

The Mo-Hud

Knockoff



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

May 2022

The REport

By the time you read this, we'll have had our second road racing "tech party" of 2022 at Bob Karl's Sales & Service. MoHud appreciates the contributions to our region by Bob Karl & family, and Jared Lendrum & family of North Country Subaru, for hosting our tech parties each year.

We'll also have had our first Street Survival event of the year, too. Many thanks to the members who volunteer and put this on for us each season.

We're gearing up to put on our annual display at the Saratoga Auto Museum's Spring Car Show. If you have a Solo, Road Racing, or Rally competition car and would like to be part of our display, please contact Chip Van Slyke or Tracey Burckhard.

We're still working on securing locations for our Solo season, and may have an announcement soon. However, if you have any leads on a potential site, please contact Russ Burckhard or any MoHud officer.

As the season starts, please make sure to check our website, Facebook page, and the Knock Off for upcoming events and news.

See you at an event,

~ *EJ Smith* Regional Executive

In this month's KO:

A New Kid on the Block; 2020-2021 Solo Awards; Adam Wright goes to a Southern TT; and Campbell Racing starts a new season.

Calendar: May and...

- **May 4:** Wednesday. 7:00pm. Membership Meeting. Gateway Diner, Central Avenue in Albany; near I-90 Everett Road exit. Socializing and chowing-down starts around 6:00pm...

- **May 14:** Saturday. 9:00am – 2:00pm. Spring Auto Show at Saratoga Automobile Museum/ SPA State Park. MoHud has the parking spaces in front of the Museum as a spot to show off current members' cars and to recruit new members. We especially need competition cars: Solo; TT; Road Racing; Rallycross. Or perhaps you have a restored BMW coupe... Contact Tracy at traceyburckhard@gmail.com or Chip at chipperv@earthlink.com to sign on to show or volunteer to staff the exhibit.

MoHud Time Trials Championship

A recap of MoHud's newest competition series:

The Championship will be run according to SCCA Time Trial rules, partnering with the Connecticut Autocross and Rally Team (CART) /New England Region (NER) SCCA as well as the Time Trials National Tour at Thompson Speedway.

The core Championship events will be:

- CART/NER SCCA Time Trial at Thompson 5/21/22
- SCCA Time Trial National Tour at Thompson 7/1/22 to 7/2/22
- CART/NER SCCA Time Trial at Thompson 9/17/22

Bonus events may be added.

MoHud will be running points for the following Time Trials classes. Competitors are encouraged to visit TimeTrials.SCCA.Com to class their car or read the rules to build to a class.

1. Sport – S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6
2. Tuner – T1, T2, T3, T4, T5
3. Max – M1, M2, M3, M4, M5
4. Unlimited – U1, U2

Keep track of the series by frequent visits to the MoHud Facebook page and <https://mohud.motorsportsreg.com>

Road Racing

~ Reported by the KO staff

A New Kid in Town...

One of the unexpected pleasures of attending a Spring Tech Party is seeing someone bring a race car that is new to the Region. So it was both unexpected and a pleasure to see Frank McCleneghen bring his new/old BMW Z4-GTR to the tech party at Bob Karl's shop on Saturday, March 23rd.



The Z4-GTR could be thought of as the club racing version of the Z4-GT3 which appeared in both IMSA and European FIA GT racing starting in 2010. Based on the sporty Z4 coupe, the GT3 featured a 4.4 liter V8 and lots of aero bodywork. The GTR uses the same basic bodywork, but is powered by a more "normal" inline 6.

Below is a shot of Frank's car racing in the European NATC series. Harry Adalian has pointed us to a YouTube video showing the car taking 1st place on the last lap of an ADAC race in 2019. Cool stuff. (Start watching about 4:35:36)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyQzWUGtxLw&list=PL1SXVM2Nu7nH04g3AX1sb8En0rStio8Y4&index=1&t=22057s>



2020 and 2021 Solo Awards

- Russ Burckhard

We start with the 2020 MoHud Solo Awards. With the Covid pandemic running rampant, it was a tough year to get going. State-mandated gathering restrictions were major setbacks on getting a season together. As a result, three events were all we could manage to get on the books. Because of the abbreviated season, all events counted toward the Year End Championships. And because we were unable to put together an awards event for the year, the awards for 2020 were part of the 2021 Annual Meet at the Saratoga Automobile Museum.

I want to start off by acknowledging another club. We would not have had a season without the generosity of the Poughkeepsie Sports Car Club. They allowed us to use their site so that we could have some events. We also need to thank the Mohawk Hudson Region's Board of Directors, Solo Advisory Committee, Members, and all the participants. We couldn't have done this without you.

All things considered, attendance wasn't too bad for 2020. We averaged close to 50 participants at each event. We had a total of about 90 different entrants, 21 of those made it to all 3 events, and about 45 only made one event. *Street* was the highest attended class with 30 different cars. *Novice* was next with 17 different cars. *Street Touring* and *Pro* each had 12 different cars. *Prepared/Modified* had 11 different cars. *Street Prepared* had 5, *CAM* had 2, and *Kart* had 1. These class numbers trended about the same as 2019.

Street		Street Prepared		Novice	
3 rd place from GS	Tracey Burckhard	3 rd place from DSP	William Fish	5 th place from FSP	Mike Kane
2 nd place from DS	Brian Borie	2 nd place from ASP	Joseph Cassidy	3 rd place from CS	Nicholas Williams
1 st place from DS	Ian Wallace	1 st place from CSP	David Cowie	3 rd place from FSP	Paul Beechner
Street Touring		CAM		2 nd place from STH	Pierre Massena
3 rd place from STH	Nigel Boyce	1 st place from CAM C	Salvatore Baisley	1 st place from STH	Brandon Glasser
2 nd place from STS	Joseph Iacovello	Prepared & Modified		Pro	
1 st place from STS	Matt Huchro	1 st place from SM	Philip DeJan	3 rd place from HS	Jim Garry
				2 nd place from GS	Russell Burckhard
				1 st place from STR	Nick Austin

Specialty Trophies

2020 Cone Hunter

This driver went above and beyond all the others and really had no competition in the cone counts. He wasn't aiming for them; he was just a little bit aggressive and grazed a few. The top 4 had 45 cones and 1 off course. - Remember this was only a 3-event season - This is an average of 15 each. Numbers 3 and 4 (Adam Wright and Nigel Boyce) each had 7 cones. The runner up, Mark (Shaggy) Werthiem had 8 cones. Our winner had more than the other 3 combined and he went off course once. With a total of 23 cones the 2020 Cone Hunter trophy goes to Brian Borie.

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2020 Awards...contd

2020 Most improved.

We had a two-way battle for the top. Both drivers improved 20 positions in the PAX. We went back and forth trying to decide who the winner should be, and we decided on both. The Co-Winners of the Most Improved Driver are Andrew Saptura and Shelby Blanchette.

2020 Worker of the Year

This goes to a guy that shows up early and stays late. He is probably the first guy you see when you arrive. In the uncertain times of the early Covid era, he had the job of having to interact with everyone. He was instrumental in making sure you were registered to be there and that you signed the waiver. The Worker of the Year trophy goes to Joe Cassidy.

2020 Spirit of Solo

This award goes to someone that has been helping us out since he started. He just jumps in and does what needs to be done. He stays late and patrols the lot looking for left items and garbage. At one of the events, he picked up a little more than he bargained for. While cleaning the lot he discovered some debris. When he put it in the garbage bag, he realized that it was some type of organic material. The 2020 Poo award goes to Kirby Vallant-White.

2020 Driver of the year

This driver was a novice in 2018. He won his class at all three events and he PAX'ed third, fifth, and second for an average of 3.33 in an under-prepared car. I know this, because he has done some work on it this year and has been very strong in 2021. The 2020 Driver of the Year is Matt Huchro.



The 2021 Season

The 2021 season started a lot better than the 2020 season. While Covid was still around, the restrictions were not as strict as they were in 2020. This made holding events easier since there were less hurdles that we had to go through. Again, we must thank the PSCC region for allowing us to share their site. Tech City was the only site available for us to use for the second year in a row. Fortunately, we were able to have 5 events.

We started strong with a season high 67 entries but dropped off throughout the season. We were still a little better than last year with an average of 56 entrants. 131 different entrants were up from the 90 we had last year. This was mostly due to two more events this year. We had 40 entrants in the Novice class, 34 Street entrants, 21 Touring entrants, 19 Pro drivers, 10 Prepared - Modified entrants, 4 CAM entrants, and 3 Street Prepared entrants. 13 entrants made it to all 5 events while 64 only made 1 event. 41 drivers had 3 or more events.

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2021 Awards...contd

Class Trophy Winners

Street		CAM		Novice	
4 th place from DS	Ian Wallace	1 st place from CAM C	Salvatore Baisley	8 th place from STS	Jerry Huchro
3 rd place from HS	Paul Isbester	Prepared & Modified		7 th place from HS	James Mulder
2 nd place from HS	Sheri DeJan	3 rd place from FP	Ian Johnson	6 th place from BSP	Aiden Fahy
1 st place from GS	Tracey Burckhard	2 nd place from SM	Philip DeJan	5 th place from HS	Travis Aanensen
Street Touring		1 st place from SMF	Kirby Vallant-White	4 th place from STU	Stephan Tresco
3 rd place from STX	Shelby Blanchette			3 rd place from CS	Brad Dunn
2 nd place from STR	David Cowie			2 nd place from STS	Garrick Vogelsang
1 st place from STS	Matt Huchro			1 st place from HS	George Isbester
Street Prepared				Pro	
1 st place from ASP	Joseph Cassidy			4 th place from STH	Nigel Boyce
				4 th place from HS	Carmine Russo
				3 rd place from CS	Phillip Reddington
				2 nd place from STR	Nick Austin
				1 st place from GS	Russell Burckhard

Specialty Trophies

2021 Cone Hunter This Driver was not the standout like Brian was in 2020. 2021 had 685 cones hit and 100 DNF's. We had 126 different drivers. 28 of these drivers were clean but did have 1/3 of the off courses. So, most of those guys got lost, but didn't hit anything. 29 drivers hit at least 10 cones. Of these, only 7 had more than 20 cones. The winner tied another driver for the most cones with 23. This is the same number of cones as last year with two more events so you can see how high Brian had set the bar in 2020. We decided on this guy because the other driver, Bruce Kosakoski, missed last year and was out of practice and has a new car. The 2021 Cone Hunter is Lyndon Peck.

2021 Most improved. We had another two-way battle for the top. These two were both close to a 20 Pax position improvement. One had a new car to thank, the other just improved their driving. Again we went back and forth trying to decide who to give it to. Being the decisive group that we are, we decided to have co-winners. The 2021 Most Improved drivers are Dave Cowie and Sheri Dejan.

2021 Novice Driver of the Year We had a heck of a battle in the Novice class. Out of the 40 different drivers, only nine were eligible for the year end championship. We had a tough choice as only 15 points separated the top 3 in class. In a tough decision, the 2021 Novice Driver of the year is George Isbester.

2021 Spirit of Solo I

This goes to a guy that has continued to be a great asset to the program. He continues to step up to fill in wherever he is needed. From setup to tear down he is there. Whatever is needed, he will do. He has stepped up to become a member of the Solo Advisory committee this year. And at the last event when I fell ill, he took over as the Solo Chair for the rest of the event. The first Spirit of Solo award goes to Sal Baisley.

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2021 Awards...contd

2021 Spirit of Solo II

This winner has been a participant for over ten years. Always willing to help in whatever way they could. Always improving with their driving skills. The past few years those skills were used to teach both novice and experienced drivers how to get a little better. Always willing to lend a hand and always trying to get others involved. Having become addicted to the sport and wanting others to follow in her footsteps, the second 2021 Spirit of Solo winner is Tracey Burckhard.

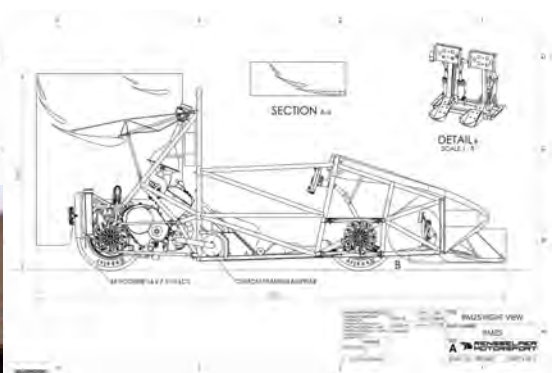
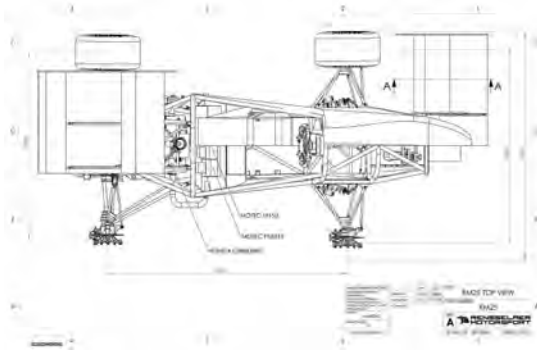
2021 Driver of the Year

This driver is no stranger to the top of the Pax list. With only 9 cones over the last two years, he is very precise with his driving. He is also very consistent. Most events he is within a second or two between his best and worst runs. He had a third, first, first, and first on Pax this year for an impressive 1.5 average. The 2021 Driver of the year is Nick Austin.

RPI Motorsports Gearing Up for 2022 Formula SAE Competition

Once again the RPI Motorsports group will be heading for Brooklyn, Michigan, May 16-18, for the annual Formula SAE competition. The International Society of Automotive Engineers describes Formula SAE as a challenge to students to conceive, design, fabricate and compete with small formula-style racing cars. The annual competition will include cost and engineering design analysis, as well as solo (autocross) and high-performance endurance events. In prior years, more than 50 engineering colleges from around the globe have sent teams.

Below are a few pics from their Facebook site. And keep in mind that they are always looking for more sponsorship.



May 2020 Membership Report- *-Jim Garry Mohud Membership Chairman*

< mhr.membership@gmail.com >

Membership count as of April 26th is 332.

Count last month: 338

This time last year: 311

New Members since April 1

Levi Wright, Berne

James Hislop, Saratoga Springs

Emily Mioducki, Rocky Point



Significant Anniversaries

5 years - *Caleb Pocock* - TT driver, RallyCross, Solo

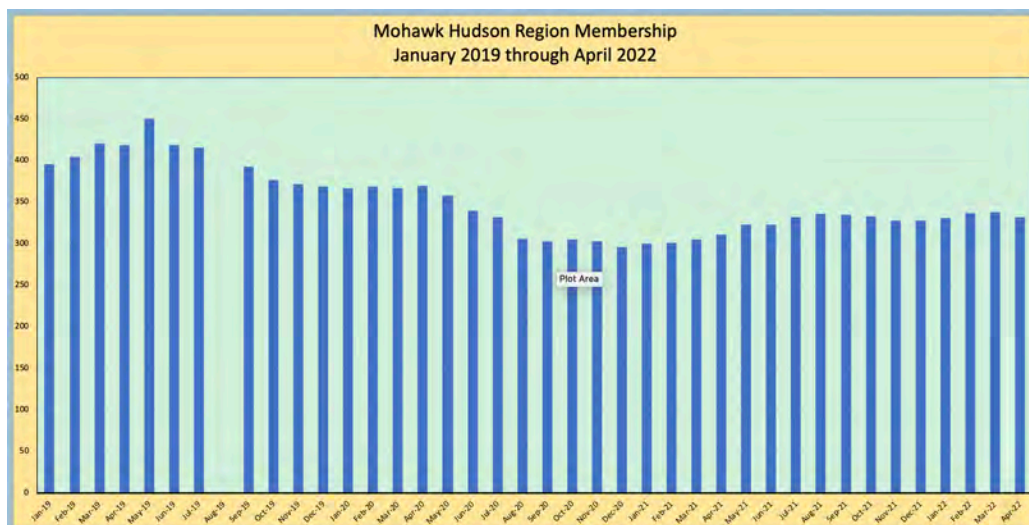
10 years - *Aashish Vemulapalli* - TT Driver, TE/TT Driver Coach, TT Event Lead Apprentice, TT Safety Steward

15 years - *Annamarie Cioffi* - Spouse of 40 year autocrosser Ken Hurd
- *Ed Granka* - Ed's primary interested are club racing and solo

20 years - *Jill Wright* - Spouse of Bob Wright is well known for his efforts in creating and running Formula Race Promotions and being a formula car racer.

35 years - *Deborah Riggi*
- *Jennifer Riggi*

45 years - *Chris Zarzycki* - long time FV racer also is a regional registrar with plenty of interesting tales to tell.



Mohawk-Hudson Region SCCA Monthly Membership Meeting of April 6th, 2022 7:00 PM

Location: The Gateway Diner Albany, New York

Officers Present: Eric Smith, Chip Van Slyke, Richard Welty, Paul Malecki, Shelby Blanchette, Salvatore Baisley, Bruce Kosakoski

Total Members Present: 22

Shelby Blanchette makes a motion accepting the meeting minutes as published in the March Knock Off. Sheri DeJan seconds the motion and Eric Smith thirds.

Member Report- submitted by Jim Garry

- Currently at 330 members
- Down seven members since last month

Knock Off Report- Paul Malecki

- The April Fools edition was published and received well.
- Still looking for a new editor

Treasury Report- Paul Malecki

- \$27,847.66 In checking account
- Tire Rack Street Survival profit was \$60.00 but will be split 3 ways between, Saratoga Auto Museum, BMW Patroon and Mohud

Solo- Russell Burkhard

- Still looking for a site
- PSCCA still at Tech City, we may be able to use that lot
- New timing equipment has been tested out and works great.

Tire Rack Street Survival- Salvatore Baisley

- On 4/24 at the Saratoga Auto Museum
- 13 sing ups and 16 instructors
- Students can have their permits, they just need to be eligible for their driver's test

Track- Salvatore Baisley

- CART and MoHud Time Trials will be at Thompson Motorsports Speedway on May 21st and September 17th
- The Time Trial National Tour Event on July 1st & 2nd will also count towards the Mohawk-Hudson Regions' Time Trials for 2022
- Stickers required for events have arrived
- Extra points towards season championship if competing at other national time trial events

Road Racing- Richard Welty

- Inspected 12-16 cars at the North Country Subaru Dealership
- 2010 helmets need to be replaced
- Bob Carl's tech party is on 4/23
- Electronic log books have been postponed

Old Business – Eric Smith

- Eric Smith asks for a vote, yay or nay, to accept the new proposed Mohawk-Hudson Region logo. All members were in favor.
- Files for the financial audit were sent and the committee has a meeting planned.
- Inventory will be done later during the season

New Business- Eric Smith

- Have not heard about The Spring Car Show at the Saratoga Auto Museum yet, will check in with Tom Campbell
- Chip Van Slyke and Tracey Burkhard have volunteered to help with it
- Eric Smith spoke with Jason Smith about MoHud trying to get the Banquet sponsored, it sounds like a good idea and will be looked into.
- Per Peter Kroth, Brian Deane's mother, Janice, has passed on 3/8, we should make a donation to the family's chosen organization, condolences to their family.
- Harry makes a motion to donate \$100 to the Bayhealth Cardiac Care Unit in memory of Janice, Sheri DeJan seconds motion and all members in favor.

Diane Malecki makes a motion to adjourn meeting and Russ Burkhard seconds motion.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Meeting minutes recorded and submitted by Shelby Blanchette.

Mo-Hud Officers and Contacts

Regional Executive (RE)

Eric "EJ" Smith MoHudRE@gmail.com

Assistant RE

Salvatore Baisley sa26bais@gmail.com

Treasurer

Paul Malecki paul@dianenpaulmalecki.org

Secretary

Shelby Blanchette shelby_blanchette@yahoo.com

Director

Bruce Kosakoski bkbmw@gmail.com

Director

Chip VanSlyke chipperv@earthlink.net

Activities Chair

Tracey Burckhard traceyburckhard@gmail.com

Membership Chair

Jim Garry mhr.membership@gmail.com

Road Racing Chairs

Richard Welty Paul Malecki paul@dianenpaulmalecki.org

Solo Chair

Russ Burckhard russtduck@gmail.com

Track Chair Time Trials and Track Nights

Aashish Vemulapalli aashish2@gmail.com

Rally Chair

Ken Relation Kenneth.Relation@dot.ny.gov

Flagging and Communications Chair

Rich Alexander dweebdad@msn.com

Merchandise

Chip VanSlyke chipperv@earthlink.net

KockOff Editor

This coveted position is Open; apply now!

WebMaster

Eric "EJ" Smith ejvo8@gmail.com

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 1st Wednesday of the month, excepting July and August, 7pm, at locations as announced on the Region's Facebook page.



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The KnockOff Journal

This Month...

- Adam Wright's TT Adventure In the Carolinas
- Campbell Racing Starts a New Season



Carolina Motorsports Park Time Trials National Tour, March 25-27, 2022

~ Adam Wright

The full story about my trip to Carolina Motorsports Park for the Time Trials National Tour starts back in November. I decided to go full racecar mode and put in a 6-point cage...and I was going to do it myself. Lesson learned; I'll never do another cage myself. A project that I thought would take me a month took 4. I didn't even have the seat bolted in right when I had to take it to my alignment shop the first time.

The event opened on Friday for check-in and tech. I try to make it to any event the night before just to drop off things that I don't care to take to the hotel, and I know that my things are often safer out in the open at the track than locked in my truck at the hotel. The super fun part about that was finding a loose bolt on my suspension that my alignment shop overlooked the week before. Combine that with an uninsulated garage, running a construction business, 2 small kids, and farm life, and you start to get the picture of how close I cut it. I picked my car up on Wednesday night from the shop while Sal Basiley was awesome enough to change 10 tires for me in my shop. Thursday, I did the truck tires (studded snows down south didn't sound like the best idea) and loaded up to leave by 3. But wait, there's more; I decided to change my wheel studs, which caused me to have to order new lug nuts, that were delayed and were supposed to be delivered on Thursday. We waited until 3:45 and hit the road...for about 15 seconds which was when I passed the FedEx truck with the lug nuts LOL!! Back to the house, then back on the road. 1 infant, 1 toddler, one teenager, myself and my wife piled in the truck with dreams of warm weather and race car noises.

Friday comes and we arrive at the track with little drama along the way. In typical Southern style, we are greeted with warm smiles and thick accents at the gate, and I couldn't help but smile. Then the wind hit me through the window, and I noticed a woman in full winter attire in the guard shack. "So much for the warm weather," I thought. Regardless, we unloaded car, tires, fuel, and stretched our legs as I looked around for familiar faces to greet, and there are a handful.

Saturday morning was exciting! A brand-new track, car setup, aero, tires, gauges, all the way down to the mirror. Sure, I double checked everything along the way, but there's still butterflies when you think about doing a shakedown 800+ miles from your garage. Driver's meeting came and went, and cars started taking to the track. I decided to go out with the paced laps to get a look at the track firsthand after watching many videos, and immediately gained confidence. I couldn't wait for my first practice session, which went without any drama. Even though this was the first event of the year for many there, it seemed like they had not forgotten one bit about handling traffic on course, and things went very smoothly.

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Adam's TT, contd...

For the timed sessions this year there has been a slight change to the format in that the advanced and intermediate groups are combined (with intermediate passing rules) and then split into 5 groups based on speed. This eliminated most passes and created very clean track time for everyone. I made a few mistakes in the first timed session and got caught up in the mistakes of others in the second, so not my best showing on Saturday, but it was so much fun! Then the BBQ, oh the BBQ. If you've talked to someone about SCCA Time Trials, they've likely mentioned the BBQ.

Sunday started with the Track Sprint. Think of an autocross on track: standing start and flying finish over a segment of the track. This allows the staff to use cut-throughs to create essentially a new track for Track Sprint. I felt I did well and it helped me figure out some goblins in that segment of the track. After that were two more Time Attack sessions and then we were done. I knew after Saturday that I would not win my class, but I wanted to get closer, and I felt I accomplished that. After the Track Sprint, I felt confident that I would at least secure 2nd place, and after my first timed session I felt I was good to go (and was).

As for the elephant in the room for those who have heard, yes there were two incidents that looked much worse than they were. Heyward Wagner did an excellent job in summarizing the incidents and you can email him to get a link to that presentation if you are more curious. Spoiler: it wasn't all that dramatic. First incident was simply a Camaro sliding off track, through a sand pit, and coming to rest after pushing some loose tires back several feet. Unfortunately, the exact spot where it came to rest was full of tall, dry vegetation. We all know what happens on a windy, early Spring day when you add heat to last year's weeds. The local fire departments did an excellent job knocking down the brush fire. We then had a Miata back into a tire wall, then roll off them after coming to a stop. The key take-away from both incidents was that both had OEM safety and both times it worked flawlessly. There wasn't even a scratch on the top of the seat or roll bar/hoop thingy on the Miata. So, for those of you with stock safety, know that even in scary situations, you're protected. To the best of my knowledge, both had track insurance and no injuries, so their recovery will likely be an easier one than you might think.

All in all, a very fun weekend at a great track surrounded by some of the best people you will meet. I have a novel's worth of amazing stories from just that one weekend, and that seems to be the norm for SCCA TT; you'll walk away with a wealth of amazing memories. That's what it's all about.

Remember, the Mohud Time Trials Championship registration is open, along with registration to each of our events (see last week's Track Day Thursday post).

The June 8th and 9th Track Night in America at Lime Rock is filling very fast. Do not wait if you are thinking of attending. It's much easier to cancel if you must than it is to get off the wait list!

~ Adam



ed's note: Can't find a pic of Adam's car, but this should rate a chuckle...

Campbell Racing – Race Report # 1 for 2022

Virginia International Raceway (VIR) April 8 - 10

Here it is spring again and time to start the new race season. As in the past few years, we start at Virginia International Raceway with one of the SCCA's Hoosier Super Tour events. Testing on Thursday; practice and a qualifying session on Friday; a second qualifying session on Saturday morning followed by Race 1 in the afternoon; and then the "feature" race on Sunday.

Charlie's "weekend" actually started on the previous Sunday when he left home for North Carolina to get a brand-new engine installed in his car, including the dyno break in and tuning. We met at the track on Wednesday afternoon and got our paddock spot set up and everything ready for the test day. My trip down on Wednesday was fraught with little problems which turned a 12 hour drive into about 14, including a flat tire on the trailer which did quite a bit of damage to the trailer. On a dual axle trailer the driver can't feel a flat tire and they are difficult to see in the mirror. Luckily a passing car brought it to my attention, and I was able to find a place to pull over and change it. Not the first time but always a pain. And something for the growing work list for when I get home.

We needed to split the test day between the two cars – it was really a shakedown day for both. Charlie ran his Spec Miata in the two morning sessions, but both were wet. But he did finish the break-in of the new motor. We skipped the first afternoon session because of the rain and then did the last one in my F Production car. Didn't really learn anything but none of the bits and pieces fell off and that is the mark of a successful shakedown.

There were 74 SM cars entered which made for a very full and busy track. In practice and qualifying it was practically impossible to get a real clear lap. The practice session was without drama for us but there were a few "comings-together" and the session was halted for a few minutes about halfway for cleanup. In the first qualifying session Charlie continued to improve his times and ended up 38th. He improved to 32nd in the second session on Saturday morning.

There were 37 cars in the Production race group: in the usual 4 different classes. In F Prod there were 14 cars, a nice entry for this early in the year. Lap times were a little slow because of the cold track and rusty drivers. Charlie ended up 4th overall and 3rd in FP. The afternoon qualifying session went trouble free. Everyone's times improved. Charlie ended up 4th in FP. Actually, about where we expected; the top half of the field contains some of the best FP cars in the country (and yes, I include us in that count). The second qualifying session on Saturday morning didn't go well at all. While most of the others improved their times, the FP car just wouldn't run, it began breaking up well before red-line, giving up a lot of power. The result was that we dropped to 10th overall and 6th in FP on the grid for the afternoon race.

The SM Saturday afternoon race started with a lot of excitement. There were wrecks and cars off track everywhere – on the first lap! The weather was cold and very windy, the drivers were cold and mostly crazy. Only 39 cars completed the first lap. After stopping the race in order to make the cleanup easier, the race was restarted with only 10 minutes to go. He continued to improve over the remaining laps and finished a very nice 16th. -- And without a scratch on the car.

Race Report #1, contd...

The FP race started well. Charlie moved up a couple places on the first lap and continued to run with the leaders. He had a very spirited race with the other front running Miata but the two Acura's were clearly the class of the field. They have just a little more power and VIR is certainly a "power track". But at about half distance the lead Acura had a suspension failure - which included a very hot broken brake rotor which came off the car and started a small grass fire. The race had to be stopped for a short time to allow the fire trucks and grounds crew to put out the fire. The race was restarted with 9 minutes to go and the top three (the surviving Acura and two Miata's) ran nose to tail to the end. It was great racing, just not long enough. Charlie ended up in 3rd place. Hard earned and well deserved.

The big SM race on Sunday was tame compared to the race the day before. Charlie started 30th of 72. The field quickly got into single file, and everyone behaved well. There was some passing but it was all done safely. Compared to Saturday, it was boring to watch. Charlie moved up a few spots, then back a couple, then forward again, all the time racing with someone. At the end he finished 29th. But more importantly, he took 2 full seconds off his best time of the weekend and was only a second slower than the leaders. I think the new motor is just starting to get broken in. We'll see if the trend continues at the next event.

The final race for the FP car was a story with a different ending. This weekend Charlie's two race groups were back-to-back, with the SM race first. All through the weekend the Grid had been waiting for Charlie to get his SM back to the paddock and switch cars and get to the grid as soon as he could. For some reason, they failed to wait for him this time. The field was half way around on the out-lap before Charlie could get to the grid and he had to start from the pit lane after all the cars had taken the green to start the race. He wouldn't have had a chance for a really good finishing position but, knowing Charlie, he would have had a lot of fun passing everything between him and the leaders. However, it was not to be. For some reason, as yet undiagnosed, the car wouldn't run over 5000 rpm (on track, it goes to 8000 and rarely gets below 6000). Our race was over before it began. He did make one lap so he got credit for having started the race but then came in and parked it. All the available indicators were normal. At this time, we haven't a clue what is wrong. I'll let you know in the report from the next event.

That will be at Pittsburgh International Race Complex ("Pitt Race") on the weekend of April 30th. So, I have 2 ½ weeks to get it figured out and fixed and ready for the next run. Along with 4 pages of other less critical work items. But then, this is what I do!

~ Tom and Charlie



ed's note: This year's poster for the Pitt race features Charlie in the (white) FP car with one of the Acuras (red) alongside during last year's meet.