

Carriage Racing Catching On Fast

Carriage Arena Races pit horses and their drivers against the clock. Each carriage runs the course by itself.

"It is still very new in the U.S., but there is a lot of interest," says Pam Kister, a horse trainer and carriage racer for the past 5 years.

The drivers take their horse and cart through a course with sets of obstacles. The challenge is to maintain speed while following the course without striking an obstacle.

"There is a lot of strategy involved," says Kister. "Everyone has to go through each set of obstacles in the same order. However, they can choose which direction to follow out of the gates, either left or right. Some horses are better turning one way or the other, and you have to know your horse and choose accordingly."

One of the things that makes the event even more interesting is that any size horse can participate in the single or teamed events.

"I prefer Shetlands and Morgans, but I'll be using a National Show (Shetland/Hackney cross) at events this year," says Kister.

"Smaller breeds can cut the corners faster."

Unlike other types of harness racing, carriage racers can have a second person on the cart or buggy. Although they are called "navigators", they are not allowed to speak with the driver or help direct them through the course. With a single horse, they shift from side to side to keep the wheels down. In case of problems in team events, they can help with the horses. One navigator is required with 2-horse teams, and 2 navigators are required for teams of 4 or more.

"Safety is foremost with carriage racing," says Kister. "This isn't something to try if you haven't practiced at home. You need to know how tight corners can be driven and how fast."

Some special equipment is needed, such as a breech on the harness attached to the shafts. Kister explains that the breech is the braking system and keeps the carriage from hitting the rear of the animal.

Kister advises working with an experienced carriage racer to get started. "Every course is different, and you have to learn it before you



Photo courtesy Amanda Smith

In carriage racing, drivers take their horse and cart through a course with a set of obstacles. Each carriage runs by itself, racing against the clock.

drive it. "That's one of the things that makes the sport so fun and challenging for drivers and interesting for those watching."

Kister invites those interested to contact her or the American Driving Society (ADS) to learn more. The ADS is developing rules to formalize the sport.

Check out a video of Arena Carriage

Driving at FARMSHOW.com.

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Flag Flies From Unique "Wrench Flagpole"

When WWII veteran Ken Lovejoy decided to put up a flagpole, he used something he had plenty of—wrenches—and created a practical tribute to two things he loves—his country and farming.

The 18-ft. "wrench flagpole" has stood the test of time since Lovejoy welded it together in 1990, when he and his wife, Bonnie, retired from farming and moved to town. As a farmer, he had plenty of experience welding, Bonnie says.

"The base is a cast iron wheel from a horse-drawn mowing machine," she explains. "The pole is odds and ends wrenches he welded together."

Wrenches are welded in pairs for strength, and though the flag can be raised and lowered, the Lovejoys seldom take it down. The flagpole has been the talk of the town since her husband put it up.

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Ken Lovejoy made this 18-ft. tall "wrench flagpole" using various wrenches that he welded together.



Wrenches are welded in pairs for strength.



Cast iron wheel from a horse-drawn mower serves as flagpole base.



Brian Edmond removed the engine, transmission and fuel tank from his 22-ft. cabin cruiser and converted it to run on batteries and DC motors.

Cabin Cruiser Converted To Electric

Despite a lot of naysayers telling him that it couldn't be done, Brian Edmond converted his gas-powered boat engine into a clean, quiet, and convenient way to enjoy the water. Edmond is the owner of Edmond Electric Co. in Amherstview, Ontario, where he spends most of his time converting lawn tractors to electric power. After first experimenting with smaller boats, Edmond decided to try converting a larger 22-ft. cabin cruiser with a 4-cycle engine, because he says "noise and exhaust can often get in the way of trying to relax on the water." He named his new electric boat "My Way."

Edmond first removed the 4-cylinder 37 hp. gas inboard engine, the transmission, and fuel tank. He replaced those components with his own custom-built electric system that includes batteries and motors. To make room for the batteries he opened the floor and created a holding area for a bank of a dozen 6-volt batteries supported by metal framing. Ten batteries run a 6 kW motor for the prop, and 2 are used for accessories including the lights, microwave and refrigerator. The larger motor puts out about 8 hp, which Edmond says will run the boat close to the same speed as the original, more powerful gas motor. Running continuously at this top speed the batteries last about an hour. Reducing the motor speed so it puts out only 3 hp. allows it to run at about 6 mph for about 4 hrs.

"I like to run it at the lower speed, which is really nice for cruising," says Edmond. "There isn't any noise or any exhaust. Where we live in Kingston, we can cruise the islands

peacefully with friends." Edmond says one charge of the batteries gives him a range of about 25 miles, which is "enough for day trips around the islands." For re-charging he uses a slip at a local marina with an electric hookup. It takes about 5 hrs. to charge the batteries. If a converter is used the batteries can also be operated with solar power.

With normal use Edmond says the batteries should last about 8 years. Maintenance includes checking the distilled water twice a year and keeping the batteries on a "smart" charger over the cold winter months.

The 15-in., 3-blade bronze propeller on Edmond's boat has a one-inch steel shaft. The electric motor, which can handle 100% torque at startup, is connected to the propeller shaft. Because the motor starts under a full load it doesn't need a gearbox and transmission. To move the boat in reverse the motor simply runs backwards. Steering is done with cables connected to the rudder.

Edmond has been in the electric business since 1975 and has been working on small engines since 1990. He developed the electric conversions using his own ideas and perfected them through trial and error. He says after many hours of testing that he feels the concepts are perfected. He hopes to have plans for the average handyman later in 2017.

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