

# The Mo-Hud

# Knockoff



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

August 2020

## The REport

### Mohawk Hudson Region's Jack Hanifan Memorial Golf Outing

Whether it was a race car, a street car, or a golf ball, Jack Hanifan loved driving. MoHud owes such a big debt of appreciation to Jack for his many years of service to our club in so many roles. While many of us have contributed much, Jack's love and dedication to the success of the Mohawk Hudson Region was unparalleled.

We want to recognize Jack's contributions by naming our annual golf outing in his memory: The "Mohawk Hudson Region's Jack Hanifan Memorial Golf outing". It combines his love for the club with his love for the sport of golf as well.

Please join us on Thursday, August 13 for the inaugural Mohawk Hudson Region's Jack Hanifan Memorial Golf outing. Tee time is 2:00PM. \$40 gets you 9 holes of golf, a cart, and choice of 3 dinners. Location is Burden Lake Country Club. Please let Dick Stewart or me know that you'll be attending.

### Tech City Solo

By all accounts MoHud's first Solo event of the year, which was held at Tech City in Kingston, was a great success. Congratulations to Russ Burckhard and his Solo crew for a great event.

### Aashish The Champion

Congratulations to Mohawk-Hudson Region member Aashish Vemulapalli on receiving the SCCA Time Trials program's newest award, simply known as *The Champion*. His efforts overwhelmingly earned him the award, which honors individuals who do the most to champion the Time Trials program and support the overall event experience. Aashish has been an incredible supporter of the SCCA Time Trials program on track and trackside during social events, meetings, coaching sessions, and on social media. He received the award during his attendance at the Time Trials National Tour held recently at Gingerman Raceway in South Haven Michigan

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

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**In this issue of the KO:** Road racing, Time Trials, Solo and Membership reports; A member tribute; Journal articles by Tom Campbell and Aashish; Notices of a number of upcoming events...

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## Coming Events: August and...

*MoHud takes a break from monthly membership meetings in August, but there are still events for members.*

- **August 5:** Wednesday. 6:30 – 8:30pm. Funplex, East Greenbush. Annual MoHud Family Fun Go-Kart Night. Getting somewhat back to normal; \$20 wristband gets 2 hours of karts, mini-golf and other fun.
- **August 13:** Thursday. Jack Hanifan Memorial Golf Outing at Burden Lake Country Club. \$40 per person. E-mail Jim Bucci < hdjimbu@gmail.com > so he can get a head count.
- **August 16:** Sunday. MoHud Solo Event #2 at Tech City in Kingston. Register at <<< [www.motorsportreg.com](http://www.motorsportreg.com) >
- **September 2:** Wednesday. Where the first membership meeting of the Fall will be held is still undecided. Gateway Diner says it's ready in COVID mode; there is at least one other option. Jim Bucci will blast e-mail, the MoHud website will note, and there will be chatter on the MoHud Facebook site. Stay tuned to your favorite station.

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## SOLO 2020 Event #1

**Thanks** to I-lost-track-of-the-hours efforts by Russ Burckhard, E.J. Smith, Jon Kirshman, and a bunch of workers on the ground, MoHud was able to run the first Solo event of the year on July 12, at the TECH City campus in Kingston.

Nick Austin topped the PAX (corrected time) chart in his '02 Honda S2000, with Miguel Texeira close behind in his Ariel Atom.

Miguel's Atom won the *most rad* award, while Mark Long won the *most bad* award with what started out as an '89 Honda CRX. Full results are available on the MoHud website, and lots of driver comments and action shots, most of them courtesy of Todd Lowe, have filled the MoHud Facebook site for days.

Run under COVID rules, everyone was pleased to be back in competition after a too-long Winter and Spring. And while the site is a haul for many competitors, it appears that the usual organizers – Poughkeepsie Sports Car Club – are willing to let MoHud use the PSCC dates approved by TECH City. Keep noodling the MoHud Facebook site for updates.



< Rad  
Bad >



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## Road Racing Report- August

- Jim Bucci, and one other

### Evan Back on Track

2015 Mohawk-Hudson Region Rookie-of-the Year, Evan Karl, swept the SCCA Majors weekend at Thompson Speedway in his Spec Miata. Evan followed up his win in the Saturday race with a convincing victory in Sunday's race, pitting almost half a track on the rest of the top 5. Millville, NJ was the site of Karl's next Majors race where he slipped and slid his way to P1 in Sunday's Spec Miata feature race at New Jersey Motorsports Park. (*ed's note: go to Evan's Facebook site and watch the NJ race through the forward camera for the first lap, then through the rearward camera to the finish. He sure was having fun with cars...*)



### Thompson Majors

In addition to Evan Karl, other MoHud region drivers competing at the Thompson Majors included Pat Stringer and Doug Garrison in SRF3 and Pete Meck in Formula Vee. Meck had a podium finish in Saturday's race.

### Yuven Goes West

Our other up-and-coming racer, Yuven Sundaramoorthy, is off to school at the home of the world's best student union and Badger playground. And it looks like the rest of the family is pulling up stakes to join him. Hard to beat the Midwest for open-wheel racing opportunities. We wish him well.



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## Time Trials Report- August

- *Aashish Vemulapalli*

**The Tire Rack SCCA Time Trials National Tour** at Thompson Speedway in Connecticut marked SCCA's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of on-track competition, going back to a 1944 time trial at Thompson. MoHud drivers showed up in force for what was one of the first COVID-rules events of the year.

Michael Park - 20th Overall (trophy)  
Nick Austin - 21st Overall (trophy)  
Greg Goss - 24th Overall (trophy)  
Adam Wright - 30th Overall  
Dermot McArdle - 31st Overall  
Dave Burnham - 46th Overall (trophy)  
Caleb Pocock - 52nd Overall  
Tony Tovsen - 65th Overall  
Aashish Vemulapalli - 67th Overall  
Daniel Gorss - 78th Overall  
Dave Kosla

MoHud Volunteers:

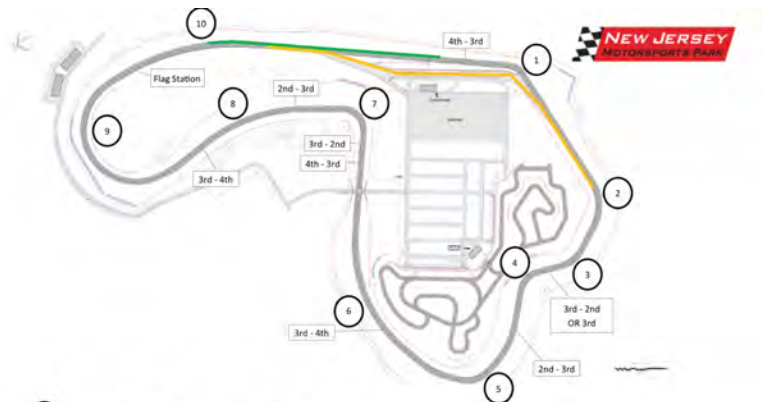
Greg Rickes - Announcements and Commentary  
Jon Coffin - pit out

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### Next Up: TT at New Jersey Motorsports Park Lightning Course

**On August 28 -30** the SCCA Tile Trials National Tour will visit the very cool NJMSP Lightning course. The blind uphill corners at 1 and 5, the sharp left-hander at 7, and the semi-banked "lightbulb" of 9 pack a lot of challenge and fun in a 1.9 mile course. A reasonable 4 ½ hour expressway drive from Albany, lots of choices where to stay overnight, and where to eat in Millville/ Vineland. (Brass Tap and Sushi-Lovers, along with Rita's for sundaes.)

We may hold a pre-TT Zoom session to talk about the course racing line. Keep tuned to the MoHud Facebook site, and look for several good GoPro videos on U-tube...



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## Membership Report- June 2020 *-Jim Garry*

*Mohud Membership Chairman*

< mhr.membership@gmail.com >

**By the first of July**, Mohawk Hudson Region's membership had fallen to a ten year low of 319 members. However by the third week of the month that trend was reversed as we recovered to 332 members. Most of this was due to ten new members joining the club and the rest to older members getting their renewal checks to Topeka.

### **New members in July**

*Jeff Worsa, Schenectady*  
*Roopa Ayengar, Poughkeepsie*  
*Sridhar Ayengar, Poughkeepsie*  
*Harlen Ego, Northville*  
*Melody Ego, Northville*  
*Shelby Blanchette, Cambridge*  
*Kirby Vaillant-White, Cambridge*  
*Aidin Bharti, Green Island*  
*Ryan Pappalau, Schoharie*  
*Nicholas Williams, Gloversville*

### **Significant Anniversaries for August**

*Erick Mesick*      5 years  
*Alex Shchipkov*    20 years  
*James Neese*      30 years



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## An Unintentional Racer -- Rich Alexander

*Greg Rickes, Jim Garry and RA himself*

**Rich Alexander's** foray into motorsports was not an impetuous matter of the moment. For his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday his wife Ellie gave him a trip to a racing school, but it wasn't until SEVEN years later that he actually got behind the wheel at the Jim Russell School at Le Circuit Mont Tremblant in Quebec. It was the first, but not nearly the last, time he'd be in the "hot area" of a race track. It made quite an impression : " I called (Ellie) from Mt. Tremblant after day one and told her that if I had done this when I was 15, I might very well still be a virgin."

Following his experience at Russell Canada he shifted his focus closer to home, making his racing debut with the Skip Barber Race Series at Lime Rock.

After a season or so in the Barber Series Rich felt like he wanted to be more personally invested in racing. This led him to another MoHud member, Dick Stewart, who was heavily involved in Formula Vee. Dick had one of his cars for sale. Ellie sounded a bit reluctant to go down that road, but shortly thereafter things took an unexpected turn.

" Christmas rolled around, with the usual present openings, etc. After the last present was opened and the kids were busily occupied, Ellie asked me to get the paper. As I hit the garage door button and headed for the opening, I noticed her and the kids standing behind me in the doorway. I turned around and there was the Vee, on a trailer, sporting a huge red duct tape bow. At that moment, Ellie and the kids said Merry Christmas! "



"I Celebrated my 50th birthday by being MoHud "Rookie of the Year" in that Vee. The car got passed on to my older daughter, who later became Rookie of the Year in it when I built a new car. My driving career faded out under the pressures of getting both daughters through college and my advancing age."

...That's far from the end of his story.

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## Rich Alexander – cont'd

**Along the way** Rich also got involved with trackside Flagging & Communications (F&C) first at Skip Barber and then with SCCA. He expanded his involvement in the days when MoHud was still able to put on races at Lime Rock by first becoming the region's Assistant F&C Chief under Bryan Deane and then moving to the top role when Bryan moved to Indianapolis.

" Over the years I can't count the number of SCCA Club events I've worked but I've worked them at Lime Rock, New Hampshire, Thompson, Palmer, Pocono, NJMP, Summit Point, VIR, Road Atlanta, Mid Ohio, Road America, Indianapolis, and probably a couple others that I've forgotten. Besides that I've done about 30 F-1 races in Canada and the US (Indianapolis and CoTA), so far, plus IMSA/ALMS at Sebring, Road Atlanta, Road America, and Lime Rock, along with a whole bunch of other club and pro events."

Rich's F&C resume' also includes all of the U.S races held in Brooklyn for the electric-powered Formula E cars, giving him an in-depth perspective of this unique form of motorsport.

" I know a number of F1 purists who don't care for it, but I find it fascinating. The cars are very quiet, as one would expect. While there is nothing close to a naturally aspirated V12 F1 motor at 18,000RPM, it is really educational to be able to hear the individual wheels working. Under the right circumstances, you can hear the tires and brakes working as the loads change from corner entry to exit. Also of note is that these cars are amazingly strong. We've watched them bang wheels with forces that would put Spec Miatas in the crusher and continue on seemingly unaffected. The actual racing is quite close and I find it very entertaining. While the chassis are standard issue, there is quite a bit of leeway in setup and software control. Note that the series has heavy manufacturer support, with a number for full factory teams, including Mercedes, Audi, and BMW. A big step forward was made last year with the introduction of a support race for Jaguar electric SUV's. So the program is filling out. Probably the ultimate value of FE lies, in addition to promoting technology advances, in bringing motorsports to an entire new audience. Because of the low noise and compact tracks, the series runs in predominantly densely populated urban areas. Many of the spectators I spoke with remarked as to how they never even considered going to an auto race until this came to town. To a person, they agreed that it was entertaining and were looking forward to coming again. Also, as a scenic backdrop for a race, Brooklyn is nothing short of spectacular - Lower Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty look like you can touch them from the corner stations!."

There are, needless to say, stories galore from Rich's tenure on the turns: " Moose on the track? Worker stuck upside-down in the tire wall during a major international event? Marmot for lunch? Inflatable sex doll on live TV during another international broadcast?" And those are just a few...

Though he isn't actively racing he's still got 3 Formula Vees in his fleet. Two are sitting in his garage. "The older of the 2 Vees is the one-time Dick Stewart rental. This Vee was put in storage when I decided to build a new car, a Protoform P-2, which hit the track in 2000. The original car came out of storage a couple of years later for his oldest daughter Libbie. She has expressed a strong desire to get back into it after her new son is old enough to not be a total distraction at the track. Her husband is also keen to keep one around since he wants to see her drive it and, I suspect, as an occasional auto-crosser, has a secret desire to give it a go himself."

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## Rich Alexander – III



- Suited Up
- Success at Pocono
- Fall Foliage Tour Mt. Tremblant
- Race Prep Garage
- Libbie's First Race



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## Rich Alexander – IV

**The third of Rich's 3 Volkswagen-powered racers** has its own unique story. When he was building the Protoform Rich needed a number of specialized parts. Lime Rock safety car driver Bob Green had a car for sale, so a deal was done and the car was stripped of the needed parts.

"The rolling chassis and body sat in a friend's barn for a few months until, at a MoHud function at Saratoga Auto Museum. Ron Hedger asked if anyone had a derelict race car that might be useful as a photo-op car for kids. I raised my hand and offered the Vee to the museum. Then I set about making it presentable. In one of my few moments of inspiration, I decided to do it up as a tribute to another MoHud FV racer, the late Dave Riggi, using Dave's colors and number. I said nothing about this to Ernie and Kay (Riggi) until after the car was completed and installed at the museum. Actually, I never told them. I lured them to the museum (they had never been there) and let them find it. I couldn't see them when they spotted it but I heard a teary sounding Kay say "It's beautiful" Mission accomplished."

"It's been a popular attraction for kids of all ages, but many years on display has taken its toll on the car so the museum asked Tom Campbell to lead a restoration. Tom contacted me, and we began the process right about the time COVID-19 shut everything down. A great deal has been accomplished, but the finishing of the body remains a bit problematic. The body was turned over to the local BOCES, who was going to do the prep work and painting. That plan fell by the wayside along with everything else. At this time, the unfinished body has been retrieved from BOCES and is at the Museum. We need someone with the necessary skills and equipment to finish the body repairs and paint job so that we can get the car back together and on display. Any volunteers, contact Tom or me."



"Ellie has always favored "doing" over "watching". For her part, Ellie has been the constant supporter of my daughter and my activities as well my crew chief, and working registration, grid, and timing and scoring. Her competitive leanings have taken her to playing ice hockey and rowing. In 2016, she competed in the US Rowing Masters National Championships in Worcester."

"Earlier this year, I was surprised and a bit overwhelmed to be awarded the MoHud "Member of Excellence" award. Ellie bears full responsibility for my involvement. I never had any desire to do anything more than spectate until the aforementioned birthday present."

*That's been a benefit not just to Rich, but to motorsports, and SCCA in particular. - Greg*

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## Membership Meeting Minutes

- Ron Bass, Sec'y

**July 1, 2020**

General Membership Meeting on Zoom.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

- Membership – there are presently 319 members. Membership has dropped recently. On April 1, 63 memberships expired and only one if those members renewed. We will continue to monitor.

- Solo - event is scheduled for July 19 at Tech City in Kingston. Russ has recently sent out guidelines to ensure compliance with Covid safety precautions. Registration will be online only at Motorsportreg.com.

- Road Racing – Watkins Glens Fun One road race has been canceled. Formula Race Promotions will be at Lime Rock Park July 24 – 25. There are still openings in vintage as well as HPDE. Contact [ofracer@gmail.com](mailto:ofracer@gmail.com) for more info. Thompson Time trial will be on July 4. It was noted that the first SCCA event was held 75 years ago, also a time trial at Thompson. Test and Tune is scheduled for Lime Rock Park on Tuesday, July 7.

- Other Upcoming Events – Mo Hud will be at the Funplex in East Greenbush for the annual Go Kart Outing in August 5. Start is 6:30 pm. Cost is \$20 for 2 hours of go karts. The annual Golf Outing will be at Burden Lake Country Club on August 13. Cost is \$40/person. Please contact Jim Bucci if you are planning on attending (a head count is needed). Saratoga Museum's new exhibition is the Dyson Racing Collection and will be open to the public.

- We may be having our monthly membership meeting at the Gateway Diner, Central Avenue, Albany on September 2, conditions permitting. Diane Malecki will provide more details as the date approaches.

- Tom Campbell reminded the members that we need to meet with the Saratoga Auto Museum to discuss feasibility of scheduling the upcoming Tire Rack Street Survival.

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.



So, what was this about in last month's KO?

The September KO will reveal...

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**And now, a word from friends...**



**WE'RE WORKING TO BUILD THE NEXT  
GENERATION OF CAR LOVERS AND  
WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOUR HELP.**

**DO YOU HAVE A LOVE OF CARS? DO YOU HAVE TIME TO GIVE? DO YOU HAVE  
A SPECIAL SKILL SET OR KNOWLEDGE TO SHARE? DO YOU WANT TO FORGE  
NEW FRIENDSHIPS?**

**IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO ANY OF THOSE QUESTIONS, WE WANT YOU TO  
JOIN OUR TEAM OF DEDICATED MUSEUM AND AUCTION VOLUNTEERS!**

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE, OR TO SIGN UP, PLEASE CONTACT  
TOM CAMPBELL BY EMAIL AT [TOMCAMPBELLSCCA@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TOMCAMPBELLSCCA@GMAIL.COM)  
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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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## SPORTS CAR

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### THE FALL MEET

Now that this long conflict has been brought to a successful conclusion, the Club will hold its first peace-time meet. All records for attendance should be broken on the week-end of September 22-23, at the beautiful Longshore Club, Westport, Connecticut, on Long Island Sound, where a minimum of twenty sports cars is expected to compete on the tree-lined drive, which provides a road-racing atmosphere reminiscent of the great road "courses" of France. Standing-start quarter mile trials will be held, also other events if conditions permit.

The lifting of gasoline rationing will permit many members and cars to attend who have never yet been seen at meets, and much of interest is expected from the Washington and Philadelphia contingents.

Reservations for Saturday night accommodations should be made directly with Longshore. The Annex may be specified if desired, where lower rates prevail.

Longshore is easily reached by turning off the Merritt Parkway at Westport, where the side road leads to the Club.

This is the meet you have been waiting for, you have the gas, so fire up the iron and have a real week-end.

### CAR BADGES

The badges have finally arrived from the manufacturer. Send in your order now to the Secretary, enclosing your remittance for the number you require. The price is 75 cents each.

### THE SUMMER MEET

Successful but small -- this was the concensus of opinion of the fortunate few who participated in the fun at Thompson Speedway, Thompson, Connecticut, on July 22nd. Vacations and lack of gasoline were given as reasons for absence by some members, but it is still a little difficult to understand why more did not take advantage of Emil Bayer's kind offer of the use of the fastest half mile track in the East.

The weather was good, and a brisk run down through country roads was enjoyed by the Boston contingent, consisting of Weaver in Type 51 G.P. Bugatti, Wallour in Rolls PI Ascot, Robertson in Mercer Raceabout, and Engborg riding forward on a guest's Rolls Ghost town car.

At the track we were met by our genial host, Emil Bayer who, with his brother had built the track several years previously. It is a banked  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile oval, paved with asphalt, with 15 deg. banks at each end. The lap record is held by Joie Chitwood at 24.16 seconds. The excellent racing held there before the war will be resumed as soon as possible, and Emil will be very glad to see any members with their sports cars at his race meets. He promises to put on a special event for Club cars, also to have one of them pace the feature event. A very interesting prospect. Also awaiting us at the track was Mr. Taylor, down from Taunton in his Austin 7 roadster, and father of Capt. Crosland Taylor, one of our members now in France. He mentioned having seen a miniature "Thunderbolt" in company with a very pretty blue and gray Bugatti coupe a few minutes back, which of course turned out to be Sceli in the "Complex" and Gerner in his beautifully reconditioned Type 57 "Atalante" coupe. Dr. Gerdes was with them, all the way from Missouri in his unblown Cord sedan.

After an unsuccessful attempt to obtain luncheon at the nearby "Russian Bear", where we were very shabbily treated, we again repaired to the track to collect data, using the average of three stop-watches for time. As expected, Weaver's G.P. Bug was easily the fastest bolide, and will be much faster yet when the 91.5 cu. in. blown Miller straight eight is installed. It is now powered by a 151 class Peerless marine racing engine, a 4-cylinder single overhead camshaft unit developing 90 b.h.p. at 3800 r.p.m. The Gerner Bug had only done 300 miles since overhaul, and the Robertson Mercer was on smooth tires, which kept them quite a distance from the lap record. The flying lap times were: Weaver, Bugatti-33  $\frac{2}{5}$  secs.; Sceli, Complex-38 secs.; Robertson, Mercer-40 secs.; Gerner, Bugatti-40 secs.; Wallour, Rolls-Royce-40 secs.; Gerdes, Cord-40  $\frac{4}{5}$  secs.

This event was followed by standing start  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile tests, from the middle of the home stretch around the first turn to the middle of the back stretch. These times were of course slower than on a straight road. Weaver again led with 22  $\frac{2}{5}$  secs., Sceli 24  $\frac{2}{5}$  secs., Robertson 27 secs., Gerner 27 secs., Wallour 27 secs., Gerdes 27  $\frac{4}{5}$  secs.

After the time trials, members and the many guests enjoyed driving and riding in the various cars, and comparing the engine room of the Gerner Bugatti to those of modern American beer cans.



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# The KnockOff Journal



## This Month...

- **Aashish on the Thompson Time Trials**
- **Tom Campbell on the Trail to the Runoffs**

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## 75 Years Later at Thompson...

*- Aashish Vemulapalli*

**At some point** between the Time Attack sessions on Day 2 of the 2020 Tire Rack SCCA Time Trials National Tour at Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park Powered by Hagerty, Andie Wolfe pulled me aside and asked if I could write an article summing up the event. I nodded yes, but the enormity of the task hit me after the event concluded. Allow me to offer a little perspective.

This wasn't just another Time Trials National Tour event, it was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first SCCA event on track - Time Trials held on the oval with Track Sprints on the then finished sections of the road course. While that event took place as World War II was drawing to a close, this one took place in the midst of a global pandemic.

The buzz for the event started just prior to last years' Time Trials National Tour. I was at Thompson for a Track Night event and the then track manager told me about how Thompson was the venue for the first ever SCCA Track event. A social media conversation then followed with Heyward Wagner confirming that the 2020 event was the big one and that's when the wheels were set in motion. Word was spread at membership meetings and at subsequent Time Trials National Tour and Nationals events and the excitement started to build. Members who'd been with the club for decades were looking forward to being there - where it all started.

And then, just like that, COVID-19 hit us all, impacting entire industries, sectors and the lives and livelihoods of common folks. SCCA Programs including Time Trials were affected as well with the first two National Tour events canceled. Around the first week of May an update was shared with what events remained on the calendar and the probability of those events actually happening. Thompson Speedway was at 75 percent. That was the lowest probability for all the events that remained given the precarious situation in the Northeast at the time. The event looked unsure and then just as it got confirmed (thanks to the vociferous appeals of the advocates), along came a tri-state restriction requiring people from certain states to quarantine for 14 days. That did put plans on hold for people that wanted to come from those states. Heyward Wagner was unable to come, and this also meant that the father and son duo that were handling the Hagerty party duties could no longer feed the hungry masses.

External environmental factors aside, the event was still a resounding success with 92 entries (88 cars set times with some drivers coming from as far as Detroit and beyond), and with everyone diligently following the rules of social distancing. A terrific suggestion by Brandy Wiggans resulted in us having a socially distanced yet fun, Hagerty Party, with hot dogs in lieu of the barbecued and smoked meats that have become a staple of the Time Trials social events. As you all know eating hot dogs fresh off the grill on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July beats eating pizza.

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## TT at Thompson- II

**By now**, you no doubt understand my predicament in trying to write about the essence of this milestone event given all that passed in the lead up to it. Also, I finished nowhere near the podium; in fact, I was the farthest from it in my class. I'd gone 4 seconds faster than the year prior, but it wasn't enough. So rather than bore you with my superlative efforts to win the 'First from last' trophy, I turned for inspiration to Jack Baruth's write up of the inaugural 2018 Time Trial Nationals (<https://www.roadandtrack.com/motorsports/a23602637/scca-time-trials-nationals-the-future-of-motorsports/>).

Jack was present at the 2018 Time Trials Nationals as a crew member for his wife, Charley, and his brother, Mark. While crewing for those two, he also had conversations with several members in the paddock, motivating them and summed up the essence of the Time Trials program in his article – fierce but friendly competition, competitors helping each other out to get back on track, and every member present in the paddock having a good time in the spirit of being on one team. In short, he called the Time Trials program the future of motorsport. And, as a participant and a witness to the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SCCA's first ever track event, I can confirm that this event lived up to those expectations.

The spirit of sportsmanship and camaraderie was well and alive. Seeing that I was struggling to swap my wheels (Full disclosure: I struggle at the simplest tasks), my friend Shiv Joshi and Mike Park, a fellow Mohawk Hudson Region member walked over and made what was a painstaking effort a 10-minute job. I then responded by taking Shiv and Frank Putman out on a track walk as they had never been to Thompson before. On track during the first practice session, I perceived someone in an ITS race car behave in what I thought was an unsportsman like manner, causing a train. Before the second practice session, I motioned Shiv, who I knew would go faster than me to grid ahead, to avoid a train. Farzad Karkvandeian, who was running his Subaru BRZ in my class allowed me out on grid ahead of him even though he was faster on sections of the track than I was (he did move me to last place after the final time attack was run).

Competitors were sharing data and driving tips throughout. Donald Lui and the Northeast 86 Cup group were in the thick of things and it was impressive to watch them help each other improve. The CART group was in the midst of the action too with volunteering at the event and managing transponders as well as helping out their participants with car issues. Kathy Barnes, Greg Amy and Dick Patullo from the New England Region worked the event as officials and group coaches. Some NER folks also managed Tech and made sure it flowed smoothly.

Members from the Mohawk Hudson Region showed up to volunteer at the event. Jon Coffin was working pit out for the event, while Salvatore Baisley showed up to spectate but cheerfully worked grid despite recovering from a motorcycle accident. Greg Rickes, who manned the role of public announcer converted his Honda Element into a mobile broadcast booth and parked it overlooking the oval as social distancing norms meant he did not have access to the Control Tower for his duties. Harry Adalian of MoHud reviewed data remotely for some of us and gave us tips on where to pick up speed. Similarly, my friend Anthony Tau Hai who won the Max 3 class last year offered feedback from home by watching our videos. The event may have been happening at Thompson Speedway but many from near and far that couldn't be there were tuned in and cheering us on. Picture that, and you'll realize just how much those who were present and those who had any remote connection to the event were equally committed to the events success.

The weather gods were also smiling on the event. Friday was relatively cool, and Saturday was seasonably warm without becoming unbearably hot. The sessions ran with very little disruption on day one. Drivers that went off were apologetic in impound and this made the whole group of drivers feel like one team.

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## TT at Thompson- II

**During the first timed session** on day one, Nick Austin of MoHud had an incident on track involving another car driven by Stu Cabral. Both drivers were OK and were thorough gentlemen as they discussed the incident and put it behind them. Nick, with the help of some MoHud members was also able to fix his car, compete on the second day and finish second in class. Another participant had trouble on track too, which put him out of competing at the event. It was a matter of pride to watch how the paddock came together to help him out. Not only did the member have an offer to have his car towed home, but a group of participants pulled together and helped load the car on the trailer and another member ensured this person had transport to his hotel and back. It helped that some of the people that had incidents were covered by Hagerty.

Day 1 was capped off with a very special photograph. All the cars, drivers and crew lined up on the oval and Geoffrey Bolte, the event photographer got a very special picture to commemorate the event. (If that picture makes it to the cover of SportsCar Magazine, I'll finally be able to claim that I was once featured on a magazine cover. I imagine that will win me several imaginary fans.)

Day 2 started with a Track Sprint meeting and the morning featured Track Sprints as well as the first round of Time Attacks. The course for the track sprint utilized the drift loop between Turns 4 and 5 at Thompson Speedway and much as I was not able to set a decent time, I enjoyed watching others go through there while spectating from the bridge. On my final run, I followed a friend's advice and started to engage my e-brake to help the car rotate and was able to salvage the track sprint somewhat.

For the time attack sessions, the groups were further sub-divided. We would have one out lap, followed by three flying laps and then a full cool-down lap. This meant the sessions would be about 5 minutes long, but they didn't lack for intensity and I think actually allowed us to focus on doing our best without the need to maintain attention span for a longer session, nor have us deal with traffic. The sessions went by swimmingly and before we knew it, the event was done, and it was time for the trophy ceremony.

I packed the car and headed to the trophy ceremony. I wasn't getting one, but just like the year prior, everyone that I helped learn the track was either on the podium or had finished better than me in their class. My friend Michael Finkbeiner who won the Sport 5 class last year, came back to finish third and Shiv Joshi won the Max 3 class, after being away from the track for three years. My MoHud fellow members including my mentor Greg Goss, Michael Park, Dave Burnham, and Nick Austin also won trophies. It was nice to see Brian Kuehl win his class and his father Don take third place in Tuner 3. Brian and Don are people that I've become acquainted with at Time Trials events. Elsewhere in Tuner 4, Kevin Zhu drove the wheels off of his 2009 Honda Civic Si sedan to place an impressive third behind Blake Fitzgerald and Nick Austin. That he was separated by a margin of less than a second from Adam Wright, last years third place finisher and Bryan McCrea is proof of the tight battles that are common at SCCA Time Trials. Keegan Stabley who was in Tuner 4 last year, moved up to Prepped 3 and dominated the class by setting an overall time that was 13 seconds ahead of second place. Victor Boniface, another friend that I've known over the past year also put in a great effort to finish second in the Sport 4 class. Dan Gorss in that attractive green Mazda 2 also did well to finish fourth in his class. All of the aforementioned are very good drivers and it has been my privilege to know them and watch their success.

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## TT at Thompson- IV

As the trophy ceremony wound down, it was a welcome surprise when John Hunter called out the Mohawk Hudson Region for their effort and participation and announced that we had received the Spirit of Time Trials Award. Nick Austin received this trophy on our behalf for his comeback from an adverse situation. This one was for not just the group of MoHud drivers, but also our volunteers like Greg Rickes, Sal Baisley, Jon Coffin and crew members like Alyssa Park.

I would be remiss, if I didn't mention the staff from the National Office. John Hunter was the event lead and made sure the event stuck to schedule as he remained his cheerful self. My friends Kristen Poole and Brandy Wiggans managed registration along with Andie Wolfe. The ladies also appeared to don multiple hats as the event progressed and kept things together. Jon Krolewicz did the safety inspection for the track, helped with tech and also served as driver coach for one of the groups. Watching this team in action, as I did, was a great learning experience. I was the proverbial fly on the wall listening in to Jon very patiently and genuinely explaining to a participant how someone in the Novice group could actually be faster despite being part of what is considered a slower group. The opportunity was rife for ridicule, but watching Jon intently listen to the participant and then offer him a full and proper explanation and watching that person leave satisfied with the answer was a live demonstration of the SCCA values. If you're ever wondering how to keep and retain members and ensure they leave an event smiling, you need to watch this team in action.

Whilst I headed home somewhat wistful about missing out on a trophy despite my improvement in performance, the high of having spent more than 48 hours in the company of good friends and competitors at a milestone event surpassed any doom and gloom. There is also that promise of being on the cover of Sportscar Magazine and the hope that 25 years from now, I will compete at the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that first SCCA event. Maybe I'll win a trophy then. If not, I will quote Jack Baruth "have a story that will prove more durable, and interesting, than the mere fact of a win."

With Solo site availability becoming a challenge for a lot of regions, and the costs of club racing deterring entrants, I am glad that the SCCA has a welcoming program that brings together all kinds of car enthusiasts as one team to have #funwithcars. For proof, you need to look no further than the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary event aka 2020 Tire Rack SCCA Time Trials National Tour at Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park Powered by Hagerty. By all accounts, the format of the event held 75 years ago (time attacks and track sprints), seems to be a winning formula in present times too.

*- Aashish*



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## Campbell Racing 2020 Race # 2 Mid-Ohio

**Here it is the middle of July** and only our second race of the season. Normally this would have been number 5 or 6. But it was a good weekend, nonetheless.

We arrived Wednesday evening but had to spend the night in a nearby truck stop because the track wasn't allowing anyone in until Thursday morning – the test day. Processing in through their COVID screening was straightforward so that was a good start. We were able to find a choice spot and get setup in time to start the first test session at about 9:30. I have to say, Mid-O does the best test day of all the tracks we go to, although partly because there was a relatively small entry this time. They gave us 7 twenty minute sessions, most places give 3, maybe 4 and they tend to be much longer. If you are truly doing some testing (different suspension alignments or engine tuning for example) more sessions give more opportunities to try different things and 20 minutes is enough time to get what you need. In fact, we only did 5 of the sessions. So we were able to get some good testing done and learned a few important things. Which shall remain our secret.

Friday morning was the practice session. The FP car was on the old tires we were using on test day so I didn't expect much, and we really didn't need any more "practice" anyway. Charlie ended up 5<sup>th</sup> in a tight group at the front. There weren't any really fast E Prod cars so the F Prod guys were going to be leading the field. It was a small but tough FP field, however: including two prior FP National Champions (and one future FP Champion (that's us)); one of whom claims this as his home track and has the current track record. Of course they are all great friends and we see them at all the tracks.

The SM practice session was important, however, because Charlie only put in one session in the SM on Thursday and it was good to get some more time in that car before qualifying began Friday afternoon.

It was hot Friday afternoon; actually, it was in the 90's all three days of the weekend. I really was impressed by how well Charlie held up under the heat strain. But then he is quite a bit younger than I am. FP qualifying went well, we ended up third in class and fourth overall with the lead EP car ahead of us. We knew then that this was going to be a problem. The SM qualifying didn't go well, after only 5 laps Charlie brought the car in and retired to the paddock. He suspected and was correct that a wheel bearing was failing. He ended up 19<sup>th</sup> out of 25.

The second qualifying session was on Saturday morning. We talked it over and decided to skip the session for both cars. It was unlikely that anyone was going to go faster and even if we did lose one or two spots on the grid it wouldn't be significant. Better to save the equipment, especially the tires.

The FP race was the first for us, scheduled for early afternoon. It turned out that there was one other FP car that was able to turn a qualifying time on Saturday morning a couple tenths of a second quicker than us so we started 5<sup>th</sup> overall and 4<sup>th</sup> in class. Charlie quickly got by the new comer but, as we feared, was stuck behind the EP car. Good EP cars are faster than FP cars everywhere and they just go away and are not a problem. But not-so-good EP cars have much more power and so can beat an FP car down the straights but then hold them up through the corners. So while Charlie was trapped behind this guy, trying everything he could think of, the two FP leaders motored off and left Charlie behind. Charlie finally hounded the guy to the point he made a mistake and went off the track at the exit of turn 1 and Charlie was able to get by and start after the leaders. But it was too late, he was about 9 seconds back and was able to close the gap but not quick enough to catch them. Actually, one of them had a short off track excursion and Charlie closed the gap to him to about 5 seconds but still, third place was all we were getting today. Not bad but we would have liked to run with the leaders to have a chance to do better.

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## Campbell Racing 2020 Race # 2 ...cont'd

**The SM Race 1** started only about 45 minutes later so Charlie had to hustle to get ready. We were in the post-race impound with the FP car so he took the golf cart back to the trailer to get the SM to the grid while I tended the FP car and got it back when impound was completed. And it was so hot that the FP car wouldn't start so I had to have it towed. I suspected it was either the battery or the starter but both check out fine and, after about an hour to cool off, it started normally and was not a problem for the rest of the weekend.

As I mentioned, Charlie started the SM race 19<sup>th</sup>, then drove quickly to 14<sup>th</sup> where he finished. The car ran well and he had a good time. The SM field is always one of the biggest in the entire event and there is always close racing throughout the field. Charlie really enjoys his time in the SM.

As always, Saturday evening was busy with all the post-race maintenance, repairs, and changes. Charlie works on the SM and I work on the FP. There wasn't anything significant that needed to be done this time but the usual stuff takes a while. And we took time out to have a video conference with our team of Data Analysis Engineers who had been going through the in-car data from the race. They are able to glean some important observations from the information and have been providing Charlie with some valuable coaching. And, it is that much more fun to share what we are going with some more "team mates".

Race 2, was late morning on Sunday, but it was already up to 90 deg. Charlie's cool suit was definitely a valuable performance advantage. Because Charlie had put in a lap during the Saturday race that was faster than his previous qualifying time he moved up on the grid to third; starting ahead of the EP car that had given him so much trouble on Saturday. And he was able to stay ahead of him coming out of the first turn and join the first two cars in leaving the rest of the field behind. The three of them, all FP cars, were much quicker than anyone else and by lap 8 were starting to overtake the cars at the back of the grid. On lap 10 Charlie got past the second place car, who pulled out of the race on the next lap. So it as a two car race for the victory. Charlie had closed the gap to about a half second but then it began to grow again. His lap times were about two tenths of a second slower and the gap grew to a little over 2 seconds. He reported that the car had started losing grip, especially at the rear. I suspect it was a combination of the track getting slick after a long weekend of use in the heat, and our asking too much of this set of tires. The gap back to the third place car was substantial so Charlie backed off a little and cruised to the finish with a strong second place. We were very happy with the second and third place finishes.

The SM race was still to be run. This time the lunch break was also between the FP and SM races so Charlie was able to cool off a bit and get a little nourishment. Even so, we managed to be late to the grid. The count down to the start of the race had already begun and while Charlie was still trying to get his helmet on and the belts all set the other cars left for the track and Charlie had to start at the back of the pack in 25<sup>th</sup> place; and he had to hustle to catch the pack before the green flag started the race. He was really flying and just caught the pack when the green flag came out. He actually was able to pass one car before they even got to the start line. By the end of the first lap he had passed another 6 cars and was looking for more victims. By the end of the race, with a little help from attrition, he had raced his way up to 13<sup>th</sup>. And had a great deal of fun doing it. He is getting to like this starting from the back of the field.

So we had a really good weekend. The racing was a lot of fun, didn't break anything or hit anyone. We learned a few things in testing and got some ideas on a couple more things to try in the never ending quest for more speed.

Next up is the Super Tour event at Pittsburgh International Race Complex (best known as Pitt Race) on the last weekend in August. Talk with you then.

*Tom and Charlie*