



The Llama Rescue Review

The Newsletter of Southeast Llama Rescue, Inc.

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March 1, 2008

Volunteer Highlights *By Shirley Engelhardt, SC Adoption Coordinator*

In this issue we pay tribute to three board members and SELR volunteers. Their profiles will serve as the first in a series to highlight the people behind SELR.



A llama owner for more than 25 years, **Julie Wier** began her association with SELR over the Internet when SELR founders, Lance and Alvin, needed help in picking up some

"bad boy" llamas. In response, Julie finished her first SELR rescue (some 800+ miles later) and joined the SELR family.

A founding board member of SELR and self-proclaimed "all around wild woman," Julie is passionate about llamas. Her dedication is evidenced by her memberships and board positions in various lama organizations and her caring for a herd of more than 50 llamas (including 8 SELR llamas), 75 alpacas and one guanaco in Fairview Heights, Illinois just east of St. Louis. In addition, Julie thinks llamas should be "FUN" and takes hers to parades, nursing homes and schools. In the spring and fall, she hosts dozens of tour groups at her farm. You can learn more about Julie's farm and animals at <http://www.llamasofwierworld.com/index.html>

Chris Stull (below) never actually intended to keep llamas. She entertained the thought of having some and training them to cart but after her initial investigations, she decided that llamas were not intended to adapt to our humid climates, and decided against it. That all changed in 2000 when she attended a horse auction where she saw two extremely frightened llamas. (*Continued on Page 4*)



SELR Mission Statement: To protect the quality of life and improve the well-being of abused, neglected, unwanted, and behaviorally unmanageable llamas through prevention, education, intervention, placement, and lifelong care.

In this Issue

<i>Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch</i>	2
<i>4-H Day at Soggy Bottom Farm</i>	3
<i>Fiber Guidelines: The Terrible Too's</i>	5
<i>Shear Success</i>	6
<i>Training for Toenail Trimming</i>	7

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*We wish to thank our most
 recent SELR donors & adoptors*

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*Many thanks to our foster homes and
 volunteers!*

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch

By Lynette Melton, SELR BoD, Chair

Meanwhile.. ..have you considered serving as a foster home? Do you know someone who may consider it?

I know, you have all the llamas you plan to own, you don't need more; but would you consider opening your heart and your home to just one more - even temporarily?

Let me talk about what it means to be a foster home.

* Being a foster home means you give a llama or an alpaca a safe, comfortable place to rest and sometimes catch up on routine health care on their journey to their forever home.

* Being a foster home means you have the opportunity to meet, know, and work with llamas and alpacas you wouldn't have otherwise known - often a very rewarding experience in itself.

* Being a foster home means the llama or alpaca doesn't have to remain in a place where they can't be properly cared for, fed, or loved.

* Being a foster home means SELR can accept one or two more llamas or alpacas when owners need to surrender.

* Being a foster home means that someone who is looking for that perfect llama or alpaca may find that one at your farm.

* Being a foster home means you will get to know the animal better than anyone, and can offer health and behavior information to help a Coordinator to appropriately

place them.

* Being a foster home means you will either initiate or enhance the animal's training, enabling it to be more easily placed.

* Being a foster home, you get first right of refusal to adopt the llama or alpaca.

Though foster homes are responsible for routine care and feeding, SELR does cover major medical expenses, as approved.

At the beginning of 2007, 35 llamas were in foster care with SELR. Of the 80 llamas surrendered to SELR last year, 56 found loving adoptive homes, leaving 24 to join the others already in foster care. To date, 19 llamas have been surrendered in 2008. Currently, those 63 llamas are looking for their own forever homes. The number continually changes; our foster numbers are increasing, and our foster farms are reaching their capacity. The llamas and alpacas need you. Please consider serving as that bridge to their forever homes by fostering one or more llamas or alpacas.

Now, in appreciation to those who have already opened their hearts and farms to fosters, I'd like to share this poem. I don't know who wrote it, and it's aimed at dog and cat fosters, but I believe it will also speak to every one of you who have ever fostered a llama or an alpaca.

(Continued on Page 3)

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch—Continued from Page 2

There I sat alone and afraid, you got a call and came to my aid.

You bundled me up with blankets and love and, when I needed it most you gave me a hug.

I learned that the world was not all scary and cold, that sometimes there is someone to have and to hold.

You taught me what love is, you helped me to mend, you loved me and helped me and became my good friend.

And just when I thought you'd done all you could do, there came along not one new lesson, but two. First you said, "sweetheart, you're ready to go, I've done all I can and you've learned all I know."

Then you bundled me up with a blanket and kiss, and along came a new family -- oh! what bliss! They took me to their home, forever to stay. At first I thought you had sent me away. Then that second lesson became perfectly clear: No matter how far, you will always be near.

And so, now you know that I have moved on.

I have a new home, with toys and a lawn.

But I'll never forget what I learned that first day --- You never really give any of us away.

You gave me these thoughts to remember you by. We may never meet again, and now I know why -- You'll remember I lived with you for a time; I may not be yours, but you'll always be mine.

-author unknown-



4-H Day at Soggy Bottom Farm

By Pat Cothran, SELR BoD, NC Adoption Coordinator



On February 10, 2008 our farm was the lucky recipient of a volunteer day from a 4-H group. There were 7 adults and about 17 kids, ranging in age from infant to probably 11 years old. It was like finding ourselves in the middle of a bee hive during the peak

of honey-making season! They were great workers and did an amazing job helping to clean up and organize the barn, muck out stalls, scrub buckets and feed bowls, etc. Of course they got to feed and pet the llamas, as well as the horse, donkey and goats.

After the last car pulled out, I was in the back pasture trying to herd 4 girls back to their pasture, 3 boys back to their pasture, and one boy back with his buddies in a separate area from all the rest. The escapes and co-mingling were not surprising given the multiple gate openings and closings of the day (but all the males are gelded!). I then attended to the last chores: Feed the animals. Pick up the leftover crackers, water bottles, paper towels, sanitizer, etc. Undo the minor damage the kids inflicted on equipment and shelter. And fall into the recliner with a cold beverage.

Volunteer Highlights *Continued from Page 1*

As she described it, "the panic and anxiety in their eyes will be forever etched into my memory. Needless to say, at the end of the day I was hooked..." The two creatures went home with Chris and are with her still.

Chris and her husband live on a 35-acre farm in South Central Pennsylvania where they play host to almost every type of farm animal imaginable plus an emu of ten years. (Sounds like fun.)



Susan Gawarecki (above) bought her first llama in 1995 and "never looked back." Today her Pathfinder Farm north of Knoxville, Tennessee, is home to 13 llamas and two alpacas. Susan is

active in the llama community, showing, packing, breeding, spinning and doing PR at various events throughout the region.

Susan's role in SELR extends beyond adoption, volunteer work and a seat on the Board of Directors. Of note, Susan set up an email list that enables SELR to hold ongoing virtual meetings and undertook the first major fundraiser for SELR (having T-shirts printed with the logo and selling them). More recently, she was instrumental in coordinating with Dr. Van Amstel to put together the upcoming UT vet seminar.

According to Deb Logan, "she is a huge fiber enthusiast with various looms stashed around the house and she is always in the midst of a dozen projects at once."

There you have 'em - three of your Board members and fellow llama enthusiasts. We and our camelid pals owe them many thanks.

The Loss of a Friend

Gary Arthur, a member of the SELR family, passed away on February 2, 2008 at the VA Hospital in Asheville, NC, following a battle with throat cancer.

Gary was supportive of his wife Denise's involvement with SELR, and he was an avid cyclist. He leaves behind his wife, 4 children, 6 grandchildren, and many beloved family and friends.



Gary Arthur, October 5, 1945—February 2, 2008

Fiber Guidelines: The Terrible Too's *By Starr Cash, Venezia Dream Farm*

Are you thinking about using your llama or alpaca fiber for yarn, but not sure where to start? Starr Cash, the owner of Venezia Dream Farm in Asheville, NC, compiled the following guidelines for the Alpaca Fiber Cooperative of North America, Inc for determining what fiber "not" to keep!



Unusable "no commercial value" for AFCNA is:

Too short (less than 1.5") & **Too long** (more than 7.5")

o You don't need specialized training for these 2. Just a ruler. I've made some marks on my skirting table so that I can quickly measure anything I'm not positive about.

o IDEALLY - commercial high-speed, high volume equipment likes fibers that are between 3 - 5" long.

o Those of you who shear your crias might want to think about letting them grow out at least 2.5" before you shear.

o Those of you who DON'T shear your crias might want to just keep those cria fleeces that are more than 7.5" long. Too Long is the second most common reason why fleeces are not given credit for contribution by AFCNA.

Too tender (locks break when snapped)

o take a few strands and tug on it. This may not be the best explanation but here's how I do it. If you have to tug pretty hard and each hair kind of snaps in different places and pulls apart looking "frayed" then it's OK. If it pulls about too easily with minimum tugging, it's too tender. If all the strands seem to break off at about the same point - its a stress "weak point" in the fiber. Unfortunately, you'll often see this in cria fleeces.

Too stained

o Mostly a problem with white. I happen to live in

red clay country. My whites are peach or strawberry or just about any dang shade except white. As long as it's just a "tinge" of stain, no problem. Heavy stain can't be graded as white.

Too much Vegetable Matter

o Mostly it's excess VM - here's what I learned. If you grab a handful of the fiber and it feels "crunchy" in your hand - it's too much VM.

o Other contamination runs the gamut of amazing things you would never expect to find in a lovely animal's fiber. Cigarette butts, pieces of wire, and worse from there.

Too matted

o Lots of cria fleeces are ruined by this problem. Can't do anything (commercial) with them. Mini-mills with de-hairers might salvage them but that's not a commercially (economically) viable solution.

Too molded

o The bad thing about those plastic bags we all use is that if the fleece is damp when you bag it... rot happens. Make sure the fleece is good and dry before you twist & seal up those bags.

Too buggy - infested with moths or other insects

o But don't leave your open bags sitting in the barn or attic too long either. If moths get in, it will ruin the whole bag for sure and possibly the entire box if they spread.

Too Hairy - Topknots, tails, and lower leg hair, excess guard hair
o This is the #1 most common reason why AFCNA does not give credit for member fleeces.

o It's easy to see "guard hair". Pick up a lock (staple). If it looks "spikey" or has lots of thick straight hairs sticking out of it - it's too hairy.

o It's easy to see good fiber with minimal guard hair - all the little staples are just the same length, no "fuzz" of guard hair extending out longer than the staple.

o If you're not sure, you can take a lock from and outer area like the lower chest, upper leg or chest and lay it in the "prime blanket" area. I've got some alpacas with great big huge "blankets that stretch neck to tail and side to side. I've also got a few old gals with blankets about the size of a dinner plate and the rest of them is hairy as can be.

www.veneziadream.com

Llamas as Teachers



"Some friends of ours have a 2 1/2 year old daughter, and she recently was potty trained by my llamas. She has been in the corral with the llamas twice now, and she is utterly fascinated by them. She was so fascinated after the last visit that she 'was a llama' for the next week and a half.

When she "was a llama", she asked her mom where SHE should go to the bathroom because llamas all go to the bathroom in the same area. They said that after her seeing the llamas and seeing them using the poop piles, she is now potty trained. She suddenly understands the concept of the toilet."

Contributed by Pamela Tait
Pinnacle Peak Llama Ranch of Parks, Arizona
www.PinnaclePeakLlamaRanch.com

Shear Success

It's almost that time of year again! We've assembled a list of shearing tips from our volunteers that will make your job easier and will be sure to have your lama saying "ahhh!"

* I like to use my trailer to shear in. The animals seem to be less anxious about what is going on. They are contained but I have more room than if they are in a chute. I have a gate (or divider) that can be closed against the llama if needed. Having someone at their head with a bowl of food is a good distractor, as well. Being able to see other llamas helps, too.

-Claudia Hammack, Peaceful Acres Llama Farm

*For oiling electric clippers, I use a condiment container (mustard) which has a small tip to dispense lubricating oil (10W-40). It works well for targeting the holes and

blades. To clean the blades, I use a mix of 50+% lamp oil and 50-% baby oil in a shallow container. When there is a lot of buildup, just scrub with an old toothbrush. Be sure to oil afterwards, as this is not a lubricant. Then run the clipper briefly and wipe off the excess.

-Susan Gawarecki, Pathfinder Farm

* For llamas who really resist shearing wait to shear them until it is hot. Not so hot as to cause heat stress, of course, but hot enough that they're uncomfortable. Then, once we start shearing, it only takes a minute or two for them to realize that having the fiber off is feeling much, much better. Behavior generally improves at that time.

-Lynette Melton, Chinguapin Ridge Farm

*I use Rescue Remedy--given about 10 to 15 min BEFORE any activity. Don't want the llama upset and then give it. It just takes the edge off. Do the more skittish llama first so he isn't worried by seeing the others done. Another way is to blindfold him. Be sure the llama cannot see out of the blindfold at all. The ones I have done this to--stop dead in their tracks. But do keep talking to them the whole time so they know where you are and that they are safe.

- Nancy Sottosanti, Persimmon Hill Llamas



Training for Toenail Trimming *By Bob Huss*

When I got Betsy three years ago her front toenails were terribly overgrown. Less than a week after I got Betsy, my brother and I decided to trim her nails. Betsy is only 250 pounds, Rich and I are both carpenters, and Rich had been trained as a farrier, so we figured it would be easy for two strong carpenters to manhandle one small llama. We completely underestimated Betsy's strength and determination. It took us 45 minutes of hard work and struggle to get her front nails trimmed, and they definitely didn't look like a pedicure. I felt better because she immediately walked higher on her toes and had more spring to her gate. I determined that I would never again subject Betsy or myself to that type of struggle.

During a Beginners Llama conference at Rocky Mountain Llamas, Bobra Goldsmith taught me that a patting touch instead of a continuous touch seemed to cause less negative reaction from a llama. Karen Pryor, through her book "Don't Shoot The Dog," taught me how to use click-and-reward training. By using patting touch and click-and-reward training I've taught Betsy to allow me to pick up any of her feet. Since Gunnison, Colorado is high desert and the hiking trails often have many sharp rocks, I feel that I must be able to inspect her feet during a hike but I often do not have anything to tie her lead to. The following is our procedure:

For the right front foot I hold the lead in my right hand, about a

foot from the halter ring. I say "Foot," and start patting Betsy's right shoulder. I move the patting motion over the elbow, to the back inside of her knee, and grasp the middle of the bone between her knee and ankle. Usually she lifts the foot for me. If not, I gently lean against her with my left shoulder to shift her weight to the left foot so it's easier to lift her right foot. After I inspect her toenail and/or trim it, she gets a click, a reward, and a lot of praise.

For the right rear foot I hold the lead in my right hand, about 18 inches from the halter ring. I say "Foot," and start patting Betsy's right hip and thigh. I move the patting motion to the front inside of the stifle joint and down the front inside of her leg. I grasp the leg between the hock joint and the ankle and lift it. I gently lean against her with my left shoulder to shift her weight to the left foot. Sometimes she crosses her rear legs, but that's the only resistance. After the inspection and/or trimming, Betsy receives a click, a reward, and a lot of praise.

I do the left side exactly the same but switch hands for holding the leading and lifting the feet. Once I lift a foot I can let go of the lead.

I can trim all eight toenails in only ten minutes without struggle and without tying her lead to anything. With click and reward training it only required about one minute a day (after she already had the halter and lead on) for thirty days for Betsy to



learn to stand still during toenail inspection and/or toenail trimming. She understood the principles of click-and-reward training before I used it to teach her to accept foot handling calmly.

Recently I trimmed Muffin's toenails. I simply closed her lead in the van's sliding side door, gave her the "foot" command, and proceeded to lift her foot, dig the packed snow out of her toenails, and trim them. After I was finished with each foot she got a click and a reward. Betsy's lead was also closed in the door, thus she was moving around and being a distraction. I did two feet one day and two the next day with no resistance and no spitting. That was easy, considering her aggression and resistance as recently as a year ago. I'm very proud of Muffin - she's made so much progress in so many areas.

Though it takes a little time to teach a llama to allow his/her feet to be handled, I feel that it returns big dividends down the road in easier maintenance and fewer struggles. I'm a strong believer in click-and-reward training.

Llama Personal

Bob, Lotz of Dotz as I call him, is a 4 year old gelding who gets on well with llamas, goats, and sheep. Bob was surrendered during the summer of 07 because, after castration, he continued to jump fences to be in the company of females. He is pastured next to females at my farm and has never even hinted at jumping a fence here. He is an extremely sweet llama who leads well and enjoys going on walks. He does require a bit of guidance during haltering but learns quickly and is not the least bit aggressive. This handsome appy would make an excellent companion to someone willing to put in a bit of time and consistency.



Bob is looking for his forever home. Please email Chris Stull at llamalife@comcast.net or call 717-464-5132

In This Issue...

Volunteer Highlight, Llamas as Teachers, and more!

Prayer for Animals

The following prayer was composed by George Brandon, a member of the SELR Board of Directors and the founder of Indian Creek Llama Sanctuary. It was printed in the *The Daily Currier* of Forest City, NC for the Blessing of the Animals at the Springdale Fall Festival.

Oh Great Creator, we offer our thanks for the life that you have made. Help us to remember that all, from the mightiest of men to the smallest of animals, were made by You and are treated by You with equal compassion. Give to us a measure of that compassion. Give us the wisdom and the knowledge to care for the sick, the hurt, or abused animals and give us the strength, at the end, to gently, and with respect, help each animal as it begins its journey to a green pasture, cool water, warm sun, and whatever else You have prepared for the times to come. Amen.

Lama Photos



Above: Photos by Starr Cash, Venezia Dream Farm