

# The Journal of RMLA



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## RMLA Recognizes Outstanding Youth Member

By Lougene Baird

RMLA congratulates RMLA Youth member, Morgan Barba, the recipient of a \$500 educational stipend. During the past year, Morgan has been involved as a volunteer with RMLA without missing a beat due to Covid. She continues to participate in RMLA activities. Morgan voluntarily contributes articles to the Journal. Morgan will continue to be the chair of the RMLA Facebook and Youth Committees while she is attending college.




*Morgan began working with Mason when he was just a month old. The bond these two have is very special and Morgan is looking forward to continuing her RMLA involvement as an adult.*

In her private life, Morgan has been with her animals, graduated from Prairie View High School with a 4.4 GPA and, because of her concurrent enrollment in college classes that she was able to complete from home during the pandemic, she enters college as a sophomore!

She is an active member of Adams County 4-H, recently serving as the Colorado State 4-H Vice President and President of the Adams County Members Council. Because of her leadership activities, Morgan was named this year's Outstanding 4-H Youth Leader at the June 4-H State Conference.

Morgan is attending Fort Hays State University (Hays, Kansas) and is studying agricultural business with an emphasis in agronomy.

Morgan said, "I have long enjoyed my participation in RMLA and appreciate the fact that the Journal staff is always willing to take my submissions no matter the topic. My animals helped keep me grounded during the last year and a half, especially my llamas Mason and Charlie."

Congratulations, Morgan! RMLA wishes you the very best in your future studies and thanks you for being an outstanding RMLA Youth member. 

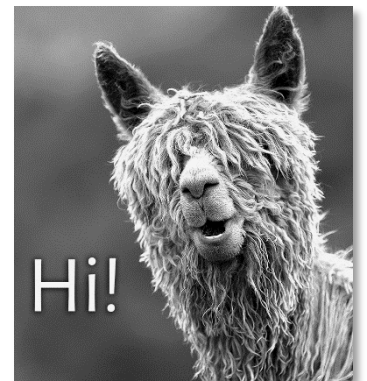
## NEW MEMBERS

### Welcome New Members!

RMLA is always growing! We welcome the following new members:

Josh & Elizabeth Robertson, Edgewood, NM  
 Catherine Collins, Parker, CO  
 Diane Bluhm, Heresy, MI  
 Nicholas Stone, Somerset, CA  
 Julie Testajewell, Berthoud, CO

Check the website, [rmla.com](http://rmla.com), for additional contact information.



## Board of Directors

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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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 Liaison Nancy Wilson

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 Liaison Sandy Schilling



## Journal Submission Dates, Ad Rates & 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 Rate	Non-Member
Business Card	3.5"x2	\$15	\$18
¼ page horiz.	7.5"x2"	\$24	\$36
¼ page vert.	3.5"x4.5"	\$24	\$36
1/3 page horiz.	7.5"x3"	\$35	\$48
1/3 page vert.	2.5"x10"	\$35	\$48
Half Page	7.5" x 5"	\$48	\$72
Full Page	7.5"x 10"	\$78	\$117
Two-page spread	15"x10"	\$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**.

### To submit articles, ad or photo:

- All submissions go to [rmlaeditor@gmail.com](mailto:rmlaeditor@gmail.com)
- Documents in MS Word format
- Camera ready ads as a pdf file
- Images/photos as .jpeg (.jpg) or .tiff files 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.

### Instructions for advertising payment:

Send your check, payable to RMLA, along with a copy of the ad to:

RMLA  
11483 Ponderosa Ln.  
Franktown CO 80116  
303-841- 5126

Payment and ad copy must be received prior to submission deadline. See the table above for dates.

Welcome to the new look and 'feel' of the RMLA Journal! What do you think?




While the look has changed, the content remains the same: great educational information for you and your llamas and alpacas.

Several members have stepped up to take a turn at volunteer positions. Check out the articles "Your New Librarian" and "Meet Sandra Schilling." And, see your "Board at Work." From the photos they really do work and have fun while doing it.

When was the last time you really looked at your trailer; yes, the one that transports your beloved animals? Maybe it is time. Read the great article "You and Your Trailer" for some specific guidance on where to look and what to notice.

This issue introduces Dr. Rachel Oman who is replacing Dr. Robert Callan as the lead veterinarian for our Ask the Vet column. We are very pleased that she agreed to take on this role to answer our questions.

And finally, yes, "Scout was on the Run, Again." This is a great rescue article and just as important is the information at the end of the article to remind us all that not everyone knows how to catch a llama or alpaca. There is a website for lessons! Please share the link with your veterinarian and public officials. 

**Cover Photo Credit:** Susi Hülsmeier -- Oana Murry being tickled by Diego as he takes snacks out of her hand. Below: Emma & Candido on a walk.





## President's Report

As we begin a new RMLA year with a new Board, it is like a fresh new beginning for how the Board works and how members chip in to work alongside the Board.

A group of your Board was able to have a face-to-face meeting September 1. We met at a delicious diner in Dewey, AZ. Those present were Linda Hayes, Nancy Wilson, Sandy Schilling, and I. We all regret that Geri was not able to travel from Nebraska to be with us, but we had the next best thing; we had her comments for the meeting.



It is a rare occasion to have a face-to-face as most Directors have lived in far-flung places. We discussed who would likely fill which offices of the Executive Committee; they are elected at the first meeting after the Annual Meeting and who will be Liaison to which Committees. Additionally, we discussed the future and direction of RMLA. I brought along my laptop and we had a soft opening of the new RMLA.com. We believe the membership will have a fabulous new website and that it is beautiful – coming soon!

RMLA was founded in Colorado. This is the first time in the history of RMLA that the Board does not have a Director from Colorado. There was no Colorado member who chose to run for the Board. But do not worry, this new Board will work solidly to direct RMLA into the future with strong goals and great volunteer work. We just happen to live in different places now.


RMLA needs a new Committee Chair and hopes Colorado members or those from other states will commit to fill this open position. Please consider becoming Chair of the Pack Committee. We need new energy to bring fresh ideas to this most important committee. The old timers are really getting old and becoming tired of doing all the work; have you noticed?

The Annual Meeting was good. If you were not able to attend, you will be able to review the minutes in the next few weeks as they will be posted on RMLA.com for your review. This year's minutes will be approved by the members attending next year's Annual Meeting – time and date to be published next summer.

RMLA is nothing without its members. Nothing but a name and a beautiful website. So, let's make RMLA something. Please volunteer! Find places to volunteer that make you feel good because you are passionate about this organization, and you care. Trust me, you will enjoy volunteering.

I appreciate you and thank you for your support of RMLA,

Lougene



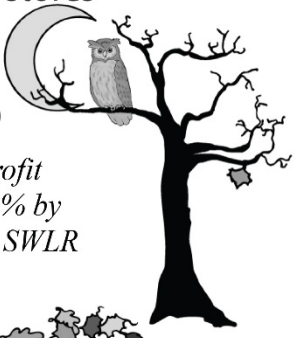
# Truly Amazing

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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**NEW MEMBER**

## Meet Sandra Schilling



Sandra is a new RMLA member as of this Spring. She jumped right in and decided to get busy on the RMLA Board.

Having just retired as Assistant Finance Director with the City of Phoenix, she moved permanently to the farm she owned in Chino Valley north of Prescott. Sandy's passions are her family, her animals and her Iris flowers she received from her grandmother twenty years ago.

If she is not gardening, she is having fun with her four alpaca girls, three dogs, two potbellied pigs, three Nigerian dwarf goats and four Lamancha kid goats. And, she finally has her own barn!

Besides being elected to the Board, Sandy has also volunteered to chair the RMLA Constant Contact Committee and the Membership Committee.

Welcome aboard, Sandy! We love your energy and enthusiasm. 🐫

**INTRODUCING...**

## Your New Librarian

By Sandy Lockwood  
Chair, RMLA Library Committee



Hi, everyone. I am Sandy Lockwood and was recently appointed RMLA librarian. The Library was packed up by Jeanne Williams with help from her friends. Thank you, Jeanne! The library was delivered by UPS and was in good shape.

Everything has been placed on shelves. If you wish to borrow something, please contact me at [rmlalibrary3@gmail.com](mailto:rmlalibrary3@gmail.com).

*Note from the Board:*

We are so happy to have a new home for our educational and historical library. Thank you, Sandy.

An advertisement for el Zorro Colorado Alpacas. The logo features a large, stylized red and black 'Z' with the words 'el Zorro' and 'Colorado' written in red script. Below the 'Z' are silhouettes of three alpacas in different colors. The text 'Alpacas' is written in a bold, black font below the silhouettes. To the right of the logo, the contact information for Ron Hinds and Elizabeth Cline is listed: 5704 Canyon Trail, Elizabeth, CO 80107, 303-646-1320, and Cell 303-999-6103. Below the contact information, the slogan 'WHERE QUALITY, COLOR AND PERSONALITIES ARE BLENDED WITH PRECISION.' is written in a red, stylized font. At the bottom of the advertisement, the services offered are listed: 'BREEDING - HEALTH - Caring Boarding - Fiber and Antlers' and the website 'www.elZorroColorado.com' with the email 'alpacas@elzorroc Colorado.com'.



# Llama Lunacy July 2021

By Mary Wickman  
Woodland Park, CO

Llama Lunacy is held annually in conjunction with Llama Rama (llama race and activities to help promote organ donations) and Burro Days in Fairplay, Colorado. Llama Lunacy is an obstacle course set up to give children and adults, a chance to have hands on experience with llamas.

The weather was great for a llama event, cloud cover and around 65 degrees. This year Julie Bullock, events Director for the Town of Fairplay, let us use the street for the event. Bonus, we did not have to haul everything to the course location. I met up with the great volunteers Diane Turner, Jim Roller, Susanne Roller, Dalton Roller, and Bridger Roller to get the course set up.



Duke (llama) and Dalton Roller taking a child through obstacle course



Playboy

We were worried that people may not find us in our new location. As it turned out, people were lining up before we were finished setting up. We had 105 children and around 20 adults go through the course. The llamas did great, doing the obstacles and keeping everyone safe. One boy spent most of the day hanging out with us. He even helped with taking obstacles down and taking the llamas back to the trailer. He stated that his parents said as soon as they can get a barn built he could have some llamas or alpacas. This is one of those activities that can leave a lasting memory in a child's life.

Thanks to Silver Scoop of Fairplay. Each child going through the course was given a coupon for a free ice cream cone from their shop.

Thanks to the great volunteers; we could not have done this without your help. Julie Bullock, and The Town of Fairplay were wonderful in every way and they provided us a fantastic place for this event. Thanks to RMLA for sponsoring us and supplying us with insurance. A personal thanks to Fred Huggins and Taylor for letting us use Playboy and Danny. 🐫🐫



Danny



# Balance, Physics and Animal Handling

By Marty McGee Bennett  
CAMELIDynamics.com

You can't read very much about CAMELIDynamics without running across the word balance. Balance is really the key to success in working with animals without force. Llamas and alpacas are shy, afraid of what they haven't experienced before and are inherently worried about groups of humans. For all of these reasons empowering the animal any time you can possibly do it will go a long way towards quieting flight/fight responses. As a young woman heading to college, my dream was to become a veterinarian. Alas, physics and I didn't get along and that one bad grade torpedoed my chances of a career as a veterinarian. Ironically as a teacher of animal handling, I find myself teaching...physics! Effective animal handling is largely a matter of using and understanding leverage, balance and center of mass. By way of review...

**Center of Gravity or Mass:** The single point inside a body where all is balanced. To achieve balance, this center of mass must be inside (over) the area created by the supports (feet) on the ground. This center is created by a camelid's four feet touching the ground. When the force of one or more of the animal's four feet (supports) are changed, balance is shifted.

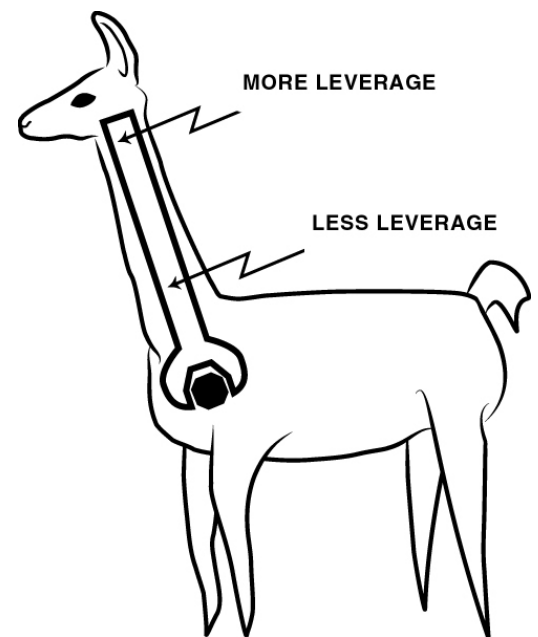
**Leverage:** Any method that creates mechanical advantage. A teeter-totter is a lever. If one arm of the teeter-totter is longer than the other, then the long arm can balance the short arm with less force applied.

Maximum leverage is achieved when one applies any force at the maximum distance from the center of mass. The further from the center of mass/gravity that you apply force, the more leverage you have over that entity - just as a long pole and a rock (the fulcrum) allows you to lift a heavy object or a longer wrench works to unstick a stubborn bolt.

**Balance:** The parts of the body that are the farthest from the center of mass are the parts of the body that will offer you the most leverage should you gain control of them. A camelid's center of mass is inside the rib cage near the heart. Therefore, pushing or pulling on parts farthest away from this center will most affect the balance of the animal.

Animals instinctively know where and how they are the most vulnerable. It is no coincidence that camelids are the most sensitive around the tail, feet and head. These are the parts of the body farthest away from the center of mass which offer a predator the most leverage over their balance and therefore their life. There are lots of theories about why camelids are more head-shy than other domestic species that typically wear a halter such as horses, mules and donkeys. Based on the laws of physics I believe it has a lot to do with their longer necks. The long neck means gaining control of the head offers a LOT of leverage and feels really scary. Use a camelid's head to take his body out of balance and you make yourself a threat.

Camelids are extremely vulnerable to control of the head because it is just that much farther from their center of mass. For this same reason I think it is dangerous to restrain a camelid solely by tying the head, particularly if the animal is frightened or unaccustomed to being tied. Based on its different anatomy, a wildly struggling llama or alpaca tied by the head is much more vulnerable to injury than a horse.







*The Handler is not helping the animal stay in balance and the animal will move or jump because he is out of balance.*

My original camelid coach, way back when, instructed me to avoid touching the head, particularly the mouth, because according to him all llamas didn't like it. For the first 5 years that I owned llamas way back in the early 80's, I did everything in my power to avoid touching the mouth. The fact is though that we must handle the head and the mouth. First, if you are going to lead an animal effectively, you need the leverage afforded by the head and so we must halter our animals. Second, you must work with your animal's head on a regular basis for herd management. Among other things you need to check the teeth, administer paste wormer, and perhaps apply medications topically. By handling an animal's head responsibly, you demonstrate that you are both powerful AND trustworthy.

Most people who get their hands on a llama or alpaca's head use it for restraint. If the handler holds the head in an attempt to hold the animal still, the result is that the animal will attempt to escape by throwing the body around. In this case the long neck works to the animal's advantage. You can make a huge shift in the way your camelids perceive you and the threat level you represent by simply working in a confined area and using the head to help the animal **keep** his balance.

To do this you re-position the head in line with the neck, the neck in line with the body and the body over the feet. This requires that you look at the whole animal as you work and move the head into alignment in more or less a continual fashion using small shifts. The sooner you correct and the smaller the correction, the safer the animal feels with you at the helm so to speak.

Like anything, balance gets easier when you practice. When you are new at it, make sure you use the very top of the neck using a catch rope, the bracelet technique or practice with an animal that is haltered. Work in a small space, perhaps half a catch pen (9' x 4-5' or so.) As you get more consistent about using the head to keep the animal in balance, your animal will learn to remain in balance more consistently and the whole exercise gets easier for both of you.



*Now the handler is helping the animal stay still by keeping the animal in balance.*

### **What follows is a list of things that affect your ability to help an animal keep his balance:**

- Remember that half of the equation is YOU keeping your own balance. You CANNOT help an animal regain or keep his balance if you are not in balance yourself. Maintaining an athletic stance and keeping your weight over your feet is key to keeping your balance. Simply... If you reach out to do something with your left hand, move forward with your left foot.
- Breathing...are you holding your breath? Many of us do this unconsciously. If you are holding your breath, you are holding. Take slow, deep breaths. Repeat and check yourself repeatedly.
- Yoga, Pilates or any of the martial arts will help you understand and be more in control of your balance. These disciplines along with animal handling will help keep you young!
- If you are new at balancing an animal, working in a confined area with other animals in a properly packed pen will make balancing easier and help you do a better job.

- Believe your animal when he/she tells you that you are holding! Regardless of how talented you are at balancing, some animals will rear or jump away. So how do you know if it is you causing the reaction by holding OR the animal being reactive? The answer is in the number of jumps. An animal will not jump 3-4 times to get away unless you are holding. As an example, you are leading an animal and the animal spooks, if you drop back to the end of your lead and give the animal as much line as you can, the animal will jump once, possibly twice and stop (this is why I invented the ultimate lead which is long enough so that you can offer a lot of line). If you lower your center and hold tight on the rope (which is the standard advice), the animal will rear and plunge several times, once to get away from whatever startled him and 3 or 4 MORE times because you are holding him.
- Helping an animal keep his balance is all about short twitch muscle reactions. The handler offers a quick preempting response when the animal just begins to shift his balance, followed immediately by a short and complete release of pressure and the resumption of neutral contact. Good reflexes are a huge help with this. We all can't have lightning-fast reflexes, so the way to compensate is to PAY ATTENTION! I can't tell you the number of times I have observed handlers in the ring or people trimming toenails who are absolutely NOT present. The animal knows when you are not paying attention and will choose that moment to move. You must pay attention!
- One corollary to the previous point: keep your hands light and open. Whether or not you have your hands on a lead rope, handler helper or are using the bracelet to balance an animal, a lighter connection is better. Once you tighten and close your hands or flex your biceps and keep them flexed, two things happen: the animal feels that your intention is to hold and will become nervous and therefore will be more likely to react AND you will not be able to feel the animal's small movements. If you can't feel the small movements, i.e. small shifts in balance, then you will have big movements to deal with such as rearing, jumping, and tossing.

**PRACTICE! Use training aids to learn. These clinic participants are practicing with the pipes of preemption.**



*This is an inexpensive training aid you can make to practice your balancing skills. It is an 8-foot very lightweight PVC pipe, with some foam pipe insulation attached with duct tape.*



*Balancing this pipe on uneven ground simulates very nicely the lightness one must cultivate to balance an animal from the top of the neck or the head.*



## Ask the CSU Vet Team

Rachel Oman, DVM, Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital

*Editor's Note:* We welcome Dr. Rachel Oman who has agreed to lead our Ask the Vet column since Dr. Callan's retirement. Thank you, Dr. Oman.

Greetings! My name is Rachel Oman. I joined the Livestock Medicine faculty at Colorado State University in December of 2020. I am originally from New Mexico and attended veterinary school at CSU. After graduation, I followed my passion for livestock medicine and teaching by completing an internship and residency in large animal internal medicine residency at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

From there, I joined the Food Animal Medicine and Surgery faculty at the University of Missouri. There I taught senior veterinary students in the veterinary teaching hospital and as an ambulatory clinician. Working in the Midwest was very exciting and gave me a chance to treat many of the conditions that I only read about in vet school like meningeal worm, and anaplasmosis. I enjoy working with llamas and alpacas and find the challenges of treating metabolic diseases and neonatal septicemia particularly rewarding. When I am not working, I enjoy spending time outdoors gardening with my backyard hens and running with my dogs. I am pleased to be back in Colorado and look forward to working with you.

### Question: Do camelids get dementia?

The short answer to this question is that we do not know. There are no reports of dementia or cognitive decline specifically in llamas or alpacas. We may find some clues to this quandary by looking at research done in humans and canines. Generally speaking, there are certain characteristic changes that occur in mammalian brains as we age. Assuming that camelids exhibit some of the same changes, it is reasonable to think that they could suffer from dementia. However, we don't yet have any scientific evidence to support this assumption.

Canine cognitive disorder is a relatively recently described dementia-like condition in dogs. In dogs, there are validated checklists of behavioral changes that can help veterinarians make this diagnosis. No such list exists for camelids and we must be cautious about making a diagnosis based on work done in other species.

If you observe unusual behaviors or changes in attitude and energy level in your llama or alpaca, you should seek veterinary advice to help rule out a serious medical problem. Your veterinarian may want to perform bloodwork or advanced imaging (x-rays, ultrasound, CT, etc.) to help rule out other causes of the abnormal behavior such as metabolic or electrolyte abnormalities, infections like tooth root abscesses or ear infections, or cancer. In dogs, dementia is often a diagnosis by exclusion meaning we diagnose dementia by ruling out every other cause of the clinical signs. If after a complete workup you don't identify an underlying cause for the behavior changes, it may be possible that age-related cognitive dysfunction is involved. At this time, we just don't have enough information to know for sure.



Dr. Rachel Oman and her Buff Orpington HEN, Midge.



### **Question: My alpaca has white discharge in its eye. What could be causing this?**


Eye problems are quite common in llamas and alpacas. With large prominent eyes, camelids are prone to injuring their eyes. They can also suffer from infections, foreign bodies like grass seeds, congenital malformations like imperforate nasolacrimal ducts (blocked tear ducts), allergies, eyelid lacerations, and even neoplasia (cancer) just to name a few ocular maladies. With so many possibilities, it is difficult to impossible for a veterinarian to determine the correct diagnosis and appropriate treatment without examining the animal.

Excessive ocular discharge, whether it is clear, white, or colored, is reason for concern and should prompt a visit with your veterinarian. Other common signs that your llama or alpaca may have a problem with its eye and needs to be seen by a veterinarian include squinting in the light, avoiding bright sunlight or wind, a cloudy appearance to the eye, discolored areas of pigment or blood on the eye, and raised lumps or bumps on or around the eye, especially if they tend to crack and bleed. Sometimes you may notice just one of these signs, but they can also occur together. Generally speaking, the sooner you get your animal evaluated and on the appropriate treatment, the better the outcome will be.

When you take your animal to a veterinarian because of a problem with the eye, your vet will do a physical exam to check on the overall systemic health of your animal as well as doing a more in-depth exam of the eye. Often this will involve putting a special stain in the eye that helps identify ulcers on the surface of the globe. It can also help determine if there is a blockage of the tear duct as the stain should also be visible inside the nostril on the same side of the face. Your veterinarian may also use a special magnifying light to look at the structures within the globe itself and take a swab to check for infectious organisms. If there are any raised mass-like lesions, they may recommend a biopsy to rule out cancer. Each case is different, and the process will vary accordingly. The important thing is to get the animal evaluated by a veterinarian before starting any treatment. If you have eye ointment or drops left over from another animal or even from a previous eye problem in the same animal, using them without consulting your veterinarian first may cause more harm than good.

If you can't get your animal to the vet right away or are trying to decide if the problem warrants a trip to the vet, there are some simple things you can try at home. For your safety and that of your camelid, good restraint and an able helper is usually necessary. Infected and injured eyes are usually very painful, and your animal may not tolerate much of an at-home exam. That said, if possible, wipe away any discharge around the eye with a soft cloth dipped in water. Gently pull back the eyelids (easier said than done!) and look for any objects like seeds, dirt, or hairs that could be irritating the eye. If you see something, you can try to gently rinse it away with a saline solution for eyes, which you can get at your local drug store. Even if you are able to rinse away a foreign body, there is still a good chance that your animal could have an ulcer on its cornea or a secondary infection that will require further treatment from your veterinarian.

The takeaway lesson here is that eyes are complicated. Ophthalmology is a veterinary specialty all by itself! There are many different problems (foreign body, bacterial infection, fungal infection, allergy, cancer, etc.) that can cause similar signs like white discharge. Getting your animal evaluated by a veterinarian as soon as you notice a problem with its eye is the safest way to get your llama or alpaca feeling better quickly.

**Have a question for the vets?** Please send it to Ask the Vet at [rmlaeditor@gmail.com](mailto:rmlaeditor@gmail.com). We will try to answer in an upcoming column. The purpose of this column is to provide veterinary information to our members. It should not replace getting your animal to your vet for evaluation and treatment. 

## Of Change and Silver Linings

Susi Huelsmeyer-Sinay  
www.yellowstonellamas.com

Nobody likes change. But change came to most of us with the unexpected arrival of a pandemic. My personal life change occurred for different reasons though it certainly had a connection to what we all have experienced collectively in one way or another over the last 18 months. In September 2020, while saying my last good-byes to my dear dad at his hospital bed in Germany, a fire raged near my home in Montana. My llamas and cats were evacuated and valuables were hastily taken to a safe place while I tried to come to terms with the tragedy of losing a beloved parent.

Returning to Montana a few weeks later, thankfully to a still standing house and after having recovered my animals, I went through the final steps of selling our wildlife tour business that my husband and I had owned for decades. The business had barely made it through the downturn in tourism and it was time to sell and recover what was left after repaying Covid-related loans. Unexpectedly, things went awry with the buyers; I was laid-off and found myself suddenly unemployed at Christmas. My world had seriously been turned upside down. Why was this happening? There certainly was no silver lining in any of this!



While I slowly worked through the darkness of grief, struggling for a hold on a new reality, my llamas still stood at the gate every morning waiting for their hay. Waiting for me. Depending on me. Their expectations were much more basic than mine. Their solid presence and reminder of something steady and familiar in my life eventually got through to my injured soul. My llamas had always been the silver lining in my life, so why not now? Why not look to them to help me accept the events that had suddenly invaded my life and, most of all, find a way to provide hay and vet care for them.

I had excluded Yellowstone Llamas, my trekking business with a concessions permit in Yellowstone National Park, from the sale. Because it had been closely tied to the main company, it did not have its own website or insurance. Therefore, the first order of business was to create a new website and try to get going for another season of llama trekking. But restarting this business was a scary proposition for an unemployed, mentally exhausted, not-so-young-anymore person. Would this investment pay off? I had no choice; the llamas needed to be put to work again. And so did I. After weeks of creating web contents and compiling photos, interrupted often by bouts of doubt and anxiety, the new website finally entered the world of Google and soared! A new insurance policy was negotiated, signed and paid for. We were on!

As the silver lining started to grow into a hopeful sunrise, a new plan was born: I would offer llama day hikes. I figured that the newly unleashed tourists might go for day adventures more than the multi-day excursions that I had offered in the past. The llamas and I are getting older and we value our beds at home at the end of the day. We


started offering picnic day hikes. After months of winter solitude and spring worry, we emerged into early summer, hoping for the best.

And then it happened! Bookings started to come in. The llama day hikes were a hit! We created picnic treks on favorite trails in Yellowstone National Park, away from the crowds. I found a reliable local provider of tasty lunches made with organic, sustainable food in compostable packaging. The llamas charmed the hikers, mostly families with kids. Some arrived with young children and did not care to hike, but really wanted to meet the llamas. So, the Farm Visit entered the scene! The llamas brought so much joy to little kids and their parents. I set up an educational station with raw llama fleece and finished wool skeins, as well as pack saddle systems to touch. There are little bags with llama fleece samples to take home. Friendly llamas can be hugged, led around and fed snacks.

In short, the summer brought us what we needed. The universe gave us renewed confidence that there is always a way. Grief will demand its time, unjust treatment may reset priorities and despair may impact confidence. A silver lining may be hard to find, but – guess what? - it may be waiting patiently by the gate! I know we all suffered and we all had to readjust. In my case, my llamas kept me going and I found a path to a lifestyle that nicely fits our changed circumstances. The income produced is sufficient to buy the pricey hay this year, cover vet bills, the cost of website development, insurance and concession fees, as well as repairs on an aging towing vehicle.



The future may bring us more customers or more ideas. Or more changes. The llamas, of course, take it all in stride and continue to be my teachers. They know the secret to always walking on the bright side of life and do what they do best: ruminate, spit and don't worry!

Let's go llamas! 

## FEATURED ARTICLE

### Scout Was on the Run, Again

By Lynda Liptak and Robin Benton  
Southwest Llama Rescue

Scout was the name given to one of the intact males that was included in our recent Jefferson, Colorado llama roundup. (See articles in Spring 2019 and Fall 2019 Journals). There were 12 wild males (out of 24) living on a large ranch (160 + acres) that were gathered up in June and rehomed or placed in temporary foster care with a Southwest Llama Rescue volunteer.

This is not an easy or simple effort and requires experienced llama handlers and a strong coordination among the team. We were lucky to have caught these llamas in two days. Day one: create the corral that can contain 24 jumping males. Day 2: manage to herd them into the corral, sort out half of them and load those scared llamas into the trailers. Seven of the twelve went to a temporary foster facility only about 55 miles away in Divide, CO. Scout was one of those seven, but was the only one who was still intact in that group.

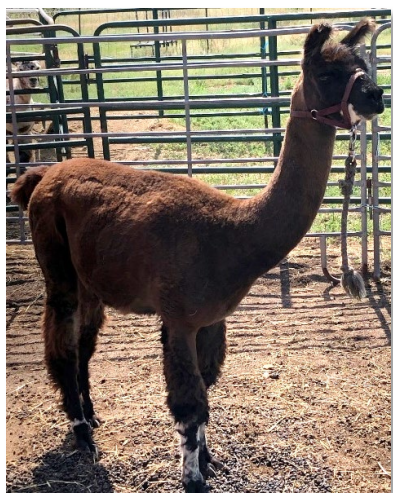




This is a story about Scout and his companions that moved to Divide. Scout is a beautiful rich brown color and had never been sheared!

A side note: The other five younger males were driven to New Mexico and were placed in their forever homes as soon as they arrived in Albuquerque. They are all adjusting well to their new homes with other young male llamas to run with and are getting along great.

As is typical of wild llama round ups on large properties, the ages of the llamas were not known -- other than an estimate; if they were gelded, they were at least seven years old, and if they were intact, they would have been born on the ranch, making them younger. So, we deduced Scout was younger than 7. Of course, with wild llamas, it was not easy to tell if they were gelded or not until they are sheared or handled.



*Scout after shearing.*

It was the decision of the foster care to have all seven males sheared the following morning of their arrival. This was to be their first experience being handled by people and we were very concerned about how this would affect their adjustment and trust in people. But the decision was ultimately that of the foster parent who was planning to also halter and lead train anyway and the deficit of trust would have to be regained by them. The shearing commenced with professional shearers using the tie and stretch on the floor method which is quick but still not without trauma and stress. The early shearing did reveal some very thin llamas under heavy coats that had never been shorn before. Nails were not an issue since their home turf was great for keeping them down. Fighting teeth trimming was not part of this as that would have likely required medication, which was not used.

This is good background for what happened with Scout a couple of days later. The shearers were called back to adjust the halters that were too loose. It was another rough-handle situation that was done inside the barn. One can imagine what the llamas are thinking given how they are handled every time they go in the barn.

On day three, our foster parent was working hard to manage the ranch and the new llamas and was going about the business of feeding and working around the yard. Scout typically appeared relaxed with his companions, but that day decided to leap over the panels (and another fence or two) and ran off into the pasture where the females and a gelded male (their guardian) were frequently grazing on over 50 lush acres. This should have been expected once Scout observed the females come and go a couple of times. A 5-foot panel and fence are not much of a deterrent to an intact agile young male.

Our assumption was that if the females were brought back in, Scout would return. A month passed and the foster parent spent many hours looking for him on the 100-acre property. The ATV may have scared him off. There was plenty of food and water for a smart wild llama like Scout and he had no need to return to the corrals and barn. We hoped that he was not on the highway somewhere, caught by the 15" lead attached to his halter and immobilized, or fallen by a mountain lion or other predator.

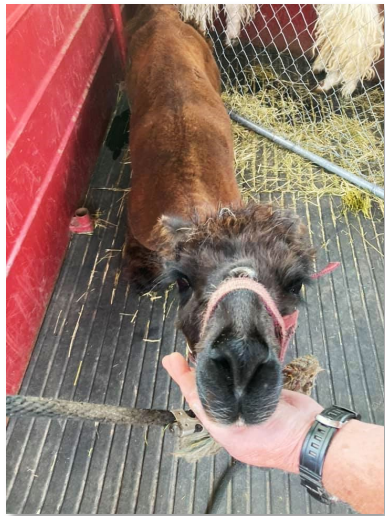
Then, a Facebook message came to our foster parent that a llama was spotted about 3 miles west of the foster home and not far from the highway. Maybe he was working his way back home. A party of 10 people led by the foster parent included the local animal control and some friends to catch Scout again. SWLR was not contacted until two attempts were made that weekend to no avail.

Lynda Liptak got the call that it was just too much and the stress of running around trying to pick up Scout could possibly cause someone a heart attack. So, it was left up to SWLR and the professionals to recover Scout. Again, we were dealing with a wide-open area – this time hundreds of open acreage, and a wild llama with all he needed, except companionship.

Lynda was indisposed in Albuquerque so she contacted Robin Benton in Monument, Colorado to request her help in getting Scout back and to lead his rescue. Robin and Lynda also reached out to Stage Stop Llamas for a female bait llama to use to interest Scout into approaching. Jeff Rucker of Stage Stop Llamas was very kind to help out and brought a female llama; Robin brought her male llama and Bailey from a nearby 4-H club also came to assist.

Along with Trixie and the other great folks at Teller County Animal Control, Jeff, Robin, Bailey, and a pair of llamas, they headed out into the field where Scout was seen. Scout took one look at the pair of llamas, called out an alarm, and ran up into the trees and hid. So much for that idea. Animal control left since they were discouraged from driving out to him on their ATVs and did not have the time to wait him out. Jeff left with his female llama since that did not seem to work. So, Robin and Bailey were the last ones standing.

Robin opted that they sit down in the shade of a tree and see what might happen. Her male llama, Obe, was in the old dilapidated corral within sight, hanging out calmly. But within about 40 minutes, Scout came charging out of the trees and made a straight line for Obe right into the corral to perform a male challenge posturing. Robin and Bailey quickly sealed the corral and got Obe to safety. Fantastic! In less than an hour, Scout was trailered up with the help of animal control



*Scout, trailered, after his runaway and second rescue heading to Robin's.*

To the credit of Robin’s tremendous awareness of llama behavior, Scout was finally recovered. And, due to her generosity, and patience, Scout is now fostered at Robin’s with doubled fencing and then six foot high panels to domesticate him, build some trust, and eventually find him the right home. Scout has become a very sweet llama and can be gently handled. Scout is very attentive and curious, and is going to be very trainable. He does seem a bit traumatized around his neck and head, probably from the rough shearing and the halter discomfort from a poor fit for about a month. He will allow Robin to walk right up to him and to touch his withers freely. We hope that he will soon be adopted along with a couple of his buddies from his herd so that he can feel safe and comfortable.

Southwest Llama Rescue is a 501(c)3 and has several llamas that are needing qualified homes. Please help us with homes, donations, assistance. We are all volunteers looking out for quality of life for all llamas.

Loose llamas and alpacas pose a safety concern for themselves and the public. The general public, animal control people, wildlife departments, sheriffs and police officers often do not know how to approach or catch a loose llama or alpaca.

A website has been created just for these instances. On this website are instructions and videos on how to approach, make a temporary catch pen, move them to the desired location and much, much more!

Visit website: [www.HowToCatchAllama.com](http://www.HowToCatchAllama.com)

Please share this website with your local officials and veterinarians. Thank you. 

## FEATURED ARTICLE

### You and Your Trailer

Reprinted from LANA 2021 Summer Newsletter  
By Llama Association of North America

*For many, the show season is in full-swing and our llamas are moving to and from, here and there, with hardly a care in the world. For others, the beckoning wild blue yonder is calling us and our llamas, and after a long, hard winter, many are getting ready for that first of many road trips with animals quite literally in tow. With that in mind, it's time to think SAFETY, and so, below, please find the following article written in 1997 by Gerrit Rietveld, Animal Care Inspector/OMAF, and posted on the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs website. Just change the word "horse" to fit the creatures of your choice (mine is "llama"). - Gary Kaufman*

Most horse people are very conscientious when it comes to the training, care and maintenance of their horses; but are they as meticulous when it comes to ensuring that their horses arrive at the show safely? Transporting horses can be a very traumatic and potentially dangerous experience for both the horse and owner if some practical steps for care and consideration are ignored.

Follow these steps to make sure your show day is a success from the start to finish.

#### Animal Welfare

Asking a horse to enter an unfamiliar, cave-like structure instinctively tells him that danger must surely lurk ahead, and he should not enter. Spending a few hours a week prior to transport can overcome this fear and result in a horse and handler that are much more relaxed during the trip. A calm horse will perform better than one which has had a distressing trip on the way to a show. Tip: Often "spooky" horses will feel more confident traveling with a partner. Suspending a hay net (within reach, but not too close for entanglement) for the traveling horse will provide him with a nourishing distraction for a longer trip.

The interior of the trailer should be free of any projections or holes which may cause an injury to the horses, as they are often moved about involuntarily during transportation. Partitions, breast and tail bars should be padded for the comfort of the animal of the horses.

Reluctant horses may load easier in a trailer which has a lightly colored interior, rather than one which is dark. Battery-operated interior lights are a good idea and can be obtained at minimal cost.

It may also be advisable to check the insurance policy (if you have one) or your horses to determine if they are covered while in transit.





## Suitability of the Trailer

Trailers come in many shapes and sizes. Select a trailer to suit the type of horse it was designed to carry. Larger or heavier horses must be transported in a trailer which affords them adequate head room and stall length and width. Tip: Carry all buckets, forks, shoes, etc. in a compartment separate from the horses.



### Points to Consider

**Undercarriage:** Check closely each year prior to use for cracks in frame, axle brackets, excessive rusting of components, etc. ALWAYS check, clean and repack wheel bearings twice a season. Replace the seals and any other worn parts. Tip: Carry along a replacement bearing and tools to install it.

**Floorboards:** Over time, whether a trailer is used regularly or sitting idle, floor boards deteriorate to the extent that they can pose a very real threat to the safety of the horses on board. Floorboards should be replaced if they show signs of deterioration. Hardwoods, such as oak, are a good choice for replacement. Tip: If a screwdriver or a pocketknife can easily be pushed into the boards more than a quarter of an inch, consider replacing the boards. It is also suggested, as an added measure of insurance, to tack-weld a sheet of expanded metal fabric to the frame of the trailer before installing the floorboards. Rubber matting installed over the boards will help to extend the life of the boards and provide better footing for the horses. Tip: Always provide bedding to absorb moisture. Clean the trailer upon arrival at your destination.

**Doors and Ramps:** Regularly lubricate all hinges and latches to prolong their life. Check these prior to departure to ensure they are functioning properly.

**Brakes:** Some trailers are fitted with their own braking system, others are not. It is not advisable to disconnect trailer brakes, as it is better to have the trailer braking the truck than to have the truck providing all the stopping power for the trailer, potentially causing a “jack-knife” in the event of an emergency stop. Ensure that the brake controller is properly adjusted and maintained. It should not “lock up,” and it should release freely. Tip: Adjust to suit change in the seasons; i.e. summer/winter.

**Tires:** Tires should be well matched, properly inflated, and be in good condition. As trailers are often parked for long periods of time, the tires may show good tread, but the sidewalls should be checked regularly for cracking. Tip: Ensure that the spare is in good condition and full of air. Also ensure that all the tools are available to change the tire. A “roll-up block” is a handy alternative to a jack system for two-axle units. Simply roll the good tire (next to its flat mate) up on the block, suspending the flat tire in the air.

**Hitch:** Does it lock securely? Are the safety chains heavy enough, well-fastened and in good condition to hold the trailer in an emergency? Nothing less than a two-inch ball should be used. CHECK YOUR RECEIVER for missing or loose mounting bolts, cracked welds, or cracks or sagging receiver assemblies.

**Lights:** Check all lights prior to departure. Other drivers require ample warning of a trailer stopping or turning. It is crucial that running lights are functioning properly, as often a portion of the journey may be made at night.


**Emergency Kit:** An emergency kit should include: - Two flashlights with extra batteries (may be used as tail light if trailer lights fail) - Lead ropes for each horse - A 100-foot length of rope - Flares - Red warning triangle - Jack for trailer or “roll-up block” - Electrical tape - Duct tape - WD-40 - Stockman’s knife - Blocks to stabilize a stationary

trailer - Two well-stocked first-aid kits (humans/horses) - Extra blankets - Food - Change for a pay phone (cell phone charger or battery pack)

**Tow Vehicle:** The vehicle chosen to pull the trailer must be appropriate. A well-mated truck and trailer combination will have the trailer riding level to reduce strain on horses' legs during transit. A good towing vehicle for a two-, four-, or six-horse trailer should be equipped with: - Heavy-duty suspension - Good quality brakes in good repair - Transmission cooler - Heavy-duty radiator - Good quality tires - Dual gas tanks (or supplementary tank in the back) - Cell phone with emergency numbers list - Current registration and license and insurance And finally ...

Become familiar with backing and driving the trailer when it is empty. Be aware that a trailer containing two 1100 lb. horses does not handle like an empty trailer. Tip: Place a glass of water on the dashboard of the truck and try not to spill a drop while you are driving. This will encourage smooth starts, stops, and corners which your horse will appreciate. Plan your route before leaving to select the way with the least amount of traffic, starts/stops and sharp corners. Perform a "circle-check" each time the trailer leaves the farm to ensure that lights, brakes, hitch, safety chains, etc. are in good working order and the doors are securely closed.

Reprinted from a 2010 LANA newsletter.

Many of us are getting back on the road and attending shows, hikes, and events. Please make sure your trailer is safe for you and your loved ones. 

## FEATURED ARTICLE

### Gift of Appreciation for Dr. Callan

RMLA presented this beautiful statute by Henry Rivera to Dr. Callan upon his retirement from the Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital in appreciation for his willingness to help the camelid community. During his years at CSU, Dr. Callan provided accurate and timely advice to all camelid owners.

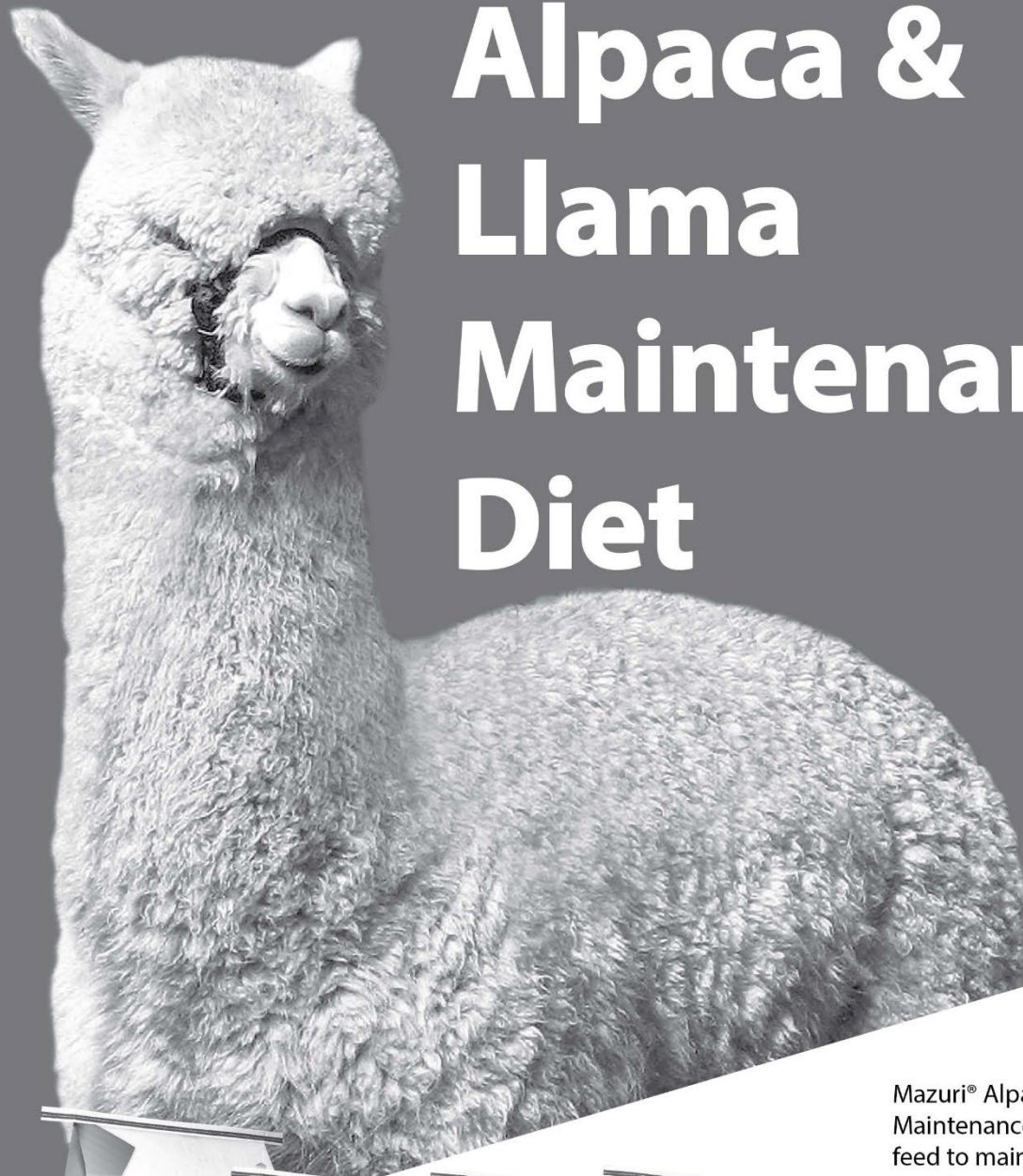
An engraved plaque will read: Dr. Callan—In appreciation for your dedication to camelids—Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association.

Sculpture by Henry Rivera, [RiveraSculptures@gmail.com](mailto:RiveraSculptures@gmail.com). 

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# A Tribute to Two Llamas

By Sandy Lockwood  
Lockwood Dreamstar Llamas

Yinyang was born on May 9, 2002 at 5 a.m. When he was a yearling, Warren started training and showing Yinny in the youth shows around Colorado. Over the years, the two of them formed a very strong bond. Warren had only to ask him and Yinyang would do his best to accomplish the task. They literally grew up together. At Yinyang's last show, NWSS 2014, he earned enough points to move up to the Master class in performance. But we retired him instead. He spent his last years taking it easy and teaching the young guys manners. As Yinny aged his health started to deteriorate and on August 11, 2021 at the age of 19, it was clear we had to say goodbye. Rest in Peace, Yinyang! You will be missed.



Grey Dawn was born on January 6, 2003. He was a complete surprise as I wasn't expecting him until February. But he did things his own way and in his own time. Grey Dawn went to his first show at Estes Park at 5 months of age. He and Dave bonded over the next few years and showed at all the Colorado shows. Grey Dawn tied for first place in Lleaping Llama at the EPWM when he was about 12. Dave retired him in 2017 at age 14. He was head of the boys' pen until age 16 when his health started to decline. He passed away quietly on July 27, 2021 at the age of 18. Rest in Peace, Grey Dawn! You will be missed. 



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FEATURED ARTICLE


# Your Board at Work

With four of RMLA Board Members living in Arizona within an hour or two of each other, ‘many hands make light work’. It is truly just coincidence that most of the Board now lives in Arizona; history had made Colorado the hub. Times do change.

Earlier this summer Directors, Linda Hayes and Nancy Wilson met to mail the General Election ballots to RMLA members. Director elections roll around every year in the summer. The number of open positions rotates between electing two or just one new Director.

Newly elected Directors take their position on the Board following the completion of the Annual Meeting. An Executive Committee meeting is then held for the purpose of doing two things: elect officers which are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and At Large and select Committee Liaisons. Liaisons work closely with their chosen committee chairs and are the link between the chair and the Board. A good relationship between the Liaison and the Committee Chair is reflected in the success of each committee. You will notice how much fun Linda and Nancy are having. Maybe it is time you consider having this much fun too! Place your name on the ballot next summer.



Directors Nancy Wilson (top Left), Lougene Baird (bottom left), Linda Hayes (bottom right) and Director-elect Sandy Shilling (top left) meet for a working lunch meeting in Dewey-Humbolt, Arizona. It was a good brain-storming, tire-kicking, think-tanking meeting to discuss the future of RMLA, RMLA events, the new RMLA.com and how to grow the membership, encourage more articles for the Journal from our members and how to encourage more volunteers within the organization. They missed Director Geri Rutledge's (NE) presence, but she couldn't get to the meeting that day. We missed you Geri, you are important. 

FEATURED ARTICLE

# The Versatility of Locker Hooking

By Nancy Wilson  
Camp Verde, AZ

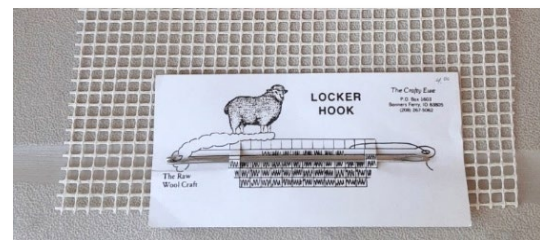
Got fiber? What if you're not a spinner, weaver, felter, or other fiber artist (yet)? How about considering locker hooking? According to Chicken Scratch NY, “**Locker hooking** is a hand craft that turns scraps of fabric and twine into coasters, rugs, bracelets, bags or art pieces. It's an easy skill to pick up and you can finish a small piece in an evening. The sky is the limit when it comes to your design, you can follow an ornate pattern, do a simple geometric pattern or just randomly use up scraps.”



What's to love about locker hooking? You can use any quality of fiber; no need for next-to-the skin softness. If you use your llamas for packing, how cool would it be for the saddle blankets to be made from the fiber of your own llamas? Need something to place a hot dish on so it doesn't scorch your dining

room table? Locker hooking to the rescue. Wall hangings, tote bags, baskets anyone? Here's a trivet I made. Remember, this is a beginner.

All that is required are simple tools. A locker hook is a crochet hook with an eye at the opposite end of the hook. Your canvas is mesh. Here's a picture of the tools. →



You'll need roving and inexpensive yarn to lock the loops in place. Essentially, you pull loops through the mesh (just like if you were crocheting). Then after you have a few loops on the hook you pull the yarn (that is threaded through the eye) through the loops you've formed, thereby locking the loops in place. You don't see the yarn, so this is a great way to use up any yarn you don't have a use for.

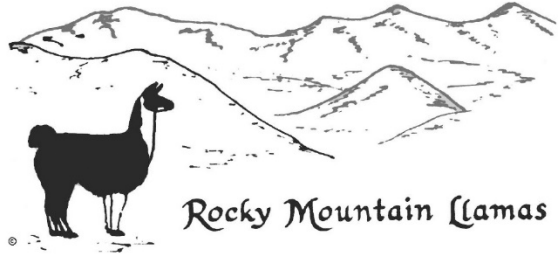


Once you have the basics, you can finesse your technique. I would recommend a book by Pam Dyer called *Locker Hooking Basics*. You can find it in her Etsy store (link at end of article). Create your own designs or buy a canvas with a preprinted design.

Years ago, a friend gave me a canvas with a llama design on it. I never got to that project. But another friend (Kimberly Sharp, email below) makes beautiful locker hooking items and graciously offered to make the project for me. Here's the colors we selected. I used natural colors for the llama and some of the border, then selected a hand-dyed roving for use in the border.



This is the finished piece. →



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It is proudly hanging in the foyer. It brings a smile to my face knowing all the friends (both two-legged and four-legged) who were part of its creation. I tend to keep blinders on when it comes to adding another fiber art to my repertoire (spin, knit, rigid heddle weaving, dyeing), but I am sorely tempted by locker hooking. Especially when you go to Etsy and enter locker hooking.

Web pages and Etsy stores that you might find helpful:

Chicken Scratch NY:

[Introduction to Locker Hooking \(chickenscratchny.com\)](http://chickenscratchny.com)

Dyers Wool Etsy store:

[Locker Hooking Basics by Pam Dyer | Etsy](https://www.etsy.com/shop/DyersWool)

Kimberly Sharp, locker hooking instruction and locker hooking artist:

[thegoatbarn@outlook.com](mailto:thegoatbarn@outlook.com)





Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association  
c/o Kathy Stanko  
6778 Kannah Creek Rd.  
Whitewater, CO 81527



## EVENTS CALENDAR:

### National Western Stock Show Dates By Judy Glaser

Arrival -- Thursday Jan 6, 4-9 pm  
Friday, Jan 7 -- In place by 6 pm  
Saturday, Jan 8 -- Walking fiber classes,  
afternoon with a llama or alpaca, and  
performance classes begin.  
Sunday, Jan 9 -- Halter classes, all out by 9 pm.

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The mission of the Association shall be to educate the members and the public as to the breeding, raising, care and use of llamas and alpacas.

**The Youth Llama Project Manual**  
From the Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association

**Caring for Llamas and Alpacas**  
A Health and Management Guide  
Carey Robinson DVM  
Lizbeth Adams

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