

# The Journal of RMLA



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# Jekyll and Hyde - Managing Expectations During Training

By Morgan Barba – Youth Member

“Why does this llama do one thing, and this llama doesn’t?” I ask myself this question frequently when I am training each of my llamas because each of my performance llamas are different. It can be frustrating when training your animals and each one has their obstacle preference. I have trained and shown llamas for four years now and I still don’t understand why one llama chooses to do the jumps but not the bridge and vice versa. I currently am in the process of training three llamas for performance and they are on different ends of the spectrum. Each llama has their own personality and mindset, which I have learned over time you have to learn to work with. Some of the first steps to being a good trainer is learning how to work with your animals and what they like versus what they dislike.

The three llamas I train all are different and work in different ways. My youth llama, Mason, is a very special llama. I have had Mason since he was three weeks old and started to socialize with him from a very young age. Mason is now three years old, and I consider him to be “bullet proof.” He will do anything to please you and will always try an obstacle. If Mason does not like an obstacle, we continue to approach the obstacle in multiple ways until he finally does it and from that point on, he will do it.

As for my llama Phae, she will only do what she wants. She is stubborn and hard headed and has no problem putting all four feet down and saying “no way, not today.” Working with Phae can honestly test my patience because I am so used to working with a llama like Mason. That is where I have to analyze what makes Phae work best and then work off of her strengths.

Our first cria was born in August. Her name is Marley and she is very curious about everything. I have noticed her curious nature as a trainer and use that when I take her out to work with her. She is very willing to walk on a halter and investigate our obstacles. When working with Marley, I have to remember she is only six months old and still learning. For me, this means I have to be very calm and take things slowly while constantly praising her.



*Morgan with Mason*

Overall, I have really enjoyed getting the opportunity to work with multiple animals and experience their different personality types. I can definitely say I have become a more well-rounded trainer and showman by working with them. Training your animals is hard work, but in the end the hard work pays off and you feel pride in what you have accomplished. The best advice I can give is not to focus on why a llama does one thing and the other one doesn’t, but rather focus on what that particular llama does well and work from there.



*Morgan and Marley*

Did you hear? Morgan was chosen to represent Adams County (CO) 4-H in Washington, D.C, this June as part of the Citizenship Washington Focus (all expense paid) trip.

***Congratulations Morgan Barba!!***



## -- Board of Directors --

### President

Lougene Baird  
631 Silver Springs Cir  
Cottonwood, AZ 86326  
808-747-5023  
lougenebaird@outlook.com

### Vice President

Marshal Rutledge  
2948 NW 1st  
Lincoln NE 68521  
402.366.9303  
mrut11@hotmail.com

### Secretary

Geri Rutledge  
2209 Rd 9  
Waco, NE 68460  
402-366-9304  
buckshollow@wildblue.net

### Treasurer

Ron Hinds  
5704 Canyon Trail  
Elizabeth, CO 80107  
303-646-1320  
alpacaron@gmail.com

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The information in The Journal is not intended to be a substitute for qualified professional advice. Readers are encouraged to consult

with their own veterinarian, accountant or attorney regarding any questions concerning their animals or business operations.

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## -- Chairpersons, Active Committees --

### Bookstore

**Ron Hinds**  
303-646-1320  
bookstore@rmla.com  
Liaison Marshal Rutledge

### Bylaws

Lougene Baird  
808-747-5023

### e-Communications:

**E-mail, Facebook & Website**  
**Ron Hinds**  
303-646-1320  
web@rmla.com  
Liaison Lougene Baird

### Education & Outreach

**Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay**  
406-580-5954  
education-outreach@rmla.com  
Liaison Ron Hinds

### Events/Marketing

**Mary Wickman**  
719-687-1423 719-651-8871  
events@rmla.com  
Liaison Geri Rutledge

### Fairplay Llama Event

Liaison Ron Hinds

### Fiber

**Kathy Stanko**  
970-256-7716  
rmlafiber@gmail.com  
Liaison Geri Rutledge

### Finance

**Marilyn Arnold**  
303-841-5126  
rmlaaccounting@yahoo.com  
Liaison Ron Hinds

### Journal

Co-Editors:  
Content-**Kathy Stanko**  
Layout-**Ron Hinds**  
rmlaeditor@gmail.com  
Liaison Lougene Baird

### Library

**Dick Williams**  
406-826-2201  
bellama@blackfoot.net  
Liaison Marshal Rutledge

### Membership

**Lougene Baird**  
808-747-5023  
membership@rmla.com

### Nominations & Elections

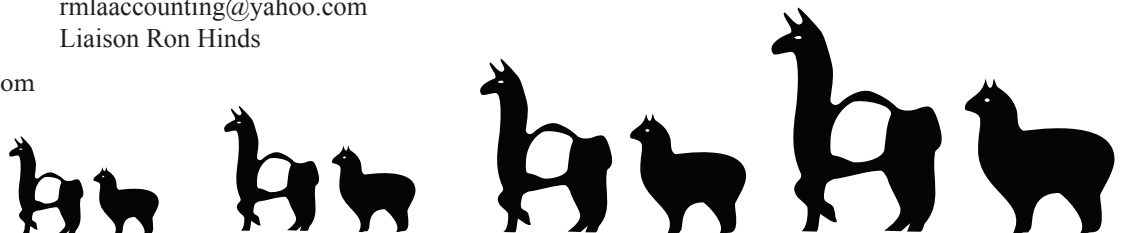
**Christina Abel**  
620-626-8743  
luckyonyx4@hotmail.com  
Liaison Lougene Baird

### Pack

**Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay**  
406-580-5954  
llamas@yellowstonesafari.com  
Liaison Lougene Baird

### Youth and 4-H

**Marshal Rutledge**  
402-366-9303  
RMLAyouth@gmail.com



## 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. Quality photos start at 1-2MB.
- 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 - 5704 Canyon Trail - Elizabeth, CO 80107 - 303-646-1320 - [RMLAADVERTISE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:RMLAADVERTISE@GMAIL.COM)
- Payment and ad copy must be received prior to submission deadline. See the table above for dates.

### Journal Staff:

Content - Kathy Stanko  
Layout and Design - Ron Hinds } Co-Editors

Email - [RMLAEditor@gmail.com](mailto:RMLAEditor@gmail.com)

Advertising – Staff, [RMLAAdvertise@gmail.com](mailto:RMLAAdvertise@gmail.com)

Proof Reader - Marilyn Arnold

Have you ever had one of those days when the simplest of things just goes haywire and upside down? A new washing machine to be delivered and installed on Saturday! Hooray.



Well, wrong. Washing machine was delivered, but no instructions on the work order to install. We hashed that out and for a mere \$40 it could be done. Wrong: hoses are 'frozen' to the plumbing pipes. Delivery guys: we can't do it; you need a plumber. Can't reach my husband; cell phone is not working because as it turns out the autopay has taken a vacation!



Call the plumber and he is able to make it out after receiving my photos of the connection. This was NOT a \$40 expense! Takes the plumber a short time to get the plumbing situation up to speed; or maybe code. But no, he can't hook up the washing machine, not in his job description, I guess. So, my husband gets home after being gone for 3 days and wants to know why the old washing machine is sitting outside and the new one is not hooked up? My day is then narrated to him. He will hook it up in the morning.

But thanks to you, the Spring Journal has come together very easily and we believe it is awesome. The content and photos you submitted are better with every issue. Thank you does not even begin to express our gratitude. But Thank You!

April 20th! Remember that date and join all of us at the Douglas County Fairgrounds for the Together We Are Better educational conference for RMLA members. This is how your RMLA is saying THANK YOU. See you, then. Kathy

*Kathy and Ron*



Cover Photo: Morgan Barba with Phae



# Letter from Your RMLA Board

Thank you for renewing your annual membership and a big welcome to RMLA's new, first time members. Congratulations and thank you to Alexa Metrick for becoming a Life Member. We look forward to another productive, fun and educational year.

In a Board planning session about a year ago it was agreed that RMLA, in the spirit of our Mission Statement "to educate" should plan something special for our membership. The idea of a conference was discussed and seems to have met with a good deal of interest.

A questionnaire was sent to members asking for their input on what each would like to see happen at a conference. The results of the returned questionnaires were placed in a spreadsheet which revealed when, where and what to include in a conference. Trends surfaced to the top as the answers were consolidated. With this information, the RMLA "We Are Better Together" educational conference moved into the planning stages.

Please plan to attend the conference, it is organized with you in mind. Our featured speakers will bring you up to date on a number of health and management concerns. It is a chance to meet with other RMLA

members, learn what they are doing on their farms and ranches, share ideas, and make new friends.

And – it is free with your membership renewal and your lunch and booth space are included. Please go to [RMLA.com](http://RMLA.com) to register so that we can make sure you have a booth space and we know how many lunches to plan for.

Don't miss Page 7 of this Journal to see the up-to-date list of speakers and activities for you! This will be a gathering of amazing information.

Tables will be available for you to set up a display for your ranch or what you do with your animals, fiber, etc. There is no charge for these informational tables.

And, always – we will need a few more "angels" to volunteer during the setup on Friday and during the day on Saturday and cleanup Saturday night.

We thank you for being a member of RMLA and are looking forward to seeing you in Castle Rock CO April 19 (set up) and April 20 (conference).

This will be a wonderful time to learn, share, meet new llama and alpaca owners and enjoy our group of amazing members.

*Geri, Ron, Lougene and Marshal*





## Truly Amazing

is what the volunteers & contributors of Southwest Llama Rescue can accomplish. \*Help Is Always Needed: your time and money go a long way.  
\*Contact: [www.SouthwestLlamaRescue.org](http://www.SouthwestLlamaRescue.org) or [SouthwestLlamaRescue@yahoo.com](mailto:SouthwestLlamaRescue@yahoo.com) or 184 Hoofbeat Trl, Kerrville, TX 78028  
\*Designate SWLR as your charity while shopping online at such stores as [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)


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 Two RMLA Members!

 [www.facebook.com/Rescue.Llamas](http://www.facebook.com/Rescue.Llamas)

## PACK ANIMAL



*Pack Animal Magazine* is about the hiker's companion: the llamas, goats, and other pack animals that willingly haul our gear into the great outdoors. A quarterly print magazine full of color photographs, *Pack Animal* is for anyone who loves our wild spaces and our public lands.



[WWW.PACKANIMALMAGAZINE.COM](http://WWW.PACKANIMALMAGAZINE.COM)  
[ALEXA@PACKANIMALMAGAZINE.COM](mailto:ALEXA@PACKANIMALMAGAZINE.COM)

# How To Catch a Llama or Alpaca

## Web Site Designed for Police and Animal Control

Over the past decade there have been hundreds of llamas turned out to fend for themselves. Or, gates are left open and llamas or alpacas leave their homes to go exploring. Whatever the reason, loose llamas pose a safety concern for themselves and the public.

This often happens in areas where the local law enforcement and animal control personnel have absolutely no knowledge of llamas and alpacas. They get a call that there are animals in need of rescue. They don't know where they came from or what to

do with them, let alone, how to catch them. Now thanks to a new web site, all they need to do is go on line to find plenty of information designed for people like them.

At [www.howtocatchallama.com](http://www.howtocatchallama.com) anyone can see photos and articles on how to make a temporary catch pen; how to move around the llamas so they won't escape; how to deal with heat stress and finally what to do when the animals are caught. A listing of organizations and people who can help is provided. For example, both the Southeast and Southwest Llama Rescues are included.

Linda Hayes, ILR Vice President and longtime RMLA member designed this site. It took close to 2 years due to changes in web building programs and obtaining authorizations. Authorizations were necessary before including contacts and for permission to post articles previously written. It was a frustrating job. Linda would often find links to what should have been useful videos, but most of the time, they were of poor quality. Some showed how to do a task but in a dangerous or wrong way. One video entitled "How to catch a llama" showed a field with one llama and a voice making pig sounds until the llama walked up to see what all the fuss was about!

The new site is sponsored by The International Llama Registry (ILR). The ILR wanted there to be universally available information that people could use. They purchased three Domain names that they felt would be the obvious search choices. [www.howtocatchallama.com](http://www.howtocatchallama.com)

and [www.llamarescue.info](http://www.llamarescue.info). They even purchased one with llama spelled with just one 'l' : [www.lamarescue.com](http://www.lamarescue.com). This was done, not because they felt the general public would know that "lama" refers to llama relatives but because it is a common misspelling. These domain names were purchased for just a few dollars each and are renewable for a small amount each year.

An interesting aside is that some enterprising person saw an uptake in llama related names.

They saw the misspelling and decided that we would probably want

the name with the correct spelling. They bought the domain [www.llamarescue.com](http://www.llamarescue.com) for a small amount and then offered it to the ILR for \$4,600. Needless to say, The ILR refused the offer and the enterprising person was left holding the name.

The web site is a work in progress. To keep it at the forefront of lists on how to catch llamas, the site needs to be updated regularly. If you have any suggestions, information, photos or contacts that could be included send them to Linda Hayes at [llamas@skybeam.com](mailto:llamas@skybeam.com). If appropriate, they will be added to the site.

HELP: There is a real need for videos on how to shear or trim toes. Some of the 4-H clubs looking for projects might want to take this on. Linda will be happy to include them.

The next phase of this project is to let all the police and animal control agencies know about the site. Certainly, they can Google "How to Catch a Llama" and will probably find it, but there is a lot of "junk" to wade through. And by providing the information from a reliable source directly to them can make a huge difference. The goal is to send a link to everyone who will find the information useful. In the meanwhile, you as a responsible llama owner can help by letting your local agencies know about the site. Look at it this way, someday your llamas may get loose and be wandering around on a busy highway. Wouldn't you want the people who are dispatched to help to actually know what they are doing?





# **We Are Better Together!**

**April 20, 2019**

**RMLA Conference - Douglas County Fairgrounds -  
Kirk Hall - Castle Rock, CO**

**A FREE educational and FUN day for all RMLA members.**

**Lunch and booth space provided.**

## **Agenda:**

### **Dr. Robert Callan, CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital:**

- **9:30-10:30 Fundamental health evaluation and medical care for Llamas and Alpacas**

Evaluating the health of individual llamas is critical to maintaining a healthy herd. This session will review what signs to watch for and how to perform a basic health exam on a llama or alpaca. We will also discuss and demonstrate some basic health care procedures and how to do them safely for you and the animal. Open discussion time will also be available to answer any health-related questions

- **11:00-11:45 Biosecurity and Biocontainment for the Llama Herd** This session will help you understand the potential diseases that can be brought into a herd when purchasing or moving animals and how to minimize introduction of new diseases (biosecurity) and also how to minimize spread of current diseases within the herd (biocontainment). We will discuss what diseases you can test for, samples to collect and how to interpret results. We will also discuss isolation procedures, disinfectants and how to use them, and regular control measures for specific diseases or parasites.

### **Lunch noon to 1:00pm**

### **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS):**

- **1:00-1:30 Jennifer Cook, Small Acreage Coordinator.**  
Topics to be addressed include manure management, wildlife friendly fencing, predator control, and how to get your soils tested.
- **1:30-2:00 Dan Nosal, Multicounty Rangeland Management Specialist.**  
Dan will speak on proven ways to have sustainable pastures using Proper Grazing Management with an emphasis on Alpacas and Llamas and Carrying Capacity / AUM's.

### **Information Booths, 9AM – 3PM:**

- Southwest Lama Rescue (SWLR). Lynda Liptak, Board President will be available to answer questions about lama rescue.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Deric Clemons. NRCS has many programs and consulting services to help you keep your land healthy
- el Zorro Colorado Alpacas Ron Hinds & Elizabeth Cline. Elizabeth will give presentations on some easy ways to sort your fiber.
- Pack Animal Magazine and Sopris Unlimited, Alexa Metrick
- Higher Ground Fair, Gayle Woodsum
- Rocky Mountain Llamas, Mary Vavrina
- RMLA Youth Programs, Geri Rutledge
- Alpacas on the Rocks, Jane Levene
- PacaBuddies, Gary & Patti Jones with Ron Hinds & Elizabeth Cline



**Go to [RMLA.com](http://RMLA.com)  
to register and  
to see updated  
information, maps  
and live links!**

# PACK LLAMA TRAIL ASSOCIATION

By Tom Seifert, PLTA Secretary – [www.packllama.org](http://www.packllama.org)

Across the United States there are a number of different llama organizations dedicated to showing llamas, breeding llamas for packing, breeding llamas for fiber, but there are none that I know of that are dedicated to setting a skills' standard for working llamas. The Pack Llama Trail Association (PLTA) has developed a wonderful evaluative tool for prospective owners of llamas who want to know if the llama being purchased is pack worthy: it is the Pack Trial.

During the 1990's, llama owners in the Idaho area organized and formed WILA. (Western Idaho Llama Association). Early members with the names of Russell, Sheehan, Hammons, Rais, Northey, Landis and others wanted to bring llama owners together to test their llamas in the back-country. It was not meant as competition, although, I suppose bragging rights were always involved, but testing your llama on hikes that involved carrying a specific weight, walking a specific distance, elevation gain included, and numerous obstacles found in the back-country, and all of it according to a llama's age and weight. In time, the WILA organization evolved into the PLTA, which now has members from Oregon, Washington, Idaho to Arkansas, Georgia, Florida and several other states, with our most far-reaching member in Australia.

When my wife and I started with llamas nearly 25 years ago; with a song, a short dance, and \$50, we could buy a llama. Several had never been haltered or saddled, which my broken nose can confirm. It is advised to put some time and practice into your llamas before you head out to the trail or you could have one interesting back-country rodeo. Not that all of my boys are perfect and don't get out of line once in a while, but by putting them through the different Trial levels, we have eliminated several of the issues that could come from poorly trained llamas.

I recommend that a future owner of llamas should not get caught up in the size of your llama. One does not need a 52" llama (at the shoulder) to pack gear. If you want something big, buy a horse.

A llama will be far gentler on the environment, and on your foot if he/she steps on it. They are great companions, each with their own personality. I have had, what one might refer to as shorter llamas, pack just as well as some of my taller ones. Be aware and cognizant of conformation, length of back, pasterns, overall balance, temperament, and owner knowledge and reputation when purchasing.

Today, one is going to pay for good breeding, and if you have the opportunity to use llamas that



have gone through PLTA training, your travels in the back-country will be much more of a reward, than a headache. When looking to purchase a good packer, inquire on its pedigree, is it registered with the ILR (International Llama Registry)? Look into the background of the seller. Are they producing what I would call something akin to a "puppy-mill?" Ask about the training level of your llama. Can you easily halter and saddle the llama? How does it walk while you are leading it? Is it breathing down your neck and pushing? Wandering side to side? Stops every-time something new pops up on the trail?

This is where the PLTA comes in. If your purchase is a llama that has gone through the different certification standards, you are on the right track. I would never tell you "rest assured" because one must always be working with, training and walking with your llama. We groom, saddle, and walk our llamas in the foothills of Boise several

*continued on next page*



times per week, trail conditions being permissible.

### So, What Does the PLTA Do?

The PLTA's prime objective is to discover and recognize llamas that can fulfill the llama packer's needs on the trail by performing in a manner consistent with the demands of actual packing conditions. The intent is not to confront the llama with unrealistic or trick problems, rather it is to test the llama's ability and acquired level of training and conditioning. PLTA certified pack llamas are expected to possess a defined set of abilities that enable them to serve as valuable packing companions. The PLTA has a number of programs designed to meet the needs of all skill levels.

People new to llamas or those that have never packed are often afraid to try packing with llamas on the trail. The **Packer's Primer** is a hands-on workshop created to help aspiring llama packers become familiar with safe beginning packing techniques and to encourage them to enter their beginner pack llamas in a PLTA sanctioned pack trial. In this workshop, participants learn to teach their llamas to safely negotiate obstacles usually encountered while llama packing, including those evaluated during pack trials. Primers offer guidance



to get everyone off to a good start and are taught by a PLTA approved instructor.

A **Pack Trial** is the actual designing (i.e., not constructing) a course in a natural environment with natural obstacles. Obstacles are not generated to make a llama fail, but designed to practice what that llama and handler will see in the back-country. From Basic level, to Advanced, Master's and Elite the llama and handler will gradually work up to longer distances, greater elevation gain, and more complicated obstacles with an emphasis on safety for all.

Using the Advanced level as an example, let's look at what this llama must, on three consecutive days, accomplish.

- ❖ First; the llama must be a minimum of 36 months old.
- ❖ Second; manageability tests would be observed by the certifier. They would include, haltering, loading and unloading from trailer, placement of saddles and panniers, how does the llama react to being picketed on an approximate 20' rope or strap.
- ❖ Third; the load requirement will be 15% of llamas weight. In comparison, an Elite llama would be carrying 25%.



*continued on next page*



## Timberline

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*Pack Llama Trail Association continued ...*

- ❖ Fourth; there will be 10 obstacles for the llama to complete. Examples of this would be: duck-under, rock rubble, deadfall, trail traffic (dogs, horses, hikers) and crossing water.

The **PLTA Mileage Club** is a great way to get you and your llamas in shape for the summer/fall hiking or hunting season. Recording your miles is a wonderful motivator. In fact, the llamas in the mileage club have walked sufficient miles to circle the earth.

If one is a bit apprehensive evaluating your llama's abilities in a Trial, you might first try the **Challenge Program**. Usually, a Challenge is held in conjunction with the Trial. It is much more low-key, no stipulation to distance, elevation, pack weight. In fact, you can just lead your llama with no weight or saddle. The group goes for a hike and any member can call out an obstacle and ask if anyone wishes to attempt it. Challenge points are earned and tabulated at the end of the year.

Many non-registered, untrained llamas can become wonderful companions on the trail with some thorough training and practice. The PLTA is there to help you. Attend a Pack Trial, observe what is taking place, the attention to safety

first, the camaraderie and sharing of ideas and networking that occurs. Visit our website and scroll around because there is a great deal of information contained regarding our direction, Trials and objectives. The PLTA Board and current members believe there is a real demand for the PLTA within the packing community and those soon-to-be llama owners. We are always looking to add members, enhance the programs offered, and put on Trials wherever our members are located. Please check out our [packllama.org](http://packllama.org) site and if there is something you are not finding or just have a few questions, please contact one of the PLTA Board Members. Additional information may be found at [www.packllama.org](http://www.packllama.org).



**To Join or Renew your  
membership go to  
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JOIN OR RENEW**





# CAMELIDynamics

**Sane, Safe Science Based Solutions!  
Understand the Nature of the Beast**

- Does your llama or alpaca plant his feet and refuse to come forward?
- Are you having trouble trimming toenails?
- Is teaching your llama or alpaca to lead like flying a kite or dragging an anvil?
- Is showing your animal a drama?

## Camelidynamics is:

- Empowering
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- Relies on an understanding of behavior and balance, NOT restraint and force
- Is a method that will work for you regardless of your physical ability.

## Camelidynamics offers:

- The CAMELIDynamics Guild - online forum moderated by Marty, biweekly newsletter and training tip, and supportive online community
- Innovative, thoughtfully designed equipment made in the USA.
- Online Courses-self paced video lessons
- Hands On Courses:

**Pomeria South Carolina March 15-18**  
**Victoria BC Canada May 25-27**  
**Okanagon BC Canada June 1-3**  
**Evergreen Colorado June 22-24**  
**Germany July 6-8**  
**Austria July 13-15**

 **CAMELIDYNAMICS™**

For a list of Marty's 2019 clinics, go to [www.camelidynamics.com](http://www.camelidynamics.com) and click on **LEARN HOW.**

# Bridging the Gap: Alpacas & Llamas

By Gary Jones, Silver J Ranch



What a fantastic way to start the new year with alpacas and llamas together at the National Western Stock Show Complex. Both the alpacas and llamas seemed to be enjoying themselves showing off to the wonderful crowds of spectators coming out to see our wonderful animals. Alpaca owners and llama owners were sharing space together, sharing the ring together watching one another and occasionally cheering for one another.

It was so very exciting to see all of the alpaca breeders and llama breeders sharing the center stage. This is the best way to understand one another and move forward to help our industry survive. I witnessed numerous alpaca breeders explaining the difference between alpacas and llamas and adding, "Be sure to go over and see the llamas." I also witnessed numerous llama breeders explaining these same differences and adding, "Don't forget to go see the alpacas." There is no other place and time where the two groups can share and participate in such a large group. There is no better example of both groups coming together for the betterment of all.

I love the Stock Show as everyone knows watching me run around socializing with anyone that will talk to me: my wonderful alpaca friends, my wonderful llama friends and the extraordinary people coming to see our animals. Yes, I drink too much coffee and eat too much chocolate, but I have a blast. I was able to talk to both alpaca breeders and llama breeders about the differences and misconceptions between both groups. I was able to introduce my friends from both worlds to each other and watch them discuss the different ways

they run their ranch or feed their animals or basic husbandry issues that are associated with the alpacas and llamas. It was a great collaboration of shared experiences and laughter.

However, even at the National Western Stock Show there were murmurs from alpaca breeders, "We could do so much more if we had more room." And I heard whispers from the llama breeders, "If only we could use that area and expand that way." Both groups were smiling at each other as they shared the space, but neither group was overjoyed with sharing the limited space with one another.

The best suggestion is for the two camelid groups to come together to improve our experiences at the Stock Show together. Together we might be able to persuade the Western Stock Show Complex to extend our 2 days into three or four days. The other obvious solution is to take on the cattle industry and kick them out of OUR RING. Perhaps that's a little too aggressive, but it is just one idea of what can be achieved together in the future when the Stock Show Complex is expanded.

The two camelid groups should be representing our animals together for the entirety of the Stock Show. We need to keep our two-day events as they are AND ALSO be able to set up some extra stalls with a couple alpacas and llamas that are allowed to stay for the duration of the Stock Show. In this way, no one misses out when our current two days is over and done. It should be one event, both camelid groups; alpaca breeders, llama breeders coming together for the betterment of our industry.

*Gary with his wife, Patti, raise & board Llamas and Alpacas in Elizabeth, CO.*



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# THE SOUL OF FLEECE

Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay  
Yellowstone Llamas



Until recently, I admittedly had no particular interest in my llamas' fleece after it was shorn before the summer. Llamas have been bred over the last few decades to have more and more wool and in the process most have lost their natural capability to molt. This results in very wooly pack animals who have to be shorn every year so they don't have to lug their heavy burdens through the countryside wearing huge, permanent wool coats. After shearing my animals and admiring their new, sleek looks, I stuff their fluff into bags, mark them with their names and year of shearing and store them on shelves in my house.

There it sits awaiting a more meaningful future fate. Unfortunately, I am not overly fond of the time-consuming sorting and cleaning and the dust that covers everything around me in the process of getting the fiber ready for the mill. Therefore this task ends up at the bottom of my annual to-do-list and has stayed there solidly and stubbornly for years. I did try my hand at it once many years ago but even though I was rewarded with a neat package of skeins in the glorious colors of my animals, I had no desire to repeat the process any time soon. In

addition, my past habit to knit, once a hugely addictive activity resulting in an impressive number of sweaters, scarves, mittens and socks, gave way to other priorities over the years or simply fell by the wayside due to a shortage of time.

Yet, when the llamas produced progressively cleaner fleece over the subsequent years, I couldn't bring myself to throw away the bounty. Thus the shelving was extended to cover almost a whole wall holding an impressive number of labeled bags. Unfortunately, llama fiber, unlike good cheese and wine, does not get better with age. Something had to happen.

I recently realized to my surprise that llamas have been part of my life for 25 years. During this time, I have learned a lot about these remarkable and endearing beings and have never ever lost interest in them or ceased wanting to learn more. After the many years of shared experiences and adventures, I feel that I have come close to understanding llamas and honoring almost every aspect of their being.

Except one: their fiber.

So, on a recent, cold winter afternoon, I decided on a whim to sort through the many bags on the shelves. Hours later, I emerged again to the present time and waning daylight. Where had I been? What I thought was 4 years' worth of shorn fleece was really 6! I dove into the bags, dust notwithstanding, and touched, smelled and marveled at the soft essence of the animals neatly lined up and labeled before me:

Picasso, crimped, so soft and dense. Teddy, luxuriously grey under outward chocolate-brown disguise. Yukon, the color of bubbly champagne. And oh, DotCom, getting greyer through the years, how I miss you, my sweet boy!

Otis, I only sheared your red abundance twice after you came home with me from horrid neglect at the "Sanctuary from Hell" in 2011. You packed with us in Yellowstone, tall Otis, and died too early and mysteriously in 2016. And Ishi, two-toned glamour, white and tan, like coffee-and-cream next to each other. And mischievous Domingo, reddish brown Argentine, prolific fleece producer and lead packer.

I grab the next bag and now I am crying. Amadeus, my most beloved llama. I held your head last summer as you

*continued on next page*





*The Soul of Fleece continued ...*

breathed your last breath after 24 years of life. I sheared you many times, my friend. You were a classic llama, your black fleece would be scratchy in a sweater, but I am glad I kept a bag full of what was once a part of you. Candido is next, solid and strong, my Prince Charming, white wool always dirty, you love your deep dusty wallows.

Chico, sweet with gorgeously soft wool, you are useless for packing, but I love you. Mucho, a small bag of your fleece in the corner, but not forgotten. A snake bite claimed your life, the horror of watching you die deep in a far corner of my memory. The list goes on. Name after labeled name. Memory after memory. I take my time. I touch them all, quietly acknowledging the gift they gave and left behind.

And then it hits me. This evolutionary masterpiece of insulation, of hollow fiber, natural loft and ingenious moisture regulation that is a gift to anybody who wears garments of the genus lama, contains so much more than solid warmth and exquisite beauty.

There is personality in fleece. There is DNA in fleece. There is SOUL.

Both the tangible and intangible aspects of all our lives, of who we are and who we will remain, some scientifically proven, others heart-felt and just as real to me. On a dim Sunday afternoon of yet another cold Montana winter with my hands deep in fleece-filled plastic bags, the final piece of what is the colorful mosaic of my llama experience falls into place. The timeless connection, the memories flowing through the enduring fiber is a gift from my animal friends, alive and departed. My long-awaited motivation stirs, kindled by the desire to honor their souls through art.

Artists through time have woven, spun, painted, knitted, beaded, braided, carved, and sculpted a part of their soul into their pieces of art. Indigenous hunters included a part of their spirit in the crafting and decoration of their weapons. Drum makers and flute crafters know the sound of their instruments because it carries the joined melody of their soul as well as the essence of the animal or tree they once were.

Creating pieces of art, therefore, is a spiritual act of connecting with the natural materials that are used as well

as a deeply-felt kinship with the animals that provided antlers, hide, bone or fiber. Finally releasing the llama fleece from the shadows of the shelves and into the light of love, acknowledging and remembering each animal and respectfully preparing the fiber to be processed, is a first step on the way to give back. Knitting a part of my soul in a piece of wooly art to join with theirs may be next.



As has been my habit over the last few months before I fall asleep, I touch the small, dense ball of neck fleece that I kept from my last moment with Amadeus. My heart squeezes as I hold it, then becomes light with memories. I see his tall, dark form approaching as a dreamy fog begins to embrace me.

"Tomorrow", I think as I drift off, "I will start knitting again".





# How Things Are....or Are They?

Marty McGee Bennett – [www.Camelidynamics.com](http://www.Camelidynamics.com)

How do you want life to be with your alpacas or your llamas? Why did you decide to buy llamas or alpacas or both? What kind of relationship do you want to have with your animals? How do you see llamas and alpacas adding to your life? What is important to you about the treatment of animals in our human world?

These larger questions are frequently forgotten in the excitement of selecting and purchasing your first animals. Yet these are the important considerations that will guide you in your decisions about everything from showing to shearing and haltering to hugging.

Llama and alpaca shoppers are often introduced to camelids at a fair or show. There is nothing quite like that first nose greeting, those cute little lips, the eyelashes, that over-the-shoulder look. You are smitten. This alpaca or llama plays kissy face, lets you fondle his wool, pet his head and take all kinds of liberties which the average alpaca or llama would never tolerate. You sign on the dotted line, then find that your huggable investment is viewed closely only with binoculars.

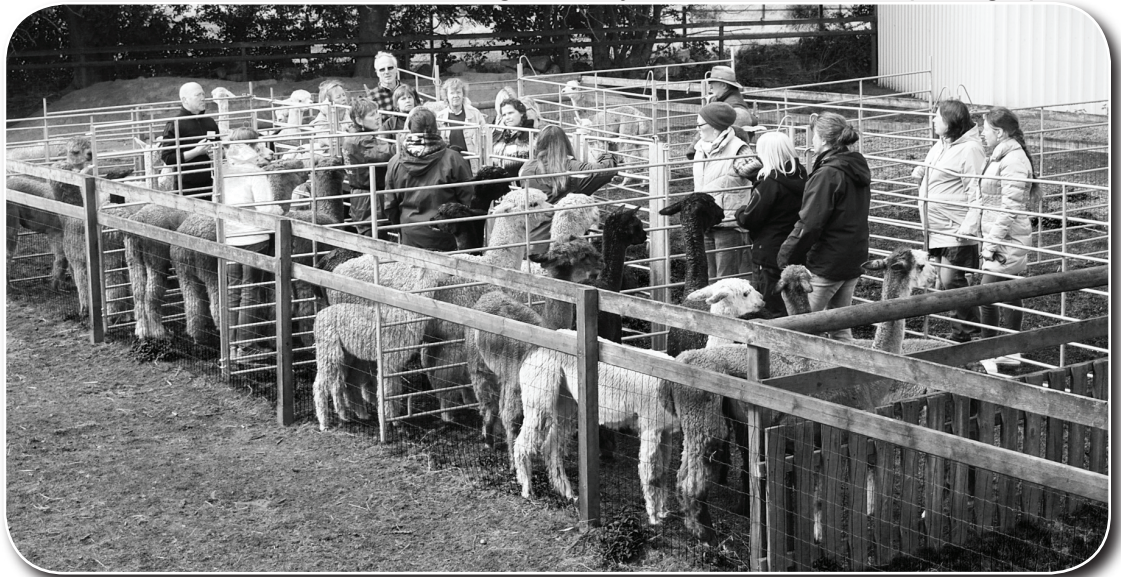
When you get home, your llamas or alpacas hang out at the far side of the pasture and venture over to look at you only if you are safely on the other side of the fence. “Well,” your new camelid buddies fess up, “that other animal you met, that is what we call a ‘Public Relations Animal.’ The truth is most llamas and alpacas are aloof and don’t like to be touched.”

This is called *The Way Things Are*. The moment you become an alpaca or llama owner you begin to get the “real” scoop on what llamas and alpacas don’t like, what they can do, what they won’t do, and how you—the human—must do things. As a result, after a few months of exposure to *The Way Things Are*, you accept the limitations others placed on the

relationship you thought you could have with your animals. You begin to give up on the dream with which you started.

## Let’s not give up.

It can be the way you imagined it to be in the beginning. Let’s fantasize a moment about a reporter’s findings when he visits to do a news story about your fantasy farm. As the reporter is writing furiously in his notebook, his photographer



buddy is snapping away. What kinds of adjectives do you want the writer to use as he describes his experience with you and your animals? What photographic images of you and your animals would you like to appear in the newspaper?

How about words such as: trusting, fun, kind, companionable, respectful, interesting, harmonious, understanding—even efficient. How about: “I watched mesmerized as these magical animals gathered around visiting politely. These graceful camelids were curious yet respectful. They were shy around me but they clearly trusted their owner. I could sense some special relationship.”

How about a picture of you sitting in the midst of your animals while they relaxed and chewed their cud? How about another photo of you walking through the barn with your alpacas and llamas sitting quietly as you stepped over and around them. These are some of the words and images that my clinic attendees invariably suggest.

*continued on next page*



The reality for most llama and alpaca owners is decidedly different. A reporter visiting most llama or alpaca farms would more than likely comment, "I was struck by how touchable these animals appeared, but yet how unfriendly they behaved." Or "Gee, why is it so hard to catch them? Don't they like you?"

Why do most llamas and alpacas dance away from our reach and interact with us primarily for food? Why do they stand up and look for the exit when we come into the barn? Why won't they let us touch them? Please don't believe it is just *The Way Things Are*.

There is a way to interact with alpacas and llamas that gives them the confidence to relate to humans.



This is called *The Way Things Can Be* (and IS for many alpaca and llama owners). You must learn the secrets of becoming the kind of person with whom your alpacas and llamas will feel comfortable.

### **The Law of Camelidynamics**

What is the **SINGLE** most useful behavior that you can get your llama or alpaca to do for you on a consistent basis? (Be aware: this is a trick question.)

You walk into the training pen with your animal. What do you want your llama or alpaca to do? What do you want him to do when you put his halter on, trim his toenails, prepare him for a show, look at his teeth, or give him a shot? What one thing are we hoping for when we approach our camelid companions?

The most useful behavior that you can get your llama or alpaca to do for you on a consistent basis is: **NOTHING**. You put the halter on. You put the pack on. You pick up the feet. You give the shot. You do the shearing. How much easier it would be if your animal stood quietly doing nothing while you did your work.

### **What If You Were Picked up by Aliens?"**

So why won't they stand still? Why—when we do so many nice things for them—do they insist on running away unless we lure them with food? Why do we have to chase them, hold them, wrestle them and build chutes? Perhaps it is BECAUSE we chase them, hold them, wrestle them and put them in chutes.

Most of the llama and alpaca management and training that we need to do is not hurtful. Even the occasional shot is really nothing compared to the unpleasant and scary experience of being cornered, grabbed and wrestled into submission. This drama all happens before the needle ever pricks the skin.

Perhaps the best way to understand camelid behavior is to engage in a bit of role playing. Imagine that you are driving down a road late at night. You see a blinding flash of light, get out of the car and walk toward the light. Suddenly strange looking creatures appear. Your first instinct is to run. You are so completely panicked that you run right past your car. The aliens have six legs, compared to your two and are faster.

These strange beings chase you down and grab you. You fight like crazy, but they are too strong. They drag you aboard their space ship. Once on the space ship these alien things wrestle you into a tiny little box. The aliens tie your arms and legs to the box and slip a strange contraption around your neck.

You continue to struggle, but there is no use. Next one of them puts his slimy hand thing on your leg and slowly slides your pants leg up. You freeze, hold your breath and then finally scream. After all that struggle, wouldn't it be odd if the aliens did nothing more than look at your feet and then let you go free?

To an alpaca or llama, I think we must seem very much like the aliens I just described. Once we've captured our creature the procedure usually isn't all that bad, but the process of getting them within our grasp is horrendous.

*continued on next page*

A camelid's first line of defense is most always, like ours, the flight response. If running is no longer an option, they struggle to get free—the fight response. For llamas and alpacas this tactic includes leaping, screaming, spitting, spinning, and throwing themselves around and against the attacker. Thankfully camelids don't generally resort to biting, but they can.

If all attempts to get away are exhausted most animals will get very still. This is not acceptance of the situation but rather another instinctive response—the freeze response. The freeze response is often accompanied by kushing and, in extreme cases, a loosening of the bowels and bladder. I didn't want to get too graphic in my spaceship example, but humans would have many of the same responses.

What would cause a llama or alpaca to abandon these instinctive maneuvers and maybe even visit with us? Let's go back to the alien example. Fear of the unknown is perhaps the most potent of all fears. An inability to communicate their intention is what makes the aliens so frightening. Learning the alien's language and ultimately its culture makes an alien environment understandable and safe. If we can devise an approach that does not feel alien to an animal, we will become a safer presence.

The secret to understanding Camelidynamics is in learning how llamas and alpacas think and react as well as understanding how your behavior affects the behavior of the animal. This is the path to enhanced communication and understanding. Your llama or alpaca then will overcome the instinct to run from you. Understand Camelidynamics and magic happens...your llama or alpaca will stay still, hang around you and **DO NOTHING**.

### **How things go wrong**

Let me give you a very telling example of a common misunderstanding I see at llama and alpaca farms all over the world. A new camelid owner has just purchased five new animals. The new owner is now going to make friends. The following scenario is told from both the animal and the human point of view.

Humanthink: I want my llamas/alpacas to like me, get used to me and allow me to touch them. They will only come to me for food so I will put out the food in the barn feeders and call the critters. I will touch them on the back as they enter the barn and as they line up at the feeders. I will cruise around

the barn and pat everybody while they eat. If I do this every day, they will eventually like me and trust me. I will have made friends with them and made great strides in my training program.

Camelidthink: Gosh, I'm hungry and I sure would like to go in there in get that food, but that scary thing is standing right in the @#%!& doorway. I hate having to deal with this to get to the food. Maybe I'll just wait until it leaves, or maybe I could rush through the door really fast and it won't be able to get me. Maybe I could kind of slink down a bit as I rush through the door and it will miss. Oh, all right I will make a dash for it! I made it. But now it is stalking around in here while I am trying to eat. What a royal pain all this patting is! At least I can kind of fishtail around here by the feeder and get a bite here and there while I am avoiding the thing.

Following this line of logic many llama and alpaca owners unwittingly teach their animals to rush head-long past them for fear the dreaded arm may reach out and touch or grab them. Even worse new owners may teach their animals never to come in the barn when the human is there.

Camelidthink: People who reach out, chase, corner and grab camelids around the neck are not safe to be around.

Llamas and alpacas can get used to almost anything. Establish a routine, and camelids will eventually tolerate touching. While this kind of behavior may result in toleration, it seldom results in affection. Camelidynamics is about something much more than toleration. Camelidynamics is about helping you create a truly respectful, safe and trusting relationship with your animals.

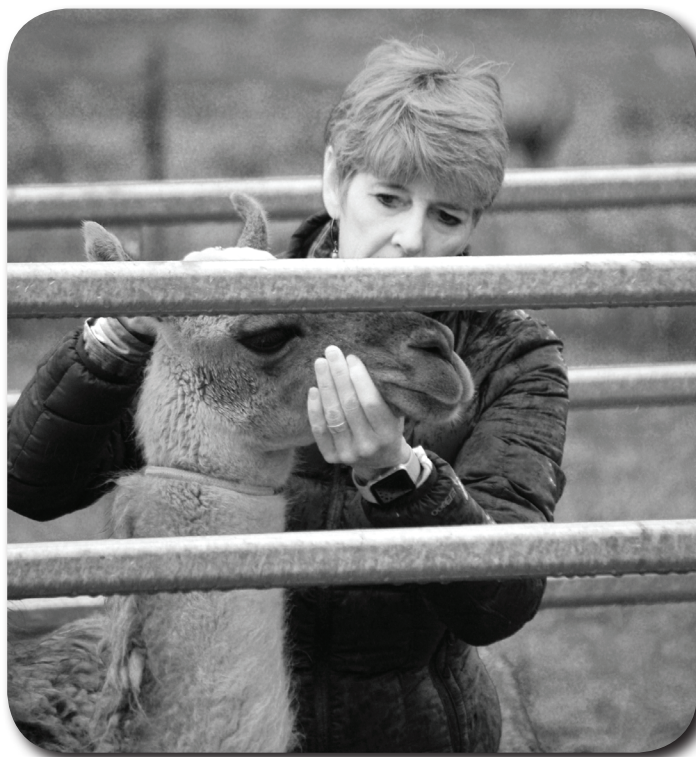
From my experience I've found you cannot buy this kind of relationship with food. You cannot produce it with repetition. And you cannot get it by overpowering an animal. You create this respect, safety and trust by learning to think like a camelid, working consistently to make them feel safe, and learning to honor their nature.

I have learned these things in my years with llamas and alpacas. Consequently I can accomplish things almost immediately with an animal belonging to someone else; things that the owner—despite a prior relationship with animal—cannot do. Animals that have never allowed a person to touch their head and mouth, or pick up a foot, or give them a shot without a big fight, will let me do it—easily.

*continued on next page*



After reading this you may think the approach makes a lot of sense and have a desire to learn the



techniques I call Camelidynamics. The next thought you have might be: "What about the animals that I have already chased, grabbed, wrestled, and frightened?" Will they change? What if I have older animals that have been handled the old way for their whole life? The answer to the question "Will they change?" is OF COURSE THEY WILL! Animals (and humans) never stop learning.

In order to stay alive animals must react and adapt to changes in their environment which includes changes in the behavior of their humans. Think about it...someone sells an older llama or alpaca. This animal arrives at his new home and must immediately figure out where the food, the water, the minerals and the pastures are. They must discover if there are any ditches or other dangers in their environment. He or she must create new alliances with other animals AND figure out how the new humans do things.

The learning process never stops. My 90 year old mother moved into an assisted living community and had to do essentially the same thing. If you embrace the collection of ideas and techniques I call Camelidynamics you will find that your animals regardless of their age and experience heave a sigh of relief and embrace the new you!

I am no "camelid whisperer." I just know how to speak and understand plain ol' llama/ alpaca language. I speak with my body and my behavior, and I do it meaningfully and clearly. And the best news for you is you can learn these same skills. I can teach you how.



*Editors' Note: please see Marty's ad on page 11 for a list of her upcoming training sessions.*

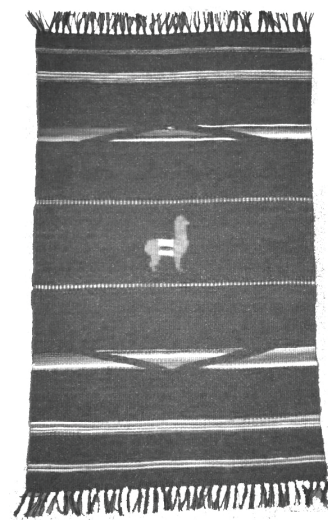
**--- She will be in Colorado in June! ---**

## Each Piece Is a New Lesson

By Susan Unser - Unser Alpacas

I have only been weaving for 3 years but it is a wonderful way to relax and each piece is a lesson. I send my prime alpaca fiber to a mill in Mora, NM where they blend it with mohair and return it as roving. The roving then goes to a dear lady here in the Chama valley who spins it into either rug or blanket weight yarn (i.e., thinner than rug weight). Another friend who specializes in natural dyes puts the colors in. I love weaving with bright colors and she turns my Alpaca into amazing bright reds and yellows all with natural dyes. In the photo, the brown has not been dyed.

Now as a bonus, the leg and neck hair from the past 3 years has been blown into the attic of my studio and provides great insulation.



# 2019 Fairplay Llama Event

July 27th, 2019, Fairplay, CO



We are looking forward to Fairplay 2019 and hope you are too! Based on what the Board has seen and heard at the last several events, we have made a couple of adjustments.

The traditional Pack Llama Race returns. We thank Toby Stensland for stepping up to do the course layout. Entries in the Pack Llama Race will be using their own llama or locating one to borrow that is conditioned to endurance on the trail.

Participation in the Walk Event has increased tremendously in the last few years. Those of us at the registration booth have had to turn away many people who wanted to enter because of a shortage of animals.



New this year! We are expanding the traditional Walk with a Llama Event. It will now be known as the "Walk with a Llama or Alpaca" Event! We have seen a few alpacas alongside the llamas in the walk and notice their endurance and willingness to participate is awesome.

A larger number of animals means a huge opportunity to educate folks visiting Fairplay who have never been around llamas or alpacas. The Walk is a fun, easy stroll along the same course as the Pack

Llama Race. And, as in past years, participants may walk alone or as a team.



We are asking members to bring their llamas and alpacas to share in the walk. The walk is a perfect time for visitors to touch and get to know our animals – both llamas and alpacas. And you, the owner, can walk with your animal to ensure its well-being while educating the participant.

Bringing an animal is also a great opportunity for you to market your farm and perhaps

sell an animal in the process. Please bring your animals to share for the day.

And yes, the very popular Llama Lunacy course for children will be going full strength. The Lama Rama, a benefit for organ transplants is also on the schedule.

Join us for another very exciting and fun filled day. Volunteers are needed and registration will be open soon. Watch your email for the announcement.





# Large Llama Rescue Near Fairplay, Colorado

By Lynda Liptak, Owner of Llamas del Sol and Volunteer for Southwest Llama Rescue

In September of 2018, Southwest Llama Rescue (SWLR) was called upon to rescue a large herd of 35 llamas from the mountains above Fairplay, near Jefferson, CO running on 200 – 300 acres. We are always grateful for the chance to save the lives of llamas over the other tragic options: to euthanize, auction, or let them perish in the elements.

Upon our arrival, we learned that the current fencing was minimal, and that the llamas could jump onto the neighbor's property and roam where they pleased. If they are ruled a nuisance for roaming outside their property or are found trespassing on national forest, some government agencies will have them killed.

This herd of llamas had survived for many years, though some had perished, and new ones were continually being born. It was the end of September, and we knew we were running out of time to save the llamas from a harsh winter, predators, and lethal exposure for the young ones.

Occasionally the llamas were known to come up to the old partially fenced corrals near the house and we hoped that it would not be too difficult to contain them. However, there was no hay (as we thought there would be) to entice them and so no incentive for them to come in. The drought in Colorado had made hay scarcer and the usual roadside hay farms were not open that weekend. A kind local working at the motel spent hours on the phone trying to assist us in finding hay, to no avail.

We noticed on Friday at the first site visit that there was a lot of fence repair to do to contain them before getting them into the corrals which also had to be re-enforced. Several hours of the first day were spent organizing, planning, building, and repairing the containment areas. None of us had worked together before and we all came with different experiences, successes, and failures from our past rescue efforts. We were struggling to mend fences, raise panels, and create an inviting yet secure area to confine 35 wild llamas which had bonded with a donkey, ram, and an alpaca.

One of the most challenging issues with a llama rescue is the customized effort for the situation. Each one is like a first – especially when the team is

meeting for the first time.

It's a stressful situation that requires a lot of work and patience. Additionally, it takes a lot of resources; and as a 501(c)(3) organization, SWLR is funded by volunteer time and private donations.



We were dependent upon a local veterinarian to give us approval to move the llamas and we also needed to coordinate with the local sheriff's office.



On Friday evening, we had a good-sized crew and met over a pizza dinner at a local restaurant. Jonna Johnson and Jake generously came from the Technical Large Animal Rescue (TLAR) all the way from Houston, TX (see figure 4) with their perfect trailer for moving the females and crias to our Texas Sanctuary & Nursery run by F.E. Baxter. Also, E.T. and Pat Little (see figure 5), our experienced rescuers from SWLR were up from Tularosa, NM and brought a trailer with 16' panels for creating a secure corral. Kent Greentree from Walsenburg, CO also came with panels, an experienced handler and trainer, who brought thin tape for topping the fence line to deter jumping. Gayle Woodsum brought her trailer to take some llamas and was the designated leader given her experience with the notorious Montana Sanctuary Rescue that dealt with 600+ suffering llamas during the heart of the winter in 2007.

We had local support from the son of the owner of the llama herd and his family who were very kind, helpful, and ultimately grateful. Their elderly mother was having to surrender her herd which has grown out of control (mixing males and females) over the years. I was in the area from Albuquerque, NM but also in the area on travel for work; and as an active member of SWLR, I volunteered, as did the whole team, to help these llamas move to a safer place to be cared for and managed properly. This was my largest rescue so far.

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*Large Llama Rescue, continued...*

Our first step was to build a large enough containment field that would feel safe enough so they would not jump or push the panels. Also, we built a corral and catch pen with a chute of sorts directing them ultimately into the trailer. This was the first early hours of Saturday after unloading and placing several panels on Friday evening. A big mistake was thinking that hay was delivered and so no one brought any. Thankfully, the sheriff's office brought us two small bales Saturday which helped us at least get started.

Our first attempt at 9 am Saturday moving the llamas into the large fenced area was fraught with trouble from the beginning. The llamas wanted to go in a different direction than we thought and missed the open gate all together. The llamas started panicking as they were being pushed towards the corral. The rescue team was not in sync or agreement as to how to move as a team or how to coax or react around the llamas. We had a mixed bag of beginners and experienced folks. The llamas bolted away and ran off about a quarter mile down the hill and hid behind the tree line. We learned lessons of routing of least resistance, keeping still and quiet, and the use of herding tape may have improved our chances. A pair of binoculars was needed to see the llamas.

While we waited for a new opportunity, some volunteers walked the fence line and re-enforced openings to make the entry point to the corral to funnel the llamas. This meant E.T. and other volunteers walking the hundreds of acres. We hoped that we could get the llamas to try again, with less fear of us.

Kent waited about an hour to let them settle down before he sat down in the field with the llamas. He began to slowly coax them out and towards the fenced area. Around 12:30 there was an agreement with the rescue team again to move them into the corral. This time we had a cohesive plan (See Figure 1).

Jonna walked the road to keep the llamas from bolting up the mountain where we would lose them entirely. Jake, Lynda, Pat, Kent, E.T., Greg, and son (seven people) created a partial circle behind the llamas. Using herding tape to signal the desired direction and a moving pseudo fence line, we slowly started moving the llamas forward. We were quiet, calm, and often stopped to control any panic. I tried to keep the tape spread out among everyone so it would act as a deterrent for going backwards. However, as they approached the corral, they were reluctant to enter – but we had them in the fenced area!

While we all held our breath, the donkey who was most interested in the hay inside the corral ambled into the hay-filled corral and started eating the hay. Then several llamas followed, but a few started bolting in different directions. A cria, to my horror, ran right into the herding tape like a clothes line on her neck and fell backwards – she was obviously released to recover and run off. We lost four of them at that time.



*Figure 1. Jake is slowly waiting for us to start moving the llamas as calmly as possible.*

The large black female who seemed to be a leader was now facing me. She went high toward the treed area instinctively knowing she had the advantage among the aspens which was also near the road and another escape route. We both darted and countered each other, eye-to-eye. She was stunningly beautiful, agile, and powerful. I couldn't match her of course, and finally she bolted past me to her freedom. We lost her and one or two others.

On the other side of the field, one of the crias was running around in a panic, unable to find its mother, and was jumping around challenging the fences and panels. She found a weak spot and managed to push down a cattle panel and

*continued on next page*





**Figure 2.** Successful herding into the corrals - males and females with crias.

climb out (5 1/2 ft. tall). Then a large female saw another small opening that she could clear, and over she sailed. Two more lost. But the good news was that in the end, we had 30 animals in the corral: 27 llamas, a sheep, an alpaca, and a donkey! We all hoped no more would jump out. They settled in for the evening with the remains of two hay bales (See Figure 2).

On Sunday, Day 2, the sorting of sexes had to be done while I made a hay run to Buena Vista about 50 miles away. There was not enough hay for them to eat and we needed to sustain them to keep them as content as possible.

Separating the males and females was another stressful time. It caused a lot of commotion. There was even a mutiny by the males who all pushed the line of panels separating them from the females and managed to rejoin. So, we started over to get the females in the front catch pen to load up for our sanctuary in Kerrville TX run by Baxter. Jonna had been delayed an extra day already and the vet was nowhere to be seen – a requirement to move these llamas across the country is a vet check. We were anxiously waiting for the go-ahead to trailer the llamas as there was a very long ride for the females and crias. Besides, our kind volunteers needed to get home.

Finally, the vet came and spent 5 -10 minutes to draw up paperwork and we

were good to go. Loading took patience as the llamas learned for the first time how to get into a trailer and to trust it enough to walk into. The hard work was only partly done as we got the females and crias loaded. There were still the males and the family of llamas and donkey that Gayle was keeping that were all going into Gayle's trailer.

The sheep (ram) was left behind with seven escaped llamas and that was a hard reality to swallow. No one knew when the next rescue could be arranged but we did know that before long we could be in the same predicament of breeding llamas running wild, jumping fences, and dying from starvation or exposure. We needed to first recuperate from this mega-effort and devise a plan.



**Figure 3.** The yearling males who ran away and headed up the mountain.

*continued on next page*





Figure 4. Jonna Johnson and Jake

Anyone interested in assisting with rescues, adoptions, or foster care, please let SWLR know. We are on Facebook, Southwest Llama Rescue and our web site is [www.southwestllamarescue.org](http://www.southwestllamarescue.org). Please look us up Southwest Llama Rescue, Inc. and consider helping us with future llama rescues by volunteering or donating. Rescues are expensive to conduct.

The llamas are treated and cared for in our sanctuaries and foster homes. We carefully vet potential adopters for forever homes and have grown a community of loving llama caretakers with our llama adoptions, mentorship and information

sources. Our mission is to ensure llamas are cared for and not auctioned, euthanized, neglected, or abused. We need your help to be able to continue our mission and are seeking all kinds of assistance.

Next time – part two – Saving the Rest.  
(See Figure 3).

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If you want to volunteer or donate to  
SWLR, see *(paid)* ad on page 5



Figure 5. ET and Pat Little



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### RMLA WEBSITE UPDATE

Remember the interests you checked on your membership form? Check out the **MEMBER INTERESTS** under **MEMBERS**. Need something? They are all there, easy to find and easy to contact the members.



# Alien with Questionable

## Documentation Joins Tribe

Susan Unser– Unser Alpacas

*Unser Alpacas*



As promised in the Fall issue, the sixth Alpaca joined our growing herd via a phone call and gave my husband considerable anxiety about when he had lost control of this Alpaca adventure. Within a week of bringing our 5 “boys” home from Colorado, I received a phone call from a lady on the western slope of Colorado who “heard” we had Alpacas and wanted to know if we would consider taking her alpaca that had lost his brother and was now alone.

How on earth my telephone number got on the Alpaca Rescue Hotline was a mystery but feeling magnanimous in our new venture I agreed we would come to her ranch and see if her Alpaca might fit in with our five. When asked what price she was asking, her response was “he is free, just come get him.” That should have been my first clue, but ignorance again took a backseat to enthusiasm.

We borrowed a small horse trailer and GPS’d our way to Durango, where we were met at the driveway by a rather frantic looking woman, waving registration documents and directing us to the barn where her husband was attempting to get this Alpaca haltered and brought to a gate. As my imagination is prone to do, after 15 minutes of waiting, I expected to see the Tasmanian Devil Alpaca come charging out of the barn dragging its owner. Instead out came a small dark brown Alpaca with the biggest brown eyes who seemed to be as pleased to see us as we were surprised to see him.

Remember, I had told my husband we were just going to go see if this poor little orphan Alpaca might fit into our herd, but I think he realized when we hooked the horse trailer to the truck, that it would not return to our little ranch empty. We stopped for fuel and I walked around to the back of the trailer, expecting to see our newest boy. No head in sight. Panicked and with great, ungraceful effort I climbed on the wheel and there he was cushed and humming. Now we knew this is how these guys travel.

Thus, Merciano (Don Pizzazz) born on the 4th of July, came to be a member of the Unser Alpaca tribe. Attempting to register him in our name has taken time. It would appear Don may have a suspicious history which only endears him further into our own dubious lives.

These Alpacas have such distinct personalities. Some are followers, some are smart, some are clever, some are curious, some encourage and are quickly ready to wrestle and chase each other and



some seem to enjoy mounting another male, with perhaps a memory of what that activity was once intended to achieve.

*continued on next page*

Don's introduction to his new "mates" was not particularly memorable and in hindsight not proper. We opened the gate and Don walked into his new home. Perhaps he was the "top dog" before coming to us, but he was being placed in a herd that already had established its pecking order and Don was not going to be the Alpha out of the chute. Access to food seemed to be the way the herd let Don know that he was being kept on probation until they decided if he could stay.

He was shoved out of the way at the hayrack; he had to wait until all the others had chosen a grain dish before he could have one and none of them would let him get even close to the carrot lady. Finding him away from the others I tried giving him special attention which only made matters worse, as now he was being marked as mom's favorite. He knew that, even when I didn't.

What he has brought to the herd is the ability to spot anything on the property that doesn't belong there. And when he sees it, he lets out with a high-pitched distress call that stops everyone and all eyes are directed to where he is looking. The prairie dogs were a constant source of his distress call in the beginning, then came the turkey, deer and elk, all of which he has finally accepted as being part of his domain. However, he has saved us all, especially the dogs from skunks, badgers,

porcupines, and at night when he makes his distress call, I assume he has spotted a lurking gang of coyotes. He is the eyes and ears of the herd.

Standing at the kitchen window, just 2 weeks into my alpaca parenthood, I watched as Don and Camero, a usually docile white male, stood up on their hind feet and started screaming at each other. I went running out of the house waving a dish towel and telling them to STOP. Needless to say, I was ignored and the screaming only got louder and then the chasing and wrestling began and I was sure my herd was going to be smaller by the end of that day. Frantically trying to find my phone to call the vet, a neighbor, anyone but my husband, I again looked out the window to see those same 2 grazing in the pasture as if nothing had happened. This noise that comes with their testosterone driven need to rough house with each other will always bring us to see who is after whom, just as the distressing sounds leads us to see what is amiss in their world.

Even after these past 3 years this Zen-like humming noise they make still confuses me. Of course, as a greenhorn, I assumed they were just thrilled to see me each morning and night, but further reading has revealed that this is considered a sound of emotional distress. That first summer, in an attempt to bond with them, I drug my hammock into their pasture and spent time reading with the delusional hope they would all cush around me. While their curiosity caused them to investigate what I was doing in their domain they would eventually wander off, humming and probably thinking the carrot lady has lost her mind.

So this chapter ends with 6 male alpacas, tenuously sharing quarters which provide shelter, water and carrots but with only a few remaining bales of hay. The search for second-cutting, grass hay, which seems to be the only hay they will eat, begins the next venture into a world of charlatans, rogues, tricksters and finding my husband's next driving career, hauling hay.





## Do You Ear What I Ear? – *An Overview of Ear Tick Management*

Ticks can be a difficult and frustrating part of livestock management. Ear ticks bring about an especially frustrating aspect for camelid owners. In this brief article we will discuss the life cycle of ear ticks, management practices to keep ear ticks under control, and potential conditions caused by these creatures.

Ticks are considered arachnids, and there are two broad categories of ticks: hard ticks and soft ticks. These two categories are based on the structure of tick's shell surface. While both categories of ticks can take up residence in the ears of llamas and alpacas, the soft tick *Otobius megnini* has an affinity for ears.

Note: It is important to remember that ticks are not the same as mites. Mites are much smaller than ticks, have a different life cycle and cannot be seen with the naked eye. They actually burrow into the skin and are not readily observed on the surface. Ear mites do occur in cats, dogs, rabbits, ferrets and humans, there is not a recognized ear mite in camelids.

This tick is often called the spinous ear tick because the nymph life stage is covered in small spines and a part of its life-cycle is directly related to the ear canal. Adult *Otobius megnini* ticks lay their eggs on the ground. These eggs hatch into larvae, and the larvae begin searching for a host ear to take up residence. When a host reaches down to graze or lays down on the ground the larvae have their opportunity to reach the ear. Once in the ear canal the larvae will stay there and molt through their larval stages and into the nymph stage. Consider the nymphs teenage ticks. These nymphs continue to take blood meals from the skin and burrow into the ear canal until they reach their adult stage. Once these ticks have reached their adult phase, they leave the ear and the host to mate in the environment, lay eggs, and die. While this life-cycle may appear simple it is often times hard to break this cycle and control ear ticks due in part to the lengthy time that the ticks can survive on the host and in the environment.



Figure 1. Adult spinous ear tick (*Otobius megnini*). From <http://csu-cvmb.colostate.edu/vdl/Pages/spinose-ear-tick.aspx>.



From left to right, Dr. Ben Turchin, Dr. Elizabeth Crabtree, and Dr. Cileah Kretsch.

Camelids have a particular aspect to their ear anatomy that makes managing ear ticks even more difficult due to the length and shape of their ear canal. While it is common with most other species to be able to look down the length of the ear canal and visualize the

tympanic membrane, that is not the case for camelids. Camelids have a long ear canal that makes a sharp turn. This turn prevents us from visualizing the entire length of the ear canal, and it also makes a great and safe environment for the ear ticks to hide. This often means we do not readily see the ear ticks that may be causing camelids problems until secondary conditions arise.

The most common secondary condition seen in camelids with ear ticks is ear infection. While it is possible that they can get a simple external ear infection, it often progresses to a much more complex infection involving the structures of the middle ear (otitis media) or inner ear (otitis interna).

As in humans, middle and inner ear infections require more intensive care, and often show extreme clinical signs. These signs can include, but are not limited to,

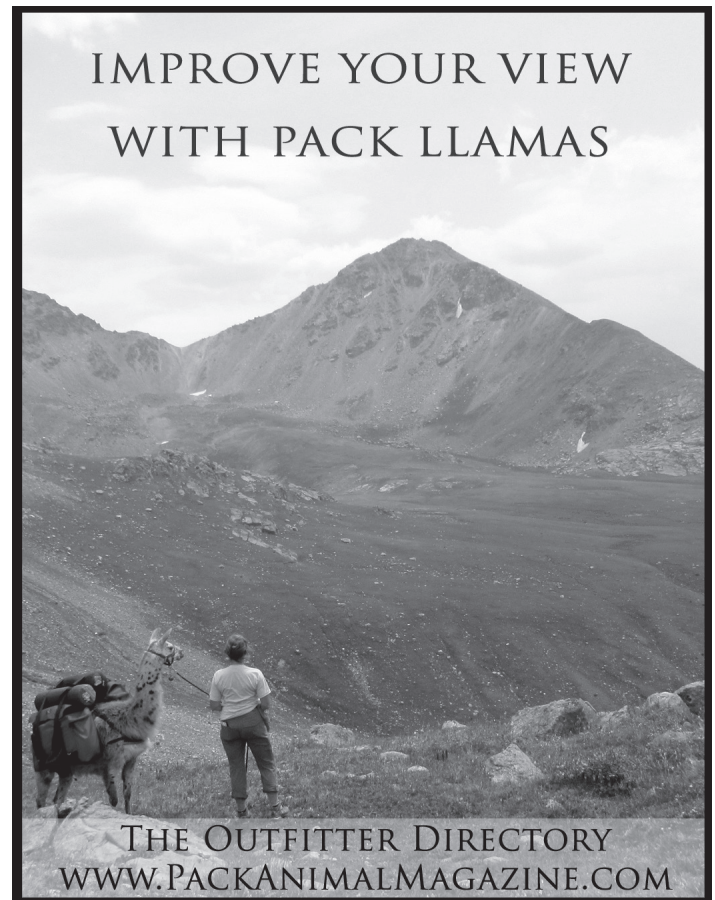
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tilting of the head, drooping ears on the affected side, foul smelling discharge from the affected ear, wide based stance, difficulty turning, and seeming to not be able to balance when walking. If any of these signs are seen, a veterinary consultation is warranted immediately. Some other subtle signs of ear tick infestation include shaking their heads, rubbing or scratching their ears on inanimate objects, and pain on manipulation of the ear.

So, what can be done to manage these little buggers? As previously mentioned, it is very difficult. Unfortunately for us, and our camelids, there is no oral medication for the prevention of tick infestations like there is for small animals. Fortunately, there are management practices that can aid in decreasing the occurrence of ear ticks.

On an environmental management standpoint, pasture should be kept short, and access to heavily wooded areas could be decreased. Tick larvae do not survive well in direct sunlight, and they will try to find suitable places deep in grass, in bushes, or shade in other environmental structures like log piles. Keeping the pasture forage short can facilitate keeping the larvae further away from the camelid's ear when they graze. Brush and wood piles should be removed from pens and pasture areas. You can also use commercial permethrin sprays to reduce the population of ticks in the environment.

While these efforts may help, it is often more feasible to treat the animals and kill the ticks in the ears. This can be done in many different ways. Catron® IV fly spray is available at the majority of farm and ranch supply stores, and it is a great option! It is effective in treating the ticks, economical, and it is labeled for use in controlling ear ticks. Catron® IV can be sprayed in and around the ears. Many llamas and alpacas do not particularly like to have their ears sprayed, so as an alternative you can spray some into a cup and then draw the fluid into a syringe and apply into the ear canal. Another great option is using Ivermectin. It can be placed directly into the ear to kill the ticks on contact. This is an extra-label use of Ivermectin and you should work with your veterinarian to determine if it is an appropriate treatment for your animals. Both Catron® IV spray and Ivermectin can be administered in the ear on a monthly or bi-monthly basis to control the ticks.



Based on the *Otobius megnini* life cycle and the amount of time it spends on and off the host, we recommend treating all animals once monthly for at least 8 months. While the ticks will be controlled in the animals sooner than the full 8 months the ticks can survive in the environment for up to 7 months. In addition, other wildlife and domestic animals including deer, coyotes, dogs, rabbits, goats, and horses can be hosts for ear ticks and continue to maintain exposure from the environment. Work with your veterinarian to develop a prolonged treatment and control program based on your herd's environment and management.

We are aware that Fipronil is also used in the ears to control ear ticks. While this is very effective at controlling ear ticks, Fipronil is labeled as a pesticide and regulated by the EPA. It is a violation of Federal Law to use this product in a manner inconsistent with its labeling such as applying in the ear of a llama or alpaca. Because of this labeling we do not recommend its use for the control of ear ticks in these species.

The CSU Livestock Service hopes that this article was fun and informative, and if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us by calling 970-297-5000!





# Using Pack Llamas to Improve Your View

by Alexa Metrick, Editor of Pack Animal Magazine

I grew up on a little llama ranch two miles outside of Carbondale, Colorado. The house my parents built framed the town's iconic Mount Sopris perfectly in the three huge picture windows of our living room, and our couch faced these windows so we always had front-row seats to the weather passing across the peaks. For my family, it has always been about the view.

When I was four and my brother was one, my folks mortgaged our house and bought two llamas after my dad read a Sports Illustrated article about people using llamas as pack animals. The llamas were a breeding pair, and my dad intended to build a pack string to help get his young family deep into the mountains he had been raised to love. This led to the invention of a llama pack saddle and a line of llama pack equipment called, naturally, Mt. Sopris Llamas (now Sopris Unlimited). Over the course of three decades, my dad trained generations of llamas to pack and traveled the country teaching people how to use pack llamas to improve their view. We still sell the equipment to packers around the world.

As kids, my brother and I were out on the trail before we could walk. Once the llamas came along, we spent every summer deep in the backcountry, exploring the western slope's most secluded spots, a string of pack llamas in tow. Our family pack trips doubled as training sessions for green llamas that would, by September, be seasoned packers ready to sell. That meant that every obstacle along the trail, no matter how small, was both a potential lesson for the llama and a potential memorable moment for us. The stories of our trips can be found in my dad's



Alexa as a young girl leading J.P. up the trail.

book, *Tales of the Trail: An Entertaining and Educational Guide to Using Llamas in the Backcountry*. It was during our summer pack trips that I learned to love nature in a way that is at the core of who I am as a person. And our little herd of pack llamas was a big part of that education.

We weren't peak baggers or weekend warriors; our goal in heading to the backcountry was simply to be out in it, to enjoy the view. In camp each morning, my brother and I would wait for the sun to hit the tent before we would crawl out of our sleeping bags, as the nights in the semi-arid high mountains were usually cold and sometimes brought snow. After breakfast, my folks would drill us on the proper response to weather, wild animals, and getting lost and then they'd set us loose.

I remember sitting in the meadow where the llamas were picketed and watching them graze. As they made their way past me, cropping a clump of grass every few steps, they'd pause to sniff me and I'd feel their warm grass-breath on the part of my hair. I remember making boats out of skunk cabbage leaves and racing them down a nearby stream. I remember the sunshine, the rain, the hail, the snow, the thunder, the lightning. I remember how beautiful it all was, especially if I were warm and dry at the time. I remember evenings spent cozied up around the campfire, slapping errant sparks off my pant legs and

*continued on next page*



Zoë, 4 and a half years old, leading Sunrise up the trail

staring up at the stars until the combination of the fire's heat on one side of my body and the cold of the night on the other finally sent me to the tent.

I want my kids, who are three and six right now, to have these memories, too. I want them to have a deep and intimate connection with nature, and I want pack llamas to be the means to that end. The problem is, my little family lives in town and we have no room or budget for our own pack string. Although there's always a chance this could change, I've made peace with our lack of llama ownership. But this doesn't mean I've abandoned the dream of raising the next generation of llama wranglers.

In the last five years or so, packing with llamas has experienced a renaissance. I am constantly getting calls and emails asking if I know of anyone who has pack llamas for sale, and new commercial outfitting businesses are sprouting like mushrooms across the U.S. Leasing pack animals has become a rapidly-growing segment of the business, primarily because hunters have discovered how valuable pack llamas can be to a successful hunt. This renewed interest in packing with llamas means that it is possible—and actually, quite easy—for my family to go llama packing whenever we'd like.

My girls were out on the trail with llamas long before they could walk. As infants, they both spent hours in the laps of their grandparents, mesmerized by the sunlight sparkling on a turn in a stream. As toddlers, they fed handfuls of grass to llamas picketed out in a meadow and snuggled in their sleeping bags until the sun warmed the side of the tent. Two years ago, we went on our first pack trip with just the four of us, and my eldest led her first string up the trail. She's a natural, already.



Zoë and Lila enjoy cups of hot chocolate in camp.  
Inset: Zoë on her first overnight llama pack trip at the age of five months.

My girls are well on their way to loving wild places. I hope that this love settles into the core of the people they become and enriches their lives as it has mine, helping them understand the world, and their place in it, a little bit better.



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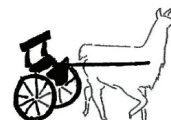
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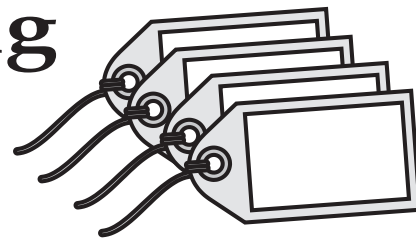
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By Chris Switzer  
Switzer-Land Paco Vicuña Farm



Did you know that if you are selling your llama or alpaca products including fiber, roving, handspun or millspun yarn, and finished products there are labeling requirements? The requirements are stipulated in the Wool Products Labeling Act, 1939 and Textile Fiber Products Identification Act, 1960. And if you have my book, *Spinning Alpaca, Llama, Camel, & Paco-Vicuna*, you can find the information on page 37.

According to the Labeling Act, fiber and yarn must have weight plus your name and farm name. I also like to add town/state plus color with name of animal. (Think reorders.) Of course, also the price.

Finished items need percent of fiber content (e.g., 100% llama or alpaca or 60% alpaca with 40% loopy mohair, etc.). Be sure to mention dyeing, if appropriate and the technique. (knitting, crochet, weaving, felting, etc.) Your name plus town/state are important plus CARE INSTRUCTIONS. hand wash, cool temperature, mild detergent, lay flat to dry, etc. And, the price. By law, these are labeling requirements for fiber artists.



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# GIVE YOUR NATURAL COLORED FIBER THE 'RED-CARPET' TREATMENT!

By Nancy Wilson – Camp Verde, AZ

This vest started as an attempt to entice more sales of natural colored fiber. Natural colors aren't as sexy as the bright dyed braids in fiber and yarn stores. So I decided to see what I could do to change that. Besides, how many fiber-producing animals have the wide variety of natural colors as our wonderful camelids!

I spun a two-ply marled yarn (see my previous article about this process). One ply is a combination of dark brown and gray, and the other ply is a brown and light tan. I like the richness of the resulting yarn. Using a marled yarn for this project made the task of spinning enough yarn more interesting than had I used a single solid color. The vest is based on the Fiber Trends Options Vest pattern (the hip length version). I also have a knit cotton vest that's a similar shape so I used that as a reference. The stitch pattern is one that I really like (and easy to remember). For you knitters out there it's a variation of stockinette stitch.

Row 1 (right side): knit one, purl one and repeat across the row

Row 2 (wrong side): purl across

Row 3 (right side): purl one, knit one and repeat across the row

Row 4 (wrong side): purl across



I made a nice large gauge sample to figure out what size needle to use and see what the stitch pattern would look like. I ended up with a size 5 needle. I did some calculations and figured out how

many stitches to cast on. The vest is knit in the round up to the arm holes then each side and back is worked separately and then the shoulders get bound off using a three needle bind off. The only finishing work was weaving in loose ends. My kind of pattern!

When it came time to change to a new ball of yarn, I realized that there was a definite color difference between the first ball and the rest of the batch. To make a nicer transition, I alternated rows between the new yarn and the old yarn (yes, there was some unknitting or frogging involved).



I also decided to make a few changes to the pattern so the vest would lay nicer. I did a four row garter stitch edge at the bottom and then kept the first four stitches of each row in garter stitch. I slipped the first stitch of each row as if to purl, so there's a nice edge up the front.

I am really pleased with how the vest turned out. For me, this was a big project. I'm not sure I'm up to a full-blown sweater with sleeves either from the knitting stamina it takes or the amount of hand spun yarn that would be involved. Plus, where I live in Arizona a vest is usually all you need.

So I encourage all you fiber artists out there to combine natural colors and see what sort of unique, one-of-a-kind items you can make!





# Education & Outreach: Spring Plans

Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay – Chair, Education & Outreach Committee

Spring is a time of new beginnings and hope! Knowledge is key! Our Education & Outreach goals are, without a doubt, to provide others with support, advice and resources to address their questions and issues regarding their alpacas and llamas.

How do I take care of my animals' needs? How can I prepare myself best for my new llama's arrival? What about fencing, shelter, feed? Can males and females live together? How do I train my animals? Is this behavior normal? Why is my alpaca not eating? These are just a few of the questions new and not-so-new camelid owners may ask.

There are many resources RMLA provides to concerned alpaca and llama owners seeking information. For instance, the association's easy-to-navigate website provides links to experts addressing behavioral problems, providing training tips, and responding to health concerns. So if you cannot answer or feel unsure about a question somebody asks you about their animals, you can direct them to RMLA with the recommendation to join or, as a first step, check out the assistance provided on the website. Likewise, if you come across questions in one of the many on-line forums, feel free to offer RMLA's link with a helpful note that llama & alpaca organizations provide a great resource of knowledge and are happy to help. Joining an organization dedicated to the education of their members and wellbeing of their animals just makes sense. As we all know, there is always more to learn! Link: [www.rmla.com](http://www.rmla.com) and click on Education and Outreach.

A wonderful new resource is "How to catch a llama". This new website provides step-by-step instruction on how to catch a llama. It was developed by Linda Hayes, RMLA member and ILR Board member. See the article on page 6 of this issue and go to [www.HowToCatchALLlama.com](http://www.HowToCatchALLlama.com).

Springtime is also a time to be outside again after the winter season to show off your animals or participate in events promoting outdoor activities, arts and crafts, youth programs or cultural events. Propose a llama walk at your local school or visit seniors to brighten their

day when touching your animals. Where ever you can showcase your alpacas and llamas and be available for questions, consider participating and even better, let RMLA know in advance so we can enter your events on a calendar to draw more folks and provide education.

Helping owners understand their animals better helps the animals and their people, as well as the public's perception of just how wonderful and unique alpacas and llamas are. And remember, you are not out there alone. You will have the support, advice and substantial resources of RMLA behind you. Consider joining the Education & Outreach Committee to draw from a pool of ideas on how to spread the word about our beloved camelids and become an ambassador for their beneficial and stress-lowering presence in people's lives.

And last but not least, I would love for you to join me on the Education & Outreach Committee because together we will come up with more ideas to spread the word and pave the way for a healthier and happier camelid community.

Happy Spring and I look forward to hearing from you at [education-outreach@rmla.com](mailto:education-outreach@rmla.com)



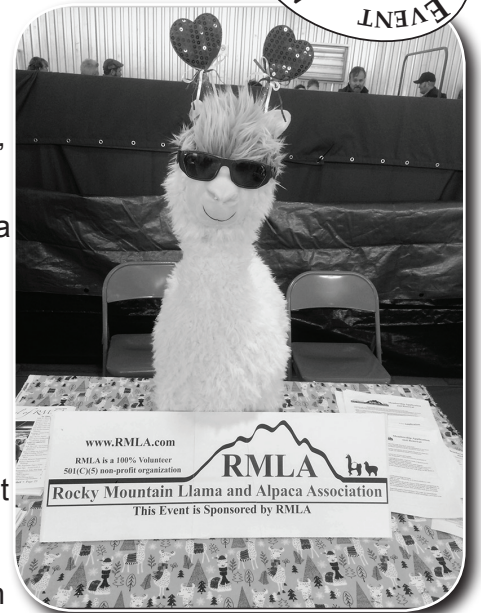


# PacaBuddies Spring Event

By Gary Jones – Silver J Ranch

PacaBuddies first Spring Event was held at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Castle Rock February 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> just before Valentine's day. Sponsored by and through RMLA we had a very successful event with a great attendance from the public. Due to the success of this event, we are planning on doing this event in the future.

The public got to experience the different products made from alpaca and llama fiber. We sell yarn rovings from our llamas. The public also got to see in person the difference between alpacas and llamas as we brought two of our alpaca girls as well as The Batman! Batman is our very proud llama who was not thrilled to be in attendance, but he was compensated with extra hay for his contributions over the duration of the PacaBuddies event.



RMLA had a very nice booth set up with RMLA Journals and RMLA Information to review and enjoy. Three of the participating ranches in the PacaBuddies group are RMLA members that proudly represented and spoke about llamas and RMLA.

PacaBuddies is planning on more events over the next few months leading up to our annual September PacaBuddies event held in Castle Rock at the Douglas County Fairgrounds. Thank you to all who participated, supported, visited, and most of all, thank you again to RMLA for sponsoring our PacaBuddies event.





# *Welcome!* **NEW RMLA Members** *and Thank You* RMLA IS ALWAYS GROWING

Alexa Metrick - Pack Animal Magazine -Renewed as a Life Member

Laura Thom .....Chaska MN  
 Ulrike Berg & Annemarie Algermissen .....Colorado Springs CO  
 Janet Anderson &  
 Jason Day-Mountain Desert Alpacas .....Nampa ID  
 Carolyn Wohlers.....Woodbury MN  
 Cheryl Pflipson.....Sauk Rapids MN  
 D & Joe Moll-Constellation Ranch LLC.....Kiowa CO  
 Barbara Mehta.....Woodbury MN  
 Julie Barden.....Victoria MN  
 Jenny &  
 Richard Mansheim-Natures-Acres .....Fort Madison IA  
 K & S Pothén.....Stillwater MN  
 Lynda Liptak-Southwest Llama Rescue .....Albuquerque NM  
 Shanda Griebel-Morris Animal Foundation... ..Denver CO  
 Julie Strohsack.....Waconia MN

NOTE: Before members under the age of 18 are listed on the website, 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 BY NAME page on the website. *Thank you*

**To Join or Renew your membership go to [RMLA.com](http://RMLA.com) and click on JOIN OR RENEW**

## **Postscript from the Journal Volunteers**

Here is a test: Go to the article “Large Llama Rescue Near Fairplay, Colorado”, find Figure 2, got it? Now there are two groups of llamas separated by a, hard to see, but a definite fence. Now here is the question: Can you tell which group is the males?.... and why? Send your answers to [rmlaeditor@gmail.com](mailto:rmlaeditor@gmail.com)

Marilyn,  
Kathy,  
Roni

*We are very excited to see many of you at the Conference on April 20!*

Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association  
5704 Canyon Trail  
Elizabeth, CO 80107-7814



# EVENTS CALENDAR

MARY WICKMAN, EVENTS CHAIR

For more details and live links, go to [www.RMLA.com](http://www.RMLA.com), select EVENTS and hover on the boxes.

- **April 20, 2019–RMLA We Are Better Together Educational Conference.** For RMLA members. Douglas County Fairgrounds Castle Rock, CO. Check the RMLA home page, [www.rmla.com](http://www.rmla.com), for all the details and to register!
- **April 27, 2019–Stars n Stripes, York County Fairgrounds, York, NE.** Contact Geri Rutledge, [buckshollow@wildblue.net](mailto:buckshollow@wildblue.net) or 402-366-9304. ALSA alpaca and llama halter and performance show in conjunction with the Midplains Fiber Fair.
- **June 21 and 22, 2019 – Llama Alpaca Camp, Waco NE.** Contact Geri Rutledge, [buckshollow@wildblue.net](mailto:buckshollow@wildblue.net) or 402-366-9304. RMLA hands-on educational event. Experience the joys of working with llamas and alpacas and their fiber.
- **September 21 & 22, 2019 – Higher Ground Fair Llama and Alpaca Performance and Fleece Shows.** Albany County Fairgrounds, Laramie, WY, Llama & Alpaca Performance and Fleece Shows, Llama & Alpaca Demonstrations - Contact Gayle Woodsum, [gayle@highergroundfair.org](mailto:gayle@highergroundfair.org) or 307-399-3815 or [www.HigherGroundFair.org](http://www.HigherGroundFair.org)

## SAVE THE DATES

- **July 27, 2019 – Fairplay Llama Event, Fairplay, CO.** Fun for everyone! Llama walk / races, Llama pack races, obstacle course for kids.
- **September 7 & 8, 2019 – PacaBuddies, Douglas County Fairgrounds, Castle Rock, CO** Alpacas, Llamas!, Fiber, products, seminars and demonstrations. See [www.pacabuddies.org](http://www.pacabuddies.org)
- **October 19 & 20, 2019 – Alpacas on the Rocks, Jefferson County Fairgrounds, Golden, CO.** Llamas, alpacas, seminars, demonstrations and vendors. For complete information, go to [www.alpacasontherocks.org](http://www.alpacasontherocks.org). To participate, contact Jane Levene at [jlevene@comcast.net](mailto:jlevene@comcast.net)