

MAPACA

December, 2004 Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 12



President's Message:

Tonight, December 19th, I sit at my kitchen table watching the Wizard of Oz on public television, with bills to pay, year end P&L's to review for the other businesses that I reluctantly run, and Alice Brown calls, or emails me for the third time, in 3 days, about my article for the Newsletter. We (Alice and I), go through this exercise once a month. We have done this for four years now since I felt that there should be a message from the Board of Directors to the membership on an ongoing basis to generate interest and "activism" among the membership.

Over these four years we have increased the frequency from quarterly to monthly in an attempt to provide consistent communication and useful information. Some members have said "thank you" and some have even submitted articles. Those of you are few and far between – but "thank you" to the few.

The "Wizard" of Oz was a man providing guidance through basic "common sense" – made useful and insightful through the lack of any "vested interest." I like to believe the Newsletter has strived hard to create interest through articles of a common interest that would reflect the values of the "Wizard" in not trying to influence you in self serving directions- but to guide you to awareness of ideas or issues that we "objectively" feel are in your interest to consider as an alpaca owner or breeder.

That said, I truly encourage all of you to pay attention to every communication you receive from AOBA or ARI – to open them "upon receipt" and to read them through immediately. Going through my mail this evening I found envelopes that I had "set aside to look at later" that looked totally "bland." No markings on the envelopes, no messages expressing any "Urgency."

It turns out one of the envelopes, dated October 25, 2004, contained our ARI membership renewals and the information to send in, (nothing whatsoever was mentioned on the envelope) in order to "purchase" our individual rights to vote as ARI members. I had another envelope from AOBA, also blank in every respect, not even a mailing date, that was for my 2005 membership and an "amendment change" with a re-

quired return date of January 17th.

In my personal opinion (Paul Connor's opinion), I think important documents should be notated on the envelope – "Important", and include the subject matter, such as – "ARI Membership renewal and information regarding the cost to each ARI member should they actually want to purchase the right to cast a vote for a specific issue".

In closing, I would suggest paying "very close attention" to everything you receive from these very important, "Closely aligned organizations". In some cases you receive "One Voice", in other cases you receive a few voices from organizations that you had voted for a "Board of Directors" on, yet it seems to me that we rarely hear "Your Voice". Starting with the January issue of the MaPaca Newsletter we will have a column known as "Your Voice" – we welcome your comments on one entire page devoted to "your comments", signed or "unsigned." Your criticism and praise will be welcome and will be printed as received.

With total optimism for the well being of all of our alpacas "regardless of heritage, ethnic background, or individual standard of breed, - I wish you and all of your magnificent charges – a very happy, healthy, Holiday Season and 'proactive' New Year!"

Paul Connor

The message presented here does not necessarily reflect the opinions or points of view of any other MaPaca Board members.

MaPaca Membership

Meeting

Sunday, January 16, 2005

12 Noon– Lunch

1PM– General Membership Meeting

Location:

Rocky Run Alpacas—Bud and Gail Stewart
2045 Union Hill Road
Malvern, PA

Please RSVP Upon Receipt of the Newsletter if you "think" you may be able to attend.—

610-644-8077 or rralpaca@aol.com

See www.mapaca.org for directions.

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Jubilee Coordinator's Message:

Hello to Everyone,

As I write this article, Christmas is just five days away and we're enduring the worst cold front yet this season. The current wind chill is - 4 degrees F. in Frederick, MD. People and 'pacas need extra care in this cold. By the time you read this the holidays will have come and gone. I hope everyone is safe and had a great holiday season. Kim and I extend our best wishes to all for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.

One big change I want to mention is that Frieda Goodrich is now taking over the huge job of MAPACA Treasurer. Frieda is a real numbers person, and she's offered to take the Treasurer's job. All of MAPACA will benefit from this move. This move leaves me to concentrate on the Jubilee. Many thanks to Frieda.

In the last column I mentioned Jubilee registration would open on January 15th. Our computer tech guys inform us the registration pages for the website won't be ready by then, but that everything will be up and running by February 1st. The registration period will now run Feb 1st to Mar 1st and the early deadline is eliminated. There will only be one price for each of the various registrations because we feel the show will fill up before the deadlines, anyway.

We will be requiring microchips for **all** alpacas entering the building **for any reason**. The USDA will be requiring permanent ID on all species of livestock in the near future and many established shows already require microchips. The MAPACA board decided to institute this requirement at our shows from now on. We will be buying universal chip readers but there are some brands of chips that many readers won't pick up. If you use one of these brands, it is advisable that you bring your chip reader with you. If you purchased an alpaca that has another brand chip, you may want to consider re-chipping that animal with the type of chip you routinely use. It is also advisable to check each alpaca's chip while you're doing vet certs. If one won't read, you can replace it then and there and include the new number on the health papers. If we can't read the chip or the numbers don't match, the animal will not be admitted to the building.

Mark Loffhagen will be providing at least two, and hopefully three, shearers this year. If you know someone who wants to make money helping the shearers, let us know, or contact Mark directly. We will not be selling shearing tickets this year. You will now pay cash directly to the shearers, so please plan ahead. There is an ATM in the Cameron Street lobby if you need it.

We still need lots of volunteers for many things. Deb Hoff, Warford Creek Alpacas, will be chairing the volunteer committee. If you can help, even if it's just for a couple hours, please let Deb or myself know.

Andy Schneider

**This is Your Opportunity!
Donate an Alpaca to Ma-
Paca to be Auctioned off in
the 2005
Jubilee Auction!**

Proceeds from the sale are earmarked for funds like ICI, ARF and funding research projects.

The goal is to keep funds collected in our industry for our industry.

Here are the benefits:

1. Donor will automatically get a space in the auction for another animal.
2. Donor can put 3 banners in the following locations:
 - 1 farm banner in the ring,
 - 1 farm banner on the auction stage apron,
 - 1 farm banner in the corridor leading to the auction arena.
3. Champion Class Sponsorship.
4. One Class Sponsorship.
5. Name tag recognition.
5. 12 Free Inserts in the MaPaca Newsletter.
6. Two extra parking passes.
7. Four Free dinners for Friday night.
8. One Free pen space over the 6 pen space limit.

Contact Nick Melfi and Donate An Alpaca!

MelfiFarm@aol.com or 908-369-3276

**Jubilee Volunteers
Needed**

Greeting to All,

The Holiday season is upon us! As we all scurry around making sure our respective holiday celebrations are successful and memorable. The Jubilee committee is also scurrying about working hard to assure the success of the 2005 Jubilee.

With that said, as the holidays wane and we all become focused on our alpacas and the spring show season ahead, I would like to remind everyone that we desperately need your support, so we can have a successful and memorable Jubilee. We still need many volunteers! Volunteers are what make this show great. Please help us give you, the membership, another great event!

If you could give us just for a few hours of your time, it would be appreciated. It all adds up and makes a great event even better. We need help in many areas, so please volunteer. Contact me at (908) 996-2128 or email at Debbie@warfordcreek.com.

Thank you and Happy Holidays!

Bright Idea!

By Alice Brown, Forever Precious Alpacas, Vineland, NJ

I amazed some farm visitors last weekend with a simple laundry basket. I went in the barn and got the laundry basket that I use to carry alfalfa out to the girls daily. It is a major response when they see this laundry basket! I just tapped it and called here girls. Every head looked up, stared at me and then they all came running to surround me and the small group of farm visitors. They were impressed! I sure looked good and so did the alpacas! Of course, I then made sure everyone got a mouthful of alfalfa.

I'd like to share another procedure that I've learned for bringing in the boys. Our barn has a pen on the front side for the girls. Here there is a gate that goes between the boys pasture and the girls pasture that is always double locked. However, when I need the boys, I lock the girls out of the pen in their pasture and open the gate separating the boys from this pen. I just call, "Come on Boys!" Every head looks up, they all stare at me and then "en masse," the boys make a bee line into the pen, all excited! Works every time. Now I close the gate, perform whatever herd health I need to do and then open the gate and let the boys go back to their pasture. By then they are more than willing, since they've realized the girls are not there any how!

Feature Article:

An Introduction to Poisonous Plant

By James E. Perry, Ph.D., PWS, from Ambler's Alpacas, Lanexa, VA

Plants are an important part of our North American ecosystems. They stabilize our soil with their roots, buffer soil erosion by intercepting raindrops, and provide food for our native wildlife. It is the latter, however, that we need to keep in mind when we are thinking about raising camelids: the wildlife that feed on the fruit, buds, and/or leaves of our North American plants have coevolved with the species found in their native habitat. That means that they have learned (some the hard way, I'm sure) which plants, which part(s) of the plants, and during what part of the year that are edible, and which are not. It is important for us to remember that even though the South American camelid has its historical origin in North America, the llamas and alpacas that we have transported to this country in the late 20th Century coevolved with South American vegetation (as well as soil and climate) that was very different than what they are now exposed to on our ranches. Co-evolution is a process that may take hundreds of years. Therefore, it will take time, and more than likely some experimentation on the part of camelids (as well as some unwanted poisoning) before they can become familiar with our native plants. It behooves us as camelid owners to take note of some of the most problematic species and manage our ranches to protect the health of our animals.

Through articles in this newsletter I will present some of the common plants that we need to be concerned with. The information in these articles will be taken from a number of books and web sites, as well as my own observations as a botanist and camelid owner. I have tried to emphasize the most common species that camelid ranchers throughout North America will encounter. However, please note that there are many locally common species that I do not have the room to include in these articles. Simply because I have not included a tree here does not mean that it will not cause a problem.

Signs of poisoning will be given for each family or species and have been compiled from numerous literature sources, particularly Kingsbury (1964) and Knight and Walter (2001). However, it is important to realize that each animal has its own physiological makeup and one animal may respond differently than another to a toxin. Signs, as well, will vary depending on the time of year, part of plant, and amount ingested. Therefore, not all signs may be seen at one time, or at

all, before death occurs.

As I mentioned in an earlier article, if you suspect your alpaca or llama has ingested a poisonous plant, **CALL YOUR VET IMMEDIATELY!** Plant toxins usually work fast, so it is important that you get help as quickly as possible.

(This article has been extracted and modified from "Managing Your Ranch for Poisonous Plants" by J.E. Perry, Camelid Quarterly, December 2003, pages1-6.)

Editor's Ramblings:

As the first snow flakes fall, it is great fun to see the new crias frolic in their newly experienced "white stuff." This is one thing that I love about raising alpacas, there are always a few new crias annually to keep the fun going!

Yes, the snow flakes are flying and so are our shovels, plows, and snow blowers. This time of year has it's good points and it's bad points. On December 21 we experienced the shortest day of the year. Now that the winter solstice is past, we can enjoy thinking of the fact that with each day a few minutes of daylight is added and each day is getting a little bit longer (although you can't prove it by looking at the sky in the early evenings on these cold and blustery days). However, soon we will see the results of these added minutes and with patience on our parts by February the days will actually be noticeably longer!

As you sit by your fire place or wood burning stove, if you are so fortunate to have such, please take some time to read all the articles that are coming your way in regard to the various issues that are set before all alpaca breeders. Such issues as Breed Standard adoption, Merger of ARI and AOBA, move of the ARI to yet another new office are worthy of attention. Then there is the issue of the NAIS and how that will affect our farms. Most of us, if we haven't done so yet, are pondering getting a microchip system. There is plenty of food for thought out there, so make sure you read and research these issues.

To keep you abreast of MaPaca business, as announced in an earlier Newsletter, Andy Schneider is the Jubilee Coordinator. However, because of the workload involved in handling that position, Andy will no longer be serving as the MaPaca Treasurer. Frieda Goodrich very kindly offered to take on the task and will now serve as MaPaca's Treasurer. Please note the new way we are listing the MaPaca Board of Directors on page 2 of this issue of the Newsletter.

If you have an article that you have written and would like to see printed in the Newsletter, please send it my way. I appreciate the many breeders who have sent me articles. I actually have a small backlog. Keep them coming! Thank You!

If you have received your AOBA renewal paperwork, note that there is a vote asked for. Please take the time to consider what is being asked and then make an informed vote. Speak up and be heard. Voting is the primary avenue that we have to do just that. Keep safe, keep warm and keep on enjoying your alpacas.

My Best to you all, Alice

Food for Thought Part 2

By Ingrid Wood. From *Stormwind Alpacas*, Columbus, NJ

Laughing All the Way?

Several years ago, a friend of mine attended a conference sponsored by an alpaca organization. "They had several breeders there from other livestock industries," she reported upon her return. "One speaker was smirking about the fact that we don't have a breed standard," my friend complained, adding indignantly, "No... make that laughing... he was laughing at us while telling us that we're the only livestock organization without a breed standard."

I knew this wasn't true (we are far from the only one!) but chose to ignore that bit of misinformation. However, I enjoy laughter as much as the next person, so I decided to investigate what prompted the conference speaker's outburst of hilarity and Schadenfreude.

Alpaca breeders who advocate a breed standard often stress that such a standard will ensure the health of our animals. Livestock industries with standards should therefore serve as excellent examples for us to emulate.

How did breeders of other species find health for their animals and reason for laughter at us, the livestock greenhorns? Eagerly I read the *Merck Veterinary Manual* (1998) to begin my research.

I thought it made sense to primarily search for disease believed or proven to be of genetic origin, since even the best breed standard can't defend against strictly environmental influences. I stopped compiling my search list on pg. 450 – well shy of Merck's 2,300 pages (my husband, who types all my articles, refused to cooperate further).

Here is what I found:

Cattle: Ventricular septal defect, ectopic heart, ventricular hypoplasia, cleft palate, epitheliogenesis imperfecta, ocular squamous cell carcinoma, failure of fetal endocrine function, islet cell tumors, thyroid C-cell tumors, familial dysmorphogenetic goiter, arthrogryposis, internal hydrocephalus, syndactyly, umbilical hernia, schistosomus reflexus, lysosomal storage disease, citrullinemia.

Is anyone laughing?

Horses: Ventricular septal defect, PDA, tetralogy of Fallot, tricuspid atresia, supernumerary teeth, inguinal hernia, ileocolonic aganglionsis, anal atresia, iridic cysts, cataracts, squamous cell carcinoma, Addison's disease, hirsutism, contracted tendons, hydrocephalus, cryptorchidism, patellar luxation, pervious urachus.

Who is still laughing?

Swine: Tricuspid valve dysplasia, atrial septal defect, subaortic stenosis, inguinal hernias, rectal prolapse, necrotic ear syndrome, atresia ani, hydrocephalus, myotonia congenita, arthrogryposis, cleft palate, cryptorchidism, familial dysmorphogenetic goiter.

Was it smirking or laughing?

Sheep: Ventricular septal defect, dentigerous cysts, rectal prolapse, familial dysmorphogenetic goiter, agnathia, brachygynathia, atresia ani, hypospadias, limb defects, myotonia congenita, muscular dystrophy.

They are laughing at us?

I could easily have listed many more. Of course, sometimes, disease caused by environmental conditions mimics that of an inherited genetic defect.

One such example is goiter. Perfectly healthy mammals can suffer from goiter due to iodine deficiency. Familial dysmorphogenetic goiter, however, is a genetic enzyme defect. "It has been reported in sheep, cattle, goats, pigs and appears to be inherited as an autosomal recessive" (Merck's).

I read somewhere that Germans particularly are guilty of feeling and expressing Schadenfreude. As one who was born and raised in that country, I must admit that I have been guilty on occasion of indulging in such an unattractive display of unkind behavior.

After reading this sorrowful list, however, I did not experience any feelings of glee. If breeders of other livestock species laugh at alpaca breeders for not having a breed standard, I realize now that it must be laughter born of desperation. Please, let's not show any Schadenfreude. Let's forgive them.

On the other hand, it's entirely possible that the speaker my friend encountered at the conference wanted company in his misery. In that case, I hope he gets a good dose of necrotic ear syndrome. Or how about a nice little rectal prolapse?

Read, think... and decide what's best for your alpacas!

Ingrid Wood is the author of *A Breeder's Guide to*

Kay and Stan

By Kathy Kenworthy from Almosta Ranch Alpacas,
Mohrsville, PA

The weekend of October 30-31, 2004 was filled with activity in Mohrsville, Pa. as Kathy Kenworthy from Almosta Ranch Alpacas hosted the first "Fall in Love With Alpacas" Open Barn Days.

Both days brought a steady stream of visitors enjoying fiber preparation and spinning demonstrations, meeting our animals---especially the new cria, Amazing Grace---watching the animals maneuver an obstacle course, and shopping in the farm store.

The special bond between animals and people with special needs has always intrigued me. They certainly do have a sixth sense! I witnessed this when a friend, Kay Watson, age 17, who is wheelchair bound, came to visit with us. Kay would always tell me that she liked llamas, but not alpacas. I could never really get a good reason out of her as to why she didn't like them. Well, that all changed when Kay met Stan! Stan is our farm ambassador. He is always the first one to meet and greet visitors. I was anxious to see what his reaction to her would be, as he had never seen anyone in a wheelchair. When I introduced him to Kay, even I was amazed. He gave her a "kiss" and then proceeded to put his head on her shoulder, leaving it there a few seconds, as if giving her a hug. Needless to say, Kay's opinion of alpacas immediately changed.

It was so rewarding to watch Kay smile and giggle as Stan kept kissing and she kept petting!



Photo submitted by Kathy Kenworthy from Almosta Ranch Alpacas, Mohrsville, PA

Effective Immediately

Please send all new MaPaca memberships and renewals to:

Alice Brown
458 Main Road
Vineland, NJ
08360

If you want to receive your pen space discount, make sure you send your renewal to me post marked no later than **Dec. 31st!** You will find a membership/renewal form on line at www.mapaca.org . Print it out and send it to me with your check made out to MaPaca.

Do You Want to Advertise in the MaPaca Newsletter?

No ads will be accepted that include the PRICE of animals for sale. Stud Service prices are acceptable.

We will insert one-page ads for members in MaPaca Newsletters. Ads cost **\$40.00** for one 8 1/2" by 11" ad, on 24 pound paper or less, if you supply ALL the copies (they can be in color and two sided if you like). If your ad is on heavier paper than 24 pound, the cost will be **\$60.00**. If you would like us to copy your ad, supply us one copy and we will have it copied in black & white, one sided, for **\$70.00** total.

If you know any business that sells products or services relating to alpacas or farming in general that would benefit alpaca farmers, that would like to place an insert AD in the MaPaca Newsletter, you can recommend them if you are an existing Lifetime MaPaca Member. The costs for businesses would be an additional **\$100.00** added on to the regular member fee for an insert AD. Thus it would be either **\$140.00, \$160.00, or \$170.00**. Please send copies, along with payment, to Alice Brown, 458 Main Road, Vineland, NJ 08360 by the 20th of the month you want your ad inserted. Make check payable to **MaPaca** and include check with inserts.

If you have any questions, email Alice Brown at fpalpacas@aol.com or give me a call at—**856-697-8127**.

Classified Ads:

Any member may post an ad for alpaca and/or alpaca farm related equipment and items. The ad may include a one sentence description and contact information.. We will run your ad for one month, if you do not sell the item and wish to run it again, let me know. This will be a free service to current MaPaca members ONLY. Please send your ads to Alice Brown, 458 Main Road, Vineland, NJ, 08360 or fpalpacas@aol.com or call 856-697-8127.

1. **Vet Quality Alpaca Chute**— This chute is in excellent condition and comes with pull-down sides, belly slings, wheels and other handy features. I paid \$1,300 for it several years ago, and I would like to sell it now for \$750. Photos are available, and please call or e-mail if you have any questions. **Nancy Lake Infor@alpinealpaca.com** , 301-393-5878, Hagerstown, MD
2. Announcing **The Blue Ribbon Alpaca** by Susan Rosche (Pax River Alpacas). A delightful, beautifully illustrated, hard-cover children's book that promotes the alpaca. The story of an alpaca, her jealous companions, her awesome fleece and the children who love her. \$18.,95. Bulk discounts available. **Information at <http://www.paxriveralpacas.com/>** .
3. Alpaca Art on Egyptian Papyrus. Unique. Original or custom designs. Reasonable prices. Additional information and samples at <http://www.paxriveralpacas.com/> .

MaPaca Meeting Schedule for 2005

January 16, 2005
April 21, 2005 (At the Jubilee)
July 17, 2005
October 16, 2005*

***Please mark your calendars for these dates and plan to attend. Watch the Newsletter and the web site for announcement of the meeting locations, as the locations will vary.**

Calendar of Events

March 5, 2005—An Introduction to Camelid Color Genes by Ingrid Wood (author of *A Breeder's Guide to Genetics—Relax It's Not Rocket Science*). Seminar held at Stormwind Alpacas. 11AM-3PM. Columbus, NJ—easy access from Rts. 206, 295, and NJ/PA Turnpikes. \$50 per person (includes lunch) - **Call 609-261-0696 or email alpacas@uscom.com. Visit www.StormwindAlpaca.com for directions.**

April 3, 2005 Second Annual Alpaca Heritage Budget Caper Halter & Fleece Show. West Friendship, MD, Howard County Fairgrounds. Sponsored by Alpaca Heritage Events, Inc. Free seminars; learn about alpaca care and the tax advantages of breeding alpacas as a business. Free parking, and admission. Entry fee \$50/alpaca—unlimited class entries. Limit of 2 pens/4 entries. No stall fees, bring your own panels.
Contact: Ingrid Wood, 609-261-0696 or alpacas@uscom.com Kate Perez, kperez@erols.com or www.AlpacaHeritage.com.

April 21, 22, 23, & 24—MaPaca Eastern Alpaca Jubilee 2005— The MaPaca Jubilee will again be held at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex, in Harrisburg, PA. See the MaPaca web site at www.mapaca.org and read your MaPaca Newsletter, to keep abreast of current Jubilee information.

Veterinary News for the East Coast:

Long Gestations

By Alice Brown

Recently I received an email from Dr. David Anderson that discussed how to assess the situation when a female alpaca is carrying a cria for what seems like an eternity. I immediately could identify with the article as our first cria born on our farm was born on day 382 gestation. The long gestation had us very worried to say the least. This question does come up for breeders on occasion and everyone wonders what to do.

I read of one female that was at a whopping 401 days gestation. The breeder finally had the female X-rayed only to discover that she was not pregnant at all. So, this can often be the case, as Dr. Anderson points out, but not always. The causes and mechanisms of prolonged pregnancies are currently not well understood. In Dr. Anderson's report entitled "Overdue Females and Problem Pregnancies," Dr. Anderson points out that fetal well-being in such cases is an area of "on-going research."

One thing that Dr. Anderson says is important is to assess the behavior of the dam. Is she eating normally, and behaving normally? If so, he says that "most likely the fetus is fine. To evaluate an overdue pregnancy, Dr. Anderson recommends performing a complete physical exam, rectal and vaginal examinations, ultrasound examination, and a fetal heart rate (FHR) assessment. Dr.

Anderson states: "If the dam and fetus are normal in all aspects, then the pregnancy is allowed to continue undisturbed." This was the case in the long gestation that we experienced of 382 days. I have heard of another breeder with a dam going 386 days with successful delivery of a healthy cria.

Dr. Anderson goes on to explain how to perform each of the tests that he suggests and how to evaluate the results of each of the tests in assessing the health of the dam and fetus. Rectal palpation is often difficult in alpacas, but a skilled vet with a small hand can do the exam. Our vet was able to do a rectal exam on a pregnant female here that we thought might have a uterine torsion.

In regard to ultrasound, Dr. Anderson says that this non-invasive evaluation can be used to observe the fetus and that even the heart can sometimes be seen. If the heart can be viewed, the FHR can be assessed. Dr. Anderson has recently investigated the use of fetal cardiocography using a Fetal Monitor 155. The monitor records FHR and uterine contractions. So far, Dr. Anderson has not successfully been able to record diagnostic uterine activity for various physiological reasons. However, Dr. Anderson has been able to record FHR tracings to assess rate and variability. He found that FHR "consistently below 60" were found in dams with severe illness and the crias were either delivered by C-section or were aborted.

Reference: Overdue Females and Females with Problem Pregnancies, by David E. Anderson, D.V.M., MS, Diplomate ACVS Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Comments
about the
Newsletter,
or any
contri-
butions,
send to
Alice
Brown at
fpalpacas
@aol.com .

Speech is Civilization itself. The word, even the most contradictory word, preserves contact—it is silence which isolates.

—Thomas Mann,
The Magic Mountain

PHOTOS NEEDED

The MaPaca Web Site Manager Carol Masters would like some new photos for the MaPaca web site. If you have a cute alpaca photo, please send it via email (not larger than 350 pixels in largest direction) to Carol at:

carol@serenityalpacas.com

You can also send a photo via USPS to:

**Carol Masters
219 Turkey Hill Road**