

## **Horse World Expo, Timonium MD January 17 - 20, 2003**

For those of you who were not able to be at the Horse World Expo, which ran from 17 to 20 January in Timonium, MD, I want to give you my view of happened.

I think our first effort as a club to represent the Icelandic horse breed was a great success. FIRC members, Sandy Newkirk, Suzi McGraw, Terri Malec, Kelly Pierce, and Sverrir Bjartsmarz had two adjacent booths in the 4H Building. The booths had lots of photos of Icelandic horses and videos presentations about the horses playing on a TV and on a laptop computer. There also were numerous brochures and magazines about the horse and the FIRC.

Various club members volunteered to help staff the booths during the four days. In addition to Sandy, Suzi, Terri, Kelly, and Sverrir, they included Jack, Sharon, and John Shumaker, Sue Thomas, and Pat Moore. (If I missed someone, please forgive me.) A brochure about the club had been prepared by Marcie and Dave Seller and Suzi McGraw. Several hundred of them were distributed during the expo. Copies also were placed at the Icelandic Air booth in the Cow Palace. Hundreds of people stopped at our booths and talked to us about the Icelandic horse. A lot of club members came by as well. I was surprised to meet several people who owned Icelandic horses but did not know that they were Icelandics until they saw our displays and videos. The horses had been bought at auctions as ponies. They were probably part of the "lost herds" that had existed in Virginia and in Ohio in the 1960s and 1980s. Several other people knew that they had Icelandics but did not know anyone else in the area did.

Club members put on two riding demonstrations on Icelandic horses in the main arena. The FIRC drill team, consisting of Kelly, Sandy, Suzi, and Sverrir, first did coordinated riding at the tolt. Sverrir then demonstrated the beer tölt and then ponying. The members ended the program by showing the horses' gaits at the walk, trot, medium and fast tölt, and at the canter. I was pleased to narrate both programs and I believe I was able to pass on a lot of information about the breed. Thanks to Nancy Marie Brown for furnishing the text of the narration. The arena was packed for the Saturday afternoon demonstration and almost full for the one on Sunday morning.

The expo made it clear how much we can accomplish by working together. We were able to show the Icelandic horse to an estimated 1,000 spectators, passed out hundreds of brochures about the horse and the FIRC, and spoke to several hundred people about the Icelandic horse. Kelly overheard two men saying "Those Icelandic horse people are certainly doing a great job promoting their breed." I believe they were correct. I would like to thank everyone in the club who made that possible and who contributed to the very successful effort.

Submitted by Rich Moore