



The Llama Rescue Review

The Newsletter of Southeast Llama Rescue, Inc.

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June 1, 2009

Nineteen Llama Newcomers

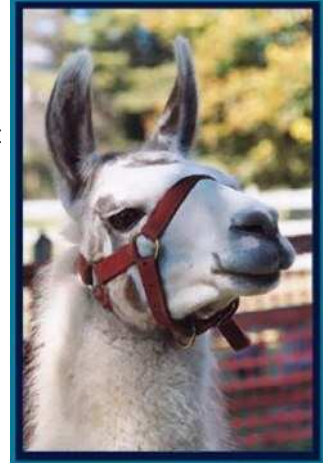
By Wes Laraway, Northeast Llama Rescue, www.redmaplefarm.net

There are good days and there are bad days when you run an animal rescue facility. When I received the phone call from some folks 6 hours away that were having a tough time with the bank and needed to find a home immediately for 19 llamas I didn't think no ... I thought what am I going to have to do to pull this off? I've been on bigger rescues, I've driven longer distances to save animals. The details are always the toughest to work out. The first thing that I started thinking about was: where was I going to borrow a larger trailer to get them all in one trip. My trailer is too small to carry 19. The next thing that I was thinking: what muscle could I get to road trip with me; since there was no way I was going to wrestle 19 wild llamas in the trailer by myself? I found the trailer, Justin and Chris were up for an adventure--plans were made to take off for our mission at midnight on Friday night.

We arrived at 6am as planned to get the llamas. I was hoping that they would be locked in the barn ... we could back the trailer up and be home bound by 7am Saturday morning. Llamas are an amazingly intelligent animal and have the unbelievable ability to foil the best of plans. Due to the fact that we've done this a couple of times, Justin and I had everyone on the trailer and we were back on the road with two heartbroken people standing in the driveway waving their goodbyes. It didn't take me long to figure out that these were not your normal llamas. They were in good shape but over half the herd stood for the entire six hour trip back home; very odd and not something that I've ever seen before. Normally as soon as the trailer starts moving the llamas kush (or lay down) but these llamas were not making anything easy or normal.

We arrived back to the farm slightly behind schedule and really happy to be back. I decided that while the

llamas were still on the trailer that they should get their worming shots. That went as I expected it would, it was not on the top of the llamas' list of things to do after a long ride but it had to get done. Now the fun part. I don't let intact male llamas out with the herd until they have been gelded.



Supposedly there were five intact males running with this herd. I started letting them off the trailer and running them down through the barn through a series of locks where I could sort off the males into pens and let the females out into the herd. My daughter Hannah (who is 12 and has rescued more animals with me than most animal shelters have) quickly volunteered for the Easter egg hunt and we quickly had seven males identified and separated. The one six month old male cria got a reprieve and got to go back out with his mom and the herd ... this still left us with six males, not five.

Continued on Page 2

In this Issue

<i>Field Setup for Click and Reward</i>	3
<i>Lama Photos</i>	4
<i>Happy Endings</i>	5
<i>Got (Too Much) Fiber?</i>	5
<i>How Does Your Garden Grow?</i>	6
<i>Alpacas: They're not Just for Fiber Anymore</i>	9

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Nineteen Llama Newcomers . . . Continued

The females with their crias (most likely rebred) have adjusted well over the last couple of days. They like their new mountain view and they are starting to settle in. They do not want to sleep in the barn and prefer to sleep out in the middle of a 10 acre pasture. I am starting to get into their heads and get to know them. You really don't have to be an animal communicator to pick up on their vibes. They know that I won't hurt them and they know that I helped them but they are very nervous and you can feel that they haven't settled into their new home yet. They are confused, don't understand why they are here and really would like to be someplace that they are more familiar with. If they only knew what their fate could have been.

They have a lot ahead of them. They will be given the time that they need to settle in before I start halter breaking them. The first of the biggest two obstacles are over.

The males are the next hurdle. They need to be gelded before they can be let out of their pens to rejoin the herd that they have lived with their entire lives. I need to raise at least another \$1000 to cover the vet bill for their surgeries. We have received enough donations to cover the transportation costs. Our facility has grown a lot over the last 10 years. I can no longer afford to pay for everything out of my checkbook as a teacher. We have to rely on donations because my vets won't come for free. :) I have never been good at begging for money. We have become a not for profit facility now (not like any rescue facility ever

makes a profit). The nice thing about this is that people that donate money to us can write it off as a tax deduction. I am hoping that we can raise the money to cover the geldings this week so that I can get the vets here. Once the males are gelded, we can handle the rest of their care, worming shots, vet visits, feed, shearing, training, etc. We have never turned an animal in need away and I don't intend to start saying no anytime soon. I really am flattered that so many of our supporters have sent a check. It really validates what we do that other people support us. As soon as we get the guys gelded and everyone gets settled in, I would love to teach anyone that would like to learn how to halter break a llama a few of my tricks to do that.

This article was reprinted from the Northeast Llama Rescue: Rescue News Blogspot (<http://northeastllamarescue.blogspot.com>).

Northeast Llama Rescue and SELR have long worked together to help camelids in need. NELR is a non-profit and accepts donations. Their current biggest need is for injectable dewormer. You can send monetary donations via their blogspot, or mail:

Northeast Llama Rescue and
 Barnyard Sanctuary, INC.
 PO Box 410, 167
 Llama Lane, Middleburgh, NY 12122

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.

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Virtual Adopter:

Pamela Verosky—*"Loretta Llama"*

Thanks to Everyone for Your Support of SELR!

Field Setup for Click and Reward Training

By Laura McNamara, SWLR Board Secretary, Edgewood, NM

We have been using click and reward training with our llama Hugo, one of the Mountainair rescues. To work directly with Hugo, I get him in pen by himself by luring the other animals away and/or gently separating him from the group. He freaked at first, until he realized that this involved food.

Then, I rely on the principle of "llama nibbles = llama crack" and that definitely applies to Hugo. He loves his nibbles. Paul and I are both treat machines for him, getting him used to the idea that people have good stuff in their pockets. Our three other boys know this and love us for it! Here's what we did:

SET UP THE BEHAVIOR. Hugh was pretty shy, an adult who'd had little (if any) handling. We had to bootstrap to get to the starting point where Bob begins. Once you've got the animal in a small-ish pen, away from the other animals, start with a simple target - something the animal knows. For Hugo, it's the feed scoop. I put it on the ground with a couple of treats in it, just to get him to be interested, so that he associates "feed-scoop-on-ground = treats-for-me." No clicks—yet. You're just setting up a behavior that you can then start rewarding the animal for performing.

ASSOCIATE THE BEHAVIOR WITH A CLICK AND A TREAT. Then, once he starts checking it out to see if there are indeed any goodies, I change the routine a bit: I click and drop a treat into the scoop. It took him about 3 clicks to figure this out, and pretty soon he was hovering by the scoop, nosing it and looking up at me. Repeat a few dozen times.

MOVE FROM THE GROUND TO YOUR BODY. Once he's got that down pat, hold the scoop at arm's length, rather than keeping it on the ground. The llama will nose it. Click and reward. Repeat until the animal clearly gets the game.

NEW TARGET/MOVE CLOSER TO YOUR BODY. Then, choose another target, like a frisbee. Use the same sequence. This time, though, bring the frisbee closer and closer to your body. Once the llama is comfortable in your 'airspace' - standing within a couple of feet of you and having fun with the touch frisbee-click-reward sequence, totally comfortable with the fact he's 2 feet from you, you will...

GET THE LLAMA USED TO NOSING AROUND YOUR FINGERS. You do this by putting your finger inside the frisbee when you drop the treat inside as part of the click-reward sequence. Gradually work to get most of your hand in the frisbee when the treat's in there, so the llama has to nose around your fingers. Do this until he's comfortable with the sequence.

GET HIM TO EAT A TREAT FROM YOUR HAND INSIDE THE FRISBEE. Next, leaving the back of your hand resting in the frisbee, hold the treat in your palm. If he balks, do the frisbee-fingers thing a few more times. As an experienced llama trainer/rescue volunteer told me, you often find yourself going back to kindergarten along the way...

SEPARATE THE FRISBEE FROM YOUR HAND. Once you've got the llama trained to take a nibble from your palm inside the frisbee, separate the two. Have him nose the frisbee, then get the treat from your hand.

BTW, Hugo used to stay 20 feet from me. He now greets me at the fence and takes goodies from my palm. He's learning!



Example of a clicker used in training. Clickers are available for sale online or at most large pet stores.

Continued on Page 4

Field Setup for Click and Reward Training . . . Continued

THIS IS THE MILESTONE. You've taught the llama how to learn. Once he's got the target-behavior-click-reward in palm-sequence down pat, you're golden. You can get him to touch a halter with his nose, then click and reward. Then you can get him to stick his nose in the halter, then click and reward. Soon he'll be standing still as you hold the halter on his face ... etc, etc.

With our young boys, working with them last summer, it took about 3 days to get to this entire sequence, training 2-3 times a day. We did very little this winter - too much snow on the ground and below-zero winds - but when I went out with my apron and clickers as the weather got better, I was delighted to find that they'd forgotten nothing. They LOVE this game and will pick up the frisbee and look at me longingly. Two of our three pretty much halter themselves - well, not the buckle. The third gets a little fussy, so occasionally we need a catch rope. All three enjoy the obstacle-course game with click-reward built in. With Hugo it took a week, but I'm only going out once a day. I expect it will take about 2 weeks of consistent training to have him walking very nicely on lead.

Remember - to keep up the momentum, quit BEFORE

the llama loses interest. You want to leave him wanting more. When I started with Hugo, he could take about 3 minutes of checking out the scoop before he got a little freaked out by my proximity. Three or four short (5 minute) sessions a day, just putting the scoop on the ground with a couple of nibbles and standing there while the llama takes them, is perfect to start with. Take tiny steps and go slowly. You're conditioning the animal's brain to a very different set of behaviors, after all. Imagine all those neurons being rerouted until the light bulb goes off. BING! Secondly, working with the other animals definitely gets his curiosity up. They learn by watching, and seeing that "click-reward" sequence applied to the others is a good start. Let the llama watch other llamas having fun.

Thirdly, once you can do click and reward in a catch pen, start combining techniques. I find that doing click and reward in combination with some of Marty McGee Bennet's tricks in a 10x10 catch pen works well, too. Her ideas about space and escape zones and knowing how to put on a halter before you put it on a llama are all excellent handling techniques that work well with click and reward.

Lama Photos



Left: A donated llama pack purchased via the Ebay charity auction to benefit SELR is put to good use by Hercules, the llama in Virginia. His companion, an Angora goat, also trained to pack! Right: Chaz, a SELR llama in foster care at Kim and Lynette Melton's farm, enjoys a mouthful of hay straight from the truck. Lynette reports that Chaz receives all the grain and hay he desires, as he tends to stay thin. Chaz is very appreciative of his special treatment!

Happy Endings

By Jeannine Anderson, Wellsville, NY, SELR Adopter

Things have finally melted here and we look forward to expanding our new SELR llama, Zeus's world even more. He is very brave about new things and seems to love an adventure. I have seen parts of my farm that I haven't seen in many seasons as we think up new walks for him. We have bought him a llama pack and we'll see if he enjoys going on picnics with us.

In terms of training - he seemed to know how to follow well and we have been working on signals of communication so that we ask, he thinks and then responds. He is very smart and is great with our daughter, Galen. She

has learned to be a very light handler with him. When we approach a new situation, or something new enters our situation I take the lead just in

case he reacts, but he never has; he remains very calm. I love the way he looks out in amazement at a view!

In the pasture he often positions himself as a guard with the alpacas. He notices everything first and takes the front position. But he is way too nice to them - he let's them eat his food. He doesn't want to eat separately, so we try to stand with him while he eats so he gets enough.



Zeus and alpacas



Zeus and Galen

Got (Too Much) Fiber?

Every time this year, llama and alpaca owners are amassing bags of fiber (hair) from the shearing of our camelid friends. Some people use the fiber for yarn, and send it off to fiber mills or spin it themselves. But if you're not interested in producing yarn, roving, or felt, what can you do with those bags of fiber? Here are some ideas:



"As we all know, nesting birds love llama fiber . . . Buy an inexpensive square shaped suet feeder, stuff llama fiber in it and hang it in a tree. I hung one out near where I feed the birds and

they started plucking choice fibers immediately. I already spied a nest in the barn that is in the process of being built with some llama fiber."

- Helen Carpenter, SELR BoD, Adoption Coordinator, Heather Hill Llamas

* Send the fiber to the [Hair Mats Program](#) to help save

marine animals from the damaging effects of oil spills. According to an article by Theresa J. Holmes, the [Hair Mats Program](#) was developed by Phil McCrory, a hair stylist, and *Matter of Trust*, an ecological public charity (www.matterofftrust.org). Your fiber contribution will be made into half-inch thick mats of hair that can be used to absorb oil from both air and water. One square foot of hair mat can absorb one quart of oil in a minute. Your fiber donation does not need to be washed, but should be relatively free of debris like hay, sticks, etc. Please put the fiber in a plastic bag that is tied shut, then in a box, and write "Llama/Alpaca Hair" on the outside of the box. Mail to:

Hair Mats Program
1588 Carroll Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94124

-From "Waste Fiber Can Help the Environment," first published in *The LAMA LETTER* of the Pennsylvania Llama and Alpaca Association, February 2009.

How Does Your Garden Grow?

By Melissa Perryman, SELR BoD

Every year this time when the grass is greening and the leaves and flowers are growing, I am stricken with a yearning for a green thumb. I've had llamas for five years, but this is the first year I've gotten serious about using nature's perfect fertilizer in my yard: llama beans.

Last fall I began redirecting my barnyard scooping efforts from the manure pile to the base of trees, shrubs, and gardens in my yard. This spring, thanks to warm weather and lots of rain, I'm seeing tremendous results: the leaves of the sapling trees are bigger, the rhododendrons and azaleas are producing more growth than ever, and the herb garden is bursting at the seams! The areas of yard that border the gardens and trees have the greenest, fastest growing grass.

Most types of manure must be composted before applying to plants, or it will burn the plants. Not so with llama beans. To the right is a table (reprinted with permission from the HiDOG—High Desert Organic Gardeners—website) detailing the components of each type of manure. According to the HiDOG website, llama manure contains less organic matter, and therefore it doesn't produce as much heat while composting. However, as my yard will attest, llama manure has great fertilizing properties!



Another point of interest on the HiDOG website was how to store the "beans." The article's author writes: "If the beans aren't kept

moist they will harden and form a white crust taking longer to break down. My favorite way to store them is to moisten them (damp not dripping, like you do compost) and keep them well covered. During the first couple of days check and remoisten if needed (it will depend on how dry they are when you start this process). In something over a month the beans will

Animal Manure Comparison

Animal Type	(N) Nitrogen (%)	(P) Phosphorus (%)	(K) Potassium (%)
*Llama	1.7	0.69	0.66
Chicken	1.0	0.8	0.4
Horse	0.7	0.25	0.55
Sheep	0.95	0.35	1.0
Cow	0.6	0.15	0.45
Pig	0.5	0.35	0.4

*Llama manure can be applied directly to plants. (Will Not Burn)
 -Animal Manures are best used as mulches or as soil conditioners.
 -Unit of Measure shown above is in Micrograms/Gram

Ref: Season 2001_HO_AMC

References— → University of Idaho, Holm Research Center, Moscow, ID 83844
 -Sunset Western Garden Book – Sunset Publishing Corporation, Menlo Park, CA – 40th Anniversary Edition
 ©A Guide to Raising Llamas, Gale Birutta: Storey Publishing

break down and look like moist rich peat moss, ready to amend your garden."

For more information on organic gardening, visit the HiDOG website at www.hidog.info.

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch: Recent Lama Events



Sisters Deb Logan and Tracy Snell

Pack Trials were held May 3 at the DuPont Forest near Brevard, NC. The weather was actually quite nice; a threat of rain, but never any rain; warm but not too hot; cool but not too cold; both overcast and sunny. In other words, we had a little bit of everything, some of nothing, and a generally wonderful day. The attire changed from pants and shorts to jackets and t-shirts. But just as soon as we would change from one to the other, we'd need to change back again.



Pat Cothran's llama Teeter (right)

Sunglasses popped on and off the face as the weather changed so quickly.



Llama Attendees at '09 Pack Trials

This is the largest crowd in the three years the pack trials have been held in this area. Approximately 20 folks and nearly as many llamas were in attendance. Eight folks either participated or assisted in the basic packer event, and at least nine people participated in the advanced course. Whether or not you want your packer to earn a medal or certificate, this is a fun, laid-back llama event. For more specific information about the pack trials, visit "<http://webpages.charter.net/packtrial/>". To be contacted about the 2010 event, send an email to packtrial@charter.net.



Pat Cothran and llama Teeter

- **Pat Cothran, SELR BoD, Adoption Coordinator**

Kim and I attended an Open Farm event at the farm of Ted and Elke Spirakis in Burnsville, NC on April 18. Ted and Elke invited us to represent SELR and graciously gave us a very nice place just by their farm store.

We had a great time. It was great to spend time with Ted and Elke, and to be able to show support for them, as they do for SELR. We sold 3 Loretta's, a bear, and 1 bottle of water. There were \$3 in the donations box, and a friend of Elke's donated the proceeds from the two cloth wallets she sold - \$6. So, a total of \$75 for the day. I'll send a check to SELR's treasurer Nancy S for that and the other Loretta sold last week . . . \$95 grand total.



Kim Melton at the SELR booth

I had a long conversation with a lady who writes for WNC Magazine - Kiesa (pronounced 'kasa') Kay, and her photographer partner, Joe Mulligan. They appeared very interested in SELR and were intrigued with the stories of Isaac and Young Man. She said she would pitch the idea of an article to her editor and, if they approve, she'll be in touch. We'll see.

- **Lynette Melton, SELR BoD**

Continued on Page 8

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch: Recent Llama Events . . . Continued



Llamas at Kansas City Pet Expo

I spent April 18 at the Kansas City Pet Expo. The Missouri Llama Association had two mini-llamas there and several of the women were spinning. We had a video going and pamphlets available. It was a busy day, mostly telling everyone what a llama can do.

- **Ricky Zachow, SELR BoD**



Vision the llama and his admirers at Heritage Days

I took animals to the Southern Illinois University - Carbondale Agriculture Industry Day on Friday, April 17. I had one llama and three alpacas BUT two SELR supporters brought two llamas and spoke glowingly about SELR and "rescue" llamas. It was great.

Many pre-vet students there -- forestry majors -- Ag marketing folks, Equine majors. Lots of questions answered for them, I think. I was not allowed to sell anything, but the day was beautiful.

I also took llamas and alpacas to the excellent Heritage Days event at Willoughby Farm on May 2. Artisans and craftspeople did demonstrations of paper making, wood carving, pottery, blacksmithing, feed sack art, fiber dyeing, carding and spinning, and weaving.

- **Julie Weir, Adoption Coordinator**

Monday morning (May 11) I took my llamas Betsy and Muffin to a Small Animal Show sponsored by the Gunnison County Cattleman's Association. Bus loads of preschool and grade school children from Gunnison and Crested Butte, Colorado (27 miles north) attended the show. Hundreds of children came through the area between 8:30 and 1:00. Betsy and Muffin were a great hit and did very well. The following site is from Gunnison Country Times and has some cute pictures of small children feeding hay to Betsy:

http://gunnisonetimes.smugmug.com/gallery/8209811_EbXRS#536527779_pD9Qv



Photo Credit: Erich Walters/Gunnison Country Times

Summer, a high school freshman, volunteered to help me. She was a great help and quickly learned to answer all the questions about llamas in general and Betsy specifically. She was great with Betsy, the children, and the adults. Right before we left I taught her how to load the girls into the minivan. She seemed to appreciate the opportunity to work with Betsy as much as I appreciated her help. Young people like Summer increase my hope for the future.

- **Bob Huss, SELR Volunteer**

Alpacas: They're Not Just for Fiber Anymore

By Corinne Hewett, SELR Foster Home & Adopter

Mowing grass/lawn is not my favorite chore so I went looking for some forager to manage the 2 acres I have behind my house. There's not enough acreage for my horses, considered goats and sheep but.....Then I remembered seeing a sign for alpacas down the road from me. I went online and learned a bit more about them. I liked that they were very efficient foragers, getting fiber to work with was a plus, and last but not least, they're cute! I contacted the folks down the road and arranged to visit their ranch. I spent several hours learning about and interacting with their alpacas. I also ended up purchasing 2 non-breeder 18 month old males. A few months after getting the alpacas home I was talked into taking them to a show and participated in the halter classes. I'd watched the llamas in the performance classes and thought that looked a lot more fun. I asked if I could enter my alpacas in the performance classes and was told, "yes, but don't expect them to do well – they don't have the temperament for performance classes." When another show was in the area I entered my alpacas, Elijah and Patrick, in 2 novice performance classes. It was a double judge show for both llamas and alpacas. There were about 7 llamas with experienced handlers in each class. Patrick BOMBED the Public Relations class but Elijah took a 2nd and 3rd. In the Obstacle class Patrick took 3rd and 6th. Elijah took 1st and 2nd! I was SO proud of my alpacas! They were BOTH SO awesome!



The one judge came up to me and strongly encouraged me to show Elijah in Pack classes. He told me that a goat pack would fit an alpaca and he gave me some tips on how to better handle my alpacas in performance classes. I'm encouraging alpaca owners to do things OTHER than produce fiber with their alpacas. They are athletic, smart and willing to work with their owners. Llama owners that participate in performance classes and pack trials can be excellent sources for training/handling tips- they've "been there, done that." So alpaca owners...get out there and have some fun with your alpacas! They're not JUST for fiber anymore!

Loretta Llama's Adventures

Loretta Llama, the Gund doll that is featured in SELR's Virtual Adoption program, recently spent some quality time with the grandson of SELR board member Ricky Zachow (photo to right).

For more information about how to adopt your own Loretta, please visit SELR's website at

www.southeastllamarescue.org



Llama Personal: Available for Adoption

PPR Sundance PE27



This pretty gray boy just turned 8 years old in April. Sundance, located in western North Carolina, is a recent gelding who he needs to be by himself until his hormones settle down. He is fine around people, is halter trained and leads well, and is approachable. But he still gets excited around both females and other males, and must not be allowed contact with either for awhile. Although he has recently been given a full body shear, he is a heavy woolled llama.

If you are interested in adopting, or can provide a foster home for Sundance, please contact llamacoordinator@bellsouth.net or call Pat at 828-712-5450.

To see more llamas that are looking for their forever homes, please visit our website or contact your state coordinator: www.southeastllamarescue.org

Support SELR



Yes, I would like to assist SELR's mission to help llamas and alpacas in need. Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of . . .

- _____ \$25 Friend
- _____ \$50 Partner
- _____ \$100 Sponsor
- _____ \$ 500 Sustaining Giver
- _____ \$ _____ Other

To donate online, please visit www.southeastllamarescue.org

My email address is:

Please mail your donation to:

Southeast Llama Rescue, Inc
678 Mill Creek Road
Luray, VA 22835