

# THE KNOCK OFF

April 2023 Issue

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MOHUD ON THE WEB



## THE REPORT

**Are you ready for the season?** I'm hoping to get my new-to-me car out to the track this year for some high performance driving events (HPDEs), so after consulting with some fellow members I have a plan. Now I just have to get my car to a competent shop and have some parts installed, and some fluids changed, and then I'll be ready... at least until I find out I need new tires, or a different alignment, or maybe something else. Having been with my previous track car for 18 years, I'd forgotten the anxiety of not fully knowing what your car was capable of at the track.

MoHud is trying to get ready for the season, too. We have our Spring and Fall Street Survival events on the calendar, and we are trying to put together a Solo season schedule that fits within the tight parameters we've been given for the venue we use. We're hoping to have Solo news to announce soon but expect multiple events to happen in July and August. Our Time Trial and Track team have been working on a schedule as well.

Outside of our region, there are many different SCCA events you can participate in. If you have any questions about a

particular aspect of SCCA's events, please ask us and we can point you to more information.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Apr. 5 – MoHud Membership Meeting @ [Gateway Diner, Albany NY](#).

Apr. 8 – Road Racing Tech Party, [North Country Subaru](#), Queensbury NY. 11:30a – 2p

Apr. 15 – MoHud “Spring Has Sprung” GTA Rally. [Details](#) and [registration info](#) online.

Apr 23 – [Tire Rack Street Survival](#), [SAM](#), Saratoga Springs NY. [Student registration is open](#).  
Volunteers and instructors should contact Sal Baisley.

May 3 – MoHud Membership Meeting. Location TBD.

May 6 – Road Racing Tech Party, [Bob Karl's Sales & Service](#), Troy NY. Noon – 3p.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT – JIM GARRY, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Our membership stands at 311 as of March 26, up three from last month. We're 27 down from this time a year ago.

New members in March:

- Eric Hamilton, Clifton Park
- Mark Gentili, Amsterdam
- Christian Flagg, New Boston
- Andrew Stone, Red Hook
- Joseph Davidick, Round Lake

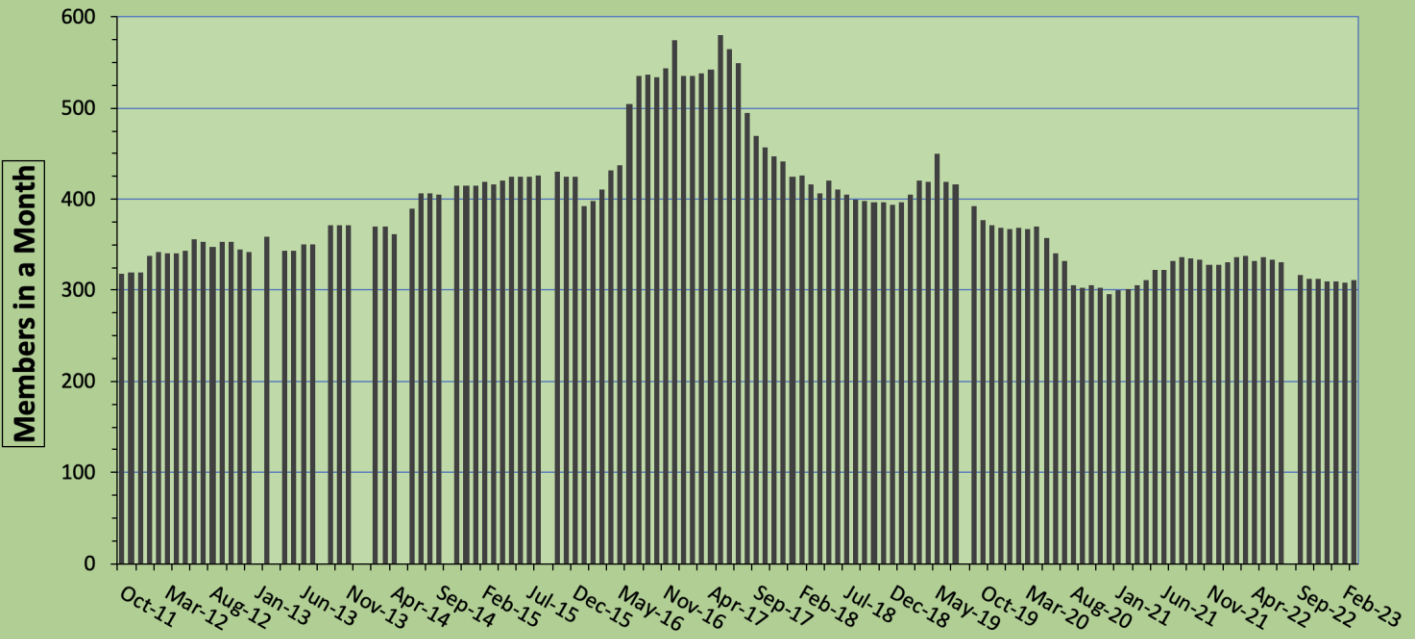
Welcome! We hope to see you at events and meetings.

Significant Anniversaries:

- Nicholas Cattell, 5 years
- Randall Salisbury, 10 years
- Christopher Brassard, 15 years - Chris has an SCCA Competition License
- Susan Butcher, 20 years

Congratulations everyone!

## Mohawk Hudson Region Membership September 2011 through March 2023



*1 See Adam Wright's write-up of the VIR TTNT event in the Knock Off Journal*

## **TREASURER REPORT – PAUL MALECKI**

The comprehensive report can be downloaded at: [2022-23MoHud-ProgramFinancialReport.pdf](#)

Notes on the Program Financial Report:

- It should be noted that if Van expenses were allocated to the various relevant programs, the TRSS positive income would just about disappear, and Solo positive income would be at least halved.
- In summary, the report shows what I have been saying for several months: membership dues are keeping us in the green, if only by a small amount.
- Actual checkbook balance as of 5pm, Monday, 20 March 2023, is \$29,372.57. As usual, our balance (recognizing any outstanding checks — 1 at this time) reconciles with the bank's balance (not recognizing any outstanding checks).
- There has been no change in Bitcoin holdings...

PaulM.

## **SOLO REPORT - RUSS BURCKHARD**

See March Board Meeting minutes for the latest information.

## MARCH MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

### Mohawk-Hudson SCCA Monthly Membership Meeting March 1st, Start 7:06 PM

- Location: Martel's Restaurant, Albany New York
- Officers Present:
  - Eric Smith,
  - Paul Malecki,
  - Shelby Blanchette,
  - Salvatore Baisley,
  - Russ Burkhard
- Total number of members present: 20
- Eric Smith makes a motion to accept the meeting minutes as published in the February Knock Off.

#### Membership Report- Submitted by Jim Garry

- Two new members in February; AJ Conforti from Saugerties and Eric Hamilton from Clifton Park
- Significant March anniversaries:
  - 5 years- Aaron Wright and Brian Borie,
  - 10 years- Greg Goss,
  - 20 years- George Harmuth,
  - 30 years- Arnold Beebe

#### Knock Off Report- Submitted by Jim Garry

- Still looking for a replacement KO editor

#### Treasury Report- Paul Malecki

- \$28,950.45 in the account this morning
- Paid \$1375.00 for bus insurance for the year

#### Solo Report- Russ Burkhard

- July and August are our dates for autocross
- Need a new venue still

#### TRSS- Paul Malecki

- April 23rd event at SAM
- Need volunteers for event and setup on April 22nd
- Will have posters for advertising

#### Rally- Kenneth Relation

- Plan to host a GTA on Saturday April 15th
- Most likely will be starting in the Guilderland area

### Track/Time Trials- Salvatore Baisley

- CART has announced their schedules in May 20th and September 30th at Thompson there is a tentative date of August 26th for Palmer
- National TT at VIR next weekend
- MoHud will also have a second annual Championship for the Time Trials
- There is a flagging training event on March 19th at the Thompson track
- Patroon BMW will be at Lime Rock on April 29th

### Road Racing- Richard Welty

- NER racing schedule is posted
- Major schedule is set
- Tech parties April 8th at North Country Subaru and on May 6th at Bob Karl's in Troy
- There will be an additional Tech party in Kingston at the Jim Glass Showroom on April 29th

### Old Business- Eric Smith

- Request by the SAM to have additional TRSS events
- SAM will be partnering with the Audi club for the events, they want to use our cones, and some other top people to assist with the event
- Intent of SAM is to have the Audi club shadow us during the April event so we can teach them about running the event

### New Business- Eric Smith

- Someone who represents the Mohawk Towpath Byways reached out wondering if we could sanction a GTA rally fundraiser for them
- If we were to support this, we would have to charge them for entrants and for volunteers
- DJ McArdle suggests having them submit a written proposal for their request, include what the request is, monetary information, what they would need help with etc.
- Kenneth Relation- mini convention in Scranton PA, gave a presentation about our successful road rallies.

Peter Kroth makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, Sheri DeJan seconds the motion; members were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28

Meeting minutes recorded and submitted by Shelby Blanchette

## MARCH BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Via Zoom, called to order at 7:08pm, March 22

Attending: Eric Smith, Sal Baisley, Chip Van Slyke, Russ Burckhard, Shelby Blanchette

- Time Trial
  - Sal Baisley: Partnering with CART @ Palmer on 8/28 is dragging as CART has still not submitted a proper proposal.
  - Eric suggested we need one that doesn't simply ask MoHud to donate \$4500 to the event, but instead properly share in profits or losses as a true partnership would require.
  - Sal has only received an error ridden spreadsheet of some of the financials as envisioned.
  - Sal said if he receives something before the April membership meeting he'll let us know and we'll schedule a short board meeting once again to discuss.
  
- Mohawk Tow Path Rally request
  - Eric Smith: have not heard anything from the gentleman who contacted me since he said he'd put together a proposal for us to consider. Ken R said he's not keen on participating but would abide by what the Board decides. Eric figures we can evaluate a proposal quickly if one does get submitted to us.
  
- Solo
  - Russ B: Season has been defined as July & August by PSCC telling us those months are the only ones available to us.
  - Russ is planning a 4 event season, with 2 dates in July and 2 in August.
  - We discussed the risk of burning out our customer base with such a compressed schedule. To compound the issue, it appears PSCC is also doubling up on their events.
  - We take comfort in knowing it's easy to cancel and avoid the \$1000 site charge if we don't get sufficient turnout to justify the cost each time.
  
- TRSS
  - Sal looked at student registration numbers for the 4/23 date, which currently sits at 15.
  - We discussed how to get the word out to more areas of the community.
  - Sal mentioned he had recently sent out instructor registration requests and how best to cast a wider net on it.
  - We're still waiting for a Zoom call with SAM to be scheduled.
  - Eric asked if there was any progress on soliciting donations or grants to cover breakfast and lunch. Eric offered to contact Miguel Teixeira again and ask for his Dunkin support if we were still in need.



- MSR's recent announcement of their \$2 registration fee
  - Being assessed to each user who registers for an event.
  - Discussed what potential impacts it may have on participation.
  - It was a topic of discussion during the previous night's SCCA Medium & Large Region Leadership Zoom, which Eric participated in.
  - Chip pointed out it is likely the result of several regions who use MSR but encourage entrants to not pay via MSR to avoid the 4.5% fee charged for CCs.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM.







# THE KNOCK OFF JOURNAL

April 2023 Issue

In this issue:

- 2023 Time Trials National Tour at VIRginia International Raceway, by Adam Wright



## 2023 Time Trials National Tour at VIRginia International Raceway



*2 Author Adam Wright coaches his son, Aaron, before a session.*

March 2021 was the first time the SCCA Time Trials National Tour (TTNT) visited VIR as well as the first time I visited there. I was lucky enough to have great weather, on track lodging, and awesome people to meet. So, of course when it was announced TTNT would be back this year I signed up as soon as I could. The big differences this time around would be that my son, Aaron, would be coming along to drive and wife Carrie would be helping out with working the event.

For those who don't know, Aaron began driving karts in the former Solo Junior Driver Program at the age of 13. When the JDP ended, he transitioned over into driving my Scion FR-S which was far down the path of becoming a dedicated track car. Before going to VIR, he had made the Southern New England tour of Thompson, Palmer, and Lime Rock and had a half dozen or so track days under his belt. Importantly, all those track days (and two Time Trials) all had wonderful weather. As we got closer and closer to the event at VIR, we began accepting the fact that the weather would be anything short of challenging.

As we all know, 200 treadwear tires all come with a warning not to use them below a certain temperature. Some say 40, others say 50. The forecast for the weekend showed a steady decline in conditions from sunny and mild (for us northerners) to ending with snow. I hemmed and hawed about going at all, especially with the 30" Nor'easter forecast for the drive home. If Sal Baisley, Kirby

Vaillant-White, Shelby Blanchette, Carrie, and I were not working the event, and part of our travelling party) I think I would have sat this one out, but in the end, we decided to roll the dice and hit the road.

The trip down went as expected and we arrived basically right on time. Carrie and Shelby slipped into their roles at check-in while Sal and I got started helping with setup. Aaron took care of on-site car prep stuff (fun fact: you can't get true E85 up north during the winter) and Kirby was great in shifting around to where he was most helpful. We eventually met up with Nigel Boyce, Mike Park, and adopted MoHud member Ben Smolen.

Saturday began with the usual driver's meeting, which held no surprises for anyone who is familiar with the TTNT format. I would be coaching one of the Track Night in America-style groups that would be mixed in throughout the afternoon, Sal was coaching one of the TT groups, Carrie was getting everyone put into the correct grid spot, Shelby was helping with check-in, and I volunteered Kirby to help get cars where they needed to be coming off track. There wasn't one single person there that did not see MoHud members anywhere they went; it was awesome.

Aaron smartly took it easy to start the event, again this was his first time at VIR. For those unfamiliar with VIR, this is a 21 turn, 3.27 mile road course. For me, one of the telling signs of how difficult a track is to master (or in some cases, how dangerous) is how many of the turns or sections are named. VIR has a name for every single turn or section. Starting with Horseshoe and ending at Hog Pen, it is incredibly difficult to remember where you are, no less be fast and competitive at the same time. I spent quite some time going over the best way to get around the track with him and after the first two practice sessions, Aaron ended up mid pack in the Novice class and about the same in Max 4. I improved slightly since my last time there and continued to try and have the courage to start pushing new levels of speed and grip through some areas.

Saturday ended with Aaron moving up to the top 25% in the novice grid and I sat just outside of podium times. As is customary with national TT events, we had the wonderful BBQ provided by SCCA. It was beginning to get cold and the forecast was showing more snow for Sunday which prompted a staff meeting to discuss what to do. Sal was pulled into that meeting, so the rest of our travelling crew commandeered Sal's truck to stay warm while we ate. On the way down, we made a special stop to get firewood, because why not?!? It's cold at home, let's have a campfire, have a few drinks, and enjoy good company. Friday night was a bust with strong, cold wind so we HAD to burn all the wood Saturday night. After Sal was done with his meeting and got some food, Aaron got to building a fire in the fire pit we brought along, and we invited all the MoHud clan to join us. It was a great time, complete with drinks, good friends, new people to meet, and other PG-13 debauchery. I honestly have not laughed that hard in many years. Some small part of me still thinks we were preparing ourselves for the second day of competition and the looming drive home, potentially in a snowstorm. Oh, and they bumped up the forecasted snow totals for both VIR and home.

We woke Sunday to snow falling at a steady pace, but not sticking on paved surfaces yet. The schedule was condensed, and we got right to it. Aaron's run group was first after the traditional inversion of the run order, and he ended up in grid place 4 or 5. That means his first ever time on a

wet track would be VIR, in the snow, at 33 degrees (well below the safe limit of the tires). As the event lead described, VIR in the wet is equivalent to the final boss in a video game. That puts it, arguably, as the most difficult track in the wet that most of us will ever drive. So, what does Aaron do? Go out and do 112mph down the front straight and find that the normal braking zone (covered in rubber) gets quite slick in the rain, as does the grass that you find past that braking zone! Luckily, he was able to slow enough to get the car under control and continue as normal. Several others were not as lucky, but none from the MoHud group.

I find myself to be very comfortable on a wet track, even ranking 3rd at the last Palmer TT in the wet. I took that confidence and moved up into a podium spot after my first session! Since we only had to complete one session to have a full event (2 times added together for a total time) and I was 3 seconds ahead of 4th, we decided to load the car up and pack up the RV to get on the road ASAP. I kept half an eye on the folks who decided to take another session on the track, not expecting much as the conditions were not improving, but I was bumped off the podium by someone who was able to make up a bunch of time in their second session.

We got on the road immediately after the trophy presentation, with snow still falling. Another fun fact: they don't pre-treat the roads down south, or so it would appear. We passed a dozen or more highway trucks, lights flashing and full of salt...parked on the side of the highway. Some even had chains on! I don't think I've ever been so happy to cross into PA where I hoped the roads would be treated (and I believe they were). After only stopping for fuel, food, and restrooms, we made it home around 3am. Of course, the snow at home ended up being pushed back so we COULD have left early Monday morning, but after the weather we dealt with that weekend, we weren't taking any chances.

While there were several challenges and opportunities for stress and anxiety, most of it was purely worry that never materialized. If it were not for the amazing company during the trip, perhaps this article would have a different tone, but Sal, Kirby, Shelby, Nigel, Mike, Ben, Carrie, and Aaron made the weekend incredibly fun. I mean, VIR is always a fun challenge and I'll certainly head down there again at my very next chance, but hopefully the weather will cooperate next time.

For those interested in trying Time Trials in some warmer weather, check out MoHud's Time Trial championship series for this year. We will be heading to Thompson twice and Palmer once. Track Night in America is a great place to start if you're new to driving on track! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Sal Baisley, Aashish Vemulapalli, or DJ McArdle.





*3 Time Trial in the snow? It happened at VIR.*

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