

The Mo-Hud

# Knockoff



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Newsletter of the Mohawk-Hudson Region, Sports Car Club of America **September 2021**

## The REport

**It's hard to believe** that the 2021 season is more than half over. I was just looking at my calendar and trying to plan out how the next two months will go, and I'm going to be extremely busy. In between trying to troubleshoot a wheel fitment issue on my Evo, I need to perform some parent care duties for three weeks and attend the Runoffs as part of the F&C crew.

Our former RE, Jim Bucci, had brought up the need to have a succession plan for all positions within our region. All of us in positions of responsibility see the need for this, but the biggest challenge we always run into is finding individuals who are willing to step forward and help pitch in with running the region. For example, Sal Baisley's going to take over my duties of leading the membership meeting in September while I'm away, but I'd love to have someone lined up to take over my Solo Timing & Scoring Chief duties, as well as my Solo Registrar duties for the events I won't be able to attend. There's a real risk to our region of relying on a select few individuals to perform all these duties, because if someone is suddenly not available to perform them, it leaves a void that is difficult to fill.

In addition to the need for Solo Timing & Scoring help, Solo Online Registration help, and webmaster help (WordPress knowledge is a big plus!), MoHud also has the ongoing need to find someone to take over the editor position for the Knock Off newsletter.

If you've ever had an interest in helping out with the administration of the region, please let us know. We have a good group of talented individuals who are carrying out these duties - some of you are new and we thank you. Our hard-working team deserves to have some help now and then, and we hope you consider joining us and sharing your talents. If you have any questions about needs or details, just let me know.

\*Speaking of time flying by, keep Saturday, January 8th open on your calendar, as MoHud intends to hold our Annual Meeting & Awards Banquet at the \*drum roll\* Saratoga Auto Museum. Details will be coming soon from Assistant RE Sal Baisley.

Thanks,

~ *EJ Smith* Regional Executive

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## Coming Events: September and...

- **September 1**: Wednesday. 7:00pm. Membership meeting at the Gateway Diner, Central Avenue in Albany. Traditionally, people start showing up around 6:15 to swap stories and dine from the Gateway's classic menu.
- **September 9**: Thursday. 12:30 – 7:30pm. Track Night in America at Palmer (Mass). SCCA.com for registration.
- **September 11-12**: Palmer (Mass.) New England Region's annual Pig Roast club racing.
- **September 17-19**: Solo autocross at both Devins (Mass.) and Seneca Depot (NY) this weekend.
- **October 17**: Sunday. Tire Rack Street Survival at Saratoga Automobile Museum/ SPAC. See below.
- **January 8, 2022**: Saturday. 5<sup>ish</sup>. Annual Membership Meeting at the Saratoga Automobile Museum. Some business, some awards, the annual MoHud Runoffs (adult and kid classes), and maybe a special guest speaker. This is gonna be great! PS: Russ and Ken will scare away any Northway snow...

*As always, keep checking with the MoHud website and Facebook page, as well as motorsportsreg.com to make sure you've found all the nearby or "road trip" events that interest you.*

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## Street Survival Needs You at Saratoga

*~ Jim Garry, MoHud TRSS Chair*

Mohawk-Hudson Region along with our friends from the BMW-Patrol Chapter is presenting another Teen Street Survival School on Sunday October 17th at the Saratoga Auto Museum. Getting students is not a problem; we've already got a wait-list. The key ingredient is having plenty of instructors. Ask any Street Survival instructor around and they'll tell you that participation in this school is among the most rewarding activities you can take part in. The kids arrive in the morning looking aggrieved at having been roused from their beds earlier than noon. But within seconds of their behind-the-wheel instruction they are alert and 100% engaged. Teaching them to understand car control is fun and gratifying.

For in-car coaches, we're looking for people with car control skills and experience with AutoX, car control clinics, high performance driving, racing etc. We can provide in-car training as well (riding in the back seat with an experienced instructor). We could use non-coach volunteers as well, for things like shagging cones and traffic flow control.

To sign up please get in touch with our school's Chief of Instructors, Kevin Belden at [kgbelden@gmail.com](mailto:kgbelden@gmail.com). If you've not been a Street Survival instructor before, you'll be required to spend an hour or so of online training and certification. But even that is interesting and you'll learn many new things yourself.

Learn more about the program at < <https://streetsurvival.org> >

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## September a Big Month for Friends...

**Saratoga Automobile Museum** will hold its annual car auction on Friday and Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, in the SPAC parking lot. Volunteers are needed not just those days, but starting Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup>, for tasks such as shuttling the consigned cars to staging areas, keeping track of sold and unsold cars in the post-auction corral, and helping jump-start reluctant barn-finds. MoHuders who've worked the auction in past years have told great stories about cool cars they've pushed, started or driven. Word is that some 350 cars will cross the auction block this year.

Send an e-mail to Tom Campbell < [tomcampbellscca@gmail.com](mailto:tomcampbellscca@gmail.com) > or call him at 518-441-5573 for more details and to sign on.

**In other SAM news**, as they approach their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *Horsepower Magazine* has been retooled as *Curated*, featuring slick artwork as well as a feature stories. The first issue highlights many of the street Porsches from the collection of Steven Harris as photographed by James Lippman and exhibited in the "Rare Air" show scheduled to close after Travers Weekend.

MoHud gets its due in this first issue of *Curated* by way of an article by Rich Alexander on the restoration of the Museum's #85 Formula Vee in colors raced by the late David Riggi.

Of course you'd know all this already if you were a supporter- member of the Museum, as we've all received a copy of *Curated* in the mail. Can't promise the same in the future, but you ought to consider membership to keep them going.

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**September 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>** will mark the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of automobile racing at the Altamont Fairgrounds.

Promoted by Ralph Hankinson, six "big cars" (sprint cars) showed up for the inaugural two days over a half-mile track that until that time was the exclusive domain of horse racing trotters and pacers.

The first race on Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> featured four cars: Bob Price in a Chrysler, George La Motte in a Rajo (Ford Model A block), James Ewers in a Studebaker, and Ralph Baker in his Hudson Special. Despite an early accident that sent a spectator to the hospital, the ten-lap race saw three lead changes, with Price coming in first in a time of 6 minutes, 54 seconds. The second event, a "time trail" was won by Roy Ketcham in his Chicago Special. His winning lap time was reported as 22 .1/5 seconds – a supposed statewide record for a half-mile track. In the light of record lap times at the Fairgrounds in following years, it seems the lap was more likely 32 seconds plus, not 22 seconds plus.

There's a legend around Altamont that the first automobile race was held at the Fairgrounds in 1910, but research by the KO editor has deflated that claim. A race was advertised, but was called due to rain; wouldn't want a wet horse track to be churned up by heavy automobiles...

The Gypsons, Ken Sr. and Ken Jr., are the best known MoHud connections to racing at Altamont. Racer Ken Sr. was MoHud's second RE, back in 1957. Young Ken still has at least one "big car" in his collection.

Another MoHud connection is Greg Rickes, who appears to have driven a Formula 500 Cooper or some such in an exhibition race a few years back. Perhaps we can get Greg to elaborate on this.

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## Road Racing

### Thompson Under the Lights - August 21<sup>st</sup>

The second annual New England Region Midnight Madness regional races, including the Heritage Racing Group, ran on Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> on a hot day and night that foretold the coming of Hurricane Henri. Midnight Madness consists of qualifying in the morning, a race for groups in the afternoon, then a night race for each group under trackside lights -- no car headlights allowed.

MoHud Racing was represented by Ed Zemek (SpecMiata2) and Mike Harmuth (Historic Racing Group 1). Other MoHuders spotted in the darkness included EJ Smith and Sal Baisly flagging, Rich Welty in Tech, and the Maleckis occasionally seen pushing a car up the tech scales and taking pictures.



Ed



Mike

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### Mount Washington Climb to the Clouds - August 13 -15

It's been several decades since MoHud's first and last hillclimb, but Caleb Pocock carried the flag for us at the annual climb that is the East Coast's version of Pikes Peak.

Look for his first run up the 8-mile course at :  
< <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYgPVsXU3-0> >



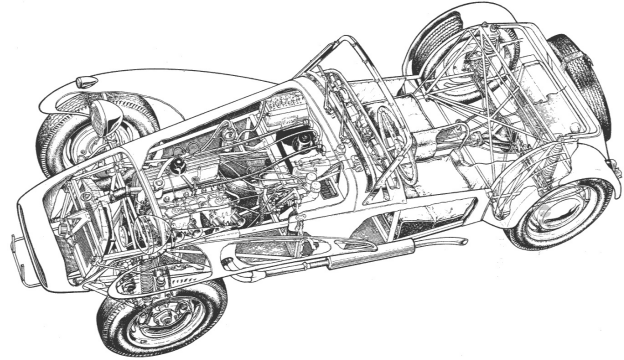
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# Membership Report- *-Jim Garry Mohud Membership Chairman*

< mhr.membership@gmail.com >

**As we near September**, Mohawk Hudson Region's membership is up four from last month, now at 336. New or rejoined members in July & August are listed below. Their primary interests, if chosen, are included after city of residence.

<b>Jack Leung</b>	Brooklyn Club Racing, Rally, RallyX, Solo
<b>Andrew Nicolella</b>	Rexford
<b>James Mulder</b>	Lake George Solo
<b>Christopher Moberg</b>	Clifton Park
<b>Richard Plotkin</b>	East Chatham
<b>James Shea</b>	Albany
<b>Katherine Weidenbacher</b>	Cementon
<b>John Romeo</b>	Ballston Lake
<b>TJ Hanifan</b>	Albany Club Racing
<b>Frank McCleneghen</b>	Galway Club Racing
<b>Kent Vaccaro</b>	Plattsburgh
<b>Ryan Eamer</b>	Delanson
<b>Donald Mallery Jr.</b>	Chenango Forks
<b>Aidan Fahy</b>	Johnsonville



## Significant Anniversaries

**George Kline**, 10 years - George has a competition license and has been very successful in both NYSRRC and NERRC driving his distinctive yellow E Production Caterham Seven.



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## Mo-Hud Officers and Contacts

**Regional Executive (RE)**

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**Assistant RE**

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**Solo Chair**

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**Track Chair** Time Trials and Track Nights

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**Rally Chair**

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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, 7pm, at locations as announced on the Region's Facebook page.



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# The KnockOff Journal

**This Month...**

- *Greg Rickes on Forgotten Venues*



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## Menands. Motorsports, and MoHud History

**On a recent excursion around town** the always observant Aashish Vemulapalli made note of an array of orange pylons laid out in the parking lot at 431 Broadway in Menands. Apparently this was a set-up for some sort of emergency vehicle training exercise.



Not surprisingly this set off an on-line conversation musing about the prospects for a new autocross site.

Like so many things in MoHud this was another example of the past as prologue.

In the late 1940s oval track racing for "midget" cars was booming, and the Albany area was not immune to the craze. A quarter-mile paved oval was constructed in Menands at what would eventually become 431 Broadway.

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**Menands, II...**

May 1948

But in handling 25 put-outs and total bases.

**EMPIRE RACEWAYS**

PRESENTS



**MIDGET AUTO RACES**

**8 Thrilling Events Each Nite 8**

TOP-NOTCH RACE DRIVERS — Best in the EAST  
THRILLS and CHILLS GALORE!

**OPENS TONIGHT**

Every Wednesday 8:30 P.M.  
GEN. ADMISSION: 1.20 incl. Tax and Seat

**TROY-MENANDS RD. Near Bridge**

**TUNE IN TO WABY EVERY RACE NITE FOR LAP-BY-LAP  
DESCRIPTION OF MAIN EVENT**

This location had the unique feature of sharing the property with a drive-in movie theater. The auto races would run mid-week, a slow time for movie-goers, and utilized the drive-in property for spectator parking. The speedway was a popular attraction for many years. In the following photo you can see the silhouette of the drive-in screen in the background.

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## Menands, III...



**The speedway operated from 1948 until 1965.** The first auto race I remember going to was at Empire Raceway, in the summer of 1963. The program included not only the usual local stock cars but the travelling series of the American Race Drivers Club midgets. It was a glittering field in terms of both cars and drivers, including an up-and-coming talent out of Nazareth PA by the name of Mario Andretti.

A few old-style sports car gymkhanas were held on the track, and our dear friend Jack Hanifan played high school football on a grid-iron set out in the track's infield.

T

he lure of commerce inevitably overcame the draw of seasonal auto racing and outdoor movies. The property was razed to construct a discount department store. But that wasn't the end of this story.

With local "blue laws" in effect into the late 1960s the vast parking lot at "Two Guys" Shopping Plaza became a prime location for MoHud autocross events.

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## Menands, IV...



**This popular location met its end** when Sunday shopping became a priority, if not necessarily a necessity. In the dynamics of a market economy "Two Guys" eventually faced its own demise in the market place and the property moved through various iterations of vacancy and re-purposing, but alas motorsport has yet to make it's return to this historic venue.

*~ Greg*

*Ed's PS: Who's driving the Lotus?*