

Winter 2003-04 Newsletter

Villa Louis Sets a Beautiful Stage for Fjords

Submitted by Phillip Odden

The first weekend in September found 119 competitors polishing their vehicles and grooming their horses and ponies for the ADS sanctioned Villa Louis Carriage Classic on the banks of the Mississippi River in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

People and horses from several states came to compete. There were 6 Fjords registered in 3 of the 13 divisions offered. Marguerite Meade and Dr. Joan Kepros drove in the Single Pony Open division with 15 entries. Susan Keating of Woodstock, Illinois, drove her five-year-old gelding put to a phaeton in the Novice Horse/Pony division among 12 entries. Paul Degen of Mason City, Iowa, Linda Syverson Kerr of Holmen, Wisconsin, and Phillip Odden of Barronett, Wisconsin, entered the Novice Driver Pony division where there were a total of 12 turnouts.

A wide variety of breeds put to varied and interesting vehicles made for a colorful and lively show. The overall level of competition was very high though there were several classes for novice drivers and novice horses. Some people came to win ribbons and others came with less ambitious expectations. For some whips, just learning to show under the strict ADS rules was accomplishment enough. For those who knew how to groom, harness, present, and drive already; the challenge may have been an inexperienced horse lacking exposure to all that can happen in the tight show realm. There is a lot to learn and people were willing to share knowledge.

The Fjords did very well in their divisions. In the Novice Horse/Pony division Susan Keating was the champion with 24 points, driving Nerid. Paul Degen won the Novice Driver Pony division by one point with Linda Syverson Kerr and Spruce Hill Markus taking second place and Phillip Odden in third place with his stallion Smedsmo Graen. The fjords did not place in the tough single horse open division. Marguerite Meade took a couple ribbons, but Dr. Joan Kepros flipped her cart in the cross-country class taking her out of the competition on the first day. Joan and her horse are very seasoned competitors and together have won their division in the past. It was sobering to see the wreck happen though nobody was seriously hurt.

If you wish to compete in a regional ADS driving show it is important to be prepared. Besides all the equipment, you and your horse need to be able to handle congested ring classes as well as wide open cross-county and gamblers choice classes where the goal is to see how much you and your horse can tolerate. The challenges are stiff, the surrounds are grandly beautiful, the people and horses are intriguing, and the judges are down right tough.

Fjords, Chicago & Turkey Day

Submitted by Jessica Katzman

On Nov. 27, Chicago, Illinois, held its 70th Annual State Street Thanksgiving Day Parade. The parade had 12 gigantic helium balloons, 24 outstanding marching bands, 17 majestic equestrian units, 12 fabulous holiday floats, 24 specialty units, and 12 honored guests and celebrities.

The crew at Lazy Valley Ranch consisting of Tyler Schlickman, Dawn Woolever, Jessica Katzman, Cierra and Cole Woolever participated as one of the 17 equestrian units. To get into this parade, we had to send in an application. In August, we were part of the Clinton, Wis. all-equestrian parade. After the parade we received a thank

you letter that included information about the Chicago Thanksgiving Day Parade. They were looking for new participants so we called the contact information and started the application process. This consisted of a picture of our unit, our qualifications, and our parade experience. We waited for what seemed a long amount of time to hear from the parade committee. Then one day in the mail, our letter of acceptance came.

Now it was time to figure out costumes to go along with the parade's Christmas theme. After some tedious thinking, it was decided that we would go with a Victorian theme. So Dawn rented costumes from a local college theater department. We decorated our three quarter scale vis-a-vis carriage with Christmas greenery, gold bows and bells.

The night before the parade, we took the 2 girls (Reterra Alida and Rokida's Nanna) down to the neighbor's heated wash rack so we could clean them up. (They were a muddy mess from the previous weeks of rain and mild weather.) They were, not thrilled with the process, but being good girls they grinned and bore it. With promises of oatmeal dancing in their heads, it was hard to turn down. While the mares were drying, we packed the essentials for the next day.

The next morning started at 4:30, which was early for some of us. It was a balmy 28 degrees with a thick covering of fog. Tyler and Cole went out to the barn to wake up the girls. They sure did not enjoy the lights being turned on. I know they were glad to be getting out of the stalls because they sure did not want to go in them. Tyler and Cole harnessed them up to save time for when we got to the parade, as this was our first time at this parade and we did not know what to expect. We thought it was better to be safe than sorry! Once the girls were harnessed it was time to load up and head down the road for the 2-hour trip to Chicago.

Master driver Tyler, who has experience with Chicago traffic, got us to our destination safe and sound. We arrived with 15 minutes to spare for our 8:00 check-in time. So that gave us time to take in the sites and sounds of downtown Chicago. We maneuvered into our assigned spot behind the Milk Buds of Somerset, Wis. From there we unloaded the horses and carriage, reloaded the horses to hoof black their feet because the city of Chicago did not want black hoof prints everywhere! In between hoof blacking, wiping down the harness and carriage, we each took turns getting into our costumes. When we were all dressed, it was picture time! Our good friend Roger Best, who got up very early to come with just to drive the truck and trailer, took our pictures and then drove our rig to its disband area where we would load back up after the parade. This was one of the most difficult parts of our adventure because we had to have someone who was capable of safely driving our 65-foot rig through the streets of Chicago.

The parade started at 8:30, but we were not set to step off until 10:05. So we had plenty of time to observe the other units in the parade. There were the Milk Buds which consisted of an 8 horse hitch of black and white ponies, a riding group from Hawaii, the beautiful horses from Medieval Times Dinner Theater, and various other groups and associations from around the area. We were the only Fjords so that drew a lot of attention. While we were standing and waiting, a high-speed street sweeper went flying right by in front of us, but this did not faze our girls. (The equestrian unit coordinator then proceeded to chase him down by foot.) I feel this speaks highly of the calm disposition of the Fjord breed.

At 10:00 we were instructed to be ready to march. Each unit was assigned a parade attendant who walked along with us on the parade route to keep us spaced correctly and answer our many questions. The parade was only 9 blocks long, but it seemed more like 9 miles! We encountered many "spooky" things as we were merging

towards State Street street, as a 35-foot Frosty the Snowman balloon, a very musical Brach's Candy float with pom pom girls, and many marching bands.

Our wonderful girls took it all in stride. We were so proud of them. Not once did they shy, but they did keep a careful eye on their surroundings. As the parade proceeded, we received many compliments on our team, carriage, and costumes. That made all the hard work and early hours well worth it. As a group we decided to try this again next year.

As we were loading back up to head home, we realized how wonderful the morning had gone and how great our horses are. We could not have asked for a better showing. As we are all family, it was a great way to spend Thanksgiving together.

We wish everyone Happy Fjording!

Evaluation 2004?

Submitted by Phillip Odden

Last year Phillip Odden, together with Linda Syverson Kerr hosted an evaluation near La Crosse, Wisconsin. There was an evaluation in Cincinnati in 2003 with Neil and Ruth Sorum hosting. Sophie and Howard Fiedler hosted an evaluation in 2002 at Galena, Illinois.

People have asked if there will be an evaluation in 2004 in the Midwest. That depends on how much interest there is and how many horses people want to be evaluated. If we can get thirty horses committed to be evaluated, chances are good the evaluation will happen.

If someone is interested in having a horse or horses evaluated, please contact Phillip Odden or Sophie Feidler.

If you are interested in hosting an evaluation and you have a site in mind, you can request an information packet from our registrar Mike May.

If there are enough horses to be evaluated and nobody comes forward to host the evaluation, arrangements can be made to have it at either Galena or La Crosse.

We should have an idea of how many horses there are to be evaluated by the Winter Meeting so a decision can be made at that time.

Win a Fjord for 4-H Benefit

Submitted by Patti Jo Walter

The Manitowoc County 4-H Horse and Pony Project has a wonderful and exciting project lined up for 2004 AND the best part-it includes a Fjord Filly! I must admit, this was not my idea, although many will think it was.

Our 4-H committee bought Arianna, an imported 3 yr old Norwegian Fjord Filly. She is adorable, very well bred, great conformation and best of all a great disposition and temperament. But, of course, she is a FJORD. I have agreed to start the filly for the committee, then have some older talented 4-H'ers work with Arianna, campaign her all over the state of Wis., selling Raffle Tickets and raffling her off at our County Fair in Aug. of 2004. It really is gonna be a fun year for all of us!

Arianna has the kids working with her gearing her up for Horse-A-Rama, April 3 & 4

in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and the Midwest Horse Fair in Madison, Wisconsin, April 16-18. After that we will be switching gears a little and working with her on showmanship and halter. Arianna will be brought to several horse shows in the area, she will be going to a couple of clinics in Wisconsin, she'll be in parades, at local 4-H events, other events in the area and well, her date book is booking up fast!

I am VERY excited that they wanted a Fjord and I'm as equally excited that Arianna is the one they choose. She was imported from Norway as a weanling. She has wonderful breeding, Rannar, top stallion in Norway is her Sire. Guri is the Dam. Both horses ride and drive and so will Arianna by the time we raffle her off.

She also will be worked with in the Parelli Style as one of the other leaders is very much into this style of training. Arianna even had her first introduction to it this week. The handler, Judy Wiesbrook commented, "things Arianna picked up in this short session, took months, with my other horses." "Wow, I want to win this horse!" Arianna is just very calm and very smart, like most Fjords I think. She will be a wonderful representative of the breed and I'm just thrilled to be working with her and getting this opportunity to have so many different people be exposed to the Fjord Breed.

I am hoping that some of you would like to have the chance to win her as well. If you would like to buy a ticket, please email Patti Jo Walter at dwalter@lakefield.net or mail a check written out to the Manitowoc County 4-H Horse and Pony Committee, \$5 a ticket or 6 for \$25. Mail it to Patti Jo Walter, 4405 Moody Ln, Two Rivers WI 54241 and make sure you enclose a SASE, so I can return your ticket stub. Drawing will be held at our County Fair in Aug. of 2004. It's for a GREAT cause and she is a GREAT horse.

I know it will be hard to part with her, and it will be VERY different to actually be giving her away rather than selling her, but I'm totally confident that a wonderful person will win her. It would be really nice for an already existing Fjord Owner to win her, and time will tell if that will be the case.

Travel to Norway for Stallion Show in May

Submitted by Phillip Odden

The annual Fjord Stallion Show will be held at Norfjordeid in scenic fiord and mountain country of western Norway on May 6, 7 and 8, 2004. People have expressed interest in attending the show. Housing is limited and transportation must be coordinated carefully.

If people are interested in attending the stallion show you may contact Phillip Odden for suggestions on finding accommodations and transportation.

If enough people attend the show there may be a program arranged with senior NFHR evaluators to help explain the Norwegian evaluation process and the individual animals.