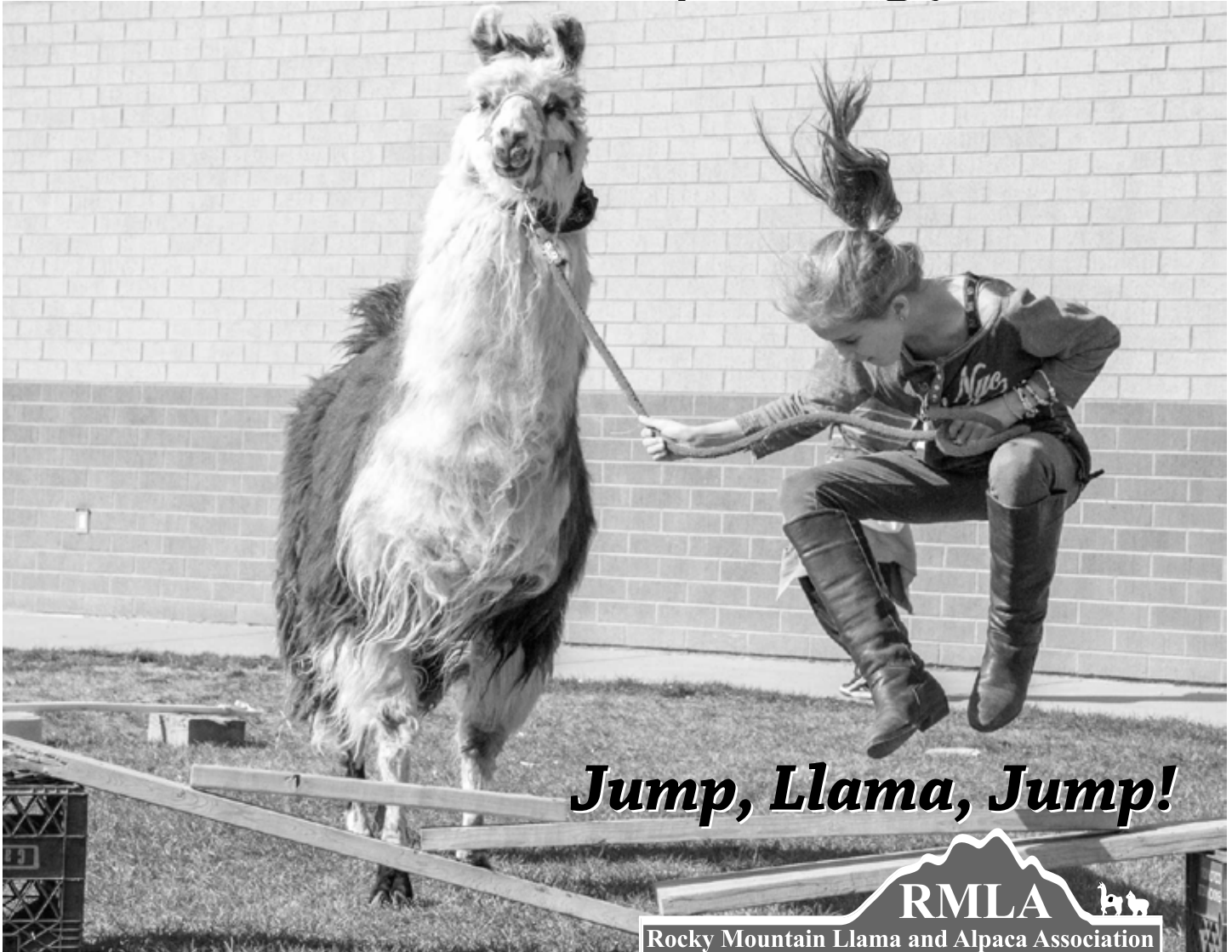


# The Journal of RMLA



## Jump, Llama, Jump!

RMLA



Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association

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# Youth Happenings!



By Marshal Rutledge, Chair RMLA Youth Committee

Photos courtesy Christina Able

As the 2016 year of the Rocky Mountain Youth Awards Program (YAP) winds to a close, I want to thank all the kids, parents, 4H Leaders, grandparents and all those involved in the activities this year! The types of events, and the number of people the kids reached out to has been amazing. We have kids participating in Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska. So, imagine how many different titles of events we have seen over the year.

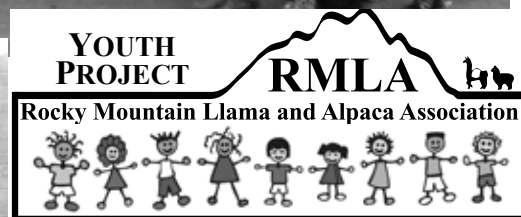
Attending Llama Camp in Waco, NE to meet the kids was fun. It brought back memories of teaching several animals over the years.

A great big shout out to Ron Hinds for creating the database on the RMLA Website and tracking the recordings and getting pictures into each journal. I can only do so much from my phone, so having Ron around is awesome. Ron and Kathy both have helped me in several ways over the year.

Another thank you goes to the RMLA Board of Directors. They allowed the senior youth and myself to create a renewed version of the program that is user friendly, and have supported all the youth over the year. We have improved several areas where suggestions have been made. I will be proposing to the Board that we continue the RMLA program in 2017.

The YAP program runs until December 31st, 2016 so be watching the Spring Journal and an Email to announce our Youth for 2016 with High Points.

Finally, we all know farm kids are awesome. But now it is in writing. Be sure to read the article, Farm Kid Qualities, on page 26.



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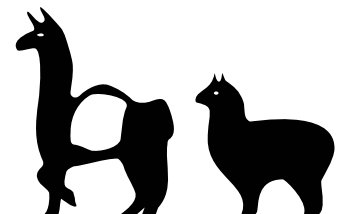
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## Journal Submission Dates, Ad Rates and Specifications

Issue	Submission Deadline	Mailing Date
Spring	February 20	March 20
Summer	May 20	June 20
Fall	August 20	September 20
Winter	November 20	December 26

Ad Type	Width x Height	Member	Non-Member
Business Card	3.5"x2"	\$15	\$18
1/4 Page Horiz.	7.5" x 2"	\$24	\$36
1/4 Page Vert.	3.5" x 4.5"	\$24	\$36
1/3 Page Horiz.	7.5" x 3"	\$35	\$48
1/3 Page Vert.	2.5" x 10"	\$35	\$48
Half Page	7.5" x 5"	\$48	\$72
Full Page	7.5" x 10"	\$78	\$117
Two Page Spread	15" x 10"	\$200	\$300

- **Classified Ads**—Member \$10 for up to 50 words  
Non-Member \$25 for up to 50 words. Ads must be related to the Camelid industry.
- 25 cents for each word over 50 for both Member and Non-Member.
- Ad rates are quoted per issue. Lock in the current rate by purchasing the same ad for four consecutive issues and receive a 10% discount.
- **INSTRUCTIONS FOR ARTICLE AND AD SUBMISSION:** Email all text and/or graphics content to: [RMLAeditor@gmail.com](mailto:RMLAeditor@gmail.com). 'Camera ready' ads and articles should be submitted via email in .PDF, or any text readable by MS Word. Images alone should be submitted in .jpeg(.jpg) or .tiff.
- We suggest ads and article graphics be submitted in color at 300dpi. Both will be converted to grayscale for printing.
- For ad design or graphics that require scanning: Use address: RMLA-Ron Hinds -5704 Canyon Trail, Elizabeth, CO 80107-7814 or email to [ad-design@rmla.com](mailto:ad-design@rmla.com). Phone: 303-646-1320.
- **INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAYMENT:** Send your check, payable to RMLA, along with a copy of the ad to: RMLA Journal Advertising Manager – Sonja Boeff – 12920 W. 84th Avenue. Arvada, CO 80005 – 303-257-6733 – [RMLAAdvertise@gmail.com](mailto:RMLAAdvertise@gmail.com)
- Payment and ad copy must be received prior to submission deadline. See the table above for dates.

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We want to thank all of our readers who provided such positive comments on the Fall 2016 Journal. We just hope we can come close again with this issue: the pressure is on! But let us all take a bow! You and the articles and photos you send to us are a part of the success of each issue.



Because 'RMLA is always growing', for all the RMLA members, but especially for the newer members, we asked Dr. Stacey Byers, CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital, if she would update her 2-part article on parasites. She agreed. So, since winter is a really good time to soak up this information, Part 1 is presented in this issue. Part 2 will appear in the Spring issue; a time when many llama owners are thinking about deworming.

And speaking of winter-time reading, be sure to check out the wonderful books and videos in the RMLA Library. I know you will find something to enjoy. Here are a couple of DVDs to check out:

Camelid Culture - Marty McGee Bennett

Llama Talk - Understanding Llama Behavior -

Cathy Spalding, 2002

Or for the younger set, try these:

MOUNTAINS TO CLIMB by Richard

Wainwright (Jr. High)

MY LITTLE LLAMA by Pat Wegner

THE MYTH OF THE LLAMA by Jeri Massi

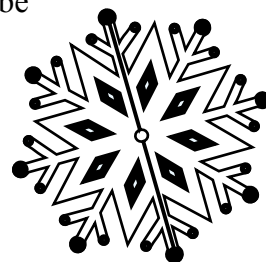
Just go to the RMLA website and select the Library tab.

For our fiber enthusiasts and dreamers, don't miss the article about the ancient Peruvian fiber 'industry' in Ccaccaccollo (see page 22). A couple of the photos included are from my co-editor's trip to Peru several years ago. Which brings me to a request: do you have llama-related stories and photos to share from a trip you have made? Send them in, please.

Finally, before you get out there in a few months to shear, do you need to think about your clippers? What do they need to be in tip-top shape? Read the article on Page 24.

Thank you and have a wonderful new year!

*Kathy and Ron*



# President's Letter

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Happy New Year to you all!

As we begin a new year, I want to personally thank the Board Members for their exceptional teamwork this past year. Working on your Board is not just a 90-minute meeting each month. There is something to do almost every day. Each Board Member was genuinely involved in ALL of the responsibilities and situations with which we were faced. If one person could not handle a task because they had to work at their 'paying job', others would jump right in and help. This is teamwork at its best. As volunteers, we have cross-trained in each position because we are dedicated to the success of your organization. I am grateful and appreciative to the Board for their consistent, exceptional and focused work.

In review, 2016 was a great year for your organization. More volunteers than ever stepped up to help at events and take on new fun things to do. RMLA had 13 well attended educational events across Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas and Wyoming. The CameliDynamics educational clinic in the spring brought new llama owners together and several new members to RMLA. RMLA welcomed 33 new members over the past year. We celebrate those of you who have joined RMLA to learn more about the care and use of alpacas and llamas.

The RMLA Youth Awards Program has achieved a banner year. The new program encourages youth to learn about and do things with their llamas. When the annual Youth Awards are announced, you will learn just how involved these eager members have been.

Now to the future. Have you noticed the trends over the years in RMLA and the llama world in general? In the beginning, packing was about all that one did with llamas. In the 1990s, most RMLA members were more interested in showing. Then, some of our members realized that llamas really did need to be shorn to be healthy and comfortable in the hot seasons. Members began spinning, weaving and making beautiful creations. And now, we are seeing a renewed interest in packing and guarding. It does appear that more of the world has awakened to all of the joys of alpacas and llamas.

Please have a wonderful 2017. Enjoy your critters. RMLA appreciates that you are a part of this long-standing, nationally recognized organization.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you, the members of RMLA.

Respectfully, Lougene Baird, President.



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## NEW RMLA Members

**RMLA IS ALWAYS GROWING**

*Welcome!* Ahni & Paul Atkins, Salida, CO  
Pat & ET Little, Tularosa, NM  
Toby Stensland, Lakewood, CO  
Bob & Jo Riley, Paola, KS

Additional information, farm/business name, phone, address, etc. can be found on the website under **MEMBERS**.

NOTE: Before youth members under the age of 18 are listed, a signed release is required from a parent or legal guardian. You can find a link for further instructions and that form at the top of the **MEMBERS** page on the website. *Thank you*

# PROMOTING OUR LLAMAS

By Mary Vavrina, Chair, RMLA Education Committee



**O**n September 24 and 25, the RMLA Education booth traveled to the Higher Ground Fair in Laramie, Wyoming. This was billed as a “a weekend for delighting in the beauty, cultures, crafts, art, music, food, animals, agriculture, land, joy and meaningful work of life in Rocky Mountain country.”

The fair was a great opportunity to promote the usefulness of llamas.

The booth was staffed by Leigh DiNatale and Mary Vavrina. Leigh



brought her llamas, Santana and Baker, who have experience with packing and public relations. The first day was cold and windy (hey, it's Wyoming) but there were some hardy folks there who were interested in chatting about llamas.

The next day was much warmer and sunny, and people came out in droves. There were many families who appreciated learning how llamas can help carry all their stuff so they can get the kids out on the trail, hunters who would be glad for the help packing out game, crafters who didn't realize the value of llama fiber, and farmers who need guardians for their sheep.

It was a very good two days of promoting the intelligence, versatility, and general awesomeness of llamas.



# Fun at the Annual Meeting

By Ron Hinds and Geri Rutledge



The RMLA Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, October 8, 2016 at the Ramada Plaza in Northglenn, CO. Before the meeting, Geri Rutledge had made arrangements for a RMLA members-only tour of The Recycle Repurpose Plant in north Denver. Just 8 members took advantage of this wonderful adventure.

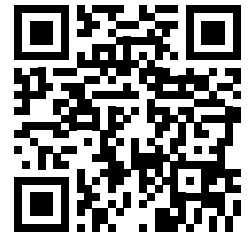
So they ended up with many rolls of rubber sheeting that were to be used as bladders for truck air brakes; all were in perfect condition. The rolls are covered and the rubber sheeting is separated with a thin layer of reinforced plastic. What can you use this for? Hmm...how about a great covering for a concrete floor even in your barn? And for sale very inexpensively!



The Recycle Repurpose Plant is where many items headed to the landfill are repurposed into products that can be used on the ranch and in the arena as obstacles. It's a place to let your imagination go wild. The idea here is to find useful ways to use some of these products in other ways than their intended or manufactured purpose.

The owner, Damon, talked about how he got some of these items. One of the more interesting short stories was about an overturned semi that was carrying large rolls of 1/8" thick x 8' rubber sheeting. The trucking company said since the load was insured and may have some damage it could not be used as intended. They called Damon and asked if he wanted these materials \* free of charge\*, otherwise they would be going to the landfill.

Other items included: high grade lumber from stadium bleacher seating, plastic pallets (for your hay barn, they won't fall apart!), outdoor carpet, large vinyl signs to put over your hay stack, parachutes (excellent strong shading material), used fire hose (rubber lined heavy canvas has a lot of uses besides carrying pressurized water), thick rubber sheeting for the bare barn floor, very large metal window wells that, with a little side support, could be used as a shed roof, lots of small to medium wire in rolls for winches, fences, guide wires, tie downs, and a good supply of new poly rope in various sizes and lengths. Visit



their website for more ideas.  
<http://www.RepurposedMaterialsInc.com>.

After the great tour, the group drove to the Ramada Plaza just a few miles away for lunch and the annual business meeting. Again, attendance was low: just 11 even though 25 members had RSVPed. RMLA Board Secretary Geri Rutledge ran the meeting. Once the Board has an opportunity to review the minutes and take the necessary actions, they will be published on the RMLA website. They cannot be approved until the 2017 Annual Meeting. The Board is currently working on some bylaw changes so expect to see a mailing before the end of the year.

Thanks to all who made this a great day in Colorado.



## Cover Photo:

Frances Bell showing Illumina how to jump over the boards as part of the obstacle course during the after school enrichment program at Sopris Elementary School. Photo courtesy of Chelsea Self, Glenwood Springs Post Independent.  
*See page 28 for more info.*



# A Magical Summer Trip

By Fiona Caruthers  
Boulder, CO

What a magical summer trip. With my eyes I am scanning the valley far below, the cliffs across the valley, the peaks ahead of us. How many times have we been here! But this is special, it is the first pack trip in 6 years. Who would have thought we would be coming here again, our favorite trail leading to our favorite campsite, which Bobra Goldsmith had shown us more than 20 years ago.

But I did not just stand still to admire the view. A tug on the line had signaled me to stop. Pino, my hiking companion for so many years, had reminded me – as he has for over 21 years – that he is not and never will be an uphill llama. As his breath settles, he admires the so familiar view. He knows this trail inside out. I pick a few raspberries for him, he has always had a sweet tooth.

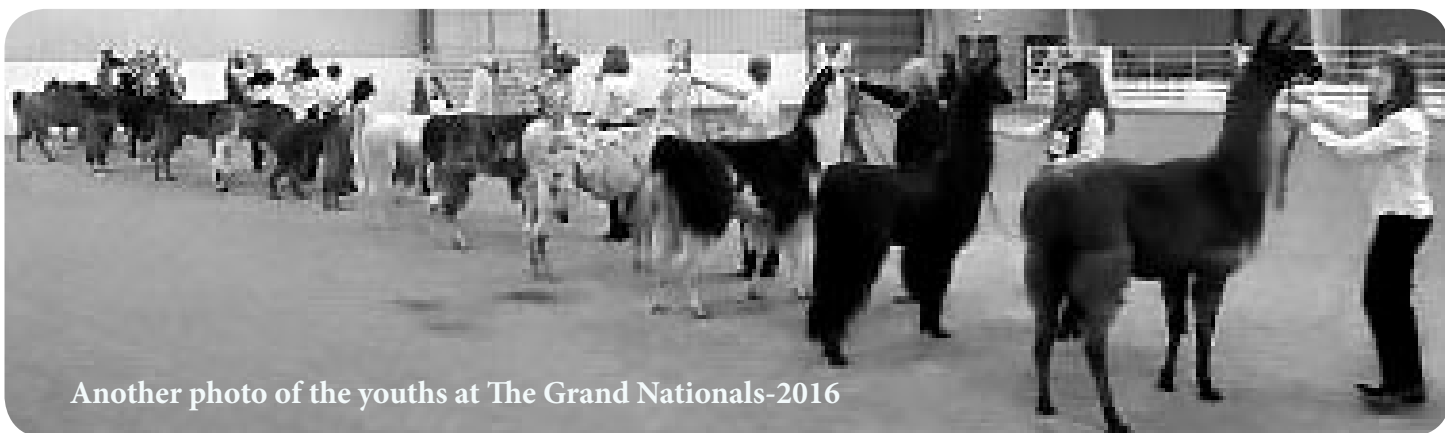
Pedro, our 8-year-old ‘youngster’ in the back of the string stretches his head: ‘what’s going on? Am I missing something? And why am I not in front – I know how to do this, I should be in front!’ Pedro’s motto is ‘me, me, me and don’t forget about me!’ In the middle of the string is Tostito, our most inexperienced newcomer to the family, busy just looking: ‘wow – what is this? Where are we? Can I do this? Wow!’

By now Pino is starting to move again; he sets the pace, he decides when to stop and start; he has earned his leadership position. With an expression of pride he says ‘come on guys, I know where we are going, I will show you!’.



In my backpack, I am carrying a handful of Pepe’s ashes, my best friend and hiking companion for 19 years. There are many goodbyes for me on this trip, not only Pepe, but my mother, who came along on endless pack trips, and Bobra who was an integral part of my llama life. When we got Pedro and Tostito 2 years ago, life was dark and painful. It felt like joy would never be part of my life again.

But life can turn around. First Pedro appeared and planted himself firmly in front of me: ‘I will make you smile, you can count on it’. And so he did and still does every day. Then came Tostito, now 15, a bit shy and inexperienced, but craving for love. Our favorite thing is to stand cheek to cheek. It is healing for both of us, and how it affects me is beyond words. And that’s how it came that we are on the trail again. There is nothing better than being on the trail with a string of my beloved llamas behind.



Another photo of the youths at The Grand Nationals-2016



## Parasites, Part 1: Treatment and Control Strategies

*Editor's note: It is time for a refresher discussion on parasites in camelids since the past year threw a lot of owners and animals for a loop and there are new camelid owners with questions. This is Part 1, an overview of parasites. Part 2 will appear in the Spring Issue.*

Camelids can be infected with many different parasites and these include gastrointestinal (GI), external (ticks, mites, etc), and a cria. This is only a partial joke since many heavy lactation females can look like they have a parasite problem but their poorer body condition is just due to milk production. This first part of a two-part article will be focusing on the GI parasites commonly affecting camelids, clinical signs of infection, and life cycle features that we can use for detection. Treatment and control strategies will be discussed in Part 2.

Why are we seeing more GI parasite problems in certain regions of the West? It is primarily due to the weather. Some areas have had significantly more rainfall or rain in normally dry times and winter has not helped in other areas since it has been warmer than normal rather than a long duration cold spell. These two factors – the moisture and temperatures – have favored the GI parasites. Environmental conditions have not been that harsh (hot and dry or frigid) to kill off the eggs in the pastures and pens. The eggs have always been around but were being inactivated by the weather conditions. The parasite eggs are shed in the feces of the animals in your herd.

The camelid dung pile is a great parasite control method compared to what owners have to do when keeping sheep and goats since they drop fecal pellets in random fashion. However the dung pile is not foolproof. Juveniles or other animals may not be that fastidious at using it if they are suffering from diarrhea and have the “urge to go now”. Also animals get feces on their feet, these can tracked around and lead to eggs being deposited in a variety of areas. Then we get a little water and warmth and voilà, the parasites can complete their life cycle and become infectious.

Most of the time we see GI parasite problems in our juvenile camelids. These juveniles are under more

stress (psychological, immunological, physical, etc.) than adults, except for pregnant animals. The first time the animal is infected, their immune system is not prepared (naive) and it takes time for the immune cells to develop to fight the parasite (or bacteria, virus, etc.). This naiveté provides the parasites time to complete their life cycle leading to intestinal damage and cause the diarrhea, poor growth or weight loss, poor fiber, lethargy, etc. that we see. Older animals can have similar parasite problems because their immune system is not as robust as in younger adults. This is similar to the increased risk of influenza and pneumonia in elderly humans.



The severity of signs from GI parasites is usually dependent on the infectious dose the animal gets, therefore infection with a larger number of parasites results in more serious disease. Once the immune system has “seen” the parasites the first time, it is more prepared for the next exposure cycle and often can keep the infection in check without clinical signs developing. The duration of protection varies with types of parasites and time between exposures.

Additionally when we have years of low parasite loads on the pastures, the lack of continued low level immune stimulation can lead to a flare up of parasitism in any age camelid. The beneficial aspect of low level immune stimulation is one reason we no longer recommend routine, whole herd deworming when there are no signs of parasite infections or just small numbers of parasite detected on fecal examinations.

As a review there are several categories of GI parasites: nematodes, cestodes, and protozoa.

- **Nematodes** are sometimes called “worms”, and some of the more common ones found in camelids are *Haemonchus*, *Trichostrongylus*, *Nematodirus*, and *Trichuris* species. *Haemonchus* and *Trichostrongylus*

*continued on next page*

are often lumped into the general category of “strongyles” since the eggs look identical.

- **Cestodes** are tapeworms and include *Taenia* and *Moniezia* species.
- The final category is the **protozoa** which includes coccidia (*Eimeria* species including *E. macusaniensis*), *Cryptosporidium*, and *Giardia*.

The GI parasites found in your particular region vary by environmental conditions, animal stocking density, previous biosecurity protocols a farm may have implemented, as well as other factors. All farms should assume to have coccidia, *Nematodirus*, and some version of strongyles. These may not show up in every fecal floatation performed, however, they are too common and impossible to eradicate completely from the environment and the animals (more in Part 2).

The different GI parasites have some unique features we need to discuss in more detail.

- **Haemonchus and Trichostrongylus**  
– Under optimal conditions of high temperature and humidity, the eggs from these worms can mature to infective larvae stages in approximately one week. The larvae require moisture and grass or spilled hay to wiggle on to in order to live long enough to be consumed by an animal. Once ingested, the larvae require 2-4 weeks to mature to the egg-laying adult stage (prepatent period) and then we can detect the eggs on fecal examinations. Adult *Haemonchus* attach to the Compartment 3 (C3) mucosa and feed on blood.

The signs of a severe infection are a reflection of this blood loss. The anemia from the blood loss shows as lethargy or exercise intolerance (e.g. lagging behind the group), increased respiratory rate and possible nostril flaring, increased heart rate, and pale mucous membranes and sclera. This can look like a *Mycoplasma haemolamae* infection. In “pure” *Haemonchus* infections, the host usually has well-formed feces because blood loss is the main problem, not impaired digestion. *Trichostrongylus* infections appear to have some variable geographical differences

in severity of infection and disease. For example, camelids in the Northwest coastal areas of the US can have significant infections with this parasite.

- **Nematodirus** – The parasite is a low egg shedder so the presence of multiple eggs on a fecal floatation indicates a significant infectious load. The eggs can remain dormant for over a year on a pasture and hatch into infective larvae when optimal weather conditions exist. Once ingested, it takes 2-3 weeks before we can detect the eggs in a fecal examination. Alpacas often show signs of mild-moderate abdominal pain (colic) with *Nematodirus* infections.



- **Trichuris** – This parasite is often called a “whipworm” because the adult form looks like a whip. *Trichuris* infections seem to have some variable geographical differences. The prepatent period is approximately unknown in camelids but 2 months in other ruminants. The eggs are very resistant to environmental degradation.

- **Cestodes: Taenia and Moniezia** – These are usually more of a concern for an owner than the animal as it can be disturbing to find small “grains of rice” attached to the rump or fiber of the animal.

Most of the time tapeworms do not cause problems, however, significant infections can be pathologic and result in diarrhea and ill-thrift.

- **Coccidia** – There are multiple species of coccidia and all are host species specific so camelids cannot be infected by coccidia from cattle, chickens, etc. Coccidia are often found in fecal floats so treatment is only warranted if clinical signs are apparent or oocysts are seen in very high numbers. Diarrhea can be mild and due to maldigestion and malabsorption of nutrients with low infection loads, but can progress to an inflammatory condition with bloody diarrhea, mucosal shreds and fibrin in the feces with high infectious dosages. In severe infections, animals may strain to defecate and even develop a rectal prolapse from straining.

The oocysts require a minimum of 5 days to transition to the infectious stage and moist warm weather favors this faster time. The oocysts are very hardy hanging out in cool, moist conditions.

*continued on next page*

# LLAMA <sup>AND</sup> ALPACA CAMP

**June 23rd - 24th, 2017**  
(Friday & Saturday)

— All ages welcomed —

Sponsored by  
Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association



**Want to learn more about Llamas, Alpacas and Paco-Vicuñas?**  
This camp offers two days where you can ask questions and have hands-on experience with the animals.

The days are filled with various activities including:

Working one-on-one with an animal

Learning about fiber and various uses for it

Crafts • Break out groups AND Visiting with friends



To register for Camp, contact: Geri Rutledge  
2209 Road 9 Waco, NE 68460 (420) 366-9304  
[Buckshollow@wildblue.net](mailto:Buckshollow@wildblue.net)

*Ask The CSU Vet Team continued*

The prepatent period varies from about 2-5 weeks depending with the individual *Eimeria* species with *E. macusaniensis* having the longest prepatent period.

- **Cryptosporidium** – Oocysts are immediately infective once they pass out in the feces and the infectious dose is very low, therefore infection occurs quite easily. The prepatent period is 3-7 days. Some species of *Cryptosporidium* can cause disease in animals and humans (zoonotic). The parasite is very difficult to eradicate from the environment so if it is on your premises, assume it is there to stay.

- **Giardia** – Often *Giardia* is an incidental finding on fecal examinations, but it can be the primary cause of diarrhea. We usually determine this when the diarrhea does not resolve with normal treatments. Infection typically occurs through contaminated water. Similar to cryptosporidiosis, the infectious dose is quite small and significant fecal shedding occurs in affected animals. Once *Giardia* is found on a farm, it is assumed that all animals will be infected. The

prepatent period is between 3-10 days, and cysts are immediately infective. Some strains of *Giardia* are also zoonotic.

General Clinical Features of GI Parasite Infections

- Poor or no weight gain, weight loss, poor hair coat
- Colic or intestinal inflammation (enteritis)
- Diarrhea may be profuse and lead to metabolic abnormalities.
- Blood in the feces
- Weakness, lethargy
- Anorexia due to cramping or weakness or just not feeling well.
- Swelling along the bottom of the jaw, chest area, scrotum, prepuce, or udder. The swelling (edema) develops as fluid (similar to water) accumulates into the more ventral subcutaneous tissues. This can occur with severe protein loss from a damaged intestine.





# Hello from Hope Pass!

By John Fant, a member of the Pack Llama Trail Association



Another Leadville 100 race is in the history books. Life at the Mount Hope Aid Station went very smoothly this year, and the weather was perfect. Only a couple of rain showers in the afternoons and one morning of frost! Even the fact that the station was breaking in a new water treatment tech from Arkansas went smoothly as well. (The new water treatment tech is me, John Fant).

The Leadville 100 is a hundred-mile race, where the runners run fifty miles one way, turn around and come back. The race starts at 4 AM on Saturday morning in Leadville, Colorado, and goes 30 hours until 10 AM Sunday where it ends in Leadville. The elevation starts at roughly 10,200 feet and runs up to 12,600 feet. The turnaround is the ghost town of Winfield, Colorado, at the fifty-mile marker. This race is world known. There were runners from France, Italy, Germany, Spain, USA, and others that ran. This year 848 people entered into the race. Out of that, only 20 people did not make the cut off time which was 16:15 Saturday afternoon (at Hope Pass) and could not continue on. The first runner came through at 11:26 Saturday morning; yes, 7 hours and 26 minutes to run 45 miles! Every runner who completes the race has bragging rights and a belt buckle to show off!



The aid station provides runners everything they need to complete the race: food, fluids, shelter, and medical care (if needed). It also is home to a small group of volunteers, who are responsible for setting up the aid station and overseeing its daily operation. This year there were four of us who set up the base camp on Thursday. But by Sunday the crew was at a total of 12 for the final trip down.

Now the amazing part of this is that the food and gear (over 2,000 pounds) are brought up by llamas and mules. On race day the crew is responsible for the food and clean drinking water. There are two shifts of volunteers who hike up the mountain to help out as well. More than 470 gallons of purified drinking water were processed.

I would like to mention and thank a very special group of people who went way above and beyond just volunteering to help out with everything.

1<sup>st</sup> Golden High School Track Team – They paced runners coming in and encouraged them on. Plus they resupplied the fluids the runner needed, while the runner had a snack to eat.



*continued on next page*



2<sup>nd</sup> Michael Bigley, RN – Not only did he give great medical care, but he helped out with whatever needed to be done.

3<sup>rd</sup> Scott Burkhardt – Radio/Communications; he did everything that needed to be done, including carrying water up to the aid station.


4<sup>th</sup> Logan and Lance Prewitt – these brothers worked almost every area. For two young men, they showed great maturity.

5<sup>th</sup> Tessa Maurer – This young lady was impressive! She worked all day cooking and serving with a big smile. This young lady put many of the adults **who worked** that day to shame, and she is only 13 years old.

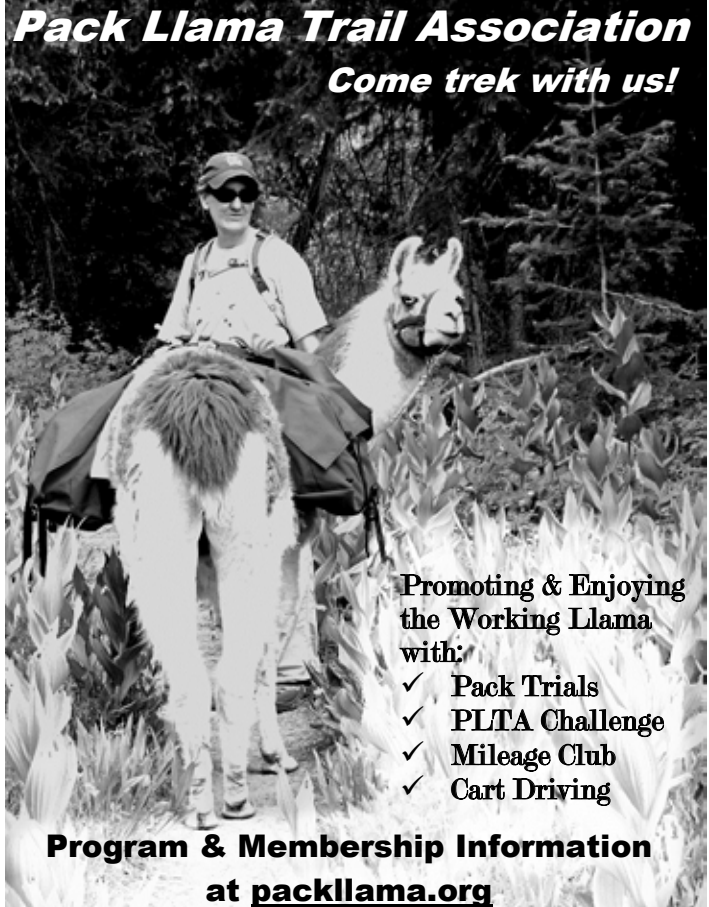
The race has its rewards as well for the volunteer crew. When you see a runner, especially from another country, who knows in advance about this aid station and its past history, the thanks they give is very heartfelt and sincere. They remember everyone who works at this aid station. Plus, the llamas are a great hit with them as well. There were a lot of pictures taken with the llamas that day.

Now for the serious part of this article. We need more llamas and many younger hands to help out. Out of the four who went up Thursday to set up, the youngest was 52 years old. So please if you want an adventure and to pack with your llamas, contact RMLA. They will put you in touch with the right people to talk to!

And beginning with the 2017 Race, the Pack Llama Trail Association (PLTA) will conduct a pack trial in conjunction with the Leadville 100 race. Just think: you can have an adventure and get your llama certified with PLTA in the same weekend. Then afterwards you have the bragging rights and proof that you can actually trek with your llamas.

One last thing! The new guy from Arkansas (who lives at 682 feet elevation) did fine and cannot wait for next year to come! So if a lowlander like me and his llamas could do it, you can too! I am now part of the Hopeless Crew! 

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# GIVING: A YEAR IN THE MAKING

By Geri Rutledge, Waco, NE

CAMELIDKIDS 4H and their families who attended the 2016 Llama Alpaca Camp all deserve a great round applause for the efforts put into this project. Today 170 felted llama/alpaca Christmas ornaments were delivered to Nebraska Hematology/Oncology for persons dealing with cancer. Colored pictures of llamas, alpacas and goats done at the Nebraska State Fair by kids in the bleachers were delivered as well.

One year ago the group purchased Christmas ornaments on clearance after the holidays. At the CAMELIKIDS 4H Christmas Party last January, they started felting with hot water, soap and a nylon over the ornament, making beautiful designs on the balls. They squished and rolled it on bubble wrap until they had a smooth ornament. The ornaments were then allowed to dry.

At Llama Camp in June 2016, the project continued. Never did we imagine 170 ornaments

would be completed! With help from Shawn Leland, origami llamas and alpacas and little note cards were attached to each ornament. With a little yarn and some “bling”, the ornaments were complete.



During the Nebraska State Fair, we had kids coloring pictures of llamas, alpacas and goats. The kids got crayons and colored while watching the shows. The kids recycled the crayons for 2 days! We had nearly a hundred colored pictures to add to the ornaments. What a great gift and so many participated from so many miles apart.



This project will certainly touch many lives. It was done with the thoughts of Shelia Gulbrandson who lost her battle to cancer; she was a 4H mom, sister, wife, teacher and the best friend who we truly miss. We have given back to others fighting their own battles with cancer. Our wish was to spread Holiday Cheer and we did just that by giving a Christmas ornament.

Thanks to all the kids and families who participated in this fun and heartwarming project.





# TEACHING TO

Llamas are the perfect pack animal particularly if you like to walk rather than ride. They are smaller, easier on the environment and easier to take care of while out in the wilderness. Even a single llama can carry a lot of creature comforts for the trail. Llamas also make interesting and observant hiking companions. Conventional "llama" wisdom has it that llamas are also easy to train to carry a pack and I agree, with a bit of a caveat. Many llamas are chronically and needlessly difficult to saddle because they were never taught to accept a pack. There are few things more frustrating than trying to put a pack on a llama that is kicking, kushing or wrapping himself around a tree.

Training a pack llama is not as simple as just tying him up and attaching a pack to him. Look at this event from your llama's point of view. The "puma/pack" jumps on, grabs him around the middle and won't let go! There are no natural occurrences in your llama's life that will have prepared him for the sights, sounds or feelings inherent in wearing a pack. Most llamas are going to panic if you simply pop one on. The event will be seared into his brain; the pack becomes an enemy to be avoided. Perhaps in time your llama will realize that the pack isn't going to eat him; by then he has developed avoidance habits that will be annoying and time consuming.

The process of teaching a llama to ACCEPT a pack is quite different than tying one on, but surprisingly it doesn't take much more time or effort. The small amount of extra time involved in the beginning comes back to you a hundred-fold each time your llama stands quietly for saddling.

Your pack candidate should be easy to halter and lead, and not terribly frightened about having his legs

touched. Always keep in mind that YOU know that the pack or anything else you put on his back will not kill him, but HE doesn't. It pays not to take anything for granted with a llama that has not worn a pack before.

The following is a step by step plan for introducing a pack. If your llama is not bothered by a particular step, there is no need to repeat it. Too much repetition will only bore your llama and cause him to act out. With

llamas that are comfortable with a halter and know how to lead, this whole process may not take more than 20-30 minutes and might be accomplished in one session. If you reach a point of resistance, it is better to back up and repeat the previous step successfully, quit and resume the process the next day or the day after. If you get your ego involved and



turn the process into a fight, you will end up creating a problem where there wasn't one before. Llamas DO think about things over night and many times what seemed to be impossible one day can be a piece of cake the next.

If you end up dividing this process into several lessons, there is no need to begin at the beginning each time. You need only repeat the last one or two steps from the previous lesson. Teaching a llama to accept a pack is a handling more than a training process. The llama needs only to stand still; he is not required to DO anything, therefore little to no repetition is required. If you are having trouble with

*continued on next page*

a particular step, do not repeat the step exactly as I have outlined it, instead figure out how to divide that step into two or more smaller, easier steps.

Llamas will accept new and potentially scary things best when these things are introduced in a catch pen (10' x 10' or so) with the llama left free. If your llama is the least bit fearful, tying him up will convince him that something awful is going to happen. Imagine your first appointment with a new doctor, he says, "This won't hurt a bit but I just want to tie you

down first." What would you think? You can attach a lead rope to the llama as you work but allow him to move around the pen freely. Use the lead only to determine the direction of travel, not to slow him down or attempt to stop him from moving. I suggest that you leave the

llama completely free within the confines of the catch pen.

When a llama is tied, and cannot use his natural instinct to run away from things that are frightening—the flight response—he will use another instinctive behavior, the freeze response. This behavior is often misinterpreted as acceptance. Your cooperative llama stands very still as you slowly set the pack on his back and is so good you just go ahead and cinch the pack up. You think to yourself, "Wow this is really easy, my llama is so smart!" Untie your brilliant llama, ask him to take a step forward or walk through the gate that tugs on the pack and he may very well snap out of his state of suspended animation and go bonkers. I have



met too many llamas that had really serious issues with a pack because they flew off in a panic the first time they ever wore one.

Leaving your llama free within the confines of the catch pen and allowing him to move about as you introduce new things will prevent this very common scenario from happening. If your llama is zinging around the catch pen or circling wildly as you introduce a particular step, you probably need to back up a step or figure out how to divide the step into two steps. I will offer some examples of this problem solving technique as we go along. Allowing an occasional bite of food while introducing new items of equipment is a good practice. This is not a reward for any particular behavior, but a way of making the process interesting and pleasant. Taking a few bites of food will also encourage your llama to breathe. When your llama is frightened or unsure, he will tend to hold his breath. A llama holding his breath will be much more likely to explode or behave erratically. A bag of really juicy hay hanging in a corner will encourage cooperation as well as breathing.

You will need:

- A llama
- A 10 X10 catch pen
- A halter
- A wool blanket (twin or full size)
- A wand or lightweight pole
- A bath towel, dish towel, and handkerchief
- Two lead ropes
- Various old pillows or rags

#### Introducing a Pack

1. Herd your llama to the catch pen. Halter your llama. Drape a small towel over your llama's back and let him walk around with it for a second or two. Pick up the corner and drag the towel off allowing it to touch the llama's legs as it drops to the ground.

- Problem solving tip: If a towel seems to be a problem, get something smaller, a washrag, or dish towel and repeat the process gradually working up to bigger pieces of toweling. When retraining llamas who have had a bad packing experience, I have started the process with a handkerchief folded in fourths. Do what works!

Always allow the llama to have a look and sniff at each new thing you are going to put on his back.

*continued on next page*

*Teaching to Pack , continued*

2. Place a blanket folded in fourths (preferably wool- it sticks to the llama's body better) over your llama's back and drag it off as before. I suggest dragging the blanket or towel off in this manner to accustom the llama to strange items falling around his feet. This process prepares your llama for the inevitable— a slipping or falling pack or pannier, a dropped lead rope or items falling out of the pack. If your llama becomes upset or kicks at the blanket as it comes off, repeat the process or back up to the previous step.

3. Unfold the blanket one time and repeat the process. Continue unfolding the blanket and dragging it off until the blanket is completely unfolded. I like to use a blanket that is big enough to drag near the ground and touch the llama's legs a bit. Let your llama walk around and play 'Darth Vader' for a minute or two. The purpose of this exercise is to get the llama used to things on his back and around his legs. Remember: do not tie up the llama for this procedure. At this point nothing is tied to the llama, if he panics the blanket will come off and that is fine.

4. Refold the blanket in fourths and place it on the llama's back. Drape a lead rope over his back. Stand close to your llama at the front shoulder and facing the rear of the llama. Reach over his back with one arm pushing the rope into your other hand, much as if you were going to give your llama a hug around his middle. This step will be much easier if you position yourself in the center of the catch pen (the hub of the wheel) with the llama tracking around the edges (the rim). By standing in the center you will not have to take many steps when your llama moves.

Avoid the temptation to tie your llama up if he is nervous. Tying him up will most likely cause a panic reaction. The rope under the belly can now become a practice cinch. Before you tie the rope around the llama and simulate a cinch, allow your llama to experience pressure on his back and pressure on his belly separately. Standing as before, use your hands and arms to push down gently on the llama's back. Next, with an end of the rope in each hand, lift gently in the cinch area and release. Now you can tie the blanket snugly to the llama. A wide flat lead rope or a heavy cotton rope works best for this step.

5. Most packs use a two-cinch system. You can simulate a second cinch with another lead rope. Pass the lead through the first cinch and repeat the



process standing as before to bring the second cinch under the belly. Repeat all steps further back where the second cinch is to be worn, behind the spring of the ribs and a hand's width in front of the sheath on a male.

6. Walk your llama around inside the catch pen. Snug up the pretend cinches a bit more and take your new "blanket" packer on a short walk. Let him brush up against things with his new gear and get used to the sensation of the rope around his belly as he walks and trots. Bring him back into the pen. To simulate panniers, tie some pillows or towels to the "cinch" or tuck the pillows under your cinch. It is a good idea to tug on the "pretend" panniers so that your packing student will not be startled the first time something catches on a one.

Once your llama has graduated from this process, a real pack will be no different. He has experienced all of the sights, sounds and feelings associated with wearing a pack. The real McCoy will be an easy next step. When introducing the real pack make sure to give your llama a chance to inspect it before you set it on his back. Work in a catch pen as before and pull the pack off the back a time or two from both the right and the left before you attach the cinches.

A note on "training packs": Many people invest in a training pack when they begin teaching their llama to pack. Unfortunately, most training packs are all in one affairs that cannot be broken down into component parts. The handler must apply all parts of the pack at one time because the saddle panniers and cinch are all sewn together. In my opinion, a training pack is not useful unless it can be taken apart. Using this method, you need not spend money on a training pack; once your llama has experienced this process you can proceed immediately to a real pack.

Practice with short walks before you hit the trails. Have fun!





# Cooper's Walk, Part 2

by Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay, Chair, Pack Committee

*Editors' Note: Part 1 of Cooper's Walk was published in the Fall 2016 Journal. We pick up the story after Cooper, with a great deal of assistance, walked out of the backcountry on three legs to the waiting trailer.*

Finding "Dr. Ellis" was extremely lucky for us. Young, skilled and empathic, Dr. Ellis Farstvedt, DMV at the Copper Springs Ranch Equine Medical Center in Bozeman, Montana, is the kind of surgeon you want for your animal with a serious injury like a broken bone. Dr. Ellis' usual patients are horses but he had plenty of past experience with llamas at Oregon State University. Finding him was a crucial link to saving Cooper's life. "We have a chance of fixing him," he said, "because llamas heal so fast and they take care of themselves pretty well during the healing process, unlike most horses."

When we arrived at the Equine Medical Center with its modern technology, bright, clean (and padded!) exam and recovery rooms and met the friendly and competent team, I took heart. Maybe we had a chance! I had brought Llama Gambit for Cooper's and my moral support. Dr. Ellis admitted later that he expected a stubborn, frightened, spitting animal. Instead, he met Cooper who endured the examination with his usual calm demeanor. Our training of touching, scratching, hugging and, of course, packing with strangers, paid off.

We found that Cooper had an open, severely splintered cannon bone fracture that involved approximately 75% of the length of the bone. With open wounds, there is always the worry about bone infection and implant infection or failure. Our options, according to

Dr. Ellis, were to use a plate to create a strut for the bone pieces to be screwed down to, or to use lag screw fixation.

While Gambit watched with concern but still lending his support, Cooper was anesthetized and then rolled into the operating room. It turned out that it was not possible to place a plate as there was not enough parent bone below the fragments to anchor it. Dr. Ellis chose lag screw fixation and got this done with minimal invasion of the soft tissues around the fracture, a genial procedure that would allow for faster healing and has less infection rates than an open approach. This technique basically lined all the fragments up.

Two screws were now holding Cooper's leg bones together, a third one did not hold. Dr. Ellis placed antibiotic impregnated bone cement along the open wounds to provide local antimicrobial treatment. Finally, he placed two transfixing pins - one in the proximal cannon bone and one in the distal radius - that were then anchored into a cast to stabilize the limb and minimize stress on the fragments. The cast incorporated Cooper's foot and went up to his elbow joint. This procedure lasted over 4 hours!

Cooper was then wheeled back into the examination room to recuperate, with Gambit watching nervously. Cooper groaned, gurgled and whined as he slowly regained consciousness. Llamas have to be watched carefully when awakening from anesthesia. Cooper struggled for another hour until he was fully awake and - with some help - got up to carefully test his stiff leg. The second crucial part had been accomplished.



*continued on next page*

*Cooper's Walk...., continued*

Cooper soon invented a genial method of sitting down. He carefully positioned all four legs, shifted his weight back, and spread his hind legs to keep balance. He then slowly bent his healthy left leg, slid the right, stiff leg forward, landed on his left knee with hind legs spreading out further, then moved his weight forward, slid the stiff leg all the way out front – and down he was! This was also his preferred position to eat. Because he was not supposed to move around much, Cooper was now confined to a room in the llama house at our ranch that he would not leave for many months.

That time was fraught with serious concerns and worries. One of the fragments in his leg had



moved and had to be secured with another screw, which meant another surgery. In addition, there was the worry about infection, which was still possible. And then the question: will Cooper walk normally ever again?

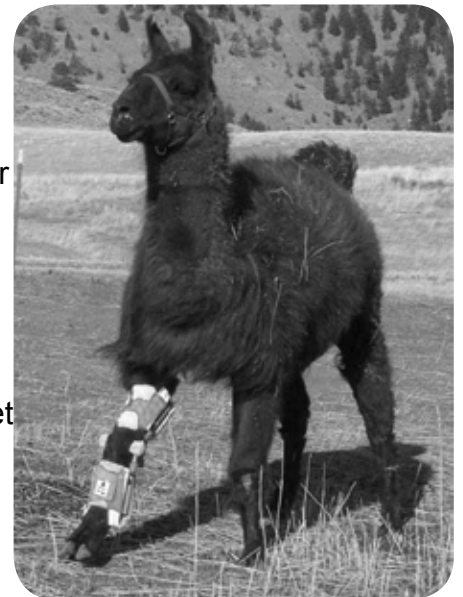
My life revolved almost

exclusively around Cooper's care. I administered antibiotics twice daily, at first through a port in his neck, later subcutaneously with a syringe. We both disliked this procedure but Cooper cooperated with his usual calm attitude. He knew exactly what was going on and what was at stake. He greeted me bright-eyed and ears-up in the morning and waited to be scratched in his favorite spot first before we moved on to the more serious business. It is because of this attitude, this strength that Cooper found in himself that he survived. Not only on that fateful weekend in Yellowstone, but also on the many long days that followed and that he spent confined to his sick room in the llama house. Cooper practiced what we commonly call "positive thinking". Through a window in his room, he watched his llama buddies frolic in the sun. But Cooper never looked depressed or suffering, he was always bright-eyed, calm and patient, even though I think that he was often in pain.

At the Equine Medical Center, Cooper was known as the "Super Llama". Everybody was pulling for this llama who had not only shown a strong resilience in the face of a severe injury at age 15, but had also reformed their view on llama behavior. When the screw that was put in with the second surgery failed, Cooper's body had healed the gap and grown cartilage around and over it. Soon we wouldn't have to worry about infection anymore. Everything was healing according to plan. Dr. Ellis was exuberant and I felt like a heavy weight just lifted off my heart. The third crucial part had been accomplished.

When we removed Cooper's fourth and last cast, he had to learn to walk with a severely weakened, atrophied leg that had only half the circumference of the left one. We practiced a little every day, then more and more. The leg grew steadily stronger; the muscles were growing again. However, we soon noticed that the back of his leg did not look straight and found out that when all the pieces had grown back together the cannon bone ended up with a backwards bow (image # 5). This was compounded by the fact that the tendons had weakened and lengthened during the long time of inactivity as well as stretching out the leg when kushed. The weakened tendons could not support this structural weakness and he ended up with carpal hyperextension.

Cooper and I were not ready to give up now after all we had endured and accomplished. Something had to be done. Drs. Ellis and Bruce could not come up with a solution. I resorted to the Internet. A friend of mine had injured her knee recently and wore a prosthesis to support the recovering knee. This device subjects the upper and lower leg to a slight resistance, excluding the knee. This was what Cooper needed and indeed the Internet search produced "Dynasplint" ([dynamplint.com](http://dynamplint.com)), a device that helps relieve and



*continued on next page*



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## *Cooper's Walk..., continued*

cure hyperextension, shortened and lengthened ligaments, etc. in horses. There was no reason why this should not work for a llama and soon a Dynasplint that was adjusted to Cooper's leg dimensions arrived. Cooper wore the device for four months. Again, he cooperated with his typical calm acceptance.

The Dynasplint works through spring supported tension which keeps the leg slightly bent. When walking, Cooper had to work against the tension, thus strengthening his leg muscles and at the same time shortening his ligaments. He did not like to wear the contraption. But he did it. So began the last chapter of Cooper's recovery.



**Dr. Ellis & Cooper**

While the daily removal and adjustment of the Dynasplint was time-consuming, we had to make sure there were no pressure points developing. And Cooper walked. With his bright blue prosthesis,

he marched all over the dry lot, up and down the hill. Soon, he was not to be kept from frolicking (to a point) with his friends in the springtime sun. His ligaments and muscles responded to the exercise. Early June, almost a year after his terrible accident, I took the Dynasplint off Cooper's leg for the last time. I could not take my eyes off him: he was standing straight! We did it! Over the next months, thick cartilage covered the bones and arthritis prevented his knee to bend all the way. But Cooper's leg had healed completely.

Cooper proved that – contrary to “horse wisdom” – llamas don't have to be euthanized because they break a leg. They are tough and will walk quite a distance on three legs. And one thing became clear: as soon as Cooper felt we would not give up on him, he put all his strength and determination towards the goal to survive and, ultimately, to heal. He endured it all for over ten months and worked with us with his typical gentle, calm demeanor, eyes bright and ears up, with a decidedly positive attitude. And he made it! The fourth crucial part had been accomplished.

Cooper, my beloved “Super Llama”, lived to be 18 years old. My message to you is: Don't give up on a llama with a compound fracture! Large animal surgery has come a long way with minimal invasion techniques and reduced danger of wound infection. And there are devices available that help a body to repair itself, even when it is not that young anymore! While Cooper's strong will to live was the most crucial factor in his survival, all the other components helped him to recover and thrive again.

PS: I have since changed my overnight tethering methods and use shorter lines that are rounded, not flat and don't stick easily to vegetation. They are attached to rock-filled drag bags. We always carry a satellite phone and have increased our llama first aid supplies. All our treks are accompanied by two guides trained in first aid.





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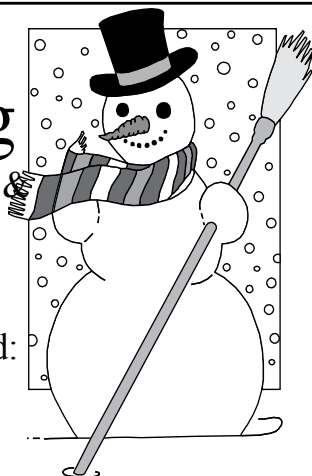
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# A Rebirth of Ancient Skills Revitalizes a Village in Peru's Sacred Valley

By Simon Willis who writes for the guardian.

First 3 photos by Simon Willis. Reprinted from the Humming Herald, Summer 2016

A tourist boom and natural disaster almost led to the extinction of an ancient way of life but, thanks to a women-led initiative, old weaving techniques and economic viability have returned.

Ccaccacollo village's weaving market is perched on an emerald-green Andean mountainside, looking out across Peru's Sacred Valley. Inside a straw-roofed hut, two women sit at wooden looms working the foot treadles, transforming the frames into thrusting locomotives. Pumpkin-orange and white fibres intertwine as the shafts shift up and down – clack-clack, clack-clack, clack-clack.

Next door, bowls bursting with black corn, eucalyptus leaves and pearl white beans line the terracotta shelves. A woman plunges a ball of alpaca fibres into a pot of steaming dye and pulls out the mesh; it drips crimson like the head of decapitated warrior. The 60 Quechua women running this market in Ccaccacollo, 15 miles north-east of Cusco and about 80 east of Macchu Picchu, source Andean materials to dye clothes,



A woman working in Ccaccacollo's revitalized weaving market.



The Ccaccacollo weaving market, Peru. A workers' meeting at the market.

Quechua  
pronounced  
'keCHwa'

from qolle, a shrunken cauliflower-looking plant, to cochinillas, which are small insects that burrow into cacti.

"Not long ago this was a sad place. We lost our way of life," Francisca Qquerar Mayta, a spokesperson for the women, tells me. Sacred

Inca traditions, which survived the mid-16th century Spanish conquest, disappeared from Ccaccacollo in the 1990s after a tourism boom caused an economic imbalance in the Sacred Valley.

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Most significant was the increase in visitor numbers to Machu Picchu, which surged from about 95,000 a year (including locals) in 1992 to 1.1 million in 2014. Profits rose, too, transforming the region's capital Cusco into a tourist hub with swanky hotels and expensive restaurants. And while communities close to sacred Inca ruins, like Pisac and Ollantaytambo, also thrived, others were forgotten. Fears over discrimination saw children forced to abandon their indigenous roots, including their native tongue Quechua. Many relocated to tourist locations to become street sellers, or to beg for money.

Quechua women have returned to Ccaccacollo.

Most of the women left the market as young girls, pedaling trinkets in Cusco and living "with no electricity, water, very little food. In rooms no bigger than that," says Francisca, pointing to a stable housing two tethered alpacas.

Spotting the inequity, in 2005 Planeterra – the non-profit foundation of the Canada-based travel company G Adventures – launched the Women's Weaving Co-op in Ccaccacollo. Local women relearned weaving techniques and, with the guidance of the foundation's experts, started selling handmade alpaca clothing.

But in 2010, three days of torrential rain across the Sacred Valley almost completely destroyed Ccaccacollo. Mudslides dragged most of the houses down the mountain, leaving surviving homes spewing water from their front doors like burst dams. Looms and other equipment were washed away; the workshop was destroyed.

Thanks to Planeterra's fundraising and financing from the municipality, locals have rebuilt the village including a factory, central plaza and homes for the 170 families. The market, lined with rows of brightly coloured clothing, welcomes trekkers and the co-op received its first export order last year. Perhaps more

importantly, though, the women continue to preserve their unique way of life for future generations.



Quechua women have returned to Ccaccacollo and relearned weaving techniques.



Photo by Ron Hinds



Photo by Ron Hinds



# ELECTRIC SHEARS – BLADES, CARE AND MAINTENANCE

By Joe Viola, Viola Sharpening & Repair, Eglen, WV

**Y**ears ago, when the only electric shears you could buy were Oster Shearmasters, I wrote up a short flyer on how to install the blades and maintain them. Although written for the Shearmaster, the information will apply to all the newer shears as well. I hope this is useful.

## Installing New Blades

The cutting end of your clippers consists of a larger bottom piece called the comb and a smaller cutting piece called the cutter. A comb and cutter combination are usually called a set of blades.

Any comb and any cutter

can be used together; it is not necessary to keep them as a set. To get the best cutting results with your clippers, blades must be both aligned and adjusted. Alignment involves placing the comb in the proper position. Adjustment involves applying the right amount of pressure.

First remove the old blades by loosening the tension knob. This raises the forks that hold the cutter in place. Then loosen the comb screws and remove the old comb and cutter. A three point shears screwdriver makes this very easy.

To install new blades, hold the clippers with tension knob pointing down and comb screws pointing up. Set the new cutter on the forks with the engaging pins in the 4 cutter holes. Then slide the new comb in place under the comb screws. Tighten the comb screws lightly for now. Tighten the tension knob just enough to hold the cutter in place.

## Aligning the Blades

Proper alignment of blades requires that:

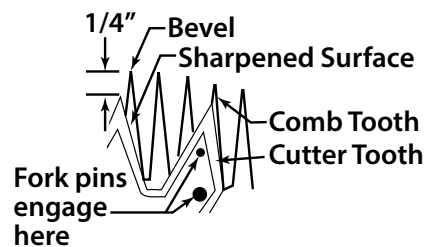
- The cutter points operate on the sharpened surface of the comb behind the bevel.
- The movement of the outer teeth of the cutter extends evenly to the outer teeth of the comb.
- The heel of the comb is parallel to the heel of the head.

To accomplish this:

1. Adjust the comb position so the cutter point is about 1/4" from the tip of the comb. The entire cutter

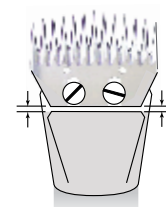
point must run on the sharpened comb surface. On the new comb this will be about 1/16" behind the bevel.

On combs that have been sharpened many times, the bevel may have been ground away.



2. Make sure the heel of the comb is parallel to the heel of the head. Now tighten the screws securely

3. Lastly, turn on the clippers and check that the cutter moves to cover the outer teeth of the comb.



It may take several attempts to properly align the comb and cutter. Improper alignment can cause wool streaking, dull cutting, or excessive skin cuts.



## Adjusting the Blades

Final adjustment is made during the shearing with the clippers running. Pick a clean patch of wool on the sheep and begin cutting. If wool is not being sheared smoothly increase the tension knob slightly, no more than 1/8". Continue shearing increasing the tension in this manner until the wool cuts smoothly and cleanly.

Increasing the tension beyond the minimum tension point will cause premature blade wear, will reduce the cutting speed, and will cause the motor to run hot. Tension should not need readjustment until the blades begin to dull. This will be indicated by chewing off the wool rather than cutting smoothly and cleanly.

## Care and Maintenance

Clipper maintenance is not complicated or time consuming. Follow these guidelines and your clippers will last a lifetime:

- Keep your motor screen free from hair and dirt. If the screen becomes blocked, the internal fan

*continued on next page*



### *Electric Shears —, continued*

cannot vent the motor's heat. Excessive heat can dry out bearings and ruin armatures, creating a costly repair bill. To prevent this, remove and inspect the screen daily.

- Lubricate the head and blades every few minutes when in use. Squirt oil into the oil holes on the head. Turn the clippers upside down and squirt oil into the head opening so that oil flows into the tension knob. Then turn the clippers on and pour more oil onto the running blades. Never squirt oil into the motor.
- After shearing for the day, wipe your clippers clean. Use an old toothbrush, or towel to remove as much dirt and shearing residue from the motor housing, cutting head, and blades as you can. Blow out any wool or dirt that may have gotten trapped in the head opening. An air compressor works great for this.



- If you will not be shearing in the next few days, remove and clean the blades.
- Yearly, or after about 200 hours of use, remove the cutting head from the motor and apply a small amount of grease to the gear opening at the rear of the head. Typical wheel bearing grease works fine, but do not pack the opening full. Excess grease will cause the clippers to run hot. This is a good time for a complete cleaning and inspection. This is a service I provide and involves complete disassembly, cleaning, lubricating, and inspection of bearings, wear pins, cups, and electrical parts. Contact me for details.

### **Why do clippers run hot?**

Nine times out of ten, your clippers heat up because of one of the following:

- ❖ **Dirty motor screen.** Inspect often and keep it clean.
- ❖ **Too much cutting tension.** Use only enough tension to clearly cut the wool. Anything more creates excess friction and causes your motor to work harder.
- ❖ **Dull blades.** Using dull or improperly sharpened blades will require more tension to cut.

• Reprinted from the GALA Newsletter, May, 2016



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# Top 10 Qualities Farm Kids Bring to the Work Place

By Rachel Kagay, Leadership Development Manager, FFA Enrichment Center

Reprinted from February 2016 Topline, ORVLA

In my experiences growing up on a farm, and in my line of work, I have interacted with a wide variety of people. Since an early age, I have always believed you can identify quickly upon meeting someone whether or not he or she grew up on a farm, has worked on a farm, or possesses the ‘farm kid’ mentality. These students and young professionals possess recognizable talents and abilities that allow them to stand out from their peers. Without further ado (and in no particular order) here are the top 10 qualities kids that grew up on a farm bring to the workplace.

**Work Ethic:** ‘Farm kids’ are instilled with the value of hard work, and a great work ethic. They are resourceful and willing to stay until the job gets done, and done right. Often, this work ethic translates into a willingness to “get dirty” when necessary, and complete the work even when conditions aren’t ideal. Knowing the value of hard work also means that you can count on farm kids to have the determination to see a task through to completion, often without close supervision necessary.

**Responsibility:** Employers and co-workers often recognize their ‘farm kid’ colleagues are reliable and dependable. Responsibility is extended to ‘farm kids’ at an early age. Growing up, the rule in my home was “you eat after the animals eat”; my sister and I knew that we were accountable for having our chores completed before we sat down to the dinner table. In the workplace, these colleagues can be expected to take full ownership for their projects and work to get the job done right.

**Critical Thinking Skills:** Challenges often arise on a farm; addressing these issues develops skill in independent thinking, problem solving, ingenuity, and offering creative, innovative solutions. Through a social media discussion Katie C. shared, “[Farm kids have] the ability to solve problems and come up with creative solutions! I had a kindergarten teacher tell me

she can pick out the farm kids as early as kindergarten based on their ability to problem solve.” I believe this ability expands and deepens over time, serving as a great asset in the workplace.

**Flexibility:** Nature and the markets don’t always trend the way we’d like on the farm. In the workplace, this translates into the ability to be flexible as needed and make do with a given situation. I’m sure, like myself, many ‘farm kids’ can look back and remember mornings when plans were drastically changed due to escaped livestock—resulting in being late to church, work, or school. On the farm and in the workplace, sometimes things must be done that are not on our

preferred time frame or schedule.

**Initiative:** Farm work imparts an ability to see what needs to be done, and then seek to accomplish that work. These individuals are driven, and typically have less hesitation in making decisions regarding work. ‘Farm kids’ take action on the work as necessary, without always needing to be given instruction or direction.

**Perseverance:** Persistence, endurance, and perseverance: all qualities that ‘farm kids’ bring to the workplace. They often possess a great internal drive,

and can make hard choices when necessary. They know how to deal with disappointment, and have an optimistic outlook regardless of the situation. For many ‘farm kids’ their faith in a bigger plan empowers their perseverance and optimism.

**Team Player:** Very little work on a farm is done completely independently. In the workplace, ‘farm kids’ know that it takes the whole team to accomplish a project with the most success. While working independently is also a skill of ‘farm kids’, they bring a willingness to assist co-workers as needed. Often they are eager to do what it takes to support the overall work of the team or organization.

**“Real World” Skills:** Often ‘farm kids’ come to the workplace armed with practical, real world skills

*continued on next page*

**Work Ethic  
Responsibility  
Critical Thinking Skills  
Flexibility  
Initiative  
Perseverance  
Team Player  
“Real World” Skills  
Respect  
Humility  
Passion**

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## *Top 10 Qualities... , continued*

they can directly apply to their jobs. Often, these skills are in the practical areas of science, technology, engineering and math, as well as general agriculture. These skills translate into on the job common sense and ability that benefit themselves and their peers in the workplace.

**Respect:** Respect for others, respect for authority, respect for property are all learned on the farm. This often translates into being a colleague that knows how to extend respect to others, treat others well, and be open and coachable.

**Humility:** Farm work results in being rewarded over time for your labor; there's very little instant gratification. In the workplace, this often translates to less of an "I deserve" attitude, a lack of pretentiousness. Through a social media conversation, Katy K. shared that this attitude develops from the fact that "you don't reap the field of benefits if you didn't plant, [you must] plant and care for it properly along the way."

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Please let me make one thing clear. I am not implying that only those that grow up on a farm possess these qualities, and that non-farm individuals do not have these abilities. I believe that growing up on a farm facilitates the opportunities for these skills to develop more naturally than it might for those without the same experiences or opportunities. There are other avenues for these skills to develop with conscious effort.

There is a bonus 11th item for the list that I believe overarches all the others: **Passion**. Passion for the field of agriculture often translates into the workplace; it facilitates and motivates the other qualities on the list. We are engaged in this industry because we care, because we love it, and because we live it.

Rachel Kagay serves as the Leadership Development Manager for the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny, IA. Rachel is passionate about facilitating opportunities for youth and adults to maximize their natural potential.



# An Enriching Llama Experience

By Linda Hayes, Llama Linda Ranch

Photos by Chelsea Self, Glenwood Springs Post Independent

Sopris Elementary School in Glenwood Springs gets out early every Wednesday. This extra time is filled with enrichment classes taught by volunteers from the community. It can be anything from arts and crafts to music and homework help. I lead a hands-on animal class with a group of ten 5th graders. Each week for nine Wednesdays, a different live animal has visited the classroom. Children got a hands-on experience while learning animal safety and care.

In October, I took several llamas including my PR llama, Illumina, and Sara, a rescue llama I am caring for for Southwest Llama Rescue. The llama class was especially fun as the children got to feed, brush and lead the llamas through a challenging obstacle course. They also took part in a ribbon race with two llamas tied together with crepe paper and took a walk around the school.

The event was covered by the local newspaper and several spectators. It was good for the kids but even better PR for the llama world. We all need to get our llamas out and into the

public eye if we are going to have the industry succeed. When people realize how safe and gentle llamas are, they will want to own some of their own. Can you find a place to volunteer with your llamas? Give it a try.



Barb Parquette helping Sopris Elementary fifth grader lead her llama through the obstacle course.



10-year old Clara Lange (left) and 11-year old Mikea Nicol feeding Sara, one of the llamas that visited.



Frances Bell (10) leading her llama around the buckets as part of the obstacle course.

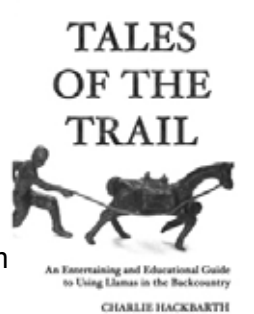




# SURVIVING IN THE WILDERNESS

by CHARLIE HACKBARTH, SOPRIS UNLIMITED

*An excerpt from Tales of the Trail: An Entertaining and Educational Guide to Using Llamas in the Backcountry by Charlie Hackbarth*



For my son Andy's tenth birthday his mother promised him and two of his friends a llama pack trip to the wilderness. This was to be an all-boys trip, a male-bonding wilderness experience led by me, the oldest and wisest of the boys.

"What a swell idea," I said with sarcasm. "I'll just pick up a sack of marshmallows and we'll be off! It sounds like so much fun I can't believe we haven't left yet!"

The real motivation for this insane plan was getting Andy and me out of the house for a few days so that the girls could relax and catch up on their reading. I don't remember what form of blackmail was used, but I soon found myself sitting with the other three boys making up the food and equipment list. The original list read like this: Saul—marshmallows, GORP; Hagen—marshmallows, fireworks; Andy—marshmallows, fishhooks, and rope to build a raft. After editing the list and adding a few items that I felt were important (like a fifty-pound first-aid kit and a half-dozen flares), I felt we at least stood a fighting chance of surviving the planned three-day trip.

Andy and I were the most experienced in the backcountry, and the only two with llama-handling experience. Hagen, a car camping pyromaniac who had never set foot nor fire in the wilderness, was quite excited about the trip. Saul was a somewhat sheltered, overweight boy who had never spent a night away from home, much less a night in the wilderness. After being told that we would be leading, not riding, the llamas four miles up the trail, Saul quickly withdrew and began re-calculating the number of pounds of GORP per hundred feet it would take to complete the hike on foot.

I picked out the three llamas I felt would make the trip most safely. J.P., our strongest and best packer, I would give to Andy. Iron Boy, a reliable even-tempered packer, would be Hagen's. Thumper, whose favorite pastime is kushing on the living room floor with a bowl

of grain while watching the Denver Broncos, would go to Saul. This left me with both hands free should my assistance be needed. We filled and balanced our panniers, loaded the llamas into the trailer, and headed for the mountains.

At the trailhead, I saddled and loaded the llamas while the boys romped in the stinging nettles. I gave them a short course in llama packing

while they soaked their hands and faces in the cold stream to relieve the itching, and then we started up the trail. J.P. carried the heaviest load, a cooler filled with perishables and cold drinks in one pannier counterbalanced by the first-aid kit in the other, with two sleeping bags and a tent tied on top of the panniers. Iron Boy carried the kitchen equipment, fishing equipment, clothes, more food, and two sleeping bags and a tent tied on top. Thumper carried Saul's GORP with an emergency supply of dried apricots tied on top.

As we rounded the turn on the first switchback, Saul called for a GORP break. A few feet further it was a water break. Then a bathroom break for Thumper, which really was a calculated rest break. And so it went up the trail: GORP break, water break, bathroom break for Thumper. Every so often I would drive a stake in the ground to assure myself that we were still moving.

Although the hike up to the lake was slow, it was uneventful—and that wasn't all bad. The llamas were excellent with the kids. They had been taught (the llamas, that is) to calmly step through the mud holes and tricky streams instead of flying over these obstacles and ramming into the person leading them. If a boy rolled down the bank or was short on his leap



*continued on page 30*

to the opposite side of a stream, he only had to hold on to the lead and the llama got him through it. If a boy wandered off the trail, his llama would hold back on the lead and get him lined out.

By the time we reached the lake, Saul had finished his GORP and the emergency supply of dried apricots. His face seemed to have absorbed, and was now reflecting, the cerulean blue of the sky that had turned to dusk. We unloaded the llamas and tied them in a grassy park away from the lake and stream. I briefly explained the camp rules. Rule #1: Everyone does his share of camp chores. Rule #2: Under no circumstances does anyone wash his hands or brush his teeth, no matter what his mother may have told him. The boys' faces slowly disappeared behind their huge grins. Hagen gathered firewood while the rest of us set up the tents. After dinner, Andy got out his harmonica and we sang campfire songs; Hagen conducted with his flaming marshmallow wand.

In a reflective voice, Saul asked, "Charlie, let's just say, if a guy was way up in the wilderness and he decided for some reason he needed to go home, what would a guy do?"

"Well Saul," I said, "I guess a guy would need to have a flashlight and a backpack full of batteries to get him down to the trail head. Then, unless the guy's mom was waiting for him there, he would have a long walk home."

"I think I'll go to bed," said Saul, "I don't feel too good."

Occasionally, Andy and Hagen would have to take a break from singing to blow on the fire. Fortunately, this was held to a minimum because of Saul's request from the tent to "keep singing; it makes me feel better."

As the boys filed out of their tent in the morning, I momentarily panicked, thinking we had a new kid in camp. Whew—it was Hagen wearing an ET mask . . . no, wait a minute . . . I remembered a certain fire-blowing session, just after we had sung "Home on the Range," and realized that the horrible stench that I had assumed was a mouse falling into the fire was actually caused by Hagen's eyebrows and bangs going up in flames.

After breakfast it was time to go fishing. I helped each boy rig a bobber and an artificial fly to his fishing pole, and showed them how to cast out into the lake and then retrieve the fly. It wasn't long before the boys



were casting and retrieving like mad. As the three boys cast and retrieved, a peaceful melodic rhythm began to develop.

Whoosh... plop... click, click, click.

Whoosh... plop... click, click, click.

Whoosh... plop... click, click, click.

I drifted off into memories of my childhood . . . I was spinner fishing on the Crystal River. The fishing was good. Whoosh . . . plop . . . click, click, click. I had drawn back to cast when my friend Frank walked behind me. Whoosh . . .

"Oweeee!" The screech of a high-pitched voice brought me back to reality in time to see Saul standing motionless on his tiptoes, suspended from a four-pound leader with Andy's #16 Gray Drake buried between his shoulder blades. While removing the fly, I consoled Saul with the fact that when I was a kid I had sunk two barbs of a #8 Dare Devil into my friend Frank's cheek, and he had to ride two miles of dirt road on the handlebars of my bicycle to have the doctor cut the spinner out. The boys seemed to have gained a measure of respect for each other's casting and always gave a wide berth from that time on.

"I got one!" Saul hollered. I turned in time to see Hagen (who, four years later, would be the fastest sprinter on the track team) dash toward Saul. As he made a turn in the trail he hit a slick spot, and both feet went out from under him. He landed on his back. As I ran over to him he jumped up screaming, "I can't breathe! I can't breathe!" Immediately, thoughts flashed through my mind about how I was going to get Hagen out of the mountains and take care of the other two boys and the llamas. We were the only hikers at

*continued on next page*

the lake. "Don't panic!" I thought, surveying the area where Hagen had fallen. Relieved to see that there were no rocks or sharp objects, I said, "Hagen, you're O.K. You're O.K. You just got the wind knocked out of you."

"I can't breathe!" Hagen responded. Then his eyes rolled back in his head and he fell limp in my arms. When he came to, he looked up at me and said, "I saw my whole life pass before my eyes. I saw my mom and dad, my cat, my Nintendo . . ."

"You're O.K., Hagen. You just fainted." For almost ten beautiful minutes after the accident the boys quietly sat with Hagen while he repeated in disbelief, "I saw my whole life pass before my eyes." I wisely used the time to relax and let my heart rate return to normal.

After the break, the boys were back to their furious pace. Before it was time to pack up, the #2

Rule had been broken by all three boys: Saul, who had never caught a fish before, caught three and was forced to wash both of his hands; Andy cut a finger with his Boy Scout knife, requiring that he wash one hand; and Hagen burnt his hand in the campfire the last night and had to soak it in cold water. But because the boys were so good about not brushing their teeth I went easy on them for breaking Rule #2.

The last morning we broke camp and loaded the panniers on the llamas. The final camp chore for the boys was spreading the llamas' dung piles. I won't even get into what happens when you give three ten-year-old boys the job of scattering llama dung!

In terms of survival, I suppose you'd have to say the trip was a success. We all survived. But it's difficult enough to survive with three ten-year-old boys in the back yard for three days; why take it to the wilderness?

h w

Excerpt published with permission from Tales of the Trail: An Entertaining & Educational Guide to Using Llamas in the Backcountry by Charles Hackbarth. Further reprinting by others is NOT permitted.





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### Postscript from the Journal Volunteers

Kathy, Ron, Sonja, Marilyn

*IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER WONDERFUL YEAR. THANK YOU! HAVE A WARM AND SAFE WINTER. ENJOY EACH OTHER AND YOUR WONDERFUL CRITTERS.*

"You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give." ~Winston Churchill

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## **EVENTS CALENDAR** BY MARY WICKMAN (EVENTS CHAIR)

For more details and live links, go to [www.RMLA.com](http://www.RMLA.com), select **EVENTS**, and hover over title.

- ✿ **January 6, 7, & 8, 2017 National Western Stock Show Llama Show.** First show of the new year. Come and visit with the exhibitors, watch the performance classes on Sat. afternoon and stop in at the Steaming Bean Mining Camp Hospitality Booth! 2:00on Sat. is the Meet a Llama and Alpaca in the arena. This is always a huge crowd pleaser. Contact Judy Glaser for more information, judy.glaser@yahoo.com
- ✿ **February 4, 2017, Golden Plains Llama Conference,** McPherson, Kansas. Contact Patti Morgan, pmmorgank@gmail.com or 620-441-8830. One day llama and alpaca educational conference for youth.
- ✿ **February 4, 2017 Ag Expo 2017 Garfield County Fairgrounds** Rifle, CO. Speakers and workshops on all things related to agriculture. Linda Hayes will be giving talks, aimed at sheep ranchers, on using llamas as guard animals. Contact Linda Hayes at llamas@skybeam.com or 970 379 4576.
- ✿ **April 29, 2017, Stars and Stripes Show,** Waco, Nebraska. Contact Jim Rutledge, buckshollow@wildblue.net or 402-366-9304.
- ✿ **June 23 & 24, 2017, Camelid Kids Llama & Alpaca Camp,** Bucks Hollow Farm, Waco, Nebraska. Contact Geri Rutledge at buckshollow@wildblue.net or 402-366-9304. Lama camp for all ages, safety training, and making crafts.