

Fall 2003 Newsletter

Visiting Fjord Friends

Submitted by Judy Mathison

Last Friday night, Dad (Lyll Mathison) received a surprise voicemail message - an invitation from fellow MWFHC member Agnes Lee to come down to Clinton (WI) on the weekend because she would be using her horses for an old-fashioned threshing.

Checking the map, we discovered that Clinton was only about an hour's drive from Waukesha, so Dad, our friend Sue Knaak (my fellow driver trainee), and I took Agnes up on her invitation. We hadn't seen Agnes or her son, David, since the 2002 MWFHC annual clinic in Galena, Illinois, but she well-remembered that Dad enjoys watching horses in draft, working out on the farm.

Of course, we were introduced to Agnes' entire head of 22, including four Percherons and 18 Norwegian Fjord Horses, two of which are boarders. Her stallion, Larson, is a happy fellow, as he spends his time in the company of a couple of mares. In the other pasture, all of the mares, babies, and geldings had to come over and check us out (typical Fjord curiosity!) and then follow us back to the barn. Sue had not yet ever seen a Fjord baby and was enthralled with them. Agnes brought in two of the mares to hitch for the threshing.

There was no mistaking the field with the threshing going on! Families driving by were surprised by the unusual sight and pulled off of the road to watch. A number of older men who stopped enjoyed reminiscing with Dad about their early years on the farm.

The grain had been cut and shocked prior to the weekend. A pair of Percherons was making a circuit around the field while walkers pitched the shocks onto the wagon. Agnes and her team of mares joined right in with the second wagon. It was a thrill to see her Fjord girls perform like the veterans that they are. Carriage driving is wonderful, but it was wonderful to see Fjords perform in another historical setting.

For those of you raised in the city or suburbs, like me, here is the rest of the process. Once a wagon is full of shocks of grain, the team drives close to the thresher for unloading. Workers climb up onto the wagon and pitch the shocks into the thresher, where the machine separates the grain into a collecting bin and chops the sheaves of straw, then spits the chopped straw onto a huge pile (15 feet or so by the time we got there). The blower can be adjusted to form the pile into a specific shape.

There was no baling equipment when Dad was growing up, so the straw pile would remain outdoors. The straw at the top had to be formed in a certain way to protect the straw under it over the winter. When straw was needed, his family had to pitch it from the pile into the barn.

The thresher was a noisy, scary monster for horses, but both of the team dealt well with it as part of their routine.

As most of us know, the hay always seems to be ready to be baled and moved into the barn on the very hottest days of the summer. Seems to me that threshing has to happen on the same kind of days. Whew - hot work. But what a wonderful afternoon with horses.

P. S. from Lyll: This visit brought back so many memories for me from growing up on the farm and doing all of these things: cutting grain with a binder that puts it in

bundles, then shocking it so it could dry until it was ready for threshing. I have hauled many loads of grain from the field with teams of horses (including my favorites, Chubby and Star) and pitched many bundles from the wagon into the threshing machine. It is good to see that some people still enjoy doing things the old-fashioned way. I appreciated the invitation and opportunity to be taken back to earlier times when this was the way things were done on the farm.

2003 Blue Earth Show

Submitted by Nancy Hotovy

The Upper Midwest Fjord Horse Show ("Blue Earth Show") was held on July 21, 22 & 23 in Blue Earth, Minnesota, and was a resounding success. There were 96 exhibitors and somewhere around that many horses! How far we have come!

The weather cooperated and the classes were full. I was really proud of the youth classes. We had many new youth ready to show their Fjords! The adult showmanship class had 14 entries while the youth had 17 entries. The riding classes were also full and many enjoyed the Hunter Hack, Bareback Jousting and Ride-A-Buck classes that were held in addition to the English and Western Pleasure classes.

There were many hours spent preparing for the Costume class (with 19 entries). What great ingenuity these Fjord owners have along with the patience and willingness of the horses wearing their new outfits!

The only groans I heard were that the show lasted too long Tuesday evening and we hit the mosquito hour. Actually they are out way more than just one hour and those Minnesota mosquitoes are vicious! The classes were large and took longer to judge than previous years - I guess that's what we call "growing pains".

The Youth High Point award was again a tie - this year the honors went to Keelie Finnel from Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and Sami Poirier from Colorado. These two girls did a great job and were an inspiration to those watching.

The Versatility Award was won by TUF Reba owned by Rich & Nancy Hotovy with TUF Brander owned by Jessica Katzman coming in a close 2nd.

A very special thank you to Mindy Wonnan from Indiana who sang our National Anthem at the beginning of our show each day. What a beautiful voice!

It is with mixed emotions I have now stepped down from the job of Show Secretary for the Blue Earth Show. I have had the job since the early 90's (not exactly sure when). It's been great to see the show grow each year and this year things seemed close to perfect with the numbers of horses AND exhibitors.

We have come a long way from the small barn and arena that was small and very slippery to a huge arena with good footing and a bigger barn, new wash racks and electrical improvements in the barn. Actually, the first year I came to Blue Earth (1988), we showed the Fjords on the track in front of the grandstand.

I challenge the new show committee to always keep the Blue Earth Show a place where everyone feels welcome to come and show their Fjord, whether a newcomer to the breed, a young person learning the ropes of a horse show, or those who show other disciplines at higher levels. Don't discriminate -- make all feel they are just as special as the next person. It can't be an all bad idea - look at the great success of

this show year after year.

I close this article with the invitation to all those who came to see what the Blue Earth Show was about and left their Norwegian Fjords at home - come back next year, *with* your horse, and plan to have a great time with great people.

Show Memories

Submitted by Patti Jo Walter

The Upper Midwest Fjord Horse Show held July 21-23, 2003 in Blue Earth, Minnesota was remarkable. It was by far the best show ever. The number of Fjord horses was approximately 85, about usual. What was NOT usual, was the number of entries in each class. I entered 11 classes, I had 10-20 in each of these classes. ALL the classes were like this, except weanlings, yearling and stallions at halter. They were just huge, huge classes. Which was GREAT!

Competition is wonderful. I know you beginners like to only ride/drive with about 3 in the class, but it's such a great feeling to place out of 10 or 20, and well.... to get 2nd out of 3 just isn't the same. Plus it really makes you work on things at home for next year. Competition is always a good thing.

Things that were the same: friendly, helpful Fjord owners. Our club has to be one of the nicest, or perhaps Fjord owners are just the nicest people on earth! I had people lend me things, help me with tack, we shared grooming supplies, many congrats were given out, it is just such a nice show to be at. I also hope that feeling of seeing a barn full of Fjords and getting goose bumps never goes away. It's such an awesome sight, those middle stalls are great at Blue Earth, they are so airy and really makes it nice to "see" so many of the Fjords.

A few highlights of the show: The costume class had to be one of the top hits of the show. Around 20 exhibitors! Kids and adults alike, I've never seen anything like it. We filled the ring from end to end. The judge gave the mic to each exhibitor and let them say whatever they wanted, something I've never seen before either.

Phil Odden was a troll, in a mask that was very life like. He is a quite the character. He was leading the horse that his son was riding playing the violin and in Norwegian attire. They, of course, won, as they spoke Norwegian, no one knows what they said, but how could you not give it to them at a NORWEGIAN FJORD HORSE SHOW. That class was a memory maker. All the kids were adorable! I, myself, will never live down being the "witch".

Keelie Finnel and Sami Poirier tied for youth high point. Sami is from Colorado and had been at Green Valley Farm all summer training and working. Sami is a VERY talented young rider, who rode Roman-style with Beth Beymer at the Denver Stock Show this year. If you haven't seen that tape, get a hold of it, you will not be sorry. Beth is riding her stallion and driving a team of geldings in front. Sami is standing, riding Roman-style on a pair of mares. They are good!!

Keelie Finnel came with me, she is my friend's daughter and is another VERY talented young rider. Keelie's horse was having hock problems so she only took him in halter and showmanship. I let her take Silas in a couple classes, Joni Griffin let her take her gelding Jock in a couple, and Bonnie Uermann let her take Bergen in classes as well, so Keelie, never having ridden any of these horses besides Silas a couple of times, did a fantastic job.

I was very worried she was gonna beat me in barrels with Silas, she would have too, if she knew how fast that boy is and how tight you have to hold him around the barrels. He went wide the first barrel, after that she knew and had two fantastic turns. That boy can run! I'll have to think twice about letting her take him next year.

I just want to thank every for coming and making this show so wonderful. I know it's a haul for many. It's a 7 hour drive myself, 10 this year as we had some trouble. Let's keep doing what we are doing as it just gets better and better and better.

Remember if you sell a Fjord or meet someone interested, give them this newsletter, so they can join our club. The more the merrier. Word of mouth is the best advertisement and in today's world, sometimes you have to tell them two or three times.

Congrats to ALL of the competitors, you are all winners in my book!

Annual Business Meeting Review

Submitted by Patti Jo Walter

Some important news first, a change of officers took place. Our new president took over, FIRST WOMAN President Karin Peterson, Vice President Walt Monheim (V.P. moves up to President at next term), Secretary Patti So Walter and Treasurer Sharon Falck. New By-laws were approved.

A lot of thank you's went out. There is a lot of work involved in putting on a show, especially one held far from home. Thank you's went out to Nancy Hotovy, Fairbault County Fair Board, Whitney's, Hans'. There are a lot more who help, and I just want to say thank you from our club, we could NOT do it without each and every one of you.

There was a professional photographer on the grounds, many took advantage of some very nice photos of themselves and their horse(s).

2004 show committee is Pat Holland, Linda Syverson-Kerr and Howard Fiedler and they were busy listening to suggestions and comments for next year. You can contact them for suggestions, comments, or concerns. That's why they are getting the big bucks!!

The brochure committee has also been busy getting a rough draft finished; photos were still needed.

The NFHR report from Al Merrill was thorough and complete. He is always keeping us informed of what is happening at the national level. They are busy busy busy, new owners handbook is complete. The NFHR is sending those out to new members, but the rest of us can buy them at \$5 a piece. Contact Mike May. The coloring book should be complete this fall, along with a versatility video and a new record book is coming out by the end of the year. National level is working hard for our breed.

The MWFHCs website is being worked on and hopefully will soon be completed and running under the NFHR website.

Sophie Fiedler volunteered to head up the winter meeting in 2004. She will be working on when/where/what it will consist of. She has coordinated several in the past and always does a wonderful job, sure this one will be great as well. You won't

want to miss it!!

Fairbault 4-H served our club lunch after our meeting, the club bought the meal for its members. Thank you MWFHC! yum yum.

Editor's Note: The MWFHC follows parliamentary procedure, so minutes of our meetings cannot be published until approved. Secretary Patti Jo Walter submitted some meeting highlights instead.

Looking Ahead to Blue Earth 2004

Submitted by Pat Holland

With the 2003 show now over, it's great to look back on what a success it was. For those of you who could not make it, please write the dates for next year's show down now, July 26-28, and set that time aside to attend. Without a doubt, the Blue Earth show is the largest attended Fjord event in the country and it continues to grow.

A few changes will be in effect for 2004, but only a "tweak" here and there. We're still deciding on a couple of new classes, so if you have any suggestions, let us know. Linda Syverson-Kerr has kindly accepted the position of organizing class sponsorships. Some of you may remember doing this before, but it is time-consuming to put it together. Linda will have more information for you by the winter meeting.

Another change, the entry fees will be \$8.00 and late fee, \$12.00.

It appears as if I will be the Chairperson of this show, and I sincerely appreciate the work Nancy Hotovy has done in the past. I don't know if I can fill her shoes, but I will try. The show committee will be keeping in touch with all of you. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at 815-591-3658.

La Crosse Evaluation 2003

Submitted by Sophie Fielder

The Evaluation Committee would like to thank Phillip Odden, Linda Syverson-Kerr and their committee for sponsoring the LaCrosse, Wisconsin, evaluation. The facility was very nice, well-organized, and everything ran smoothly in spite of the delayed arrival of the evaluators, but that is a story for another time!

Linda gave endlessly of herself and her energy by attending to everyone's needs and wants. Her 4-H group prepared breakfast and lunch at the site, and when we were running late, Linda's husband, Jim, accommodated us by preparing a chicken dinner with all the trimmings. We paid a small fee that went to the 4-H club. The 4-H drill team entertained us at the lunch break with a performance that was outstanding!

Sherle and Walt Monheim are special Fjord friends. Walt measured the height and cannon of all horses presented for conformation. Walt recruited Howard Fiedler and the ~ of them set up the advanced utility tests and were always available if anything needed to be done. Sherle did the layout and printing for the booklet and generously donated the cost of the the printing. Sherle actually brought her computer to the event so she could make any last minute changes!

Joan Griffin helped Mike May with all the crucial paperwork which takes time and accuracy. I'm sure I'm missing others who also helped but it is people like these that make our NFHR so special.

Thank you to all who participated, for continuing to learn more about the Fjord, and for demonstrating the athletic skills of this unique breed. The Fjord owners were supportive of each other and a pleasure to work with.

Also a big thanks to Karen Cabic and Wayne Hipsley, our senior evaluators; Beth Beymer and Sharon Makurat, trainees; and Mike May, technical delegate.