

Winter 2005-06 Newsletter

President's Message

by Chuck Kelly

Well I guess we have answered the question of if we will be able to get the sleighs out this year!

We already have about 8 inches on the ground here in northeast Iowa, and I am sure that you folks further north have much more than that.

It looks like we have another exciting winter meeting planned. We also will have some important business to consider, so I hope the weather cooperates and everyone will be able to attend.

I did a little rough calculating, and here is where our membership hails from:

State	Members	Percent
Wisconsin	62	38.5
Minnesota	50	31.0
Illinois	19	11.8
Iowa	10	6.2
Michigan	6	3.7
Ohio	4	2.5
Other states	10	6.2
Total	161	

81.3% of our members live in the top three states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois. It would seem that we really are the Mid-West Fjord Horse Club!

Take care all and I hope to see you at the winter meeting.

Chuck Kelly

Driving Miss Driva

Submitted by Laurie With

On the north shore of Lake Superior, halfway between Duluth and Canada, is Grand Marais, Minnesota. It's a harbor town on the big lake, but it also sits right on the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and the Superior National Forest.

It's filled with many special places to shop and learn. One of those places, the North House Folk School, features a variety of outdoor skills and classes, including a half-day course in Pleasure Driving Fjord Horses.

My admittedly non-horse friend, Carol, whom many of you have met at Blue Earth the last two years, suggested we give it a try. It's facilitated by Philis Anderson, well-known to the Fjord community.

We arrived at her farm, just off the Gunflint Trail, on a very warm September Saturday, and were greeted by Philis and some of her critters. We met the horses, Karina and Driva, who were to be our teachers for the day. Karina was the larger of the two, with a cute smile and kind manners. Driva was my teacher, and seemed

small to me, when compared to my huge Oz, but she was also a gentle soul.

We began with some grooming, and then Philis showed us how to harness them. I think as Carol worked with Karina, she relaxed and learned why so many of us are so in love with our Fjords. After harnessing, we then took them into Philis's outdoor arena to try some ground driving before the real thing.

Driva was very sensitive, and I kept stopping her in spite of myself with my hand signals. Carol seemed to do just fine, and both girls seemed to do alright in spite of our inexperience.

Then it was time to hook up the cart. Karina was our tour guide, since she was the larger of the two and better able to handle three people in the cart.

Accompanied by her dogs, we started on the roads and shortly came to some trails that wind through Philis's property. She was careful to drive in the opposite direction from where someone had been bear hunting and there was supposedly a wounded bear wandering about.

The day was beautiful, and Karina carried us well. I can't say that I could go right out and harness up Oz, but Carol and I both got a feel for what Fjords can really do as Karina trotted back to Philis's farm.

Editor's Note: To learn more about the North House Folk School, visit www.northhouse.org or call 888-387-9762. The school also offers a wood carving course taught by MWFHC members Phil Odden and Else Bigton.

The Comeback Kid

Submitted by Pat Holland

I would like to share with you all a story with a nice ending, and because of our love of the Fjord breed, perhaps something to learn from.

Last year I was asked to prepare and present the stallion Kimpton Brook's Eiken Var at the 2005 La Crosse NFHR Evaluation for Susan Crawford.

Eiken Var is by the great old stallion "Solar" and out of a mare going back to another foundation horse "Line". Bloodline-wise, this horse deserved to be preserved, but Eiken Var came with a problem. When he was a yearling he contracted EHV (Equine Herpes Virus)...better known as Rhino.

We all vaccinate for Rhino and some of us have horses contract the disease, usually with only respiratory distress or in mares abortion, however Eiken Var contracted a type that went neurological - he was literally paralyzed in all four legs - could not move - and he carried an odd movement behind because of the disease - rare but documented.

I had a copy of his prognosis from the University of Illinois and asked three local Veterinarians if bringing him back into work would do him harm, all of which said what damage there was, was done and could do no harm.

So on May 14, 2005 I started him in a training program. Here was a breeding stallion who, for 10 years, had been allowed to recover and adjust to his "odd" movement on his own. He had not been trained for anything, but was cared for well and obviously loved by Susan. In the beginning he could not trot for 10 minutes, his hind end tended to drag or over step, it was like he didn't know where his hind feet were. I found with slow, steady everyday work he was gaining and building muscle

control and regaining somewhat normal movement behind. But the "hitch in his get-a-long" was still there.

The willingness that this horse showed me to work **was unreal**. He had every reason in world to say "no" to the things I asked of him and he never did.

I wanted to get him fit for the conformation test, so I began working him to a stone boat and thought, if possible, I'd put him in the intro draft test as well and possibly the intro driving test.

My conditioning program was such that I LITERALLY counted our steps, each day.....50 trot strides, then 100 then 150 with 50 pounds on the boat, then twice around my outdoor arena, then four times around - so on and so forth.....everyday this horse looked forward to the work and gave me all he could. Eventually we were up to 300 pounds on the boat and working the draft test.

He had never been off Susan's farm, so I used the Blue Earth show to acclimate him - he was "up" but manageable and we even did the ladies log pull class.

Evaluation time came and he was a 100% gentleman in hand...stood like a rock and presented himself beautifully. He received a 9 on his head, 8.5 on his neck, 8 for his body and an 8.5 overall and 8.5 in type -- outstanding scores -- but unfortunately the evaluators had to score what they see that day. He received a 4 on his walk and a 5 on his trot, thus not allowing him to go on for the performance tests. He was approved for breeding with a combined score of 73.

The point of this story is that what this gentleman of a horse showed ME. Here was a horse that carried a physical disability, left untrained for 10 years and came back to me with the will of "Rocky"...like in the movie.

THIS showed me what a good Fjord IS. His temperament was always gentle and kind, he never made a fight and tried so hard to work and please. And mind you, all of this work happened in 2 1/2 months - again after 10 years off work.

By the way Kimpton Brook's Eiken Var has a daughter, SFF Ebba who received an 8.5 on her walk and trot. She also received her Gold and Silver Medallion of Quality.

We have a unique breed. I just wanted to share this story with all of you.

Iduna Acres Oyer Takes Home the Blue

Submitted by Hannah Boisen

Hi everyone, my name is Hannah Boisen. I am a freshman at Zumbrota High School. My parents are Tom and Linda Boisen. We live in Mazeppa, Minn. on 20 rolling acres with my younger sister, Hayley.

My sister and I have been showing Paint and Quarter horses for the past five years. We compete in the Western Pleasure and Halter classes. However, this year I also started showing our two-year-old Fjord gelding, "Iduna Acres Oyer" in Pleasure-type halter. (This class is open to all non-Quarter Horse breeds.)

Oyer spent his summer competing against Arabians, Morgans, Saddlebreds and other Fjords just to name a few. Overall he took home nine blues and one red. This made him the 2005 Goodhue County/WSCA highpoint winner. I received our award in November at the year-end award banquet in Northfield, Minn.



Hannah Boisen and Iduna Acres Oyer had a successful show season in 2005. They won the Goodhue County/WSCA Highpoint Award. Photo by Bob Mischka.

This summer at Blue Earth, Oyer won the 2 & 3-year-old gelding class, took second in Trail-in-Hand and two fourths in adult and youth showmanship. I was very surprised by his good behavior. He had to stand still for a half-hour, two classes in a row. I was so proud of him. That seemed like a lot to ask of a two-year-old.

Of all the horses I have ever dealt with, Oyer is the one that astonishes me the most. Whether it's his "everyone look at me" attitude or his love for anything edible. I'm sure if it were up to him, he would be right in the house living with us. He's as close to being human as possible! I love all my horses, but there is something about him that touches me in every way and that's the reason why he's the favorite.

This winter, Oyer will start Western pleasure training at Al Hartman Show Horses. Al is a respected WSCA judge and Quarter Horse trainer. He is a faithful riding instructor and friend. I'm glad he lives close to me, as I don't think I could handle being far away from Oyer. Al has also worked with my four-year-old Paint gelding, "Watch Zipper Flash."

Oyer is by WH Stone and out of DHF Lily, both owned by Jim and Vicki Hovre, Iduna Acres Fjords. If you are looking for a show-quality Fjord Horse with a great personality, you better give them a call.

I hope everyone has a fun holiday season. Hope to see you all at the winter Fjord Horses meeting.

The Blue Earth Show from the Chairman's Perspective

Submitted by Pat Holland

It was an honor to be not only a part of this year's Blue Earth show as an exhibitor, but also as the Chairman. It was without a doubt one of the best experiences of my life.

It's hard to relate to all of you the camaraderie we experience putting together this event and seeing it to conclusion. It's almost like watching your child grow up and do well. Pride hardly describes it.



Youth at Blue Earth 2005. Left: RJ Kerr with Spruce Hill Markus, 1st place Showmanship 7 & under. Middle: Savanna Poirier with Tirra, 2nd Costume 18 & under. Right: Samantha Poirier riding Haylee, Youth High Point. Photos by Sophie Fiedler

Putting a show together is no easy task. Putting a Fjord show together successfully is downright difficult. With all the talents our varied exhibitors carry, plus the versatility of this wonderful breed, creating a venue stretches our organizational skills and imaginations to the limit.

To be able to celebrate our 20th year together in Blue Earth was not only rewarding but emotional. Talking to and taking into account the work the founders have done over these two decades, it's hard to believe such a small group of ambitious Fjord owners came together, stuck together and worked so hard to make what we have each year in July at Blue Earth.

We've suffered growing pains, worked out problems, found solutions, used our group's individual resources, thought "outside the box", carried the show and tripped a few times. Yet, as a whole, we shared a few days that carry us all through, looking forward to returning again next year.

We've seen children become adults, we've seen beginners advance, we've seen green horses become solid, we've seen nervous "new-bees" become experienced showmen, we've seen young horses become old and we've seen a great member, in particular, leave his legacy with his horses and dedicated family.

We laugh, we cry, we have on-going jokes, traditions and routines. We know where to be to help, when to stay away, what to say and when not to say it.

The hardest part of the Blue Earth show is the day we all leave. No one wants to say good bye, knowing we might not see each other for awhile. We hug, we say "have a safe trip," we pack our trailers and try not to notice the rigs leaving one by one.

No show, no event, no gathering of people of any kind is perfect. But for three days out of the year, the MWFHC-sponsored Blue Earth show is about as good as it gets in terms of the people that make up the membership of this Registry and the breed we all love, the Norwegian Fjord Horse. See you all next year!