

## President's Message

### GALA has much to look forward to in 2017, and much to be proud of, following 29th Conference



The "Year of the Camelid" Conference and GALA have had a most interesting, productive, and innovative year. Thanks to the many GALA Members who helped with the Conference and who volunteered to serve on GALA's Committees.

At this year's Annual Meeting, Terry Beal and Hilary Ware announced that the Maine Llama Association (MLLA) had decided to "close" after many productive years offering camelid education and camelid events and to disburse its remaining funds. The Association chose GALA as a recipient of \$3000 with a specific purpose. The MLLA stipulated that this grant to be used in a very specific way. "We would ask that GALA set this amount aside for the purpose of offering a discount of 50 percent to 'first time GALA Conference attendees.' We would ask GALA to offer and to grant these discounts every year to first time registrants until the funds have been exhausted. The 50% discount would apply to conference registration only for attendees who are GALA members and who own llamas or alpacas." While everyone was sad about the dissolution of this important association, everyone was touched by the generosity and by the confidence placed in GALA to use these funds to strengthen GALA and, in particular, to strengthen GALA's educational outreach via the annual GALA Conferences.

Thank you everyone associated with the Maine Llama Association.

Results of the fall Election: Carol Reigh and Barb Baker were elected to serve a second Board term of three years, beginning in January 2017. Mike Sheridan of Hemstreet Farm in western New York was elected to serve his first three-year term on the Board. Bob Wolfe will be leaving the Board at the end of Decem-

ber. Bob's wise and studied counsel will be missed. Thank you, Bob, for your service to GALA. Happy to report that Bob will continue overseeing the annual Photo Contest.

Board officers for 2017 will be: Treasurer Carol Millard, Secretary Carol Reigh, Vice President Terry Beal, and President Jane Hamilton-Merritt.

Three new Committees were created in 2016: the Veterinary Affairs Committee, Andean Committee, and a Committee to explore 501(c) (3) tax exempt status for GALA. In this issue there is an article by Barb Baker, Chair of the Veterinary Affairs Committee, describing its project to recruit current veterinary students to consider camelid medicine. This is an exciting initiative.

Camelid Medical Research is critically important to GALA. In this issue, there are articles on research about to begin at Ohio State on a barber-pole vaccination and an update on Dr. Daniela Bedenice's research from Tufts on eprinomectin as an extended release formulation against meningeal worm. This year's auction produced some \$8,000, the majority (55 percent) of which goes for camelid medical research.

The Membership Drive produced 20 new Members, bringing membership to 264. Winner of the membership drive drawing was Carol Millard who won a free registration for the next conference. Thanks to all who recruited for GALA. As we all know, recruiting new members should be an agenda item for everyone.

One highlight at this Conference was the first ILR sanctioned fleece show, judged by fiber expert Niki Kulenski. Many of us, including myself, are interested in fiber but have little knowledge of how to properly prepare our fleeces for entry into

shows. Under Niki's tutelage, we examined various fleeces and learned firsthand what judges look for when examining a fleece.

Once again, the fiber room and the animal tent were Conference favorites. The 2017 GALA Photo Calendar and conference t-shirts delighted all and sold out immediately.

Katrina Capasso, Charlotte Sankey and I, Masquerade Committee, want to thank all who participated in this costume event. Costumes were extraordinarily creative; many hand-made. All deserved prizes. Almost half of the attendees turned out in costumes. Whether in costume or not, everyone seemed to enjoy the "hilarity" of the event.

So HATS OFF to all who worked so hard on this Conference. I wish all GALA members had been able to attend. Also HATS OFF to all the Committees who keep GALA running in an efficient and professional way.

As usual, there is more work to be done. One idea that caught on this year was to establish a GALA Committee that would focus on promoting camelids to the general public on a national level. A number of people with public relations backgrounds have expressed interest in being involved in such an effort. This will be on the Board agenda at our first meeting of 2017. If you have ideas for this effort, please let us know.

The "Year of the Camelid" may be coming to an end but the focus of this organization will continue to foster the growing vitality of camelids in the U.S. with everyone's help.

Best wishes for a beautiful holiday season.

—Jane Hamilton-Merritt