

Fall 2023

# *The Journal of RMLA*



**RMLA**   
Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association

# Welcome to RMLA!

--- Mission Statement ---

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.

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## About the Journal

The Journal of RMLA<sup>®</sup> is a quarterly publication of the Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association (RMLA). The RMLA Journal Committee and the Board of Directors reserve the right to select and edit all articles and advertisements submitted.

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.

RMLA is not responsible for any losses resulting from readers' failure to heed this caution. The views expressed by the authors of articles are not necessarily those of the Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association, Inc., its officers, directors or members.

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## Table of Contents

RMLA Board of Directors.....	2
Chairpersons, Active Committees .....	3
About the Journal.....	3
From The Editor.....	5
Journal Submission Dates, Ad Rates & Specifications .....	5
Letter to the Editor .....	6
Welcome New Members! .....	6
Upcoming RMLA Events.....	6
The Weavers Visit And Memories Sparked.....	8
Superstitious Behavior.....	10
Prairie Patch Farm Brings Smiles to Social Media .....	11
Are You a Special Person?.....	13
RMLA Library Update .....	15
A Llama’s Experience Of A Book Signing Event .....	16
Have You Checked the RMLA Website Recently? .....	17
Llama Component Becoming Major Medical Asset .....	18
Feeling Guilty? Don’t Be So Hard On Yourself! .....	19
Llama Lunacy 2023 .....	22
RMLA Youth Are Active .....	25
Llama Industry Needs Some Political Clout.....	26
Woolly Tidbits.....	28
Dr. Temple Grandin: A Most Remarkable Woman .....	29
Update: Restoring Our Pastures .....	31
A Visit To The 2023 Higher Ground Fair.....	32

## Advertisers in this Issue

Antelope Alpacas Fiber Arts Center.....	12
Chris Switzer, Weaver .....	31
elZorro Colorado Alpacas .....	12
Lewis The Yellowstone Llama .....	9
Mazuri.....	24
Rocky Mountain Llamas.....	31
Southwest Llamas Rescue.....	17

**Cover Photo: Courtesy Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay.** Robert with llama friend, Teddy, on a hike with Yellowstone Llamas.

## From The Editor

Kathy Stanko, Editor, [rmlaeditor@gmail.com](mailto:rmlaeditor@gmail.com)



My husband and I, along with good friends, took a train ride this past summer. The interesting thing about trains is they are always in motion, showing you the past, the present and a view to the future. In this issue, we have a great article by Jane Robertson-Boudreaux from 1990 about issues in the llama industry at that time (page 26). And looking to the future, Ron Baird’s article shows us an innovative way scientists are exploring the use of llama nanobodies to detect COVID (page 18).

And in between the past and the future, we have NOW. This issue is loaded with educational information for you and a number of articles about the current activities of our members.

And, just a few weeks ago I was on another wonderful adventure. I was able to finally attend the Higher Ground Fair in Laramie, Wyoming. Such an adventure, but I am sure Gayle Woodsum will write an article about the fair in an upcoming Journal. For now, I have included a

number of photos from my view of the fair. You can find them at the end of this Journal.

Have a wonderful fall. Thank you to everyone who submitted an article for this Journal and to all of you who read and learn from the many topics included. Please remember, if you have a great photo, send it to me for possible use in a future Journal.

## Journal Submission Dates, Ad Rates & Specifications

Issue	Submission Deadline	Publication Date
Spring	February 28	March 31
Summer	May 31	June 30
Fall	August 31	September 30
Winter	November 30	December 31

Ad Type	Width x Height	Member Rate	Non-Member
Business Card	3.5"x2"	\$ 7	\$ 15
¼ page horiz.	7.5"x2"	\$ 12	\$ 24
¼ page vert.	3.5"x4.5"	\$ 12	\$ 24
Half Page	7.5" x 5"	\$ 24	\$ 48
Full Page	7.5"x 10"	\$ 39	\$ 78

Ad rates are quoted per issue. Lock in the current rate by purchasing an ad for four consecutive issues and receive a **5<sup>th</sup> ad for free**. You may change your ad once during the year.

### To submit articles, ads or photo:

- All submissions go to [rmlaeditor@gmail.com](mailto:rmlaeditor@gmail.com)
- Documents in MS Word format
- Camera ready ads as a pdf or jpg file. **NOTE:** What you send is what we publish.
- Images/photos as .jpeg (.jpg) or .tiff files. Photo from a camera or phone are sufficient. Please check the background and lighting. RMLA will only crop for fit and/or enhance the lighting.

### Instructions for advertising payment:

You may pay for your ad at [RMLA.com](http://RMLA.com) using a credit card. Payment and ad copy must be received prior to submission deadline. See the table above for dates.

## Letter to the Editor

To the editor and staff of the RMLA Journal:

The task you have -- the Journal and the website -- are a work of your caring and love of llamas and the organization. As a past editor of just the Journal, I know the amount of work, cajoling and effort that must go into every issue.

To the readers and RMLA members:

When it comes to the website -- WOW! I was doing some online research the other day and queried "llamas in the rocky mountains". RMLA's website came up FIRST out of 1.18 MILLION results! Your volunteers have accomplished a wonderful job of bringing RMLA to the forefront of llama organizations. You are a part of a fantastic organization -- pitch in and make it even greater!

Ron Baird

## Welcome New Members!

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

Tanja Andreas Fort Collins CO  
Marcia McMahon Fairplay, CO

## Upcoming RMLA Events

By Mary Wickman, Events Chair

### Save the Date:

**National Western Stock Show:** The llama and alpaca show is now the last weekend of stock show. Arrival Wednesday, January 17th beginning at noon. Walking fiber and Shorn fleece, Thursday, January 18th beginning at 9 AM. Afternoon with a llama and alpaca, Friday, January 19th at 1 PM. Llama Halter show, Friday, January 19th at 2 pm. Llama Performance Show, Saturday January 20th at 1 PM. Contact Judy Glaser, [judy.glaser@yahoo.com](mailto:judy.glaser@yahoo.com) for more information.

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## The Weavers Visit And Memories Sparked

By Katy White

Pear Tree Llamas, Midway, UT

On June 3 of this year, Pear Tree Llamas hosted a monthly meeting of the Mary Meigs Atwater Weavers Guild of Northern Utah. Eighteen women and one man came to our ranch in Midway, Utah for a program about llamas and llama fiber, a potluck luncheon, and to visit our herd of 13 llamas.

The Guild was established in 1956 in northern Utah. They meet the second Thursday of each month in Salt Lake City, usually in a show and tell format. They publish a monthly newsletter and hold a fall show in September. They maintain a large resource library and have the only complete downloadable collection of the Atwater Shuttle-Craft Bulletins

published by Mary Meigs Atwater from 1924 to 1949. Downloadable copies of the Shuttle-Craft Bulletins may be purchased by contacting the Guild website at [www.mmawg.org](http://www.mmawg.org). There is also a southwest Utah branch that meets in St. George on the third Monday of every month during the winter.



The group met with me in our barn, and I provided a program about llamas and llama fiber. We also set up a display of the items we sell at Pear Tree Llamas, including llama fiber yarn, roving, handwoven rugs, and dryer balls. Local area gardeners also purchase llama poop from us, which some of our resident herd had thoughtfully deposited in the corral for our visitors to see. Mandan (Danny), our gregarious PR llama, was happy to present himself both for back scratches and alfalfa pellet treats.

This meeting was particularly poignant for me because of a special personal connection. My mother, Virginia McGuigan Flanagan, was an active member of the Mary Meigs Atwater Guild in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, where I grew up. The guild is now called The Champaign-Urbana Spinners and Weavers Guild and their website is [www.cuswg.org](http://www.cuswg.org). The Utah weavers were very interested in hearing about my mother's involvement in weaving, so I arranged a display of what little I have left of her work. Mother was active as a weaver from approximately 1955-1975. I remember many times coming home from school to find a coterie of ladies and their looms ensconced in our basement participating in one of the many workshops and weaving sessions that the central Illinois guild sponsored. As a young teenager, I spent many hours helping Mother design projects and warp her looms. Sometimes the warp would trail from her weaving porch along the upstairs hallway and down the staircase to the main floor as we slowly wound it on to the loom.

She had two four-harness floor looms: a LeClerc (which was used for yard goods, table mats, and other finer projects), and a Macomber, which resided at our Minnesota summer home and was used primarily for rug and bathmat weaving. Mother designed and planned all of her projects with pencil and yellow graph paper – long before the days of computerized warping programs. As she became more proficient in weaving skills and branched out into different types of projects, she acquired additional looms, and eventually our home housed ten looms ranging from 4 to 32 harness models. The accompanying photo shows some of her work.

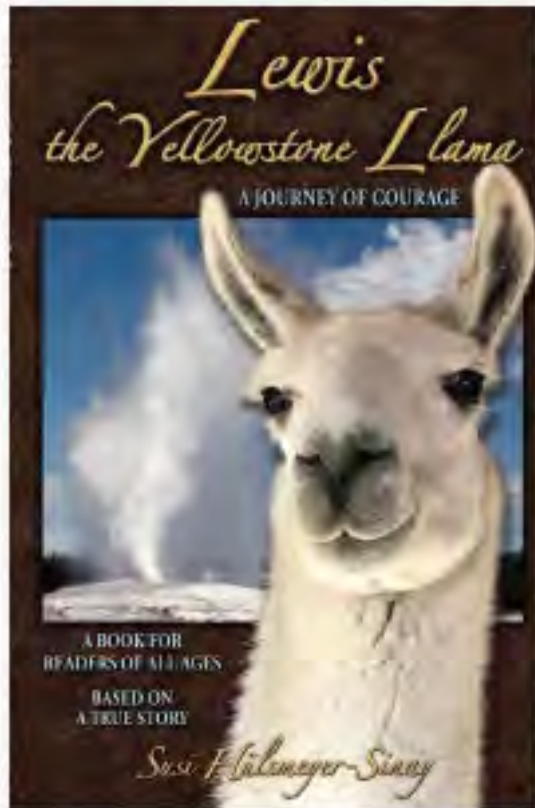
She wove yard goods that ranged from raw silk and nubby tweeds for my father's sport coats to fine linen for the bridesmaid dresses for my oldest sister's wedding. She wove countless tablemats, tea towels, bathmats, and Christmas towels... many of which were used for gifts for friends. She designed and wove numerous Rya and Flossa rugs for



various family homes. I can still see her at the LeClerc loom with two wooden yardsticks around which she knotted the yarn to form the Rya rug. When she ran a razor blade between the yardsticks to cut the yarn ends, I always wondered if a sliver of the yardstick would come off in the rug, but none ever did.

Mother also wove curtains for both our Minnesota and Illinois homes. The Minnesota lake house, high-ceilinged and casual, received bamboo blinds woven with a warp of shades of brown and tan chenille. The house is now owned by my nephew, and the blinds are there to this day. The Illinois house, more formal, received more elegant cream-colored Belgian linen curtains. The mention of those curtains brings back memories of 1960-61, when we lived in Brussels, Belgium, and my father taught at three Belgian universities. Mother took weaving lessons from a group of cloistered nuns, and took the tram every week to their nunnery to pursue her weaving lessons. I think that her lessons took place at the Abbaye de la Cambre in Ixelles, but my memory is now faulty. When we sailed home in the spring of 1961, we were accompanied by trunks of cones of Belgian linen that would eventually become the Illinois curtains.

Mother died in 1985 and never saw our llama herd which we began in 1996. She would have immediately had her hands in the llama fiber, happily planning countless fiber projects. Her large floor looms were sold, but one of my nieces has several of the table looms. She has taken weaving classes and is learning how to repair some of the Rya rugs that were damaged by use over the years. I know my mother would be delighted to see her daughter and granddaughter involved with fiber.



**IT IS HERE!**



This book about the adventures of Lewis the llama on his 3-month quest through Yellowstone National Park tells about courage, hope and survival. It explores Yellowstone's wilds and wonders through the eyes of the lonely yet curious llama trying to find home.

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## Superstitious Behavior

By Marty McGee Bennett  
CAMELIDynamics

Superstitious Behavior: Accidentally or unintentionally reinforced behavior. A behavior is reinforced but the reinforcement occurred by random chance instead of in accordance with a specific contingency. For example, if a rat is in a Skinner Box (a controlled environment used for studying behavior) and food is delivered at random intervals, not contingent on any particular behaviors, the rat is likely to be performing a common behavior, such as sniffing, turning or standing on hind feet, more often than other behaviors. Even though the food delivery is not contingent on any particular behavior, the frequency of some behaviors may increase, and this is called accidental or superstitious. In this example, after a few sessions the rat might be spinning in circles well above its previous operant rate believing that the food is arriving BECAUSE he is spinning in circles!



It is interesting to note that humans are also affected by superstitious behavior. Humans are anthropocentric (regarding humankind as the central or most important element of existence, especially as opposed to nature or animals). We assume that everything an animal does when we are present has to do with our behavior. Animals behave for many reasons and humans are certainly an important element of their lives. We hold great power over them, but we are not the only things in their lives and not the only things they react to. The assumption that any behavior exhibited in our presence has to do with us can create superstitious behavior in **us**.

A llama or alpaca that spits, for example, may have many reasons to exhibit this behavior and it may have to do with past experience with other humans or other animals or the environment. When we get spit on, it may have nothing at all to do with us or what we are doing in that moment... or it might. If, when the animal spits, we assume that whatever we were doing at that moment provoked the spit, our behavior is now shaped by theirs. If you react to the spitting, you have now created the connection for the animal between their behavior-the spit- and your behavior and depending on what you did it may well increase the incidence of spitting!

Kicking is another good example. If you are kicked, it may be that the animal simply missed the intended animal target or perhaps the kick was actually startle response more akin to a reflex than intentional behavior directed at you.

When I am in a pen I have a plan to deal with this phenomenon. When it comes to behavior I don't want to reinforce, I choose not to react to it— to do my very best not to give ANY response that indicates the behavior has affected me. I notice the behavior, of course, but I do my level best not to give any indication to the animal that their behavior registered with me. I don't put my hand up, say anything, turn my head, jump away, etc. I make a mental note of the conditions in operation when the behavior occurred and I use that information in future sessions. For example, if I am working in a packed pen with a group of animals and as I move around the pen, Lucky kicks me. I look to see where I am standing relative to Lucky and make a mental note of the conditions. I do NOT say or do anything to indicate to

Lucky that his behavior had any effect on me at all. In this way I don't teach Lucky, by accident, that his behavior worked to gain something of value. You may not think that these choices will reduce the likelihood of the behavior but reacting to a behavior draws attention to it and is more likely to cause an increase in the behavior.

I am not suggesting that you just stand there and get kicked or spit on; I am suggesting that you do your best not to teach your animal that if he kicks or spits at you it affects your behavior. Animals make connections between two behaviors when they are contingent, that is, when they happen at the same time. If an animal spits on me while I am working with him, I react as little as I possibly can and press on with what I am doing for a few seconds. If appropriate or necessary, I will change what I am doing but without immediacy. It is that knee jerk reaction that will help to teach your animal how to train you!

If I know in advance I am likely to encounter a particular behavior that I don't want to reinforce, I will approach the animal in a way that based on my experience is not likely to provoke that behavior. If the behavior happens I take note of the current conditions and otherwise behave as if nothing happened.

When you are in a catch pen, you are in a Skinner Box of sorts and YOU are the rat... Things happen but not everything that happens is connected to YOU or what you are doing. Assuming everything that happens in the pen is a result of something you did will create superstitious behaviors in YOU.



## AGRITOURISM

### Prairie Patch Farm Brings Smiles to Social Media

By Debra Gaskill, Editor, The GALA Newsletter

Photos By Prairie Patch Farms Owner Kahle Atherton Boutte

*Reprinted with permission from Debra Gaskill, Editor, The GALA Newsletter.*

A farm meant to preserve Iowa's native environment has become one of social media's darlings, by sharing photos of the farm's eight llamas dressed up in handmade costumes like the Easter bunny or a hula dancer.

Kahle Atherton-Boutte, owner of Prairie Patch Farm in Cedar Falls, Iowa, says it's surreal how people love her content. It all started when Boutte, a former music therapist, and her seven-year-old daughter started dressing up the llamas, often modifying human costumes to fit the animal. Costume ideas come from personal interest, Boutte said, like the time they dressed up an animal as a character from the 1980's movie *Labyrinth*, starring David Bowie.

Videos are filmed using Boutte's phone and no other special equipment. There is





also no editing done. When one video garnered 14 million views, they were off to the races. Prairie Patch Farm has 6,200 followers on Facebook, 4,425 on Instagram and 110,000 on TikTok.

Boutte said she had no intention of starting a small business, but the farm now offers llama yoga, virtual llama visits, pictures with the Easter Llama and his Peeps, as well as Halloween and Santa llamas. Visitors can also spend the night at an Airbnb on the property and hike with llamas. A new addition will be a summer camp for kids in kindergarten through eighth grade, where campers will have hands-on training with the llamas and learn about Iowa's natural habitat.

There are eight llamas at Prairie Patch—Apple Jack, Willoughby, Sully, Fig, Fable, Poet, Huckleberri, Ollie, Earl, and Simon, the only alpaca. The star of the show, however is Earl. Nicknamed "The Red Carpet Llama" he is often featured on our social media videos and enjoys going on Llama-Gram deliveries and Zooms bringing joy to all he meets.




Kahle with Earl, The Red Carpet Llama

The family doesn't feel the need to post on social media every day, but their presence has become the place "where marketing and advertising come together," Boutte said. The farm's social media has garnered press attention from around the world. The farm has been featured everywhere from France's *Le Monde* newspaper and *Luxury Traveler*, to *People* magazine. She's been featured in the *Cedar Falls Gazette* and local television news.

Prairie Patch Farm is not a traditional farm or homestead, but a preserve started by Boutte's late uncle, Steve Atherton, a noted Iowa conservationist. Home to seven tall grass prairies, two creeks, and forest which all serve as a safe haven for Iowa wildlife, the farm reflects what some of Iowa's natural habitats consist of. Twenty acres are registered in forest preserve and other acreage is in the CRP (Conservation Reserve Program).

The farm has been in Boutte's family since the 1980s. Boutte and her husband purchased the farm in 2018 to continue his legacy in honoring his efforts in conservation. Atherton was a champion of conservation for the State of Iowa, fighting for the protection of wetlands, prairies and wildlife. A long time professor in Parks and Natural Resources at Kirkwood Community College, he played a vital role in reintroducing peregrine falcon populations and trumpeter swans; he was instrumental in starting the Lake MacBride Raptor Project.

"It is so, so important to give people more positivity," Boutte said. "How amazing is it that our llamas can evoke those reactions in people? We all have some responsibility to treat our earth with respect and to make it a better place."



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## Are You a Special Person?

### From Your RMLA Board

Are you a special person who wants to see RMLA continue to grow and who can eke out a few hours each week from your busy life to help? Our team of incredible volunteers would welcome you with open arms! Here are two spots where RMLA needs help.

**First**, the RMLA Bookstore has an opening for a committed volunteer to ship orders for *Caring for Llamas and Alpacas*—our premier publication, now in its 13th reprint with 50,000 in circulation—and the ever-popular *RMLA Youth Lama Project Manual*.

Here's how it works. Orders come through the RMLA website to PayPal with a notice to you. Normally, it's a retail order of one or two books. You will pack up the requested books and mail them. All shipping materials will be provided, and postage is reimbursed. You must have an environmentally-safe place to store the current inventory of approximately 290 books.

Good communication skills are important. You will be communicating with the RMLA bookkeeper on a regular basis.

This is an important position. Both books are mainstays of RMLA's history and considered industry standards. *Caring for Llamas and Alpacas* is most often purchased by new owners.

Please reach out to [Lougene Baird](#) or [Marilyn Arnold](#) if you are interested.

**Second**, RMLA would like to implement a Classified Ads section to the RMLA.com website.

The Classified Ads functionality will give members an opportunity to advertise animals and equipment for sale. We are so excited to provide this option on our website, BUT we need a volunteer to manage the new service. Computer skills and a willingness to learn something new are needed. You will receive training and ongoing support from Kathy Stanko, Co-Webmaster for Content.

If you are interested in this opportunity, contact either [Lougene Baird](#) or [Kathy Stanko](#).

Thank you for considering these needs. The RMLA Board appreciates you as a member.





# JAMES L. VOSS VETERINARY TEACHING HOSPITAL COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

## Ask The Vet: Arthritis In Camelids

By Dr. Rhyannon Moore-Foster and Dr. Luisa De La Cuadra  
Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Livestock

Arthritis comes from the Greek word *arthros* for joint and the suffix *-itis* that indicates inflammation. This term is used ultimately to describe pathologies present in the joint, another term used to characterize this disease is degenerative joint disease (DJD) or osteoarthritis (OA).

This is a disease that typically progresses slowly, and we can find destruction of many structures within the joint itself. This can include the articular cartilage, changes in the subchondral bone, and soft tissues (ligaments, synovium, joint capsule) in different forms ranging from mild to severe.

So, how can we tell when our friend is in pain? We may notice a variety of signs including, but not limited to: increased time laying down, not eating or drinking adequately, lameness, abnormal conformation of a joint like dropped fetlock, deviation of a joint from its normal angle or it may look bigger when compared to the equal joint in the other leg. Other signs of pain may be more weather dependent. You may notice a refusal to move around, especially when the weather is cold or there's mud.

Arthritis is commonly diagnosed in dogs and other small animals; however it is also frequently diagnosed in livestock species including small ruminants, cattle, and pigs. Yet it is not very common in camelids from what is reported in the literature. Usually, this disease is related to systemic infections in crias. This can occur when bacteria enters the body via the bloodstream and travels to the joints. This can create joints to become infected, or what we refer to as a septic joint. The damage that is caused due to this inflammation and infection within the joint can cause degenerative changes to the soft tissues within the joint and become septic arthritis.

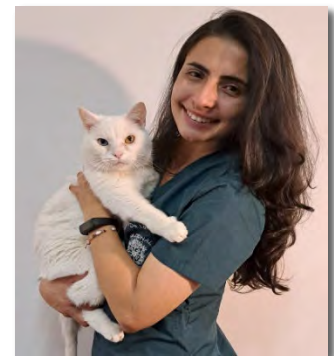
Overall, this disease, although not common in camelids, can be highly present in crias who undergo other issues early in life, such as systemic infections. Arthritis can also be present as in any other species in older animals or when traumas happen directly to the joint.

Diagnosing this disease normally needs more than a single test, from radiographies, cytology, bacterial culture, ultrasonography to computerized tomography (CT scan) depending on the severity and how the animal presents. Only by running these diagnostics can it be understood what is happening and choose how to fight our battle.

Then, depending on what is diagnosed, the treatment becomes the real challenge. Camelids are not that different from other species. Treatment goals for septic arthritis will include a direct attack to bacteria, reduction of inflammation and therefore reduction of pain. These treatments could take different forms depending on severity, response to treatment and the type of microorganism involved.



Dr. Rhyannon Moore-Foster



Dr. Luisa De La Cuadra

When we start to talk about arthritis related to aging and chronic arthritis, the situation is far more complicated. Our goal in this kind of situation is usually to provide comfort, quality of life and more years of relief if possible. These treatments may include pain management, joint injections, supplements, and acupuncture.

Some precautions can be taken from a younger age, and this includes starting with a conformationally sound animal. We will be looking for an animal with good leg conformation, avoiding “posty” legs and good body condition, and trying to avoid animals that are underweight or that are obese, which will predispose to arthritis. And last but not least, regular health checks with your veterinarian is highly recommended so indicators of the disease can be caught early, and treatment recommendations can be made to prolong your animal’s comfort and lifestyle.

### About the authors

Dr. Rhyannon Moore-Foster is currently an Assistant Professor at Colorado State University in the ambulatory Livestock Field Service. She graduated from Michigan State University’s veterinary school in 2013, then completed a PhD there in 2018 with an emphasis in mastitis and employee education. She has spent time also in private practice working with a variety of species including livestock, small animals and exotics. Her interests include reproduction and herd health as they relate to production medicine.

Dr. Luisa De La Cuadra is an intern at the Livestock hospital at the Colorado State University. Originally from Colombia where she finished her studies, she then headed to Canada and finished her rotating internship in large animal internal medicine and surgery at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. Her goal is to become a specialist in large animal internal medicine and help spread the knowledge as much as she can.

## RMLA Library Update

by Sandy Lockwood, Chair, Library Committee and  
Kathy Stanko, Co-Chair Content, Website Committee



We would like to *thank all* of you who have donated books, CDs and articles to the library. The library is a wealth of information on any camelid topic you can imagine.

Sandy Lockwood and I spent numerous hours this past summer getting new items added to the website and correcting many listings, especially in the Children’s/Youth category. Like, who still has a VHS video player? Practically no one. And this brings up another *thank you* we all owe Ron Hinds: he converted all the VHS tapes to DVDs several years ago! AND, the library contains many years’ worth (1979 – 1991) of *Llamas* magazine.

With winter on the horizon, consider exploring the RMLA library catalog on [rmla.com/library](http://rmla.com/library). If you are a RMLA member, just follow the steps to check out up to three items at a time. Sandy will quickly fill your request.



## A Llama's Experience Of A Book Signing Event

By Susi Hülsmeier-Sinay, [Yellowstonellamas.com](http://Yellowstonellamas.com)

Lewis was tired. His fans didn't leave him alone for most of the three hours it took his person, Susi, to sell and sign her books.

The event took place on July 28<sup>th</sup> at Elk River Books in Livingston, MT. It rained a bit at first but after the clouds moved on, relieved, the late afternoon sun beckoned many strollers to come out to the monthly artwalk through downtown. Livingston, a small Montana town with a railroad history and located not far from Yellowstone's north entrance boasts many galleries and shops. This time, the artwalk was enhanced by Lewis the llama, who made an appearance in front of the popular book store.

Some people came directly to the event having read about it in various venues, while others had no idea and were fascinated by seeing two llamas (Lewis and his buddy Alicio) in front of the store, surrounded by an excited throng of fans. Lewis did his best to tolerate all the hands stretched out towards him, the hugs, the giggles, the excited chatter surrounding him. He smiled into countless cameras with his signature erect posture and alert ear position. He played his part, and he knew it. He had done it before.

Susi happily repeated his amazing story about his abandonment in

Yellowstone, his adventures as a free llama among wild creatures and finally his rescue. She smiled at Lewis who kept almost constant eye contact with her. As a team, they won over many people who finally and a bit reluctantly walked off with their signed copies of the book *Lewis the Yellowstone Llama*. They did not really want to part with Lewis but took home his story and many photos to remember the event.

The team sold all the books they brought and went home tired and happy.

*Lewis the Yellowstone Llama* can be purchased directly from Susi by calling 406-580-5954 or emailing [treks@yellowstonellamas.com](mailto:treks@yellowstonellamas.com)





## Have You Checked the RMLA Website Recently?

By Kathy Stanko, Co-webmaster

There is no end to the educational information being added to rmla.com. Posts recently added to the educational blog include:

- More on heat stress
- Hypothermia
- Neonatal diarrhea
- Minimum Standards of Care
- Liability Law – history
- Building the Confidence of an Alpaca or Llama
- West Nile virus in llamas and alpacas
- Weaving around a cardboard box
- Updates to the RMLA Lending Library
- Summer Journal (members only)

Minutes of the board meetings are also current and members can find these under the Member Login tab (top right).



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Southwest Llama Rescue, Inc. (SWLR) is a non-profit, all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit animal rescue organization located in states across the southwest from CA to OK. We are funded solely by private donations and adoption fees.

In 2022, our volunteers helped over 150 llamas and alpacas; donated over 10,000 hours of rescue and care; and transported animals over 25,000 miles. Over 110 animals were placed in new homes; volunteers are currently caring for more than 30 llamas at foster farms; and coordinators maintain fluctuating numbers of intakes, often from large herd rescues, as well as smaller numbers from individuals and farms.

# Llama Component Becoming Major Medical Asset

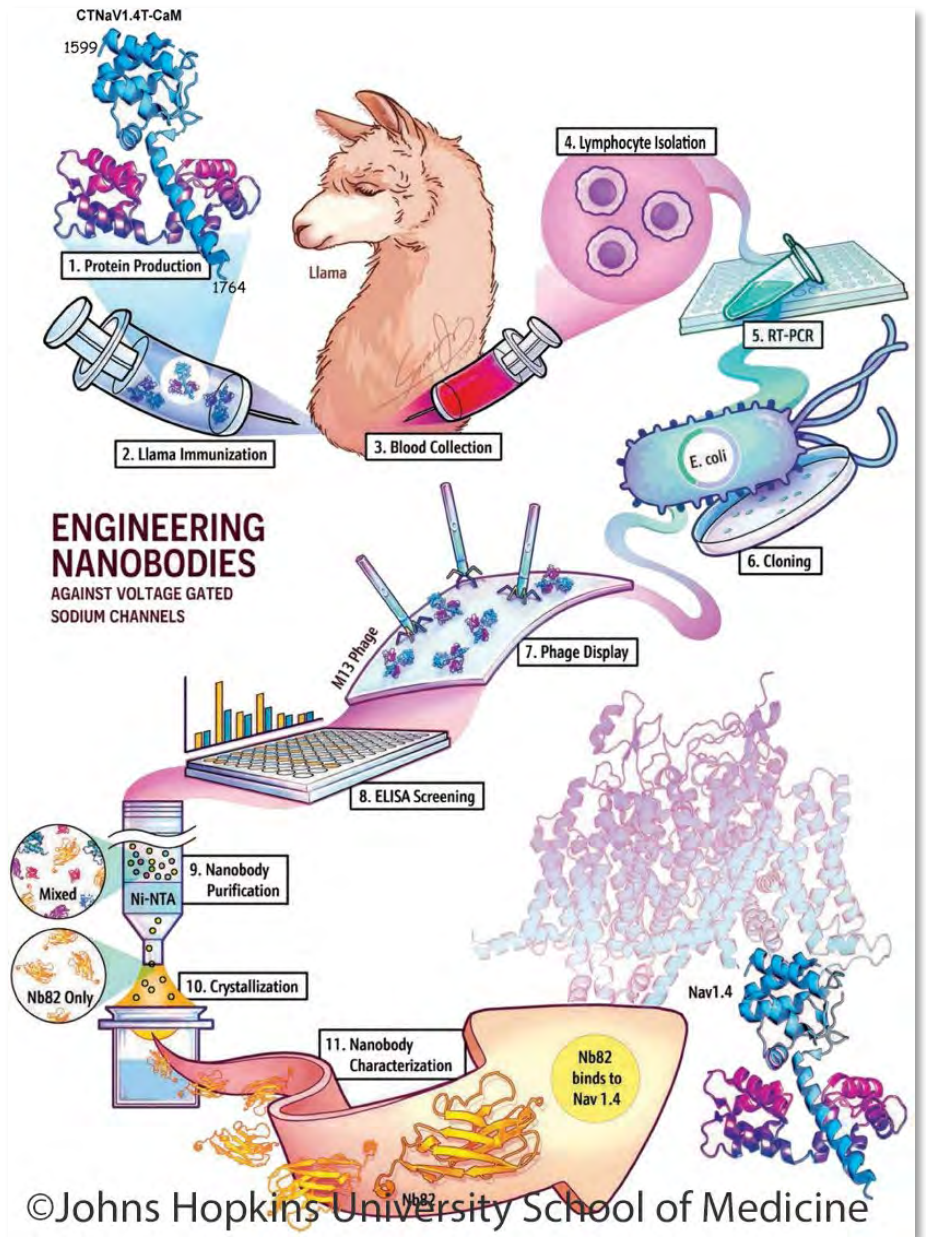
By Ron Baird, Chair, RMLA Research Committee

University researchers late in the last century made a startling discovery: llamas, other camelids, and some shark species produce strange, diminutive antibodies one-fourth to one-half the size and perhaps a quarter of the weight of antibodies produced by other creatures. These unique cells are called single-domain antibodies or nanobodies.

First discovered and identified in camelids, nanobodies are fragments of antibodies, which recognize and bind to cell or virus surface markers called antigens. Whereas human antibodies are composed of molecule chains, only a much smaller single fragment of the camelid antibody is sufficient to recognize viral or bacterial antigens.

The many ways these particles, found in llama blood, are being applied in medicine hold the promise of major advances in disease detection, treatment, and improved quality of health for humans.

This unique attribute makes llama nanobodies an exciting research and development area. Nearly all articles about this research refer to llama nanobodies rather than of camelid. This may be because researchers prefer to draw blood (to extract the antibodies it contains) from docile, easily accessible llamas.



The concept of using antibodies to deliver medicines to diseased or defective organs has become a reality in recent years. But human antibodies, being much larger, have difficulty in many instances penetrating the shells of viral or bacterial cells.

Various, medical researchers are employing llama nanobodies in the process of developing systems for medicines to be delivered exclusively to tumors, take stem cells to defective organs in efforts to revitalize them, and other applications.

*Perhaps the latest clever utilization of llama nanobodies has been the creation of a machine to detect COVID.* Aerosol scientists at Washington University in St. Louis have constructed a toaster-sized machine using llama nanobodies to detect as few as 7 to 35 viral particles of SARS-CoV-2 per cubic meter of air in as little as five minutes. Developed commercially, this device could be installed to detect the presence of COVID in airports, restaurants, grocery stores, offices, hospitals, and other public areas.



Aerosol scientists at Virginia Tech are known to be working on a detector of their own design. Creative minds will take this new application of llama nanobodies and apply it to the detection of other noxious viruses and bacteria in the future.

The Inca civilization considered llamas to be sacred, using them as messengers to the gods. These exciting medical uses of llamas – and other camelids – truly are making them medical messengers of improved health for humankind!

## TRAINING/BEHAVIOR

### **Feeling Guilty? Don't Be So Hard On Yourself!**

By Cathy Spalding, llama owner and trainer since 1985

*Reprinted with permission of the author and LANA*

A most wonderful *Ah-Ha* epiphany continues to shout loud and clear each year as I travel across North America presenting my behavior and training clinics. This sudden *I've got it!* moment is the realization we can learn to trust ourselves; we all know more than we think we do, our intuitions can be trusted and one magic key does not open all doors.

Seems we are fearful and worried that we might be messing up - or going to mess up - if we do not do things the right way with our alpacas and llamas. We worry that our relationship with them will be in jeopardy. If one does not or cannot follow the strict ABC's of a particular approach or method, is that OK? What if we must make up something right there on the spot for success in a particular instance? Is that wrong? Are we then guilty of not knowing what we are doing; are we actually messing up? How often does the notion "this isn't working therefore I must be doing everything wrong" creep into our minds? Seems all that frustration and uncertainty can then metamorphous into not doing the best we can for our alpacas and llamas... feeling they won't like us, we're failing them... and becoming immobile with guilt and inadequacy.

Musing for a moment... how is it that any particular training method comes about? How are things realized, formulated and refined as a training technique? Does it come to us in the nighttime? Do we just wake up one morning and know what to do... know what is the best way... the right way... know what will always work in any given situation? Are trainers simply gifted? Sometimes. However, I submit that most of the time it does not happen quite that way.



The art of becoming a true teacher requires remaining a true student simultaneously. To be a true teacher requires an open mind, imagination, close observation, kindness and honor in approach and the willingness to continue learning. A

true teacher does not know all the answers...who does? As both teacher and student, one must leave behind the notion of right and wrong realizing that each of our animals can be individual in their notions and reactions... realizing humans can be as well. What works great for the majority might not work at all for a minority.



Keeping an open mind, a true teacher sifts and sorts and combines their knowledge with that of many other teachers, participants and peers. Through teaching, yet remaining a student, one can continue to grow becoming better and better in their own personal skills as well as in the sharing of those skills as a teacher/trainer.

Truly honoring the knowledge and wisdom shared by my many teachers, I've also learned many things from participants and their animals. It happens, too, that through instances where something simply did not work or by accidentally dropping something or just becoming entangled trying to attach a lead rope, one inadvertently stumbles upon an idea that with some additional thought and refinement works great. And here you thought you had messed up!

So how do we decide what to do? What if the approach we select doesn't work? Could there be a number of possible approaches to the specific issue? Is there only one right approach or can there be several that may have the potential for success? What information could be helpful in making that educated decision? While experience is a great teacher, even experienced ones must consider a number of things

before simply applying a technique or method. Amidst a number of considered questions depending upon the circumstance, it is important to know basic behavioral cues for alpacas and llamas, age of the animal, the history/background, to assess halter fit, any medical issues, the surroundings and observe the animal in action.

Alpacas and llamas are communicating with us all the time. They are keen observers of their environment and as do we all, they adapt to their environment. They are in constant communication with each other as well as with their human caretakers. I smile to consider that we humans seem much less skilled as both observers and communicators. The alpacas and llamas are quite clear. We often seem muddled and confused. Working with them, it is clear they express certain ideas about this or that and the way we are doing it. What are we expressing return? Are our own bodies communicating anything understandable - even to ourselves?

Understanding communication through our own body positioning is a key element. (View a full verbal and visual description of positioning at <https://www.gentlespiritllamas.com/>).

Before beginning, observe, ask questions and think through a possible approach and how best to communicate that through your own body. If using positioning and the alpaca or llama will not balance when you are in the normal balance position, use your intuition... often a step forward or a step backward will be the comfortable balance point for that animal. Have you deviated from that starting place to be for balance between you and your animal? Yes, you have. Was it wrong to do so? Absolutely not! It is important we honor our own knowledge in working with basic training approaches and feel free to alter them if needed.



As an example, I am often hired by farm and ranch owners nationwide to do private work with them and their animals. During the course of the day at one particularly large alpaca ranch, I was presented with four alpacas having serious kicking issues. Through observation and asking questions, it appeared the first two alpacas were of the more typical reaction. They simply did not care to nor were they used to having their legs touched. In this instance, a number of varied leg training approaches or techniques would likely be of success.

The third alpaca had had a leg injury. Though it was long since healed, the trauma-drama this alpaca associated with it remained. In this instance, it was particularly important to consider this alpaca's point of view. Would it work perhaps to apply one of the leg training techniques? Could we work with the three other legs hoping he might be more settled by the time we got to the fourth? Would one just proceed and feel the alpaca was unreasonable - just get over it? Would it be wrong or ill advised to make modifications to a particular approach or design your own approach for this particular alpaca? What might you do? We felt this alpaca was reasonable to still hold some concern around humans handling his formerly injured leg. We modified our approach in ways we hoped would work better in this instance.

The fourth alpaca appeared tense and quite nervous. He kicked at everyone and everything that came near him. Our observations combined with his history, behavioral cues and his positioning provided a clear answer. Do not work with his legs at all. His kicking was a very clear response to social crowding. The solutions were to move him to a larger area, make his current area larger, or reduce the number of alpaca boys in his current area. With the enlargement of his personal space, he simply stopped kicking.

Alpacas and llamas understand behaviors. They must - their survival may depend upon it. A component in understanding behavior is an understanding of intent. Intent is an aim, a purpose, or a state of mind at the time of action.

Alpacas and llamas must understand behavior and intent. They must know if the puma is stalking or just passing through. They seem to possess that same understanding of intent in relationship to humans. Walking through the barn with a long 2 X 6 over my shoulder, my husband calls to me. Not thinking, I whip around to answer with the board still on my shoulder smacking two llamas. Fortunately the alpaca right there was shorter, and I just clipped her ears. All three back up somewhat blinking their eyes in disbelief. I was beside myself with apology and they never felt to leave the area.

When I came through again with the next 2 X 6, you can be sure that they were on guard hoping that I would, indeed, keep my mind on what I was doing. However, everyone felt comfortable enough to continue to lie about the barn. Had I gone out to the barn with a 2 X 6 with the intent of smacking them, you can be sure they would have all left the barn in a hurry when I came back in with another board. They understand intent. I smile to add they clearly understand intent when we want to trim toenails!

Our job is to earn the trust of our alpacas and llamas. It is not their job to blindly trust. That trust builds each day as we become more observant, more aware and remain consistent in our own behavior. They know who we are. We have shown them while we are mowing the lawn, playing with the dog or having a barbecue on the deck with friends and family. They do not observe us only when we walk into the barn or through the gate into their pasture. If your normal and individual behavior is to move quickly, notice the change in your animals when you slow way down. How about those of us who normally move a bit slower? Should we rush about, somehow the herd usually feels the veterinarian is enroute! When we do innocently mess up now and again (and we will!), it is truly ok. They know we are only human and after all, humans aren't perfect!

## Llama Lunacy 2023

by Mary Wickman and Jim Roller



Llama Lunacy is an event for children of all ages to take a llama through an obstacle course – for free. The event takes place during Burro Days in Fairplay, Colorado.

We had great volunteer support for Llama Lunacy, which allowed us to help 141 participants to each take a llama through a colorful obstacle course. Volunteers included Mary Wickman, Diane Turner, Patti Morgan, Nicole, Mia, and Cody Brue, Bret and Bridger Roller, Stephanie Corr, and Ellen and Jim Roller. The last obstacle was a huge hula hoop which makes a great photo opportunity for the parents. Each participant received a ribbon and a coupon for free ice cream from the Silver Scoop Creamery after successfully leading the llama through the hula hoop.

This year we had a young girl who was blind and who successfully negotiated the course with just a little verbal support. Also a young man from Belgium went through the course – he was bicycling across the USA. The Llama Lunacy is a very good place for people to learn about llamas.

Thanks to Fred Huggins, Jim Roller, and Patti Morgan, we had five llamas for the obstacle course. Patti also brought three llamas for the Donor Alliance llama race.



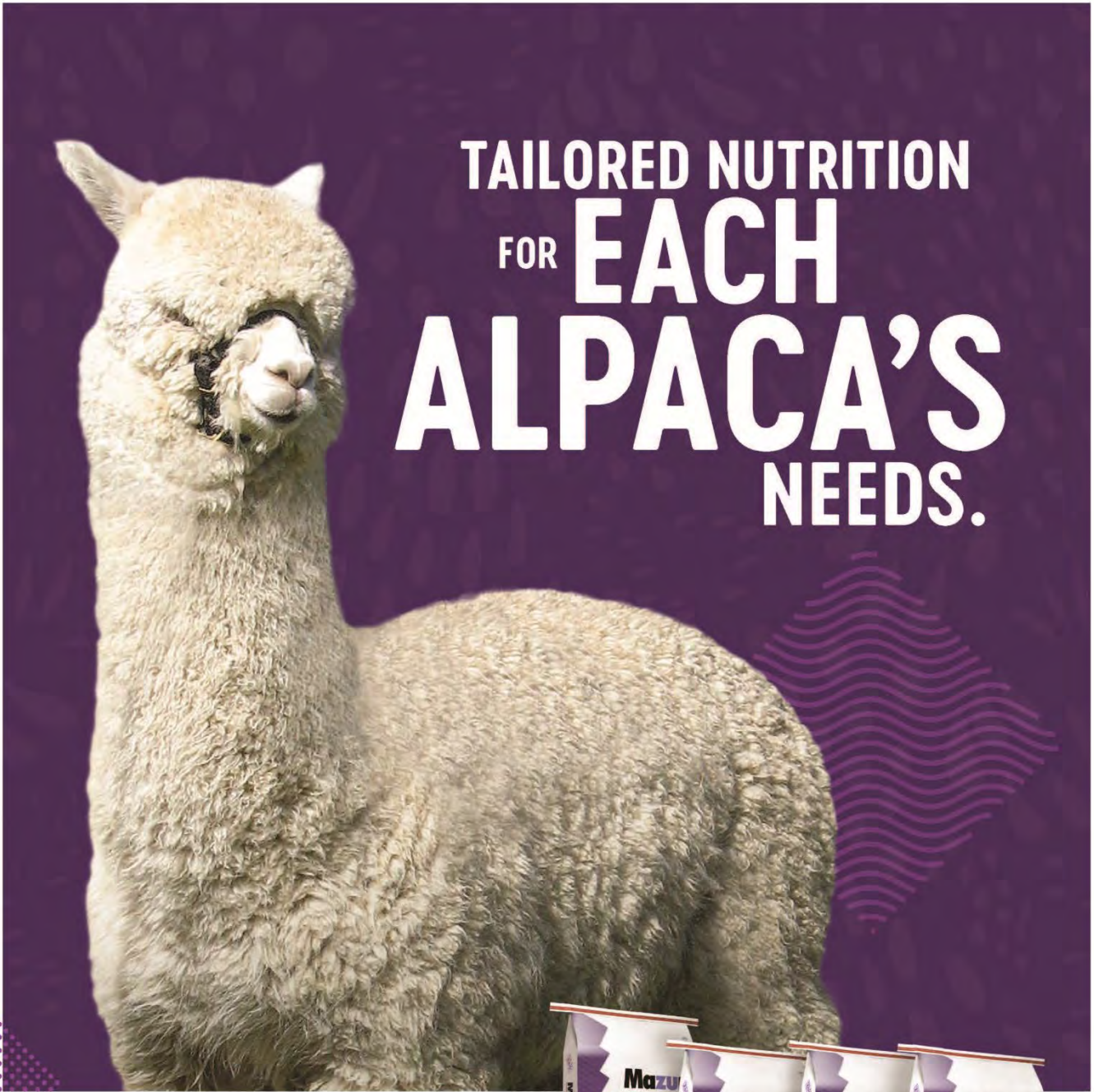
I would like to thank Julie Bullock and Barbie McBee of Fairplay for their support and help. Thanks to the Silver Spoon Creamery for their continued support every year. And to RMLA a huge Thank You.

If anyone would like to volunteer with us next year, it would be greatly appreciated. The organizers of the Donor Alliance also could use some llamas to use in a timed obstacle course and they will pay you for bringing llamas. For more information contact Mary Wickman, [mwickman1@gmail.com](mailto:mwickman1@gmail.com).









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## RMLA Youth Are Active

By Marilinn Sonneman, Dry Creek 4-H Club

The Dry Creek 4-H Club just wrapped up at the Adams County Fair in Brighton, Colorado.

We had a great time showing our llamas and alpacas. Lucy Goodman made it to the large animal round robin by placing first in the intermediate showmanship division. She then placed second, or reserve grand champion, in the round robin competition.

In the costume event, Charlie Romo wowed the judge with his costume of Tony and Luigi coming to collect. And Charlotte Goodman also made a delightful and patriotic showing in the costume contest.

We all look forward to more fun next year.



Lucy Goodman



Charlie Romo



Charlotte Goodman

## Llama Industry Needs Some Political Clout

Jane Robertson-Boudreaux

**Editor's Note:** This article was originally published in the July 1990 RMLA Newsletter.

I am speaking out about something which I feel is seriously affecting and hurting the llama industry as a whole. I realize some of you do not like the word *industry*, so substitute *community* if it helps, but please consider this issue.

As a naive new llama owner four years ago, I had the audacity to expect Rocky Mountain National Park to let me operate a commercial llama trekking business in the park. While my husband and I did get a special permit for two years, and it did help establish the fact that llamas on a commercial basis have low impact, it did not convince the Park Service to open Rocky Mountain National Park to commercial llama packing after our permit expired.

Even to obtain our permit we had to be “crucified and resurrected” at one ridiculous meeting of the horse liveryies, where the Chief Ranger invited us to introduce our program. After much shouting back and forth about llamas vs. horses, one old livery owner made an interesting threat, "I'll go to Congress about this!"

My first reaction was “So what? What can you do in Congress?” By the look on the Chief Ranger's face, apparently he or a horseman's association, had the potential to do a lot. While the Chief Ranger was firm in putting the hothead in his place, it was very apparent to me that government agencies live in fear of political encounters. This thought was confirmed when the Chief Ranger in another session with us said that he wanted to avoid any political problems with the horse-people, so we should cooperate as much as possible.

However, this is not an issue with horsemen, for I encountered the same respect for politics while doing an interview with the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) folks for a magazine article. It was soon apparent to me that although they liked having the llamas at the NWSS, they also catered to those organizations with the biggest voice politically—i.e., the cattlemen's and horsemen's, and other major stock associations.

The other stock associations get what they ask for when they come to the NWSS. Why? First of all, because the NWSS recognizes the use of sheep, cattle, and horses, but are ambivalent about llamas as a valid stock animal. But more importantly, because the cattle, sheep, and horse people have strong political factions lobbying in Washington on any issue they deem important to their respective industries. In my opinion, cattlemen rape the land, the horse people can intimidate us off the trails by threatening the government agencies; where can we turn for support to fight back? I would like to think it is our own ILA, but it is not. The largest llama organization does not have political power.

Further, it (ILA) does not seem interested in acquiring the same. While the importation issue is very valid, and much good work has been done on this, I think it is time we put some effort into building a strong llama industry, or community, or whatever you want to call us. This is a good example of our problem: we suffer a major identity crisis, for we do not even have a title in the livestock industry. More often than not, llama breeders are referred to as exotic animal owners. Kangaroos and ostriches are exotic; llamas were in North America before the horse!

It is my feeling that **we** as individuals and as separate llama organizations need to push the issue of acquiring political power in front of the ILA Board. We also need to write to our congressional representatives demanding that the llama be recognized by all government agencies as the low impact animal—good for the environment and thus the taxpayer's pocket—when it comes to trail maintenance. In addition, we must regroup and assess what we need when we go to large shows, but more than that be able to ask for it.



We are a small but growing industry in the livestock world. We are not a fad soon to fade away; however, this is the image the other livestock people have of us. If we do not soon organize our strength as a political entity, we could fade. Many of us are already questioning owning llamas in view of the inner fighting among several big breeders, the scandal about certain famous blood lines, and the greed around long wool over short wool, not to mention the endless hassle those of us who pack go through to get commercial permits.

While it is true that the llama industry is experiencing growing pains, we cannot use that as an excuse, or be smug about how special we are that we own llamas. We need to take action and unite as a respected part of the livestock community.

We should be able to say to government agencies that we also have a strong arm in Congress for what we want, such as, access to trails in national parks and forests, commercial permits without hassle, and to be able to ask for and get what we need for our animals to show at the National Western Stock Show or any other national stock show.

### **Follow-up: Llama Industry Needs Some Political Clout**

**January 1991 RMLA Newsletter**

by Jane R. Boudreaux

We still do not have any, but we are working on it.

Dr. Tom Bunting of the ILA Board has been working with a group that could be very influential in helping the llama industry as a whole. Recently, Dr. Bunting made a presentation to the USAHA (U.S. Animal Health Association) annual meeting in Denver, using an 80-slide carousel of llamas. The idea was to let this organization, which has a great deal of influence over all livestock industries, know that llama owners are alive and well--AND--take very good care of their animals. In addition, the presentation let them know the many uses of the llama. *-Continued on next page.*



The animal welfare committee meeting was where the talk was given, and according to Dr. Bunting, the group was very impressed, both with the llama owner's care of his animals and the uses of llamas. Dr. Bunting stated in his letter to me that, "the spirit of cooperation and plans for cooperative research projects was begun."

Bob Russell, also of the ILA Board, and Stanlynn Dougherty are working with a special packing committee within ILA to investigate what steps are needed for llamas to be inserted into National Park and BLM regulations.

If you have had problems getting llama packing permits into your area, you may want to contact Bob or Stanlynn for updated information on the progress of this ILA committee. This newsletter will also keep you updated as much as possible.

Hey, it is a start, folks! We have to raise the consciousness of MANY political/government organizations of the value of llamas. More importantly, we have to show that we refuse to be dominated by outdated rules and regulations, as well as old biases in favor of livestock other than llamas.

**End Note by Ron Baird, July 2023:** I believe the original article by Jane Boudreaux and the follow-up from 1991 are as relevant today as they were 30 years or so ago. In the mid-90's Walter Dabney, the Canyon Lands National Park superintendent, banned llamas in favor of horses. RMLA members and others sued the Department of Interior, which manages the National Park Service, over his action. By the time an agreement was reached by the Department of Interior to NOT ban llamas from lands it administers, other national parks and states had followed Dabney's lead. The vigilance and fortitude these members put forth on behalf of the entire llama community is, even today, the sort of action needed.

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## Woolly Tidbits

by Chris Switzer, Estes Park, CO

What is your favorite project to make from llama or alpaca yarn? What technique do you like to use ?

For me, it's SCARVES, handwoven. Sometimes I add touches of handspun in my warp on the loom. Often, I do 100% alpaca -- so soft. I have work for sale in two local galleries.

I also sell 2 oz. bags of our alpaca fleece in a variety of colors from our herd, and Paco-vicuña mill carded roving in brown. Both are handpicked and the fleece is hand washed, if needed.

Do you go to craft fairs and have a booth ? Do you demonstrate? Spinning or knitting is a draw for folks. It's important to encourage others, don't you think ? I love it when a child (usually a boy) is interested in how my hand Turkish spindle works.

Do you do hand carding ? If not, why not ? Clemes & Clemes is my favorite hand carder. There's also a roving carder, 4" wide or a drum carder, 8" wide which is especially good for making felted batts. I like to add bits of dyed mohair to alpaca on my roving carder. Cotton carders have wire teeth closer together which is good for fine Paco- vicuña.

It is a small world. Recently, we had a conversation with our grandson, Ben. He was visiting from Grand Forks, ND where he attends the university. On the flight to Denver, in the seat in front of him, he noticed a woman reading my book! He told her, "That's my Grandma's picture on the cover". They chatted a bit. It is a small world; it made my day. P.S. my book is for sale; see the ad in this issue of the Journal.



Switching gears....What is KEMP? (answer is at end of column)

Here's a list of vocabulary words : batt, blanket, carding, combing, crimp, down, fiber, fineness, fleece, guard hairs, hair, hand, huacaya, huarizo, lock, luster, manufactured, micron, natural, over the fold, paco- vicuña, phenotype, ply, rolag, roving, skein, staple length, skirt, staple length, suri, S twist, synthetic, tease, top, warp, weft, wool, woolen, worsted, Z twist. Do you know some of these words? The list comes from my book, p. 48.

Years ago, I purchased a small booklet about spinning dog hair. The author had several samples in it. So, years later, I was determined to put samples in my book; there are eight. Yes, it takes time, but it's what makes it my book. Lately, I've used my hand Turkish spindle to add some suri. It's so different from huacaya! In my book, you can see the differences between llama/alpaca and camel versus finer paco- vicuña. Have you tried them? It's fun to experiment. Remember to have a project in mind.

I wish we could spin together and exchange ideas !

Answer -- Kemp is the short bits (usually white) that's part of the fiber you're spinning.-- don't include it in your final product

**About the author:** Phil & Chris Switzer were on the founding committee for the Estes Park Wool Market over 30 years ago. In the forty years they raised alpacas, they had over 600 crias. Chris loves to weave with alpaca yarns.

## Dr. Temple Grandin: A Most Remarkable Woman

by Jane Hamilton-Merritt

*Editor's Note: From the May 2023 GALA Newsletter. Reprinted with permission.*



Quite by chance, I recently watched a TV interview with Dr. Temple Grandin, a woman with autism who successfully promoted more humane methods of handling livestock and offered profound insights on autistic life. Temple was speaking about her latest book *Visual Thinking: The Hidden Gifts of People Who Think in Pictures, Patterns, and Abstractions*.

Listening to the interview, I recalled the 2010 GALA Conference where Temple was our only keynote speaker and we held a book and DVD signing event. On the first night of the Conference, we

had the unique experience of previewing the then recently completed biographical film about her extraordinary life simply called *Temple Grandin*.

As we waited for the evening movie to begin, there was the usual clicking of members' knitting needles and whispers about whether Temple, who was in attendance, would approve of the movie and of the performance of actress Claire Danes who played Temple.

No need to worry. It was a memorable event. Our members loved it. Temple not only approved of the final product; she shared some of the prepping work done by the actress who spent time with Temple to try to understand autism.

The next day, Temple, wearing her iconic Western cowboy shirt, gave her keynote address focusing on how she saw animal behavior as an autistic person. The auditorium was packed. GALA had sold lecture tickets to the public as well as organizing a local bookstore to provide the book and DVD signing following Temple's lecture.

During the Q & A portion of Temple's keynote, someone in the audience asked about her shirt. Then someone wanted to know if she would sell it. Surprisingly, she said "Yes!"

Then, bidding chaos as bids came from various corners -- up and up went the bids. Then, Temple said she would sign it. This brought more bidding. The final bidding was narrowed down to two people -- Carol Reigh and Mary McGuire. Temple's signed black cowboy shirt went to Carol Reigh for \$1,000.

Temple apparently thought that Mary also deserved one of her shirts. She agreed to sell Mary another signed cowboy shirt for \$1,000. The money raised went to GALA for camelid medical research. Unfortunately Mary McGuire is no longer with us so we don't know what happened to her shirt.

Carol Reigh reports that this special and expensive shirt hangs in her closet. She admits that she wore it only once. However, she vows to wear it at the upcoming GALA Conference which will be held at the same Harrisburg, PA venue where this shirt story began in 2010.

Pat McKinney, GALA Member and a host to Temple during the conference, tells this visual thinking story: Pat's family owned an ice cream shop and she thought it would be a friendly gesture to bring Temple some of their specially made ice cream. At one point, Pat mentioned this to Temple, asking her what flavor she would like. No answer... only silence.

Pat waited anxiously but no response. Pat was thinking, "Oh, my goodness, what did I do to offend her? What do I do now?" Finally, Temple answered. Her response took so long, she explained, because she was visualizing every flavor of ice cream she had ever experienced in order to make a decision!

In an interview following the release of her latest book, the interviewer asked Temple: "Where does your connection with animals come from?"

Temple's intriguing answer: "I think it is because, like me, they don't think in words. They think instead through their senses. It used to be denied that animals had emotions, which has always seemed ridiculous to me. Back in my early scientific papers, I was not allowed to use the word *fear*. The reviewers made me call it *behavioral agitation*. That is slowly changing, but I think some of it gets down to verbal thinkers maybe finding it hard to imagine an animal can think and have feelings when they don't use words."

As this article goes to print, I learn that a documentary is soon to be released about Temple Grandin. Entitled *An Open Door: Life and Influence of Temple Grandin*. The trailer depicts Temple, now 75, reflecting on her life and accomplishments. And, yes, she is wearing her signature cowboy shirts!

# Update: Restoring Our Pastures

By Kathy Stanko

In the Fall 2022 Journal, I wrote a long article about the work we did to restore our pastures. I am here to report, that after two summers of hard work and diligence, we have made huge progress.

This year we did more seeding with the same mix as last year and creased the fields to make furrows for the irrigation water to flow through. We did not fertilize except for spreading llama beans in the field. We were fortunate to have a wet winter and irrigation water has been abundant this summer.

Living in what is technically a desert (i.e., less than 10 inches of rainfall per year), we feel totally blessed by Mother Nature. Now if we can have another winter like the last... hallelujah!



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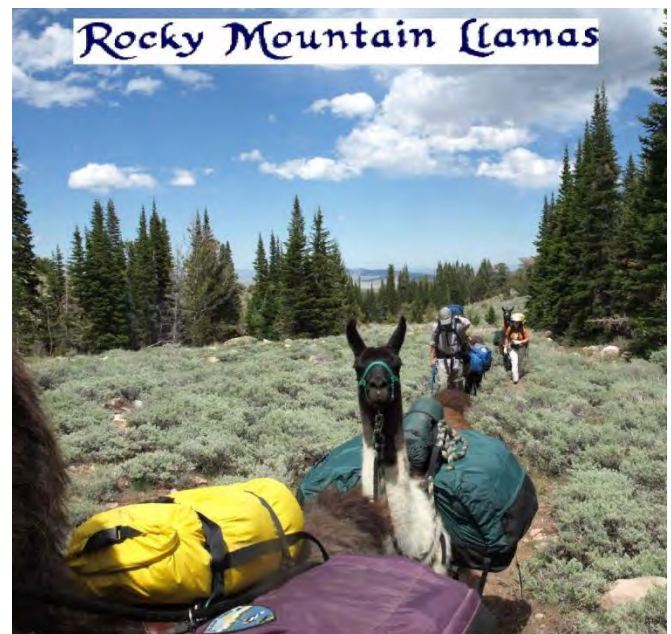
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## A Visit To The 2023 Higher Ground Fair

By Kathy Stanko, RMLA Member

*The Higher Ground Fair seeks to be both a place and an experience that nurtures the intersection of art, music, crafts, agriculture, gardening, local foods, culture, grassroots social action, holistic health practices and sustainable living – with a focus on the six Rocky Mountain states of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, and the Native First Nations of the region. (Excerpt from the [Higher Ground Fair](#) website.)*

The Higher Ground Fair is certainly all of this plus so much fun! I have wanted to attend this fair since its inception by RMLA Life Member, Gayle Woodsum a few years ago. This year the timing worked out. And since my husband Glenn did not want to go, I invited our good friend Sandy to travel with me. The fair is held at the Wyoming Territorial Prison State Historic Site in Laramie, Wyoming. We were only able to spend one day at the fair so we were not able to see everything.

Upon entering the Wyoming Territorial Prison Historic Site grounds, we were greeted with flags, the prison buildings and all manner of historic transportation. The history of the prison is fascinating. The volunteers from the state historic society are very knowledgeable and in-depth signage explains who the prisoners were and what they did to end up here. One building houses the equipment and supplies for making brooms which the prisoners made. Several of the volunteers still make brooms (sold in the gift shop) using the equipment on site.





Butterfly Goats, just because. These goats were by far the most well-behaved goats I have ever met. And it is a result of the hard work of the owner of the goat rescue center. Along with a lot of human interaction, putting butterfly wings on them is a great way to desensitize these wonderful creatures.



Sandy is thinking about getting goats!



Builders showed how to construct a geodesic dome which was raffled off at the end of the fair.



The Wind River Dancers performed a variety of American Indian dance styles, which includes men's traditional, grass and fancy feather and women's fancy shawl, jingle dress and traditional. All of the dance styles and dress were described and explained to us in order to share the Native American culture and heritage. At the end, we all danced together in a circle, a joining of peoples and cultures.

All of the musicians and performers were outstanding!



This area of the fair included a worm farmer, bakers, Feeding the Laramie Valley bus, and displays by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The blue bus is the latest addition to the efforts of Feeding the Laramie Valley non-profit. The bus is stocked with fresh fruits and veggies from the group's gardens, plus staples such as bread, rice, corn, and beans. It then travels to the most rural areas of the Laramie Valley.





RMLA has been a longtime supporter of the llama show and the Higher Ground Fair.



Getting the ribbons together for performance, showmanship, youth judging and fiber awards!



With an eye on the future, ALSA started the Youth Judging event where the youth judge the halter class. They then compare their rankings with those of the Judge.

Only a few bags of shorn fleece, but the fiber judge was kept very busy with the Walking Fiber class.





**This year, the daily parade was led by the show judge, Rob Knuckles. Any and all can join the parade. The parade goes through the tents and around the fairgrounds.**



**We didn't get to see and experience everything in one day, but we had an incredible time. A huge Thank You to Gayle Woodsum and all of the volunteers!**

