

Introduction:

Greetings everyone. My sincerest apologies for not being able to attend this evening due to illness. Growing up, I was called what most little girls who love horses are called- "horse crazy." When I got my first horse, I became "Fjord crazy." I've owned numerous Fjords over the past 16 years, with my most recent being a yearling filly. However, my passion for the breed isn't what you should consider in this election. My experience serving on boards, my nonprofit management career, my fundraising and grant writing background, and an open-minded, down-to-earth nature is what I offer. I recently identified grant funding opportunities for the Registry and have worked on getting the Membership Survey together- thanks to all those who have taken it. I look forward to answering the questions laid forth tonight and appreciate you all for your consideration.

- 1) I think the first priority for the board in 2024 is board development, which should be concurrent with fundraising. I'm going to separate this idea into four parts:
 - 1) Have every member of the board take a generic board service questionnaire to find their strengths and areas needing improvements as a board member. This would highlight topics for training, such as "how to read a Treasurer financial statement," or "how to lead and keep volunteers on a committee." It would also open honest dialog between board members.
 - 2) I'd like the board to consider dedicating time for board development throughout the year, whether it be lengthening current meetings to fit in development exercises, separate strategic planning and development meetings, independent online learning modules, or a combination of these. I've identified low-cost (\$250 and less) educational opportunities and professional services that could be covered through "board dues-" one potential option for covering these expenses.
 - 3) In this dedicated strategic planning and development time, the board would consider membership survey data to form broad organizational priorities, creating benchmarks and taking action. Committees will be strengthened with data to form respective priorities.
 - 4) Draft a Board Handbook and board or committee application. A handbook formed of bylaws, expectations, important dates, examples of confidentiality vs transparency, etc. could be given to new board members. Forming applications to the board and committees would allow the board to highlight questions that directly address commitment to service, board experience, employment experience as it relates to this board, etc. Where this is a business and the board is acting as Executive Director, every member should have to apply and answer specific questions to explicitly address how and why they want to serve on the board, beyond what a bio provides.

- 2) Attracting a young and diverse membership is an important aspect of sustainability and growth for the organization. Again, I'll divide this out in to two parts.

Rachel White

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- 1) Fjord horse exposure both in the physical and online worlds. The more Fjords that are exposed in public or are involved in lesson and summer camp programs, the higher chance of young and diverse audiences become captivated by them. Online, I think we could do a better job reaching diverse audiences through generic and uplifting posts on the NFHR official Facebook page, not groups, so people can share cool photos, events, etc. The menagerie of Fjord-related forums might confuse new Fjord lovers and send the wrong impression. I know this is likely an unpopular opinion, but limiting our presence to just one page, again not group or forum, would ensure the organization has complete autonomy over what content gets shared with the next generation of Fjord enthusiasts, instead of scaring them away. From there, maybe creating fun “reels” of people doing things with Fjords could be a fun and attractive way to reach these audiences.
 - 2) One other possibility is to create a “Junior” membership category, with reduced rates and with no vote. I was 16 when I got my first Fjord and I paid for membership all on my own. I showed my gelding, went in parades, and to national parks, wrote a Herald article... Having a youth recognition program, paid by youth membership, could open the door for young Fjord lovers.
- 3)** I see my role as someone to broadly help with board development and organizational growth. I would like to focus my efforts on writing grant proposals and target ways to strengthen efficiency in the organization. I want to pinpoint organizational priorities, find volunteers to help the volunteer board members achieve committee tasks, and evaluate internal communication methods for the sake of contingency planning, record keeping, and fact-checking (for example cloud-based documentation). As I have never served on this board, my understanding of some of these areas is lacking. There very well could be a wonderful system already in place, but unless I am on the board, I won't know these things.
- 4)** As mentioned previously, I think seeking and writing grants will help the organization with financial growth. I think finding corporate sponsors and creating ways to become attractive to these sponsors is important. There are many members of this organization, some of which possess the skillsets to go after grants or sponsors or some know a person or company who might be willing to sponsor. We need to find these members and solicit their help.

Closing:

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to voice my thoughts tonight. If you have not read my bio on the Registry's website, I encourage you to do so. If I do not make it onto the board, I still plan to volunteer however I can, including writing grants and analyzing data from the survey, purely because these are passion projects for me. It is up to you, the membership, to determine if I make it onto your board. If elected, I would make an effort to strengthen the organization through board development activities and I would gain valuable insight into the inner workings of the organization in search of ways to improve efficiency and attract new Fjord lovers. Isn't

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this what we are all here for- the love we have for Norwegian Fjords? When I ride a Fjord in public or talk to a “regular” horse lover, I am proud to be an advocate of the breed, because, after all, they are not a regular or ordinary animal. I am optimistic that, together, we can make this organization an entity that we are all proud of.