

THE FUNNY FARM

The buck stops here -
and likely hasn't been
dusted since.

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**Special points of interest:
this month:**

- It finally rained!
- The Rhododendrons are in bloom
- We sheared this weekend
- We will wash fleeces for the next year...
- We finally figured out a sensible way to give the llamas their monthly shots!!!
- Poor Jack's blood pressure is now normal and her vision seems to be back to normal.
- Dee has finally started learning the on-line stock market course that Ken learned a year ago.
- That sweater Dee started for Ken in November is nearly completed...
- We have BEES now living on the Farm and they have been extremely busy with the russian olives, locust trees, wild cherry trees and now the blackberries in bloom.
- The iris are blooming along the banks of the driveway and it looks as though they have settled in and are starting to spread now.

NEW BOUVIER ON BOARD

Gigi, Ken and I drove to South Carolina on Easter Sunday to meet Pirate, a 2 yr old bouvier boy from Florida. Ferried from Florida by Bouvier rescuer, Margret Nolan, Pirate had been taken into custody by his local Humane Society after his owner had been observed whipping him on the head with a horse crop.

Initially, Pirate was full of growls and sudden lunging behaviors—in and out of his crate, but he seemed calmed by Gigi's presence and stuck close to her to learn the routines of his new home.

Within the first few minutes, Pirate had attached himself like velcro to Ken. Hours later he was rolling onto his back, getting belly rubs from us both, but still growling fiercely at me.

It took me a week to figure out he must have been taught to growl on command—he would growl—I would say "no growl" and he would growl louder—I would say "no growl"

This past weekend the neighbors got a real Sunday-morning treat—Dee running around the mountainside, yelling at the top of her lungs, trying to chase the llamas into the "barn" (covered feeding space under the house deck). For MONTHS and I do mean MONTHS, I have been trying



Pirate and Ken on the swing in the Great Room. He looks more like a shark than a dog... we'll see how it turns out!

and he would roll onto his back and growl again. It finally dawned on me he was saying "I'm doing the best growl I can!" So I told him to growl and then rewarded him. Once we got him calmed down that he WAS being a good boy, and that good WAS rewarded as he expected, we just changed the focus onto other more positive behav-

iors. He is such a "pleaser" he will go in circles if that's what he thinks we want. And since getting rewarded for growls, it was as if his "best trick" has been acknowledged and he no longer needs to do that! This is one VERY trainable dog and we will have to invent "chores" for him to do, so he gets enough "attaboys".

LLAMAS ARE DRAMA QUEENS

to get the llamas trained to a routine so I can catch them and vet them for meningeal worms—rotten creatures that are carried by whitetailed deer and are deadly to llamas. After months of llamas refusing to follow any routine for more than 3 days, and their chronic attitude of "you

are a dangerous and spooky person so we won't trust you at all" I LOST my cool. "BE AFRAID OF THIS!!!" I was hollering as I threw sticks, fallen branches, and small rocks and chased them around the pasture. The llama's response? - "Ohhh. Why didn't you SAY so?"

MARYLAND SHEEP AND WOOL FESTIVAL

Critters 2006

So far this winter we fed 50# of bird seed to:

2 chipmunks
Gold finches
Purple Finches
Red bellied woodpeckers
Downey wood peckers
Cardinals
Nuthatches
Junkos
Phoebes
Wrens
Towhees
6 different sparrow types
Chickadees

And have spotted many:

Foxes
Squirrels
Rabbits
Groundhog
Skunk
Whitetailed deer—fawns will be born in another week or so
Turkeys

UPCOMING PROJECTS:

Skirt the fleeces

Shear Bubba (llama)

Get a grip on myself

Get more information about NZ job opportunities!

Clear off my desk

Get the roof repaired... this was a surprise!

Finish Kens' sweater (in 2 weeks—for sure!)

Finish reading "Unexpected knitting"

Spin up the wool I brought back from NZ... thanks for ALL!

Just in case I did not have enough fibers already,(nevermind the 4 fleeces I just sheared on Sunday...) we HAD to do the S&WF. I realized this was the 13th annual show for us, and takes us back to the start of The Funny Farm. Ken likes to tell the story of how he went to use the restroom at the festival, foolishly leaving me with the checkbook. When he returned, we were the proud parents of the now infamous Danny, our rambouillet-lincoln wether. Over the past 13 years, he has provided me with over 70 lbs of washed fibers. Most of which are still waiting patiently in the "wool room: for me to make them into stunning items.

For this year, I was in search of some educational materials and found several DVDs on spinning novelty yarns and making felt. That should keep me occupied for a few years, I hope.



SPRING IN THE BLUE RIDGE



The Rhododendrons are in full bloom now, and this one has finally 'come into it's own'. On the east and morning sun side of the house, it took a while to get started but is now a spectacular sprawl. Just out of sight to the right are the peach and apple trees, and the iris garden, gleanings from a neighbor who had over 1100 varieties of iris in her garden.



Gigi in the Berry Patch! This is not the best of photos for a small format but you get the general idea—acres of wild blackberries that will be harvested in July. Judging from the blooms this will be a bumper crop and no doubt, the heat in July will also be memorable! The two always go together!

