

ALPACAS: Party will welcome the transplants home

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from the original six to 11.

Those 11 are going to a new home, with Ashley and Aaron Okura. Marlene wanted them shorn and vaccinated before the transfer so they could settle into their new home with no distractions. Shearing day was last week, and long-time Sisters shearer Allan Godsiff got the job done with minimal fuss. Marlene's barn and shearing area is spotless and the animals are calm and soft-eyed — which most alpacas are naturally — but Marlene's seem particularly so. The care lavished on them is evident.

“...plans are afoot for a party to welcome the Desert Song alpacas to their new home.”

Only one of the animals objected, and Marlene wiped off the spit clinging to her hair and shirt with a smile, adding that it's all part of the deal with owning camelids, the species genre that alpacas and llamas are in. Godsiff noted that shearing day is usually an alpaca's least favorite day of the year and that they rarely spit the other 364 days.

Over the years, Marlene experimented with various ways of using the soft, fine alpaca fiber. Some of it went to Pendleton Woolen Mills, returning as warm and cuddly blankets. Rugs from a skilled weaver in Texas adorn floors, and some of the fiber was spun into yarn or used for felted craft projects. Alpaca fiber is prized by fiber artists and fine garment makers because of its unique insulating properties and softness.

The time has come for the Baldocks to be freed from the ties of diligent animal



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Sisters alpacas have a brand new home at Ponderosa Lodge.

care. For the Okuras, it's a time to add to the herd of 16 alpacas they already have. The Desert Song animals will eventually become part of the viewscape that guests at the Best Western Ponderosa Lodge enjoy. Previously, an aging herd of llamas resided there. Those animals, now in their 20s, have been relocated to Ashley's family place, the Reed Ranch. The front pasture at the Ponderosa Lodge is undergoing a renovation, and the change-over will happen when it is finished.

Lori Ketchum works in the human resources

department of the Best Western Ponderosa Lodge and has been a long-time employee of the Reed family. She is also a skilled fiber artist who cleans, spins and dyes the raw fiber, selling the yarn in the lobby of the hotel.

“For many years she has done this with the llama fiber,” said Ashley. “She has the same plan for the alpaca fiber, with all the proceeds going to the Bill and Jan Reed Memorial Scholarship.”

Ashley added that plans are afoot for a party to welcome the Desert Song alpacas to their new home.

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Sisters will celebrate the reading life

The inaugural Sisters Festival of Books (SFoB) will launch this fall.

Lane Jacobson, owner of Paulina Springs Books in Sisters, made the announcement last week.

Featuring local, regional, and national authors and occurring across multiple venues, SFoB is a three-day celebration of the literary culture of Central Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. SFoB will take place from Friday, October 18 to Sunday, October 20 in Sisters.

Friday evening, FivePine Lodge and Conference Center will host a local author reception with some of our favorite Central Oregon authors. Saturday will feature a full lineup of author events, a pop-up bookstore at the festival venue, and author

dinners. Sunday is primarily kid-focused events in-store at Paulina Springs Books. All proceeds from the festival will be used to establish a scholarship fund for Sisters High School students through the Sisters Graduate Resource Organization (Sisters GRO).

SFoB is generously supported and sponsored by Paulina Springs Books, FivePine Lodge & Conference Center, Cascade Arts & Entertainment, *The Nugget Newspaper* and *The Bulletin*. All profits will be used to create a scholarship fund through Sisters GRO. Early-bird ticket pricing is available, as well as special Friend of the Festival ticket packages

More information and contact info can be found at SistersFoB.com.

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