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*It's not magic...*

*It just seems like it*

by Laura Harrawood

Sometimes when you don't know the things you don't know, it's hard to figure out just where to start. Some people are so good with animals that it seems like maybe they were raised with wolves or something, and then there are those of us who want to be good with animals but need a little help to learn precisely how to accomplish that. Growing up in the city and wrestling with a passel of siblings doesn't necessarily get you anywhere working with animals.

When I bought my first llama and he stood up really tall, stretched out his neck and gave me the stink eye I knew instantly

that there was a lot I didn't know about llamas. I wasn't sure exactly what .....but I was pretty sure that there was something I was missing. So about three months later I decided to go to a class in Kansas that was taught by Marty McGee Bennett. Marty and her "Camelidynamics" teaches a way of handling and working with llamas that are effective and respectful to the animal. This first clinic, a basic clinic, gave me a lot to think about and some handling skills that made my life easier. After the clinic, I went home and practiced these new techniques on my herd. If something

wasn't working I would go read Marty's book so I could try to figure out what I was doing wrong.

Marty talks so much about balance balance balance you'd think she was training us to work for the "Flying Wallendas." But eventually and finally all this balance talk hit home and I "got it". It may take longer for some (ahem... me) but balance is one of the keys to developing a willing llama. I am 57 years old and although my husband, Tom, will

*Continued on page 32...*



*People are able to practice on a fake llama then move on to a real one with confidence.*

participants would have multiple animals to work with. Good deal for the rancher because these alpacas and llamas were managed in a respectful way that made their first handling experience a positive one. The animals weren't wrestled, wrangled, restrained or "caught". They were herded, haltered, and led in ways that were nonthreatening and didn't scare them. At one point we worked in teams where one person balanced the animal and the other one trimmed their toenails.

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help me work with my animals he doesn't necessarily want to. So anything I can do to make it easier for me... I'm all over it. I want to be able to do most handling without asking for any help.

Along with handling techniques Marty addresses tasks that usually require more than one person to accomplish. For example: sorting, weighing, moving a herd etc. Communication is the secret to any successful and healthy outcome especially when you are teaming up with a significant other. Tell your partner you love them before herd duties and discuss the game plan. Decide who is going to be in charge. One and only one person is in charge. Don't be in such a hurry to be the boss because the boss also has to take the blame if something goes wrong. Don't get your feelings hurt and don't yell. You might want to turn the fans off so no one can even remotely interpret raised voices over fan noise as yelling.

At the advanced clinic in Bend, Oregon, a local alpaca rancher lent his herd of alpacas and llamas to Marty so the clinic

They weren't in a chute, weren't tied and weren't held by the neck..... just balanced. Trimming toenails without a fight... wow. Some of the camelids needed more time and so we only practiced lifting their feet off the ground and touching their legs but most of them were pretty cooperative. Marty has these blow up llamas that we were required to practice on and prove that we were ready for the real thing. I felt a little silly but the plastic llama was so cooperative that I felt like I knew what I was doing when I got a breathing animal.

A highlight for almost any animal clinic be it bull riding class or llama school is to see the teacher work with the worst animal on the farm. It's what students live for. So after several students had their try at a particularly wild alpaca, Marty walked in the pen, reached over and gently balanced the alpaca's head so that he just stood there. She then haltered him and led him down an aisle-way. All this was done with minimal fuss from the animal and absolutely no wrangling from Marty. The lesson was kept short and there is definitely room for improvement from the alpaca but he is on his way.

A good reason to attend more than one clinic is that each time you go, you refine your skills and learn more. You practice at home what you've learned then get validation at the next class. Many times a cooperative animal who does what you want him to do is validation enough, but I'm glad I took and advanced clinic and I will go to another one. The more you know, the more you can see what you don't know.

At the advanced clinics, Marty video tapes participants while they are working with llamas. This little strategy causes a lot of murmuring and sent most of us into near panic but it worked so well that it was worth it. We all sat in a room and watched each other on a big screen TV. I started to laugh at a woman in one of the videos but stopped when I realized it was me. A giggle sounds weird when it's cut in half. Marty watches the video with you and can point out what you're doing wrong but also what you're doing right. She will critique but not criticize. It is an enlightening experience and a real eye opener. Besides noticing the fact that I need to loose a couple of pounds and stand up straight, I could actually see myself doing things wrong OR right and how they effect the behavior of the llama.

A Camelidynamics clinic is more than enlightening and educational. It's a lot of fun. There was a diversified group of people attending the clinic which made the class very interesting. A couple of participants in our Advanced class came up with a song that you can see on you-tube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLDZOxz0-FQ>. Great song. Great fun. A tremendous learning experience.

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# Mini Llamas and The North American Livestock Expo

By Julie Sines  
Blooming Valley Minis  
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For the first time in its 35-year history, the Annual North American International Livestock Expo in Louisville, Kentucky, allowed miniature llamas to compete as part of the llama/alpaca show. The Livestock Expo is the largest purebred livestock show any where in the world.

During its two-week run, the expo hosts nearly 22,000 livestock entries from across the United States. The livestock divisions are dairy cattle, dairy goats, llamas & alpacas, market swine, quarter horses, draft horses, mules & donkeys, sheep, beef cattle and Boer goats. Winners in these divisions go home with their share of \$700,000 in prize money. The expo is also the site of

a PRCA Championship Rodeo, numerous youth judging contests and other livestock meetings. Another fantastic part of the two-week event is the Giant County Store that hosts over 150 vendors with all different kinds of country gifts for both women and men.

This year the North American Llama & Alpaca show started on Friday night, November 7 and finished on Sunday afternoon, November 9. Throughout the weekend the mini llamas showed in the many different classes offered by the show staff. All



during the show, miniature llama breeders promoted their llamas to guests by bringing their minis out of their stalls to be petted and to get their pictures taken, had farm

*Continued on page 34...*



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# Ozark Llama Classic Sale & Show May 1-3, 2009

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booths telling about the mini and made themselves available to answer visitor's questions regarding miniature llamas. Interest in the incredible little llamas was very high as many people were not familiar with them.

The llama show finished with the miniature llama halter divisions on Sunday. It was great seeing them compete in their classes just like the other divisions of llamas at the show. A big thank you goes out to Mary Jo Miller, the North American Llama & Alpaca Show Superintendent, for allowing the miniature llamas to compete at the expo for the first time.

If you have never competed at the North American International Livestock Expo with your llamas, whether standard or mini, you should consider it for 2009. The facility is outstanding and it is a great opportunity to promote your llamas to people outside the llama industry.

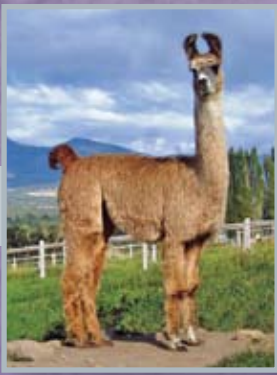


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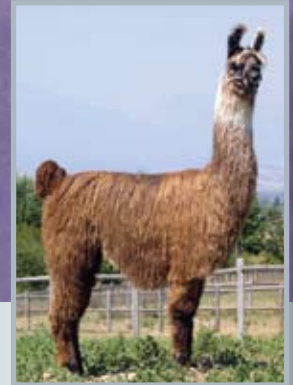
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*Winona County 4-Her's Win the Herdsmanship Award.*

The first ever Minnesota State 4-H llama show was held August 27-29, 2008. What a show it was! With approximately fifty 4-Her's and their llamas, representing fifty 4-Her's and their llamas, representing 14 counties, it was a wonderful start for years of trying to get to this level. Our county, Winona, has had a llama project for eight years. The state of Minnesota finally recognized the llama project at the state level this year. Thus, plans for the 4-H show at the State Fair quickly got under way. The state llama organization, Llamas

## Minnesota 4-Her's Join in State Fair Llama Show

By Lynda Carothers

of Minnesota, was very helpful in getting the show organized and the 4-H show was held in conjunction with the State Fair ALSA show. There were llamas clinics held throughout the state and a judging clinic for 4-H level judges. There were 4-Her's throughout the state purchasing llamas and learning all about them. At county fair time, the competition was tough. There was now a chance to qualify for a trip to the State Fair! And fifty youth would be selected throughout the state to compete at the state level.

The youth were qualified by points received in showmanship, obstacle and public relations at the county level. These classes would be mandatory at the state level with costume class as optional. A

llama knowledge interview would also be given. In preparation, llamas were groomed, baths were given and lots of practicing

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*Susan and Little Tren. Grand Champion performance llama, Winona County*

