

Reviews of the Blue Earth Horse Show, 2004

Date: Sat, 31 Jul 2004

From: Phillip Odden

Email: nww@norskwoodworks.com

Subject: Blue Earth

OK ... I will volunteer to outline a few of the highlights from my humble perspective.

I heard there were 129 horses there. Among them were lots of brown fjords, a couple grays, a couple white duns, and at least one red.

First of all we had wonderful weather the first two days with mild temps. There was wind, and showers threatened on the last day but I can't recall getting wet from the rain.

With such nice weather and a well organized show everyone seemed to be in good competitive spirits. People seemed to be very helpful. There were several new competitors there and others who were there making plans to bring horses and show next year.

This year the show committee made an extra effort to list classes for people with green horses and for those who were showing for the first time. I saw people with mighty big smiles who were courageous enough to take that first step in the show world. They had prepared their horses well and lived down those anxious moments before the classes to be recognized with a ribbon for their efforts.

There were more experienced fjord-show people who entered classes they never thought they would enter. I rode my stallion Smedsmo Gråen in English pleasure with about twenty others. This was a situation that was difficult for me to imagine last year. My hope was that it would get late enough and be dark out so nobody would see me. In the end my horse and I did most everything we were supposed to do but not as well as many others. Next year...

I also did the showmanship class with him and waited in a line of eighteen or so to show my horse to judge Karen Cabic. That was the most difficult class of all for me since I had never tried it before. I won a ribbon too and my stallion did as he was supposed to, but I thought that class would never end. Next year I will have to wear a towel around my waist to catch the sweat running down my back. They didn't have to water the arena where I was standing.

Blue Earth is a show where inexperience people can come and be welcomed. People are friendly and helpful. The level of competition has increased dramatically in the past few years as has the number of entries. There were several great moving, well polished horses there.

My favorite classes are the driving classes. The horses were fit, well trained, and the turnouts presented a very nice picture. The scurry, double jeopardy and gamblers- choice presented hot competition with a good deal of encouragement from driver to horse to get up and get going. The horses were reaching, and the carts were skidding as the dust flew.

Judge Cabic presented a class for showmanship for adults and youth. There were several youth who participated in the showmanship class as well.

The costume class was outstanding with a large number of participants. My favorite was a two horse circus team. The horses were dresses as elephants complete with long trunks and lots of color. The lead horse was ridden into the ring as the rider stood on the horse's back. In that class a horse hitched to a chariot made for some excitement as he got away for a few rounds of the arena. Nobody hurt.

I believe there were four, four-in-hand hitches and three tandems as well as other farm hitches. They were outstanding. After four years of looking over the various techniques for the log-pull I finally caught on to a few of the finer moves in that class. If you want to win the log pull it will have to be at a trot now.

In the end I heard folks thanking others for being there to provide healthy competition. Next year it appears the challenge for the show committee will be to have enough room and stalls to hold everyone.

The photographer has pictures of the show at <http://avalonequinephotos.com/>

Phillip Odden

Date: Sun, 1 Aug 2004

From: Pat Holland

Email: pholland@internetni.com

Subject: Blue Earth

The Blue Earth show was without a doubt the greatest fjord event in the country.

And I want to thank everyone who came.

We had officially 120 horses and 561 entries. I know of no other Fjord event with these numbers or any event with the caliber of Fjord horses present. It was simply the best.

We had a major surge of newcomers this year and they brought with them their talents and experience that we in the Midwest Fjord Horse Club in particular and the NFHR in general should be extremely proud of.

But more importantly our Midwest Fjord Horse Club retains our founders and they remain the strong hold of this group. I cannot take one ounce of credit for this show. It is to the credit of Roger and Diane Whitney, Ron and Kit Davis (I mention Ron here because he was there in spirit so strong you could feel it), Rich and Nancy Hotovy, Bob and Therine Gudknecht, Ann Hans (Tom was absent only physically - work took him away this year, but I bet he was thinking of us as we, him), Mike and Susie Sadlon and I hope I haven't missed any one. All of the above mentioned people made this show what it is and I am very proud to be a small part of this great, great group.

Wins were spread all around this year. I don't believe one exhibitor took it all so to speak. The classes were very tuff and very large. 20+ in some classes. I remember a time when you couldn't place 4th in a class because there were not four IN the class - this year just placing in a class was a big deal. If someone says they took a 6th place they may have competed against 15-23 horses! Congratulate them, they did well!

The High Point Versatility Award went to Linda Severson-Kerr's great gelding Spruce Hill Markus winning with 21 points. Linda showed great ability to do the "3rd day walking dead" routine. Not only was she a very active worker at the show she managed to present her horse in a fashion to win this award. I don't know where she found the energy.

Reserve High Point Versatility went to Green Valley Farm with Sophie Fiedler's favorite mare Sandura. It was a close call standing behind Marcus only by one point. The High Point Youth award also was won by a member of the Green Valley Farm Family - Sami Poirier riding the Reserve Versatility mare Sandura, taking the award with 15 points.

Reserve High Point Youth was Sarah Dahl earning 12 points.

Grand Champion Gelding was Bjorn owned by Denny and Ramona Redfield and Reserve Champion Gelding was Sonne owned by Jon and Mary Ofjord.

Grand Champion Mare was Sterda owned by Howard and Sophie Fiedler and Reserve Champion Mare was Mark McGinleys 2 yr old mare Rokida's Berit

Grand Champion Stallion was Phil Odden's Smedsmo Graen and Reserve Champion Stallion was DeeAnna Weed's Draoi.

I have to mention here that as with any large show like this a mishap is almost sure to happen and we had a few. However the unusual part is that no one suffered an injury and I firmly believe it is because of the caliber of true horsemen we have in our group. I want to bring attention to Bob Gudknecht and Phil Odden for their true horsemanship, quick thinking and foresight. We all quickly realized Ron Davis was watching and was working through these gentlemen.

Speaking of Ron and Kit Davis, our tribute to him was enhanced by Rich Hotovy and his eloquent words and Philis Anderson and Robin Holland with their music. Standing alongside Bob Gudknecht while he later drove with Kit and Ron's four horse hitch, comprising Valea's Lee, Olaf's Sol's Flick, Rokida's Ulrick and N. Creek Gustav - Rick spoke of Ron's gentle nature and uncompromising dedication to the Fjord Horse.

Ron was a true breeder, the disposition of the horses he bred and raised, along with the proven outstanding performance history of their offspring will long out live all of us -- what a legacy he left. Rich in only his unique heartfelt way demonstrated the pain we all feel from Ron's untimely death.

I also need to thank all of the volunteers whom came to me offering to help. I am so sorry I did not keep a list, but please know how much I appreciate how you stepped forward and came through for the Club. I didn't realize the work that goes into the show - while there. It is never ending but, with the results we managed to achieve, it was all very much worth it. Thank you - those who were there for me, I know you know whom I'm talking about - thank you.

Now for some more news.....next year is our 20th Anniversary and we are going all out to celebrate. Gary Johnson, the Fair Manger in Blue Earth and I got together and are already making plans.

Along time ago I was pushing for a national show - it was difficult for me to walk away from that dream - it's funny how things end up -- a national caliber show just snuck up and found me -- life is good.

Mark your calendars for the week of July 26, 2005, in Blue Earth, Minnesota. You will want to be a part of this.

Pat Holland