



MAPACA
Mid-Atlantic Alpaca Association

Newsletter

July 2006

Volume 6, issue 7

MAPACA TYPE CONFERENCE

Save this date:

August 12, 2006

MAPACA has retained several speakers including Eric Hoffman; Dr. Phillip Sponenberg, DVM, PhD; Winnie Le Breque, Dr. Stacey Byers, DVM, Ingrid Wood and Mary Reed.

The Type Conference will be held at the Philadelphia International Airport Marriott.

For more information and directions go to the MAPACA website at www.mapaca.org.

Cost will be \$35/person including lunch.

Come and be educated!

Come and be heard!

Come and ask questions!

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Camelid Veterinarian Continuing Education Grant Program

The Board of Directors of MAPACA is delighted to announce the establishment of an annual program to support continuing education for camelid veterinarians serving alpaca owners in the MAPACA region. Grants will be available up to \$500 per session to attend camelid educational programs. Grants are limited to one per year for each veterinarian. In the case of veterinary practices, only one grant per practice per program. Feel free to contact Alice Brown, Recording Secretary, with any questions you may have.

Funds will be available retroactively for programs already attended in 2006. The Camelid Veterinarian Continuing Education Grant Application is available on the MAPACA website. Please submit the completed application to Alice Brown. The applications will then be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors. MAPACA requests that all recipients prepare a brief summary of the program, within 2 weeks of attending, to be shared with the MAPACA membership on the MAPACA website. These summaries will be archived kept on the website for future reference as well.

Please Note!

The MAPACA General Membership Meeting scheduled for July 16, 2006 has been canceled due to its proximity to the August 12th Type Conference.

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Editor's Ramblings:

And the rains came! Yes, about a month's worth of rain in one night! OK, it must be those alpacas doing their rain dance again. I think they got carried away. Fortunately the load of limestone screenings we put in the barn to raise the floor level, kept the animals high and dry. They seem perfectly happy to cush in the barn or under the over hangs, nibbling hay and chewing their cud intermittently.

I hope all of you can save the date of AUGUST 12, 2006 for the MAPACA Type Conference. You won't be sorry. Please come and encourage others that you know to come and be educated about the Breed Standard issue. The MAPACA Board of Directors has gathered a great assembly of interesting speakers who will be sharing their knowledge with all of us. There will be a questionnaire for you to fill out as the day progresses and MAPACA plans to tally the information on the questionnaires to present to AOBA. So come learn and add your vote to the tally.

The MAPACA Election 2006 is being worked on right now and all should be in the mail by mid-to late July. Please, when you receive your ballot, fill it right out and mail it right back. I know the tendency is to put it on the counter top or table top for a time that is more convenient to fill it out. Unfortunately that time never comes and before you know it the ballot time is over and your vote is not counted. Don't let that happen. Vote right away. Then you will be heard.

I hope you like the interesting array of articles that members submitted for the Newsletter this month. Please note, however, that the opinions presented are not necessarily those of the MaPaca Board. If you have something of interest to share with others, email it to me. Please share your funny stories, your bright ideas, your experiences with a birth, a cria, a dam, a herdsire or something you learned works well on your farm. If you have something to say, send it to me. Poetry is nice once in a while, too. I have found that on the farm there is never a dull moment and something is always going on. Share those moments with others. See you at the Type Conference! Best, Alice Brown

The Great Alpaca Food Thief - A True Story

By Todd Johnson, son of Neil and Caroline Johnson, Mill View Mountain Alpacas, Forksville, PA

Alpacas are characters. They are active and curious: step onto any Alpaca farm, and you're bound to witness two alpacas chest-butting or neck-wrestling while a group of five or six contentedly graze on orchard grass, stopping only to inspect a visitor approaching the fence. Their unique personalities create daily situations that seem suitable for a television drama, a big-screen comedy, or, in this case, a paperback mystery.

On the Forever Precious Alpaca Farm in Vineland, New Jersey, two Alpacas, owned by Pennsylvania's Mill View Mountain Alpacas, found themselves playing the lead roles in a true tale reminiscent of Donald J. Sobol's *Encyclopedia Brown*. Koffee Kahlua, a yearling male, played the real-life role as the culprit, and the sweet, unassuming victim was Sir Starry Knight, also a yearling male. Born minutes apart, they immediately became pasture buddies, and although they were inseparable, their personalities were quite different. Shortly after the two weanlings started on their grain diet, Kahlua began stealing Starry's grain right from under his nose! Sounds like a mystery novel to me:

The thief lay hidden in the hot afternoon sun waiting for his chance to strike. When Alice had finished filling Starry's bucket with fresh grain he fixed his greedy eyes on the target. This was his chance. He snuck undetected past the other alpacas, shoved Starry out of the way, and within seconds ate all the grain in Starry's food bucket. The thief had struck again.

The identity of the thief, of course, was no mystery, but this brazen act, most likely the result of Kahlua's "Alpha Male" personality, had to be stopped; Kahlua not only thought he was The Boss of the Alpacas, but of his human caretakers as well.

The solution was strapping a halter on Kahlua every time he was seen committing the felony, and then tying the lead to a fence post at the end of the

shed that bordered the feeding pen. It was a Pavlovian attempt at curbing his bad habit, and it worked like a charm. The halter acted as the 'conditioned stimulus' and was eventually able to elicit the desired 'conditioned response', which was for him to stop stealing Starry's food! On a few rare occasions Kahlua has reverted back to his 'power hungry' mentality, but the mere sight of the halter causes him to drop his head and sulk his way back to his own bowl of grain. The case, more of a "how-to-stop-it" than a "who-dun'-it", had been solved:

The farm was freed of the sly thief, and the humans once again reigned supreme. That night Starry longingly stared into his food bucket. He took one last suspicious look around the barn, then chowed down on the luscious grain. As a tear of joy ran down his cheek, he savored every last bite of his fine, well-deserved, meal.



Koffee Kahlua (on left) and his buddy Sir Starry Knight (on right)

Photo By Alice Brown, Forever Precious Alpacas, Vineland, NJ

Isobel, the Killer Alpaca

By Dorothy Hunt,
Camelidynamics practitioner,
Sweet Pea Alpacas,
Earleville, MD



That was Jane's not-quite-kidding description of her two-year-old huacaya female when she asked me to work with Isobel. "The breeder told us that she was born kicking and spitting," Jane continued. "He warned us that she would need firm handling." I was certain that Isobel, labeled at birth, had received more than her share of manhandling as she grew up. At any rate, she had learned to kick high, hard and accurately: Jane had suffered many bruises and injuries.

At Jane's farm we herded Isobel into a 10' x 10' catch pen constructed of metal panels. Isobel was alert, watchful and clearly very nervous. When I entered the pen she immediately swiveled so that her tail faced me. When I moved she kept that tail pointed like a compass needle in my direction. From outside the pen, Jane explained that she and her husband had developed a system for any necessary procedures: Jane acted as decoy while her husband Stan, a hefty football player-type, tried to sneak up and grab Isobel's neck.

Using the full length of my catch rope and wand,* I slipped the rope around Isobel's neck; she kicked, high and hard. I took two deep breaths, then turned her with ratcheting signals* so that her left side faced me. She turned a quizzical eye in my direction: How did you do that without coming into kick range?

Constant pre-emptive signals* were needed to keep her from swiveling as I approached her. I fastened the rope high on her neck; she tensed and emitted a high-pitched distress sound. I immediately retreated to a distance that she seemed to find comfortable, prepared to pre-empt her turn into kick position; it didn't come. Instead she turned her head to gaze at me: Is it possible that this human understood my signal and re-

sponded?

Another deep breath, and I again approached. Isobel willingly accepted Ttouch circles* around her ears, nose and mouth. When I left her to fetch a halter, she did not attempt to swivel. As I picked up the halter I caught Jane's look of apprehension: Isobel had never in her life been haltered without the restraint of at least two people.

When Isobel saw the halter in my hand she did, finally, spit at me, but in a rather half-hearted, automatic way (with, however, great precision.) Deep breath, and I held the buckled crown piece up for her inspection.* After she had looked at it without reaction for a few seconds, I moved it over her nose and rested it on the bridge; she tensed slightly but did nothing else. Isobel had no reaction when I presented the noseband, and stood quietly while I slipped the halter on and buckled it. I stepped away briefly, then removed the halter. With the halter off, I stepped away but did not leave the pen, hoping that she would not revert to the compass-needle behavior. She did not. Instead, Isobel turned to face me, then slowly approached. She stopped in front of me, stretched her neck and sniffed my face.

Since that day Jane and Stan have used the same techniques with Isobel, and report that she is a changed alpaca. Isobel's unusually high level of intelligence, which had played a large part in causing the reactive behavior, had also enabled her to recognize a better alternative when it was offered to her.

* For the methods and tools mentioned see *The Camelid Companion* by Marty McGee Bennett, or ask Dorothy at (410) 275-2094 or sweetbriar@dol.net

The Great Frederick Fair

By Kate Perez, Mount Airy Alpaca Company, Mt. Airy, MD

Today I want to clue all MAPACA members into a little secret. It's called The Great Frederick Fair. This is a very large, regional fair located in Maryland, and one that has a grand old agricultural tradition. Almost every kind of livestock is shown there along with vegetables, bees, quilts, weaving, paintings and hand spun skeins, to name only a few of the other things exhibited. The alpaca halter show runs from September 21 – September 23.* This fair is judged by the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE) in the 140,000 person attendance range. Last year this fair was awarded first place in five categories and Best Overall in its division by the IAFE. This year, the fair will celebrate its 144th year of its existence. As livestock events go, the Great Frederick Fair is a hugely successful event and is run by a board of directors that cares passionately about educating the public about the importance of farms and livestock in our lives. The alpaca halter show at this fair is now in danger of being discontinued.

In return for providing a venue of this size and popularity for a very low price (pen spaces this year will be \$25 apiece) the Great Frederick Fair wants all livestock owners to have live animals in their pens instead of marketing displays. Guess which livestock breeders objected to this rule? That's right, the newest exhibitors at this old and well respected event, the alpaca breeders. Guess which type of livestock exhibitors are the only ones who have not had a fair superintendent at the fair committee meetings because their breed organization would not sanction a show unless the breed organization's superintendents and judges were used? Which exhibitors complained the longest and loudest about dust, dirt, the public trying to "bother" their animals, the lack of security guards, etc.? One of the alpaca exhibitors complained about the children of the other livestock exhibitors who were curious about the alpacas and wanted to touch them. Unlike me, I guess he's never taken his child over to someone else's pen to touch their sheep or horse.

In addition to the complaining, the internal political problems of organizations such as AOBA and the Maryland Alpaca Breeders Association have

ended up costing the fair staff extra work, many headaches and lowered participation by alpaca exhibitors. And, there were fewer exhibitors from the alpaca show who would volunteer to do anything to help run the fair than there were in the other live-stock exhibitor groups.

Some members of the current and past boards of the Maryland Alpaca Breeders have spoken out at their meetings, urging their members not to attend this fair, calling it "a county fair." That is completely untrue. This fair is open to alpaca breeders from any state and has had alpaca exhibitors from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia. All this has taken the fair from a high level of participation (around 90 alpacas and 50 fleeces) to a much lower level of participation during a time when the amount of alpaca breeders has been rapidly increasing. The fair board, feeling upset at the dropping number of alpaca exhibitors and misbehavior of some alpaca organizations, is considering dropping the alpaca show altogether. It would be a shame to lose our place at an event this important in the agricultural world. We have one more year, 2006, to prove that we do want to keep this venue available to alpaca exhibitors.

In order to help get the fair back on track, some fellow MAPACA members and I have stepped in and offered to run the alpaca show at the Great Frederick Fair ourselves this year. Bob Lewis from Sykesville, Maryland has signed on as the first Alpaca Halter Superintendent who WILL attend fair superintendent meetings. I have agreed to be the Alpaca Fleece Show Superintendent in 2006. I did this job in the years when the fleece show had those high levels of participation so I know that we can find fleece exhibitors again. My experience in helping to run the Alpaca Heritage Budget Caper (ABC show) has shown me that there IS a demand for smaller, less fancy, alpaca halter and fleece shows, especially bargain priced ones.

I have sold an alpaca at the Great Frederick Fair. I have also sold breedings there. I have bought an alpaca from a Pennsylvania breeder there as well as a breeding from a different Pennsylvania breeder. I've met several people there who later visited my farm. Some of those were from Virginia, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Many other alpaca breeders have also found this fair a good place to do busi-

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Calendar of Events

July 29 & 30, 2006—Silvercloud Farm, ABFS/ Alpaca Fiber Production, Gibsonia, PA—with AOBA & IAJS certified judge Diana Timmerman. A hands-on course, teaching students about alpaca fiber, character, density, uniformity, fineness—recognition and understanding of the factors that make “good fiber.” Learn how your herd health impacts fiber characteristics, how to make breeding choices and select alpacas for the show ring from your own herd. Be sure to bring your newly shorn fleeces for skirting. One “lucky” registrant will receive 50% discount on a breeding to any herd-sire owned or co-owned by Silvercloud Farm! **For more information contact: Helen Humphreys at 1-877-MY ALPACA. To register for this course visit www.abfschool.com.**

MaPaca Meetings— 2006

**August 12, 2006—
Type Conference**

October 15, 2006

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

Classified Ads:

Any member may post an ad for alpaca and/or alpaca farm related equipment and items. The ad may include a short description and contact information. This will be a free service to current MAPACA members ONLY. Please send your ads to Alice Brown, fpalpacas@aol.com or call 856-697-8127.

1. **Alpaca Cria Sweaters**—Made of 100% alpaca. Warm, durable, lightweight, soft! Small to 25lbs. Large to 35 lbs. Assorted colors. \$50.00 each + tax, S&H. Free shipping with purchase of 3 or more. **Mountain Meadows Alpaca Farm. 540-586-1745.**
2. **Manure Spreader.** Pequea Model 70, ground driven, excellent condition (used 10 hours total), paint faded. 70 bushel capacity. If new \$2,900—asking \$1,500 or reasonable best offer. Pictures available. Contact: **Paul at Big Sky Alpacas—856-223-0570.**
3. **New Alpaca Photos Website—www.alpacaphotosonline.com** 100s, soon to be 1000s of photos of alpacas and products. No charge to submit photos. Contact: **Nancy Lake, info@alpacaphotosonline.com or 301-393-5878.**
4. **Wanted. Long term boarders** (one or two Huacaya females) fair rates, excellent pastures, spacious barn, and plenty of TLC, **call 609-261-0696 or visit www.stormwindalpacas.com**
5. **Cover-It Shelter**, 12 feet X 20 feet. Grey Rip-stop covering. House style. Great for storing hay or small tractors—or as a quarantine shed. FREE, just dismantle and take away. **Call Jovi at 908-806-6255.**
6. **Cover-It Shelter.** 22 feet X 20 feet X 12 feet high. House style. Heavy-Duty grey rip-stop covering over steel rib construction. Zippered door. Less than one year old. Stores over 400 bales of hay. Disassemble and remove for \$400 (originally about \$1000 new). **Call Jovi Larson 908-806-6255.**
7. **Stall Mats**, 4 X 6 feet, 3.4 inch thick. Indestructible. Half-price at \$20 each. **Call Jovi Larson. 908-806-6255.**



Calendar of Events

August 25-27, 2006—East Meets West Auction—Brookhollow Farm, Boonton Township, NJ

Catch the excitement...when the alpaca world meets at the 5th annual East Meets West Alpaca Auction, featuring crias sired by the incomparable Snowmass Invincible. Renowned camelid experts, Dr. Ahmed Tibary and Dr. Robert Van Saun will be speaking on reproduction and nutrition. Don't miss the opportunity to bid on donated herd-sire services featuring the best of the best: Snowmass Nova, Invincible and more.

For more information www.eastmeetswestauction.com.

September 9, 2006—Eastern Extreme Alpaca Auction

Join us for the Premier Alpaca Auction of the Fall! We are proud to offer an elite selection of Huacaya Alpacas and thrilled to hold this year's auction at MOUNTAINEER RACE TRACK & GAMING RESORT! Visit the resort at www.mtrgaming.com. Join us Friday afternoon for a Meet & Greet and Alpaca Viewing. Friday Evening we invite you to a night out at the Race Track. On Saturday morning our guests will have the opportunity to attend seminars with featured speakers AOBA certified judge Ruth Evalstead & Dr. Wayne Jarvis.

Visit us at www.easternextremeauction.com to preview auction lots. For more information contact **1-877-MY ALPACA** or info@easternextremeauction.com



Calendar of Events

September 16-17, 2006-Everything's Coming Up Alpacas-Ballston Spa, NY. Join Kelly and Paul Zanella of Spa Alpacas and guest speakers as they share their alpaca knowledge and experience. Seminars on Sat. Sept. 16th from 8:30AM-4PM. Reservations required. (\$100 per person or \$180 per couple) includes continental breakfast, lunch and presentation booklet). Open House on Sunday, Sept. 17th 10AM-4PM (rain or shine). **Contact: Kelly & Paul at 518-885-0585 or pjzanella@aol.com.**

September 23, 2006—9AM-4PM Columbus, NJ, Camelidynamics Workshop with Dorothy Hunt, the first Camelidynamics Practitioner certified by Marty McGee Bennett. Learn a kinder, gentler, and more effective way of handling alpacas and llamas. Limited to 20 participants—\$150 per person—lunch included. Reserve your space by mailing a check to: Stormwind Alpacas, 1862 Jacksonville-Jobstown Road, Columbus, NJ 08022. **For information call 609-261-0696, or stormwindalpacas@comcast.net.**

September 30-October 1, 2006—I Love NY Alpacas Autumn Celebration- Ballston Spa, NY- ((Just 30 minutes North of Albany) Sponsored by Spa Alpacas. Saturday and Sunday from 10AM-4PM (rain or shine). Fun, educational, relaxing event in the midst of pastures full of friendly, fleecy alpacas. Weekend activities include farm and facility tours, fleece spinning demonstrations, free mini-seminars, hands-on alpaca handling and agility training, shopping at "The Fiber Nook" farm store. **Contact: Kelly & Paul at 518-885-0585 or pjzanella@aol.com.**

(Continued from page 5.)

ness.

No, the Great Frederick Fair is not heavily guarded, and the crowds coming out of the commercial side of the fair, where big Country and Western music acts perform, can be rowdy at night. All of the livestock groups have some of their exhibitors sleeping in the animal barns at night to guard their animals. And, yes, the crowd who comes to look at the alpacas will have plenty of people in it who are not rich or even middle class. Sometimes there is a thunderstorm and the footing in the animal barns and tents gets muddy. Sometimes the fleeces get touched by curious fair goers. Sometimes the alpacas get touched and it is up to the owners to watch over their own animals.

So why do so many of the goat, sheep, dairy, beef cattle, horse, pig, chicken and rabbit breeders show at this fair? Maybe they realize that the sheer number of people attending this fair will give them more visibility to the public than other events at which they exhibit. Maybe they think that it is a good thing to educate the public (even the ones with dumb questions and unruly children) about their product. Maybe they value the contacts they will make with other animal breeders. Maybe they want a chance to win some ribbons and show in a fun, low pressure event that is only 2 and ½ days long. Maybe they want the experience of showing in front of well qualified judges for a bargain price. Maybe they are proud to be part of one of the oldest and most well respected agricultural fairs in the U.S. They might even think that sleeping at the fair with one's own animals is a worthwhile experience for their children to have.

I am proud to be an alpaca farmer but not always proud of the attitudes I see displayed by other alpaca farmers. Let's be part of the farming community and not just attend events for alpaca breeders only. Let's help run livestock shows and fairs. Let's do our part to educate the public about alpacas. Let's be grateful to those in the agricultural community who offer us a place at their events and let's participate with humility and a positive attitude. The Great Frederick Fair is one place that we can start.

*The entries for the Alpaca **Fleece** Show must be made on Saturday, September 16th.

Any internet search on The Great Frederick Fair will bring up a lot more information, photos, newspaper reviews, dates and times and maps relating to the fair.

For entry information go to: www.theGreatFrederickFair.com

To Contact Halter Superintendent Bob Lewis (Red Barn Alpacas) call 410-552-0853 or e-mail: Red-BarnAlpacas@aol.com

To Contact Fleece Show Superintendent Kate Perez (Mount Airy Alpacas) call 301-607-9129 or e-mail: Info@MountAiryAlpacas.com

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 ½" 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 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. **Any questions, email Alice Brown: fpalpacas@aol.com or call: 856-697-8127.**

Please send your comments to

Alice Brown at:

Fpalpacas@aol.com.