

MOHUD AWARDS BANQUET PROVES GREAT FUN AS ALWAYS!



Photo: Jim Bucci

PLANS ARE IN THE WORKS!!

We are planning a series of outings (first one will be in January) over the next few months to Checkers Out Speedway in Johnstown; so be sure to check the MoHud Facebook group and the MoHud website forums for more details as they are posted.

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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.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE MO-HUD MAILING LIST: Go to the MoHud web site (see below), click INFO, click ELECTRONIC MAILING LIST, click LWGATE, click Subscribe to Mo-Hud DIGEST, fill out form, click SUBSCRIBE.

<http://www.mohud-scca.org/>

ADVERTISING RATES

Type	Size	1 Issue	6 Issues
Full Pg	10x7	\$20.00	\$100.00
Half Pg	5x7	\$15.00	\$75.00
Half Pg	10x3	\$15.00	\$75.00
Qtr Pg	5x3	\$10.00	\$50.00
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RE R E P O R T

Russ Burckhard

January 2012

The banquet was a great success. We had one point of order to take care off. The elected officers of the club had to be voted on. Since all positions are being held by the same members as last year and all positions were unopposed, one vote was placed to confirm the slate. Your returning officers are Ron Bass as secretary, Chip VanSlyke as Tresurer, Bruce Kosakoski and Dick Stewart as Directors, Pete Smith as Activities Chair, Jim Bucci as Assistant RE, and myself as your RE.

Other officials of Mohud are; Zeke Wright as the Webmaster, Lisa Hanifan as the KO Editor, Will Schambach as the Membership Chair, Jack Hanifan as the Competition Chair, DJ McArdle as the PDX Chair, and myself as the Solo Chair.

We had two new trophies to give out this year to represent the PDX and Street Survival programs. Thanks to everyone that helped out with both of these programs. Here are the speeches that I delivered for the recipients.

STREET SURVIVAL APPRECIATION AWARD

This year in association with the Patroon BMW Club we held our first Tire Rack Street Survival Event. For those who do not know what that is, it is a program that is geared to helping young drivers the opportunity to learn how to drive their vehicle under some extreme conditions. The training includes driving and class time that takes over where driver's education leaves off. It gives the students the opportunity to see what their vehicle will do when it is pushed to its limits in a controlled environment. These are situations that more than likely will arise at some point while driving down the road. These students now have a good idea what will happen and what to do when it does. We have already heard of a few students that have avoided accidents because of this training.

Mohud has wanted to put on a Street Survival event for a number of years. We were lacking a site that could handle it. Last year Fortitech allowed us to use their site. This year I asked them if we could gain an extra weekend so that we could put on a Street Survival event. They were excited at the opportunity and even helped to get us a tractor trailer from Auto Solutions for one of the exercises. With the approval from the Solo Advisory Committee, the event was scheduled to happen.

Bill Wade, the National Program Manager for Street Survival, had nothing but good to say about the event and the amount of volunteers and the enthusiasm that they had for the program. The parents and students also had nothing but praise for the program as well. All of this would not have been possible without the efforts from everyone that had helped with the event. Thanks to everyone that had helped with this event. While it took many to make the event happen, it was the efforts of one that we are recognizing tonight.

The wheels were set in motion and the planning for the event started. After a slow start, something wonderful happened. Will Schambach stepped up and asked if he could be the event chairman. I stepped aside and let him run with it. Will worked hard to get the right people in all of the right places and made sure that they had what they needed to get the job done. He made sure that all of the necessary materials were in place and that all of the details were taken care of. It is my pleasure to award Will Schambach with the Street Survival Appreciation Award.

PDX APPRECIATION AWARD

For the second year in a row Mohud has put on a Performance Driving eXperience. Last year was held at Monticello Motorsports Park. This year it was held at Lime Rock Park. In my opinion this event could not have been much better. The staff that was assembled was second to none. The participants had a full day's mix of classroom training and driving time. The instructors were well suited to handle the task of teaching a range of drivers from first timers to experienced racers. The track workers and specialty chiefs all handled the event like they have been doing it for years. The truth is that many have been doing what they do for years. The Patroon BMW Club has been holding these types of events for years. Mohud is fortunate that many of Patroon's members are also Mohud members. Without the help from Patroon's members, our event would not be the success that it was. The person that put all of this together is DJ McArdle. It is due to his leadership that this year's PDX was such a great event. It is my pleasure to award DJ McArdle with the PDX Appreciation Award.

SOLO Report

Russ Burckhard



January 2012

For those that did not make the banquet, here is what you missed with the Solo trophy presentation. Congratulations to all of the winners and thank you Eric Smith for the assistance with the presentation. Be sure to look for the Solo Tour and Pro schedules later in the Knock Off.

2011 SOLO TROPHY PRESENTATION

Welcome to the Solo portion of the 2011 Mohawk Hudson Awards Banquet. 2011 was another good year. We held seven points events, three test and tunes and a Street Survival event. The point's events averaged close to 50 participants at each event. This is up from last year, although we had better weather this year.

I would like to thank our sites; First off, is the McCarty Ave OGS lot. It has been a great site for us over the past few years and I expect that relationship to continue. Wilton Mall has been great to work with. The small site continues to be a hit with the competitors as it usually has the largest attendance. Our newest site is Fortitech. They gave us a chance to use their facility last year and let us back for 2 weekends this year. Seneca Army Depot is a world class site. We held a test and tune and the New England Region held the Northeast Divisional there. The future of Seneca is still in jeopardy and hopefully the issues will be resolved and we will be able to continue to be able to use it.

There are a lot of people I need to thank; Our Safety Stewards are Bruce Kosakoski, Arne Beebe, Phil Shoemaker, Tom Moeller, and Phil Reddington. DJ McArdle took care of Registration with the help from Phil Shoemaker. Bert Huiest has continued to set up some great courses. Eric Smith continues to do a great job with Timing and Scoring. Carmine Russo did a great job in his second year as Chief of Tech. Will Schambach is Chief of Waivers. Jim Garry organized and put everything in place for the test and tune out in Seneca. Also thanks to everyone else that has helped out with the events. I would like to thank my fellow Solo Advisory Committee members. Andy Furlong, Bruce Kosakoski, Bert Huiest, Eric Smith, Lyndon Peck, Jeff Kanetzky, Tom Moeller, and Will Schambach for planning the season and deciding who gets the awards.

This year we added two new classes - Street Tire and Novice. The Street Tire class was added to help accommodate competitors who don't wish to deal with the expenses and complexities of R-comps, and the Novice class was to help better position new attendees with drivers of similar experience levels. Both of these classes were a hit with the competitors based on attendance.

On a personal note there are a couple of people I need to thank. Arne Beebe and his wife Diane have continued to allow me the opportunity to co-drive their Mustang. I was able to pilot it to wins in both the NE Divisional and the Northeast National Tour. It is a testament to the preparation that Arne has performed on the car. Another person that made my year so good is my wife Tracey. She competed most of the year despite being pregnant for our beautiful daughter Lindsey. I enjoy having her at our events.

Class Trophy Winners

Stock

5th Place from CS Kevin Gebert
4th Place from FS John Danese
3rd Place from ES Tom Moeller

2nd Place from CS Greg Cuda

1st Place from GS Bill Bennett

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STREET PREPARED

- 4th Place from FSP Lyndon Peck
- 3rd Place from CSP Bert Huiest
- 2nd Place from DSP Bruce Kosakoski
- 1st Place from DSP Will Schambach

PREPARED MODIFIED

- 2nd Place from CP Arne Beebe
- 1st Place from CP Russ Burckhard

STREET

- 6th Place from ST Allan Varcoe
- 5th Place from SM Jeff Kanetzky
- 4th Place from ST Ian Wallace

- 3rd Place from ST Carmine Russo
- 2nd Place from SM Phil Shoemaker
- 1st Place from SM Eric Smith

STREET TIRE

- 3rd Place from ASP Steve Jones
- 2nd Place from HS Robert Harrington
- 1st Place from ESP Devin LeMoine

NOVICE

- 4th Place from BS Dean Baker
- 3rd Place from CS Scott Cherry
- 2nd Place from CSP Andrew Lauria
- 1st Place from SS Keith Lauria

SPECIALTY TROPHIES

NOVICE OF THE YEAR

The 2011 winner was the toughest pick again this year. We had several nominees that made impressive debuts. For the winner, while some of his finishes were not as good as the other nominees; they were respectable. He was open to criticism and accepted the suggestions from others and made steady progress throughout the year. Several voting members commented on how they were impressed with the results of the competitor given the preparation level of the competitor's car. In a very tight battle of the brothers, the 2011 Novice Driver of the Year is Andrew Lauria.

MOST IMPROVED DRIVER

The nominee for this year's Most Improved Driver had an outstanding year. He made huge improvements from last year. Last year his average finish in class was around 15th in Stock. This year his average finish was 4th but he finished 5th in the Stock group. The 2011 Most Improved Driver is Kevin Gebert

FEMALE DRIVER OF THE YEAR

This year we had 2 competitors eligible for the Female Driver of the Year; Gabby Varcoe and Tracey Burckhard. Anyone of them would be a good choice for this award, but we had to narrow it down to one. The winner started off strong with a third place finish at her first event of the year. She followed this up with 3 6th place finishes in a row despite being hampered by a growing belly. Her final event of the year she managed a 6th place finish in a car she wasn't used to competing in, just 1 week after giving birth. The 2011 Female Driver of the year is Tracey Burckhard.

DRIVER OF THE YEAR

This year's Driver of the Year had some impressive finishes. He had finished the top of his class twice and captured a fastest time of the day and a fastest Pax along the way. Even though he only made it to 5 events this year, he did all of this in a borrowed car that sometimes wasn't arranged until the morning of the event, and was never in the same car twice. Each time he beat the car owner's time. Would the owners of those cars that Jeff co-drove and beat like to stand up? The 2011 Driver of the Year is Jeff Kanetzky.

WORKER OF THE YEAR

The Worker of the Year is another tough award to give out as there are many that do so much during the year. I would like to take a moment to thank everyone that has helped with the Solo program this year. This year's winner was asked to step up and take over for a recently vacated position. He did this even when he had to entertain relatives from out of town and could not stay to compete. He came to the event, did his job, and then left to do what he needed to do. When he was able to stay, he helped out with timing usually as an announcer. For those that have heard him at the events, they can attest to the quality of his color commentary. For those that have not heard him, you are missing out. The 2011 winner of the Worker of the year is DJ McArdle.



2011 Awards Banquet



All photos on this page courtesy of Jack Hanifan.

COMPETITION REPORT Jack Hanifan

January 2012 Competition Report

2011 Club Racing Awards- 86 members and guests attended the 2011 Annual Meeting. Many of the club racers received both MoHud Awards and New York State Road Racing Championship Awards.



Photo: Jim Bucci

NYSRRC Awards:

Jack Hanifan - F Production Champion
 Brian Blizzard - 3rd ITA
 David Lendrum - Spec Miata Champion
 Ken Lendrum - 2nd Spec Miata
 Dylan Murcott - 4th Spec Miata
 Alan Lendrum - Spec Miata 2 Champion
 T.J. Hanifan - Showroom Spec Miata Champion
 Pete Smith - 3rd Showroom Spec Miata

NYSRRC Top Ten in Points:

1st David Lendrum
 2nd Ken Lendrum
 6th Dylan Murcott
 7th Alan Lendrum

NYSRRC Special Awards:

Best New Driver - Dylan Murcott
NYSRRC Driver of the Year - David Lendrum
Mohawk Hudson Region Club Racing Awards
 MoHud Regional Club Racing Championship - David Lendrum
 Great Season Awards - Jeff Lehner, Alan Lendrum, TJ Hanifan, Jack Hanifan
 Most Improved Driver - BK Karl
 Rookie of the Year - Tom Hansen
 David Riggi Memorial Trophy - Jared Lendrum
 Mohawk Hudson Regional Driver of the Year - David Lendrum
 Mohawk Hudson National Driver of the Year - Charlie Campbell

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

2012 SCHEDULE

MoHud will be hosting a National Race at Lime Rock Park –June 22nd and 23rd. The weekend will include a Restricted Regional for SSM and other cars and a Pro IT race.

NYSRRC-The NYSRRC schedule is 5 weekends with 4 of them at Watkins Glen and the other at Nelson Ledges. The dates at the Glen are May 26, 27 (Memorial Day Weekend), July 21-22, September 15-16 (The Fun One) and October 6, 7 (The Last Chance). The Nelson race is June 23-24.

NARRC-The NARRC schedule is 9 races in 5 weekends. The first 4 weekends each have two races counting for points (races not necessarily sanction numbers) May 26-27 at NHMS, June 9 LRP, July 21-22 at the Glen, August 18-19 at NJMP Thunderbolt, the finale is the NARRC Championships at LRP September 21-22.

NATIONAL RACING- National Racing begins with a Rational at NHMS April 21-22, followed by National Races at Summit May 5-6, Nelson May 26-28, The John Stim Memorial National June 22-23 at LRP, the Glen July 7-8, Beaver Run July 28-29 and Pocono August 11-12.

Driver's Schools- Schools are scheduled for Summit March 23-25, NJMP March 31-April 1, NHMS May 25, LRP June 8, and Watkins Glen October 4-5.

Monthly Membership Report 12/16/2011

Will Schambach, *Membership Chair*

New member report 12/16/11

From: 11/16/11 to: 12/16/11

Please welcome these new members to the region.

Name	Joined	City	State
Sarah Becker**	12/08/11	Delmar	NY
David Cowie	11/30/11	Ballston Spa	NY
James Cowie	11/30/11	Ballston Spa	NY
Jenna Cowie	11/30/11	Ballston Spa	NY
Sheri Cowie	11/30/11	Ballston Spa	NY

***Sarah Becker was a Street Survival participant and a First Gear member-Welcome Sarah!!*

Interests report as of 12/16/11.

Solo

David Cowie

Anniversary Report as of 12/16/11

Name	Joined on	Years
	November	
Michelle Burnham	11/28/01	10
	January	
Steven Dweck	1/6/07	5
Ezekiel Wright	1/22/07	5

There are 320 members in the region.



Photo: Jim Bucci

LINCOLN SOLO NATIONALS

Arn Beebe

We drove through the gate at the Lincoln Air Park late Saturday afternoon and went straight to registration and got our paddock assignment, all in the space of a few minutes. Camp MoHud here we come. Jim and Ken were already there and set up but I didn't see them at that point and since it was now pretty late in the day I just parked the truck and said tomorrow is another day. Now it's back to the hotel and unpack, then find a good place for dinner. Hotel staff suggested Lazlo's about ten minutes away, good steaks and many choices for beer.

Sunday morning is nice and there is plenty of time to get everything ready. Will and EJ have arrived early and found Camp MoHud so we spend some time comparing travel stories.

I spent the majority of the morning unloading car and gear followed by hours watching day 2 of the Pro Solo finals and the Challenge rounds. Diane has come by at some point to see me and not finding me has gone to the far end of the site and rented a golf cart. I had already said not to spend the money but once again she will have made the correct decision. Last year I walked everywhere and finished each day with my hip in agony, by the end of this year's visit I will have put many miles on the golf cart and been able to walk the courses till I can close my eyes and replay the entire course in my mind. Around 5 I called Diane to pick me up and right after that Dede Padberg rolls up in her golf cart to tell me the CP party will begin at 6 tonight. When I said I thought that would be Monday she said that some of the guys had gotten a bit older now and they needed an entire



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day to recover before we ran on Tuesday! So I called Diane again and told her we had a change of plan, (I had spent much of the trip out convincing her we would go to the CP party this year), so she needed to stop at the market and pick out some nice steaks and beverages for us. It was a good time and Diane got to know many of my competitors. On the way back to the hotel she said she had enjoyed the evening in spite of initial trepidations.

One of the reasons Diane usually picks a Marriot Residence Inn when we travel is the complimentary breakfast they have so Monday was another relaxed arrival at L.A.P. Today is the first opportunity to look at the courses and if Will had not reminded me I would have forgotten to get my car teched for the event. Made it through tech with less than 15 minutes to spare. Tuesday will be the west course so that is what I concentrated on, walked 8 to 10 times over the length of the day plus once around the east course once, didn't like that one at all, so narrow I didn't think I could squeeze the Mustang between the gates must have been designed by someone driving a very narrow car(a Honda Civic in ST trim actually). Also found an opportunity to get the car weighed before it was



too late plus made several visits to the other end of the site to watch some of the practice runs, this is where Jim and Ken have been spending much of their time since arriving. Boy am I glad Diane ignored my protests and got that golf cart already, thank you Diane. Monday evening is the Welcome party at the Speedway Motors complex, really good barbeque from Texas Roadhouse followed by several hours in Bill Smith's museum, 3 floors of race cars, hot rods, unique motors and collections of many types of memorabilia.

Tuesday starts before dawn with a violent thunderstorm and spectacular lightning display. Diane is very nervous and she isn't the one who will be driving in competition without any rain tires, what a way to start the day. CSP runs in the first heat so it's off to see if I can do anything to help or offer encouragement to Will and EJ. Andy has sent his rain tires along but the rain is letting up and no one in the class is happy with their choice of tire this heat, some changing back and forth every run. My work assignment is as safety steward for the second heat so it's off to check in. During the lunch break that follows is a final chance to walk the course one last time but the only thing you can see are hundreds of people everywhere ahead of you, nothing added to the mental file here. By the time I bring the Mustang to grid for the fifth heat the sky is clear, the pavement is dry and the temperature is in the 90's and I have just the right tires for these conditions on the car.

Formula SAE is up first and the CP drivers all get together for our traditional meeting and yell to let everyone know we're here. During the first interruption the announcer busts on us because we weren't the first to oil down the course, but it's a little motor with a small oil pan and we will maintain our history of major carnage. By the end of our first runs a C4 trans will have exploded and another car will snap its crankshaft in half with the front piece exiting the motor, creating a gigantic oil spill that resulted in the shutdown lane having to be moved for the remainder of the heat and generating an incident report for the courseworker who hit the oil spill and went down hard. My first run is clean and the 76 that I get has me in 20th and it will be downhill from here. Will and EJ have appeared along with Diane. When they can't convince me to go and sit in the shade along the side of the car, (I can't watch the others make their runs that way) Diane makes sure I drink more fresh cold water and EJ produces an umbrella to make portable shade. I started my second run in good spirits and of course go slower while others improve greatly. On the last run I get a 75 and finish day 1 in 25th place. Nothing to do now but concentrate on Wednesday and try to do better, but after walking only twice the sun is setting

and I still don't much like the course. Back at the hotel it's so late by the time I get out of the shower they have rolled up the sidewalks and we can't get a table any place so it's leftovers for dinner tonight.

Wednesday the weather is great and I start off in grid with Will and EJ again. By the end of my work assignment I feel like I could add herding cats to my work resume. CPL is in the third heat and EJ is the first courseworker to reach the car when the spindle shears off the left front of the Padberg's Mustang on it's final run, the carnage continues in CP. With work assignments done Will and EJ are loading up and heading for home to see what the hurricane has left them so I wish them good luck and a safe trip. I need to refill the fuel cell, torque the lug nuts and set tire pressures before taking the car to grid. Diane got too much sun yesterday so I'm not going to call her for today's session so my plan is to just study the course map and watch more of the runs before my heat starts, I've already noticed that the east course is faster than the west was. My first run nets a 70.8 but it is 3 and a half seconds slower than the class leader's first run and no improvement in my position. The second run is only half a second faster on raw time so the cone I hit means a wasted run as others go even faster. I'm bumming as I put on my helmet for my last run when Chris Travis comes up to me and says forget about the previous runs and to just go out and attack the course, don't worry about being clean, and have an exiting last run to talk about on the ride home. So I did just that. Pulled up to the start line, brought the revs up and launched hard when the starter said go! Spun the tires all the way to the first turn, barely lifted and as soon as I felt the car start to turn got right back in the throttle, didn't even look at the slalom just went and was going



through the sweeper before I knew it and almost spun 3 times in the offset after that and then it was attack the ugly z shaped element before the finish line the difference this time being I was determined to use the throttle as much as possible, forget the cones. The tires really did hold and the car is already at the time slip station and this time I can't wait until back at grid to look at the slip. The worker handing out the slips says that was a fun one to watch and believes it was clean, the time is 68.4 and I am ecstatic, so much so that I drive back to grid forgetting to go to the scales until climbing out of the car I wonder how come no one else is there. Oops, dive back into the car and head for the scales where I make minimum weight with 25 lbs. to spare. I can hardly contain

myself back in impound where official results are delayed because another car has broken the front suspension and has come to rest next to the scales with the front tire stuffed into the far reaches of the wheel well and facing west relative to the rest of the car. The entire class is unanimous that his times should stand and we are positive he is not underweight. After affirming this again to the officials they hand out the results and my 68.4 was indeed clean which has moved me back up to finish Nationals in 20th place.

Back in paddock I called up Diane to tell her it's done and I am calling Nationals for 2011 a success for me. Improved ten spots over 2010 results and once again was able to drive the car onto the trailer under it's own power, now it's time to head for home.

Eat. Sleep. Autocross.

2012 TIRE RACK SCCA SOLO NATIONAL TOUR SCHEDULE

MARCH 9-11

Dixie National Tour
South Georgia Motorsports Park
Cecil, Ga.

MAR. 16-18

Sun Belt National Tour
Texas A&M
College Station, Texas

APRIL 27-29

Southern Pacific National Tour
Qualcomm Stadium
San Diego, Calif.

MAY 18-20

Northeast National Tour at East Rutherford
MetLife Stadium
East Rutherford, N.J.

MAY 25-28

Spring Nationals
Central States Championship
Lincoln Airpark
Lincoln, Neb.

JUNE 8-11

Summer Nationals
Southern States Championship
Arkansas Aeroplex
Blytheville, Ark.

JUNE 29 – JULY 1

Western States Championship
Hampton Mills
Packwood, Wash.

JULY 13-15

Colorado National Tour
Pikes Peak International Raceway
Fountain, Colo.

AUGUST 3-5

Northern States Championship at Grissom
Grissom AeroPlex
Peru, Ind.

SEPTEMBER 4-7

Tire Rack SCCA Solo National Championships
Lincoln Air Park
Lincoln, Neb.

OCTOBER 26-28

Tri-State Challenge National Tour
Arkansas Aeroplex
Blytheville, Ark.

2012 TIRE RACK SCCA PROSOLO SCHEDULE

ROUND 1

APRIL 13-15

Maryland ProSolo
TBA

ROUND 2

APRIL 20-22

Mineral Wells ProSolo
Mineral Wells Airport
Mineral Wells, Texas

ROUND 3

MAY 4-6

El Toro ProSolo
El Toro Airfield
Irvine, Calif.

ROUND 4

MAY 25-28

Spring Nationals
Lincoln ProSolo
Lincoln Airpark
Lincoln, Neb.

ROUND 5

JUNE 8-11

Summer Nationals
Blytheville ProSolo
Arkansas Aeroplex
Blytheville, Ark.

continued

ROUND 6

JULY 6-8

Packwood ProSolo
Hampton Mills
Packwood, Wash.

ROUND 8

JULY 27-29

Toledo ProSolo
Toledo Express Airport
Toledo, Ohio

ROUND 7

JULY 20-22

New Mexico ProSolo
McGee Park
Farmington, N.M.

ROUND 9

AUGUST 30 - SEPTEMBER 2

ProSolo Finale
Lincoln Air Park
Lincoln, Neb.

For Tire Rack SCCA National Series news visit solomatters.com



MoHud's Annual Awards banquet on Dec. 3rd was a rousing success!

Photos: Jim Bucci



Checkered Flag on C Mod

Jim Garry

This year's SCCA Solo National Championship was the last Nationals in my C Modified Citation FF for co-driver Ken Hurd and me.

During the winter of 2010-11 a few key parts required professional attention. In order to have them returned early, they were sent out in late December. Despite this, they didn't make it back to my garage until after a few events were missed in April and May forcing a delayed start to our season.

Once things got underway I found myself in a driving rut, lacking both aggression and patience. Additionally, I was having trouble setting the Citation up correctly and this was a big problem because the car requires different settings depending on the level of grip at any particular site. So the season turned out to be quite mediocre from a success standpoint. But as usual, being at events, seeing friends, and driving fast (well, not as fast as I would have liked) is always enjoyable.

With this lack of speed under my belt, Ken and I headed west to Nebraska. Based on my previous Nationals experiences there was hope for a reasonably good finish.

After about 20 years of driving to Kansas for the Nationals, this was only the 2nd drive to Nebraska. The change in scenery is a good thing but driving through the Chicago area is a challenge. While driving west we saw caravans of electric utility vans heading east toward the soon to be hurricane ravaged east coast. We felt guilty about leaving our families behind, but not guilty enough to turn around.

We arrived in Lincoln on time and picked up our rented RV. The RV experience was new to Ken and me and we didn't quite know what to expect. The chance to experience the Nationals as full time residents of the site was appealing. Also, it would provide a cool oasis during the hot days, especially useful for someone still recovering from Lyme.

We paddocked with Will, EJ, and Arn, which added to the fun. Our first night in the RV was an exciting one as the weather gods wreaked havoc on the site with a 4 hour storm in the middle of the night featuring an intense electrical storm, heavy rain, and a strong wind that rocked our temporary home. It must have been payback for not suffering through the hurricane back home!

We weren't scheduled to compete until Thursday/Friday, so our time on Tuesday and Wednesday was spent spectating, driving the practice course, fulfilling work assignments (Ken in paddock check-in and me as a safety steward), and taking miles and miles of course walk throughs. One thing about Nationals is the large number of walk-throughs necessary to get a handle on the long, subtle courses.



Last Nationals in the Citation



Home away from home

Wednesday afternoon Ken took some runs on the practice course while I napped. He experienced shifting problems and so we took the gear box apart and discovered a broken cotter pin neatly lodged in a location that prevented shifting but also kept it clear of doing any damage. We had lucked out. Phew! After buttoning up the gear box, we mounted the new tires and after dinner took some final course walks.

Thursday started out hot and got hotter while we waited for 3rd heat to arrive. As Ken took his first run a strange thought flashed into my mind: "I hope the wheels don't fall off". But it was gone before it had a chance to take hold.

My runs that day were similar to the rest of my season. I lacked aggression and patience. But I was also very uncomfortable with the car. It was very loose and I never got up to speed. Ken finished the day a few spots ahead of me but was also out of the trophies.

Returning to paddock, we rolled the car into the shade of the RV and heard an ominous sound. Was it a wheel bearing? A broken piece of suspension? A CV joint?

Nope, none of those. The wheel lugs were loose! We had only finger tightened them the night before. That explained my thought about the wheels falling off. It's fascinating ... despite not remembering to tighten the lugs, somewhere in my brain I knew it and the thought tried to get out. At any rate, there was a lot of frustration and embarrassment. The lug nut problem is something that had never happened to me in decades of car competition.

The next day we had optimism that the lug nut "fix" would allow us to drive faster. It was hotter than the day before and a lasting memory will be of having rivers of sweat running off my face during our run heat. But the tightened lug nuts only helped a little; the car was still oversteering. By the end of the day Ken had pulled himself up to one position out of the trophies. But I remained mired near the bottom of the pack. Not the way I wanted to finish my last event in my Citation. But I'll always remember the successes including two National Championships in that car.



Sunrise at Lincoln



Slime removed after Thursday's runs



New owners Sho & Keiko Torii

that you don't have to have any kind of resume to attend. Everyone is invited. And regardless of whether you are a National Champion or a first timer, everyone is treated equally. Plus, each class has great camaraderie. It's an all 'round great experience. I can honestly say that despite my poor competition experience, it was a really good week.

As for my old Citation, after a year of pondering I came to the conclusion during the summer that 14 years was enough in one car. A few weeks after returning home, the car left for a new home causing much melancholy.

But my new car soon arrived. It's a Cheetah D Sports Racer that is classified in B Modified. It will be a big challenge to get up to speed in this car and may take a season or two for both the car and its drivers to be competitive. But it will be a fun challenge.

And I have a new co-driver, only my fifth in 30 years of autocrossing. Will is yet another enthusiastic, fun friend to share the racing experience with.

Before putting the car away for the winter, we attended two autocrosses in October. The speed of the car is incredible and intimidating. It's so fast that it arrives at the end of the straight before you start! Well, not quite ... but it's fast. During the winter it will get a good going over and an autocross wing. Will and I are excited about next season and are already itching to drive it again.

Anyone for the Georgia Tour in March?



The Cheetah with Will and me at Devens

The National Championship is an amazing event no matter where you finish. Eleven hundred competitors must be a record entry for a motorsports event. But of course we probably have the fewest spectators. The organization is phenomenal. And everyone takes it upon themselves to be where they should be, on time and ready, whether it is for working or driving.

The site is also phenomenal with acres and acres of nearly unblemished concrete. The only drawback is the slime that builds up on our tires due to seam filler that is stickier than normal. But it is the same for everyone.

The other wonderful aspect of this event is