



THE KNOCK OFF

December 2025 Issue

The Publication of the Mohawk-Hudson Region SCCA

Max puts Exclamation Point on Championship

MoHud's own Max LuxRamos "poaches" a NERRC championship and does it in style. See recap on page 11.



Max at the NERRC Championship at Thompson Speedway. Photo Courtesy of James Ray.

Congratulations Max!

Please note a change to the region's usual business for the annual meeting and banquet. They will be split into two meetings with the annual meeting, covering compulsory elements of regional business, held in the normal time slot of the monthly meeting on **December 3rd** while the awards banquet will be held **January 17th**. Registration is open!

This Month:

Upcoming Events	2
Regional BOD Nominees	3
The Collector's Shelf	5
The DIY'er	6
2025 Annual Gift Guide	8
Thompson Race Report	11
Treasurer's Report	13
Membership Report	14



www.mohud-scca.org



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MoHudSCCA/>

What's Happening

- Nov 29, 2025** **Racing Memories, Saratoga Automobile Museum, Avenue of the Pines, Saratoga Springs, NY.** www.saratogaautomuseum.org
- December 3, 2025** **Annual Meeting*, 6pm, Metro 7 Diner, 1090 Troy Schenectady Road (Route 7) Latham NY** <https://metro7diner.com/>
- January 3, 2025** **AMEC Racers Reunion, Cowboy Up Event Center, 230 Stevers Mills Road Broadalbin, NY.** <https://icerace.com/>
- January 17, 2026** **Annual Awards Banquet*, 5-9pm, The Factory Eatery and Spirits, Ballston Spa NY.** <https://www.motorsportreg.com/events/mohud-2026-annual-meeting-banquet-factory-eatery-spirits-scca-mohawk-hudson-007695>
- January 15-23, 2026** **SCCA National Convention (Virtual)**
<https://whova.com/portal/registration/sElnZ@Pns-IsGuOtJCGg/>

Check out the full regional calendar at:

https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=4l0pcskqj0sbmtg8scke5et658%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America%2FNew_York

* For 2025-2026, the annual meeting (business) will be separated from the awards banquet. This is in keeping with the bylaws and installs our new officers by year's end.

Region Business

At the November meeting the nomination committee presented its list of offers for action at the December Meeting.

It was our pleasure to give the following named to represent the Region for the calendar year 2026

Office

Regional Executive

Assistant Regional Executive

Secretary

Treasurer

Director at Large (1)

Director at Large (2)

Nominee

Sal Baisley

Vincent Gentile

Matt Fraley

Patricia Clair

Chip Van Slyke

Russ Burckhard



As we reflect on next year's leadership, we will also remember the milestones we've achieved together. The committee would like to take a moment to express our profound gratitude to Eric Smith, who has held an executive position with unwavering dedication since 2014. Over the past decade, Eric has been a cornerstone of our organization's growth, bringing leadership, innovative strategies, and a tireless commitment to excellence that have propelled us through challenges and triumphs alike. Eric, your contributions have left an indelible mark on our journey, and we are immensely thankful for your service. Here's to the legacy you've built—we wish you all the best in your future endeavors! I hope you enjoy the bleachers as much we do!!



The committee would like to thank the club for the opportunity to have served.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Adalian

DJ McArdle

Oscar VanSlyke

The Collector's Shelf...

Made in the USA – 1940s and '50s Diecasts



Tootsietoy and **Midgetoy**. A single picture tells the story.

If you were born around 1940, these were the diecast race cars you'd see in a *5 and Dime* such as Woolworth's when your allowance got up to 25¢ a week, sometime around the start of the Korean War.

Tootsietoys had been around since the 1920s, and were the dominant diecast producers after WW II. Midgetoy was started up in 1946 by Alvin and Earl Herdklotz as a way to convert their wartime machine shop to civilian use. With Tootsietoys based in Chicago, and Midgetoys in Rockford, northern Illinois was the center of the diecast universe. While Midgetoys turned out 20,000 pieces a day in the '50s, Tootsietoy probably turned that many out before the morning break.

Neither company made many race cars or sports cars, but those still around can usually be found online or at toy fairs for \$20-\$25. The real gem comes from Tootsietoys' earliest race car, first released in 1923.



< **One of these 1923 models in decent condition** will run you about \$75 online, keeping in mind that repaired or repainted examples have little investment value, but would look neat on your desk or bookshelf.

If this looks vaguely familiar, it's because it was the inspiration for the first Monopoly car token in the late 1930s made by, you guessed it: Tootsietoy...

~ Paul M.

The DIYer

(or things I should have learned in school but forgot)

- By Chip VanSlyke

Alert readers may remember an article from 2022 where I discussed at length my trials at getting the Crossle to work on the spec FF radial tire. In that article I discussed an upgrade from non-gas charged Koni shock to gas-charged Penske shock and the significant improvement that had on lap times. That article mentioned the tendency of non-gas charged shock to “cavitate,” greatly reducing their ability to dampen which ultimately reduces grip.

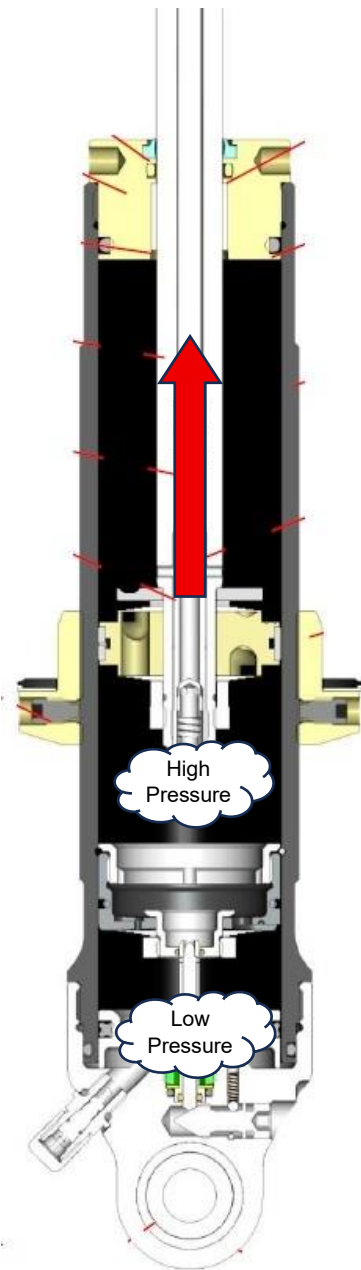
In this article I’m going to dive a little deeper into that concept and discuss why gas-charging is used. Cavitation is the formation of gas bubbles in a liquid, usually the result of low pressure. It is often used in reference to pumps. If you remember the perfect gas laws from school, you may remember that as pressure drops, the boiling temperature of a liquid also drops. This is why water boils at a lower temperature at high altitudes and recipes will often specify longer cooking times at high elevations.

In order to dampen, shock absorbers have pistons with small bleed holes, usually adjustable on race shocks, to create frictional drag, speed dependent force, and therefore dampening on the piston rod. This restriction creates high pressure on one side of the piston and low pressure on the other side. Here’s where the trouble starts. If this pressure gets low enough i.e. below the vapor pressure of the oil, the oil will flash-boil (i.e. cavitate). At that point the un-compressible fluid in the shock is mixed with compressible gas which effectively reduces the dampening ability of the shock.

While oil has a much lower vapor pressure than fluids like water or gasoline, it is not zero. Meanwhile, aggressively valved shocks can get low pressures near zero.

Further making the shock’s life difficult is the generation of heat, an unavoidable result of a friction generating device. If we remember our perfect gas laws, pressure increases with temperature. This gives the oil even less tolerance for low pressures on the low-pressure side of the piston. (and one reason street shocks don’t work for very long on the track)

Making matters even worse is the presence of any entrained air and water vapor which generally comes with atmospheric air. If the shock is not sealed from the atmosphere, entrained water, with a much higher vapor pressure than oil (and thus lower boiling point), can easily flash to a gas, detracting from performance and possibly even damaging the shock. And with time an unsealed shock will accumulate more air/water.



By pressurizing with gas, usually nitrogen, the pressure on both sides of the piston is increased. Imagine an example where the un-pressurized shock has a high pressure of 29 psia and the low side was 1 psia. (note use of psi"a" for absolute assuming atmospheric pressure is ~15psi). If the shock can be charged to 100 psi, both pressures increase to 129 and 101 psia. This keeps the pressure on the low side safely above the vapor pressure of the shock and no cavitation occurs.

What this means for us at the track is for one: non-pressurized shocks don't work very well with aggressive valving and heat. Two conditions pretty common in race applications. In addition, if you have gas shocks it's important to make sure they are charged. On the Crossle, I check the pressure before most races unless not much time has passed (like <4 weeks.) To Penske's credit, my shocks have not shown any signs of gas leakage in 5 years of service.

This video shows a good example of cavitation:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/SBdd-umHGMk>



The Annual Gift Guide – 2025



Your Picture Here

Have a picture you'd like to share?

Your car? You and a buddy having fun with cars?



Whether you use Photos (Mac OS) or Microsoft Photos (MS Windows OS) it's easy to go online to services such as Mimeo, Vistaprint or Shutterfly and order one or more products from a galaxy of formats. Greeting cards, wall art, mugs, t-shirts... the list goes on and on.

Of course you'll want to use a photo that you or a friend have taken. You don't want the shame afterward of a snide remark on social media about somebody else's artwork, or worse – a nasty "desist" letter from some white-shoe law firm who is using an AI bot to search the databases of outfits such as Vistaprint or Spotify (with or without permission).

Easy for most people, but what about racers who look best in the track action shots taken by professional photographers? Sure, it's done all the time, but for MoHud racers there is a more personalized source.

Our friend NER friend James Ray has been taking photos at Lime Rock, Palmer, Thompson, and New Hampshire for years. Join Flickr; it's free. Once online. Search "James Ray" in "People." You'll see "FlickrUser54." Click and find an album for a specific race. Bring up the image you are interested in; download as a PDF. Depending on having a PDF editor or converter; edit the shot and save – best as a JPEG or TIFF. Add a small tag crediting James.

James says it's OK to use the photo free, for strictly personal use. For any commercial use, he'll give you a deal.

* FlickrUser54

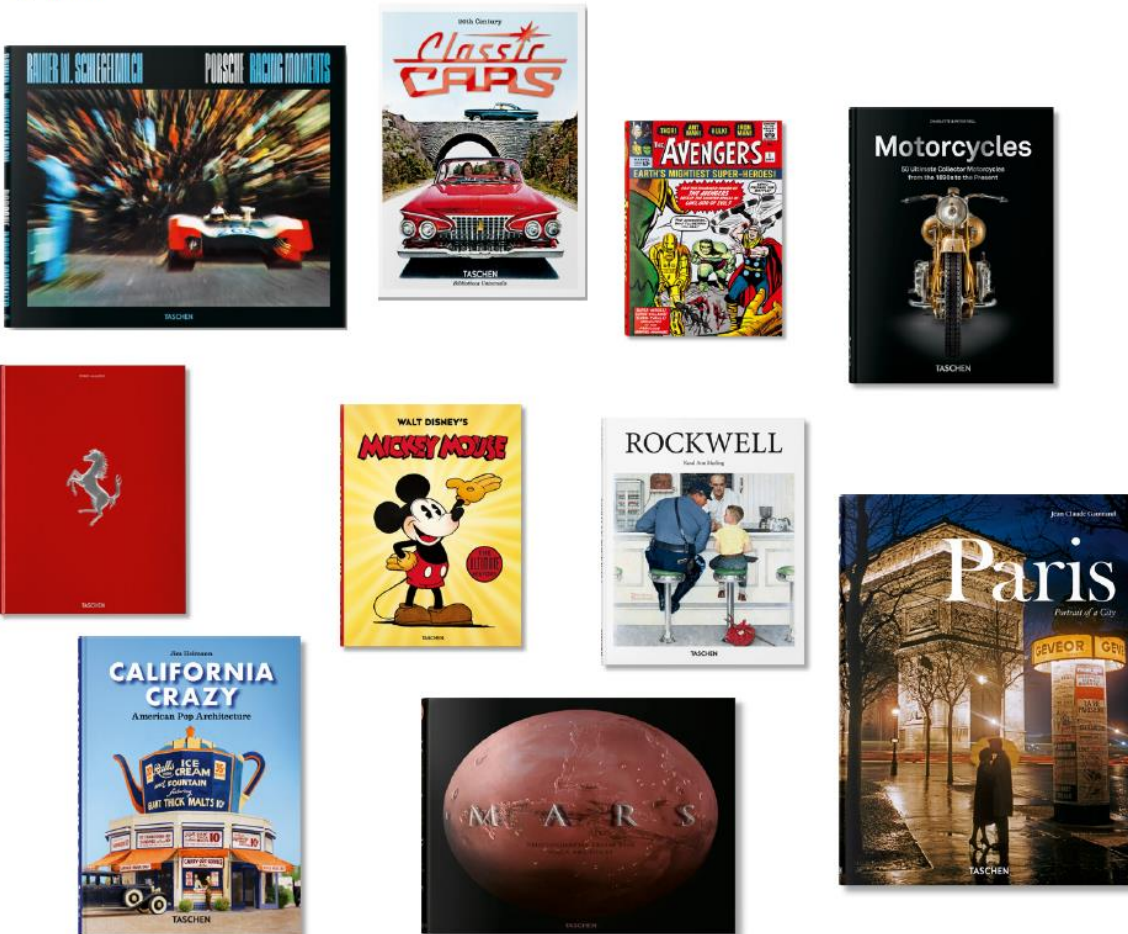
Gift Guide – II

Taschen Books

The best source of books to give as gifts is Taschen Publishing, based in Cologne, Germany. High quality printing, excellent graphics.

Topics include art history, artist retrospectives, photography, cars, comics, and some strictly adult titles that would not be printed by American publishers. The prices range from modest to stratospheric. Some people scour rare-book sites such as ABE for lightly handled, used, copies of the pricier titles.

Here are some samples, some \$\$\$\$, some only \$\$, but you really have to look through the many pages of their website in order to get a feel for what they offer, and what you'd like to give to others or to yourself.



Gift Guide – III

Back to the Future- Polaroid Cameras



So cool when the the Polaroid SX 70s came out in the 1970s. Take a picture and there it was; no waiting for prints or slides to come in at the drugstore a week later...

And the most fun was to take somebody's picture when you met them while traveling, or maybe at a party. Take the shot and hand it to them.

There's now a resurrected "Generation 3." About \$135, with film pack, at Best Buy, Target, or online... Get it. Give it. Keep it for your own fun!

Your Knees Need'em - Work Pads

We mention Traxions every year. Comfy and useful working on a car, doing exercise indoors, or weeding in the garden. 45" x 25" unfolded. \$49 at Amazon or a few bucks less at NAPA. Get several; you'll thank me after a few instances of saving your knees or your back.

If you're looking for a thicker pad, Husky at Home Depot is the best. 14 1/2" by 22" by 1 1/2" is the most generous size around. About \$18.



~ PaulM.

Tales from the Track

By Theresa LuxRamos

NER held the NERRC Championship Weekend at Thompson Speedway Motorsport Park on October 17th and 18th. The nights were cold with the days and tires slowly warming up with the bright sun. First group on track Friday at 9am had two cars veer off track coming out of grid as they warmed up tires. Car covers or trailers were essential items given the cold nights, waking up to see frost on everything Saturday morning. Over 200 cars were registered each day, the paddock was tight, and several were parked inside the top of the oval.

Sal Baisley ran the 1985 Mazda Rx-7 in Group 2, earning 2nd in Sprint 1 for IT7. During his pre-race prep on Saturday, Sal noticed his engine was coming loose. Calling upon his Boy Scout skills, Sal used a strap to secure the engine which held for the rest of the weekend. Sal earned 2nd in the Feature race.

Jim Culter double-dipped for the weekend in T4 and C-Spec with his Gulf inspired 2012 Mazda. When not on the track, Jim was working on his car. The work paid off with Jim setting a new C-Spec record in Sprint 2 with a time of 1:29.559. Jim placed first for all races in T4 and C-Spec.

Austen Levesque ran in T3 with his 2017 Toyota GT86. Sprint 1 was a close race with Austen and the two leader T3 cars right on top of each other until the axel broke on Austen's Car. Austen was able to hold onto 3rd place. Not one to pack up and go home, repairs were made and Austen was back on track Saturday for Sprint 2 where he came in 2nd. In the Feature race Austen had a differential issue in the rear and still finished on the podium in 3rd.

Our neighbor to the East from Vermont, W. Scott Stickles ran in historic racing group with his 1963 Jaguar XKE (HRG5). Some Friday issues necessitated some overnight work and then he was back on track Saturday improving his podium finish from 3rd in Sprint 1 to 2nd in Sprint 2. During the Feature race, he once again took home the medal for 2nd place. Also in the historic racing group was Steve Grabski in his 1968 Volvo 122 (HRG3). Steve continually improved his finishing position each race with a 6th place finish in Sprint 1, 5th place in Sprint 2 and just shy of the podium with a finish in 4th place for the Feature race.

Ron Bass was out in FVR with his 1998 Volkswagen Mysterion. FVR was the majority race class with 15 cars running with 9 FVs. Saturday was the best day for Ron finishing Sprint 2 and the Feature race seven positions better than Friday with 8th place finishes.

Max LuxRamos went into the weekend with the mindset and need to defend his position at the top of the NERRC points standings for B-Spec with his 2010 Mini Cooper. The top four in the field were only separated by 59 points. With the last race counting double, the title 'Champion' was within reach for the others and Max. He took second in qualifying landing in the front row of the split start for Sprint 1 where he finished in first place, his second but not last win of the season. Sprint 2 on Saturday lived up to its name as when the race started, the green and then immediately the yellow flag was waved as there was a pile up before turn 1 from the front start group. B-Spec had only moments of green as they came down the hill before the yellow was flying. Cars were black flagged while the track was cleared before starting again in single file. When the race finished after 10 minutes plus one lap, Max once again earned first place. After Sprint 2, Max had solidified his championship win. Without the need to hit the track for the Feature race Max was the 2025 NERRC B-Spec Champion; he did not stop there. By lap 4 in the Feature race, Max had pulled away from the pack which only expanded as the race remained green to checkered. In lap 12 as Max was exiting turn 2, the leaders for the rest of the B-Spec group were just entering turn 1. Lap 13 saw the 2024 NERRC Champion make a pass to position himself into second place but it was too late and too little in speed to catch up with Max who once again took first place. Max finishes his second road racing season with four 1st place wins, podium positions for the six NERRC Feature races he participated in, and the title of "2025 B-Spec Champion".

Volunteering was Vince Gentile in Tech and Theresa Lux on Saturday in timing and scoring. Sal also changed hats from driver to awards presenter after completion of his Feature race on Saturday.

Thanks to all the drivers and volunteers that proudly represented MoHud in the 2025 NERRC road racing series!

Treasurer's Report – by Pat Clair

Mohawk-Hudson SCCA Treasurer's Report – December 2025 Knock Off

On **October 31, 2025**, the accounts totaled **\$30,225.71** –

- Checking/Money Market \$14,987.17
- 6 Month CD #1 (Matures 11/04/2025) \$10,207.36
- 6 Month CD #2 (Matures 03/08/2026) \$ 5,030.18
- Savings \$ 1.00

November banking activities:

- GTA Rally "Falling Leaves" – Final Income/Expenses.
- 6 Month CD #1 Matured 11/04/2025 –
Rolled \$5000 to 6 Month CD #1 (3.75% APY) – Matures 05/06/2026.
Transfer remaining to Money Market; Open 6 Month CD #3 (\$5000)
in Jan 2026 (CD Ladder – final step).
- SCCA Membership Dues (October 2025) income.

As of **November 15, 2025**, the accounts totaled **\$30,682.90** –

- Checking/Money Market \$20,651.72
- 6 Month CD #1 (Matures 05/06/2026) \$ 5,000.00
- 6 Month CD #2 (Matures 03/08/2026) \$ 5,030.18
- Savings \$ 1.00

Upcoming Financial Transactions:

- SCCA Membership Dues (November 2025) income

***"Racers are lucky enough to have 2 families –
One they are born into and the other they gain at the track."***

Membership Report -By Jim Garry

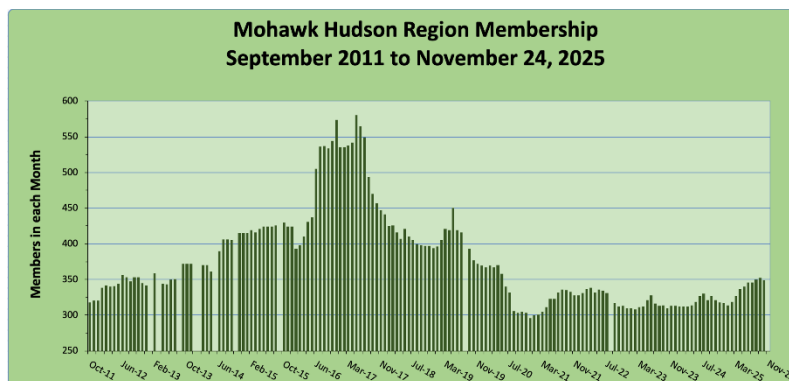
Mohawk Hudson Region membership slipped slightly from 352 members on October 22nd to 349 members on November 23rd. This is our first drop in membership in ten months.

New Members

No new members in November.

Nine new members in October:

Nidia	Castro	Charlton
Nico	Pazminio	Charlton
Eric	Steepe	Ballston Lake
Caitlin	Strait	Charlton
Stefan	Strait	Charlton
Richard	Durocher	Averill Park
Clara	Snyder	Halfmoon
Britton	Floud	Ballston Lake
Jim	O'Leary	Troy



**Regional Executive**

Sal Baisley

MoHud.RE@gmail.com

Secretary

Vincent Gentile

mohud.secretary@gmail.com

Director

Russ Burckhard

russtduck@gmail.com

Assistant Regional Executive

Eric Smith

mohud.asstre@gmail.com

Treasurer

Patricia Clair

MoHud.Treasurer@gmail.com

Director

Chip VanSlyke

chipv87@gmail.com

Autocross (Solo) Advisory Committee

Russ Burckhard

russtduck@gmail.com

Tire Rack Street Survival Program

Matt Fraley

Matt.Fraley@gmail.com

Track Events

Sal Baisley

sa26bais@gmail.com

Road Rallye Program

Ken Relation

Kenneth.Relation@dot.ny.gov

The Knock Off (newsletter)

Chip VanSlyke (interim editor)

chipv87@gmail.com

Race Flagging & Communications

Rich Alexander

dweebdad@msn.com

Road Racing Co-Chair

Paul Malecki

PaulMaleckiLaw@icloud.com

Road Racing Co-Chair and Scrutineer

Rich Welty

rwelty@averillpark.net

Membership

Jim Garry

mhr.membership@gmail.com

Social Activities & Events

Tracey Burckhard

TraceyBurckhard@gmail.com

Merchandise

Chip VanSlyke