

# Curious Llama Visits Grade School

Kids were in for a surprise visit Friday, May 26, when an eight-month old male llama named Panache came calling at the Warm Springs Grade School.

A bit on the shy side, yet a very curious animal, Panache and his owner Averil Hyder of the Hyder Ranch near Redmond made a guest appearance in each of the classrooms. But before the cautious llama would venture in to any of the rooms, all squeals of delight and other noises that might scare him had to be hushed.

Once in the classroom, Panache really lived up to his name which means "of elegant manner, smartly stylish." A domesticated animal originating from South America, Panache — like all llamas — bears the same "snooty" expression as his closest relative, the camel.

His owner explained some of the unique characteristics of this unusual animal to fascinated groups of children that morning.

Llamas have a face like a camel with that same fleshy, split upper lip and they can also go for about three days without food or water. But they have feet like a goat, with two toenails instead of hoofs, and they are good climbers.

They have pads on the bottom of their feet prompting one student to remark that Panache sounded like someone walking around in bedroom slippers that have soft, leather soles.

Also, llamas chew their cud and can be milked like a cow. And, surprisingly, Mrs. Hyder explained that they are housebroken or "potty-trained" and will go to the bathroom in only one place. She remarked that she had taken some of her

llamas to the State Fair in Salem, and that they had all waited to go until they got back home.

While the kids were feeling his thick, rug-like wool coat, Mrs. Hyder further explained that llamas don't cost much to feed. One bale of hay usually lasts for about 10 days and they like to browse, nibbling on grasses and even pine trees.

Yet llamas are a fairly valuable commodity. One llama is usually worth \$500, although she has been offered \$1,000 for Panache. A pair, however, will sell for \$4,000. And she said she was behind by five orders for pairs.

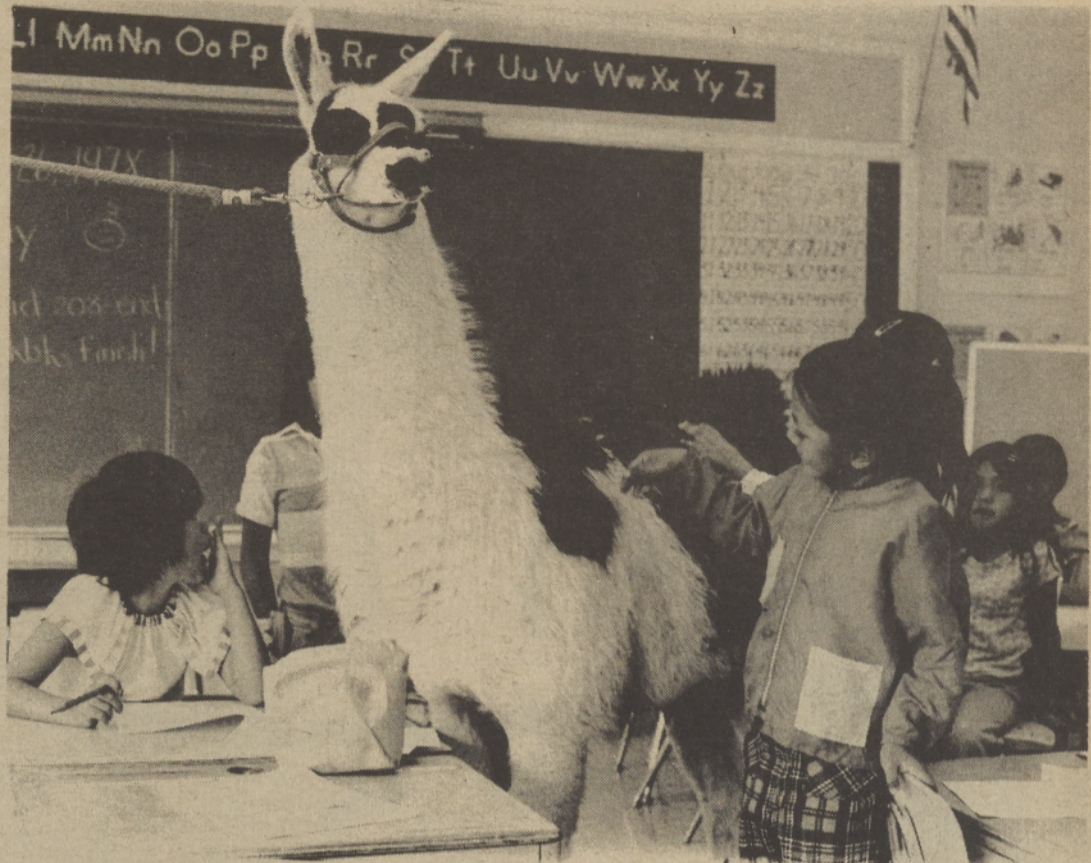
Not only is the llama itself valuable, but the Hyderys do a lucrative business selling the expensive llama wool which is in great demand all over the country. They shear just the male llamas, and only every other year. And the money from the wool is enough to pay for their feed, according to Hyder.

One rather unpleasant characteristic of the llama is that, when provoked, it fires off a very foul-smelling spit. "But the young ones don't seem to know how to do it yet," said Hyder, looking anxiously at Panache. "Mostly they spit at each other if angered or at people who tease them."

Principal Tony Miller was pleased with the kinds of questions the kids asked, even the really young children. The following is a sampling of some of the questions:

Q. "What kind of a noise do they make?"

A. They make kind of a light humming sound. Panache made this noise later in the morning, probably because he was becoming a bit antsy, according to his owner.



"He feels like a rug!" Panache, an eight-month old male llama paid a visit to the Warm Springs Grade School as part of a 4-H project Friday, May 26. He and his owner, Averil Hyder from Hyder Ranch near Redmond, made the rounds to all the classrooms. Mrs. Hyder answered many good questions posed by the kids.

Sandy Rangila Photo

Q. "How long do they live?"

A. They live for about 25 years, about the same as a horse.

Q. "How fast can they run?"

A. They're pretty fast. They can outrun dogs.

Q. "Can you ride them?"

A. Yes, if you weigh under 100 pounds. Llamas are used as beasts of burden in South America, but they're smart. If the load is too heavy they just lie down until the load is lightened.

Q. "How many babies do they have and how long does it

take for a baby to be born?"

A. They have only one baby (Hyder has never seen or heard of a multiple birth) and the gestation period is eleven months.

Q. Do they ever try to run away?"

A. No. They're very docile animals and if they are contented, they will stay pretty much in one place.

Q. "What do you do with the wool?"

A. We sell most of it, and I (Mrs. Hyder) keep some which I spin and weave. It's very good wool and not oily like sheep's

wool.

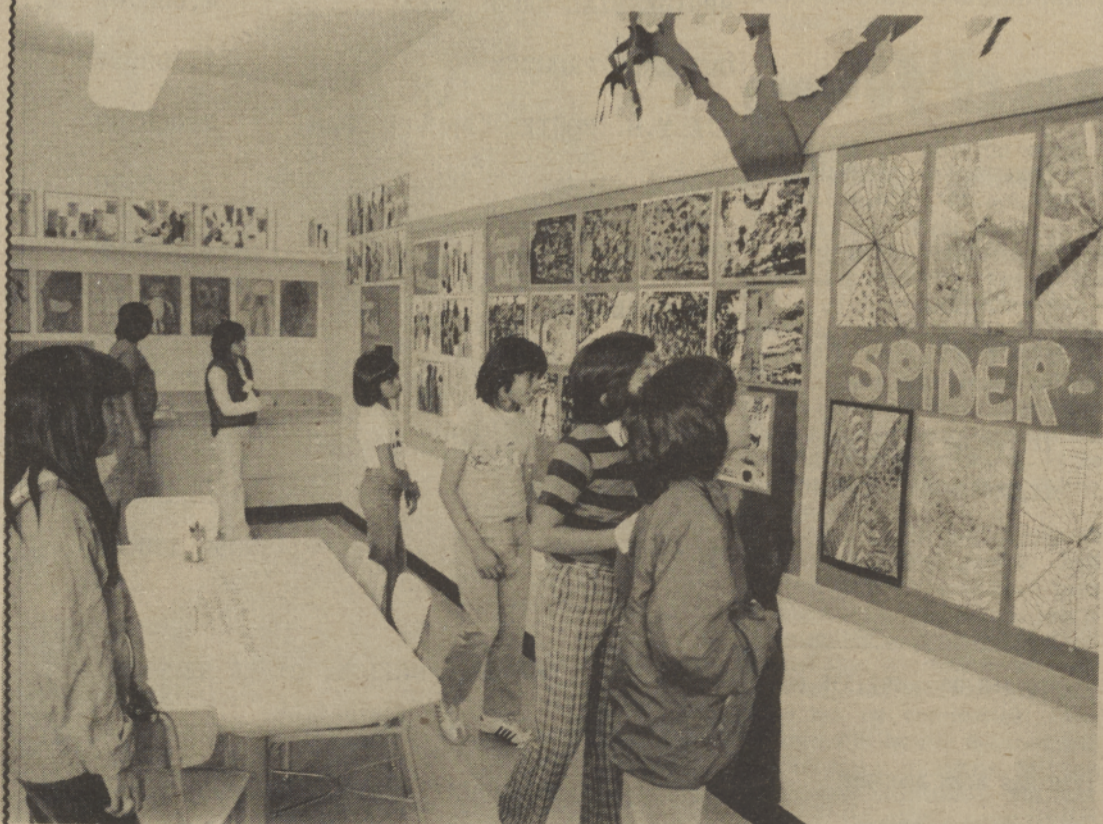
Mrs. Hyder noted that Central Oregon is becoming known as the llama capitol of the United States. There is a larger concentration of llamas here than anywhere else in the U.S.A.

The Hyder Ranch has 27 head of llamas and they are expecting another to be born any minute. Another man in Sisters, however, has 500 head of llamas. "I wish we had that many," Hyder said wistfully.

One cannot help but wonder how many kids left school last Friday pondering the possibility of a career in the llama business.

## Kids' Corner

### Grade School's First Art Show



Ms. Donovan Burkert's third-fourth graders were proud to present their "Undertree Gallery" to other Warm Springs Grade School classes. Their art work was accumulated throughout the year and presented as an art "gallery". The room was full of paintings, spiderwebs, fish (which were suspended from the ceiling), and other displays of talent.

Sandy Rangila Photo

## Happiness is a Pet

MY PET  
by Rosanna Sanders  
(Grade 5)

My pet is a hamster. It's a male named Sparky. When he bit me the first time it wasn't very hard, but the second time he bit through my skin on my finger.

He has two very small dishes in his cage and when he eats his food he sits in his water. When he drinks his water, he sits in his food.

One time I walked up to my mom and she jumped because she thought I had a mouse in my hand. After she found out it was my hamster she got mad because I was laughing.

Sparky's getting big and a little bit stronger because he knows how to open the door on his cage.

THE FAMILY PUP  
by Valerie Maxcy  
(Grade 5)

Our family only has one pet. This pup is always getting attention from us. When my little brother runs away Rover is always beside him urging him to come back home. My little brother always runs away almost every time he gets a chance. So Rover is always on the lookout for a little boy running across the road or through someone else's lawn. Even running down the road going toward the school or the store.

So about a few weeks ago Rover got hit by a car. Lucky it was only his back leg. His leg was sore for a long time. To this day he is fine except for one exception, he has a dog sickness. That sickness is called Distemper. We all are trying to help him in every way we can. We all hope that he gets better. Because he sometimes skips meals, that's bad for his health too. Rover sometimes feels good, but then again he's just feeling really bad.