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FEBRUARY 2009

Interview with
Courtnee and
Robin Benson

Monastic
Fleece

Stressed Out!

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Walnut Ridge
LLAMA FARM & STORE

Agri-Tourism

The impact it has
made on our farm

SNDR Dulce Sophia
2008 NC Mtn State Fair Show
Grand Champion Suri Female

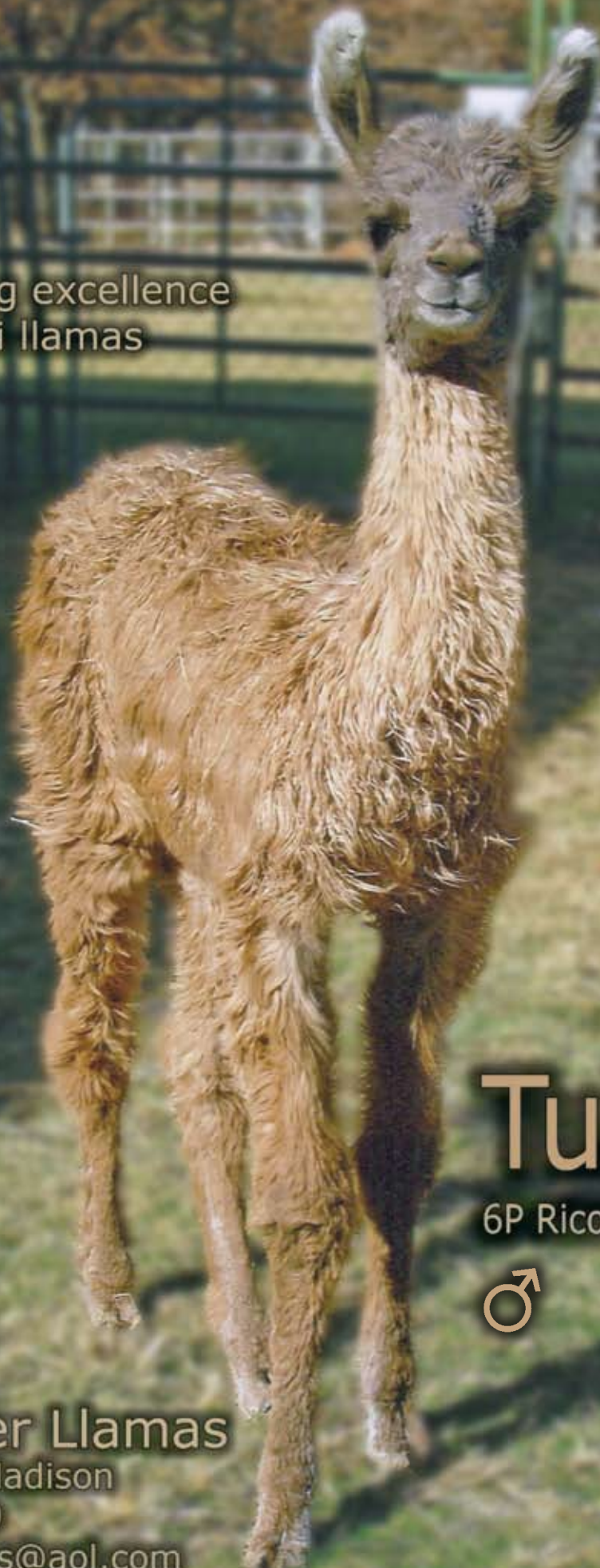
Marketing Ideas

What we have done to
dramatically increase sales

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4 & 5**

Celebrating excellence
in suri llamas



Tu Shay

6P Ricochet x Queen Celine



Leon River Llamas

Dean & Ann Madison

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21 ...We decided to have a dye day. This wasn't to be just **any** dye day... this was to be a **natural** dye day. Natural dyes are dyes that are obtained from animals, plants, or minerals. Natural dying also means that it's a **whole** lot more work

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Walnut Ridge

LLAMA FARM & STORE

"Breeding A New Generation of Quality Llamas"



Jerry & Carolyn

Living The Llama Lifestyle

Jerry and Carolyn Ayers are celebrating their tenth year living the "llama lifestyle." They live on a 19 acre farm in the small community of Chuckey located in the foothills of Northeast Tennessee with the Smoky Mountains in full view. Jerry has been a high school principal for the last nine years and Carolyn, a thirteen year veteran of teaching elementary school, retired early three years ago to manage the llama farm and store. They started out with two companion llamas in 1998 and now have a herd of silky and suri llamas that reached a peak of 60 llamas in the summer of 2007. Their llama sales have increased dramatically within the last five years reaching an all-time high of 28 llamas sold in 2007. Walnut Ridge Llamas & Store has been featured in several local and regional newspaper articles, Llama Crossing (online magazine), Llama Link, and Grit Magazine. They believe that a comprehensive approach to marketing will allow even small to medium farms achieve personal and farm financial goals. Debra and Brent Murray, llama owners who recently moved to Tennessee from Florida, joined the Ayers in a retail partnership called "The Llama Store."

Growing up in the Chuckey community, I spent many summers working on my grandparents' dairy farm. That experience influenced our decision to live on a farm and raise a variety of livestock. We purchased our first llamas in 1998, which changed our lives forever. Carolyn, originally from Jacksonville, Florida, was a certified city girl who rarely came to the barn unless baby animals were being born. The running joke around Walnut Ridge is "before llamas, I couldn't get Carolyn to come to the barn, but now I can't get her to come back to the house." Carolyn has definitely turned into a farm girl and would spend 24/7 with the llamas if she could. We have spent most of our married life of 30 years raising two children, working on college degrees, and educating children. Our shared passion for llamas has allowed us to find each other again, especially now that our two children are grown and I am approaching retirement years.

During the summer of 2000, we decided to upgrade our herd to more show quality llamas. We purchased the first members of our current foundation herd from Berry Acres Llamas (BAL). Dan and Dale Goodyear were instrumental in helping

us define our breeding philosophy and begin the development of a quality llama herd. Walnut Ridge Llamas currently has multiple Grand Champions and Best of Show llamas on the farm. Our herd of silky and suri llamas range between 50-60 llamas. We try to participate in 4-5 shows each year and attend most of the premium llama auctions, which include Celebrity Sales, LFA, and other production sales. The Walnut Ridge farm motto is "Breeding a New Generation of Quality Llamas." To be able to attain the standards of the motto, we have selected quality llama herdsires and foundation females that exhibit and produce the attributes that are important to the llama breed. Being educators, we are very interested in the genetic history of llamas. We research the bloodlines very closely before we purchase new additions to the herd. We believe in

the strong and true bloodlines of the past, which is why we purchased

Rising Star Antonio from the Goodyear's breeding program, **Piano Man** from the Milton's/Jones' breeding programs, and **Cornucopia (Silverspirit)** from the Gerkin's/Kennel's breeding programs. Blending these proven fiber-rich bloodlines with our current new suri bloodlines, such as **Dutch Flat's Rolling Stone** and **Windshire's**

Thunderous Applause (Newevo), has allowed us to enhance the quality of our fiber production and produce a marketable flashy look without sacrificing conformation. Our goal is to improve the quality of the silky and suri fiber in our



herd. The crias that we produce must have quality fiber on strong, correct frames with a body capacity to carry several healthy crias in the years to come.

Our passion for llamas has changed from a hobby in the early years into a true farm business. We raise llamas because we love the animals, but we have always felt that they needed to pay their way. We started out trying to follow what we called the "large farm model," but we lacked the assets and time to develop a national marketing plan of advertising, consignments, and procurement of high profile llamas. We just quietly visited farms and attended the premium auctions to build up a quality foundation llama herd with diverse bloodlines. We had to do our homework and couldn't afford to make purchasing mistakes. Although we have been raising llamas for ten years now, the last few years have been phenomenal in improved llama sales based on the size of our farm. I truly believe that we are on the edge of the next big boom in llama sales, and it will be led by the influx of baby boomers moving onto small farms. Four years ago we determined what our goals were as a couple and as a llama farm. We developed an action plan that allowed us

to market our llamas based on a "niche" that fit our personality and income level. We developed a comprehensive marketing strategy that involved regional and national networking, an online website presence, participation in online auctions, targeted advertisements, and a new concept called agri-tourism. Based on our research, we realized that we would have a better chance to promote the llama lifestyle and increase sales if more people visited our farm in person and virtually online. We believe that participation in national premium auctions and shows allow you to network with other llama farms. Networking is so important that we recently joined an online llama social network at LamaJournal.com. The sharing of ideas within the llama community provides the synergy to improve breeding

programs and increase growth of the industry. The traffic to our farm website has increased through the years directly influencing the growth of our llama sales. We also researched the merits of agri-tourism as an alternative way to increase farm income. We opened our farm up to the public as an agri-tourism site in the fall of

2005. Carolyn resigned from her teaching position to manage the farm and small store which was located in part of our house. We began to schedule field trips for local schools and church groups and had seasonal events at the farm. We did this for two years before deciding to build an actual store building on the farm. We wrote and received a matching agri-tourism grant for \$15,000 to help us build a 26x60 multi-purpose shelter that included an open pavilion area, retail shelter space, handicap accessible restrooms, a hand washing area, and an educational demonstration area. We opened the new store this fall (2008) with tremendous success. The store offers a variety of unique gifts including llama fiber/yarn, clothing made from llama/alpaca fiber, homemade soaps, honey jellies, llama gift baskets, pottery, woodcarvings,

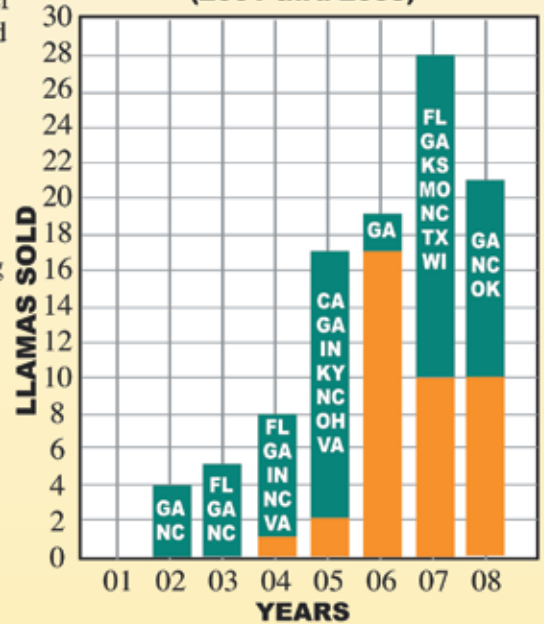


"I truly believe that we are on the edge of the next big boom in llama sales, and it will be led by the influx of baby boomers moving onto small farms"

and antiques. We have already hosted tour buses, church groups, school groups, and many individuals and families. We had a brisk Christmas season and are now preparing for spring activities on the farm. We are very excited about our future with llamas. If we can answer any questions or help you with your dream, just give us a call. And remember, with llamas as the vehicle, the possibilities are endless!

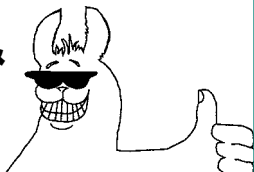


WRLF Llama Sales (2001 thru 2008)



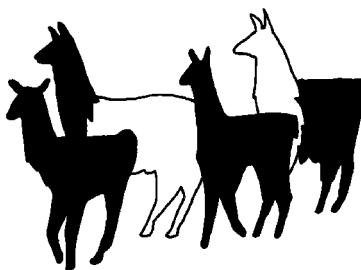
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Interview with Courtnee and Robin Benson of Sapaveco Ranches

by Sue Wilde

Hi Courtnee and Robin, welcome to the LamaLink. We are always happy to feature dedicated llama breeders in the Link.

Where is your farm, Sapaveco Ranches located? What is the meaning of Sapaveco? Your family was living in Austin, what prompted the move to the country?

Sapaveco Ranches is located in Florence, TX just north of Austin. We have a second location for family and friend recreation in Rocksprings, TX. Sapaveco comes from a vegetable packing and shipping company that was owned by my great grandfather in San Patricio County, TX. The name of the business was San Patricio Vegetable Company, or for short, SAPAVECO. He brokered and shipped vegetables out of Texas and Colorado. We wanted to use this name because of the nostalgia. My dad was always a country boy, raised in South Texas. After living in the city for almost 20 years we all felt that

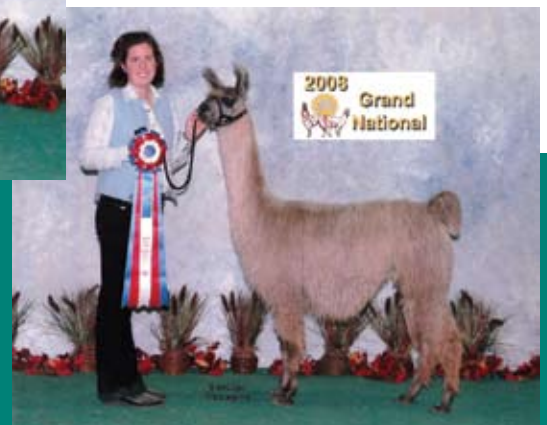
it was time to move to the country. We lived in Austin, but spent every weekend out of town at our lake house at Lake Buchanan, our Rocksprings ranch, or offshore fishing out of Port O'Connor. Robin owned a pet sitting business for 10 years while living in Austin and had to give it up when we moved. After so many years and so many good friends made, it was extremely hard for her to give it up. While living in Austin we always had a minimum of four dogs, a couple of cats, a rabbit, and fish in a pond, plus we were foster parents for the local SPCA – basically, whatever we could get away with living in the city. We even had a couple of baby goats living in our backyard for a while that would drink water out of the swimming pool. So, when we made the move to the country we knew we had to have some kind of animal.

You have been breeding llamas for only a few years, what made you decide

to choose llamas for your farm? What criteria did you use to choose your first llamas? What are you looking for in a llama for your program now? Do you two always agree on what llamas should be in the program?

Robin knew right off the bat that she wanted llamas. She liked the unique and exotic, yet gentle look they have. However, with our first purchase of llamas, we did not intend on showing, but just keeping them as companion animals. When we bought our first llamas, we did not purchase for great bloodlines, conformation, or fiber. Needless to say, we have learned a great deal. Now when we look to add a llama to our program we look for a complete package in the animal we are considering purchasing. It must have excellent conformation, the fiber type we want, size, disposition, good and reputable bloodlines that will benefit our breeding program. A great show record doesn't hurt. We are focusing on silky and suri fibered animals. Our silky main herdsire, MSF The Patriot, and our suri junior herdsire, SHAG Power Petrone, we feel we can accomplish our goals. Both males have amazing show records

Continued on page 8...



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and place at the top of their class on both the local and national level and they have the best dispositions. We want our females to be just as strong in the show ring as our males as to later produce the best offspring. I do a lot of research prior to deciding what we will purchase and spend countless hours doing this. When I show Robin something that we may be interested in, she knows I have done my homework on the animal and am serious about it. After we go over the different qualities of the animal, the show record, breeding record, etc., then we make our decision and we tend to agree. I feel we have made wise decisions on which animals to purchase to benefit our program.

Your website is very good and your photographs are great. Any tips on taking a good photograph for promoting your llamas?

I have spent a lot of time creating the website and playing with what looks the best. I think that a good picture really draws attention to the animal. Robin and I both take the photos for the website or advertisements we may do. First, we make sure there is nothing distracting in the background with minimal trees and no other llamas. I like pictures with green grass and a clear, blue sky so we always try to get our pictures done on nice days. The llama needs to look clean and groomed, but it's not necessary to have them show ring ready for the picture because not every speck of dirt is noticeable in a picture. Either Robin or I will set up the animal while the other snaps pictures. We always make sure the llama is posing at it's best – neck up, tail up, ears up, and correct foot placement. We want the llama to look it's best. When sending pictures to a potential buyer you should always stand next to the llama so they can get an idea of the actual height of the llama, too.



The show record you have on your site is more than impressive. What are your show ring secrets? Would you consider pursuing a judging certificate? What are the characteristics of a good llama judge?

We really enjoy showing and strive to show our llamas in a way that displays them at their best. First, we don't go in the ring nervous because it will travel right down the lead rope to the animal and cause them to misbehave. We always enter confident. Relaxing in the ring is not an option. We are always aware of where the judge is and always want to have the llama set up to paint the best picture to the judge. Before showing a llama we always evaluate it and know how to show it at its best – does it need to walk more slowly or quickly, will it allow the judge to go down the topline, etc. We work to teach our llamas to set up and then allow someone to rub down their topline. Grooming also plays an important part of presenting your llama. It needs to be neatly groomed and sheared in a way that shows off it's conformation. I really love grooming and shearing the llamas, so this makes getting ready for the shows fun for me too. I have considered pursuing a judging certificate and I think that will be something I may do in the future. However, I want to finish college first and learn my family's commercial landscaping company before I pursue the judging certificate. Robin and I both believe that a good llama



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judge looks at the entire llama. The judge should not focus only on the top line, leg movement, etc, but the entire package.

You and your mother Robin are a team in the llamas, what are your strengths that you bring to the venture? How are your dad and brother involved with the llamas?

We each bring valuable strengths to our llama venture. Robin does a lot of the every day tasks while I am at school. She also worms, vaccinates, grooms, and desensitizes and halter trains the young ones. We both agree on which llamas to breed together to produce the best offspring possible. Researching bloodlines and different llamas really interests me, so when we are thinking about purchasing a llama I make myself very familiar with the bloodlines and characteristics of the llama. We are each involved in the showing aspect. When we get ready for a show we usually try to get a system going. While my mom and our ranch hand brush or pick the fiber, I wash the ones they have

previously completed. This works out best and we can get the job done quicker. As far as running the business goes we each do our fare share. I handle inquiries, advertising, etc., while Robin inventories our supply of hay and grain and manages our ranch hand, plus has hands on every day with the llamas.

My dad, Mike, and brother, Connor, are very supportive of us. They each try to attend as many shows as they can. My dad usually ends up doing most of the driving when we go to shows or need to pick up llamas. They both also have a good eye for which two llamas bred together would produce a pleasing offspring.

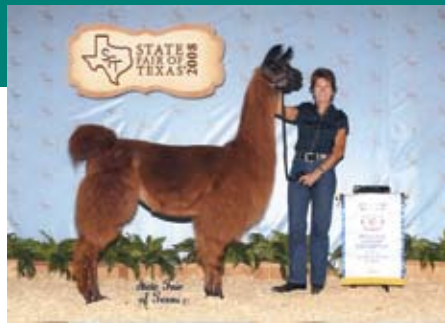
Your offer hauling and shearing services on your site. Where did you learn to shear llamas? What are some of your more interesting experiences with shearing? What should people do to get their llamas ready for shearing? What are you doing with your fiber?

I pretty much taught myself how to shear llamas. The first time we had our

llamas sheared we had someone do it for us and I watched him do a couple of them. It looked easy enough so I tried it on a few of them after I had ordered shears. The first shearing I did was a full body shear so lines and exactness didn't matter as much. When I sheared for our first show it was different because I had to make it nice and neat, but it still turned out good.

This past summer I offered shearing services around my area. I had quite a response. Everybody was able to bring the llamas to our ranch so I could put them in the chute (or attempt to) and make it an easier task. We couldn't believe the shape that these llamas came in. None of them had ever been on a halter so my mom and I got the wonderful job of putting a halter on these untouched llamas for the very first time. One lady came with two llamas she had rescued and I sheared them, did their toenails, and wormed them. We told her at the time that her female looked huge and her milk bag was full. She called two

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days later to let us know that she had a baby llama. Another gentleman came with his four llamas and he didn't understand how he started out with two llamas, but now had four! We explained to him that a female can get pregnant practically any day of the year. He was so surprised by this and wanted to know what he could do to keep this from happening year after year. He emailed a month or so later to let me know that he had a fifth llama.

If possible don't let the llama's fiber get into bad shape where it is difficult to groom them. If the llama is matted almost to the skin I would recommend cutting off this fiber with a pair of scissors or hand shears. Then, the llama can be blown out so the blades do not dull as quickly. Pieces of dirt and especially sand can dull blades extremely fast. We keep our llamas pretty clean at all times so when show time rolls around it's not such a job to brush or pick out all of the debris. This also allows us to save our fiber when we shear. When we have enough fiber saved up we are going to send it to Ingrid's in Paintrock, TX to be made into rugs.

You are learning to show in performance classes, what is the difference between training for halter classes and performance classes?

I have just started training a few llamas for performance classes. It's been a lot of fun learning how to do this and working with the llamas. When we purchased SHAG Power Petrone he was already trained for performance classes (thank you Michele!) and I wanted to continue with him. We have begun training a couple of young females that are doing quite well. The llamas have to respond to commands such as step or jump when going over the jumps in the course. They also have to know to stop walking and stand when the handler stops. Showing in halter helps with this because they already know to stop and set for the judge. However, I think that showing in performance will be very beneficial to showing in halter classes because it creates a stronger bond and a more trusting relationship between the llama and the handler. The llama has to be able to do more than walk around a ring when participating in performance. They have to be willing to go through different obstacles, carry a pack, and submit to handling. I'm looking forward to participating in the performance classes in the shows.

You have award winning llamas, how are you two promoting your program?

I have done extensive work on our website to get it up and running for advertising. I think it is a really good tool to show off all of our animals and our llamas for sale. With the website people can see what our breeding program is all about, the quality of animals we have along with their show records, and the bloodlines we have. I found many llama people and their websites from visiting other's websites that I found through links. I have also linked to other farm websites and I think that helps bring people to the website. We have also been doing advertising in Lamalink. We advertised in the herdsire spectacular issue to promote our main stud and our junior herdsires. We also advertise impressive show wins such as at Grand Nationals. We run a monthly business card ad as well. The llama magazine published by the SCLA in our region is the Humming Herald and we run ads in it as well. We have also advertised with American Livestock. We are members of LFA and SLA so our contact information is listed on those websites which may attract people. We have business cards at our vet clinic and several local feed stores from which we get phone calls. Meeting and networking with different people from across the United States is a great way to get your name out there. Participating in shows in our area and outside our area also garners recognition. We have our ranch logo and info on magnetic signs on the side of our truck and have been approached numerous times in parking lots – even out of state. We think at the heart of it all though (and this should be in any type of business) is trustworthiness and honesty.

You are studying biology at college to be a part of your family business of commercial landscaping, does this help with understanding llamas?

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With the biology classes I am studying I feel I am gaining knowledge that will be useful in understanding llamas. Some classes I am taking are Anatomy & Physiology and Plant Biology. The anatomy class gives me an understanding of how the body and body systems work in animals. The plant biology class covers topics on characteristics of different plants and where they are found which will help me identify the different grasses and plants the llamas eat. I feel like the plant classes will not only help me in the landscape company, but to decide on which plants to grow on our land that will supply our llamas with the best nutrition possible. This is going to become a real factor in the future as different parts of the country are put on water restrictions. Drought tolerant plants will become the norm.

As a young woman, Courtnee, entering the llama business what do you see as the important elements in the industry that will ensure sustainably and attract more young people to the llama world?

I don't know how many times I have heard whether it be from observers at a show, parade, etc. – "Gross, llamas, they spit!" I've also been asked at a show if my llama was an emu! I think we need to find a way to educate the public on these wonderful animals. I see the alpaca advertisements on TV and people have referred to those commercials asking if the llamas are alpacas. At the local level, the llama shows need to be advertised. It seems like we are in a barn with no spectators because there are no signs pointing the public in our direction. Getting 4-H and FFA kids involved in the llama showing is a great start to ensuring the sustainability of the llama industry. A way to attract more young people may be going to local schools or county fairs to promote the llamas. A feed store near us has a livestock day twice a year where people can bring their animals to have hands on with the public. Parades are another good tool. People love to see the llamas up close and ask questions. We participated in a Christmas parade where we educated people on the "positive aspects" of llamas. It's always fun to bring home friends that have lived in the city their entire lives and let them be hands on with the llamas. We usually halter a few of the girls and take them on a walk. They really enjoy it and hopefully they are learning a little bit about the llamas at the same time. You never know down the road where this could lead.

Excerpt from Robin: *I am extremely proud of Courtnee's accomplishments. She carries a full college load and maintains an A/B average in addition to the huge amount of time she devotes to the llamas. I'm a lucky mom.*

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The paddocks of Monastic Fleece

Interview with Fr. Abbot Ryan St. Anne, OSB of Monastic Fleece

by Lynda Carothers

Welcome to LamaLink.com and the Llama industry! Can you share a little bit about Monastic Fleece with our readers ?

Thank-you and it is truly a pleasure to visit with LamaLink.com. Monastic Fleece is basically new to the Llama world – but at the same time – the industry is not new to us. As a Roman Catholic Monastic community of Monks and Nuns, we have always throughout history been “self-providers” and “farmers.”

Our Monastic community searched for a “venture” if you will, that would allow us to contribute in some manner of farming, an investment process, and at the same time, preserve our Monastic identity. We also took into consideration that whatever we decided to get involved in, the project had to be a mission in which everyone at the monastery could partake. In other words, the project had to be multi-

functional to involve all members of the Monastic community. The llamas provide that outlet: raising & selling llamas, processing their fleece (in which the Sisters spin, weave and knit) and the all important aspect for organic farmers ... Llama Beans (which the Monks sell).

How did you choose to raise Miniature Llamas? Tell us about your herd.

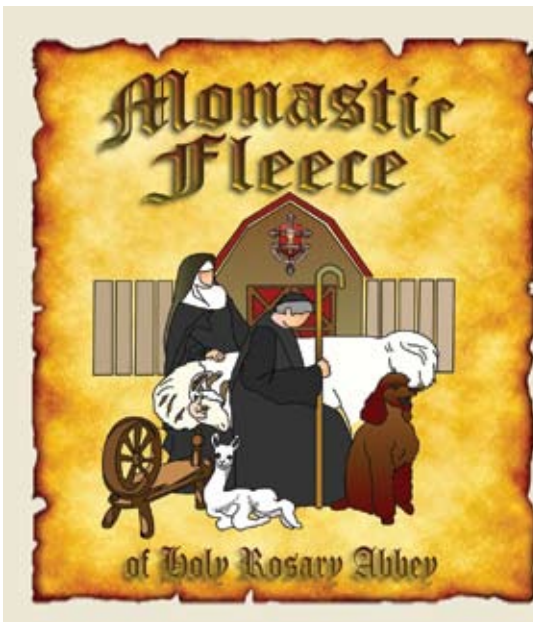
Being a Monastic community, we obviously resorted to our Monastic roots and asked for Divine Providence to intervene. I was actually searching the Internet for sheep when, as you know, one web-site leads you to another. I ended up opening a web-site and “SPLASH” ... right before my eyes was a little white Miniature Llama that was for sale. I could not look any further. This little girl just captured my heart. The problem was – she



Checking out the new baby

was 1500 miles away from the monastery – how would I even get her home?

After a couple of months of hoping and praying ... and everyone telling me that I was being somewhat ridiculous ... a Benefactor making a trailer available ... I made the trip to Virginia to pick up our little white “Josephina” and another bred female llama, named Rihanna. As I pulled into the driveway of The Fuzzy Farm I was met at the gate by Josephina and Rihanna ... just standing there as if to



Gentle creatures, lovingly raised by gentle souls.


Miniature Llamas

We are humbled to share the joy and beauty of these lovely creatures.

Blessings to All,,,

www.MonasticFleece.com
Galesburg, IL
shepherds@monasticfleece.com

www.TheFuzzyFarm.com



Gloucester, VA

Alpacas, Argentines & Minis...Oh My!

Rich & Gayle Dumas
804-815-6459
gumas@hughes.net

say: “welcome.” Not wanting to exhibit my complete excitement and awe ... I got out of the truck trying to hold back the joy



Above: At six months of age, Josephina wins her second Grand Champion

Right: Josephina at the 2008 ALSA Nationals



Brother Francis—90 years old

that was pulsating my chest.

On the way home from that trip – I stopped at another Miniature Llama farm, The Very Little Llama Farm and purchased two more! I was hooked. There was no stopping me now. I then made a trip to Minnesota to Minnesota Mini’s – four more! I am now up to eight. And now ... just a few months later ... Monastic Fleece is the proud owner of twelve Miniature Llamas.

After owning llamas for just a couple of months, you were showing at the ALSA Nationals. How was that experience?

That is like asking “are you a proud father” (no pun intended) ... It was simply amazing. Here we have this magnificent 5 ½ month old little girl who has already proven herself as a Grand Champion ... what can one say? She gives of herself

so freely to whatever the situation. She has traveled from one end of the United States to the other in such a short period in her life ... and she still gives! That is what owning a llama is about. Josephina gives unconditionally the example of what we all should be doing – and she gives with unreserved trust and love.

How have the llamas changed the lives of those living at Monastic Fleece?

The Monastic’s went into this venture in the beginning purely as a financial investment and a way of support for the monastery. What it has turned out to be – is something that I never dreamed or imagined or expected! The llamas have

brought the entire community together in a way that no Abbot could ever do ... and they did it in such a short period of time.

One of our members (90+ years old) had not been outside in the back yard of the monastery in over four years. The Sisters brought the llama inside the monastery and was walking down the corridor when they ran into our Venerable Brother Francis (Mr. Frankie). I can’t explain or tell you what caught me first ... but I saw eyes that lit up like sunshine and a smile as wide as he was tall ... and there he was ... holding on to that little llama with such blissful joy ... giggling and clamoring all at the same time. He has now been outside in the paddocks ... fresh air ... a smile on his face ... and joy in his heart. No amount of money could ever replace that encounter.

Whether you are the youngest member of the monastery ... or the oldest ... everyone is a part of Monastic Fleece in some way or another ... all sharing the peace and the joy that these little creatures of God have brought into our hearts.

Continued on page 16...



Josephina & Rihanna

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LLAMA FUTURITY ASSOCIATION

Highlights from the 2008 Llama Futurity Association World Championship Show and Sale



High Selling Female
Lot 22 Overman Kameo & cria
*consigned by Doug & Kamala Overman of Overman Farm
purchased by Keith & Patti Wattigney of PK's Llamas*



High Selling Female
Lot 9 MSF Jewell's Noel
*consigned by Mark & Susan Smith of Mark Smith Farms
purchased by Lew & Jennifer McGinnis of Superior Farms*



High Selling Male
Lot 51 Hightower
*consigned by Lew & Jennifer McGinnis of Superior Farms
purchased by Barbara Reinecke of LaMara Spring Llamas*

FUTURITY



Class #1 Amateur Males
DPDL Sundot
Breezy Acre Llamas/Angela Rumbaugh



Class #2 Amateur Females
Wild Ridge Unchained Harmony
Wild Ridge Llamas/Kristy Murdock



Class #NB1 Non Breeder
RLL Arbolado
Sugar River Llamas/Ali Soukup



Class #S1 Males
Perfection's Ducler
Perfection Llamas/Deone Townsend



Class #S2 Females
Heylee
Wild Oak Llamas/Mary Adams



Class #S3 Males
KHL Casino's Royale
Baker & Company Llamas/Barb Baker



Class #S4 Females
Star Queen Pristine
Hard Rock Llama Co/Mike Gerken



Class #1 Males
GNLC Full Tilt
Wilkins Livestock/Westerham Farm

**Mark your calendars - The 2009 LFA World Championship Show & Sale
September 18-20, 2009 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa**

**Futurity Results
Continued**



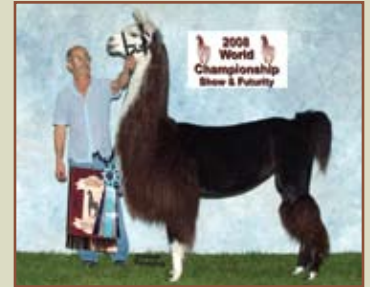
Class #2 Females
Tijara
Hid-N Hills Ranch/Pam Jensen



Grand Champion Suri Female
CTW Starlite
Catawissa Llamas / Larry Kisner



Grand Champion Suri Male
Hidalgo
Tai' Chi Llamas / Cheryl & Holly Russell



Grand Champion Light/Medium Wool Female
Tootsie SSRMT
Northwind Farm / Robert LaMorte



Class #3 Males
LUA Wyoming Status
Lash's Unique Animals/Tami Lash



Grand Champion Light/Medium Wool Male
ALCL All Jacked Up
Log Cabin Llamas / Debbie & Ulin Andrews



Grand Champion Heavy Wool Female
WLK La Tida
PK's Llamas / Keith & Patti Wattigney & Marcelo Sanchez



Grand Champion Heavy Wool Male
Starrmaker
Rain Dance Ranch / Ken & Celia Austin



Class #4 Females
MHF Sirius Style
Margaret Fowler



Grand Champion Non-Breeder
MBL Radar
Rishel Llamas / Patricia Rishel



Champion Get of Sire
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Produce of Dam
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Maplewood II / Cassie Miller

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...Continued from page 13

I know individuals that have exhausted thousands of dollars and several years in therapy and stress relief management techniques. My counsel ... save yourself a lot of time and money and get a llama (take two ... they're small) ... you will never have a therapist as proficient or effectual as these little creatures.

How do you see your future with the llamas and the llama industry?

For the members of Monastic Fleece, the monastery, the Miniature Llamas are God's answer to so many years of prayer. The llamas are the future of Monastic Fleece and the monastery. Other than our spiritual life and responsibilities, the llamas will impart not only an income for the monastery, they will reach out and bestow an opportunity for us in providing a true meaning, sense of joy, and peaceful heart to all those who they come in contact with. Evangelization if you will ... but to us ... a simple channel that God has in providing for all our needs.

For the llama industry ... I see a positive future. A future built on friendships, a melodious touch in the hearts, and a stable and impervious financial investment. God did not put these little creatures into our lives to cause suffering and pain. He put them into our lives to impart the missing link between God and man ... a true ardor ... a true joy ... and just a few (amazing) side benefits along the way!

.....

For more information on the Monastery visit their website at www.monasticfleece.com or email them at shepherds@monasticfleece.com. Thanks so much for visiting with us and we wish you the best in your miniature llama venture!



One of the Monks
Carding the fiber



Sister spinning



Our "Monastic Fleece" in process

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Stressed Out! You're Not Alone...

And Neither Are The Alpacas & Llamas!

by Cathy Spalding

One dictionary defines stress as an action: "to place emphasis on; to accent." Another describes stress as being "any deviation from the accustomed environment." Dr. Hans Selye, renowned for his work on the subject, described stress as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it." Synonyms for the word "stress" include consideration, priority value, seriousness, anxiety, imperativeness, nervous strain, tense and tautness. Do any of those descriptive words feel familiar to your mind and body? They certainly do for me. Without a doubt, neither you or I... or the alpacas and llamas... are alone! A familiar discussion of humans and stress can lay a

foundation for understanding how it is our camelids might react to stress.

The forward movement of time has just moved us through yet another fast paced holiday season. Lurking amidst the genuine excitement and joy can be a number of stress triggers both obvious and subtle. The obvious may be financial considerations, traffic, shopping in crowded malls or perhaps the feeling of inviting more visitors and/or visiting more different places in a few short weeks than we may have experienced over the entire previous 11 months. The more subtle and less obvious can include the rearrangement of our living environment. Our favorite mantel clock, oriental wood carving,

rocking chair – those personal items we enjoy viewing and experiencing in our daily lives – are necessarily moved aside to make room for holiday decorations. This disruption of the habitual and comfortable norm in our daily environment can make a significant, yet often quietly unnoticed, contribution to stress levels.

While we all could freely acknowledge that the holiday season can bring on notable stress, what might be some ongoing stress triggers during what would seem our more "normal" times of the year? Some triggers are obvious such as moving, divorce, loss of work, death,

Continued on page 18...

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...Continued from page 17

weddings or serious illness. To a lesser degree there are situations such as waiting in long lines, co-worker issues, dental appointments, project deadlines and the flat tire. What might be some of the more subtle stress triggers? There are many. It could be the addition of a new puppy, shift in the weather or changes in diet. Some feel stress when on vacation or when a partner takes an unexpected day off.

We are all familiar with stress in humans. Dr. Hans Selye – known as the



Alpacas at their social best!

“father of stress” – first wrote about the idea of a stress syndrome in the British journal, *Nature*, in 1936. It described the process through which the body confronts stress. He explained that the body passes through three universal stages of coping. There is initially an “alarm reaction” wherein the body prepares itself for “fight or flight.” As this higher level/condition of excitement in the body cannot be ongoingly sustained, a second stage begins by building adaptation and resistance to the stress. If the particular stress continues over a longer period of time, the body will enter the third stage of exhaustion and eventual breakdown. Chronic stress changes chemical blood levels in the body that can have a very significant effect upon the ability of the immune system to appropriately function at healthy levels. Not all stress is detrimental to the body. Dr. Selye’s definition of stress being the nonspecific response of the body to any demand includes situations such as the body response to a good physical workout. A stimulus that may be pleasurable to one individual could be very stressful for

another. For me, a ride on one of those colossal roller coasters comes to mind!

Stress in Alpacas and Llamas

How does stress and the stress syndrome relate to our alpacas and llamas? They are prey animals and will react behaviorally in the fright-flight sequence of fright, flight, fight, freeze and faint. The fright-flight sequence follows the stages Dr. Selye’s stress syndrome.



This alpaca clearly displays signs of stress in her face.

Alpacas and llamas are social within their herd and seem to enjoy routine – even rely upon it. Within a herd there are typically ones who are constantly on the look out and act as guards. They are always the first – and in many cases the only ones – who will sound the alarm call. Some are really great moms. They will look after all the herd crias often times paying special attention to the young ones of less attentive mothers. There are the wise ones, the leaders, the followers, the elders, the middle aged, the young, the vocal, the quiet, the shy and the aggressive... all fitting together in some understood “family” dance within the herd. As with our human families, some relationships are not always easy to bear. Alpacas and llamas have individual likes and dislikes including individual herd mates. Herd specific dynamics as well as our human management can work to create a chronically stressful situation for an animal. Chronic stress and the resulting suppression of an animal’s immune system results in much higher vulnerability to disease and infection, even death. Over the years, there have been many cases of gastric ulcers in alpacas and llamas. A number have resulted in death. Veterinarians report the cause as most often due to stress.

What might bring about stress in the lives of our alpacas and llamas? It is important to recognize chronic stress which is long term and ongoing as opposed to acute stress which is short term. Chronic stress could include being the recipient of abuse from another herd member, a very young alpaca or llama losing its mother whether by accident or design, an ongoing unsanitary environment or continual changes in herd dynamics.

Herd dynamics can be a strong source of chronic stress when remaining in a more constant state of flux with ones coming and going through purchases, sales and various breeding arrangements. Did one’s mother, offspring or best buddy suddenly vanish through a sale? Did another simply disappear for an outside breeding? How might the herd dynamics shift in their absence only to shift once again with their return? If they had a job within the herd – as look out/guard, for example – has another necessarily filled that position? Will it shift back to the way it had previously been or have things changed enough in their absence to alter their relationship within their own herd environment? Have new animals joined the herd? Did they join during the absence of other herd members? What about pasture groupings? Which animals seem to group together? Is one animal always with some and never with certain others? Is this a consideration as we move around and arrange our animals in various paddocks and pastures?

Sources of stress for alpacas and llamas are varied. Varied, too, is the individual behavioral response expressed as the result of a particular stress. Acute stress can occur out of situations such as the birth, illness or death of a herd mate, stud testing of females, performing an in-the-field necropsy, travel, veterinary and herd care tasks, training, shearing, weaning, shows, thunder storms and extreme weather changes.

Can we eliminate stress in the lives of our alpacas and llamas? It would not seem any more possible to do that for them than it seems to be to eliminate it within our own lives. It is, however, important to recognize the possibility of stress in any given

Continued on page 20...



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...Continued from page 19

instance. We can then do our best to mitigate it. There are a number of behavioral cues displayed by alpacas and llamas indicating they are feeling stress. The most easily observed are excessive humming, irregular breathing, tense muscle wrinkles about the face and self imposed isolation from the herd. Less recognized cues include sweating, clamped tail, stomping feet, grinding teeth, burping, holding the neck very stiff and tight, drooling, standing out of balance and a tight or drooping lip. As do humans, alpacas and llamas differ from individual to individual in their ability to manage stress. It is important to consider each individual personality. As examples, some alpacas truly seem to enjoy the show environment while others appear unable to adapt no matter how many times they do it. Not all llamas enjoy packing or have the personality to serve as a guardian/sentinel for other animals. Recognizing and understanding the behavioral cues expressed by our alpacas and llamas is essential information to our ability to



Notice the facial tension and taut lip displayed by this llama.

mitigate and maximize stress in their environment. If we recognize it, we can act upon it. It is a critical piece of the whole in our overall herd management for the long-term health of our animals.

A statement by Dr. Hans Selye gave me pause: "Stress leaves an indelible scar, and the organism pays for its survival after a stressful situation by becoming a little older." After some thought, I feel to add "and perhaps a little wiser, too."

LLAMAZING WISDOM



"Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one."

— Dr. Hans Selye (1907-1982)



"The process"

Why Live In A Colorless World When You Can Dye

by Laura Harrawood
Show Me State Mini Llamas

I belong to a small group of fiber addicts called the Rural Missouri Spinners. We have been together for about 20 years. Hard to believe. We have, at some point, owned almost every fiber animal ranging from bunnies to yaks..... yep, Charlotte has yaks. For some reason we never thought there were any limitations on our fiber ambitions and our group even made a yurt. The yurt has long since been dismantled and recycled or eaten.. (by moths) but lives on in myth and memory.

We decided to have a dye day. This wasn't to be just *any* dye day.... this was to be a *natural* dye day. Natural dyes are dyes that are obtained from animals, plants, or minerals. Natural dying also means that it's a *whole* lot more work. Unfortunately, it seems anything that is valuable and worthwhile is always more work. We hadn't organized a natural dye day in years so we all got pretty excited. For us, natural dye days are always more fun because we aren't that good at it and our results are usually a serendipitous surprise. Most of us don't care what colors

we get as long as they are colorfast. Colorfastness is my only "have to".



More natural dye results



Beautiful colors achieved with natural dyes

Getting ready for a dye day is not easy. First of all a group of independent, strong willed women have to agree on colors and dyes. Second, we needed to make our day worthwhile so we planned to dye 10 pounds of fiber per person (sanity prevailed though and we eventually settled on 5 pounds each). Third, we needed to agree on a location (my farm) and last but certainly not least.... the food. Every one needed to prepare their 5 pounds of fiber by soaking and heating it in a particular mordant. A mordant is a substance that when combined with dye fixes it to a fiber. This mordanting task is labor intensive in itself. We used very safe and easy mordants like iron and alum.

By the time dye day arrived there were a lot of complaints from the group about how much work this was, how much younger we were the last time we

did this, how we understand why synthetic dyes were invented and *again* how much work it was. My friend Linda was in charge of organizing the colors and deciding in which order to dye. If you want an

orange color, you need to dye your fiber yellow first then dip it in the red but we didn't want to contaminate the red dye pot until we are all sure that those who wanted a pure red color got their fiber dyed first... then those who want orange put theirs in.....can you see where this is going? Dye day actually did start out to be fairly civilized until we got tired and then it was anarchy. People were dipping fiber here and there without any semblance of order. As soon as it became apparent that no one actually cared what color they got or how they got it..... it became a free for all and a lot more fun.

White fiber was not the only "color" that we used to dye. Cream colors, greys,

Continued on page 22...



Olive drab from osage orange and iron



This over-dyed yarn started with a light brown llama fiber

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...Continued from page 21

light browns, shades of medium browns etc. can all be over-dyed with a color. The natural color of the fiber changes the effect of the dye on the fiber. I think some of the most beautiful colors are achieved by over-dying.

Linda wanted to keep a detailed record of what mordant and dye made what color and what combination of dyes made certain colors. But yarn and roving ended up in pots that were supposed to be kept pure without mixing colors. Linda finally gave up her badge as dye police and joined in the chaos.

Things I learned about natural dyes:

- natural dyes, no matter what color, look beautiful when combined with other natural dyes.
- natural dyes can be expensive i.e.: madder root, logwood, indigo.
- natural dyes can be free for the labor i.e.: onion skins, coreopsis, black eyed susan, osage orange.
- priorities change the older you get. success is relative.
- items that are dyed with natural dyes are never priced high enough.
- and never, NEVER underestimate the process (spending time with friends) or become too focused on the outcome (the perfect shade of aubergine or burnt orange).

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Extreme Makeover: Llama Edition



by Sue Wilde

America is awed every week by the amazing transformation of homes across the country. We view the process of the transformation with eager anticipation of the wonderful outcome of the efforts of the makeover team. We celebration with the recipient of the hard work and ingenuity of the team and we rest a little easier know that they are happier people.

Well, let's look at this a little closer!

- There is a focus, a goal
- There is a measurable plan
- There is location that is suitable
- There is reward for the effort
- There is a time frame

Now, let's get SMART about our extreme maker over: llama edition!

S Specific: Make a specific goal for your business. I will: Update my website, choose 2 locations to run effective ads, contact past, present and possible future buyers.

M Measureable: Make goals measurable. I will: Post at least 20 new photos and updates, create 2 effective ads whose responses I will record, I will reply promptly to all replies to my contacts.

A Attainable: Make sure you can achieve these goals realistically. I can: Update my website myself or hire a reasonable company to manage the updates, create my own ads or advertise with a magazine that includes ad set up in their pricing, I can use a computer, telephone or send an email out to my contacts.

R Rewarded: You will feel a sense of accomplishment as you have now finally taken the initiative to do it rather than just think about doing it. You will see results in your business.

T Time oriented: Set a time limit on your goal. This will be accomplished by Friday of this week.

Whenever you see a successful llama program, building project or career, believe me there is a SMART plan behind it. These days we need to be smarter than ever about planning to be successful. Our drive down easy street has gotten a little harder to navigate so we need SMART route planning to get us to where we want to go.

There is a company that was started by a group of women that were trying to save money and run their homes more efficiently called Smart Cookies. I am taking some inspiration from them and trying to change some of my ways to be more effective and efficient because playing it SMART pays off for all of us and we can be in awe of the transformation that our makeover, "llama edition" will be like and we will rest a little easier knowing we are happier with our efforts and results!

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To Coach

by Sue Wilde

To Coach...comes from the root meaning “to bring a person from where they are to where they want to be,” David Cottreal.

“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others,” Jack Welch.

A leader is key. The United States has invested the last two years to choosing a leader. All of the men and women that were “willing to walk the line” to be the leader, were people of integrity and with a willingness to serve. Their platforms were based on programs to make things better for all. All those running were ordinary individuals who went from where they were to where they wanted to be. “It’s your attitude, not your aptitude, that determines your altitude,” Zig Ziglar.

Who are the leaders in the llama industry? Right now people are voting for new people willing to serve on the Llama Futurity Association board. Thank you to all of you! The LFA is an association that is open to all llama breeders and works for the promotion of all types of llamas. LFA is an inclusive group that works for the promotion of llamas on an even playing field. They support ALSA shows and futurities. The volunteers that work on the LFA board are coaches. They want to take the industry from where it is to where it wants to be.

The ILR, ALSA, SLA, regional associations, local clubs are not names, they are people trying to take us to where we want to be. These associations

are centered on growing others and helping them grow their devotion to an animal that attracts good people.

We can subject ourselves to the negativity that pervades all aspects of life and the llama industry but why would we when there is so much positive to embrace. Llamas evoke feelings of compassion, caring and admiration. I have never felt malicious, unkind or subversive when I am with llamas. Llamas just want to be cared for and that requires caring people.

“It is the nature of man to rise to greatness if greatness is expected of him,” John Steinbeck. Llamas expect greatness from us. They expect that we will treat each other respectfully. They expect that we will co-operate with each other for their good. They don’t expect us to be petty, back biting and cruel. They expect us to be honest, caring and supportive. This is expected of us and



we can a rise to this for them. Believe me, your llamas only want to be associated with the good ones!

Albert Schweitzer said, “Do something wonderful, people may imitate it!” Who are we trying to emulate? Are all our leaders perfect? Do they know all the answers? Of course not! But at least they are trying, we owe them our support. Michelle Sedas, offers this advice: “The way we respond when others make mistakes can cause them to feel ashamed or can allow them to remember our kindness and share our stories with future generations.”

We don’t want to stay in the same place, we want to progress! We want to go from where we are now to be where we want to be. The llama people we feature in our Linking Up section are those who love their llamas, are enjoying their llamas and are moving from where they are to where they want to be. They are positive, respectful and caring.

The final word is from a man who knows about coaching and leadership:

Just play. Have fun. Enjoy the game.
Michael Jordan



WHERE TO BE

- **January 23, 2009 SCLA Select Llama Sale Friday at 6:00 pm**
Held in conjunction with the Ft Worth Expo and Stock Show. For information go to www.sclasale.com or Ft Worth entry info www.fwssr.com. The sale consist of 50 select lots and is the longest running association sale. Sale info contact Steve Berry — berry_patch@itexas.net, 817-279-6725.
- **Feb 7-8, 2009 Golden Plains Llama Association's annual conference**
4-H building, McPherson, KS. Agenda includes a variety of fiber classes, basic llama training for FFA/4-H youth, veterinarian presentation on breeding and birthing, activities for younger children, silent auction and much more. For additional information, please contact Chairman Pam Young, 620-465-2379 or jpalpaca@havenks.net.
- **March 21 & 22, 2009 3rd Annual March Magic Level III Double Casual Llama Show.**
Relax ~ Fun ~ Casual ~ No Groom ~ Low Entry Fees ~ Great Awards. Hosted by Llama Association of Southern California (LASC) Location: Antelope Valley Fairgrounds, Lancaster California. We will be offering all 4 wool divisions, driving, novice & advanced performance. All 3 youth age groups. Walking and shorn fleece will be a single show. March Magic had to be moved this year from the Fairplex in Pomona due to fairgrounds construction. This year's new facility is fully covered. No Rain Worries. Our show this year will be in conjunction with a Home and Garden Show. Show judges: Mark Smith ~ Senior Level Judge, Mary Jo Miller ~ Senior Level Judge Margaret Ricci ~ Level Judge Contact: Ken Sutton 760-240-6878 or SewSew25@aol.com or Tracey Wallace 909-792-3711 or DandT22@aol.com
- **April 3-5, 2009 - Spring Celebration Llama Sale, Heritage Place, Oklahoma City, OK.**
Tom & Nancy Simmons and Tim & Teresa Vincent have turned over the lead rope to Dan and Marilyn Milton after 20 years of putting on the Spring Celebration Llama Sale. 2009 will again see Shawn Norman's Grand Slam Llama show on Friday, the preview and sale will be on Saturday and the World Futurity on Sunday. Look for some new and exciting additions to the weekend's events. It is time to look over your herd and select your best for the grand slam show, sale, futurity and herd sire row. Contact Dan or Marilyn Milton at dmmilton@charter.net or 541-899-8097 for more information on the 2009 Spring Celebration Llama Sale.
- **April 17-19, 2009 Central Kentucky Llama & Alpaca Show & Expo.**
ALSA sanctioned show held at the Central Kentucky Ag/Expo Center in Liberty, Kentucky will have vendors, Industry information booths, "show cut" shearing available for \$15 an animal, walking fiber classes for llamas & alpacas and free farm information display areas adjoining the arena on a "first come basis". Exhibitors are encouraged to market their animals, stud services and farm products at the event and KLAA will be advertising the show & expo statewide to bring in spectators. Other events will be fiber classes, photo and poster contests, silent auction, "ask the vet" session on Sunday and "ask your fiber questions" on Saturday with our fiber judge. Show superintendent, Helen Farley, 865-922-5844, farley42@tds.net. Halter judge, Debbie Shellabarger, fiber judge, Susie Smithers. For free vendor spaces contact, Charlotte Beaudin, 502-857-9100, dbeaudin14@hotmail.com
- **May 2 & 3, 2009 Badgerland Sweepstakes and ALSA show**
Jefferson County Fair Grounds, Jefferson, WI Largest LFA sponsored Futurity in the Midwest and Level II ALSA show. Contact: Barb Parsons for more information theparsons@prodigy.net
- **May 16-17, 2009 Indy Open Llama Show - Double Show Noblesville, IN**
Indy Open 400 & Indy Open 500 All halter, performance, & youth classes offered. Fun Friday night get-together and complimentary "Exhibitor Thank-You" breakfast buffet served at exhibitor meeting on Saturday morning. Fun show, easy in/easy out, cash premiums, and ribbons. Information at www.shagbarkridge.com/indy.html
- **May 2-3, 2009 The 7th Annual Llamas And More Association**
will be holding a double point show at the Churchill County Fairgrounds. This is a no groom show and this year we will be holding a Walking Fleece and Shorn Fleece single show. Judges: Wally Baker for the Gold Show, Nikki Kuklenski for the Silver Show and Maryan Baker for the Garnet Fleece Show. See website www.lamandmore.com or Les Flynn 775-424-1217 for entry forms.
- **May 2-3, 2009 Millennium Magic Open Double Llama Show Breeder's Futurity**
Saturday evening fellowship dinner Come on out to see what all of the fun is about! Lenawee County Fairgrounds, Adrian, MI Show contact: Tami Lash (517) 467-2709 Uniqueanimal@aol.com Show forms: www.LashesUniqueAnimals.com
- **May 9-10, 2009-The 15th Annual Llama Magic, Lake Elmo, MN**
Held at the Washington County Fairgrounds, this private treaty sale offers llamas and alpacas for sale on Mother's Day weekend. A special llama training clinic for adults and youth will be held Saturday by Mallon protege Marc Page of Massachusetts. On Sunday, a fun llama/alpaca performance show for youth will be held with emphasis on those in 4-H and FFA. There will also be a fleece contest, demonstrations and a wide array of vendors. Contact Sheila Fugina at bsfugina@presenter.com or 715-246-5837, or visit www.llamamagic.com.
- **June 20th, 2009 White Star Production Sale.**
For more information contact Fred and Sharon Isayew 306.764.2917 or go to fred@whitestarllamas.com
- **June 26-28, 2009 All American Youth Jamboree**
National ALSA & 4-H Youth Show & Conference Noblesville, IN - just outside Indpls. 2nd Annual National Youth Show! Separate 4-H & ALSA shows with cash premiums & ribbons. Additional challenges such as Skillathon, Llama Jeopardy, Farmer Olympics, Fiber Show, Poster Show, Versatility Award, Obstacle sweepstakes. Showing seminars, fiber workshops, & vet seminars. Auction, street dance, cook outs. One price fits all! A "don't miss event!" Information at www.youthjamboree.net.
- **September 26-27, 2009 Millennium Magic Fall Festival Open Double Llama Show**
Come on out to see what all of the fun is about! Lenawee County Fairgrounds, Adrian, MI Show contact: Tami Lash (517) 467-2709 Uniqueanimal@aol.com Show forms: www.LashesUniqueAnimals.com

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