

NCMA Special Meeting/North Star Show 2011  
August 31, 2010  
Perkins Restaurant/St. Louis Park, MN

**Purpose:** special meeting called by the board to review financial results form 2010 North Star show, and use these to discuss and vote on decisions with respect to the 2011 show.

Note: 11 voting directors present.

**Attendees:** Tricia Hoen, Karin Miller, Candy Phillips, Gayle Belden, Valerie McCullough, Arlene Berzins, Janise Sanborn, Terry Sanborn, Ellen Geiser, Patricia Hartell, Carl Hartell, Robin Becklin, Veanne Wood, Jayne Bradford, Kirsten Johnson (via phone), Jackie Sweeney (via phone) Karyl Hylle (via phone).

Meeting called to order at 6:52 pm by NCMA President, Valerie McCullough. Valerie then laid out the ground rules for discussion. First, an overview to be provided of 2010 show results from Ellen Geiser. Next, an explanation of financial analysis and display prepared by NCMA Treasurer, Candy Phillips. Financial overview to be followed by comments from each attendee who will be given the floor for five minutes to express recommendations or concerns. Last, a roll call vote will be taken with respect to these four decisions:

- 1) will the 2011 North Star show be a 3 day or 4 day show
- 2) if the vote passes for a 3 day show, will it be held Thursday through Saturday, or Friday through Sunday
- 3) will the 2011 North Star show remain at the Fairgrounds, or move to Winona, and
- 4) once the venue is decided, on what dates will the show be held

**Update: 2010 North Star:** Ellen reported that almost all expenses have been submitted. Projected loss is estimated at \$8500.00. Number of exhibitors was roughly the same as 2009, however number of entries per horse declined. End result is that the beginning balance to fund the 2011 show is lower, and may require that sponsorship checks for 2011 be cashed as they are received. Beginning balance to fund 2011 is approximately \$13,500.00, a decrease of \$8500.00 when compared to 2010 beginning balance.

**Explanation of financial models:** Candy presented her financial analysis which represented three different scenarios:

- 1) recap of 2010 expenses,
- 2) a comparison of projected expenses for 2011, State Fairgrounds versus MN Equestrian Center in Winona, retaining most features/expenses as 2010, and
- 3) a pared down version of projected expenses for 2011, State Fairgrounds versus MN Equestrian Center in Winona, eliminating those expenses not critical to overall success of the show. (See attached spreadsheet).

Net difference: Fairgrounds vs. Winona: **\$9679.50**

Candy also explained that she had invested about three weeks time in compiling the data, often making calls to obtain the most current information. Conversations with several sources who manage facilities confirmed they expect to see trend of less entries and tack stalls into 2011 season. She also suggested the following questions be used to frame further discussion. These were: why do we host North Star? Is the show committee feeling comfortable about capability to raise at least 15K in sponsorships for 2011?

**Participant comments re: 2011 North Star show:** (note: name in bold designates director)  
**Kirsten Johnson** – in favor of a 3 day show at Fairgrounds provided: show committee comes forward with an addendum that can be used to analyze expenses to produce a firm budget for 2011. Budget to ensure financial solvency which doesn't rely solely on sponsorships. Also preferred that 2011 show keep 4<sup>th</sup> of July dates.

**Jackie Sweeney:** would prefer to keep the 2011 show at Fairgrounds, but must be financially viable. Asked: are those exhibitors from the cities willing to pay more fees to keep it there? Proposed raising stall fees to \$120.00 which would provide additional \$4500.00 in income; entry fees to \$30.00 which would provide additional \$1400.00; and office fees to \$25.00 which would provide additional \$1750.00 for a total net increase of \$7650.00. Also preferred to keep the 4<sup>th</sup> of July dates. Also commented that she had toured the Winona facility, liked it, thought it was very nice.

Jayne Bradford: likes having the show at Fairgrounds, think about cutting expenses such as ringmaster, paddock master. Contact individuals to volunteer, direct requests personally, face to face works well.

Veanne Wood: has been on the show committee for a long time. We need to have a quality show, and disappointed that the show committee was not formally invited to Aug. 31<sup>st</sup> meeting. In the past board of directors has had nothing to do with the show, the show committee carried the weight and made decisions. North Star has a long standing tradition, and should continue to be held at the Fairgrounds. Venue lends prestige to the show. Loss for 2010 show was partly due to lower stall fees, Ellen didn't want to lower fees but other show committee members out voted Ellen. Keep Fairgrounds as location, move to a 3 day show with same dates. If we move the show to Winona, how do we handle Westin's night. Also shared feedback received that Winona location not as clean. Contract for 2011 needs to be sent to Pierre Loiselle, he has agreed to judge.

**Terry Sanborn:** moving to Winona, and getting less horses and reducing quality should not be a goal of the show. Believes status level of the show is associated with the Fairgrounds and reflects on the credibility and stature of NCMA. Hosting a show at Winona is an unknown, we have no idea how things will work there. We are not exhibitors, but care about NCMA and helped with the show to make it work, and because we really wanted to keep show at the Fairgrounds. Also replied that the committee should be able to raise 15K in sponsorships next year – in response to Candy's earlier question.

Janise Sanborn: would prefer 3 day show at the Fairgrounds. It's a fun time. Cut expenses and different positions to save money, increase fees and revenue. Ask for more volunteers.

Pat Hartell: speaking on behalf of the carriage division. Willing to help by foregoing dedicated carriage judge so one judge okay provided they have carriage designation. (Pierre does not have). Would like to continue the clinic, carriage participants will continue to finance this themselves. Winona location might actually bring more entries, but dates in August could be an issue. On the show committee for many years and participated in the show for many years. Recalls when the show had to move to Rochester, and how exhibitors asked that it return to Fairgrounds and promised more support. End result was next show made a profit. Agrees with Veanne – show presence and ambience of Fairgrounds is very important to all, especially younger exhibitors. Likes 3 day show scheduled over Fri-Sat-Sun. as these are better days for carriage participants.

Carl Hartell: ambience and reputation of the Fairgrounds is important to the show. Wheat State show has moved back and forth several times between locations and has lost attendance. Its taken them three years to recover, and they still have less attendance than North Star. Winona is nice, but it is not the Fairgrounds. Okay with 3 day show.

**Arlene Berzins:** has a different perspective as she and Charlie moved the show to the Fairgrounds. It was a quality show using quality grounds. Entire show was worked by volunteers, no paid positions. That is a change from today. Ongoing mission was not to make a profit, but to promote and show Morgans, and break even. Favors 3 day show at the Fairgrounds, cut costs, more volunteers, keep 4<sup>th</sup> of July date.

**Karyl Hylle:** prefers 3 day show at the Fairgrounds, keep the 4<sup>th</sup> of July dates. Further down the road would prefer a later date for the show.

Robin Becklin: managed the show in the past, ran it very economically, raised sponsorships and cut corners. Today's economy requires that we be realistic, she doesn't expect to see improvement for another year based on what she is seeing with regard to family business. Would prefer that the date be sometime other than 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Later dates would work best for Futurity. Doesn't matter to her if we move to Winona or not, but 3 day show is needed. Too much dead time at North Star, lose fun and camaraderie. Show should run quicker, be more fun, and not cost prohibitive for amateur owners. Reminded us that intent of early bird stall fee was to create cash flow.

**Karin Miller:** whatever we do we must be fiscally responsible. Wish we had had the opportunity to hear from more NCMA members as they have the right to be heard. Opposed to raising stall fees and entry fees, the show can't do this at the expense of the exhibitor. Doesn't understand why the show has to be at the Fairgrounds and why a show held at Winona wouldn't be considered a quality show. In favor of moving if that is what it takes to make the show fiscally solvent. Isn't it better to promote Morgans and make it easy to bring as many as possible to come. Picking dates to accommodate show barns does a disservice to general membership.

**Bonnie Anderson:** very torn about this. Have visited the Winona location and really like it. Think it would be a good venue that would produce a quality show. However there is a lot of risk associated with the unknown impact on number of entries and revenue. Based on feedback received, owe it to NCMA membership to make the necessary changes to the show and host it in 2011 at the Fairgrounds, with the condition that if the show is not profitable, change in venue is next step. Significant effort invested this year in raising sponsorships and 2010 still reflects a sizeable loss. Based on this would be very surprised if the show breaks even in 2011, especially if economic conditions continue to be a challenge. Prefers 3 day show, later date.

Ellen Geiser: listened to everyone's comments about keeping the show at Fairgrounds. In my opinion, foresaw that it would not move in 2011. Need a fixed budget, but that can be tricky, dependant on sponsorships. Recommend that both Lloyd and Cheryl be retained, they are well worth what we pay them.

**Candy Phillips:** has talked with a lot of exhibitors who no longer show at North Star. Reasons given: date of show, cost of show, doing different, fun things with their horses. Can't keep losing money on the show and be irresponsible to our NCMA members because we prefer ambience and tradition. State Fair also provides exhibitors opportunity to show in the Coliseum. North Star has become more of a training barn show, and not much else for private exhibitors.

**Gayle Belden:** acknowledged all the good work of North Star committee and volunteers. Worried about economy, like Robin, sees it reflected in his business. Teamwork is needed. Fairgrounds do have a lot of history and tradition, but can have the same at a different venue. Shouldn't single out any barn or exhibitor. Assured Karin that he has talked with many trainers and barns, and many NCMA members to get their input. Feedback has been mixed, but most barns have told him "do what you need to do" to make the show financially viable. Prefers 3 day show.

**Valerie McCullough:** responding to Veanne: NCMA board is non-profit and is not in a position to cover show losses which is why we are scheduling this discussion. Other comments: the board needs to represent its members and be fiscally responsible to them. We all need to be more positive and inclusive and no matter what we decide, there are risks. Show should be more fun. 2010 was a great show despite the financial loss, everyone did a great job. In favor of a 3 day show going forward.

Caroline Winslow: condensed comments from e-mail. Prefers to keep the show at the Fairgrounds, 3 day show is needed. Cut costs as needed to keep show financially viable. Raised questions about the cost/revenue comparisons on the spreadsheet; concerned about the impact a move to Winona might have on raising sponsorship dollars.

Nina Errington: condensed comments from e-mail: concerned about the direction of the show, it must support itself financially. If moving the location is what needs to be done to financially salvage the show then that's the action that will need to be taken. Location doesn't make the show, it is the people that make the show.

Nan Wille Cechettini: condensed comments from e-mail: never had a problem with holding the show at Winona, I've toured the facility and it's very workable. I like the idea of a place for weanlings too, and it better positions the yearling sweepstakes in 2010 so it won't be in direct competition with Circle J. Nan also provided input on need for more volunteers and suggestions on how to reduce costs with regard to ringmaster, paddock master, and announcer. Also would like to see hospitality budget supported going forward, it's part of what makes North Star fun.

**This concludes all of the comments.**

**Votes/Decisions:**

- A. Regarding the question: "Should the 2011 North Star show be a 3 day show as opposed to a 4 day show?"**

**Vote was unanimous with all directors voting in favor of a 3 day show.**

- B. Regarding the question: "Where should the 2011 North Star show be held?"**

**Vote decided in favor of State Fairground by a margin of 9-2.** Voting in favor of the State Fairgrounds: Terry Sanborn, Arlene Berzins, Valerie McCullough, Gayle Belden, Tricia Hoen, Bonnie Anderson, Kirsten Johnson, Jackie Sweeney, and Karyl Hylle. Kirsten, Bonnie, and Jackie all attached conditions for future action to their votes.

Voting for the Winona location: Candy Phillips and Karin Miller.

- C. Regarding the question: "Should the show be held Thursday through Saturday or Friday through Sunday?"**

**Vote decided in favor of Thursday through Saturday by a margin of 6-4 with one director abstaining.** Voting in favor of Thursday – Saturday: Terry Sanborn, Arlene Berzins, Gayle Belden, Candy Phillips, Kirsten Johson, and Jackie Sweeney. Voting in favor of Friday through Saturday: Karin Miller, Bonnie Anderson, Tricia Hoen, and Karyl Hylle.

- D. Regarding the question: "Should the show be held June 30<sup>th</sup> – July 2<sup>nd</sup>, or July 28 – July 30<sup>th</sup>?"**

**Vote decided in favor of June 30<sup>th</sup> – July 2 by a margin of 6-5.** Voting in favor of June 30 – July 2: Terry Sanborn, Arlene Berzins, Gayle Belden, Kirsten Johnson, Karyl Hylle, and Jackie Sweeney. Voting in favor of July 28<sup>th</sup> – July 30<sup>th</sup>: Candy Phillips, Karin Miller, Valerie McCullough, Tricia Hoen, and Bonnie Anderson.

**This concludes all votes taken and resulting decisions.**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:25.

