

## MRC Carting Test 2016 – The Butcher’s Purse

*By Marianne Noble, MRC Carting Chair*

*“Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds”*

In this case, we’re not talking about our intrepid postal carriers. We are referring to our magnificent Rottweilers as they competed for the Butcher’s Purse on Wednesday, October 12 at the MRC Specialty. Fifteen handlers and their Rottweilers took 26 runs at the Second Annual MRC Butcher’s Purse Carting test, one of the largest Rottweiler Carting Tests in the nation, in weather that ranged from sprinkles to torrential downpour over the course of the day.

The day dawned overcast at Kane County Fairgrounds in St. Charles, IL . Rainfall began about 6:45 am, punctuated by flashes of lightning and an occasional thunderclap, but then cleared briefly by 8 am, allowing the setup crew the opportunity to lay the course. Strong wind gusts foretold the still-gathering storm, as the course layers hurriedly filled plastic bags with rocks to keep the course signs from blowing away. Wary handlers nervously eyed the skies as the cloud cover reformed during check-in. At the 10:30 am walk through, our judge, Dr. Tommy Caisango, gently reminded our handlers that he had judged many times in the rain and had never once heard a complaint from the Rottweilers. The handlers, on the other hand, were rarely as magnanimous, he observed, eliciting nervous laughter from the crowd.

Dr. Tommy, a resident of Melbourne, FL, had just dodged Hurricane Matthew the previous week and thought he was finished with wet weather for a while. He was wrong about that, but he was right about our Rottweilers.

Dog after dog rose to the occasion. They hitched up and pulled on command, following their handlers’ directions around figure 8s, 360 right, 360 left, through a gate, fast, slow and backup. They negotiated serpentines, ignored distractions and crossed a bridge. Sometimes squinting in the rain, with water dripping off their noses, they nonetheless completed their appointed rounds to the applause and admiration of the crowd.

The three-minute long down on cold, wet pavement posed a challenge for a few dogs, but the majority persevered and claimed their well deserved carting titles along with a cookie or two for their extraordinary efforts.

Not to be outdone by their amazing working dogs, our handlers, too met the challenge. Spirits were high and attitudes remained jovial despite the conditions. as handlers donned their raingear and splashed their dogs through the course elements and puddles. Laughter and camaraderie were evident among the huddled masses under the four rain canopies.

Not to be outdone by the dogs and handlers, ring stewards Gail O’Brien and Joan Mazat braved the elements for nearly five hours, wrangling carts and 40 pound weights, while Judy Spetka and Test Secretary Karen Haberkorn shivered at the scorers’ table as they struggled to keep scoresheets dry and organized.

Howard Bernier and Sam (Mistyridge Knock On Wood) carted home the Butcher's Purse for High in Test. Competing in the Carting Intermediate (off lead) division, they earned a perfect score of 200 points.

Reserve High in Test went to Kathi Liebnow and her canine partner, Reinie (Phantom Wood Reinhard), who netted a score of 199 also in Carting Intermediate.

Nancy Lee and Haley (Eis Haus Haley's New Year Comet) took the top award in Carting Started with a score of 197. Rich Spetka and Rhett (Jungersohn Two Morrows Another Day V Esmond) placed second with a 194. Karla Niessing and Deacon (Phantom Wood Lock 'n Load) scored 191 to take the 3rd place ribbon. Diane McKinney Pilcher and Nox (Esmonds God Of Night), who travelled all the way from Houston, took 4th with a 190.

Carting Intermediate First Place went to Howard Bernier and Sam with a score of 200. Second place ribbon went to Kathi Liebnow and Reinie with a 199. Rich Spetka and Rhett placed third with a 197.

Driving Titles (Carting Excellent) went to Marianne Noble with Juno (Unique's Benevolent Juno) and Brenda Moore with Gunny (Gunthers Mahogany Shadow) who garnered scores of 199 and 189 respectively.

Five brace teams competed in the test. Teresa Schneider guided Weston (Chief Rescued Winchester Jumps) and Cyrus (Chief Rescued Midnite Pony) to First Place and a score of 196 in Carting Started-Team. Marianne Noble with Juno and Rich Spetka's Grant (Esmonds Yankee General) took second, scoring 195, while Les Lukaszewski scored 191 to place third with Diva (Kinjack's Past Present Future) and Briggs (Briggs Von Herrschend).

In the Carting Intermediate-Team Division, Kathi Liebnow with Eli (Perogrande's Sly Box of Rocks Mr. E) and Reinie earned First Place with a Reserve High in Test score of 199. Marianne Noble with Juno and Grant Spetka took second with a 197.

It was a great day for our remarkable working dogs and their handlers to show their true hearts. The Butchers would have been proud.