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***Performance classes: What they are and understanding the differences.***

***March 3rd, 2024 – Dianna Koteskey***

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**1) What are *The Performance Classes*?**

- a) Obstacle
- b) Public Relations also referred to as P.R.
- c) Pack

**2) What are the objectives of each class? Do they represent something? How do they differ from one another?**

- a) Obstacle: To perform challenges as fluidly as possible with your Lama
- b) Public Relations: How you and your Lama interact together in a public setting. Some examples are a school, a parade or a nursing home.
- c) Pack: Challenges in this class are to mimic packing with your Lama. Things you would encounter hiking or camping with your Lama.

**3) Things to expect in each class. Examples for each class**

- a) Obstacle
  - i) A Jump over
  - ii) Backing your lama up
  - iii) Change of pace (run with your Lama)
  - iv) Duck under/walk through.
  - v) Pick something up off the ground.
  - vi) Side pass
  - vii) Ramp or teetertotter.
  - viii) Walk over a tarp or through water.
  - ix) Weave
  - x) Walk at a distance from your Lama.
  - xi) Take a selfie.
  - xii) step front feet inside of a tire or up onto a step
- b) Public Relations
  - i) Back out of a tight spot
  - ii) Flags
  - iii) Umbrellas
  - iv) Mirror(s)
  - v) Stand for a stranger to pet.
  - vi) Wear something (bandana, scarf, hat, blanket)
  - vii) Show a foot or teeth.
  - viii) Navigate a doorway.
  - ix) Push or pull a wagon, wheelchair, stroller or walker.



- x) Walk past a dog or a dog walk past you and the Lama.
- xi) Load in a trailer or vehicle.
- xii) Answer a Lama related question.
- xiii) Stairs
- c) Pack
  - i) Walk a plank.
  - ii) Back up
  - iii) Weave
  - iv) Water obstacle
  - v) Add something to your pack.
  - vi) Step over
  - vii) Change of pace
  - viii) Tie your Lama with a quick release knot.
  - ix) Remove pack (inspect for sores)
  - x) Spray with fly spray.
  - xi) Check a foot. – Show a foot
  - xii) Handler ducks into a tent, lama calmly stands outside.
  - xiii) Self load into a trailer or vehicle.



**4) Equipment you should consider for the classes.**

- a) A llama or an Alpaca – they both can do these classes. Don't let those Alpacas fool you, they are good at performance classes.
- b) Shoes or boots? Ask yourself a few questions regarding the posted course:
  - i) Is there water? Consider some rubber boots. Some clubs have a few pairs that are shared for this.
  - ii) Are you going into public relations or a pack class? You might look funny in a nursing home with your knee boots on and your nice leather boots might not fare so well in the water for pack class.
  - iii) No open toed shoes, no sandals, no flipflops
- c) What halter and lead should I have?
  - i) You may have a very nice black halter and lead for showmanship, and it would look nice for your public relations class. However, consider the length of for your lead and the snap size. If your Lama spooked, do you have the lead for that and a sturdy snap?
  - ii) Pack class should have a sturdy lead (I have always preferred round cotton) and halter that fits so your lama could eat with it on, your show halter probably fits a bit snugger.
- d) What clothes do you have on?
  - (1) Obstacle and Public Relations you are in the clear with your black dress pants and white shirt. Remember you are representing your club and community. Clean and tidy you both should be.



- (2) Pack class you could wear your black and white, however at the higher level you would get marked down for being in Dress clothes. A nice top and clean pants that you would hike in are suggested.
- (3) No logo shirts (club logo, John Deere, CAT, etc.), no flapping clothes, zip your jacket and no hats (pack class you might get away with it if the class is held outside, same with sunglasses)
- e) Should my lama be groomed?
  - i) YES, YES and YES!
  - ii) Obstacle and pack you do not need to go all out like your showmanship class, however your lama should not look like you just pulled them from the stall, field or trailer.
  - iii) Pack class, clean them up especially were the pack fits, untangle those straps from the wool you want your hiking companion comfortable and to look comfortable.
  - iv) Public relation, make them look great, however keep in mind the public is going to be petting so keep the grooming aid sprays in the box, do you like to pet wet animals?
- f) Pack class, things that you will need at some point are:
  - i) A good fitting pack system.
  - ii) Weight for the pack
  - iii) "fluff" to fill out the paneers to full width, hay, straw, newspaper, fabric.
  - iv) Snaps/ carabiners
  - v) Bungee cords

### 5) Tip and Tricks!

- a) The "J" lead – what is that!!!
  - i) A "J" lead is just that, unlike your showmanship class though we want your hands down low.
  - ii) The idea is to have the Lama willingly follow you, no tugging or pushing.
- b) Your body, your Number one "aid"
  - i) Rather than choking up on the lead to force your Lama to look into the mirror have them learn to lean forward with you.
  - ii) Slow down when going over the "STEP OVER" so that you and the Lama stepover, not jump.
  - iii) Speed up just a touch for that "JUMP OVER" and give your Lama his head to jump.
  - iv) Stoop over to let your Lama know you are asking them to duck down.
- c) Your voice, this is probably your second most useful "Aid" you do not need to yell however communication is the goal here, words or phrases like "jump", "Let's go", "yes", "no", "over" "back" and "up"
- d) SMILE 😊 you should look like you are having fun and enjoying your time with your llama.
- e) Know your quick release knots! There are several and it is more than just for show.
- f) Review your course.
  - i) Do the walk through.



- ii) Ask the questions! "What side you are to start a weave." "Are we to stop before and after the change of pace?" "Would you (the Judge) like to have the scarf tied high or low on the neck?" "Do I need to jump the jump too?"
- iii) Practice said course without your llama before class – you need to know your course and be confident walking in the ring.

**6) PRACTICE THESE THINGS AT HOME AND AT YOUR CLUB MEETINGS!**

- i) Take turns making a mock course of only 5 obstacles to work on.
- ii) take turns so your llama can have a mental break.
- iii) Point out good and bad habits to one another.
- iv) Have someone video you and your llama – review that video and you write down what you need to work on and what you and your llama did great on
- v) Watch others and see if something they are doing could help you.
- vi) Play "follow the leader" – some Lamas learn from watching others or following another Lamas
- vii) Go for a group hike.
- viii) Work on your llama trivia! In public relations you may be asked a question much like your showmanship class.



*Some of my llama friends and I, out for a hike.*

**LET'S GO TRY SOME CHALLENGES!**

Write down two goals you and your Lama want to accomplish for the performance classes.

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
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Add Picture(s) here of your accomplishment(s)!