

Laurie Findlay

About eight years ago my husband Scott was showing property in the Bay Area to clients when he ran across an alpaca ranch near our home in Half Moon Bay. Always wanting to find other streams of income he looked them up on the internet and became fascinated by both the animals and the business aspect of raising alpacas. Knowing that I love animals of any kind he approached me about becoming involved with alpacas. We soon became known as the “stalkers” by Ken and Victoria Hibbits of Alpacas By the Sea as we peered over each of their fences to get a closer look at the animals but were too shy to knock on their door to ask about the alpacas. We finally wrangled an invite through mutual friends to visit their ranch and thankfully Ken and Victoria became our mentors and friends and it was there that we purchased our first five alpacas.



Soon thereafter Scott and I were flying all over the U.S. purchasing alpacas and agisting them at several ranches. We educated ourselves and attended many seminars and hands on training clinics. Our very first show was AlpacaFest West at Firestone Vineyards where we showed our first female juvenile suri and the show bug bit us. We then purchased our property in the Sierra Foothills town of Somerset, California and began the task of planning and putting together our Alpacas of El Dorado ranch. Our ranch is now home to over 70 suri and huacaya alpacas where we continually strive to improve the quality of the breeds.

My background before alpacas was in the real estate title and escrow field. In the 1980's I began working at Old Republic Title as a receptionist and over 26 years worked my way up through the positions of Escrow Officer, Branch Manager, Assistant County Manager and County Sales Manager. I also have a teaching background having taught Escrow 101 at the College of San Mateo for several years. Making escrow exciting and dealing with diverse buyers, sellers and real estate agents over the years was indeed a challenge, but a fun one.

I continue to educate myself in the alpaca field and recently completed an advanced course in Camelidynamics with Marty McGee Bennett. This training has enabled me to teach a class of Alpaca and Llama handling to our local South County Large Animal Rescue group to prepare them to handle alpacas in case of emergency.

Scott and I face the challenges of this industry as does everyone else. We feel that we are realistic and have continued to prepare ourselves for the future through ongoing education and participation in our growing industry. We love being mentors to new breeders and inviting them for ranch visits and sharing our experiences. These are exciting times for the Alpaca

Industry both in California and the United States and the movement to accept this as a livestock and fiber industry is becoming more and more prevalent. I believe it is our obligation to continue to build this industry and help head it in the right direction.

I am certain that with my contagious enthusiasm and honest passion for the alpaca industry, I can help play a part in moving our industry forward by serving on the CALPACA board.