



## MAA e-Newsletter

Sent via the Yahoo group as text html from the Board of Directors

### 1. Leadership

Thanks to all who agreed to run for the Board in this past election. Without members willing to step up to assume leadership positions, MAA cannot function. Thanks as well to the Nominating Committee, Nicole Carter, Jan Wanggaard, and Gay deHart, for their time in putting together an outstanding slate of nominees.

We would like to officially announce the **2008 MAA Board of Directors** as the following, with their respective committee liaison position(s) listed after their names:

President – Raini Perry, Fiber Frolic, Outside Organizations

Vice-president – Pam Harwood, Website/Marketing

Secretary – Amy Grant, Fundraising

Treasurer – Pam Drew, Membership

Director – Pat Houde, Education

### 2. Communication

The BOD exists to serve you and one of our goals again this year is to provide for quick and effective communication. You can expect to find minutes from BOD and Membership meetings posted to the website as well as distributed via the Yahoo list as soon as they are available. In addition, we will be sending this e-newsletter to members of MAA and other interested parties on a quarterly basis.

If you have a question, concern, idea, or wish to have an item included on our agenda, please feel free to call/email individual Directors. However if you wish your message to be received by all directors simultaneously (and even sent anonymously if necessary) you may go to the Members section of the MAA website, and near the top of the page you will see [click here to send a message to all BOD Members](#)

The Maine Alpaca List on Yahoo.com is a critical tool for us to communicate amongst each other. As a reminder, we are re-posting the rules for the Yahoo List and will do this on an annual basis. Please remember the List is to be used for dispersal of relevant information and not for self promotion or business promotion in any manner. Use of this forum to disperse alpaca husbandry or health issues is encouraged. Please address any questions you have to a member of the MAA BOD and thanks in advance for your appropriate use of this valuable tool.

### Instructions for using the Maine Alpaca Association Yahoo group

Any member of the group can send a message to all other members of the group by sending an email to [MaineAlpaca@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MaineAlpaca@yahoogroups.com). In order to become part of the list, you must first go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/> to sign up. You will create a Yahoo ID and password. For some reason, I cannot find “Maine Alpaca” in the search for groups, but you can find go directly to <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/MaineAlpaca/?yguid=197756078>. You must request to join and the moderator will accept you. It can take a few days, but in the meantime you can read the past messages by clicking on “view all”.

This group may be used whenever you have an alpaca related question you want to ask the group or when you have information that you think the rest of the group should know about. Please use this forum to communicate about alpaca husbandry or health related concerns. **This group is not to be used for advertising purposes or self promotion of any kind.**

This group will also be used to send official MAA messages to the membership. If a meeting needs to be postponed due to weather, a message will be sent to this group before 8 am on the day of the meeting. If you receive an email from [MaineAlpaca@yahogroups.com](mailto:MaineAlpaca@yahogroups.com) and reply to that message your reply will be sent to all members of the group. If you want to respond privately to the originator of the message then you need to write a separate message addressed specifically to that person.

If you are having trouble accessing the Yahoo list, please contact Jill McElderry-Maxwell at [jillmcm1970@yahoo.com](mailto:jillmcm1970@yahoo.com) or Al Maloney at [newaim@midcoast.com](mailto:newaim@midcoast.com) for help.

### **3. Committee Help Wanted:**

In order for our committees to remain dynamic entities, and to keep the creative juices flowing, we encourage each member to sign up for a committee. You might not be able to attend all committee meetings, but your voice will be heard in online discussions. Not sure what you can contribute because you are “too new” to alpacas? Join a committee, listen, learn, and you’ll be amazed at how quickly your past “outside” experience will help ideas to flow!

#### **Education: Dawn Brooker**, chair

The Education Committee is responsible for lining up guest speakers at MAA’s 4 membership meetings, as well as organizing our annual Education Seminar.

#### **Fiber Frolic: Al Maloney/Nancy Williams/Raini Perry**, co-chairs

In 2007, MAA assumed stewardship of this small but growing annual fiber festival. MAA is working closely with the llama, goat, sheep, and bunny people to celebrate all things “Fiber” in the State of Maine.

#### **Fundraising (Including Vet Fund): Marcia MacDonald**

The Fundraising Committee is critical to the continued fiscal health of our organization!

Silent Auctions and raffles have added many thousands of dollars to MAA’s coffers. We need to keep up the good work!

#### **Website/Marketing: Cindy Lavan/Al Maloney**

The Website/Marketing Committee is responsible for putting MAA’s best foot forward through our website as well as local, regional, and national advertising and promotion, i.e. MAA’s Open Farm Weekends, newspaper and magazine ads, show sponsorships, etc.

### **4. Website**

Take advantage of the great opportunity to help gain exposure for your growing business and support the MAA Website. The MAA website is self-supporting, relying primarily on advertising revenue for its growth. Please support one of MAA’s most valuable educational and marketing tools with your Banner or Classified ads, articles, photos, events, and “Snapshots”.

- A. **Resource Section** – We need articles or blurbs related to the topics below. We are asking our members to help write these sections. Please email [al@newaim.com](mailto:al@newaim.com) with your articles or intent to compose within the next few days. Please feel free as well to send additional topics you would like to see addressed on the MAA website.
  1. What questions should I ask when I visit a farm?
  2. How do I know if I can start a farm where I live?
  3. LLC? Inc? What options do I have to establish my business?
  
- B. **Gallery** – Have you made a beautiful shawl and want to show it off? What about a woven alpaca blanket that you want to show the world? Send your photos to our webmaster at [al@newaim.com](mailto:al@newaim.com) for posting. We are also looking for artwork related to alpacas and photos of alpacas doing great things or just looking plain stunning in a field. NOTE – When submitting you are allowing for exposure to the

world. Please add your copyright material to the photo directly or be warned ahead of time, it's free game for downloading.

- C. Members in the News** – This section will provide brief articles or information on what our members are doing in and out of the alpaca industry. Informative and fun pieces which will tie into the lifestyle aspects of alpaca ownership. Please keep self promotion to a minimum. Please submit to [al@newaim.com](mailto:al@newaim.com).
- D. Snapshot of a Maine Farm** -- this is open to all members of MAA. Tell visitors to the website how you decided to get into your alpaca breeding, fiber farming, or other alpaca-related business. Forms may be downloaded from the Members section and submitted to **Gay deHart**. Each month 2 businesses are chosen by lottery to be featured, and all featured Snapshots are archived.
- E. Paid Advertising for your farm, products, business, services and stud males....**
  - 1. Classified Advertisements** (Fiber, General Services, Equipment for Sale and Stud Service) – Cost is \$5/year. Please submit payment to MAA c/o Pam Drew, PO Box 1139, Kennebunkport, ME 04046 and submit the ad to [al@newaim.com](mailto:al@newaim.com). Once payment is received, your ad will be posted. You must be a MAA member in order to advertise. Some other restrictions may apply.
  - 2. Banner ads**– Front page visibility! 6 per month at the reasonable fee of \$30 per ad. The banner ad will be hot-linked to your farm's website. You may run 2 months in a row. If a space is available the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, you may be contacted for participation. Banner ad size is 150x50 pixels. Contact **Al Maloney** at [al@newaim.com](mailto:al@newaim.com) with your questions regarding this great opportunity.

#### 5. News

Once again, MAA was an exhibitor at the Maine Agriculture Trade Show in Augusta on January 15-17. **Thanks to all of you who volunteered** to staff our table to answer questions about alpacas and our industry as a whole.. We sold \$377.00 worth of alpaca socks! Many Thanks to **Raini Perry** for organizing the whole thing and to for taking the time set up our display and take it down.

**Alan Russo** has agreed to update the Map of member farms which is used as part of the MAA display at fairs and shows.

#### 6. MAA Membership Dues Reminder

This is a friendly reminder that if you haven't yet, please pay your 2008 membership dues. Membership dues are \$75.00, payable to MAA. Please mail to: MAA c/o Pam Drew, PO Box 1139, Kennebunkport, ME 04046. Membership will provide some great benefits in 2008 so we don't want you to miss out! Do it NOW!!

#### 7. Get Your Alpacas Ready for Shearing Day! By Pam Harwood

As I write this, it's snowing –again. Hard to believe it will soon be time for our annual harvest of all that fabulous fiber. A little planning ahead of time will help shearing day go much more smoothly. I have read many "How to" articles on preparing a fleece for processing into yarn, but most of them start at the skirting table. I think the process really begins much earlier, making the whole job of preparing fleece for processing so much easier!

This spring you will save yourself a lot of work if you clear your pastures of burdock and other weeds that have burrs. In the barn, use shredded cardboard, straw or products such as Woody Pet as bedding rather than sawdust, shavings, or hay with lots of seed-heads. The less that's able to get into the fiber, the less you have to skirt out!

Let's face it, shearing day is full of commotion and stress for us and our beloved alpacas. The more we can do to prepare, the less hectic shearing day will be and the easier it will be to prepare your fiber for processing. Here is a "Shearing Day" list compiled over the past two years while going from farm to farm with Claudia Raessler of Royal River Alpaca Co. and the Peruvian shearers:

- Have plenty of assistants on hand, not only for lifting and laying down the alpacas, but also for weighing and recording fiber stats, preliminary skirting, trimming toenails, administering shots, sweeping, etc.
- 30-gallon garbage cans with black 30 gallon bags for waste fiber.
- Twice as many clear plastic 30-gallon bags as you have alpacas —available at Staples and Ace Hardware.
- Ziploc snack or sandwich baggies for fiber samples.
- Plastic sheets or cardboard for each fleece.
- Sharpie pens
- Pre-made labels for blanket, neck, and leg/belly/chest fiber bags: alpaca name and date.
- List with all alpacas' names to keep track of total shear weights.
- Platform scale for weighing bags of fiber.
- Screwdriver & hammer.
- Heavy Duty grounded extension cords.
- Tube socks (long enough so alpaca doesn't aspirate spit) or towels to place over the mouths of spitters
- Towels to mop up after pee-ers.
- Disinfectant such as Nolvasan, to wipe up any blood left by clipped toenails.
- Blood-stop or Superglue to stop bleeding.
- Push-brooms, regular brooms, or a shop vac for cleaning up fiber between animals.
- Have a plan as to who will be sheared first. Some go darkest to lightest, lightest to darkest, males to females —whatever works for you, have the alpacas penned and ready to go.
- Plenty of water, iced tea, soda, snacks etc for everyone!

It is easier to get dirt, sand, dung tags, burrs, and vegetable matter (VM) out of a fleece while it is still on the animal. Shop-vacs and fiber wands are great for basic skirting while the alpaca is waiting to be sheared, but don't stress out an animal that is already "on the edge". Finally, while it's preferable for fiber to be dry when sheared, it isn't essential. A damp towel laid across the blanket area of a suri and patted will get out a remarkable amount of dust.

Lay plastic sheets or large flat pieces of cardboard under the alpaca so the blanket can come off in 1 or 2 pieces. Be sure to sweep up between alpacas, especially if toenails are being done: clippings will ruin the mill's machinery, and lighter or darker color fiber will contaminate the fleece. Don't forget to ask the shearers to take a 2"-square sample from each alpaca's midside, or wrap a rubber band around the sample ahead of time — you can pick out the sample later. Place the sample in a Ziploc baggie with the alpaca's name and shear date written on the back of your business card. While the shearers are doing the legs and neck, you can weigh the

blanket and then quickly skirt the “edges” to be added to the bag of leg/belly/chest fiber. Neck fiber should be bagged separately. If you aren't having your fiber sorted and graded on shearing day, set the blanket, neck, and leg/belly/chest fiber aside or bag it for more careful scrutiny and skirting later. Label the bags as blanket, neck, or leg/belly/chest, with the weight, shear date, and alpaca's name.

To get the total shear weight, add the 3 weights (blanket, neck, and leg/belly/chest) and mark that on a master list to keep track of each alpaca's annual shear weights.

To store a fleece in a bag, fold it in ½ (cut-side-in for suri and cut-side-out for huacaya), then roll it up like a sleeping bag. If you know the fleece definitely won't be shown, you can stuff it loosely in a clear trash bag with holes punched in it to prevent condensation. If the fiber is even slightly damp, you may want to keep the bag open and lay the fleece in the sun to evaporate any moisture. Fluff it up a bit for better drying. Store closed bags out of direct sunlight, preferably in a well-lit, moth-free area or with a dryer sheet.

Congratulations! You've made it through Shearing Day, and your fiber is stored safely until you are ready to skirt it, sort it, and send it off to be processed.

#### **8. CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS –**

Great ways to learn, have fun, and make friends!

Some events require pre-registration so check for details via the contact information provided.

**March 29, 2008 -- Alpaca Shearing Clinic** Sponsored by UMass Amherst Camelid Studies Program. Shearing clinic with expert shearer Matt Best. Enrollment limited to 12 participants. Seminar presentations and all participants get to shear their own alpacas. Topics covered include: shears and combs selection, putting combs and cutters on the handpiece correctly, and shearing theory. Hands on training on safe take-down and release techniques and shearing of animals.

Cost \$200 per person includes lunch and snacks.

Stephen R. Purdy, DVM [spurdy@vasci.umass.edu](mailto:spurdy@vasci.umass.edu); Phone: 413-549-3820

**March 29, 2008, Royal River Alpaca Company 2nd Annual On Farm Pen Sale** for first time buyers and existing breeders to purchase select huacaya and suri alpacas. This event will represent over 35 quality huacaya and suri alpacas from farms across the country. Complimentary independent evaluations will be provided to buyers by Kevin O'Leary, AOBA Certified Judge. Also featured will be live music, food, activities for children and farm supply vendors. FMI Contact Lynda Lawrence or Claudia Raessler at 207 -846-4984 [www.royalriveralpaca.com](http://www.royalriveralpaca.com)

#### **April 4- 6, 2008 – North American Alpaca Show – Springfield, MA**

AOBA Sanctioned Level IV show. For entry information and information on speakers, show, etc. visit [www.naalpacashow.com](http://www.naalpacashow.com)

**April 20, 2008 -- Dyeing with Good Karma.** Kingfield, ME (9:00-4:00) We provide the dye and the place to make a mess, you bring your yarn, roving or fleeces. Please call Jim or Amy at 265-5276 for more info and to RSVP.

#### **April 20-21, 2008 -- All American Futurity Auction and Show – Louisville, KY**

Alpaca Futurity and auction. For more information, visit [www.the-futurity.com](http://www.the-futurity.com)

**April 25-27, 2008 MAPACA Jubilee** Pennsylvania Farm Complex, Harrisburg, PA -AOBA Sanctioned Halter, Fleece and Performance Classes. For more information, visit [www.mapaca.org](http://www.mapaca.org)

**May 4, 2008 Open House at Good Karma Spinnery (9:00 - 4:00).** Kingfield, ME. Give Jim or Amy Grant a call for more information 265-5276.

**May 9-11, 2008 New England Alpaca Fest,** Contoocook, NH, Sponsored by NEAOBA  
Regular fleece classes, Color championships (if minimums are met); Best prepared fleece  
Judge's choice, Best hand, Best brightness - H, Best luster - S, Best crimp - H,  
Best lock formation – S Contact Lana Nickerson [fossmtnfarm@msn.com](mailto:fossmtnfarm@msn.com)

**May 9-11, 2008, PAOBA Breeder's Showcase (Halter, Fleece, Spin-Off, Fiber Arts), Toyota Arena, York, PA**

AOBA Certified show sponsored by PAOBA. Visit [www.paoba.org/breedersshowcase](http://www.paoba.org/breedersshowcase) for more information and registration materials.

**June 7-8, 2008, MAINE FIBER FROLIC** – Windsor Fair Grounds, Windsor, ME.  
Check out more information – [www.fiberfrolic.com](http://www.fiberfrolic.com)

**July 20, 2008 – Maine Open Farm Day**

Go to [http://www.getrealmaine.com/visit/open\\_farm\\_day.html](http://www.getrealmaine.com/visit/open_farm_day.html) for details

**August 24 – September 1, 2008** – Windsor Fair, Windsor Fairgrounds. MAA makes sure llamas and alpacas have a presence as “payback” for use of the fairgrounds for the Fiber Frolic. Go to [www.windsorfair.com](http://www.windsorfair.com) for more information and directions.

**September 27-28, 2008 -- National and Maine Alpaca Farm Days**

**October 17-19, 2008 New England Coastal Classic Alpaca Show,** Pineland Center, New Gloucester, ME.  
AOBA Certified show sponsored by NEAOBA. For more information go to [www.necoastalclassic.com](http://www.necoastalclassic.com).

The next MAA e-Newsletter will go out in June. Deadline for submissions of articles or events is June 1, 2008  
Newsletter ideas, articles, comments, etc. please send to [pdh@longwoodsalphacas.com](mailto:pdh@longwoodsalphacas.com) .

**Thanks for your time and support of MAA!!!**