

## *Welcome to 2004!*

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and that we are all looking forward to a happy and prosperous year to come!

Thanks to all your input, we certainly have a very full issue of NEAOBA News, with lots of interesting and informative as well as entertaining writing to get you off on the correct foot.

The cold and snow that we have been experiencing has us all worried about the well-being of our alpaca friends and you will find lots of excellent advice from members in the "what do you do on your farm?" section.

Individual members share their experience of what it's like to have a specially bred dog to help guard your precious herd, running a fashion show benefit, having twins, and even holding an alpaca drive!

We have an article on the evolution of the alpaca industry from the vantage point of one long-time New England breeder, and read what happens when a VH1 camera crew arrives unexpectedly at a farm in Mass!

We were very sad to learn of the sudden death of Ben Gifford in December and our hearts go out to Jan Hensle and Ben's family. Ben was crucial to the smooth-running of the very successful New England Alpaca Fiber Pool (NEAFP). Ben and Jan have worked so very hard to build it up, so we are relieved to hear from Shelly Riley that she and her husband Chris are committed to helping Jan to keep NEAFP on track and growing strongly into the future.

*Nicola Blake,*  
NEAOBA News Editor,  
Sallie's Fen Alpacas, Barrington, NH

This is a quarterly newsletter intended to educate and proliferate the alpaca industry in the Northeast region of the U.S.

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Views, advertisements and article submissions are the opinions of the writers and providers and do not necessarily reflect NEAOBA's opinion as a whole nor member's opinions individually

Cover page credit: Nicola Blake, Sallie's Fen Alpacas

### "Winter path at Tamarack Meadows"

Photo by Nicola Blake, Sallie's Fen Alpacas

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# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

## New Farm Members

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## New Associate Members

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## New email:

Dick and Marcia Benton  
Blue Lake Alpacas  
DickBenton1@aol.com.

Peter Rosengarten  
Mountain Pond Farm  
crr8190@vermontel.net

Audrey & Bill Rhoades  
Mirage Alpacas  
miragealpacas@gsinet.net

## \*\*\*\*\*Attention NEAOBA Members - Please Renew!!\*\*\*\*\*

If your address label for this newsletter has an asterisk next to your name, then we don't have any record that you renewed your NEAOBA membership yet!

If you don't renew by Feb 16th, you will be dropped from the membership roll and this will be the last copy of the newsletter that you will receive - And we know you don't want THAT to happen!!

For those who have misplaced the membership renewal form that was mailed to you, please use the one that we have included in this package.

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## NEAOBA INFO

NEAOBA was founded in February 1995 by New England members of the Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association (AOBA).

NEAOBA is an official AOBA affiliate.

[www.neaoba.org](http://www.neaoba.org)

Current membership #s: **175** Farms

Officers:

President: **Dave Sanderson**

([Sandersons@PRAlpacas.com](mailto:Sandersons@PRAlpacas.com))

Vice President: **Liz MacEachran** ([kilblaan@aol.com](mailto:kilblaan@aol.com))

Treasurer: **Robert Hebler** ([acornpaca@aol.com](mailto:acornpaca@aol.com))

Secretary: **Cindy StGeorge** ([roy@oralpaca.com](mailto:roy@oralpaca.com))

Director: **Leslie Bacon** ([stonewallfarm@pivot.net](mailto:stonewallfarm@pivot.net))

Director: **Jerry Weisgrau**

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and **Laura Busky** ([laura@northbrookalpacos.com](mailto:laura@northbrookalpacos.com))

To request an extra copy of the Newsletter, contact **Laura Busky** ([laura@northbrookalpacos.com](mailto:laura@northbrookalpacos.com))

## Contribute to the NEAOBA Newsletter!

*This newsletter is what WE the members make of it!*

If you are interested in contributing ideas, articles, news, tid-bits, funny stories and/or photos to this newsletter please submit them to the editor, Nicola Blake ([nicola@sfalpacas.com](mailto:nicola@sfalpacas.com)).

**NEAOBA NEWS AD RATES** (*Payments will be collected by Laura Busky*)

Classifieds (45 words or less): \$15.

Business Card \$15.

1/2 Page \$30.

Full Page \$45.

Double Full Pg \$80.

Farm Flyers \$65.

A **farm flyer** is a full-page advertisement *completely* prepared by the member. The flyers can be double sided and in color if you choose. These will simply be added to the newsletter during assembly.

## New England Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association

### NEAOBA General Financial Activities

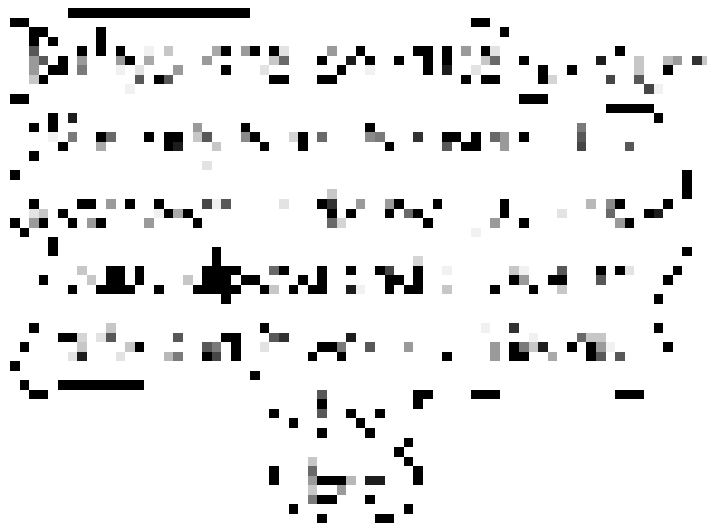
12/31/03	(A) Actual	(B) Budget	(B less A) Budget
Statement of Profit and Loss	6/30/03 thru 12/31/03	6/30/03 thru 6/30/04	over/under Prorated
<b>General Activities</b>			
<b>Income:</b>			
Interest on CD	117	250	(8)
Membership Dues	4,675	9,500	(75)
News Letter Ads/Website Listings	1,100	3,700	(750)
From NECC	0	0	0
Scientific/Medical Research Fund	645	1,500	(105)
Total	6,537	14,950	(938)
<b>Expense:</b>			
Administrative Expenses	393	2,100	657
Gratuities	0	100	50
Marketing Expenses	9,461	16,500	(1,211)
To NECC	3,500	3,500	0
Meeting Expense	592	1,000	(92)
Newsletter Expense	708	2,500	542
Scientific/Medical Research	0	2,000	1,000
Website Expense	145	400	55
Total	14,798	28,100	1,002
<b>Net Profit/(Loss) from Gen. Activ.</b>	<b>(8,261)</b>	<b>(13,150)</b>	<b>64</b>

# Calling Candidates!

At its recent meeting, the NEAOBA BOD established a nominating committee to create a slate of candidates to fill two (three year) BOD seats that become vacant this year. The seats will be filled at the election to be held at the annual meeting in May. The chair of the committee is Liz MacEachran.

Any farm member who would like to be a part of the committee, or would like to be a candidate for one of the BOD seats is invited to contact Liz at 603-924-6113 or [kilblaan@aol.com](mailto:kilblaan@aol.com).

## Kids Corner



### Why alpacas are so cute (by Jenna)

One night a baby alpaca was born in the mud. My whole family got dressed really fast especially me. My dad picked it up and put it in a blanket and my mom cleaned it off with the help from my dad. It was so cute. Its name was Donoma. I rubbed her nose. She let me pet her. Two weeks later another baby was born on our farm. It's name is wacipi. She is also cute. We watch them run and hop. They let us run and hop with them.

Contributed by Meghan (age 7) and Jenna (age 8) of Cynjim Alpacas, Strafford, NH

# ***Alpaca Round Up***

***Les Foshay, Champlain Valley Alpacas, Bridport, VT***

If it wasn't America's first, it was certainly Addison County Vermont's first "Old West Style Alpaca Round-Up". On Saturday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, Champlain Valley Alpacas of Bridport Vermont hosted their first annual "Alpaca Round-Up". It was coordinated with the efforts of NEAOBA to raise awareness of Alpaca in New England as part of NEAOBA's Holiday Open House Weekend.

Notices went out to local and regional papers and invitations were sent to prospects on the regional "interest list" resulting in attendance of over 60 people. Vermont's major newspaper, the Burlington Free Press sent a photographer for the day to capture the moments, after graciously reprinting a supplied photo in the calendar section of the paper.

Champlain Valley Alpacas opened their farm to visitors and interpreted these wonderful creatures to the general public for the weekend in a unique way - an "Old Fashioned Drive." The crowd was given instructions, herding poles, and the gates were opened. Almost 50 females and crias were herded and lead down a mile and a quarter of town dirt roads, from one farm to another, where they are now spending the winter. The road commissioner posted signs and watched from his truck with his wife as the crowd ambled past. Local 4-H horse club members were to share the fun, but horse participation was limited due to gusty conditions.

After a safe arrival, the "Drive" participants were invited to warm up with local hot cider and cocoa as they perused the new facilities and the fashion boutique. No alpaca sales were realized that day, but the overall awareness of alpaca and the joy of owning them was heightened that day thru the participants- and a full page spread in the Sunday Burlington Free press the following day. And almost 50 animals got moved in slightly over an hour- overall a very successful day for the alpaca community.

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## ***What do you do on your Farm?***

### **Questions for this issue:**

- a. What are your favorite tips for successful Open Farm events?
- b. How do you help your alpacas cope with extremely cold weather?
- c. What do you do for your alpacas after a deep snowfall?

### **Answers:**

#### **Dawn & John Brooker, Fiber Fields Alpaca Farm, Palermo, Maine**

1) Event tips: Get the word out about your event. Have your animals close enough to the public so they can be seen well but not necessarily touched. Provide amply touching exhibits---raw fiber, sweaters, yarn. Post informational material for people who would prefer not to ask questions. Serve something warm to drink. Have plenty of farm help to allow you time to talk freely to guests. Restrict your visitors to "outside the pasture" (or provide a foot bath) to limit contamination of your fields. Prevention is worth a million.

2) Cold weather: In the past we have always top dressed our grain with cracked corn and found it to be very helpful to generate extra energy/heat. I recently learned from our vet that she would recommend top

dressing with oats. We also provide extra hay.

Although I am not a fan of bedding, during cold seasons we will layer the shelter floors with straw (we do not layer the straw deeper and deeper each day like sheep breeders but rather clean out the dung twice daily and the entire shelter as needed)

3) Deep snow: We shovel/snowblow/snowplow paths depending on how deep the snow is. John and I feel it is important for the alpacas to get their exercise and have found they will not venture out in snow belly-deep. If the snow is only knee-deep they will go about without hesitation. When our large guard llama Pete heads out for a walk, he makes a great path for the alpacas to follow---and they do! We have been known to snow plow large areas for the crias to frolic in too.

**Southwood Alpacas, Jeffrey Koehl, Woodstock, CT**

1) Event tips: Have a cria available. There is nothing like a cria to bring out the kid in everyone. We also set up demonstrations for trimming nails, and fleece clean-up work on the top-knot and tail. When we are in the pen, there is always a crowd watching. We also have take-away literature which is general in nature (farm profile) and we have been surprised how many calls we get from this. Sometimes the calls are a significant time later and from a person who was given the farm profile. Advertising is another critical element. We use the local radio station.

2) Cold weather: A good bed of straw is the key and a barn which allows you to maintain outside access but close off the portions which are letting in the prevailing winds. We do this with snow storms too. Luckily, Alpacas are fairly resistant to cold weather. For newer cria, we use thermal coats and we do have a pen in our barn with radiant thermal heat. And we have an insulated, heated emergency room in the barn for extreme situations.

3) Deep snow: We shovel or snowblow the area immediately outside the barn and create a walking path to the lower section of the pasture. We shovel the section outside the barn for a selfish reason. We want our alpaca to use their outdoor poop-pile, and if we don't shovel, our spoiled babies just stay inside the toasty barn.

**Pat Delaney at Whispering Winds Alpaca Farm, Marlborough, NH**

1) Event tips: We have found press releases and ads in the local papers and radio stations to be very beneficial. We also post event signs on the main road to draw in passerbys. People seem to enjoy having educational displays and activities for the children set up.

2) During the winter we put down hay for bedding and put up 'winter walls' on the front of the barn, which is open in the summer. We also provide the alpacas with an additional midday graining in the extreme cold.

3) During a storm, we keep paths open to the poop piles and outside water tanks. After a storm has passed we get the snowblower out and clear 'road course' style paths for the alpacas to wander and run on. Watching the single file 'pronking parades' is great fun.

**Les Foshay, Champlain Valley Alpacas, Bridport, VT**

1) Event tips: My observation from watching the results of our neaoba and other open houses the old adage of location, location, location is so true. We are remote, gorgeously so and almost exclusive-but our "drawing population" base is not that what you'd find, with town Middlebury 20 minutes away compared to mid Mass. Or even other southern regions of VT. With news releases and photos to 7 papers, perhaps 1/2 got printed and we got 60-70 visitors for our first (the stateside first ever) Round-Up and Alpaca Drive. Only one horse participated. Bad weather....?

2) Cold weather: We have had several warm rooms set up with lots of hay on the floor for eating and bedding. If we start earlier in the season, feeding hay, the rejects pile up and make a nice bedded mat. We have an enclosed room for youngsters and birthing as well. We add blankets to mom, crias heat lamp, then turn it off.....etc. etc.

3) Deep snow: We plow or snow-blow runways so they can get out and run around. Hopefully the wind will drive some ground bare (while piling it 8 feet high around the barn doors! So they can enjoy a bale of hay out there in the sun. Ultimately we wait for July,.....,..... :-)

**Lana Nickerson & Dick Dole, Foss Mountain Farm, Eaton Center, NH**

1) Event tips: Pay for ads in the local paper and put signs out on the main road that lead folks to your farm.

2) Cold weather: We add cracked corn to their feed and increase the hay feedings to three times a day. If the cold is accompanied by wind, we close some doors to prevent it blowing through. Our alpacas like at least one door open, but if it is really howling and snowing, we do close them into the barn.

3) Deep snow: We take the snowblower and make paths out into the fields. The crias and our males seem to appreciate them the most. The pregnant ladies seem to like the barn and overhang!

**Deb Wright, Wright Choice Alpacas, Castleton, Vt**

1) Event tips: I'm to new at this to have much input on this but, I have had good results from advertising locally and in free editorial news paper releases.

2) When it is going to be extremely cold I add some cracked corn to their feed and be generous with the hay. Also I will close them in the barn and put down extra bedding. It worked fine for the week of -20 mornings last year.

3) When it snows I use the snowblower to clear a circle around in the paddock so the girls can get their exercise, it looks like a live carousel. For the guys I do

more of a wide straight path, it seems to suit the way they play. Sometimes I block off the driveway and really give them a romp, they appreciate being able to run straight now and then. It is a fun time for me too, great photo shoot. You do have to keep an eye on the feet, sometimes snow will pack between the toes. I do believe that happens mostly when the snow gets warm.

**Audrey and Bill Rhoades, Mirage Alpacas, Washington, NH**

- 1) - Event tips: Many Posters and Word-of-Mouth!
- 2) - Cold weather tips: "Free Choice" Hay Options. Although we feed an average of one pound of concentrated grain per head, 365 days per year, we offer additional hay that is available 24 hours a day during the colder months. The hay will provide additional heat and energy for livestock. Mirage offers hay "free choice" (24 hours a day) both inside, and outside of barns. (They are encouraged to dine outside and benefit from the sunshine and fresh air!) Alpacas that feel cold, and that are expending additional calories to merely keep warm, will generally elect to eat their hay inside, while those feeling more hardy will elect to eat hay outside. \*Each of our adult alpacas will consume between four and five pound of hay/per day--"Weigh Thy Hay!"

NOTE: On extremely cold and windy days, perhaps as many as 10 to 20 days per winter, our alpacas are closed inside the barns in an effort to protect the crias of "hardy mothers" that may have elected to eat their hay outside. Although we prefer not to close in any livestock, our barns have excellent ventilation (free moving fresh air, high above the livestock) which prevents our barns becoming too comfortably warm and thus, prevents them from filling with damp, moist air that provides the perfect environment for bacterial pneumonia! Every effort is made to eliminate all low-level drafts and not make barns comfortable for humans! A general rule at Mirage is, "If you are comfortable in the barn during freezing temperatures, the barn is probably 'too tight' and appropriate ventilation is needed."

-Condition Score alpacas on a routine basis, and especially during winter months! Mirage Alpacas used the standard dairy, sheep & goat livestock scale of 1 to 5 (with the number 1 being emaciated and the number 5 being obese) and "lead-feeds" all of its alpacas during the late fall months from an average ideal condition score of number 3, into a condition score of a solid 4. We have found the temporary, additional conditioning, to all species of livestock raised on our farm, to be helpful to them during the anticipated freezing temperatures ahead.

- Special bedding? Per bio-Security recommendations, we use a mixture of 50% sand and 50% low-magnesium lime, and nothing else. The

mixture is both soft and dry, and again, low-level drafts have been eliminated. Our animals are dry and comfortable during any weather situation. NOTE: This bedding recipe is excellent in reducing troublesome flies...

3) Deep snow: Plow paths and create new, exciting paths for them to explore! We also take advantage of the situation to force animals outside for additional exercise and into the sun by offering flakes of hay further out from the barn, scattered along the new paths created for them. While Bill's herd of mini donkeys and my flocks of sheep & goats wait patiently for paths to be cleared and for additional hay provided, the alpacas can be observed ponging gleefully throughout their barns in anticipation of the upcoming maze of new paths and trails through the deep snow! Of all species residing at Mirage, the alpacas seem to appreciate our efforts the most!

**Ron and Terry Miller, Snowshoe Farm, LLC, Peacham, VT**

1) Event tips: Be prepared to be busy! Our experience has been that Open Farm events are quite popular. We have a steady stream of visitors all day. One of us stays in the barn/paddock area and "talks alpacas" with the visitors. The other stays in the farm store, showcasing fiber products and making sales. Set up a table in a visible location; put out a guest register, samples of clean fiber for visitors to handle and farm flyers (people love to have something to take home with them). We also have on hand a few info-packed folders that we are prepared to give to any visitors who appear to be potential alpaca buyers. Provide hot or cold drinks, as appropriate and cookies or other snacks.

2) Cold weather: We keep the barn well-bedded, close doors, if necessary, to cut down on the wind, keep hay feeders full and feed extra grain when the temp drops below zero. We've had a lot of cold temps, but, so far, have not seen it adversely affect any of our alpacas.

3) Deep snow: We use a snowblower to clean out the paddock areas around the barns. Then we put hay feeders out in the paddocks to encourage our alpacas to get exercise, fresh air and (occasionally) sunshine.

**Laura and Michael Busky, North Brook Farm  
Alpacas & HandWovens, Berlin, MA**

1) All of our open farm days have been in conjunction with other events (such as the NEAOBA Holiday Farm Tour). We find that sharing publicity really helps to get the word out. Also, if there are other "non-alpaca" related stops on the tour, you may attract more people who have never heard of alpacas.

2) Cold weather: One of our barns has sliding barn doors. In the extreme cold, we narrow the opening to 4-6 inches. Essentially this closes them in and allows their body heat to heat the barn. We make sure that any wind passages are closed off, but still allow some ventilation to avoid respiratory infections. The door to our other barn does not slide, but we wedge a piece of wood in it to hold it ajar and use a bungy cord to keep it all in place. We have also been known to replace one of the lightbulbs with a heat lamp, but only in really extreme cases.

3) Deep snow: We snowblow paths for them. If the ground hasn't frozen yet, we use snowshoes to pack down the first few inches (if we can) and then snowblow any subsequent accumulation. The alpacas pretend to be afraid of the snowblower, but as soon as it passes by them, they come out and play in the snow.

**Bonnie Callery, Village Farm Alpacas, Waldoboro,  
ME**

1) When we have an open house, we usually have 200-300 people visit over the weekend. Having someone to greet people with a smile as they arrive, direct them to the alpacas, the barn store, and to the refreshments is very important. Terry spends his time giving alpaca talks, and I need to be in our farm store, so that 3rd person is a must for us. Advertise in your local papers and put up flyers around town. Hot drinks during the cold months are nice to offer.

2) Cold weather: We button up the barn from the prevailing winds so they have just enough room to get out to the poop pile. We have lots of windows and southerly exposure to allow the solar effect to warm them up during the day. We provide very deep straw bedding. My alpacas love their barns and do not sleep outside in the cold or wet weather. We provide extra grain mixed with a small amount of rolled oats and flaked steamed corn (not cracked), and hay free choice. We top off their already heated water buckets with very warm water periodically. I have never seen any of my animals shivering, and they seem to tolerate the cold fine.

3) Deep snow: We snow blow their paddock areas and make paths for them in the pastures. We make looped paths wide enough for two to get by each other. They form a line behind Terry as he clears their paths, they really seem to appreciate it, and it makes for a great photo shoot!

**Patricia Houde, Alpaca Fields, Inc., York, Me**

1.) Some of our tips for a successful open farm event are a. have a beverage available such as lemonade and/or iced tea b. offer demonstrations such as spinning, knitting/crochet and/or fleece prep. c. offer some activities for children such as a coloring contest, of the alpacas of course, etc. d. offer demonstrations on handling alpacas. e. haltering you calmest alpaca, walk it around allowing people to touch (as long as it doesn't spook the animal) and answer questions from the group.

2.) In extremely cold weather we check for shivering. If shivering is detected, a coat is placed on that alpaca. We add steamed flaked corn to their daily ration of feed. For every 10 degrees the temperature falls below freezing, we add 10% more corn. We also add a small amount of shredded beet pulp, especially for the alpacas who have a tendency towards choke with the corn. Lastly we increase their bedding with more straw.

3.) After a deep snowfall we take out the snow blower and clear an area with several large pathways for the alpacas. We check the barn roof for heavy snow and clear it off if need be.

**Cyndi Chryst, Cynjim Alpacas, Strafford, NH**

1) Event tips: We put up flyers and advertised at our local craft fair. From the number of flyers that were taken at the craft fair, we would have had a good turn out if the weather had cooperated!

2) Cold weather: We add extra bedding and also added flaked corn to their feed. We also close the barn doors so that only one animal can fit through at a time.

3) Deep snow: We shovel and use the snowblower in the pens. First we make a path to the 'poop' area!

**Melissa Ferrara, New England Alpacas,  
Killingworth, CT**

1.) My favorite tips for a successful open farm weekend are to schedule it when something else is going on around town that is publicized and already drawing people to the area, publicize that it is free and serve free refreshments (if you feed them, they will come!), and put out clear signs at intersecting roads so you easily get them to your farm.

2.) Cold weather: Being in Southern Connecticut, our alpacas do not have to deal with the long periods of extreme cold that our neighbors to the north do. We do increase their grain consumption and add cracked corn (just a bit) and load up the barn with straw. Have never had a shiver to date!

3.) After a deep snowfall, Lou gets out the snowblower and cuts everybody paths to be able to take a winter walk-about and get to the poop pile. The snowblower also seems to provide winter entertainment for the alpacas!

**Dave Sanderson, Parker River Alpaca Farm, Byfield, MA**

13. Tips for successful Open Farm events:

- a. *Identify the audience you want to attract.* The first step is to identify your audience or audiences. This may be simply a open house day to invite all those polite neighbors who are always parked on the side of the road watching the alpacas to drop in for a visit. Perhaps your goal is to sell alpaca wear for the holidays or your goal may be to bring in prospective alpaca buyers in various stages of their research. Whatever your goal or goals may be for attracting an audience make sure you understand it and then:
- b. *Plan an event that will appeal to them.* Plan an event that will appeal to them. Event planning may include activities and people available to safely educate and entertain parents and their children visiting for an hour or so. If your goal is to sell alpaca wear make sure you set expectations correctly. If you are stocked with clothing in the price range of hundreds of dollars, make sure people aren't sticker shocked, by advertising "socks, gloves, scarves as well as heirloom quality gifts". Make sure you are staffed to handle crowd surges and can properly supervise a safe visit, and that you are both insured and prepared in the event of an accident.
- c. *Get the word out.* Develop your advertising plan. Like most things, advertising is a balance of effort and money. Develop a budget of available time and money and put together your advertising plan. You can get a lot of bang for your buck if you do the leg work yourself. Know your audience and put posters in places they are likely to frequent and make some phone calls. You can put a few small ads in the local paper or go for state newspapers if you have the budget. Sending a press kit to local papers followed by phone calls can get you a free feature article.

2) Cold weather: Our barn is unheated and open on one side. We make sure they have plenty of dry straw to bed down on and are protected from direct wind. Alpacas will generate their own heat if they have the raw materials; plenty of hay and water. We do give them a little more grain when it's cold but not too much. The digestion of hay generates significantly

more internal heat than grain. Overfeeding of grain also benefits the digestive microbes that favor grains vs. grass or hay. These grain-favoring microbes are more aggressive than the hay favoring microbes so too much grain can offset the balance and actually be detrimental to hay digestion and therefore maximum heat generation.

3) Alpacas don't seem to like deep snow. We don't want them to spend too much time in the barn, limiting their exercise and exposure to sunlight for vitamin D generation. I will actually snow blow paths for them to walk along or pack the snow down with our tractor to give them a few trails to get them out. I'll sometimes look up while I'm operating the snow blower to see cars lined up on the street watching a herd of alpacas following close behind me.

**Paula Ickeringill, Sea Hill Farm, Kittery Point, ME**

1) Event tips: We usually try to have local newspaper publicity before the Open Farm Weekend to attract attention and plug the upcoming Open Farm Event. This year I made two nursing home visits which both received front page pictures and stories in the two competing daily papers. We also had an artist for one daily do a sketch of our farm with a caption about Open Farm Weekend which appeared in the Sunday paper the weekend before. We were fortunate enough to have two other papers do a large story with several photos on our success this year at the fall shows. This combined with the usual Open Farm Weekend press releases gave us record crowds. I always follow up on the press releases to make sure our papers received them, especially the weeklies as well as the dailies. Often I will take a picture of alpacas with our pumpkins or a child to get into the Neighborhood Calendar section the week before. We print up orange flyers with our farm events & directions and post them in popular spots as well as on our website. On the day of the event we have farm signs with balloons and directions on our road.

During the Open Farm Weekend we have our giant pumpkins on display and have folks guess the weight of the largest to win a prize, usually an alpaca hat or scarf. This gives us names and addresses of those who visited, in addition to our guest book.

We have spinners, a tent for product sales, refreshments, face painting and coloring pages for children, alpacas, and other farm animals on display. We set up our alpaca pen display the same way we do at shows. This usually has young alpacas for people to pet and feed apples. The pregnant females and crias are in a pasture where we have the visitors who enter confined in green panels while the alpacas have the free range of the pasture. We keep hay and apples by the pen area so folks can have a closer look. This keeps kids from chasing the alpacas. We decorate

with cornstalks, mums, gourds, pumpkins, use display tents, and make it as festive as possible.

2.) During cold weather we keep large and extra large alpaca coats on hand for older females who might be cold. We use a good six inches of straw bedding and keep it clean and fluffed up. For extra energy I might feed a little more, or an extra snack, or have the males eat Gestation/Lactation instead of Maintenance during the cold snap. A bucket of warm water with molasses is also a welcome treat. Our heated water buckets are clean and full, and the hay box is always full, so they have ready access to that. I only close the barn door if the wind is penetrating or we have rain and then cold, icy weather. Otherwise they are content to sleep in the barn or under the overhang. I also have two round plastic calf nurseries which are warm, dry, windproof, and have a haybox. Often up to five alpacas at a time will be in there eating hay or napping.

3.) Deep Snow: The day after Christmas, 2002, we woke up, saw the snow, drove to Agway and bought a snowblower. For the previous five winters we had shoveled through the plowtruck's piles between the house and barns, and then dug out faucets, gates and runways. Our snowblower is small enough to fit

through doorways and our smallest gates, but powerful enough to cut figure eight paths in the pastures for the alpacas to run. Now it's actually fun to be out there after a blizzard. We also have chains for our small tractor, but have not yet attempted to plow with it. Maybe we'll have the chance this winter.

### **Jim King, Skyeview Alpacas, Elkins, NH**

1.) Event tips: Gear your advertising to the audience that you most want to attract. Local ads tend to bring petting Zoo enthusiasts. Focused ads or emails to NEAOBA or AOBA lists tend to bring qualified potential customers. A mix of both is good for a successful farm day.

2.) Cold weather: Shelter from the wind, bedding, hay inside and coats ready for any shivering crias and adults.

3.) Deep snow: After we clear away the snow that has slid from the barn roofs to block some doors, we snow blow the paddock around the barn and then snow blow some looping paths in the nearby fields, so that everyone can get out and run around, especially the juveniles.

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# STUD DE MONTH

*Each Month we randomly choose a NEAOBA farm member to provide info on their favorite Herdsire*

## **CPeruvian Bobcat 0240**

**Mettowee Valley Farm**

**DOB:** 9/7/1999

**Sire:** CPeruvian Donatello

**Dam:** Cperuvian Chessa

**Micron:** 20.8, 4.4, 21.3, 3.3 at 4 years of age.

**Color:** Light Fawn

**Description:** Beautiful conformation, proud, well balanced, moves well, medium size

**Show Record:**

First Place - The Big E 2003

Second Place - North American Alpaca Show 2003.

Second Place - North American Alpaca Show 2002.

Second Place - MAPACA 2002.

Second Place - NYS Empire Extravaganza 2002.

Color Reserve Champion - NYS Empire Extravaganza 2001

Second Place - NYS Empire Extravaganza 2001.

First Place - AOBA Nationals, Louisville, KY, 2000.

**Stud fee:** \$2,500.

**Contact:** John Callen or Phyllis Decker

Mettowee Valley Farm

Pawlet, VT 05761

Phone: 802-325-3039

E-mail: jcallen998@aol.com

Website: [www.mettoweevalleyfarm.com](http://www.mettoweevalleyfarm.com)

# ***NEAOBA Featured Farm:***

## **The Beginning of**

# ***Wright Choice Alpacas***

**Deb Wright, 161 Howland Rd., Castleton, Vt. 05735, 802.273.2713**

web: [www.shoreham.net/~wcalpaca](http://www.shoreham.net/~wcalpaca), email: [wcalpaca@shoreham.net](mailto:wcalpaca@shoreham.net)

I was introduced to alpacas while doing my former job as a bus driver. I took a group of senior citizens to an alpaca farm for a tour. When I was told what we were going to see, I looked up briefly what alpacas were, small relatives of llamas, okay it should be interesting. This did not prepare me for these wonderful creatures! I was so taken by them that I could hardly park the bus. The alpaca bug had bitten. I spent the next nine months figuring out how to have them. Where there's a will there's a way!

Wright Choice Alpacas came to physical presence in the spring of 2001 when we (Mom and I) purchased our first alpacas a bred female and two

companions. Soon we had a cria on the ground. The fences have been going up ever since. The paddocks have been growing with the herd. The barn was up and the alpacas moved from a shelter into it one week before the first snow in Oct. of that year. The farm is located near Rutland, Vt., on property my grandparents bought in the early 1900's and my siblings and I grew up here. The land had grown into weeds and trees as it had not been farmed in all this time so I'm pleased to be taking back the land.

There have been some more purchases and of course, crias born. We do some agisting

and consignments. Sales keep the numbers from getting out of hand. As I write this, there are twelve alpacas in the barn, but we know how fast that can change! We offer stud service and now have opened a small farm store, from which we sell fleeces, yarns, knitted goods made in Vermont and Peru, hand felted animals, which I make and other alpaca related items. I no longer work off the farm. We're small enough so as to allow me to do most of the work myself. It is definitely a labor of love.

Our production herd is made up of colored Huacaya alpacas, except one white, and she has a fawn dam and cria. We are focused on production of 'fine fleeced' colored alpacas. We are excited with the quality of our cria

crop this year. Our training skills have improved greatly and we have been getting used to being in the show ring, with pleasing results. I spend a good amount of time in contact with the alpacas or somewhere nearby. I enjoy the warm moments when sitting down for a break, I find I'm about to receive a gentle kiss from one of my sweeties. I often get laughing so hard I have to hold onto a fence, as they go through their late afternoon romp and play time. These are the roses that I stop and smell. I am often out to see the sun set, because I want to be there.

**"The land had grown into weeds and trees as it had not been farmed in all this time so I'm pleased to be taking back the land."**

# FUNDRAISING BOOSTS STORE SALES

*By Cindy St. George, Oak Ridge Alpacas, Ware, MA*

We were so impressed with the 2003 Fiber to Fashion Show that it gave us a great idea for a fundraiser for our local hospital. As chair of the Business and Professional Committee for Mary Lane Hospital, my function is to help raise money for special projects in the medical technology field.

We are always looking for new ideas to augment our major fundraisers of golf tournaments and silent auctions. I proposed an alpaca fashion show with a dinner dance and a boutique full of alpaca garments for sale after the show. The head of the hospital loved the idea and the planning began.

The committee brainstormed on who would make the best models, where the dinner would be held, where to get sponsors and how the events of the evening would unfold. We asked doctors, nurses, other hospital staff, local business people and our two State Representative and State Senator to be our models. We choose a beautiful hotel and conference center and worked closely with the banquet manager to be sure dressing rooms, staging and affordable dinner pricing could be achieved. She also had many helpful suggestions including using the hospitals non-profit status to avoid the meal taxes.

Now there was the huge matter of fashions. I wanted to work with items I knew were good sellers and already in my collection. I then worked with three importers who I already had business relationships with. They allowed me to take items on consignment for the show and the boutique. We had everything from everyday items to high end fashions that would dazzle the crowd.

One afternoon, the models all visited our store to preview the collection. Each of them chose a few items they really liked. This helped to build excitement in our amateur

models and encouraged them to invite their friends, families and co-workers to come see them hit the runway in their beautiful alpaca garments. Accessories and other items were added to their outfits, at a later date, as we saw fit. Each volunteer, sixteen total, had between four and seven outfits to model. I had a fully prepared description written and personalized to the model. The outfits were numbered and bundled by model for quick changing and to keep the show

flowing smoothly. Most of them were nervous about coming out alone so pairs had to be matched for color and style so they would compliment each other. This was more work on my part but went over really well with the models and audience.

Now we needed sponsors for the evening. Since we wanted local businesses to join us for the evening, which meant they had to buy tickets, we decided to focus on the vendors of the hospital for sponsorship money. They were solicited by mail with a follow up phone call for those that need gentle prodding. We were able to get sponsors for hors d'oeuvres, appetizers, coffee, the DJ, staging, dinner wine and dessert too. All letters and invitations were handled by the Fund Raising and Development Director of the hospital. She was the key to the whole event, not to mention a perfect model at 5'10" and beautiful.

The evening was widely publicized by local and regional papers as well as the hospital newsletters. This was of course free advertising and PR for Oak Ridge Alpacas. Having our State Reps and Senator really gave us some added publicity also.

We had a few extra kickers for the evening. A local seamstress agreed to donate her time and talents to sew a custom made suit for a raffle we ran. To show off those talents, I had a suit made for the evening and she was so excited about working with alpaca, she made herself a suit. It was displayed for the evening to promote our raffle sales. The fabric was purchased from the Alpaca Fiber Coop of North America, which is stunning. It is available in five colors/patterns so our winner could choose the one they liked best. We also had a drawing for a free alpaca bear and this allowed

Oak Ridge to get an exact name and address on each attendee. These are now, of course, part of our permanent store mailing list.

Now all that was left was volunteers for the evening to help with the

models, the show, the boutique sales and yes animal handling. I solicited the help of friends, relatives, our children their significant others and of course my husband. Roy was the MC for the evening and he did a fabulous job keeping the models upbeat and entertaining the crowd with his alpaca facts. He even did his orgling impression to their delight and fascination.

**"It was a mad stampede to buy these exquisite garments and accessories."**

In order to encourage the models to interact with the audience, a tipping basket was placed at the end of the runway. The models, in their alpaca fashions, wowed the crowd every time. Their inhibitions melted away as they got the hang of working the crowd to increase the take. This added a bit of competition and a very nice boost to the coffer too. Just to give the audience a touch of the real thing, our children led two weanlings through the tables and that made a great finale.

Once the show was complete, the fully stocked boutique opened in the back of the ballroom. This of course had been set up by all of the Oak Ridge volunteers earlier. We also had to get all the items out that were modeled. It was a mad stampede to buy these exquisite garments and accessories. The sales were off the charts. In 2 hours we managed to sell \$5700 worth of merchandise, much of which had just come across

the runway. Oak Ridge donated 20% of the profits from the evening sales. The total with dinner ticket sales, sponsorships, raffle, and the donated profit on sales brought \$6000 to the hospital. They were absolutely thrilled. The added benefit was as planned, immeasurable public relations for Oak Ridge before, during and after the event including the additions to our mailing list and a room full of potential alpaca breeders and/or referrals to others.

The event is still the talk of the hospital and town at every meeting and function we attend. We are even treated like celebrities in the ER now. The conversation always moves to, "the next time you do this, we should.....". This involved long hours of planning and work along with a whirlwind of fun the evening of the function, so I guess we'll do it again.....but not until 2005!

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## Machu and Picchu

*Phyllis Decker, Alpacas of Maple Lane,  
Shushan, NY*

Why is Virginia standing there for so long with her tail straight out? With this question began the Odyssey of the Twins, Machu and Picchu.

Virginia, a lovely black female that we purchased from Bob and Louise Hebler last December, was standing out in the field for 10 minutes with her tail straight out. Even though she was not due for 3 weeks, it sure looked like she was in labor.

Walking out to the field, I could see her pushing. A nose and both feet appeared – and then went back in and then reappeared again. This scenario kept on until I finally felt she needed some help. We lubed her and tried to assist but this baby would not budge. Baby's position was good, elbows not locked but she still would not come out.

Time to call the vet – who luckily is 5 minutes away. Initial internal indicated everything looked ok but still, this rather stubborn baby would not come out.

Time for another internal – and a look of horror – she felt another neck wrapped around the first. I think initially she thought this might have been a two-headed alpaca. Down to the clinic we went with Baby #1 partially out.

Virginia then had a C-section and delivered two healthy, albeit tiny, gray boys. Weights were 6.8# and 7#. Mom did just fine thanks to the wonderful vets at Borador Animal Hospital. Although small, the boys were trying to suck right away, just too small to make it up there. The next few weeks, watching over a mom who had a C Section and two little guys that had to be lifted up to nurse, were busy, frightening, tiring and absolutely wonderful.

Virginia, although a maiden, is nursing both on her own – no supplements. They seem to be doing well. At ten weeks Machu and Picchu weigh 20# and 23# respectively.

I would like to thank the many well-wishers and those who prayed for these little guys.

It has been quite a saga.

# Where Are They Now?

## – Raising Alpacas!

It all started when I received a phone call from a woman named Shayna who said that her parents had raised sheep and other livestock before and were retiring and looking into raising alpacas. She said that they found us on the Internet and wanted to come by for a farm visit, so we made an appointment for some Wednesday in September at 10 AM.

I finished my usual chores that hot September morning, threw on my *North American Alpaca Show* baseball cap and then hung around the barn waiting for my visitors to come.

I'll never forget the image of 20 or so people walking down my driveway with several TV cameras, microphone booms, lighting equipment and the like. In disbelief, I wondered if this was some sort of prank...maybe Candid Camera? Maybe Jamie Kennedy was looking to "X" me?! Perhaps Ed McMahon was bringing me my Publisher's Clearinghouse check?!! No, I didn't see any balloons or an oversized check (or Ed for that matter).

It was VH1 and there was no Shayna or her parents after all. They were here to put my old band, *Extreme* back together, not to looking into adding alpacas to their portfolio or looking for a lifestyle change in their retirement years. The episode will be in rotation after the initial airing as well, so if you want to see it, we will be posting more info including the dates and

It isn't exactly "*Where Are They Now?*" but, a new show called "*Bands Reunited*". Each episode of VH1's "*Bands Reunited*" chronicles the effort to reunite a popular band from the past, long since broken up. The show's host, VH1 personality Amer Haleem, travels the globe to track down the former band members and convince them to come together for a one time only reunion and performance.

This time it was *Extreme's* turn, and Amer Haleem and crew traveled to Groveland, Massachusetts to *Alpaca Grove* and now my farm visit and alpacas will be televised to millions of people on VH1!! Part of the premise for the show is the element of surprise, so they posed as farm visitors to catch me off guard. Had I known that it was VH1, at least I would have showered!

Unfortunately, *Extreme* didn't get back together after all, but that may mean more exposure for our Camelid friends!

I am hesitant to tell other alpaca enthusiasts that it will be on, because I haven't seen the segment and don't know exactly how much coverage the alpacas will get, but they assure me that they will definitely be covered in the hour-long special that it will be airing in late January. I know that they taped a lot of footage of the farm while they were here, and they certainly couldn't resist our "*huggable investments*"!

times on our web site at:  
[www.alpacagrove.com](http://www.alpacagrove.com).



***New England  
Alpaca Fiber  
Pool***

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NEWS NOTES  
January/04

To NEAFP Members:

As most of you are well aware, Ben Gifford passed away unexpectedly on December 12, 2003. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Jan Hensle, founder of New England Alpaca Fiber Pool (NEAFP) and to Ben's family. Ben was a key player in NEAFP handling all the computer activity and much of the communication between NEAFP and the alpaca farmer. He did a remarkable job and will be sadly missed.

We want to let you know that NEAFP is going to continue and our goal is to become bigger and better than ever. My name is Shelley Riley of Golden Touch Farms, located in Westport, MA and over the last year I have been working with Jan sorting fleece, packing orders and just coming up to speed on all the steps it takes to turn our fleece into wonderful products. I own over a dozen alpacas myself and realize the importance of NEAFP and I am committed to seeing its future grow. Our goal is to support the alpaca farmer by manufacturing quality products at reasonable prices, utilize ALL grades of fleece and most importantly, bringing you a quality service.

Our cup is running over with new ideas and it will not be long before they become reality. Over the next few months, you will receive a lot of communication from us keeping you abreast of all our new and exciting capabilities. In the mean time, please feel free to drop us a note with any of your questions, concerns and most importantly, your ideas.

Please change our contact information. Our new information is:

Jan@neafp.com  
Phone # 401-624-4184  
<http://www.neafp.com/>

Shelley@neafp.com  
Phone # 508-672-3727  
<http://www.neafp.com>

# Calendar of Events 2004

February 4-8	<b>2004 AOBA/ARI Fiber to Fashion Conference</b> , Reno, NV, "Fashioning Your Alpacas Future", <a href="http://www.alpacainfo.com">www.alpacainfo.com</a>
February 14-15	<b>Empire Alpaca Association Education Symposium</b> , Desmond Inn and Conference Center, Albany, NY, • Dr. Dorian Garrick will present and discuss information on breeding programs and mating systems including outcrossing, linebreeding, heritability/heritability factors and the genetics of fiber production. • Amanda VandenBosch will present information on fleece assessment/fiber characteristics, conformation assessment and showmanship from a judge's perspective. • Susan Muther and Hazen Reed will walk us through the fundamentals of using the Internet as a marketing tool. Cost: \$135.00 for EAA Member's \$150.00 for Non-Members. <a href="http://www.empirealpacaassociation.com">www.empirealpacaassociation.com</a>
February 29, 11am	<b>NEAOBA Meeting</b> . Morse Hall, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Atrium, University of New Hampshire Campus, Durham, NH. Go to <a href="http://www.neaoba.org">www.neaoba.org</a> for info and directions.
April 1-4	<b>North American Alpaca Show</b> , Eastern States Exposition, Springfield, MA, <i>AOBA Certified Halter &amp; Fleece Shows - (Cert. Pending)</i> We have secured three highly regarded international judges to assess your amazing alpacas: Dr. Julio Sumar from Peru, Cameron Holt from Australia and Amanda VandenBosch from the USA. For more information visit <a href="http://www.naalpacashow.com">www.naalpacashow.com</a>
April 22-25	<b>MAPACA Eastern Alpaca Jubilee</b> , Harrisburg, PA, <i>AOBA Certified Halter &amp; Fleece Shows - (Cert. Pending)</i> . <a href="http://www.mapaca.org">www.mapaca.org</a>
April 24, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM	<b>Connecticut Sheep &amp; Fiber Festival</b> , Tolland Agricultural Center, Route 30, Vernon, Connecticut, For more information contact: Mark Russell at <a href="mailto:bal4farm@snet.net">bal4farm@snet.net</a>
May 1-2	<b>Maryland Sheep &amp; Wool Festival</b> , Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD, <a href="http://www.sheepandwoolfestival.org">www.sheepandwoolfestival.org</a>
May 1-2,	<b>"Everything's Coming Up Alpacas!" Owners and Breeders Seminar &amp; Open House</b> 5th Annual "Everything's Coming Up Alpacas!" Seminar, Spa Alpacas, Ballston Spa NY (30 minutes North of Albany). Educational, hands-on seminar featuring presentations on the alpaca industry, alpaca selection, health management, investment opportunities and tax advantages, marketing/sales and facility set-up/layout. Seminar - Saturday, May 1st from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM - reservations necessary. Sunday open house from 10AM to 4PM - farm, tours, private treaty sales, fleece product sales. Contact Paul & Kelly Zanella, <a href="http://www.spaalpacas.com">www.spaalpacas.com</a> or <a href="mailto:pjzanella@aol.com">pjzanella@aol.com</a>
May 8 & 9	<b>New England Alpaca Fest (NEAF)</b> this NEAOBA event will be held this year at the Hopkinton Fairgrounds in conjunction with the New Hampshire Sheep & Wool Festival. Announcements regarding the agenda, including the NEAOBA Annual Meeting, and registration will follow as they are developed - watch <a href="http://www.neaoba.org">www.neaoba.org</a> for info.
May 8 & 9	<b>New Hampshire Sheep &amp; Wool Festival</b> , Hopkinton Fairgrounds, Contoocook, NH, <a href="http://www.yankeesh Shepard.com">www.yankeesh Shepard.com</a>
May 22-23	<b>Massachusetts Sheep &amp; Woolcraft Festival</b> , Cummington, MA, <a href="http://www.masheepwool.org">www.masheepwool.org</a>
June 2-6.	<b>AOBA 13th National Conference</b> , Louisville, KY
June 12-13, 10am-4pm	<b>The Maine Fiber Frolic</b> Windsor Fairgrounds, Windsor ME, A celebration of fiber animals and the fiber arts--spinning, weaving dyeing, felting and rug hooking. Numerous animals, demos, lectures, workshops, and products for all ages to enjoy. Special attractions: Llama Drill Team, Maine Sheep Breeder Assoc. Wool Pool, Sheep Dog Demo, Fleece Show, Kids Activities. Sponsored by the Maine Llama Assoc. Admission \$2/person, \$5/family, seniors/children under 12 free. <a href="http://www.fiberfrolic.com">www.fiberfrolic.com</a> or 207 993-6262

# The Pros and Cons of Livestock Guardian Dogs

Lana Nickerson, Foss Mountain Farm, Eaton Center, NH

Our farm is located on the side of a mountain, where the nearest neighbors are a quarter of a mile away and the town-owned woods across the road goes on for a mile or so before it hits any civilization. When we bought the land, our neighbors and the guy who sold it to us told us with relish about the bears at the birdfeeders, the bear that blocked the road one day, the coyotes and /or fisher cats that got the barn cats and peacocks and, in winter, the moose that break through the electric fence to let your livestock out. Needless to say, we thought some kind of predator-control would be warranted before we brought our alpacas home.

The farm where we bought our foundation herd had a guard llama, so we knew that they were an option. We also looked at donkeys, since I'm an equine-lover. But in the end we opted for a livestock guardian dog (LGD) as our first choice. There are a number of breeds of LGDs, and we chose a Great Pyrenees mainly because they were available in our area. We also wanted an adult who would be able to guard immediately. We found a female, Princess, who had been guarding goats. She never was comfortable in the pasture with the alpacas and never bonded with them, but serves as 'general farm dog', loose around the property. About six months after getting our alpacas, we had the opportunity to get an Akbash Dog puppy from Greg Girard's alpaca farm in Connecticut. Biff had been born in the alpaca barn there and lived with them from day one. He still lives in our barn, with our male alpacas. Even as a puppy, he knew how to act. When one approached him in a threatening way, he averted his gaze and laid down. This at twelve weeks old. The alpaca felt safe and turned away. Biff now plays occasionally with 'his boys' and sleeps under their feeder while they eat.

We saw quite quickly how effective the dogs could be. Even before we had the alpacas, when Princess was still on our back porch, she showed me she could be a deterrent. I heard her bark and went to the porch to investigate. I let her out and while she was bouncing across the lawn toward the back hill, I heard the singing of the coyotes. They were close, right over the hill, probably in our horses' back field. Princess let out her deep, booming bark and I could no longer hear any singing. Minutes later when Princess stopped barking, I heard the coyotes far in the distance. They'd moved right out. Despite our neighbors' dire predictions, we have never actually seen a bear or coyote. We heard the coyotes one other time, in the evening, but their song was quickly silenced by the resounding barks of the two LGD's. We have only seen one moose and that was on a rainy day in the back garden when the dogs were sheltering in the barn. He never showed himself again, but Biff was very busy each night after that, barking at the woods. We also suspected something going on one night during early spring. Biff, barking furiously at the far end of the horse's paddock, woke us up. The next day, when walking on our perimeter trail, I

saw the footprints of a bear in the slushy snow. It was right at the time when the bears would have come out of hibernation and in the direction of Biff's barking. We have learned to appreciate being woken by barking in the middle of the night.

Though there are definite benefits to the large guardian dogs, there are some negatives too. The night barking can be a problem to your neighbors unless you are like us and have none close. Biff, the Akbash Dog, perceives vehicles as predators. When he is out, he sits in the middle of the road at the end of our driveway. When a car approaches he holds his ground. "Thou shalt not pass", says his stance. Thankfully, our road is not heavily travelled and our neighbors know to push on until Biff moves to the side and then accelerate. The Akbash Dog's antecedents were Mastiffs and Sight Hounds. He can run like the wind and keeps up to any car that doesn't gun it. Cars that falter get their bumpers bitten. Ones that stop and have a dog inside can have him on their hood. Not a good thing, as he weighs over 100 pounds. Thank goodness for liability farm insurance. The problem is increased in the winter when the snow renders the electric fence ineffective – no bare ground to, well, ground him. We use a rope-type electric fence in our male alpacas' pen and the adjacent horse paddock. It works fine for them, as the horses remember forever being stung by it and the alpacas don't challenge it. But Biff learned quickly that the fence wouldn't 'bite' in the winter, and gets out at will. Now we are putting in an invisible fence with a stubborn dog receiver, to see if that will hold him in. Beware the car-eating dog.

As for the Great Pyrenees, we were warned that they wander and make the town their territory, not just your farm. And Princess did wander, got picked up by a well-meaning stranger who thought she was another Pyr named Lacey and took her to the next town of Brownfield, Maine. From there she travelled on her own to Fryeburg, and we found her five days later behind the Police Station. At least she knew where to go for help. She has never wandered since, but not every Pyr would have that lesson.

**"Despite our neighbors' dire predictions, we have never actually seen a bear or coyote."**

Overall, though, we feel that having Livestock Guardian Dogs is a great benefit. It allows us to sleep comfortably, knowing that two dogs are listening for trouble. We don't know whether either of them would attack anything that got into the pasture. We suspect that nothing *wants* to get that close, after hearing those deep, booming voices, so the point is moot. And LGDs do bark a lot, especially at night. We also have a collie who will bark with them, but he never initiates the barking and would sleep all night if the two LGDs didn't bark. Fences can be good barriers, but the dogs prevent the predators from wanting to get anywhere near the fence. May we never have to find out if they'd attack an intruder. We like our coyotes, lynx, fisher-cats and bears safe in their woods and out of our pastures. The dogs keep it that way.

# Criations!!! Criations!!! Criations!!! Criations!!! Criations!!!

## **Dawn & John Brooker, Fiber Fields Alpaca Farm, Palermo, Maine**

*FFAF Sadie* (F, H), Lt Fawn, DOB: 10/18/03, 18#, Dam: Aurora Matuta (beige), Sire: FFAF Katahdin Gold (beige)

*FFAF Edison* (M, H), dk brown, DOB: 6/03, 15#, Dam: CT Elin (med brown), Sire: Snowmass Andean Gem (med fawn)

*FFAF Miss Molly* (F, H), white, DOB: 5/03, 15#, Dam: La Luna De Peru (white), Sire: Peruvian Renselaer (white)

*FFAF Ghirardelli* (M, H), dk brown, DOB: 5/03, 20#. Dam: CODI Joan (dk brown), Sire: FFAF Katahdin Gold (beige)

## **Residing at FFAF but owned by Ledge Hill Farm**

*Miranda* (F, H), white, DOB: 7/03, 15#, Dam: Isabelle (white), Sire: Peruvian Kaballero (white)

*Orlando* (M, H), white, DOB: 8/03, 18#, Dam: Peruvian Mayra (white), Sire: Peruvian Kaballero (white)

*Aida* (F, H), med brown, DOB: 7/03, 22#, Dam: Peruvian Felicetta (white), Sire: Peruvian Maori (black)

## **Pattey Bleecker, Saltaire Alpacas, Clinton, CT**

*Rosadora* (huacaya female), brown, born 8/31/03, 16.8 lbs, Dam: Rufina (brown), Sire: Matador (black)

*Pazvega* (huacaya female), brown, born 9/10/03, 16.1 lbs, Dam: Nora TAC (mahogany), PPeruvian Felix (light fawn)

*Castano's Autumn Joy* (huacaya female), light fawn, born 10/9/03, 14 lbs, Dam: Peruvian Lemay (beige), Castano Bay (brown)

## **Southwood Alpacas, Jeffrey Koehl, Woodstock, CT**

*SWD Peruvian Dynamo* (M, H), Beige, DOB: 9/2/03, 18 pounds, Dam: Peruvian Jenay, Sire: Peruvian Black Jack

*SWD Peruvian Durango* (M, H), Brown, DOB: 9/8/03, 10 pounds, Dam: Peruvian Francesca, Sire: Peruvian Mystro

*SWD Accoyo Davio* (M, H), White, DOB: 9/20/03, 16 pounds, Dam: Accoyo Kim, Sire: Accoyo Rico

## **Pamela Drew, Pamelamas LLC, Arundel, ME**

*Pamelamas Alpin Gold*, (M, H) Medium Fawn, 10/03/03, 17.5 lbs, Dam: EVA Arwen (white) Sire: 4P Altiplano Gold (beige)

*Pamelamas Piper*, (F, H) beige, 10/20/03, 16 lbs, Dam: Poco (brown/white)

Sire: Tell Vaccoyo's Triumph (beige)

## **Pauline & Bob Hamel, Alpacas at Scotland Hill, Hampton, CT**

*Ma Lady Anne of Scotland Hill*, (F, H) Light Brown. DOB: Sept. 5, 2003, 15lbs. 12oz., Dam: Aysen's Godiva IMPQ98 (True Black), Sire: Javier's Ferrari (Light Brown).

## **Nicola Blake and Jack Dibb, Sallie's Fen Alpacas, Barrington, NH**

*Jed's Aquila* (F, H), Dark Maroon, DOB: 9/26/03, 16 lbs, Dam: Kilblaas Farm Melissa Pena (TB), Sire: Sallie's Fen Jed (MSG).

*Cerveza's Cecilia* (F, H), Medium Brown, DOB: 10/2/03, 19 lbs, Dam: MVF Oreo (TB/Wh), Sire: Fosters Cerveza (B)

*Sallie's Fen Icenis* (F, H), White/Beige, DOB: 10/27/03, 16.5 lbs, Dam: Stone Ridge Candace (MRG), Sire: Helena's Teddy Bear (Fawn)

## **Geri & Frank Gabriel, Lakeside Alpaca Farm**

*Miracle Man* (M,H) white, DOB 09/30/03, 14.9 lbs., Dam: Artesia (white), Sire: Accoyo PPeruvian Legacy (white)

*Nacho del Reino* (M,H) light brown, DOB 10/07/03, 16.7 lbs., Dam: FFAF Salsa (med. brown), Sire: Hemingway's el Reino (med. fawn)

## **Pat Delaney at Whispering Winds Alpaca Farm, Marlborough, NH**

*'Deacon's Gold'* – male huacaya, light fawn. dob 10/31/03. birth weight – 20 lb. Dam: Ref Sunday (brown) Sire: AMI Nicolai (white)

*'Apollo - Poetry in Motion'* – male huacaya, white. dob 9/6/03. birth weight – 18 lb. Dam: Arellia (white) Sire: AMI Nicolai (white)

*'Whispering Winds - The Eye of the Storm'* – male huacaya, beige. dob 9/29/03 birth weight – 15 lb. Dam: Wilpaca's Elena (white) Sire: AMI Nicolai (white)

*'Whispering Winds Precious Gem'* – female huacaya, white. dob 11/5/03 birth weight – 16 lb. Dam: Silver Cloud Jemma (white) Sire: AMI Nicolai (white)

## **Lana Nickerson & Dick Dole, Foss Mountain Farm, Eaton Center, NH**

*Foss Mtn Valeri*, Female Huacaya, Beige, 8/19/03, 17.6 lbs, Dam: Caraz Tag65 ImpV98, beige; Sire: MFI Peruvian Champion, bay black w/silver.

*Foss Mtn Dreamboat Annie*, Female Huacaya, light/medium fawn, 10/19/2003, 14.6 lb, Dam: Thunder Rose, medium fawn; Sire: Fosters Cerveza, beige.

## **Phyllis Decker, Alpacas of Maple Lane, Shushan, NY**

*Twins!* - *Machu* and *Piccu* (M, H) Silver Grey, DOB: October 21, 2003. They weighed 7 pounds and 7.7 pounds respectively. Sire: AAR Grey Medallion, Dam: AAR Virginia. Their weight as of Dec 15 was 20.5# and 16.6#.

## **Deb Wright, Wright Choice Alpacas, Castleton, Vt**

*Sugar*, (M, H), Lt Fawn 9/13/03 15.4 lb d.Charm's Jasmine (White) s. Mateen (Lt Brown)

**Marcia MacDonald, Long Plains Alpacas, Buxton, ME**

*Liam* (M, H) Dark Brown, DOB:10/1/03, Dam: Nova (medium brown), Sire: Captain Nemo (light brown).  
*Christopher Gold* (M, H) Black, DOB: 10/13/03, Dam: Blackberry (Black), Sire: Alexander Gold (Light Fawn)  
*Aurora's Vincent* (M, H) Light Fawn, DOB: 11/09/03, Dam: Condor's Aurora (Medium Fawn) Sire: 6Peruvian Midas Touch ( Dark Fawn)

**Ron and Terry Miller, Snowshoe Farm, LLC, Peacham, VT**

*Snowshoe Tempest* (F, H) light brown, 10/15/03, 15.7 lbs, Dam: Snowshoe Fantaysia (light brown), Sire: MFI Pueblo (bay black)

**Laura and Michael Busky, North Brook Farm Alpacas & HandWovens, Berlin, MA**

*North Brook's Eisenhower* (male huacaya), color: dark brown, born 9/11/03, 13lbs, Dam: Ibis (dark brown), Sire: Silver Dollar (grey)  
*North Brook's Haleakala* (male huacaya), color: dark brown, born 10/20/03, 16.5lbs, Dam: Skyeview's Kona (dark fawn), Sire: MA Nat King Cole, aka Natanis (black).

**Alisa Mierzejewski, Burgis Brook Alpacas, Guilford, CT**

*BBA Peruvian Valkyrie* (F) Huacaya, 10/26/03, White/MB Fancy, Sire: 5Peruvian Camelot (MB), Dam: AC Serephim (White/MB)  
*BBA Peruvian Devante* (M) Huacaya, 12/9/03, Beige, Sire: Accoyo Avenger (LF), Dam: CPeruvian Lilly (W).

**Patricia Houde, Alpaca Fields, Inc., York, Me**

*A.FLD. DRUID* (M) dark fawn DOB 10/31/03 12lbs. dam: SA Kortina (white/black) sire: El Jefe (white).

**Cyndi Chryst, Cynjim Alpacas, Strafford, NH**

*Cynjim's Donoma* (F, H) med. brown, 9/20/03, 13lb 6oz, Dam: Acadia (lt brown), Sire : Puccini (med. brown)  
*Cynjim's Wacipi* (F,H) lt. brown, 10/4/03, 14lb, 14oz, Dam: Helena's Trillium (white), Sire: Sallie's Fen Jed (med. silver gray).

**Cindy Mingle, Mountain Brook Farm, South Paris, ME.**

*Schoodic* (M,H) White, 9/26/03, 15#, Dam: MB Guinivere (white) Sire: 6 Peruvian Adrianno (fawn)  
*Bigelow* (M,H) White, 10/10/03, 20#, Dam: MB Nimue (white), Sire: NEA Bueno's Legacy (white)  
*Sebago* (F,H) Silver Gray, 10/14/03, 15# Dam: 4Peruvian Santa Rosa (gray) Sire: MB Lewis (gray)  
*Allagash* (F,H) Lt Fawn, 10/19/03, 15# Dam: 4Peruvian Sollocota (fawn) Sire: MB Wings (white)  
*Baxter* (M,H) White, 10/20/03, 20#, Dam: MB Princess Lily (white), Sire: 4Peruvian White Wizzard (white)

*Kennebago* (M,H) Rose Gray, 10/28/03, 16 # Dam: MB Rosita (gray) Sire: PPeruvian Kenamori Gold (white)  
*Kezar* (F,H) White, 11/4/03, 1 6#, Dam: 4Peruvian Sombra (white), Sire: 4Peruvian White Wizzard (white)

**Melissa Ferrara, New England Alpacas, Killingworth, CT**

*Equoia Star*, F, H, bay black with white star and socks, 9-13-03, 18 pounds 8 ounces, Dam: Shelburne (dark fawn) Sire: Hemingway's El Reino (fawn)

**Pat and Donna Badger, Alpaca Grove, Groveland, MA**

*Darkstar's Delilah* (F, H), true black, DOB: 10/21/03, 15 lbs, Dam: DPF Darkstar (bay black) Sire: Peruvian Donovan (fawn)  
*Cabrera* (F, H), fawn, DOB: 10/19/03, 18 lbs, Dam: Patagonia's Pilar (true black) Sire: Vaccoyo's Triumph (beige)  
*Priscilla* (F, H), light fawn, DOB: 11/1/03, 17 lbs, Dam: Primrose (light fawn) Sire: My Peruvian Blakely (brown)  
*Hart* (F, H), med. brown, DOB: 11/21/03, 18 lbs, Dam: CPeruvian Harmony (med. brown) Sire: Vaccoyo's Triumph (beige)

**Paula Ickeringill and Wendy Turner, Sea Hill Farm Alpacas, Kittery Point, ME**

*Sea Hill Farm's Penobscot* (M, H) dark fawn, Oct. 5, 2003, 18 lbs., Dam: Sea Hill Farm's Seguin (bay black), Sire: Helena's Teddy Bear (med. fawn).

**Jim King, Skyeview Alpacas, Elkins, NH**

*Skyeview Octavia* (F,H) (TB) 8/15/03, 18.2#, d. Aurora (MSG), s. Samson (MRG)  
*Skyeview Tamora* (F,H) (DB) 8/23/03, 19.4#, d. Ezabelle (DB), s. El Dorado (LF)  
*Skyeview Calpurnia* (F,H) (MB) 08/25/03, 16.4#, d. Caliope (BB), s. Pizarro (LF))  
*Skyeview Mark Anthony* (M,H) (MRG) 8/27/03, 15.6#, d. Zephyr (MSG), s. Samson(MRG)  
*Skyeview Peruvian Cordelia* (F,H) (BG) 8/28/03, 18.6#, d. Golden Girl(BG), s. Pizarro (LF)  
*Skyeview Katherina* (F,H) (BB) 9/01/03, 17.4#, d. Alexis (LF), s. Samson (MRG)  
*Skyeview Peruvian Portia* (F,S) (MF) 9/01/03, 17.4#, d. Ariel (W), s. Golden Dandy (MF)  
*Skyeview Lavinia* (FH) (LF) 9/09/03, 19.0#, d. Nokia (MB), s. Peruvian Neptune (LF)  
*Skyeview Peruvian Montague* (M,H) (LF) 9/16/03, 14.0#, d Madison (MF), s. P. Neptune (LF)  
*Skyeview Horatio* (M,H) (DF) 9/21/03, 16.0#, d. Annie (W), s. Peruvian Neptune (LF)  
*Skyeview Sebastian* (M,H) (MF) 9/26/03, 14.0#, d. Bloomers (DF), s. Peruvian Neptune (LF)  
*Skyeview Silvia* (F,H) (DSG) 10/27/03, 15.2#, d. Emily (DSG), s. Platinum (DSG)  
*Skyeview Camillo* (M,H) (LF) 11/01/03, 19.2#, d. Fredricka (LF), s. El Dorado (LF).

# The Evolution of the Alpaca Industry

by Cindy Lavan, Chase Tavern Farm, Bowdoin, ME

I woke up the other day to realize that I was not a passive breeder of livestock, but a conduit through which an industry is building. Going into our 11th year of breeding alpacas, we have seen the industry change and turn in different directions. The one thing that has emerged from all the twists and turns over the past years is the fact that the alpaca industry has a strong hold in the United States and is becoming a flourishing, thriving industry.

Whether it be in a livestock trade or a fiber trade, the evolution of the alpaca and its associated business are growing and becoming more widely accepted and recognized. I have to tell you honestly, when we began years ago, it was a chore to explain over and over again the justification of what I was doing to any person I would meet – a passenger on an airplane, while waiting for the car to be serviced...wherever. It was almost as if I didn't want to tell anyone what my husband and I had pursued as a business for ourselves and our family in fear of being considered - a. a person who throws away money, b. a target for animal welfare and rights groups and/or c. a raging lunatic.

Now, that's all changed. Alpacas and the industry that has been 'criated' in the United States has reached a new stage and considered no different in the livestock world than any other mainstay and growing industry. When meeting and talking with breeders of other livestock, I do not feel as if I am different, but equal to them in my goals for wishing to achieve a stronger and healthier industry. Growth of the alpaca industry from husbandry to fiber will remain steady as long as we continue to build on the quality and improve generation to generation. This concept is no different than if we were breeding dogs, cattle or even birds.

I was on the Board of Directors of the national association, AOBA from 1995 to 1997 and then served as Chairperson for the national marketing efforts of the association. I remember clearly having a multitude of discussions related not only to marketing our industry and attracting new and interested people to the business, but how great it will be to one day elevate the fiber side of the industry and build in a new direction. While attending the first newly named 'Winter Nationals' in Las Vegas last year as a speaker, it hit me while sitting down for lunch. Not only was I a livestock breeder, I was in the fashion industry as well. A friend who is a breeder in PA approached me and asked,

**"...the number in farms in the New England states were very few with only one or two farms in each state. Maine for example was home to only about 20 alpacas at two farms. This was early 1994."**

"How does it feel to see your child growing up?" At first I was a bit confused with her question as I couldn't image what prompted her to ask on the human children while watching a fashion show, but then it hit me. She was referring to the alpaca industry. The baby was growing up, not just taking baby steps but toddler sized steps for such a young industry. We all wish our children to be overachievers at everything they do in life and its amazing to see the alpaca industry achieving so strongly at such a relatively young age for any industry.

To let some of you know where we will be going as an industry over the next few years, you have to understand where we have been. Learning from our past will only ensure us a smooth and easier ride into the future.

The New England market was slow to grow based on the alpaca population in the rest of the United States. I should say western U.S. and Ohio in particular. The first alpacas imported into the U.S. came from Chile beginning in 1984. "Here come the Americans with money to spend," the Chileans thought and we bought everything they had to offer. Most of these alpacas found homes in the U.S. in the northwestern states and the Ohio region. The first Peruvian stock did not enter the U.S until February 1994. The importing group of

Camelids of Delaware, Pet Center and Stackowski Alpacas held the first sale of Peruvians in Michigan. During this time, the number in farms in the New England states were very few with only one or two farms in each state. Maine for example was home to only about 20 alpacas at two farms. This was early 1994.

As the importations continued, the quality of the alpacas improved due to screening methods developed by the Alpaca Screening Committee of AOBA. The ARI grew out of this committee into the partnering association we know today. While a part of AOBA, the committee worked to develop phenotypic screening methods to ensure the continued strength and quality of our growing national herd as importations were to continue for another 5+ years.

Importations of alpacas continued till 1998 with an average of 550 Peruvian alpacas being imported each year and another 600-900 +/- of Chilean and Bolivian origin. Some years there were no importations from Chile. The industry was growing rapidly and the marketing based more on the selling of the animal versus the use and long-term value. New farms were

beginning all over the U.S. and the number of farms in New England more than doubled in one year. From roughly 300 members of AOBA in 1994, the number grew to over 600 in one year. Growing pains of an industry this young were sure to follow and they did. Many major decisions such as closure of the registry, formation of the registry as a separate entity and the development of a governmental framed fiber co-operative emerged.

With closure of the ARI (registry) to imported alpacas pending quickly, high numbers of alpacas were imported at the last minute from all countries of origin – Chile, Bolivia and Peru by multiple groups of different importers. One of the main reasons for closure was not only the politically driven wish of association members but due to the fact the U.S.D.A was closing its main point of entry of quarantine in the U.S. due to lack of use and cost for upkeep. Importations could still be continued through points up north such as Pierre-Michelon and then come in through Canada, as long as accepted by the ARI for certification of parentage. However, no reciprocity agreement was made between the Canadian Registry (which is run by its government) and the ARI thus making that point of entry unavailable to the commerce of the industry.

With the registries closed to new bloodstock, it was up to us to build a national herd based on what we had here...older Chilean stock, newly imported Peruvian and Bolivian stock and other importees via England, Australia and Canada. The U.S. born or as I liked to call it, "melting pot alpaca" emerged. It took awhile for this alpaca to fully emerge however. Emphasis via marketing was placed on certain countries of origin being 'better' than others for whatever reason the messenger wished to send. Many people developed breeding programs not based on what they themselves felt important, but what the industry or market might have demanded at the time. While each country of origin has something to offer, it's the quality of the alpaca first and foremost that should be addressed. If that means breeding with a Chilean line, then so be it...a Peruvian line, then so be it or a Bolivian line, so be it. A judge in the show ring does not and can not ask what lines or countries have come into play in making the alpaca standing in front of him/her today. Quality first and foremost is the future of the industry from a breeding standpoint and a fiber emergence standpoint.

**"While each country of origin has something to offer, it's the quality of the alpaca first and foremost that should be addressed."**

This seems to be more of the 'rule of thumb' in the breeding process of today.

But there are two sides to the fiber equation and development of that side of our industry. The mainstay of the New England marketplace has been a cottage industry market for the alpaca and its fiber. As the national herd grows, we are beginning to breed for more of a commercial market – more pounds, more yarn made and more income. Which is right and which is wrong? Up to you and what you plan on doing with your fiber and business.

While the cottage industry will remain the commercial industry is what will take the word and fiber of alpaca to the mass population. With over 2 million people in Maine, less than 100 people own alpacas. Looking at those numbers means we have a long way to go for our industries – breeding and fiber.

The really neat thing is – we are taking those steps. With more and more interest in these industries comes more of a knowledge base. With lessons learned in the past, we can adapt those ideas that worked and even those that didn't work since maybe a bit ahead of the times and

help re-shape and build the future.

Without question, we have been a long way since 1984. A question we get from many farm visitors because we have been around the yearly alpaca calendar a few times is "With what you have seen, will the market stay and for how long?" Well, my crystal ball will always be at the cleaners being buffed when asked this but the truth of where we have been speaks for where we might go. We are a livestock based industry that has grown solidly in a positive and successful direction for over 20 years. We are a growing fiber industry with market development and research ahead enabling us to maintain the growth of the livestock side of the trade. We are an education based community continuing to grow the knowledge base of the husbandry needs and requirements of our producing stock. We are a national industry that has emerged as one of the strongest internally supported livestock organizations in the United States and abroad.

We are alpaca owners and breeders and we are here to stay for many more years of prosperity and growth as an industry and home-based business – breeding and fiber.

# Discovering New Places

*Laura Busky North Brook Farm Alpacas & HandWovens, Berlin, MA*

Several years ago, our main farm project was to expand our pastures to give our alpacas as much space as possible in our limited area. The project included removing some trees and re-grading the land for a more gradual and even slope. The planned expansion area included a strip surrounding two sides of our current pasture space, allowing the alpacas a great view of all the work going on. In fact, several times during the project we had to confine them to small pens to insure their safety from falling trees and heavy equipment. For weeks they watched on curiously as the “silly humans” disrupted the landscape.

It came time to plant and grow the seeds. We set up a network of sprinklers and hoses to water the area regularly. Every day, the alpacas would line up at the fence and watch with some frustration as we watered the dirt. They simply didn't understand why they were not allowed to play in the sprinklers as usual. As weeks went by, the grass on the other side of the fence became thicker and better established. This further confused the alpacas, as they didn't understand why they couldn't get to the sweet, tender baby grass that looked so yummy.

Finally, it's time to re-string the electric fence and open up the new area. Once again the alpacas watched curiously, but never challenged the existing fence line while we worked. Mike and I completed the fence work and decided to park ourselves at the top of the slope in the new area to watch what would happen. The alpacas now had access to the new area, but continued to graze as usual. Sumatra, one of our adult females, was grazing right up against the old fence line as if it were still there. She continued to do this for several minutes as if she knew this was her turf and she was never going to gain access to the new grass on the other side of the fence!

Suddenly, we saw her go for some of the new grass. She began grazing on it without realizing that it used to be out of reach. Soon she looked up with a surprised expression. Noticing that something was different, she began to check out the new area. At first she moved cautiously, but was soon running up and down the hill excitedly. The other alpacas noticed her behavior and watched curiously. One by one they gathered their courage and began to run with her. Mike and I, still seated on the grass at the top of the hill, watched this show with great amusement. All of a sudden, Sumatra ran right up to us. As she looked down at us, we both somehow understood that this gesture and her happy expression meant “Thank You”.

A couple of weeks later, Sumatra's sister Kona returned home from an off-site breeding. Sumatra took great pleasure in giving Kona a tour of the new space!

## About NEAOBA

Our members include active breeders, owners of pet-quality alpacas, and prospective alpaca owners. We are mostly from the six New England States, but we welcome members from anywhere. Many of our alpacas are U.S.-born animals, and some have been imported from Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and Australia. Our numbers are growing, and we always welcome new members. We enjoy talking to interested individuals about the benefits of alpaca ownership, so we welcome your inquiries.

Contact: Jerry Weisgrau, [alpacas@staghornvalley.com](mailto:alpacas@staghornvalley.com) or download application from:

**[www.neoba.org](http://www.neoba.org)**