

KLETTAFJALLA

by Ellen Lichtenstein

After a very busy year, the Klettafjalla Icelandic Horse Club wrapped up 2023 with our third annual Fall Fun Keppni, held at Tamangur Icelandic Horses in Larkspur, CO. Around 20 horses and riders from across the region, including six youth riders, came together for games like red-light-green-light, pole bending, and a costume contest. Everyone had a great time and won ribbons, but the club wishes to give particular congratulations to one of the youth riders, Quinn Denmeade, who ranked highest overall across the entire day's activities.

NEIHC

by Jennifer Bergantino

Like all clubs, the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club has an email list. In addition to a plethora of welcomes to new members and the usual tack for sale, we had lively exchanges this fall on clipping, feeding, paddocks, sources of online training, saddle fitting, favorite riding gear, and tips on buying and acclimating an Icelandic horse. More than 30 pictures were posted on January 1 to ring in 2024. We are a congenial bunch!

Activity at Ebba Meehan's Merrimack Valley Icelandics in Boxford, MA started in October with a performance at The Topsfield Fair. Eight riders—Lexi Mitchell (youth), Brynja Meehan (youth), Kate Kalan, Valerie Moore, Ebba Meehan, Shelby Walker, Scott Smith, and Erika Tighe (coach)—delighted the audience with their drill team, and Andrea Smith and Nancy Rohlfs displayed riding in



Jana Meyer teaches Jennifer Bergantino at an NEIHC clinic. Photo by Charity Simard.



NEIHC member Andrea Smith introduces Próstur to the beach.

harmony. Ebba reports, "This annual performance has become an exciting opportunity for our riders and horses." It has also evolved into a must-see event for the equestrian community of North Shore Massachusetts, as the Icelandics are becoming well known. The MVI Drill team has already started preparing for 2024, adding some new moves to their routine. Some of the riders also participated in this year's Equine Affair in Springfield, MA (see below).

MVI offered several clinics this quarter. In November, Carrie Brandt and Guðmar Pétursson gave 14 participants a variety of learning experiences, from general lessons to liberty training to Knapamerki testing. Congratulations to Jenny Sanderson for passing Knapamerki levels 1 and 2! We thank Shannon Simmons and ANJ Stables for hosting this clinic. In December, MVI held a clinic with Vibeke Thoresen. She is a Hólar University graduate who gives riding instruction and trains horses at Guðmar's Hestaland and is pursuing a Master's degree in Equine Science at Hólar.

On the competitive front, six MVI riders went to Vermont for the last show in the Sólheimar Triple Crown Series. The group had a full schedule, each riding four classes a day! Brynja Meehan and Valerie Moore also participated in the Virtual Show this fall, with good results: Brynja made the US Team for the FEIF Youth Cup in Switzerland next July. The ever expanding crew at MVI also enjoyed beach rides and miles of trail riding, including participating in the NEIHC

group trail ride in early November and a Twilight Tölt under the light of the moon in late December.

At Sólheimar Farm in Tunbridge, VT, Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir was busy with clinics in November and December, lessons, and training and importing horses. October saw the third installment of the Sólheimar Triple Crown series of nationally ranked shows. Participation was off the charts, Sigrún says, with 40-plus horse and rider combinations and over 100 entries in sanctioned classes, with additional entries in fun classes. A single class, Four Gait Pairs, boasted 22 riders. The show was truly international, attracting riders from Canada, who, like many riders, had joined all three and earned the highest cumulative score in a class were crowned Triple Crown Champions. Kamilla Brickner and Finja Meyer-Hoyt tied for Triple Crown Champion in Youth Tölt. In addition, Kamilla was crowned Champion in Youth Four Gait. Other champions included Sigrún, Susan Sundstrom, Liesl Kolbe, Aleece Hoyt, and Jenny Sanderson, some in multiple divisions.

"My favorite class of each show is Four Gait Pairs," says Sigrún. "This time it was extra special. Richard Davis and Aleece Hoyt rode their program in memory of Marilyn Blass, who passed away in July—and they rode her own horses. Her husband, Richard, rode Magnea, and Aleece rode Marilyn's beloved Vörður. They came in second, with a score of 6. What a wonderful way to honor an amazing woman whom I loved very, very much."



Richard Davis and Aleece Hoyt rode in the Sólheimar Show in memory of Marilyn Blass.



Attending the Northwest Gaited Horse Association Fall Show are Zo Zinke-Haschemeyer on Aria (left) and Jennifer Quinn on Lolita.

The Icelandic riders at Cedar Tree Stables in Ipswich, MA, welcomed Jana Meyer for an excellent clinic in December. The group continues to enjoy the trails, Crane Beach, and participating in the local hunt with big horses. Charity Simard, Brenda Nishimura, and Anna Wallstrom enjoyed the Myopia Hunt Club's annual Halloween Hunter Pace. Nancy Rohlfs organized a highly successful NEIHC Fall trail ride through Bradley Palmer State Forest in Ipswich for 16 riders. Afterward, more NEIHC members, along with friends and family, enjoyed a potluck picnic.

Other NEIHC members spent the past quarter enjoying their horses off the oval track. Maggie Breen's 27-year-old Sprækur "is starting to slow down just a bit and taking it easy," she says, "but we did plenty of trail rides, and I taught some lessons on him for kids." Xenia Von Lilien-Waldau and her horse, Valdís, "really enjoyed participating in hunter paces this year. We did five in total, going through deep rivers and streams, along heavily washed-out trails and riding in non-stop rain."

Andrea Smith welcomed a new horse, Þróstur. Andrea met Þróstur when in Iceland at a Hestaland winter training retreat in early 2022. "I am so happy I got to do things the way I did: 18 months, four trips to Iceland, and a lot of trust in Guðmar and all the folks at Hestaland. Þróstur is calm, sensitive, brave, and so, so sweet! Having the opportunity to get to know him and build trust before he got

here was well worth the wait! Hestaland did an amazing job with him."

NEIHC has a fantastic presence at Equine Affaire in Springfield, MA. Our helmets are off to NEIHC President, Em Potts, for championing this effort. Em reports, "Our event saw an excellent turnout and the demos were well attended. As always, our booth generated significant interest, and we handed out around 400 NEIHC farm lists. Merrimack Valley Icelandics jumped in with short notice to ride in our breed demos, showcasing the versatility of our horses and demonstrating their various gaits. Both riding demos were very well done and represented the Icelandic horse beautifully. Guðmar Pétursson of Hestaland delivered an excellent and educational in-hand presentation for us at the Equine Fundamentals Forum, covering such topics as the breed's gaits, its characteristics, our club, the USIHC, Horses of Iceland, and riding or trekking in Iceland. Leah and Grace Greenberger and John and Maren Prenosil not only manned our booth, but brought Leah's Skati and Koli as our breed ambassadors. Other volunteers included Margot Apple, Hilary Houldsworth, Leslie Chambers, Claudia Barron, Jana Meyer, Nancy Rohlfs, Andrea Smith, and the MVI Team. Ona Kwiatkowski covered the event on social media. The combined efforts of each and every one of our volunteers were instrumental in making this event a success.

"As evidence of our outreach," Em continues, "one of this year's highlights

was a young girl, around nine or ten years old, who has been visiting our booth for the past four or five Equine Affaires. She eagerly stopped by to share the news that she had purchased her first Icelandic horse and was joining the NEIHC. This moment held special significance for me, as I was first introduced to the Icelandic horse at Equine Affaire when I was eight."

NWIHC

by Alexandra Venable

This year has been an exciting one for the Northwest Icelandic Horse Club. Our growing group went on trail rides whenever the weather shined on us, and club members attended various local clinics and events, showing off the versatility of our horses and the dedication of our riders. This year allowed us to finally renew our annual club show, with fabulous attendance. For many it was their first ever show, and even people who at first weren't interested in competing saw how much fun we were having and decided to jump in, with a great time had by all.

At one barn with many NWIHC members, Alfadans Equestrian Arts in Newberg, OR, there were a variety of clinics this fall, including liberty, Knapamerki, dressage, and even a first for many, an introduction to working equitation.

We also had quite a group attend the Northwest Gaited Horse Association Fall Show, with many youth riders and 15 registered Icelandics total. Their riding was a testament to the beauty of our horses and the horsemanship of their riders, and we



New NEIHC Youth Member Carlin and Blæja.