



THE KNOCK OFF

May 2026 Issue

The Publication of the Mohawk-Hudson Region SCCA



This covered bridge was one of many scenic checkpoints selected by our Rally Master, Ken Relation
Story on page 5

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Rich Welty and 2025 MoHud Road Racing Champion Max Lux Ramos consider his car at Annual Tech Party at North Country Subaru



It's that time of year again. The pavement at the TRSS may have been watered down but the content was far from it. Story on page 10



www.mohud-scca.org



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

From the Editor

You may notice that the Road Racing committee has added the Fun One at Watkins Glen to our regional championship. This was rationalized based on the popularity of that event among MoHudders. It was borne out of me noticing a lot of MoHudders there in 2025 and then running the numbers to discover it equals the popularity of the June Lime Rock race!



But maybe just as important to me is to be able to include a world-class road course to our schedule (no offense to Lime Rock, Thompson, and Palmer). To me it ranks as a top five track in the US among iconic names such as Road America, Road Atlanta, Laguna Seca, and Mid-Ohio. Feel free to make your own list. Not to mention the history of the town and track as hosts to the USGP in days of old. And don't



forget the quaint town of Watkins Glen itself is a pleasure to walk around. On that note don't miss Paul Maleki's "A Walk Through the Village."

I feel privileged to be within a ½ day's driving distance. New England may have four tracks, but if you live in the Boston area Watkins is a 7-hour tow. By my standards that puts it at the next level of attainability like Mid-Ohio or Summit Point is to us in the 518. Yes, for sure we are privileged.

Speaking of content, this month is brimming with it. We had lots of activities in April and lots of members reporting. Thanks to Ken, Michelle, Paul, Pat, Jim and EJ (happy 25th) for filling up the issue this month.

What's Happening

- May 6, 2026** Monthly membership meeting, Metro 7 diner, Route 7, Latham, NY
<https://metro7diner.com>
- May 9, 2026** Spring Auto Show, Saratoga Auto Museum. 9am
<https://www.saratogaautomuseum.org/events/2026/5/9/spring-auto-show-xa9hl>
- July 12, 2026** MoHud Autocross Event 1, IBM Kingston Lot
<https://msreg.com/MoHud-Solo-2026-Event1>
- July 26, 2026** MoHud Autocross Event 2, IBM Kingston Lot
<https://msreg.com/MoHud-Solo-2026-Event2>
- Aug 9, 2026** MoHud Autocross Event 3, IBM Kingston Lot
<https://msreg.com/MoHud-Solo-2026-Event3>
- Aug 30, 2026** MoHud Autocross Event 4, IBM Kingston Lot
<https://msreg.com/MoHud-Solo-2026-Event4>
- Sept 1-5, 2026** Solo National Championship – Lincoln Airpark, NE.
<https://solonats.motorsportreg.com/events/2026-tire-rack-scca-solo-nationals-lincoln-airpark-national-696128>
- Sept 29-Oct 5, 2026** The Runoffs National Championship – Road America, Elkhart Lake, WI
<https://www.scca.com/runoffs>
- October 22-25, 2026** Time Attack National Championship, Eagles Canyon Raceway, Decatur TX. <https://www.motorsportreg.com/events/scca-national-time-trials-eagles-canyon-raceway-trial-637587>

Check out the full regional calendar at:

https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=4I0pcskgj0sbmtg8scke5et658%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America%2FNew_York

SARATOGA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM

Spring Auto Show

Saturday, May 9, 2026
9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Saratoga Automobile Museum
110 Avenue of the Pines, Saratoga Springs, NY, 12866



Always lots of great cars and conversation. Free for spectators. If interested in participating with the Mo-Hud contingent, contact Chip at chip87@gmail.com

Tales from the Track

The Mohud Road Racing committee presents the 2026 regional road-racing championship including races at such great tracks as Lime Rock, Thompson, Palmer, and Watkins Glen*.

Registration is not required. Anyone who competes with Mohawk-Hudson as their region of record displayed in the race results is automatically counted (for dual memberships, please contact the points keeper). Our goal is to emphasize participation so every race counts*. In addition to a traditional finish position points scale we will add a "point for every car you beat" which makes every position count. The series will include some of the closest SCCA races to the Mohawk-Hudson Region and will include divisionals, non-divisional regionals, and even one majors.

The points structure will be as follows:

Finish Position in Class	Points
1	20
2	19
3	18
4	17
5	16
6	15
7	14
8	13
9	12
10	11
11+	10
Plus 1 point for every car in class you finish in front of	

The following races will be scored:

June 12-13	Lime Rock Paddock Crawl (regional)
July 3-4	Thompson Last Chance Majors
August 14-15	Thompson Midnight Madness (regional)
Sept 12-13	Palmer Pig Roast (regional)
Sept 19-20	The Fun One at Watkins Glen*
October 17-18	Thompson Championship (divisional)

The fine print: Standings will be overall versus individual classes. Best 5 of 6 events will be scored. Only the sanctioned races for the weekend* will be scored (IOW one race per sanction which is usually the last race of the weekend). Qualifying races do not count. Incomplete or cancelled races will be scored based on the grid for that race. Cancelled races with no grid will not count for the Championship. DNFs and DNSs will count for minimum points if you qualified. (DNSs that did not qualify will not count because they be cannot be distinguished in the results from no-shows). Drivers that switch classes will have points added together (if the points keeper notices, if he doesn't, then please notify him). Dual memberships that do not show Mo-Hud as the scored region are eligible if the points keeper is informed. Multiple entries at the same event will count the highest finish of the entries.

We will be presenting awards at the Mo-Hud Annual Meeting in January of 2027. Standings will be posted in the Knockoff at the end of the season. I will try to post at least one mid-season update.

- Chip VanSlyke, Points keeper

* New for 2026: Due to its popularity, the Fun One at Watkins Glen has been added to the championship schedule. Due to its proximity to Palmer on the schedule, the season will be scored as best 5 out of 6 races. In addition, due to the Fun One being run on two different course configurations, only the best race of the two days will be scored.

Road Rally

By Ken Relation, Rallymaster, Road Rally Chairperson
and Michelle Relation Road Rally Safety Steward

On Sunday, April 12th, we gathered for the Mohawk-Hudson Region's "Valley Rally". We had 13 adventurous teams compete and enjoy a fun-filled and scenic Spring drive.

The road rally was a Game, Tour, Adventure (GTA) rally requiring driver / navigator teams to find checkpoints and travel any route they choose to get there. The teams began their journey from the Schoharie/Central Bridge I-88 Exit 23 Park & Ride Lot at 10:01am in search of eight checkpoints and numerous bonus items across mostly Schoharie County & a little of Albany County.



Upon check-in, each team was assigned a team number, starting order, and start time. All teams received a safety brief and instructions at the driver / navigator meeting.

Once directed, a team was handed their rally road books and given the "all clear" to depart. The road books were filled with details to travel to a specified location (checkpoint) and document their arrival with a photo. ...Then, on to another checkpoint, and so on.

During the team's travels through Schoharie, Cobleskill, Summit, Blenheim, Breakabeen, Middleburgh, and West Berne (just to name a few), teams could earn extra points for finding many various bonus items. Teams kept an eye out for several bonus items, such as artillery cannons, clocks, yaks, lighthouses over 3 feet tall, bulldozers, cows with an entirely white head, and milk jugs.



Finish: After everyone's points were tallied, the following teams were awarded trophies (32 ounces of fresh New York maple syrup & their choice of plants) at the finish point, The Babbling Brook Watering Hole & Eatery in West Berne. Our Rally Master (Ken Relation) and Road Rally Safety Steward (Michelle Relation) collected scoresheets from the teams. Almost immediately, they began overhearing great stories of the teams in their quests for the elusive Yaks. Scores were tallied and four teams rose to the top.



1st Place, Pat Clair and Eric Smith



2nd Place: Tina and Matt Crowley



3rd Place: Paul Benjamin and Ryan Eamer



4th Place, Russ and Lindsey Burckhard

Congratulations to these top finishers and we hope you'll consider joining us at the next Fall road rally on October 25th, 2026 and have [#funwithcars](https://www.instagram.com/funwithcars).

GTA Spring Rally – “The Valley Rally”

By Pat Clair

The GTA Spring Rally, held April 12, had an impressive thirteen cars entered.

This year’s rally led us through the Schoharie Valley to find eight checkpoints of interest, and those all-important bonus points!

Covered bridges, trains, go-cart track, amusement park, a scenic view of the valley, a church and hubcaps ended with a delicious lunch at the Babbling Brook Watering Hole & Eatery.

The bonus items included cannons, yaks, lighthouses, bulldozers, milk jugs and Herefords (cows with an entirely white head).



Conversations in the cars may have included:

“Stop. I saw a milk jug!”

“Turn around! There’s a bulldozer behind that building.”

“Take a left. There must be cannons at the museum.”

“What’s the answer to the question?”

“Oooh. Nice view!”

“I need a bathroom.”

This event is always an enjoyable learning experience and leads to many topics of conversation at lunch. And a great way to see the beautiful countryside not too far from home.

As usual, Michelle and Ken Relation put forth *a lot* of time and effort for **us** to have a great day. Kudos to the four top prize winners!

Thanks Michelle and Ken!

Join us at the Fall GTA Rally.

A Walk through the Village... ...Racing Murals in Watkins Glen

The Village of Watkins Glen, some 200 miles from Albany, is known to many of us as the fabled home of American road racing, drawing people not for the spiritual experience of visiting, say, Santiago de Compostela, but for the visceral excitement of Encierro – the running of the bulls through the streets of Pamplona.

The legends of racing in “Watkins” (as it is known to those in the area) are on public display in the Village as a series of murals by Robert Gillespie and Chris Dalton, all viewable by less than a quarter-mile’s stroll along Franklin Street.

Starting at the Harbor Hotel at the North end of Franklin Street, cross 1st Street. At 2nd Street you can't miss Gillespie's “Grand Prix 1954” showing the battle between eventual winner Phil Walters in the Cunningham and Bill Spear in his Ferrari.

Halfway down the next block is a vacant lot with Gillespie's interpretation of the initial 1948 Grand Prix as Bill Milliken was about to roll his Bugatti on what was to become “Milliken's Corner.”



We've talked lately about Jon Waterhouse's father Ed, and Ed's connections with Milliken.

Any MoHud member should feel that they are connected to the incident, and this mural, by the “six degrees of separation” theory



>>>

A Walk through the Village... II

Turn around from viewing Milliken's Bugatti and you'll see a tribute to Budweiser-NASCAR.

Artist appears to be Chris Dalton, but sources are somewhat confusing. The style is clearly not Gillespie's

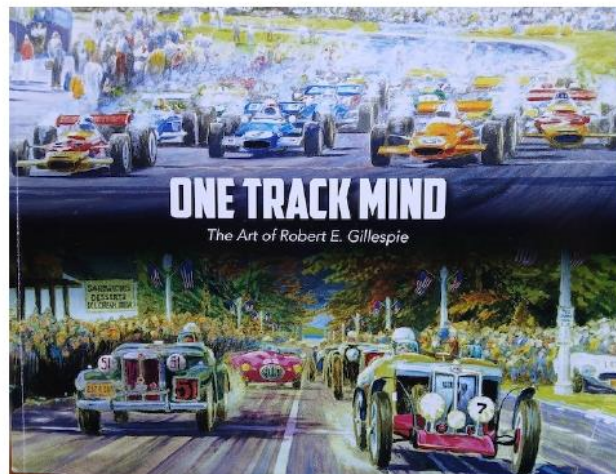


Further down the block, at 3rd Street, the Watkins Glen Chamber of Commerce has showcased Gillespie's most recent mural, an large indoor painting of "The Queen Catherine's Cup 1952" showing Denver Cornett at the start, temporarily leading Bill Spear's winning red OSCA.



This mural seems to have moved around a bit, so it's best to check at the Chamber to find the current location.

Gillespie has devoted most his artistic output to racing at Watkins, but has done a number of paintings depicting significant races elsewhere in the US and Europe . He's published a comprehensive collection in "One Track Mind" (www.glenspeed.art ; \$35 plus shipping). His many paintings are also available as prints and in custom custom formats. Something to think about if you are already thinking of holiday giving, or something special for someone special



~ Paul M.

Tire Rack Street Survival Report

By Pat Clair

Once again, many people put forth much time and effort to host a successful TRSS event. Even though Sunday (April 19) was cold and wet, the twenty-two students learned quite a bit about their personal vehicles. Reacting to quick stops, wet pavement, and sudden swerves, along with classroom time, gave the students valuable experience to use in their day-to-day driving.

The biggest “bang” for the buck? The airbag deployment! It’s amazing to see what condition the water bottle (set on top of the airbag) is in when it returns from its short explosive flight.

MoHud is very appreciative of being able to use the Saratoga Auto Museum for its classroom; a spot for breakfast and lunch; and clean bathrooms!

Brian Bailey is impressive in the classroom.

Dunkin’ gives a hefty discount on coffee and donuts. Thanks Miguel Teixeira!

Lunch was purchased from a sponsored donor.

Plus, remaining funds from Diane Malecki’s generous donation at the Fall TRSS, were used to reduce expenses.

Curtis Lumber always sends a tractor trailer and driver. Parents and students climb aboard to get a firsthand view of what the driver sees, and doesn’t see, from their seat.

The SPAC parking lot, a short walk from the museum, is where the main event happens.

We can’t forget the volunteers! Those who set up/took down the course’s cones or directed cars to the correct spot. The instructors are eager to show the students basic car maintenance and how their vehicle reacts under certain conditions. Volunteers came from various car clubs, both in and out of New York state. *Each* person played an important role.

As usual, we heard from parents who highly praised this program. Many parents have had multiple teens attend over the years.

The students receive goodie bags containing water, snacks, a tire gauge and handouts. This year, a very special gift addition – a personalized key chain! Matt Fraley (TRSS Coordinator) designed, purchased the blank key chains and processed each item. The students were very impressed when seeing their own name on each one!

The Fall TRSS is scheduled for Sunday, October 18, 2026.

We need you!

Student parting gift (name not shown)
Great work, Matt!



The group photo in front of the Curtis Lumber tractor trailer.



Airbag deployment with water bottle remains.



Tire Rack Street Survival

From An Instructor's Perspective, By Jim Garry

March 9 - Signed up online as an instructor for the Tire Rack Teen Street Survival School. Mohawk-Hudson Region has been hosting at least two of these schools each year since the early 2010s (except for the pandemic) and I think I've been involved since the start. My son graduated from this school in 2013. It's a tremendous experience for young drivers.

April 18, 8:03 PM - Even though I've read the In-Car Coach Guidelines (and earlier versions) about a dozen times over the past decade and a half, I go online to check it out again.

April 19:

6 AM - The alarm goes off. I peek out the window next to the bed. It's 37°, dark, and raining. Why am I doing this? Oh yeah, it's gratifying. I fall out of bed closing the curtain. OK, I'm up.

7:45 AM - Arrived at Saratoga Auto Museum (SAM). Despite the rain it was a nice 45 minute drive, as expected at this hour on a Sunday. I had a good breakfast at home but grab a donut for old time's sake and get to say good morning to Megan Hennessey, SAM's Executive Director. Many MoHudders know this place extremely well because of all the Street Survival schools, MoHud banquets, lectures, and plain old visiting. I also see our event lead Matt Fraley and our Assistant RE Vince Gentile, both already hard at work.



8 AM - The Instructor's meeting is about to start in the usual place ... the gift shop. We listen to Chief Instructor (and Regional Exec) Sal Baisley run through the day's agenda for Instructors. Everyone is dressed really warmly and you can't see the nice yellow Street Survival instructor shirts we have buried under our sweaters, coats, and rain gear.

8:20 AM- After conducting a search, my student is nowhere to be found so off I go to the SPAC parking lot to start the course walk-through with Sal leading the instructors and other volunteers. It's barely raining at this point but it's cold. Maybe 39°. All the students are with classroom instructor Brian Bailey who has been doing this since the beginning of MoHud's involvement in the program.

9:30ish AM - I learn that my student and her dad were found near the loading dock of SAM (not the designated meeting spot). But they're here now. The car is a very well kept 2010 BMW 328i with only 128,000 miles, not the usual Forrester or small SUV I often end up in. We line up for the braking exercise with the other 19 students. Two lines of ten will accelerate as fast as they can toward a football field-like string of markers ... 30, 20, 10 and try to brake as hard as they can and as close as they can get to the

"G" marker (goal line). The idea is to get them to learn the feel and sound of their car's ABS system so that they can maximize braking in an emergency.

9:35 AM - We chat as we slowly inch up in the queue. Most of the time these teens are sleepy looking and a little pissed off to have to be here so early on a Sunday morning, losing precious sleep that their teen clocks demand. But always within a few minutes of starting this first exercise they are ramped up and really excited. My student is different. Her family went to Ireland last year and she was signed up for something called "Rally Ireland" where she was put into a rally car and allowed to cruise around a private dirt course, with an instructor. So she's got some good experience beyond the droll high school drivers ed curriculum.

9:41 AM - First run. My student accelerates hard, which is great. Often in the beginning it's difficult to get them to stand on it. I've got her eyeing up the "G" line and she brakes about 50 feet early and almost stops before the "30" marker, then letting the car coast to the "G". This is absolutely normal stuff. They've been correctly trained to not step on the brakes too hard and to not make their passenger's heads bob



forward. She actually related this to me at some point. I tell her that in the beginning of this exercise it doesn't matter so much where the car stops. Just make sure that the brake pedal is pushed through the floor board and the ABS system actuates and the car stops quickly ... no coasting to get up to the "G". That removes a lot of pressure from the student.

9:49 AM - After a few tries she's braking very hard and the ABS is kicking in well. Now she can concentrate on hitting the "G" mark.

10:05 AM - She's determined to not only brake hard, but to brake late and be on the goal line. I've got one eye on her and the other on the pavement in front of us. And ... SUCCESS! I can hear the tire scrape across the gravel embedded in the asphalt as the car judders to a stop a foot or two before the "G". She lets out a triumphant "YES!". I clap and cheer and as we head back into the queue she drives past her dad and waves happily. He gives a big thumbs up. She repeats this again but on the last run of the morning's braking exercise the brakes decide they've had enough and I feel lots of brake fade as the 328i goes about 5' beyond the "G". She's disappointed but I congratulate her on being able to feel brake fade at such an early point in her driving career.

10:27 AM - Half the students have departed for SAM. There, Brian Bailey will present a superb set of lessons that go magnitudes beyond what they'll ever learn in drivers ed or a AAA session. Meanwhile my student and I line up for the series of driving elements they'll be facing in two, one-hour sessions today. First up is the skid pad. Usually Sal (who is also a volunteer fireman) hooks up a hose (with local fire



department permission) to the nearby fire hydrant to wet down the pad but it's unnecessary this morning as nature is doing the job just fine.

10:35 AM - My student is a bit tentative but on the last go-around on this first try (only 2 or 3 circles at time to prevent oil starvation and nausea), she guns it and lets out a yelp of fear and excitement as the front tires grind into the wet pavement. Great stuff. We pull off the skidpad and line up for the next element.

10:38 AM - Next comes a short burst of acceleration toward the first of three turn-and-brake exercises on this course. It's tough to get the teens to go fast and brake late here to properly experience the ABS kicking in as the car is turning and braking hard. Patience is required from the instructor.

10:40 AM - We pull up to the "intersection" where a MoHud member is serving as a traffic cop. This time it's Sean Thompson. In the next session he'll be an instructor but right now he's keeping cars from bumping into each other. Due to the size and vagaries of this parking lot, it's necessary for the cars to cross over each other's path when they are between driving elements. We're only doing 5 mph but someone has to keep watch, make us stop, and direct us. My student takes all this in stride once it's explained.

10:43 AM - next is my favorite element, the emergency lane change ... a challenge to drive and a challenge to the instructor to figure out when to give the command. Here's how it works. After describing what we're about to do, my student accelerates down a pylon-delineated lane (we want full acceleration but for now tentative throttle pedal is just fine). There are three lanes ahead. We can go straight but that would be a waste of valuable instruction time with nothing to learn. The important lanes are a swerve left or right. Later in the day instructors will wait until the last moment and then shout "LEFT" or "RIGHT" and the students will turn the wheel as quickly as they can to get into the lane, and then of course steer back the other way to straighten out the car. In the early going, instructors give their command pretty early so students can get acclimated to the maneuver. Indeed, on this first go-through I tell my student before we even begin accelerating that she should turn into the left lane. She sounds relieved to know ahead of time. Later on though it will become a real challenge. At the end of this element is a set of double cones signaling where to perform a panic stop at, a further challenge.

10:44 AM - We pull up to yet another element. Rich Welty is there serving as an "all clear" guy, watching for when the road in front of us is clear. He'll be instructing in the opposite heat. This element is a relatively easy left-right-left-right into a left corner into a right corner into a panic stop. This is more practice to get the feel of a car as it's steered back and forth, feeling the responsiveness of the car and being "on top of it". My student steers too much in the back and forths and gets "late". We'll clean that up as the day goes on.

10:46 AM - Now we line up for another panic stop on a curve element. It starts with a short burst of acceleration, through a right and into a left which opens a little and then gets tight. This leads to another

double coned gate where the student will panic brake on the curve. This is a fun one too. The outer side of the cones get smashed during the day.

10:47 AM - Now we've circled back to the intersection where Sean holds us until it's clear to go. The last element is a good ol' regular slalom. My student has a surprising amount of difficulty here and it will turn out to be my biggest challenge of the day to figure out what she's doing and then be able to articulate to her the situation and the correction needed. For the rest of the morning she consistently gets wider and wider as each cone of the slalom goes by, knocking down cones toward the end. A few times we have to back up to set the run-over cones free from the undercarriage.

This entire series of exercises continues for what feels like two hours but is actually only one. I had taken half a Meclizine tablet 30 minutes before this all started and will take the other half after lunch. I have not been able to instruct autocrossers in-car for decades as I get very sick from the vestibular disturbances and can stay sick for two or more days afterward. Yet I have zero vestibular issues as a driver! I think it's because as a driver I know what I'm about to do with each maneuver and my brain communicates to the throw-up bucket part of me to be ready. I'm also OK for TRSS instruction because each exercise (other than the skid pad) lasts only a few seconds before the car stops and then moves slowly to the next station. The Meclizine helps.

11:31 AM - The next group of students is here. I exit the car as my student heads off to SAM for classroom instruction and the weather hits me. Since I will serve this session as Safety Steward I grab my rain gear and winter coat from my car and immediately feel much warmer.

12:45-ish PM - We're back in the warmth and dryness of the SAM building having a great lunch and a much needed rest while chatting with Bill Hudson, my old friend who has been bringing a Curtis Lumber 18-wheeler to this school for many years. He's now retired from Curtis but brought along his replacement, Kevin. We chat and eat until it's time to head outside for the demonstration.

People often associate big rigs as the evil of the highway. They get in the way and slow us down and won't get out of the passing lane. But there's a lot more to it of course. Having an actual big rig in front of us and a professional driver discussing the issues is an eye opener for all involved. And the students each get a turn to sit in the driver's seat and check out the views, or lack thereof.

Next comes a discussion on air bags led by airbag demo chief Vince Gentile and event coordinator Matt Fraley. Both of the charges in the airbag detonate together with a loud explosion and a cloud of cornstarch as the water bottle placed on top heads skyward. Impressive and sobering.

1:45-ish PM - Everyone heads back to the classrooms ... one located in the SAM building and the other at the SPAC parking lot. In the morning session my student and I drove with Group 1. In the afternoon we'll be relocated to Group 2 so that I can work as Safety Steward during Group 1 action which allows Phil DeJan to be Safety Steward in the opposite group. There's been a few changes to the setup of the pylons, one was planned and the other two are minor cone changes to make the elements work better.

1:50 PM - The rain is merely a very light drizzle interspersed with zero precip. So Sal hooks up the firehose and sprays down the skidpad. This reduces tire wear and lets the cars move around more easily, improving the experience. It sure would be more pleasant if we had yesterday's sunny, warm weather but this is a great experience for the kids. For the parents ... not so much as they look cold and wet. Some head back to SAM. I pull my stint as safety steward with no issues and Group 1 has completed their driving time.



2:52 PM - Group 1 students depart for classroom discussion while Group 2 appears and are greeted by their instructors. My student and I are back in the car and she's really going at the skid pad with zest, feeling the front end wash out and then regain grip as she lets off the throttle. This skid pad is on a slope and there's definitely a downhill portion of it especially going counter clockwise. I ask her to use a bit more throttle and she steps on it hard through the downhill portion and lets out a combination scream and laugh at the thrill of it. It's great for this old guy to be in the presence of such youthful enthusiasm. With all this new speed, the front end simply gives up and we almost take out a bunch of pylons delineating the outer borders of the skidpad. Cool. Learning the limit and beyond in a safe environment is of course a lot of fun but extremely valuable knowledge to have tucked away for when driving in the real world. In the future it could save a lot of money in car damage and perhaps a hospital stay.

All of the elements are now old hat to the students and they drive with much more confidence through all the elements. The braking is professional and efficient. Steering inputs are more crisp and refined. Instructors are now waiting longer and longer to give the "RIGHT" or "LEFT" command at the emergency lane change element. Sure, some cones are going down but the cars are under control, mostly.

Rich Welty is offering all sorts of humorous lines when we pull to his station with my student laughing freely now. And I've been able to articulate to her that she's been applying too much steering in the slalom and needs to start turning the steering wheel back the other way even before she passes the cone. Now her old 328i is threading through the slalom like Mark Daddio ... well, like Jim Garry anyway. Each time through I have her add a little more throttle and the car still is under control. She is clearly pleased at this change of fortune in the slalom.

Indeed, through all of this afternoon's elements she now accelerates with authority, the engine revving and sounding purposeful. It's a wonderful sound. She is flat out into and through the right/left leading to the panic stop on a curve. Thrilling.

As is traditional, near the end of the day parents are invited to ride along. Her dad is 6'2" and so I slide the front passenger seat all the way forward to let him sit in the back with minimal pain. My knees are in my chest but it's all good. He stays for two loops around the elements. On the second time through the skid pad I do something I've been waiting all day to do. This 2010 model has a real hand brake, not the crummy electric button parking brake most cars have these days. I can't let this opportunity pass. At the bottom of the skid pad going counter clockwise I rip up on the hand brake and the car skews sideways as we start heading uphill. I chose the uphill part of the skidpad to help her regain control but I don't think it was necessary. She lets out a "whoa" followed by a laugh and countersteers expertly, the rear tucking back in. As we pull off the skidpad and come to a stop she looks over her shoulder at her dad and says, "So you're not the only one who knows that trick!" Turns out they did the same thing in a snowy parking lot last winter. Good dad!

Finally, the sun comes out and she remarks on the change in lighting. She takes her last run, finishes, and parks the car. I compliment her on her fine day, summing up what we learned and shaking hands with her and her dad. We're all smiling.

4:01 PM - The students drive back to SAM while our staff and instructors stack and store pylons. I get the wettest I've been all day when I help disassemble an EZ-Up and the pooled water gives me a shower. Then I do it again with the second EZ-up! We walk the quarter mile back to SAM in time to see the Street Survival Driving School Certificates awarded to smiling students. We give them a nice round of applause. I linger to talk to friends and head out, saying goodbye to Megan. The drive home south on the Northway is always much more busy but it's easily handled because of the really good mood earned from all of that instructing and camaraderie.

It's said hundreds of times that this is a very gratifying volunteer job but it can't be said enough. Every one of the young drivers that go through this program (up to 80 to 100 schools per year nationwide) are propelled into the upper ranks of driving ability. Sure there's a lot of driving experience they will accumulate to make them more complete as time goes on but the physical and intellectual training they get in this one day makes them superior drivers to most other Americans. And that's something worth spending a day or two a year to accomplish.

Please consider signing up as an instructor for our October 18th school. You won't regret it.

Treasurer's Report, May 2026

By Pat Clair

On March 31, 2026, the accounts totaled \$30,069.78 –

- Checking/Money Market \$14,937.34
- 6 Month CD #1 (Matures 05/06/2026) \$ 5,075.21
- 6 Month CD #2 (Matures 03/08/2026) \$ 5,011.65
- 6 Month CD #3 (Matures 07/05/2026) \$ 5,044.58
- Savings \$ 1.00

April Banking Activities (To Date):

- Bus insurance annual payment.
- GTA Rally (04/12/2026) income and expenses.
- MoHud SCCA logo banners (2).
- SCCA Membership Dues (March 2026) income.

As of April 20, 2026, the accounts totaled \$29,058.42 –

- Checking/Money Market \$13,925.98
- 6 Month CD #1 (Matures 05/06/2026) \$ 5,075.21
- 6 Month CD #2 (Matures 09/07/2026) \$ 5,011.65
- 6 Month CD #3 (Matures 07/05/2026) \$ 5,044.58
- Savings \$ 1.00

Upcoming Financial Transactions:

- GTA Rally (04/12/2026) final expense.
- Street Survival (04/19/2026) income and expenses.
- April interest posted at end of month.
- CD #1 matures 05/06/2026.
- SCCA Membership Dues (April 2026) income.

“Every lap is a lesson.”

~ Anonymous

Membership Report

By Jim Garry

As of April 22nd, Mohawk-Hudson Region membership stood at 344, up two since last month. This reverses our mild six-month slide in numbers from our five year high of 352 last October. We can expect more as we enter the competition seasons for autocross and club racing.

New Members in March

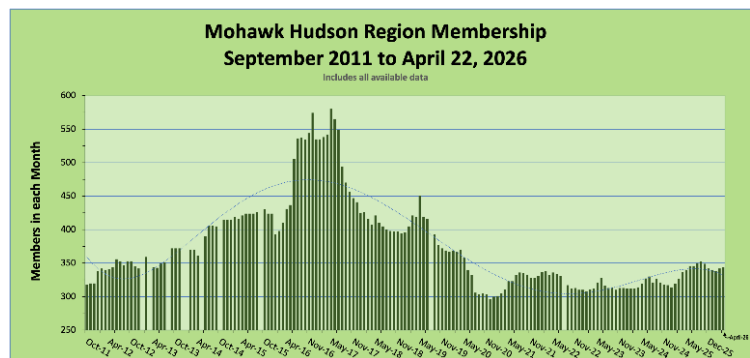
Harry Demiris, Bethpage

John Jiles, Lockport

Anthony Condo, Castleton On Hudson

Rafe Spada, Cobleskill

Christopher Cushing, Albany



New Members in April

Mark Axen, Stony Creek

David Wood, Mechanicville

Nigel Boyce, Tannersville

Nigel is a returning member after a short time away ... Welcome back Nigel! And welcome to all! We hope to see you at an event or meeting this year.

Significant Anniversaries in May

Five Years

Vince Gentile - Vince has done a lot in his five years in the club. He's autocrossed, has a competition license in Club Racing, holds an SCCA license as a divisional level Scrutineer, plays a key role in the Teen Street Survival School, organizes annual Club Racing tech inspection, and, oh yeah, he's our Assistant Regional Executive! Thanks for all you are doing Vince.

Phil Redington - Phil is a long time autocrosser and has been in the club much longer than five years. Here is yet another case of earlier time in the Club not being applied to one's years of membership if there's been a membership lapse. Phil has driven several cars in our autocrosses over the years but he is most known for his current drive, a 2000 Honda S2000. He also holds a Solo Safety Steward license. Thanks Phil.

Fifteen Years

William Dergosits - Obtaining his Club Racing novice permit in 2015, William has been racing at Lime Rock, New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Watkins Glen, Pocono Raceway, Palmer Motorsports Park, and Thompson Speedway. The only year he didn't race during that span was in 2020.

Twenty Years

Jessica Lendrum - a member of the famous Lendrum racing clan, we wish Jessica a happy 20th anniversary in SCCA.

Twenty-Five Years

Rich Teal - Rich is a Life Member and has an interest in Solo. Happy 25th anniversary Rich!

EJ Smith - With all EJ has done as a MoHud member it seems like this should be his 40th Anniversary. He has been such a stalwart member it's hard to recall a time before he joined. He has autocrossed, raced, rallied, worked as a flagger at many Club Racing events, been a long time Teen Street Survival instructor (he was my son's instructor), and much, much more including a decade long stint as our Assistant RE or Regional Executive! For more please read his article in this issue of the Knock Off.

Reflections on 25 years, by EJ Smith

25 years. It sounds less scary when you measure it in cars: four of them. So, I present "The Eras Tour (of EJ's MoHud Journey)"

The 1999 Honda Accord EX Era (1999-2003)

In my recollection, I believe I saw an advertisement in the Times Union for an autocross event at Rome Air Force base in 2000 or 2001. I figured I'd go and watch, soak in the action and atmosphere, and then I could participate at the next one if I wanted to. I talked Pat into coming along with me, so we traveled out to Rome and camped out in the paddock for the day. Pat brought the Sunday paper and entertained herself, and I decided to wander about and see how the event flowed. I couldn't see much out on course, but I saw cars start and finish, and it looked like a blast. I was pretty excited to try it at the next event.

My first autocross was at the State campus lot (now known as Patroon Creek). I had a '99 Honda Accord, and while it wasn't the best platform to compete with, I was fortunate to have some other family sedans there that I could compare myself to. To this day I recall being so proud I bested a Ford Taurus SHO sedan.

After a few seasons, I decided I was tired of comparing myself to the limited sedans that showed up, so I felt like I was ready to get myself a more competitive car. In the meantime, I got to know the MoHud Solo organizer gang and offered to help out however I could. Russ Burckhard saw an opening, and asked if I was interested in taking over the duties of the Chief of Timing & Scoring. It took a few sessions of mentoring, but I picked up how to do the job, and I've been doing it to this day. Somewhere between the end of this era and the next one, I got involved in the region's website management (which I still do to this day) after starting to attend the membership meetings and learning about the inner workings of the region. Remembering the cast of characters can't help but make me smile. We've had some very important figures who've come along that made substantial contributions to the region's website (Dave Wachtel and Zeke Wright), so I consider myself the caretaker of their efforts, which I'm ashamed to say hasn't kept up with the times.

The 2003 Mitsubishi Evolution 8 Era (2003 – 2022)

I picked up a Mitsubishi Evo 8 in 2003 and that car was a gateway to a world of motorsports adventures. I quickly fell under the influences of the track day gang in MoHud, and after believing some white lies about not using up brakes and tires, I did my first track day at Lime Rock in 2006. My tires were up to it, my brakes weren't, but I was hooked. I attended a lot of Patroon track days, but Watkins Glen was my favorite. After a Calabogie ON track event in 2009, I asked our flag chief, Rich Alexander, about how flaggers were supposed to act on station, and Rich took the opportunity to invite me to try flagging and see what flagging was all about. I attended a dismal MoHud road race event at Lime Rock Park, with the remnants of some hurricane washing out the race days. At the time there was some division in the region, pitting the "racers" and the "autocrossers" against each other for time and resources from the club. Credit to Jack Hanifan, Russ Burckhard and the other MoHud core group for agreeing to try to cross lines and better support each other's programs. I figured I'd jump in to volunteer at a race to help show my support for the other areas of the club. Lime Rock flagger Andy Smith (no relation) mentored me that John Stim Memorial race event and asked what I thought. As I told him how great I thought the rain drenched day had been, he gave a big laugh and said "If you loved today, you're going to be in heaven when you work a dry event with actual racing!" Andy was right, and I was hooked from then on.

Things really picked up in the 2010's: in 2011 I co-drove Will Schambach's CSP Mazda culminating in participating in a Solo National Tour event in Blytheville AR and the 2011 Solo Nationals in Lincoln NE. Will also decided to go road racing with a 1989 Honda Civic Si, so I got my provisional road racing license based on my track driving experience and I, along with Will, Joe Sell, Jeff Kanetsky, Phil Shoemaker, and others, formed an enduro team and started to race in the Chump Car series. Our debut was in 2012 in the "Santa In Atlanta" 14 Hour endurance race at Road Atlanta. What an eye-opening event. Out of 98 entries, we figured we were in the bottom 5 entrants in terms of horsepower. We did 1.5 hour driver stints, and watched our little band of brothers steadily move up the leader board. My first night stint was terrifying, as I realized picking out a mark on the pavement to position the car while going under the bridge and down the hill into Turn 12 was a huge mistake as the headlights of the cars completely washed it out. The first time I crested the hill and started down, I saw I was headed straight for the grass triangle that separated pit entry and the track. To make matters worse, there was a large metal undertray lying on the pavement just before the tip of the grass. Despite not being able to see much over my right shoulder due to headlights, I moved the car over as gently as possible to gain the track. After two more laps I had my mark (a letter) on the bridge and that scare passed. We finished in the mid 30s and we were hooked.

About this same time, I and some of the other track rats got tabbed to attend BMW Instructor Training School, to help fill the ranks of the gradually thinning herd of track day instructors. It was more about mental discipline and toughness than driving skills, but I and others passed, and we became certified instructors. Throw in a few more Chump Car enduros at Watkins Glen and Lime Rock (a 5th place finish for us!), a forgettable trip to Road Atlanta with Will Schambach to participate in the American Road Race of Champions (I had no business competing in anything with the term "Champions" in it, let alone in the Pro IT class – my big claim to fame is watching Danny Steyn and the front runners begin to lap me in Turn 7 in my rear view mirror so long that I ran wide and off the track as the leaders passed), and an unforgettable 1st place in class finish in the 2014 Devil In The Dark endurance race with Will and Jeff Kanetzky, and it all seems like a fever dream.

In the years that followed, I flagged a lot of races, both SCCA and professional: Grand Am, American Le Mans Series, Pirelli World Challenge, Trans Am, IMSA, Ferrari Challenge, Porsche Cup, Lamborghini Super Trofeo, to name some. I've worked as a corner marshal at several SCCA RunOffs events, include those at Indy and ViR, five in total.

During this era, I also jumped into leadership roles for MoHud, becoming the Assistant RE in 2014, and taking over for Jim Bucci as RE when he left for FL, weathering as best we could the pandemic years.

The 2021 BMW M2 Competition Era (2022-2023)

After I found parts like a steering rack incredibly hard to find for my trusty Evo, I decided to sell it and look for a newer sports car. The BMW was a very seductive vehicle, with great interior luxury and performance, all while being very streetable. Unfortunately for me, I just never felt comfortable owning a car like that, and given the costs of consumables for a car of that level in the post-pandemic world, decided to move on before I lost any more driving joy.

The 2023 Honda Civic Type R Era (2023-present)

I decided to go back to my Honda roots and pursued my current Civic Type R. It didn't help that it sat in light of the Keeler Honda showroom floor, looking great from Rt 7 as I started driving home from our membership meetings at the Metro 7 diner. With some very talented and eager younger people joining our region, I've stepped back from leadership roles to allow the younger generation to put their stamp on our club. All my SCCA event participation



has been scaled back some due to family commitments to older relatives, but I'm keeping my hand in most of them and the dream is to get back into a more involved rhythm with flagging and driving when the opportunity presents itself. Most of my flagging occurs at spectator events at Lime Rock these days – the change to paid flagging is money that's too good to pass up, and the fact I'm home every night during an event is an added bonus. Hopefully you'll see me at more SCCA races in the future, though. I'm proud to be a certified BMW track instructor and to hold a National level license as a corner marshal.

I often wish I'd have discovered SCCA sooner back when I was younger and had more free time at hand, but then I'm not sure I would have been so eager to pack so much into these last 25 years if I had. I've enjoyed almost all of it, from the thrills of autocross, racing, track days, and volunteering, to the personal relationships I've developed over the years with members, from those who have since passed to the newer faces we see in the club. That's the one thing I hope to be able to maintain for many more years to come.

Regional Directory

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Director

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Solo (Autocross) Chair

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Tire Rack Street Survival Program

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Road Racing Co-Chair / Scrutineer

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