

Built Fjord tough

Rocky Mountain Fjord Horse Club formed in Berthoud

By Heidi Kerr-Schlaefer
The Surveyor

The Poirier family of Berthoud is fanatical about Fjords. And what's not to love about these short, sturdy and good-natured horses? The Norwegian Fjord horse is an old breed with a long record of pure-breeding. A Norwegian Fjord today is nearly identical to the horse upon which the Vikings sat 2,000 years ago. Now that is something to brag about.

According to the Norwegian Fjord Horse Registry (NFHR), there are only approximately 6,000 registered Fjord horses in the United States. The breed is much more common across Europe and very popular in its home country of Norway. In Norway these horses were used as draft animals. The surefooted animal was an ideal horse for farming the mountainous terrain of Western Norway.

Today the Norwegian Fjord is prized



Casey McCannel of Birchwood, Wis. on Starfire Farm's mare, Orinke, was very competitive in the jousting game. Casey is currently a student at Colorado State University.

for its versatility. Owners claim their Fjords can "do it all." The statement rings true. Fjords are used for draft, dressage, trail riding, jumping and western pleasure riding. "A lot of people who own Fjord horses will tell you the best thing about the horse is its versatility. That plays a big part in why people own this breed. For me personally, it's their disposition and character," stated Jeanne Poirier.

Poirier and her family live in southwest Berthoud along County Road 4. They own three Norwegian Fjords. There is a saying among Fjord owners that the horse is like potato chips, you can't just have one. Poirier became interested in the breed in the 1990s. She formed a friendship with Sandy North and Beth Beymer, owners of Starfire Farm, also located in southwest Berthoud. Starfire Farm (www.starfirefarm.com) breeds Fjords, and Beymer and North have extensive knowledge and love of the breed. The two are also editors of "The Fjord Herald," a magazine dedicated to Norwegian Fjord horses.

The women have now formed friendships with an extensive network of Northern Colorado Fjord owners. The group jokes about renaming County Road 4, County Road Fjord, as the number of Fjord owners in the area continues to multiply. "If you own a Fjord you have to be willing to talk — because they draw people. People seek out the Fjords at events such as the stock show. People always have a smile on their faces when they come towards us because the horse brings that out in them. How can you not smile back? I truly believe these horses bring out the neat side of peoples' personalities," stated Poirier.

On Nov. 1, 2008, the group held their third annual Fjord Fun Day at Starfire Farm. The day is a chance for Fjord owners to get together, ride, play games, eat and enjoy their horses together. This



Photos courtesy of Sandy North of Starfire Farm, LLC

Kirsten Becker, of Florissant, Colo., and her mare Aimee, deftly navigated the obstacle course with the six-foot ball.

year's Fun Day brought together nearly 60 participants and approximately 30 Fjord horses, not counting the Fjords who live at Starfire Farm. They came from as far away as Utah, New Mexico and Nebraska.

The Fun Day started with the group performing a quadrille. The quadrille is a show where horses and riders perform choreographed movements. It is a beautiful display of the versatility, agility, artistry and the connection between horse and rider, as well as the connection of the entire group. In previous years, the group has performed the quadrille at Stock Show.

"From there we moved into the games. The games everyone played were so fun. People were rolling with laughter," said Poirier. These games involved horse and riders participating in pushing a huge multi-colored ball onto a platform, trickier than it seems, pajama

races and pie races. These fun-filled games also provide a chance for the horses to show off their calm and accommodating nature.

After games the horses were finally put up and the group settled into an enormous buffet of delicious food. "It couldn't have been a more perfect party and gathering. It was really, really fun," said Poirier.

This year the Fjord Fun Day was extra special. The group had made the decision to form their own Fjord club called the Rocky Mountain Fjord Horse Club. The club held their first meeting on Fjord Fun Day. "For us to attend and participate in any Fjord events, whether an evaluation or a show, we have always traveled great distances. It's a major summer project for us to attend these events," explained Poirier.

By creating their own club, formally recognized by the NFHR, the group will

now hold their own shows and evaluations, bringing together Fjord owners from the Rocky Mountains and beyond to Berthoud, Colo. The group will also be able to attend events such as the Rocky Mountain Horse Expo, as a formally recognized club.

At the Fun Day, the Rocky Mountain Fjord Horse Club nominated the following officers: President - Jeanne Poirier of Berthoud, Vice-President - Vicky Newport of Berthoud, Secretary - Beth German of Sandia Park, N.M., and Treasurer Susan Cargill of Birchwood, Wis.

If you'd like to learn more about the club, call Jeanne Poirier at (303) 776-1568. The club's Web site, www.rmfhc.com, is coming soon. Learn more about Fjord horses at The National Fjord Horse Registry's Web site at www.nfhr.com, or visit Starfire Farm at www.starfirefarm.com.



Norwegian Fjord horses and Fjord enthusiasts came to Starfire Farm in Berthoud from the mountains and the plains of Colorado, as well as from New Mexico, Utah and Wisconsin, to participate in Fjord Fun Day, to share time with friends, and to hold the first official meeting of the Rocky Mountain Fjord Horse Club.

Christmas in Berthoud 2008 Schedule of events

For more information about Christmas in Berthoud 2008, please visit www.ChristmasInBerthoud.org.

Planned Events on Saturday, Dec. 6:
8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. — Exercise Extravaganza taught by Joyce Hayes at Five Stones, 770 N. Second St. Classes will be going on all day. Come for one or all. A drawing for a special Mary Kay skin care products basket valued at \$350 will be held. Tickets \$1. All proceeds will go to the Christmas Fund.
8 a.m. — Muscle Pump Fitness Class at Berthoud Athletic Club, no fee to attend, all donations go to the Christmas fund.
9 a.m. — Yoga Class at Berthoud Athletic Club, no fee to attend, all donations go to the Christmas fund.
9 a.m. — Shops open, enjoy a day of shopping with many specials throughout Berthoud.
9 a.m. - 12 p.m. — Photos with Santa at RE/MAX Town & Country Realty, 340 Mountain Ave.
9 a.m. - 6 p.m. — Berthoud Drug open extended hours. FREE gift wrapping on all purchases from Berthoud Drug. Gift basket drawing with tickets for \$1 and all proceeds will go to the fund. All Christmas items on sale from 2-6 p.m.
10 a.m. - 4 p.m. — Home Based Business Bazaar — more than 25 vendors will be at the Berthoud Area Community Center selling their products. Each one will be donating to the fund.
10 a.m. - 8 p.m. — indigo sky will be open extended hours ... door prize drawing ... hot cider and cookies ... We have a "Christmas in Berthoud 2008 Fund" can available for donations.
10 a.m. - 8 p.m. — Picture This Custom Framing will have extended hours to 8 p.m.,

Free hot cider all day, and five percent of that day's proceeds goes to the Christmas in Berthoud fund.

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. — "Make and Take Crafts" for all ages at Berthoud Elementary School. From easy pre-school crafts to Christmas wreaths, this should be a fun time to make decorations or gifts. Participants will pay depending on the size of the craft item. All proceeds go into the fund.

10 a.m. - 6 p.m. — Wildfire Community Arts Center Annual Holiday Art Show & Sale.

11 a.m. - 2 p.m. — Lunch(es) scheduled in many different restaurants/organizations

11 a.m. - 3 p.m. — Live Nativity scene with real animals at Fickel Park. They will be taking photos and will have Bible costumes so kids can get into character for the photos. Donations go to the Christmas in Berthoud fund.

11 a.m. - 4 p.m. — Jewelry Trunk Show Open House at the home of Sue Graff, 515 Redwood Cr., between the hours of 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. (sorry - no credit card transactions available). We will be accepting canned food and monetary donations for the Chamber "Christmas in Berthoud 2008 fund."

All afternoon — Light House Cafe will be serving holiday drinks and baked goods all afternoon. Soup served from 5 - 7:30 p.m.

12 - 4 p.m. — Horse and carriage rides from Fickel Park.

2 - 5 p.m. — Light House book and gift store serving cookies and refreshments.

2 - 7:30 p.m. — MOPS bake sale at Grace Place.

2-3:30 p.m. — Concert at Grace Place Church - Berthoud High School Band

The Berthoud Historical Society is hosting an open house at the Mountain Avenue Museum. Enjoy hot cider, hot chocolate and other treats. Donations will be collected.

2:45 - 3:15 p.m. — Concert at Grace Place Church - "Letting Go" Band (local musicians - Chamber Group - Cello, piano, flute).

3:15 - 4:15 p.m. — Concert at Grace Place Church - Sing On Key Musical Talent.

4 - 5 p.m. — Pony Rides sponsored by Sun Pony Ranch and Happy Tails Dog Ranch. Two horses from Sun Pony Ranch will be at the north end of Fickel Park to give "pony rides" to anyone who would like to try it. All donations raised from this event will be for the Christmas in Berthoud 2008 fund to help needy Berthoud families this holiday season.

The "pony rides" will be from 4 to 5 p.m. after which you can watch these two horses in the parade.

4:15 - 5:15 p.m. — Concert at Grace Place Church - Berthoud High School Choir.

5:15 p.m. — Christmas in Berthoud 2008 Parade - Santa arrives.

5:30 p.m. — Parade of Lights

6 p.m. — Fickel Park Tree Lighting

6:30 - 8 p.m. — McCarty-Fickel house tours each half hour beginning at 6:30 through 8 p.m. with two for one tickets available.

7 - 7:30 p.m. — Concert at Grace Place Church - Grace Place Children's Choir.

7 - 7:30 p.m. — "Excerpts from Veritas" presented by Tom Jones Dance Studio at 345 Massachusetts Ave. \$5 each or \$10 per family.

7:30 - 9:30 p.m. — Concert at Grace Place Church - Peregrin Road (Enchanting arrangements of traditional Christmas music - guitar, mandolin, recorder, bass and percussion).

Ongoing events and other dates:

November and December

Donations of cash and non-perishable food items collected at local stores.

Ivy Stockwell Elementary School Canned Food Drive

Cornerstone Chiropractic warm clothes

(coats, hats, mittens, etc.) are being collected at Cornerstone Chiropractic, located at 120 Bunyan Ave. in Berthoud. New patients will receive \$50 off of their first visit in exchange for a donation of the above items. Call 970-532-3366 for more information.

Donations of new children's books are being collected at the library for distribution to needy local children.

Through Dec 18 — Private Quarters -10 percent to Christmas in Berthoud fund. Luxury hotel quality linens at an affordable price.

Shop online at www.kellyswayne.privatequarters.net or book your own linen party and get rewarding amounts of luxuries for free and half price. Mention this item and 10 percent of all individual orders and party orders will be donated to the Christmas in Berthoud fund.

For orders and bookings please call me, Kelly Swayne at 970-663-9088, 970-590-9467 or e-mail me at kellyswayne@msn.com

Through Dec 19 — Berthoud Library is offering "Food for Fines." For every canned good or non-perishable item brought to the library \$1 will be taken off any over-due fines.

Tuesday, Dec 2 — A&W Christmas in Berthoud Nights. 5 - 8 p.m. Bring your family and friends for their favorite comfort food — sandwiches, fries, root beer floats, sundaes and shakes. No matter what your appetite desires, they'll donate 50 percent of all sales to the Christmas in Berthoud fund.

Thursday, Dec. 4 — Uppercase Living Open House Demonstration and Make-n-Take 7 - 8:30 p.m. It's the latest rage in personalized word art for your walls. 904 Kansas Ave., Berthoud, RSVP to Leanne at 532-4774 50 percent of all profits go to Christmas in Berthoud fund for open house sales as well as any sales up to Dec. 4. If you can't make the open house and would like to see a catalog, you can visit my Web site to preview a full catalog at or call me and I can schedule a time to show you the catalog in person. For more information call 532-4474 or visit <http://leeannebauer.uppercaseliving.net>

Friday, Dec 5 — Wildfire Sale Preview reception from 6 to 9 p.m.

Sunday, Dec 7 — Wildfire Community Arts Center Annual Holiday Art Show and Sale continues - noon - 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec 9 — A&W Christmas in Berthoud Nights. 5 - 8 p.m. Bring your family and friends for their favorite comfort food — sandwiches, fries, root beer floats, sundaes and shakes. No matter what your appetite desires, they'll donate 50 percent of all sales to the Christmas in Berthoud fund.

Friday, Dec.12 — Five Stones Youth Group Benefit Concert: "Everfound in Concert," 6 p.m. doors open, 6:30 p.m. - concert starts. Five Stones Student Center, 770 Second St. \$7 admission, Five Stones Café will be open.

Saturday, Dec. 13 — Creative Memories Annual FREE Crop Around The Christmas Tree. Crop/open house and shopping galore. Online purchases - 50 percent of all profits will be donated to the fund now until Dec. 15. 1:30-10 p.m., 904 Kansas Ave., Berthoud, RSVP to Leanne at 532-4774. Bring a snack to share or a financial donation to go to the fund. RSVP to hold your spot or just come to shop and select from a number of in stock items, new products, and items no longer available.

Sunday, Dec. 14 — Christmas event at Berthoud United Methodist Church, Ninth and Lake Avenue. 5-7 p.m. A gathering for all ages that will include a chili cooking contest, bread making contest, dessert making contest, children's placemat making contest. The Berthoud High School Bridge Between Show Choir will perform their "Christmas on Broadway" musical offering. Entertainment, food and lots of fun.

Monday, Dec. 15 — Berthoud Library "Polar Express PJ Party" 6:30 - 8 p.m. Wear your PJ's to board the Polar Express and donate children's books for kids in the community. Then enjoy stories, crafts, and treats, plus a "special guest" if you believe.