

MARCH 2010

# KNOCKOFF



Official Publication of the Mohawk-Hudson Region Sports Car Club of America

**Spring is almost here!**  
*Race season not far away!*

**Happy  
St. Patty's  
Day!**



*Your SCCA stewards  
hard at work?*



*Can you hear me now?*

**A GENTLE REMINDER!**

Articles for KO are due  
15th of each month  
for the following month. Please  
let me know before if I should  
expect an article or insertion.

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The KnockOff is the official publication of the Mohawk-Hudson Region, Sports Car Club of America. Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the Mohawk-Hudson Region or of the Sports Car Club of America.

The general membership meeting is held on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm at The Orchard Tavern , 68 No. Manning Blvd., Albany, NY.

### **SUBSCRIBE TO THE MO-HUD MAILING LIST:**

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

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

### **ADVERTISING RATES**

Type	Size	1 Issue	6 Issues
Full Pg	10x7	\$20.00	\$100.00
Half Pg	5x7	\$15.00	\$75.00
Half Pg	10x3	\$15.00	\$75.00
Qtr Pg	5x3	\$10.00	\$50.00
Bus Crd	3x2	\$5.00	\$25.00

*All ads must be prepaid. Noncommercial classified ads run in three (3) consecutive issues and are FREE to MEMBERS*

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# RE *REPORT*

The Rallycross scheduled for February 27<sup>th</sup> on the lake in Pittsfield had to be cancelled due to unsafe ice. I would like to thank both Dave and Russ for their efforts. We will attempt it next year but try to schedule in January.

The Roundtable and NARRC Championship will be held in Florham Park, NJ, the weekend of March 12-14. We would like as many MoHud members as possible to attend the Roundtable seminars, if you can make it, contact me before the 10<sup>th</sup> and the region will arrange subsidies. The Annual Tech Party is scheduled for Saturday March 27<sup>th</sup> at Bob Karl Sales and Service on 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. in Troy NY. The Dealership is open until noon, so please do not arrive before 12:30, unless you want to look at the vehicles Bob has for sale. BK always has a good variety of vehicles on hand, so if you want to shop, come early. This is a party with hotdogs and soda. It is not only for racers but anyone who is interested in cars. Workers are needed to cook dogs, do minimal paperwork etc. Everyone is invited.

**Annual  
TECH PARTY  
March 27th 12:30pm  
Bob Karl's Sales & Service, 6th Ave., Troy, NY**

## COMPETITION REPORT

### **Annual Tech**

The MoHud Annual Tech Party is scheduled for Saturday March 27<sup>th</sup>. It will again be hosted by BK Karl at his Bob Karl's Sales and Service- 2791 Sixth Ave, Troy, NY. Bob is open until noon, so please do not arrive before 12:30pm. We will have the usual Hot Dogs and soda. Volunteers are needed for cooking. Rich Welty and his crew will be ready. Please check the expiration date on your belts.

I wrote about this last year but it needs repeating. When you go online to register for your first race, check to make sure that your region of record is Mohawk Hudson. When the results come out, check to see that you are listed as a MoHud member. Every driver should get in the habit of checking his qualifying time or finishing position as soon as possible. Remember if there is an error in either, you only have 30 minutes before it becomes official.



*From Area 10 Director John Sheridan*

## SCCA Convention Rolls On, Solo and Rally Awards Presented

**LAS VEGAS, Nev. (Jan. 29, 2010)** – Sports Car Club of America's annual National Convention Presented by Gumout completed its second day on Friday at the South Point Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, highlighted by a series of racer-related seminars and the Tire Rack Rally/Solo Awards Luncheon.

Hosted by Hall of Fame member Roger Johnson, the awards ceremony honored excellence in RallyCross, RoadRally and Solo competition and organization in the 2009 season.

The winners were:

### RoadRally

Arthur Gervais Award: Steve Gaddy's Lobster Traps Rally, DC Region

Manufacturer of the Year: Subaru

Divisional Achievement Award: Northeast Division

Regional Achievement Award: Indianapolis Region

RoadRally Photo Contest 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Dave Head

RoadRally Photo Contest 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Betsy Edwards

RoadRally Photo Contest 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Dave Head

### RallyCross

Divisional Achievement Award: Rocky Mountain Division

Regional Achievement Award: New England Region

RallyCross Photo Contest 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Marnie Swoom

RallyCross Photo Contest 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Candy Gerber

RallyCross Photo Contest 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Mark Walker



*SCCA President Jeff Dahnert presents the Solo Driver of the Year award to Clemens Berger. (SCCA Image)*

### Solo

Driver of Eminence: Tom Berry, Cal Club

Johnson Spirit of the Sport: Mike McClintock, Detroit Region

Driver of the Year: Clemens Berger, Indianapolis Region

Rookie of the Year: Katie Nicholls, San Diego Region

Divisional of the Year: Central Division

More than 450 members have registered for the 2010 SCCA National Convention Presented by Gumout — the annual gathering of the Club's leadership. For more information, please visit [www.scca.com/convention](http://www.scca.com/convention).





*Kevin Ruck accepting the Jim Fitzgerald Award (SCCA Image)*

## Club Racing Awards Presented at SCCA Convention

**LAS VEGAS, Nev. (Jan. 30, 2010)** – Sports Car Club of America's annual National Convention Presented by Gumout entered the home stretch Saturday, with top awards being presented at the Club Racing awards luncheon at the South Point Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

In addition to recognizing outgoing members of the Club Racing Board, the Time Trials Advisory Council and the Executive Stewards program, the following awards were presented:

Jim Fitzgerald Award (Top National Racing Rookie): Kevin Ruck, OVR

Kimberly Cup (Most Improved): Tom Ellis, Florida

Road Racing Drivers Club Mark Donohue Award: Michael Varacins, Chicago

Dave Morrell (Excellence in Stewarding): Tom Hoffman, DC Region

Martin Tanner Award (Courageous or Heroic action): Robert Anthony, Central Florida

The afternoon continues with more seminars, including a panel discussion by the Competitor Session speakers. The evening, and Convention, concludes Saturday evening with the Hall of Fame Awards Ceremony Presented by Honda.

For more information, please visit [www.scca.com/convention](http://www.scca.com/convention).



*Andy Porterfield (left) with  
SCCA President Jeff Dahnert  
after accepting the Woolf  
Barnato Award  
(Prill/SCCA Image)*

## SCCA Convention Closes With Top Awards, Hall of Fame Inductions

**LAS VEGAS, Nev. (Jan. 31, 2010)** – Sports Car Club of America concluded its 2010 National Convention Presented by Gumout at the South Point Hotel and Casino with the annual Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Awards Banquet Presented by Honda.

Five members were inducted into the SCCA Hall of Fame, including former president Nick Craw, road racing legend Briggs Cunningham, longtime leader R. David Jones, former staff member and FIA steward Burdette “Berdie” Martin and rally pioneer Wayne Zitkus.

Additionally, the top awards for 2009 were presented, including:

Woolf Barnato Award (longtime organization contributions): Andy Porterfield

Member of Excellence (Club-wide contributions for 2009): Dave Deborde

Presidents Cup (Top Club Racing Runoffs Performance): Sam Halkias

John McGill Award (Top Club Racing Contribution): Fred Cummings

Solo Cup (Top Solo Contribution): Sandi Brown

Robert Ridges Award (Top RoadRally Contribution): Ron Ferris

The Saturday evening function capped three days of seminars and celebrations for SCCA. For the first time, the event included a series of seminars specifically for drivers and crew, including sessions on car construction, testing, shock absorbers, engines and fuel system additives. Speakers included famed SCCA members Joe Huffaker Jr. and Dan Binks.

SCCA President and CEO Jeff Dahnert closed the event, declaring it a success to the 455 attendees.

For more information about SCCA, please visit [www.scca.com](http://www.scca.com).

# SafeRacer Named Sponsor of First Gear Membership, SCCA Preferred Provider

TOPEKA, Kan. (Feb. 10, 2010) – Sports Car Club of America announced today that SafeRacer has become the title sponsor of its First Gear youth membership program in addition to the previously-mentioned National Racing Series.

The multi-faceted partnership also names SafeRacer the Preferred Driver Safety Equipment Provider of SCCA, joining a cadre of quality official SCCA sponsors.

SafeRacer First Gear is SCCA's discounted membership program for individuals under the age of 25. Each SafeRacer First Gear member enjoys all the benefits of membership, but at an annual dues price of \$45—which constitutes a \$20 to \$45 savings over a full membership, depending on local Region dues.

“My first competition event was with the SCCA as a teenager in the Arkansas region,” SafeRacer CEO Charlie James said. “While that might have been over 30 years ago, we appreciate the challenges facing First Gear members and the great energy and enthusiasm that they bring to the SCCA. We are excited to be involved with this vital growing segment of the SCCA membership.”

As part of the program, SafeRacer will award a \$200 gift certificate to one First Gear member each month. Additionally, SafeRacer will provide unique marketing opportunities to its customers. “

Our First Gear program has grown by four percent in the last two years, representing the largest membership type increase,” SCCA President and CEO Jeff Dahnert said. “SafeRacer’s commitment to young racers will help us continue and foster this growth, hopefully for years to come.”

To become a SafeRacer SCCA First Gear member, go to <http://ams.scca.com/netforum/eweb/firstgear.htm>.

## SCCA

Founded in 1944, Sports Car Club of America, Inc. is a 50,000 member motorsports organization that incorporates all facets of autocross, rally and road racing at both club and professional levels. It annually sanctions over 2,000 events through its 114 regions and professional subsidiary. Landmark events and series for the Club include the SafeRacer SCCA National Racing Series; the Club Racing National Championship Runoffs® at Road America; and The Tire Rack® SCCA Solo National Championships and ProSolo Championship at Lincoln, Neb. For more information, please visit [www.scca.com](http://www.scca.com).

## SAFERACER

Located in Neosho, Mo., SafeRacer is the country’s number one source for racing safety equipment. Featuring products from the highest quality manufacturers, including HANS, Alpine Stars, Sparco, Oakley, Arai, G-Force, Bell, Simpson and FAST, SafeRacer has a great variety of helmets, suits, gloves, shoes, underwear and seats for every budget. SafeRacer’s 25,000 square-foot facility includes more than \$1million in inventory. To satisfy your safety needs, visit [www.saferacer.com](http://www.saferacer.com).

# January 2010 MoHud Board Meeting

## January 25, 2010

Attending: Jack Hanifan, Russ Burckhard, Chip VanSlyke, DJ McArdle, Ron Bass

### **Treasurer's Report**

Chip provided a summary of the 2009 estimated budget, actual 2009 budget, and projected 2010 budget.

### **Knock Off**

No report.

### **Solo**

Russ is beginning to contact the various solo sites to firm up the calendar/schedule for the upcoming year.

### **Rally Cross**

A proposal was offered at the last monthly meeting to run a rally cross in Pittsfield. A proposed budget for the event will be presented at the February monthly meeting.

### **Competition**

- Jack indicated that an SCCA/MoHud "Worker of the Year" award (jacket) will be presented at the February monthly meeting.
- GCR will be available to all competitors in three different formats: paper edition, online, or CD. Competitors will need to contact SCCA and advise them which format they would like to receive for the 2010 season. The paper edition will not be available in 2011.

### **Activities**

No report.

### **Membership**

No report.

### **New Business**

- PDX: DJ offered a number of options for holding a PDX in 2010 – Lime Rock Park or Monticello. The Board decided to pursue a one day event at Monticello utilizing ½ the track – the "North" course. The proposal will be presented to the general membership at the February meeting.
- Flag School: is scheduled for this Spring at Lime Rock Park. We need to actively promote the event to get greater membership participation.
- Holiday banquet: need to research other available sites for next year's banquet.



# February Monthly Meeting Minutes

**February 3, 2010**

## Treasurer

Chip Van Slyke reported \$1108 in expenses and \$290 income for membership dues.

## Solo

Russ Burckhard reported that he is starting to contact potential auto cross sites for the upcoming race season. He also indicated that registration has been opened for the May 28 NE Divisional in Washington DC. Entries will be limited to 250 participants.

## Road Racing

Jack Hanifan reported that the spring Tech Inspection party is tentatively scheduled for March 28 at Bob Karl's shop. Gene Tricozzi volunteered to be Race Chairman for the May 14-15 Mo-Hud LRP race. This will be a joint event with Northern NJ.

## Membership

No report from the Membership Chairman. Jack Hanifan offered that the Chapter needs to strengthen efforts to contact new members and discern their interests. Eric Smith volunteered to be the first contact for new members interested in Solo. John Bucci offered to draft a letter that will be sent to new Mo-Hud members welcoming them to the Chapter. Jack Hanifan indicated that we need to make certain that new members are on the membership list so that they are emailed the Knock Off

## Activities

Members were asked to send suggestions to Pete Smith who will coordinate.

## Rally cross

Event budget was submitted to Chip Van Slyke for the upcoming Rally cross scheduled for February 28 in Pittsfield. A sanction application has been submitted.

## New Business

The Chapter is beginning to make plans for next year's holiday banquet. Last year, Holiday Inn on Wolf Rd. was approx. \$45/person. Alternatives for next year include Shaker Ridge Country Club and Albany Elks. Shaker Ridge Country Club would be approx. \$40/person with soft drinks and \$35/person w/out soft drinks. Eric Smith volunteered to get prices for Albany Elks.

SCCA National Convention John Sheridan and Jack Hanifan attended the SCCA National Convention. A complete description will be published in the March Knock Off

Round Table is scheduled for March 12 thru 14. Jack Hanifan invited Mo-Hud members to attend.

PDX DJ McArdle presented a proposal to run a PDX at Monticello Racetrack on Sept 24.

Outstanding issues include:

- Flaggers SCCA requires two flaggers per station, one whom must be licensed.
- A safety steward will be needed.

Monticello is not an approved SCCA race course (Jack indicated that he did not think that a PDX course needs to be SCCA approved, but will confirm).

The attending membership approved a motion to schedule the PDX at Monticello.

John Sheridan reported on a number of items -

- The Chapter was encouraged to schedule a Street Survival course in the upcoming year.
- SCCA and it's subsidiary had a good year financially, with overall profits exceeding \$900,000.

Membership is slightly down to 43,500, though the January numbers appear to show a reversal in the trend. SCCA will be offering incentives to members who recruit new members.

#### 2010 Budget

Chip Van Slyke distributed the 2010 proposed budget and provided a full summary.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

## Autocross Nationals 2009: Destination Lincoln, Nebraska

My name is Ken Hurd. I've been an SCCA member since around 1980, and with MoHud for the past several years. While I've done a couple hill climbs, and a track day or two at Lime Rock, I've been autocrossing all those years. Early in my autocross days I owned an RX-7, and had the good fortune to be competing against 3 other RX-7 hot shoes, Paul Kozlak, Keith Scala, and long time MoHudder Jim Garry. We were all friends, shared tips, and pushed each other. We all discovered the National competition, got hooked, and for most of us, kept coming back year after year. All of us took National Championships...and one year, we placed we placed 1,2,3,4. I stayed with the RX-7 the longest of our crew....about 14 years worth, the RX-7 became outclassed, by the 1.8Liter Miatas, and a couple cars that were for years, undiscovered RX-7 killers, the Toyota MR2 and a unique 924. Without a prayer to win in my car, (some might say the dead horse was well beaten), I began to look for other options to compete at both local, and national level. After sharing rides in a Neon (thanks Chip!), Miata, then a Camaro, I got an offer I couldn't refuse from my former RX-7 competitor, and good friend, Jim Garry. Jim owned a formula ford...he found himself between co-drivers....(something about his codriver getting married, building a house, [is this called getting a life?...nah, anyway] That offer required zero thought! 1.6G cornering, accelerates like a new vette. Yeah! What a ride! After a bit of a learning curve for both Jim and I, (and updates to the car, (as it was learned in the school of "this car isn't winning like it should....and it isn't me",[what da ya mean just drive it?]) the car needed updating....as the class became faster [not just more competitive]) long story short, we placed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> last year in C-Mod at the nationals held right near SCCA headquarters in Topeka, Kansas on the parking lot of Heartland Park. The Nationals had been held for many years at Forbes Field, a large military facility ....but aging pavement where we were racing, and a tempting offer from Heartland Park to pave an attractive racing surface lured us to the race track. The attraction was short lived, as the pavement was less than desirable, with sand coming out of the pavement, creating a path, or "one racing line", complete with a penalty for attempting to find a different line from the masses (1200 autocrossers x 3 runs each). Other not so niceties found at Heartland Park included not getting as much pavement for race area as anticipated....and the lack of room necessitated a sizeable distance from the grid to the race course. This made watching your competitors in your class, including your co-driver, difficult. The memberships' dissatisfaction with Heartland Park was heard by SCCA National office, and the large undertaking to move to a new site was quickly accomplished. The new site promised, room, room and more room.....good pavement.....room for grid, spectators, paddock, and a town that was happy to have us, in Lincoln, Nebraska. Did I mention there was room?? As long as we could schedule the Nationals when the college football team didn't have a home game. That was worked out. Hey, these people are serious about their corn huskers.

So, just before labor day weekend, which is about a week early for Nationals...., (because of that football thing), I drove down from Vermont to Albany, and to Jim's, transferred my luggage/helmet, etc, and we headed out on the usual drive for September to autocross Nationals, on the usual

12 March 2010

route....until Cleveland, where we took a more northern track. The drive out wasn't much different than the trip to Kansas. We went by more corn and soybean fields than you could shake a stick at. There was a noteworthy wind generator farm on the way, in Nebraska. When we arrived at the Nationals site, we found.....room as advertised! It seems like the race area was a ¼ mile wide by a ½ mile long....all concrete. Impound/grid/scales/registration tents/paddock were placed logically.....not to mention a for real practice course.....on real concrete, that could be used during competition. This was really nice to have a practice area, and get like 20 plus runs each, on the new to us, concrete Nebraska surface. We went through a bit more rubber than anticipated, but it was great to get the feel of the surface. The same practice course will be used in the future, so, year to year, you can compare to other years.

We arrived on the Friday before race week. Pro Solo was running their own starting practice in the course area, and we went to the solo (autocross) practice area, and got some runs in. Over the next couple days, we had time to make adjustments to the car for the grip of the concrete. We put in some new spark plugs, and adjusted the valve clearance, and broke in the new tires. The one downside of having so much practice opportunity is that it becomes difficult to gage how fast you are compared to your competition, since the times are not recorded, and chances are, with so many practice hours available, you may not hear any of your competitions' times. After 3 days, we hadn't seen anyone faster than us....which was reassuring, yet we had only seen 3 or 4 of the 16 competitors in C-Mod.

*Ken on the practice  
course.*

*(Photo by Jim Garry)*

We drove into town on Saturday for dinner, and it was very odd to see, everyone wearing red. A quick glance at the Big screen TV's in the bars told the story....the corn huskers were playing. The town was into it.



Monday, we learn the (approximately ¾ mile each) east and west courses on foot: it was the “walk the courses till you drop day”. Competitors are not allowed practice on the race course using any wheeled device. It's part of the challenge, to learn the course (on foot), plan where you want the car, figure the path for the best times.....and then try to learn the plan well enough so you could close your eyes, and picture the course, and where the car was going to be in each corner, and where you could carry speed, where you would brake, where you would set up for corners, and where you could keep the pedal to the medal. This takes me around 14 to 18 walks on each course. Sure would be nice to get some practice runs in a race car before the big race. That's not how it works. We were scheduled to run Thursday/Friday, so there would be ample time to walk, walk and walk some more. Tuesday/Wed we spent time watching race action on the course, and “helping in the race grid with some select competitors”. The event was well run, and the courses were fun.



*East course Race car grid, looking toward West course race grid, way in the distance. Room!  
(Photo by Jim Garry)*

Race day, first run, I took an early lead....and quickly lost that. Jim ran his first run on a tire that was loosing air, and almost flat by the time he crossed the finish timing light. We changing tires and basically settled into a time about 1.5 seconds off the pace. The car felt good, we were driving well, but the times were not there. Having a bad tire was an important distraction to being off the pace. Day one left us both struggling to stay in the running for a trophy. Day Two we made a significant

handling improvements in our shocks and were starting to dial in driving the car...but it was too late. This was not the year for another 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> finish. We placed 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> with only 1 trophy to take home. Next year we'll be starting from better place. Peter Calhoun from the Midwest took his first National Championship trophy in C-Mod, after a multi-year quest. He was very pleased, and we were happy for him.



*Peter Calhoun, C-Mod 2009 Champ*

## **Working at Nationals:**

It's a huge undertaking. It starts a year or two before the event. Percentage wise this is almost entirely volunteer run, with support from a half a dozen wizards from national office. This view is more from the competitor's side. So, here's an event where 1200 people compete....wild guess 900 race cars (since there are a lot of 2 driver cars, some 3 driver cars(2 open class, 1 ladies class)), and 600 compete on tues/wed, and the other 600 on thurs/fri. (There are 2 different courses.) Each driver gets 3 runs, on each day they compete. That's 7200 runs. (Best time on each course determines who wins.) OK, so 300 on a course/day x 3 runs=900 runs. There are 5 heats (race groupings) so a bit under 180 runs/heat. So, roughly a car runs starts every 15 to 20 seconds. There needs to be enough workers near the 300 or so cones marking the course so they can replace the cone before



the next car arrives. Occasionally a multi-cone hit event will stop the course, and a couple cars will have reruns. Generally the workers keep up, and there are around 35 workers scattered over the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile course. This means that everyone who races, also spends a couple hours each race day working to enable the event to run. There are also a host of jobs from assigning paddock spots, which is a job I chose, so I'd be done with my work by race day, to impound workers, grid workers, people at the gate, and the list goes on.....but everybody works. Car owner Jim was had the job of working course, and while, each day, you normally work the same course you run, was able to switch which course he worked (with approval from course chief) with another competitor running on the opposite course. Because we ran early in the day, he was scheduled to work on the course he already ran. However, working the course you are going to run provides a close up view of the course you will be running, so, workwise, there is some flexibility. I actually worked course even though I was done working, just to get that close up perspective prior to driving the course. Bottom line: it takes all of us working together to make this event work. It's pretty amazing to watch it all working.

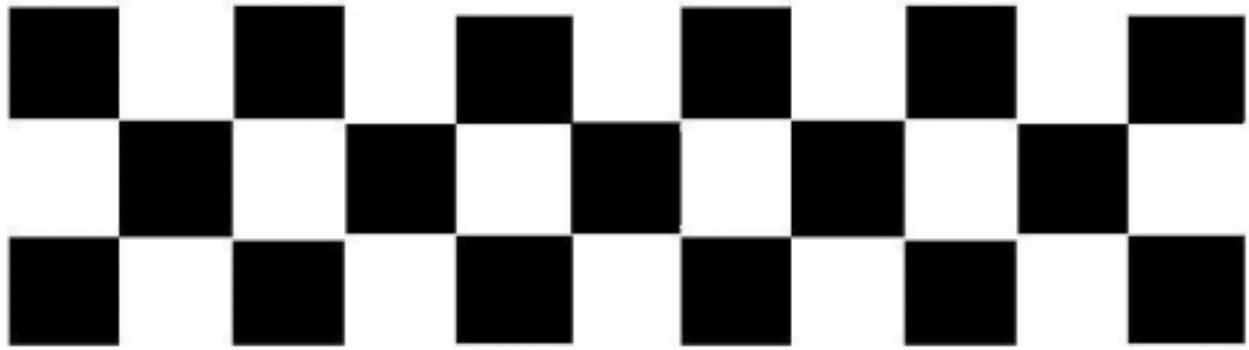
The Lincoln Airpark site is awesome. The drawbacks to the site are minor. One is the racing rubber getting picked up. We needed to clean the tires after each race day. (Hot putty knife takes the excess rubber off pretty well.) As we found out, the practice course was short. More driving time per run, and more plain old sweeping turns would be more useful to have. The number of short maneuvers and lack of longer sweeping style turns, masked our less than desirable shock settings. The plusses are many....mostly derived from the generous amount of room! The concrete was very nice, and there is a lot of it, in good shape, with good grip. The room provides little restrictions for safe, brisk, quality courses, and enough open area so they can be viewed by spectators and racers in grid.

A superb auto museum was the site for a night out , courtesy of the city of Lincoln....dinner and browsing 3 floors of some amazing race cars, and exotic autos, not to mention beer. All in all, it was a fun vacation: good racing, fun courses, and a good bunch of friends we also call competitors. It was good to see. Hope to see more MoHud competitors out there next year! We'll be back to do it again!

## Joe Stimola passes away!

Veteran open-wheel [crew chief](#) and engineer Joe Stimola died in Florida from complications following open heart surgery. Joe's wife Nancy was very much his partner and very involved with the business as was their son Jamie [James], who worked with his father for the last several years.



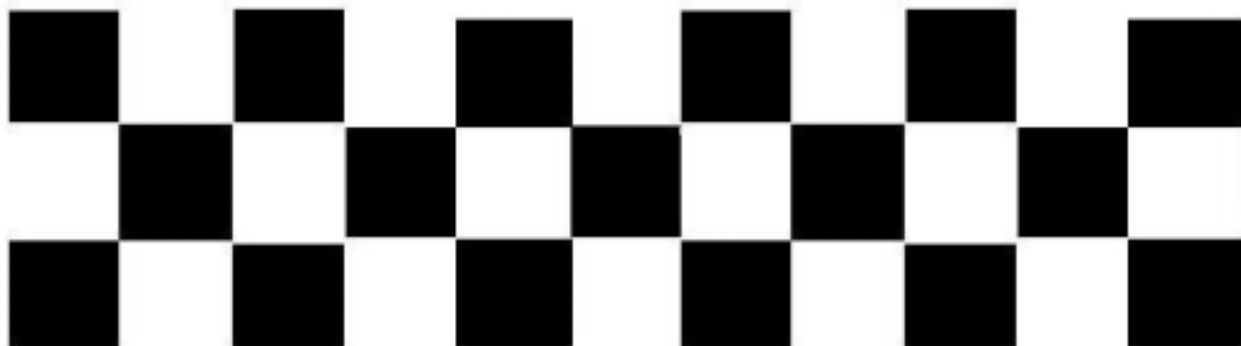


*Open Track Day at..  
Monticello Motor Club's  
4.1 mile road-course!*

*Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> 2010*

**SAVE** Money with our **LOW PRICE!**  
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*Let Your Heart Race!*



**16 March 2010**

**Mohawk Hudson New Members Year to Date 03/04/2010**  
**Report for board members and chairs.**

**Please welcome these new members to the region.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Joined</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Comm.</b>
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Nicholas Ligon	02/15/10	Schenectady	NY	(518)844-7011(H) ligonnp@yahoo.com
Jon C. Skalwold	02/24/10	Schenectady	NY	(518)243-5056(H) oliverlyn@att.net

There were 3 records printed.

**Interests Report**

**Solo**

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**There are 325 members in the region.**

**Dave Wachtel**

Membership chair/Webmaster

# PAUL'S SECOND CHANCE

By Dave Hathaway with Bob Claffie's collaboration

I am still having problems realizing that Paul Hacker is gone. Part of the problem is that over the last few years we saw each other infrequently. Adding to this was my inability to attend any memorial service, which would have brought a greater sense of closure.

Probably I am one of the few who knew Paul in his early days, when he lived and worked in Pittsfield as an apprentice draftsman with G.E. Our paths crossed when he became a member of the Berkshire Motor Sports Club. That was in the early sixties. The club was active in many areas, one of which was performance driving, known back then as Gymkhanas.

Some club members were wanna be racers. Paul was most interested in this level of activity and learned his lessons well. Those were the days when Lime Rock held a truly open practice on Tuesdays. You run what you bring, these were street cars, not race cars, all for a fee of \$25.00.

Paul's career as a champion racecar driver has been well documented. One of the best articles was by Randy Probst, in the February issue of Sportscar. He, as only a competitive driver could, pays tribute to Paul and his wonderful brother, Karl.

One point in Paul's career that has been missed is that he was the undisputed Renault LeCar champion, having won both LeCar Challenge races held at Lime Rock Park. It is my opinion that Paul's drive in the second Challenge was one of his finest. He did not have the best car in the field. (I would know as it was my car.) He proved to be the best driver, racing against a 30+ car field which included the likes of such drivers as Bobby Archer, Ken Payson and MoHud's own Craig Robertson. But I digress.

Back in the day of the motorsports club, we were a lot more "clubby." Members did it all - the age of specialization had not arrived. You went on rallies, ran in auto slaloms (I mean gymkhanas) often traveling as a group over to Albany or Springfield to run in other club's events and had picnics and parties and even an ice trial. Ice trials were a trademark of the Berkshire Motor Sports Club and Pittsfield Winter Carnival. Back then a "fast woman" was one who trophied in open competition. As a club we would venture to the races at Lime Rock helping to support the local talent.

It was at one of these events, a picnic at a summer camp on Onota Lake, that Paul got his second chance. As I remember, the camp manager, who was a B.M.S.C. member, had arranged for us to use the facilities and their waterfront. It was an ideal summer afternoon. Late in the afternoon Paul and Bob Claffie took Butch Sciarra's kids out on the lake in a canoe. All seemed to be going well until Paul, as Bob picks up the story, got up to change his seating position, lost his balance and fell into the lake. Paul was not as capable at swimming as he was at driving. This lake, like many New England lakes, has weeds lurking not far beneath the surface, just at the right depth to cause entanglement for a startled and disoriented swimmer. Paul was in trouble.

Bob, having to stay with the canoe because of the kids, called for help. It was Al Bissell, a strong swimmer, who got Paul to the surface and out of the lake. Paul was revived and taken to the hospital where he was kept for the night. It was a scary and sobering experience, but with a happy ending. Paul got a second chance at life and made the most of it!