

# The Mo-Hud

# Knock ff

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

April 2020

## The REport

### Celebrating National Volunteer Appreciation Month

In the United States, **April** is National Volunteer Appreciation Month—a month dedicated to recognizing the importance of volunteering and honoring the significant contributions volunteers make by generously donating their time and talents to worthy causes.

A sometimes over-looked or forgotten aspect of our club is that it is almost completely volunteer run. One of the benefits of being an all-volunteer run organization is that there is a value of having passionate people running an event that they have poured their blood, sweat and tears into. They care.

In honor of National Volunteer Appreciation Month, here are 10 ways that you can thank our volunteers:

1. Honor their work. If a volunteer is trying to help you with something, please don't dismiss their efforts. Take the time to appreciate what they are doing for you.
2. Say "THANK YOU". It is a really little phrase that goes a long way.
3. Roll up your sleeves and help. Event days are long we all know this.
4. Have fun at the event! When the volunteers see you having fun, we know our work was well worth it.
5. Save your drama for your llama. Yes, it is motorsports. Yes, it is ego driven. But at the end of the day the prize is a piece of wood with your name on it. Is that worth making someone's day absolutely miserable?
6. Shut your should-er. Volunteers work hard, and we love our participants and their feedback. It helps us grow and learn and get better. However, there is something slightly insulting when people come up to a volunteer and say, "You should.....".
7. A little treat goes a long way. You would be so surprised how much it means to be thought of.
8. Join us in volunteering. Flag an event. Offer up your talents and join a committee.
9. Give shout outs. Did you have an instructor/tech inspector/steward/flagger/ev worker or registrar take particularly good care of you? SAY IT!
10. Smile. It's contagious

### Brain Bucket

The theme of this month's KnockOff is driver head protection; helmets and related safety gear required in various events by SCCA regulations. Helmet requirements can be confusing, as a number of different agencies test, rate and certify brands and models, with each agency using its own nomenclature and labeling. As the competition season gets underway, we hope this issue of the KO helps to clarify this important safety topic for both new and long-time MoHud members.

*For the good of the sport - Jim Bucci Regional Executive*

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## Coming Events: April and...

- **APRIL 1:** Wednesday. 7:30pm. MoHud membership meeting at the Gateway Diner, 899 Central Avenue, Albany. CANCELLED
- **APRIL 5:** Sunday. MoHud Rally. Watch the MoHud FaceBook and Web sites for up to date information. POSTPONED
- **APRIL 26:** Sunday. 8:00am to 5:00pm. Tire Rack Street Survival at Saratoga Auto Museum. CANCELLED
- **May 6:** Wednesday. 6:30pm. MoHud membership meeting at 1945 Speed & Custom, 631 River Street, Troy. Pizza, wings and potables will be provided. Attendees are asked to not drool on the cars. STILL SCHEDULED
- **June 7; June 28:** Tentative dates for the first Solo Autocross events of the season. Watch the MoHud FaceBook and Web sites for up to date information.

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## Early Driver Protection

**Protection for drivers** and their necessary mechanics in the early days of automobile racing consisted of leather. Leather boots of course, and leather pants, leather jackets, leather 'helmets,' leather gloves, and leather face masks. The face masks were meant to protect from stones and debris kicked up on the race route's public roads, as well as filtering dust.

Pictured here is the famous 60 hp ALCO Black Beast, driven by Harry Grant, which won the 1909 and 1910 Vanderbilt Cup Races on Long Island, as well as finishing 33<sup>rd</sup> in the first Indy 500 the following year (1911).

ALCOs – built by the Providence (RI) subsidiary of Schenectady's ALCO locomotive works -- were billed as "the world's most expensive automobiles" at the time. As a showcase for ALCO machining expertise, the company advertised that the car took 18 months to build; they lost money on every one. ALCO phased out automobile production in 1913, but the Providence factory still stands, now serving as a welding and foundry workshop for artists.



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# KEEP A LID ON IT- driver head protection

## Background

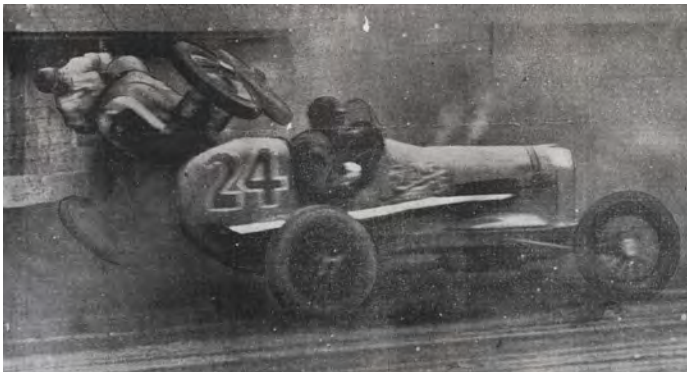
**In April of 1935** the AAA Contest Board became the first sanctioning body anywhere to require, beginning with the Indianapolis 500 a month later, that drivers wear *crash helmets* in competition. The Contest Board rule stemmed from their concerns that driver fatalities at the increasing number of Big Car (aka sprint car) races at county fairs might result in negative newspaper coverage of the 500 and other "Championship" events. Or worse yet: calls for bans on racing.

Locally, newspaper promotion for the Altamont County Fair a few months later included a story headlined "RACE DRIVERS TO WEAR CRASH HELMETS."

The story explained that "crash helmets are made of extremely heavy fibre, which has been treated with many coats of shellac. Although much larger, the crash helmets are designed long lines similar to that of a football helmet. They offer far more protection than the old type racing helmets which were made of heavy cloth."

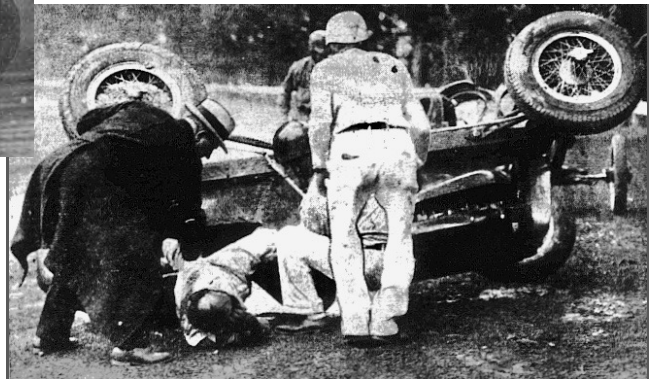


One of these helmets demonstrated its value on the first day of racing. Midway through the Saturday afternoon Feature, Charley Engle charged from third place past Bob Sal going into suicide corner, just past the start line, only to tangle with leader Doc MacKenzie. Engle's crash looked horrific, but the helmet clearly saved him, and despite initial speculation that he had broken his back, he lined up for time trials the next morning.



Engle rides up MacKenzie's wheel...

The aftermath...



**From the mid-1930s** to the end of the 40s, helmet technology advanced very little. The most sophisticated WW-II helmet, the 1938 "Tanker" model, was pretty much the 1935 race driver model you see above, with bigger ear flaps and leather straps on the top, sides and back to (hopefully) absorb the bumps of being jostled around the interior of an armored vehicle.

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## Lids, cont'd

**In 1950**, the two best-selling helmets, the Cromwell (GB) and the Anderson (US) were variations on the basic theme of a fiber-based hard shell using leather on the exterior or interior as a cushion in itself or as an encasing for organic padding such as unwoven cotton.



< Cromwell

Anderson >



**In 1953 Roy Richter** decided he could produce a better helmet.

In 1945 he had purchased what was left of the famous Bell Auto Parts hot rod business, focusing his product line to meet the demand created by the post-war growth of dry lakes racing in California. The new Bell Auto Parts became known for its innovative use of a (mimeographed) catalog, and an emphasis on driver and car safety gear.

In early 1954 Richter announced the now-iconic Bell 500 helmet featuring a fiberglass shell. A year later, Carl Niday was the first driver to wear a Bell 500 at Indy, and his survival of a severe crash on the 170<sup>th</sup> lap of the race was attributed to the new helmet. Sales of the Bell 500 soared. But the popularity was short-lived.

The July 1957 issue of *Sports Cars Illustrated* reported that helmet impact tests by Dr. George Snively showed most helmets on the market actually contributing to injuries rather than reducing them. The only helmet to show consistent crash protection was a Toptex model designed for motorcycle policemen. The key to Toptex's superiority was a non-resilient liner that absorbed force rather than transmitting it.

Following the Snively report, Richter quickly redesigned the Bell 500 lining to create the 500-TX, which became the first helmet to receive certification from the newly created Snell Memorial Foundation.

*Footnote: The Snell Memorial Foundation was named for Peter Snell, an SCCA racer and friend of Dr. Snively. Snell died of head injuries in a slow rollover of his TR-2 during a regional race at Arcata, California. Snively raced an Austin Healy at the time.*

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## Lids, cont'd

### Helmets Today

**For Solo, Rallycross and Club Racing**, SCCA requires that driver's helmets be certified for crash protection by one of five standards organizations:

- Snell Memorial Foundation (North Highlands, California)
- SFI (SEMA Foundation, Inc.; Poway, California)
- BSI (British Standards Institute, London, England)
- FIA (Federation Internationale de l'Automobile, Paris, France)
- ECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland)

Each organization licenses or issues unique labels to manufacturers of helmets that have been submitted for testing and have passed the organization's appropriate test requirements. Snell labels are the most widely seen in the US, and are the easiest labels to understand. A Snell label clearly identifies the use and standards-test-year protocol for a particular helmet. For instance: SA-2015.



#### The basic Snell use designations today are:

- SA Sport Application. Required for SCCA racing. Includes impact, fire resistance, and penetration testing. Note that current SA helmets have built-in provisions for ease of installing *Forward Head Restraint* system attachments (aka FHR posts).
- M Motorcycle. Allowed in Solo and RallyCross. No fire-resistance testing; closed face versions have wider field of view than SA. Note that there are several variations of the upcoming 2020 Snell designations.
- K Karting. Allowed in Solo and RallyCross, although eligibility of the upcoming 2020 Snell designations outside of Karting has not yet been determined. Similar impact testing, but not the fire-resistant testing, of SA helmets.
- EA Elite motorsports 2016 designation; not normally found in the current market.

Snell test year specifications are set at 5-year intervals. For the remainder of this year (2020), helmet 2010 and 2015 labels are valid for racing. (GCR 9.3.19-C-2).

And for this year, 2005, 2010 and 2015 labels are valid in Solo, RallyCross, and Karting. (Solo Rules 4.3.1 - which includes Karting; and, RallyCross Rules 3.2.P).

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## Lids, and more...

**Special Note:** Snell 2020-labeled helmets will be available as of October 1<sup>st</sup> of this year (2020), not earlier. Helmets with 2005 labels will no longer be valid for SCCA Rally, Karting and RallyCross after December 31<sup>st</sup>, this year (2020).

For SCCA racing, 2010 helmets will be valid, as of this writing, through 2021; drivers planning on participating in the 2020 Runoffs (October 5-11) are advised to watch for any announcement from Topeka on the subject of helmets.

As every responsible organization suggests that a helmet be used no more than 5 years after purchase, there may be several good reasons to put a Snell-labeled 2020 helmet on your Christmas wish-list.

## Forward Head Restraint Systems

Forward Head Restraint (FHR) devices are designed to limit fore and aft movement of a driver's head during a crash. Invented in the 1980s, and first mandated by the National Hot Rod Association in 1996. It was not until the widely-publicized death of Dale Earnhardt, Sr., in February of 2001, that the wider racing community took serious notice of the effect of even low-deceleration frontal impacts on the lower-skull (non-moving spine, forward moving head; need we say more?).

The earliest FHR devices were manufactured under the HANS (Head And Neck System) label, but other devices are now on the market. So, not every FHR device is a HANS device, but a lot of people use the terms interchangeably.

A standard FHR device quick-connects with tethers to posts on the side of a driver's helmet, and is held in place by the two shoulder belts that are standard in any racing driver's seat harness. Current Snell SA-labeled helmets have provisions for easy installation of the posts.



SCCA racers are required to use an FHR device complying with standards set by FIA or SFI. (FIA 8858-2002 or 210; SFI 38.1; as per GCR 9.3.19-C-2).

While an FHR device is not required in Solo or RallyCross, many Track-day drivers use them. This author is of the personal opinion that the more secure your seat belt system (four or six-point harness), the more you should consider wearing a HANS device in such driving events.

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## Lids, and more...

### Shopping

When shopping for a helmet, look on the 'net to see if the one you are considering is Snell certified:

< <https://www.smf.org/cert> >

Keep in mind that price of a helmet or FHR device should come last after looking at certification and fit.

This author recommends buying driver safety gear in person; a number of MoHud members prefer a shop that is 3 hours to the East. If you plan on going for the first time, talk to us – on the MoHud FaceBook pages – as the last couple of miles will challenge even a WRC navigator.

### Parting Note

Always: run hot, burn oil, make noise; but keep a lid on it!

*- PaulM., ed.*



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# Membership Report- March 2020

-*Jim Garry Mohud Membership Chairman*

< mhr.membership@gmail.com >

**Mohawk Hudson Region's current membership stands at 377 as of March 14th.** That's an increase of 14 since February 5th.

The SCCA spreadsheet shows that 8 new members joined our club between March 1st and March 14th. At least one of these has been at MoHud events before as a Weekend Member. And three others are Teen Street Survival students. A warm and enthusiastic welcome to all.

## New Members

**Charles Dickinson**, Stillwater  
**Samantha Dickinson**, Schaghticoke  
**Isaiah Kalbfliesh**, Schaghticoke  
**Brent Howard**, Valley Falls  
**Ericka Howard**, Valley Falls  
**Ethan Howard**, Valley Falls  
**Meredith Howard**, Valley Falls  
**Max LuxRamos**, Valatie



## Significant Anniversaries in April

In April we have eight members with significant anniversaries. The sum of their membership years comes to 205 years! Congratulations and may you have many more years of fun with cars.

### 5 Years

Jeff Gorss  
Ian Wallace

### 10 Years

John Gebert

### 20 Years

Ron Bass

### 35 Years

Robert Polastre

### 40 Years

Jim Garry  
Steve Wold

### 50 Years

Johannes Krauss



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## Membership Meeting Minutes...

March 3, 2020; Gateway Diner, Albany. Call to order - 7:30 pm

There was a moment of silence in memory of Jack Hanifan.

**Treasurer** - brief analysis of last year's income/expenses provided.

**Membership** -Region presently has 369 members with three new members this month. Member anniversaries were also presented.

**Solo** - a couple of potential sites are being evaluated. More information will be available in the Knock Off.

**TRSS** - there are 17 students registered for the April 26 school and 4 students registered for October 18. 17 instructors are already signed up for April.

**Rally** - the new rally chairperson is Ken Relation, who will be replacing Trish Bucci. [Next Rally] It will be in Halfmoon on April 5, registration at 12:30 with driver instructions at 1:05 and first car off at 1:30. A smart phone and digital camera is required. Format will be a scavenger hunt. Children are encouraged to participate.

**Road racing** - tech party has not yet been scheduled. It will probably be late March or early April.

**Knock Off** - no report.

**Old Business** - none.

**New Business** - a number of members attended the MiniCon. Rich Welty won the NEDIV Worker of the Year Award, George Kline G Production Award, and Jason Smith Rookie of the Year.

**Jim Bucci** presented Chris Robbins' slide presentation and video on the new SCCA Code of Member Conduct.

Next general membership meeting is April 1 at the Gateway Diner.

May 6 meeting will be at 1945 Speed and Custom in Troy. Start time is 6:30 pm.

On Monday March 30<sup>th</sup>, there will be a board meeting at the Gateway Diner at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

*- Ron Bass, Secretary*

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# Mo-Hud Officers and Contacts

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**Secretary**

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**SOLO Chair**

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**Membership Chair**

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**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 ...

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**Director**

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**NeDiv License 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. See the "Coming Events" page of the KnockOff, or MoHud's Facebook page for meeting place and time.



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