

Ephrata 3-Guns Stepping Up

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STAFF

West Coast 3-Gunners know Carl Carbon. He's a veteran of the MGM Ironman, Mystery Mountain, the DPMS match, the old SOF matches, and virtually any other major 3-Gun you can name. For the last several years, Carbon has been applying that experience toward his own local Multi-Gun event, held near Ephrata, Wash.

This little 70-shooter limited-entry affair has quickly gained a reputation for quality stage design and smooth operations. Two years ago the match sold out weeks in advance. This year it sold out FOUR MONTHS in advance, with a pile of paid waiting list entries seeking any cancellation.

That's most interesting when you consider that at Carbon's match, people shot for wooden plaques – not prizes. The match feels like a family reunion, and a veritable who's who of Northwest 3-Gun competitors attend. Sitting around the lunch table, eating complimentary sandwiches and Susan



There are targets out there, really. Carl Carbon lays into them on the way to winning Tactical Division.

Carbon's famous cookies, you could see Robert Johnson, Robert Wright, Mike Gibson, Pat Kelley, Joe DeSimone, Mark Anglin, and Carl himself all laughing and sharing their experiences.

Carbon opened the match to sponsorship this year, garnering a few thousand dollars worth of prizes. With a pair of Remington 870s and other high-dollar items up for grabs, good officiating was a must. Carbon brought on fixed RO staff (who competed for score the previous day), and a lot of brand-new MGM and R+R Racing steel, lending an "uptown" feel to an otherwise local event.

"Carl is a lion for putting matches together," declared Pat Kelley during the awards ceremony.

Indeed, Carbon and his family all pitch in. Carbon serves as MD, his wife Susan as chief statistician, and their two young daughters as score runners (driving tiny motorcycles, carrying scorecards in their backpacks). His eldest daughter, 12-year-old Adriana, opened the event by singing the national anthem.

"I don't drive to matches this size very often," says Mark Anglin, "but this one is usually well-run, and it's got really good competition."

He wasn't alone with his praise.

"It's almost flawless," enthused Gary Roessel. Like Anglin, he had driven more than four hours to shoot a seven-stage, one-day event. He was particularly impressed with how the level of expertise on

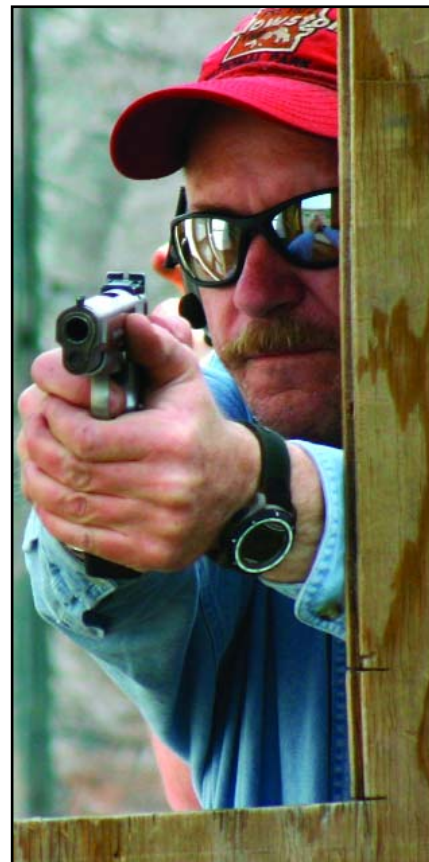


Photo by Patrick Kelley.

The surprising Robert Morrow. Capable of amazing things with the rifle, he's captured here on a pistol stage. (Check out the reflection in his sunglasses.)

long-range rifle had grown — both in how the stages were run, and in the skill of the competitors themselves.

Sadly, overly-enthusiastic steel setters set up an extra target on the slug stage halfway through the match, forcing Carbon to throw the stage out. As Roessel said, it was "almost" flawless.

Stage design remains an obvious strength of Carbon's match. Shooters stretched their rifle marksmanship, engaging a series of self-resetting plates at ranges from 100 to 350 yards. The next stage had you mounting a small piece of angled rooftop (asphalt shingles and all) to take on a plate rack at 91 yards and still more self-resetting steel. You then leapt off the rooftop and ran to your shotgun, using it to work over a series of knock-down, frangible, and flying frangible targets with the shotgun.



Hulls fly as Patrick Kelley mows down targets with his pump gun. He would place High Limited, shooting heavy metal-legal equipment.

“I liked it. Twenty-four shotgun shells and a lot of movement — it really got you going!” said Martin Barnes.

Carbon has some decisions to make about the future of the Ephrata Spring Multi-Gun. Bringing in a prize table may jeopardize the “family reunion” feel, but it has the potential to draw in enough competitors for a multi-day event — something rare in the region. Whether it stays local, or expands into a regional prize match, just get-

Sponsors:

- DPMS
- ESS Eyewear
- MGM targets.
- Montana Gold Bullets
- R&R targets
- Sierra Bullets
- Taylor Freelance, LLC

Victors:

- Open: Robert Johnson
- Tactical: Carl Carbon
- Limited: Pat Kelley
- Heavy Metal: Rob Wolf
- High Lady: Martha Beaver

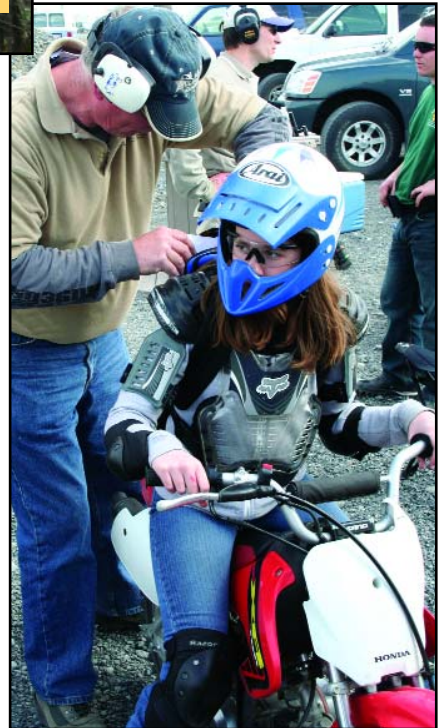
Robert Morrow surprised many with his amazing performances on both of the long-range rifle stages, particularly the 350-yarder. That last drew a spontaneous ovation from the crowd after Morrow sliced through it with scarcely an extra shot. (Morrow’s rifle skills lifted him to seventh overall in Tactical.)

“They had some interesting stuff,” said Martha Beaver, top lady at the match.

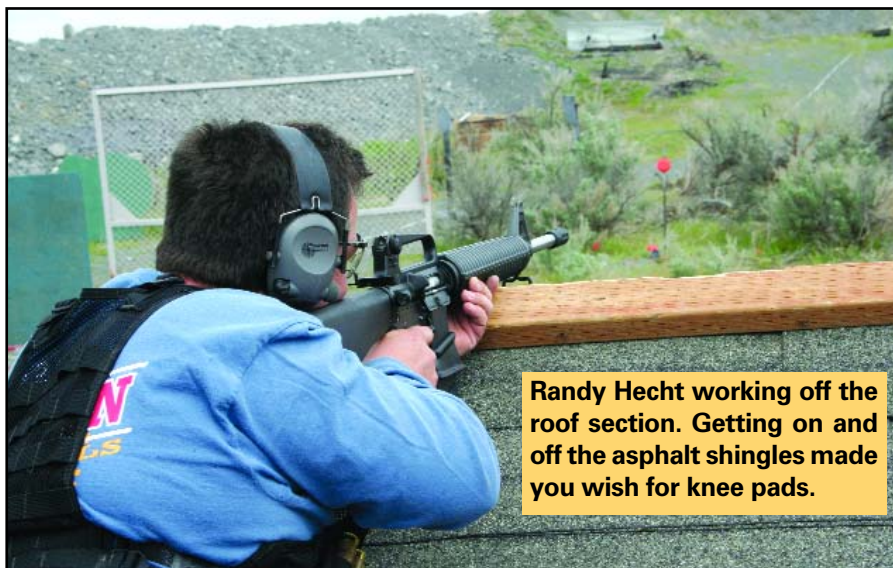
Perhaps the most laughed-about

stage began with the shooter blowing a door open with the shotgun. The door on the “barrel stage” (which you could not touch with body or shotgun) was held closed by a “deadbolt” fashioned of two pieces of wooden lath taped together. The start box put you close enough that the “deadbolt” lay perhaps 18 inches ahead of your muzzle. One shot would open the door, if you hit the wood dead-center. Two shots was typical. Four was rare. The record was nine.

Irritated by the short shotgun stages seen at other 3-Gun events, Carbon incorporated a full-on jungle run with the shotgun.



SMART IDEA: Ephrata’s stats rely on the Carbons’ gradeschool-age daughters on low-CC motorbikes. Here Adriana Carbon stops in for a pick-up. The RO stuffs completed score sheets into Adriana’s backpack, and she’s off to the next stage. The low-speed motorbikes deal well with loose gravel, and give the kids an important (fun!) job.



Randy Hecht working off the roof section. Getting on and off the asphalt shingles made you wish for knee pads.

ting a slot to the ESC Spring Multi-Gun will be challenging. Plans for next year aren’t set yet, so watch the JP 3-Gun calendar (normally found on page 77) for more information. 3-Gunners, when you see Carl, ask him about his match. Tell him you heard about it in *Front Sight!*

