

Feature Bio – “Jabeaux” By Char Hakes

As a young man, Jabeaux was sweet and extremely easy to handle. One year he developed a sulfur deficiency and lost almost all of his short fiber. I bathed him regularly using sulfur-tar shampoo to ease the itching. He was also very good about taking his sulfur pills and the condition eventually cleared up.



Some time later, Jabeaux was purchased by a wonderful retired couple, along with another llama, “N.C. Wyeth”. These two buddies soon became the weekly hub of attention, along with a few other llamas, when a gang of us women would load them all up and then meet at a trailhead for weekend hikes. Jabeaux and N.C. would carry small packs containing lunch and other essentials for their owners and did great on the trails.

Over time, however, Jabeaux and N.C. demonstrated just how smart they were. They could literally read their owners like a book and would play them for fools, especially during attempts to catch and halter them. No matter how many times I showed the owners how to use a catch pen and how to halter the boys, the llamas always outsmarted them. Two years later, I found Jabeaux and N.C. in one of my pens – the owners had totally given up on them.

As sanctuary life involves volunteers helping to care for, walk and train the animals, I was amazed to see that a young Junior High School girl always selected Jabeaux to walk on her regular visits. I could see they adored each other. Jabeaux was groomed often, got to walk in parades and fairs, and he seemed so happy and perky. Then after that winter came and went, Jabeaux’s best friend (now in high school), stopped coming. Her new activities and interests, like sports, cheerleading and boys, occupied all her spare time.

Jabeaux has not been the same since. He became standoffish and even his gentle demeanor with the other llamas faded away. He also developed another bout of sulfur deficiency, but we got right on that once we recognized the symptoms. Recently, during the winter of 2008, Jabeaux started acting quite ill, remaining kushed even through the hustle and bustle of feeding time. I got him to the vet, who diagnosed an ulcer and successfully treated it. Shortly after Jabeaux's recovery in February '09, N.C. was suddenly whisked away from *Safe Haven* to temporarily serve as a seeing-eye companion for a lonely, elderly, blind sheep - and Jabeaux seemed lost once again.

Interestingly, when the sheep died, its owner asked if she could foster some additional *Safe Haven* llamas to keep N.C. company at his temporary digs. At last Jabeaux was reunited with his buddy, N.C., along with a few other llamas. They were last seen romping around and lazing in the grass, together again. Although Jabeaux is content, I know he would do even better if he could have a permanent, one-on-one relationship with someone who thought he was "so special", just like his former young girlfriend did. That would make him totally happy once again – and me too!

Jabeaux is an excellent candidate for adoption, with packing and guarding potential. If you have the determination, time and patience to work properly with Jabeaux, he will not disappoint you! Of course, like all other llamas, he does need to be around other compatible llamas or livestock.