 points, Joe Cassidy*

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## SOLO Trophy III

### Prepared/Modified

2<sup>nd</sup> Place from SM     *David Kickery*

2<sup>nd</sup> Place from SMF     *Kirby Vallant-White*

1<sup>st</sup> Place from BM     *Chuck Larson*

### Street Touring

3<sup>rd</sup> Place from STS     *Saul Morse*

2<sup>nd</sup> Place from STH     *Tracey Burckhard*

1<sup>st</sup> Place from STX     *Adam Wright*

### Kart

2<sup>nd</sup> Place from KM     *Moises Samaniago*

1<sup>st</sup> Place from KM     *Josh Smith*

### Novice

3<sup>rd</sup> Place from NES     *Andrew Scaptura*

2<sup>nd</sup> Place from NSM     *Bill Ziganto*

1<sup>st</sup> Place from NSTX     *6 point margin, Shelby Blanchette*

### Pro

4<sup>th</sup> Place from XSTX     *Caleb Pocock*

3<sup>rd</sup> Place from XGS     *Russell Burckhard*

2<sup>nd</sup> Place from XSTS     *Jon Staude*

1<sup>st</sup> Place from XHS     *Scott Monti*

## Specialty Trophies

### Novice of the year

This year's Novice classes had 3 drivers that were only separated by 13 points. The top 2 were even closer. Since we only counted two out of the three events, their best events were the two at the Berkshire Mall. At the first event, driver A beat driver B by 2 points. At the next event, driver B beat driver A by 3 points. This made a 1 point difference before bonus points were added. The Pax showed about the same with both drivers finishing next to each other on the overall list. Driver A finished two places above Driver B at the first event. Driver B finished 8 places ahead at the second event. The overall average for both drivers was only separated by only 2 places. the 2019 Novice Driver of the Year is **Shelby Blanchette**.

### Most Improved Driver

The winner for this year's Most Improved Driver made huge improvements over last year. With three 5<sup>th</sup> places and a seventh place last year, he finished sixth in class last year. This year he started with two 5<sup>th</sup> place finishes and finished with a 3<sup>rd</sup> place for a top 5 in class this year. The Pax improvement is even more impressive. Last year he had an average Pax of 49<sup>th</sup>. This year he did much better. His Pax average was 11<sup>th</sup>. I am not sure what made the difference. He ran the same car in the same class. The only difference was that he lost his novice status. this year he closed out the championship by finishing fifth in the Street class. The 2019 Most Improved Driver is **Matt Huchro**.

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# SOLO Trophy IV

## Female Driver of the Year

This year we had a total of 6 women that ran an event. Only 4 qualified for yearend trophies. Tracey Burckhard, Sheri DeJan, Shelby Blanchette, and Beverly Relyea. Two of these drivers did well in their classes with a win and a second. The two top Pax drivers had averages of 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The winner also had a top 10 Pax finish and would have had a better final event Pax finish if her new ride was in the correct class. The 2019 Female driver of the year is **Tracey Burckhard**.

**Cone Hunter Award.** Because of the brief season and the lack of cone carnage we decided not to award a cone hunter this year. That doesn't mean that I can't bring attention to those that deserve it. Last year's winner had 31 cones. Anyone remember who that was? Chris Keenan. On a positive note, Chris dropped to 9<sup>th</sup> this year. Probably helped by missing an event, Chris only had 6 cones. Off courses were not common this season. Less than 10 DNF's from the top twenty on the list. This is a testament to the ease of following Jon Kirschman's courses. The top 2 cone hitters you have already heard their names tonight. With 10 cones to 9, the female driver of the year, **Tracey Burckhard**, has beaten the 2019 Driver of the Year, **Scott Monti**.

## Spirit of Solo award

We have a few people that contributed to the program this year and their efforts did not go unnoticed. As always I wish we could give out many of these awards and not to just one person. Many people help out throughout the year and I would like to take a moment to thank everyone that has helped with the Solo program this year. This year we had someone that stood out and deserves to be recognized. This person has not only been an asset this year, but in the past as well. This year he helped tremendously with the Solo program and the Street Survivals. He stepped up to become an instructor and helped with set up and tear down at the Street Survivals. He also helped with set up and tear down of all of the Solo events. Did multiple work assignments throughout the events. Whatever he was asked to do, he did. He also helped without being asked. He worked all of the Solo event, the test and tune, and the sweeping party. He did this even though he didn't compete in the last event. He also became a Kart Steward this year. The first Spirit of Solo Award winner is **Sal Baisley**.

## Spirit of Solo award

This guy stepped up to fill a position when we needed him and did a great job. He also helped out fellow competitor during the events. He took care over Registration when Miguel was unable to. Our next Spirit of Solo Award winner is **Saul Morse**. The final winner has filled in wherever there was a need. Doing multiple jobs throughout the events. Being a Solo Safety Steward, the wellbeing of all in attendance is a priority to them. Not only helpful at our Solo events, this person was also very helpful to the Street Survival program. Never turning down a request to help out and always there to help without being asked. This person also was one of the first people you would see when registering and participated in the sweeping party despite having recent foot surgery. Our final Spirit of Solo Award winner is **Sheri Dejan**

Congratulations to all of the winners. We appreciate everyone's support of the Solo program and look forward to seeing you all next season. Thank you.

*- Russ*

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# SOLO Trophy Award Pics

by EJ



(clockwise):

Most Improved- Matt Huchro

Spirit of Solo- Saul Morse

Spirit of Solo- Sherri Bucci DeJan

Spirit of Solo- Salvatore Baisley

Novice of the Year- Shelby Lee Blanchette

Female Driver of the Year- Tracey Burckhard with Kirby Vallant-White and Russ

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# Time Trials and Track Night Stars

- Aashish Vemulapalli  
- Greg Rickes

## The (Track) Stars Amongst Us

Late October as the season wound down, the Board of Directors discussed setting up an annual award to recognize SCCA track event participation and performance. Jim Bucci asked me if I could work with Greg Rickes as part of a committee to discuss the parameters for the award and determine who receives it. My answer was a resounding yes - no region that I'm aware of has an award like this and it'd be an honor I felt to help work on this.

Greg Rickes and I set up a meeting soon to discuss the award and parameters. The idea for the award is Greg's baby and we agreed that it should be based not just on performance but also dedication, innovation, and enthusiasm. The parameters for the award would be participation in Track Night in America and Time Trials events. The award would be called the "Mohawk Hudson Track Star".

Track Night in America started in 2015 with support from the FIA. Time Trials started in earnest in 2019 with the prior year featuring primer events held largely in the southeast. MoHud members have been attending Track Nights since the year they started. In addition MoHud also participated and worked the Time Trials National Tour at Thompson and had a sizable contingent representing the club at NCM Motorsports Park for Nationals.

Our region members have represented the club very well and have finished amongst the trophies at Thompson and at Nationals. So it wasn't an easy task for Greg and I to pick a recipient.

We discussed what I had observed. Adam Wright (the ingrate that I shall protest at every opportunity) who only ever had a chance to drive Thompson in the rain at a Track Night and then showed up to the Tour bumping out of novice and on to the podium, passing yours truly on track in more than one session.

Nick Austin, who was locked in a tight battle with Keegan Stabley all through the Thompson event and managed to hang on to first in spite of a money shift that nearly grenaded his engine. Dave Burnham and DJ Mc Ardle who both finished on the podium with the latter winning his class as well as volunteering with a work assignment. The list goes on and on.

In light of all the above stories and given that we also wanted to include Track Night participation which isn't performance related, the region has determined to award the following while also acknowledging the contributions and participation of others to Track Night and Time Trials.

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## Time Trials and Track Night Stars II

**Mohawk Hudson Track Star Honorable Mentions:** Greg Goss and Michael Park are recognized for their participation in Track Nights and performance at Time Trials events.

**Greg Goss** has not only participated in Track Nights since inception, he has also championed the program and gotten several others to try it out. In addition he set the fastest time by a MoHud member (second overall) at the Thompson event. He also helped yours truly on multiple occasions to help prep the car and ready it for competition.

**Michael Park** is recognized for participating in Track Night events where he has advanced through the run groups. He attended his first ever Time Trials event at Thompson and not only finished in the Top 10, but also received the award for the fastest Novice Driver. He also attended Nationals in Kentucky and finished 82nd overall out of 190 drivers while moving up run groups during the 4 days of the event.

**Mohawk Hudson Track Star:** the inaugural award goes to **Daniel Gorss**. Dan and his Mazda 2 participated in both the National Tour at Thompson and the Nationals at NCM Motorsports Park. Unlike most of the MoHud crew, Dan drove his Mazda 2 packed to the gills down to Kentucky and back home enduring a malfunctioning ECU on the way back. Dan finished 59th overall at Thompson within spitting distance of a Subaru WRX STi and acquitted himself very well at Nationals as well.

Dan is a flagging and communication volunteer as well but the most important and least know fact about Dan is that he holds the national record for attending the most Track Nights In America.

Dan Gorss started attending Track Nights in America since 2015 and has attended 33 Track Night events as of the end of the season. While most of his event participation has been at Thompson, Palmer and Lime Rock Park, Dan also made the trip down to Road Atlanta for a Track Night.

Dan runs in the Tuner 5 class at Time Trials and as much as he's outgunned holds his own and turns out a great performance. He has aspirations of putting a cage in his Mazda 2 so he can also race in B Spec someday.

For his contribution to the sport in his many roles and for representing MoHud at all these events, Dan Gorss is the unanimous choice as MoHud's 2019 Track Star.

Best wishes and continued success to Dan, Greg and Mike. I'm sure I speak for the BOD and Greg (my committee lead) in hoping for an increased MoHud participation at Time Trials and Track Night events.

*PS: The club has a few \$50 coupons that can be used towards Track Nights as well as one for Time Trials. So if you've always been on the fence, please feel free to reach out to Jim Bucci and request a coupon. All we ask in return is that you either contribute an article to the KnockOff or attend a membership meeting to share your experience.*

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# Time Trials and Track Night Stars

- Pics by EJ



Dan Goss receives his Star award from Greg and Aashish



Greg Goss with his Ariel Atom



Mike Park and his 'Vette



Greg R answers the question:  
...was there ever a more appropriate tie?

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## Road Racing Report- February

- Jack Hanifan

- Jim Bucci

- Pics by EJ

### Mohud Road Racing Drivers' Points Championship

Our winner was busy this year. 5 event weekends including a Majors event at Thompson and the Super Tour event at Watkins Glen. Here is a sampling of his finishes. Palmer - 3 first place finishes. New Hampshire - 3 first place finishes and new track record. Watkins Glen SuperTour - 2 top ten finishes. Palmer - 3 first place finishes and new track record. The 2019 MoHud region road racing champion is **Bill Dergosits**.

### Rookie of the Year

Through high school and college Maclin raced in a few Rally-crosses and Auto-crosses but has found his home in road racing. He comes from a large family of racers and with their help was able to compete in his first season racing the # 24 Subaru Impreza, "The Buzz-Bomb". He recorded numerous podium finishes at Palmer, New Hampshire, Lime Rock, and Thompson. The 2019 MoHud road racing rookie of the year is **Maclin Norray**.

### Road Racing Driver Of The Year

Born and raised in Brunswick NY where he lives with his wife, Laura and 3 children, Hannah, Samuel and Lyla. He is a 3rd generation president/owner of Troy Industrial Solutions (formerly Troy Belting and Supply Co). Hobbies. " I race American Sedan...soooooo basically I drive for 2 hours at the track and spend the next 2-3weeks fixing the car." He says it is a labor of love. He was the Northeast Conference Majors champion in American Sedan and recorded a top 10 finish in his first Runoffs appearance. The 2019 Mohawk Hudson Region Road racing driver of the year is **Jason Smith**.

*A message from Jason: Special thanks to Josh Huestis, he has sacrificed many weekends and nights for the last 4 years to get us to 2019 Northeast regional championship, top 10 finish in our first Runoffs and now Driver of the year with MoHud....thanks buddy! Here's to a great 2020!!!!*



Bill, Maclin and Jason showing off their award windbreakers.

Presenter Jim showing off his *Appropriate Tie* entry.

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# Membership Report- January 2020

*-Jim Garry Mohud Membership Chairman*

< mhr.membership@gmail.com >

**As of January 23rd**, Mohawk Hudson Region membership stands at 367, one more than last month. For 2019 we had 82 new members but lost exactly 100 old members, most of them having joined less than 3 years ago.

Member retention is the primary issue that all regions face. Starting last year and continuing into the future your membership chair will reach out to every new member to help make them feel welcome. We also must ensure that members are aware of all of the programs available to them. With hard work, we hope to increase our membership in the coming year.

## **New members :**

Herbert Sodher, Saratoga Springs.

Interests in Club Racing, Pro Racing, and Solo.

Bradford Beal, Saratoga Springs.

Interests in Club Racing, Solo, and Time Trials.

## **Significant Anniversaries**

Phil LePore 5 years

Jon Skalwold 10 years

Diane Gurdak 20 years

Cecil Hanifan 20 years

Congratulations everyone!



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# Mo-Hud Officers and Contacts

**Regional Executive (RE)**

Jim Bucci [hdjimbu@gmail.com](mailto:hdjimbu@gmail.com)

**Assistant RE**

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**Secretary**

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**Club Racing Chair**

Jack Hanifan [jackhanifan@hotmail.com](mailto:jackhanifan@hotmail.com)

**Rally Chair**

Trish Bucci [trimar71@gmail.com](mailto:trimar71@gmail.com)

**SOLO Chair**

Russ Burckhard [russtduck@gmail.com](mailto:russtduck@gmail.com)

**Membership Chair**

Jim Garry [mhr.membership@gmail.com](mailto:mhr.membership@gmail.com)

**Chief of Pits**

Clark Nicholls [cwnicholls@aol.com](mailto:cwnicholls@aol.com)

**Scrutineering (Tech)**

Richard Welty: See his Facebook page

**Chief, Flagging & Comm.**

Richard Alexander [dweebdad@msn.com](mailto:dweebdad@msn.com)

**Activities Director**

Open. Contact Jim Bucci if interested ...

**Merchandise**

Chip VanSlyke [chipperv@earthlink.net](mailto:chipperv@earthlink.net)

**Director**

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**WebMaster**

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**NeDiv License Chair**

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**KnockOff**

Paul Malecki [paul@dianenpaulmalecki.org](mailto:paul@dianenpaulmalecki.org)

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For more information about the Mohawk-Hudson Region SCCA, and membership in the Sports Car Club of America, go to < <http://www.mohud-scca.org> >

Membership meetings of the Mohawk-Hudson Region SCCA are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, excepting July and August. See the "Coming Events" page of the KnockOff, or MoHud's Facebook page for meeting place and time.



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# The KnockOff Journal



**This Month...**

**- EJ at the Runoffs**

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## **Flagging at the 2019 SCCA Runoffs.** - EJ Smith

**I was able** to scratch “flagging at the SCCA Runoffs” off my bucket list back in 2017, and ever since then I’ve been eager to get back to another Runoffs. Being able to share that experience with flagger friends from MoHud made Indy that more special, and the camaraderie and hijinks we had on the drive out and back thoroughly enhanced it. So it was with excitement that I put my hat into the ring to be included in our merry band of MoHud flaggers for plans to attend the 2019 SCCA Runoffs at ViR.

Initially, planning was too easy: we found a house to rent almost a year prior to the Runoffs, and we had enough room to hold all our close-knit group of flaggers, about 8 of us in all. Then, it got interesting. In March 2019, we got notice that our house reservation had been cancelled – best we could figure out was the owner got wise to the Runoffs coming to town and realized he could get much more for it than we had reserved it for. At this point, there were slim pickings for housing options; all the other SCCA crowd had picked over it. I kept my fingers crossed that someone was going to step in and find a reasonable alternative for us, but that wasn’t happening.

I finally decided to do a deep dive on Google and find something that would work for the core group of MoHudders (Pete K and Rich A). I found something about 45 minutes away – a humble cabin with relatively updated interior – and sent out feelers to Rich and Pete to see if they were in. The cost was right, and they both committed to joining me. Adventure back on!

The drive down to ViR was relatively uneventful, with Rich taking his own vehicle due to the possibility of a grandchild arriving any day. We took I-81 down in order to avoid the DC Beltway madness, and it worked like a charm. The cabin proved to be humble but totally workable, and since we’d be spending nearly all our waking hours at the racetrack, as long as you can sleep and take a shower, it’s about all you need. As Rich said, you’d swear you could hear banjos off in the distance each time we pulled up to that cabin.



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## Runoffs, II ....

### Day 1 (Tuesday)

It was the only day we wouldn't need an alarm clock and be waking up in the dark, so we got a leisurely start. Stopped in town at the local Huddle House (think Waffle House knock-off), got a good breakfast, then wandered down to the track. First up was getting our credentials and assignments for the rest of the week. I recognized some NER folks that I was going to flag with on most of the days, so that helped reduce my anxiety. See, it helps to come out to your local events so you make those personal contacts and connections! We wandered around the paddock, tried to locate any of our local racers, took note of the layout of where things were - flagger meeting spot & parking, stations on track that we'd be working, etc. Rich pointed me in the direction of a vendor who is known to carry flagger supplies. I went over and sure enough, I found stuff I hadn't come across before, walking out with a flagger suit, orange safety gloves, and a radio belt. We searched out the SCCA Gear tent and got our freebies and some things we were looking for. I wandered up to Grid and found Bruce Kosakoski and Harry Adalian sitting in a golf cart in between their putting data acquisition units in cars, and we chatted.



### Days 2, 3, & 4 ( Wednesday - Friday)

The track schedule had three days of practice and qualifying for the racers. Flaggers can use this time to get familiar with the flow of the event, the comms syntax, the racers and their cars that are in attendance, pick the brains of flaggers that have been at the track before for any tendencies for things to happen at your station, chat with old friends you run into, and so on. The days begin with an early wake up and drive to the track in the dark. Even the flagger meetings begin in the dark. On Wednesday they hadn't arranged for lights for the meeting, so some folks in attendance ringed the group with their cars running and left their headlights on. You listen to the special instructions, reminders of protocols that may differ from what you're used to at local events, and then it's a scramble to find others that will be on station with you for some quick introductions and to either get a ride out to stations that have some parking or to take the damp, cold shuttle wagons pulled behind pickup trucks. The sun is coming up as the flag meeting ends and you head out. Cars are on course by 8am.

Each station has a pre-assigned captain, whose job is to quickly direct how the station will work and to figure out a rotation for the assigned flaggers. Unlike local events where you are usually working with only two or three folks on station, the Runoffs tends to attract a few more flaggers, and the numbers grow each day as the weekend of race days approaches. My stations had anywhere from 3 to 6 flaggers assigned.

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## Runoffs, III ....

**As a flagger**, I always try to assess who I'm on station with, what their experience and personality are, and then assist with station set up as needed. It's good to know who you can trust around you and who you may need to keep an eye on if they don't have a lot of experience. Most flaggers at the Runoffs have a good amount of experience, and it's just sorting out preferences of how things will be done. Some captains like to keep the radios for comms, and the rest of you will just rotate through flags; some don't. You also find out what kind of response process is expected, what the safe boundaries of the station are assumed to be, and whether there will be outposts for response. It's a lot that needs to get settled in the 20-30 minutes before competitors come out on track.



I'll take a ride out to station with anyone.

The track action was entertaining, and I found the flaggers I was assigned to were competent and friendly, if not outright entertaining. Lunches were a bit lackluster, but you rarely get sirloin and caviar on station. It's fun to see cars and drivers you aren't used to seeing, but I got pumped when I saw familiar cars from the NER events I attend. I kept an eye out for the home team guys to cheer on. MoHud drivers like Jared Lendrum, Jason Smith, and Charlie Campbell were fun to see there, and my MoHud pride was strong. I made it over at the end of some days to chat with Jared and his dad, Ken, or Jason, to see how their day went and discuss the event.



MoHud's Jared Lendrum and Charlie Campbell pose for a picture at the NER Paddock

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## Runoffs, IV ....



I had to go to ViR to meet MoHud racer Jason Smith, but I recognized his AS 97 Mustang from NER events.

### Days 5 & 6 (Saturday & Sunday)

These are race days, and those days have a different feel. Everything needs to tighten up: your comms need to be shorter and concise, your flagging needs to be spot on, and the down time between cars on course shortens, making it tougher on you to catch a rest, hit the port-a-john, or chat.

ViR was in the midst of a drought for this event, and there were multiple calls throughout the days of cars going off course, into the brown grass, and then as they left leaving grass fires in their wake. Several times action on track was interrupted so that a truck could be dispatched to a track section for them to knock down the fire.

Highlights of the racing for me were watching Nick Leverone (NER), of Flatout Motorsports, win a T4 championship. It wasn't our own Jared Lendrum, but we settled for being happy for Nick. MoHud's Charlie Campbell dueling Eric Prill for FP honors had to be the most exciting race for me. As an IMSA fan, having Cooper MacNeil run was pretty cool. He was even nice enough to come up to me on his T2 victory lap so I could get a quick video of him celebrating.

While I was showing the debris flag during the GT-1 race on Sunday, I had a front row view of one of the bigger crashes of the event.

The oil that a back marker dropped all around the track on the first laps of the race bit another competitor hard.



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## Runoffs, V

**At the end of the event**, the flaggers all gather and have a toast of remembrance in honor of those who have passed away during the year since the previous Runoffs. It's a touching moment, and a sobering one, as the names are shouted out by various members of all the regions in attendance. I had worked with a guy earlier in the week by the name of Kurt Storck. Kurt was a cool cat: drove to the event and slept in his van, rode a dirt bike out to station, and was a hoot to talk with. He said he worked for a motorcycle racing organization and traveled around the country; he'd always wanted to attend this event as a flagger. He was standing next to me at the toast, and as I turned to bid him goodbye and safe travels, I noticed he had tears in his eyes. "As I'm hearing all these great tributes to friends and colleagues, I realized it was 5 years today that my dad passed away. You guys are so good – I really dig the brotherhood I'm witnessing. I can't tell you how much I appreciate you folks making me a part of it." I just stood with him and patted him on the back while he regained his composure, and then we said our goodbyes. It just confirmed my impressions of him as a great individual and was another example of the special folks you'll run into at an SCCA event.



The MoHud Gang.  
(L to R:)

Pete Kroth,  
Leigh McBride,  
Rich Alexander,  
Bryan Deane (*former MoHud  
Flag Chief, now Indy Region*),  
Mack McCormack,  
and the author)

NER hosted the paddock party, but  
MoHud's Pete Kroth provided the cheese.



A flagger tradition: pictures of  
flaggers taking pictures of  
flaggers taking pictures of  
food. And we do this in public  
at classy restaurants, too!  
Don't let it scare you off –  
come out and join us this  
season; we'd love to have you!

- EJ