

“ JUST WHO IS THE EXPERIENCE FOR?”

There are not many opportunities to get together and have fun with a group of 'Icies'. So, when the Erin fair appeared on my radar, I made up my mind that I would go. Along with my friend Röskur an 8 yr old gelding. The experience would be great for him I decided. Apparently his opinion turned out to be different!

For me , the two weeks leading up to the fair weekend and a six hour trip (turned into 8!) made this adventure look like relaxation. The trailer was ready to go, all things packed for any occasion. Röskur was NOT ready to leave! Eventually we rolled out of the driveway and headed for Caledon ON. Our overnight stop before the fair on Saturday. Up at the crack of dawn to load six horses between three trailers. Somehow, overnight , five of the six horses had unionised and refused to load! Work to rule I guess- make the humans THINK about the fact they were removing them from their buddies just for their day of fun!. Two hours for six horses but we made it to the fair just in time for the first classes .

Six classes had been set up for the Icelandic horses, five for the Rocky mountain horses, and six for the Paso Fino's. This was collectively the Gaited horse show for the fair. Each group alternated classes until all had been ridden then followed eight open classes for all gaited breeds. Alexandra Pregitzer came all the way from Michigan via Ohio and another commitment. Not only did Alex judge but gave all her comments as though this was a schooling situation. This is a dedication that was appreciated by all of us. In addition, both judges learned about each others disciplines.

The Icelandic classes were:- T7, T5, T6 loose rein, 3 gait, V4 4 gait and of course Beer Tölt. The open classes were two basic dressage patterns, equitation, challenge of the breeds, and who could fail to have fun with the egg and spoon and bare back class? :-) The ribbon class showed my shy boy to be the one who did not want to make new friends in the ribbon class. He just wanted to hide behind Mom. I made him stand in the centre just to see how much fun he could have with a new friend . When it came to his turn to be in the ring all alone, we rode the basic dressage test just six feet away from the heavy horse pull (now at 10000lbs and at the urging of three guys and a whip!), a large grader that smoothed out the track and worst of all, a small caterpillar tractor that wheezed! The last contraption was the only one that stopped him dead, eyes bugged, between K and A! At my request though he finished the pattern.

There were nine Icelandic Horses at the event. Some classes were ridden simply for the experience of either rider or horse. All experiences resulted in learning. Altogether, in spite of a biting wind and a sprinkle of rain we had fun and the addition of Alex to correctly judge our breed was a bonus. Dedicated Icelandic owner spectators came out to freeze and cheer us on. So, just who is this experience for ? Horse rider and spectator I would say.