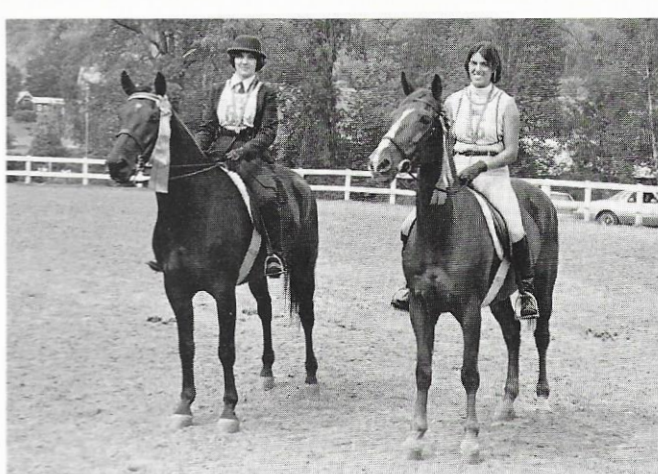


Morgans Win 2 Divisions in

Vermont 100 Mile Ride

By Mrs. Wilber C. Maker



TRIJAS WHIPERPOPPER (left) was the highest placing Morgan in the Jr. Division and his rider, Sylvia Maker won the jr. division horsemanship award and stable management award. VELVET ALERT KING with Janet Mele, up, won the middleweight division.

Morgan enthusiasts should be proud of the showing our breed made in the 1977 Green Mountain Horse Association 100 mile trail ride in Vermont. This is the oldest, and one of the most difficult, 100 mile rides in the country. It was even more difficult this year because of a very dry summer which made the dirt roads particularly hard, along with very humid weather. This was evident in the statistics of 73 starters and only 33 finishers.

The Vermont ride is characterized by efficient and experienced trail ride officials and beautifully marked trails with terrain either going up or down. This year's chairman, Dr. Wilson Haubrich, has ridden and won the ride many times in the past, as well as being a judge. He put together a panel of judges who were experienced in the field of competitive trail riding and had, indeed, put many 100 mile rides behind them. Dr. Clarence Parks, Mrs. Reba Plante and Mrs. Roger Ela were the ride's judges and Mrs. Clarence Parks was the special awards judge.

It has been a long time since the Morgan breed could boast of 2 of 4 division wins. Not only did the breed account for these 2 top placings, but their scores ranked just below the 97 points of the sweepstakes winner, a big gray Thoroughbred mare who lives a mere 5 miles from the GMHA grounds.

Velvet Alert King (Iroquois King x Bald Mt. Polly Allen), with a score of 96, won the middleweight division with a very consistent performance. This 14-year-old chestnut gelding is owned and ridden by Janet Mele of Bristol, Ct. "King" always looked strong on the trail and seemed not to vary from day to day. He is a competitive trail rider's dream as he won the lightweight division last year on this same ride. Keeping sound year after year and winning his divisions is a tribute to Janet's horsemanship and conditioning program. "King" also won the New England Morgan Horse Association award to the highest placing Morgan in the senior division.

Trija's Whipopper (Ledgemere Bounty x Just-A-Nod Genesis) eagerly took the trails in stride and won the junior division with a score of 94. A dark bay 6-year-old gelding, "Popper" won many friends in earning the C.J. O'Neill

Memorial Trophy for the highest placing Morgan in the junior division and the Soneldon Memorial Challenge Trophy for the highest placing Morgan in any division ridden by a girl under 20-years of age. His owner and rider, Sylvia Maker of Shrewsbury, Mass., after years of competitive trail riding, put it all together and won both the horsemanship and stable management awards in the junior division.

M.R.M. Lady Zizz (Vandaleer Ebb Tide x Shawalla Silver Dawn) came all the way from Missoula, Montana to conquer the Vermont hills and earn a 5th placing in the middleweight division. Ann Hayes, this 9-year-old chestnut mares's owner and rider, always wore a smile and had a friendly hello for everyone. The Morganfield's Perpetual Trophy for the best Morgan trail horse went to this strong mare.

Mary Martin rode John Griffith's 9-year-old bay mare, Small Nighthawk to a 3rd in a very strong lightweight division. "Nighthawk" (Foxy Nighthawk x Small Wonder) came from Fair Haven, Vt., and deserves our thanks and congratulations.

The beautiful little 13-year-old mare Temptation, owned by Maryanne Riley and ridden by Bonnie Maynard, turned in her usual steady ride with pulse and respiration readings which hardly varied from start to finish. She comes back year after year and finishes despite the conditions.

Wales Farm Colonel, owned by Leonard Wales and ridden by Carol Edson, and Spanker's Poppy, owned and ridden by Mary Crouse, finished the grueling ride which saw many former division and even sweepstakes winners fail to finish. The green completion ribbon and medallion is, indeed, difficult to earn.

There are always stories of heartbreak, bad luck, true horsemanship and sportsmanship conduct to be told when looking at the horses who didn't finish.

Bob Howland won the men's senior sportsmanship when he voluntarily withdrew the game and proud 17-year-old Morgan, "Rocky." This gelding is owned by Spearland Morgan Farm of Vermont and had the true Justin Morgan heart.

The hard luck trophy went to Kathryn

Burow from St. Albans, Vt., riding the popular 9-year-old stallion Equinox Royalty. On the second day he lost a shoe on the trail and despite all attempts the farrier was unable to attend to him until very late. The ride officials felt they were at fault and did not eliminate the stud from the ride as he did finish the course as soon as he could. However, over half way through the final day, Kathryn withdrew her horse voluntarily from the ride. She rode the horse back, at a walk, rather than take the chance of harming him on the fast and grueling last day.

Another Morgan stallion, Donald Twilight, had the crowd hoping he could repeat his division win of two years ago. However, Amy Holt, after a seemingly bright 80 miles, decided to withdraw so there would be other 100 miles in years to come for the two. He made a pretty picture on the trail and we know they'll be back!

Popular Betsy Cook from Woodstock, Vt., held down two part time jobs and still managed to condition "Sam," owned by Bo Gibbs, for the 100 mile. However, Betsy's good horsemanship told her "Sam," although still game, was too tired for that final 20 miles and voluntarily withdrew him. Betsy is a tireless worker for GMHA in about every department of running the ride through the years. She knows the thrill of placing well in the 100 and will no doubt saddle up another year.

The pretty Furbruk Lucy, owned and ridden by Peggy Nuzzolo, made a good go at the 100, but Peggy's horsemanship dictated this year was not the year to go all the way.

All the riders are to be commended for their horsemanship, sportsmanship and for the knowledgeable decisions they made regarding their horses. They proved, once again, that the Morgans could compete in open competition and do very well.

The Morgan heart and desire to please, which has characterized the breed since Justin, himself, was evident in the Morgan entrants of the Vermont 100 mile ride once again. Their riders demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship and fine horsemanship which, in the last analysis, makes them all winners. □