

President's Message

The Year of The Camelid, Great Conference Plans and A New Board Member



Bolivia, the ancestral home of many of our llamas, had petitioned the United Nations to name 2016 the "International Year of the Camelid." Apparently, the Bolivian effort almost made it through the bureaucracy to obtain this UN designation.

While Bolivia is undoubtedly disappointed in this decision, GALA is honoring camelids this year with its "Year of the Camelid" Conference theme and moving ahead to benefit camelids with its innovative Mentoring Program and Veterinary Affairs Committee projects.

2016 has been a year of firsts for GALA: an e-Newsletter option, e-Directory, e-voting for elections, and at this fall's Conference there will be "The First Annual Fiber Show & Sale".

There is much excitement around the introduction of this ILR sanctioned fiber event which will provide an opportunity for us to have an eminent fiber judge, Niki Kuklenski, evaluate our fleeces.

Carol Reigh, the creator of this event, points out: "People need to recognize the great commodity we have in our camelid fiber. There is value in our animals' fleeces." She urges, "Enter your fleeces in this Fiber Show to gain knowledge and education about your fiber and get feedback important to our appreciation and understanding of various fiber types." Carol also reminds us that all grades are usable to produce different products as we have found out through the Llama Fiber Coop of North America. Following the fleece judging and prizes, the fleeces will be put on display and made available for sale.

More details on this event are included in this newsletter. If you would like to enter this competition and are not certain what to do, Carol Reigh has agreed to walk you through the preparation.

Contact Carol at carol@buckhollowllamas.com.

With this issue of our Newsletter, we welcome Debra Gaskill, our new editor. Debra brings lots of experience and skills to this assignment. We look forward to working with her.

Many thanks to Bev Vienckowski who produced the impressive May Newsletter while GALA was interviewing candidates for the editor position.

We welcome our newest Board Member, Charlotte Sankey of Contoocook, NH. Charlotte has been a GALA member for over 10 years. She attended her first GALA Conference in 2012 which was such a wonderful experience for her that she took on the task of co-chairing the 2013 GALA Conference in Albany, NY. Charlotte has a herd of eight llamas which she shows and hikes with. She also takes her llamas to parades and community events. Now she has expanded her love of llamas by including their fiber into her needle felting, wet felting and knitting. Welcome, Charlotte.

Ron Caruso, our Webmaster, who does a terrific job, is asking for assistance in expanding the Website content. For the GALA Flickr Photo website, Ron is asking for photos for a category named "In Costume." Examples could be from shows, events parades and such: Check it out at: www.flickr.com/photos.

Ron has also established a GALA YouTube page which currently only features a couple of items. Ron would like members to offer videos, such as contests, shows, parades, costume parties, events, walks on the trail. Check this out also at:

www.youtube.com/channel/UCRAgb-jQnjC8k-NsUjnXsp7w.

A Membership Campaign is under way. A drawing will be held at the Conference to determine the winner of the 2016 GALA Membership Campaign Grand Prize which will be a non-transferable single registration for the 2017 GALA Conference. See details in this Newsletter.

Keeping with this theme of the "Year of the Camelid," Bank of America is using "Paul," a white llama with a snazzy red scarf to promote the bank's mobile banking app. When I enter the lobby at my local Bank of America branch, "Paul" is there to greet me. He has his own personae.

According to someone who knows his story intimately, "He is cheeky, intelligent, likes pizza with hay and pepperoni topping, and enjoys Andean flute music." If passing a BAC in the very near future, you might consider popping in to see the handsome and now famous white llama with the snazzy red scarf.

Please consider being a Conference Sponsor to make possible another world class event. Details on becoming a sponsor are available in this issue.

The GALA Board would like to hear from you—the Members. Tell us what we can do for you. What do you like and/or dislike about what we are doing now. Visit the website often and tell us what you would like to have added there. Also, think about things that we need to discuss at the annual meeting. We need to hear your voice.

See you in October at the "Year of the Camelid" Conference in Reading, PA. Awaiting you are many exciting sessions, field trips, expert speakers and lots of fiber activities.

—Jane Hamilton-Merritt