



Florida Alpaca & Llama Association Inc.

www.falainc.com

WINTER 2026

A Note from the President

Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy 2026!!

I pray this Christmas season has afforded you many cherished memories with loved ones, both two- and four-legged!! This month, 20 members from Suwannee County 4H clubs took four animals to sing Christmas carols for the residents of our local nursing home and rehab. The children and residents had an exceptional time! We are planning to make this a yearly community service project. We also participated in our Christmas parade.

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As we begin the new year, we are looking forward to the two upcoming shows that we host in Florida. The first is the 5th annual FALA Florida Winter Classic, January 17 and 18, right around the corner!! We have selected a new venue and hoping to have the ease and flow we all love. Then, February 12 -15, we will be at the Florida State Fair. I can't wait to see everyone and their beautiful animals!

Don't forget to send in your dues to our Treasurer, Mary Rose Collins.

*Sarah Strautmann
Heaven Sent Ranch
FALA President*

*The information printed within this publication is for informational purposes only. Always rely on your veterinarian for advice and treatment. The opinions expressed in articles, letters, ads and editorials are solely the opinions of the author(s) and do not necessarily express the views of FALA. Acceptance of advertising/bulletin board items does not imply endorsement of products or services. Articles, letters, pictures and other contributions are welcomed.



**5th Annual FALA Winter Classic
Alpaca / Llama Show**

**Saturday, January 17th, 2026, 8:00 – TBD
Sunday, January 18th, 2026, 9:00 – TBD**



**NEW LOCATION - Hayley Stables Arena
40812 Grays Airport Rd, Lady Lake, FL 32159**

FREE Spectator Admission!

- Covered Show Arena
- Stalls Available
- Halter, Obstacle, Public Relations and Pack Classes



Go to <http://www.falainc.com> for more information.



**5th Annual
FALA Winter Classic
ALPACA / LLAMA SHOW**

January 17th - 8:00 – TBD

January 18th - 9:00 – TBD

NEW LOCATION - Hayley Stables Arena, 40812 Greys Airport Road, Lady Lake, FL 32159.

SPONSOR FORM

Our 5th Annual FALA WINTER CLASSIC show will be a two-day show at Hayley Stables Arena, 40812 Greys Airport Road, in Lady Lake, FL 32159.

We are looking for **Show Sponsors** to help support our next FWC show on January 17th and 18th, 2026.

- Diamond Level - \$150 and up
- Gold Level - \$100
- Silver Level - \$50
- Bronze Level - \$25

All sponsors will be recognized in level order on our FALA Website and Show Day Board

Thank you in advance for your support!

We would not be able to continue doing our shows without support from our sponsors!

Make checks payable to "FALA Inc.", complete this form and mail them to:

FALA - 4211 S. Old Floral City Rd. Inverness, FL 34450

Sponsor Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

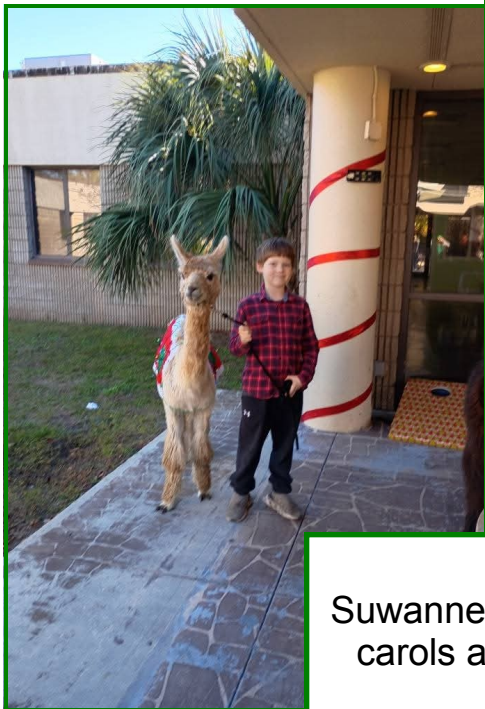
Business Type:

Ranch: _____ Veterinarian: _____ Shearer: _____

Breeder: _____ Other: _____

NOTE: FALA – Florida Alpaca and Llama Association is a Not-For-Profit Organization.

HAVING FUN WITH ALPACAS IN THE COMMUNITY



Suwannee County 4H Clubs sang Christmas carols and visited with residents at a local nursing home and rehab.



HAVING FUN WITH LLAMAS IN A CHRISTMAS PARADE

Inverness Christmas
Parade





Display

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Pages



Clip



Share



Menu

Street

After reviewing the submissions, work as it unfolds.

See AIRPORT, page B2

IN BRIEF

Beverly Hills Leadership Council plans party

The Beverly Hills Leadership Council Inc., an all-volunteer not for profit organization, will be hosting a Christmas party at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18, at 77 Civic Circle, Beverly Hills.

Those who attend will enjoy a sliced turkey breast dinner with mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, cranberry orange relish and marshmallow delight. Members' price is \$10 and non-members' price is \$12.

The guest speaker is District 3 Commissioner Janet A. Barck who will speak while the dinner is served at 6 p.m. The commissioner will update the community on activities of the Board of County Commissioners. Questions from those in attendance will be entertained.

For more information, check the website at beverlyhillsleadershipcouncil.com.

CF closing for winter break Dec. 18-Jan. 2

College of Central Florida campuses will be closed for winter break Thursday, Dec. 18, through Friday, Jan. 2, 2026. The CF Post Office and Print Shop on the Ocala Campus also will be closed.

The Appleton Museum of Art is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon-4 p.m. The museum will be closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

The Webber Gallery on the Ocala Campus will host "Trains at the Holidays," open Dec. 19-31 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with Christmas Eve hours of noon to 3 p.m. and closed Christmas Day.

The college will reopen Monday, Jan. 5, 2026. Spring 2026 classes begin Wednesday, Jan. 7.

For more information, call the Ocala Campus at 352-873-5800, Wilton Simpson Citrus Campus at 352-746-6721, or Jack Wilkinson Levy Campus at 352-658-4077.

Orchid Society to gather Jan. 24

Nature Coast Orchid Society will host Ryan Kowalczyk on Jan. 24 for a program on preparing your orchids for shows and judging. The meeting will be in the St. Joan of Arc Church Hall in Spring Hill; doors open at 11 a.m. and the meeting begins at noon.

There will be a plant sale, display table and raffle.

For more information, visit www.naturecoastorchidsociety.com.

Celebration night set for TOOFAR on Thursday

Celebrating an active year of community participation, TOOFAR Water & Natural Resources Foundation will close out the year with a celebratory feast, a recap of present activities, and announcements for future en-



Photos by Mike Pate / For the Chronicle

Santa Claus makes his official return to Inverness, marking a special moment in the 2025 Inverness Christmas Parade.

Parade brings holiday favorites to life

By MIKE PATE
For the Chronicle

The streets of downtown Inverness were filled with holiday cheer as the 2025 Inverness Christmas Parade marched through the city Saturday afternoon, drawing crowds eager to celebrate the season.

A total of 62 floats were registered for this year's parade, which showcased the theme "Holiday Favorites," highlighting beloved seasonal traditions, nostalgic memories, and imaginative displays.

Judging the parade entries were three

See PARADE, page B3



Seven-year-old Theodore celebrates his birthday getting ready to march in the 2025 Inverness Christmas Parade as the official "little brother mascot" of the Inverness Middle School Cheer team. He is often volunteered to be lifted high by the squad.



Citrus County Schools Transportation employees Rachel Howard, dressed in an inflatable elf costume, and Nicole Grooms hand out popcorn, stuffed animals, and books to children along the 2025 Inverness Christmas Parade route.

Celebrate Hanukkah at inaugural event this Friday



Chabad to host public menorah lighting near downtown Inverness with treats, music and door prize

By MARGO WILSON
Chronicle correspondent

Jews were victorious and wanted to celebrate by lighting a menorah, a type of candelabra. But most of the olive oil to light the menorah had been destroyed by their enemies.

Then, they discovered enough oil to light the menorah for one day. They lit it and miraculously, the oil burned for eight days, giving the people time to make more oil.

Serebrynski said that the pagans didn't



The Boogie Woogie Choo Choo travels down Main Street during the Inverness Christmas Parade. Mike Burton says he built the train after renting one for a nonprofit event and thinking, "I can do better than that." He has since built several trains for local nonprofits.



The Citrus County School Board is well represented during the annual Christmas Parade.



While marching with the Citrus County Honor Guard, Veronika Nansel paused to say hello to Kyle the llama along the route.



The Citrus High Hurricanes' cheerleaders march through downtown Inverness during the annual Christmas Parade.



The 2025 Inverness Christmas Parade brought plenty of candy for parade-goers Jackson, 9; Roman, 6; and Giada, 5.

PARADE

From page B1

Well-known community figures: Trina Murphy, publisher of the Citrus County Chronicle and a longtime supporter of local events; Laura Kovach of Kovach and Baker Law, recognized for her dedication to community traditions; and Laurene Long of Brooksville Healthcare, who brought a passion for community care and holiday spirit to the judging panel.

From classic winter scenes to pop culture-inspired floats, the parade offered something for every age. Ten-year-old Charlie, a first-time Little Miss Strawberry contestant, appeared ahead of her upcoming pageant at the Floral City Strawberry Festival in March. Donna Boley made sure her granddaughter, Evelyn Jane, had her moment in the spotlight by turning her into a princess after sev-

eral missed opportunities to appear in past parades.

Seven-year-old Theodore celebrated his birthday in memorable fashion, marching as the official "little brother mascot" of the Inverness Middle School Cheer team, often lifted high by the squad along the route. Creativity was also on display with "In the Children's Eye," a large trailer built by Raymond Baumes of Citrus Lanes and designed as a classic red Radio Flyer wagon. Filled with youth bowlers dressed as Toy Story characters, the float brought Baumes' vision of toys coming to life to the parade.

Community organizations played a strong role throughout the event. Members of the Citrus County Education Association walked the route handing out children's books, while the Citrus County Honor Guard drew smiles when Veronika Nansel paused to greet Kyle the llama along

the way. The Florida Alpaca Llama Association, Inc. was also represented, promoting its nonprofit mission of supporting Florida's alpaca and llama industry through education and events.

Young parade-goers delighted in unique rides, including the Boogie Woogie Choo Choo, built by Mike Burton after he decided he could improve on a train he once rented for a nonprofit event. Nine-year-old Graham was among those enjoying the ride down Main Street.

The parade honored local leadership and service as well. John Thomas, a life-long rancher and advocate for Citrus County agriculture, rode with his wife and grandchildren as Grand Marshal. Citrus County Schools Transportation employees added to the festive spirit by distributing popcorn, stuffed animals, and books to children, with inflatable costumes drawing extra attention and smiles.

Dance, costumes, and candy were plentiful, from the Forever Dance float featuring 6-year-old Royale waving to the crowd, to Mike Scott's Plumbing employee Jace Niedermayer handing out candy in an inflatable pink flamingo costume. Children including Jackson, 9; Roman, 6; and Giada, 5, eagerly collected treats along the route.

The parade concluded with a moment many had been waiting for: Santa Claus' official return to Inverness, marking a highlight of the 2025 Inverness Christmas Parade and bringing the afternoon of holiday celebration to a joyful close.

Mike Scott Plumbing employee Jace Niedermayer walks the parade route in an inflatable pink flamingo costume while handing out candy to children.



HANUKKAH

From page B1

This year, Dec. 21 is the eighth night of Hanukkah.

The local Chabad menorah lighting is part of an effort by the international Chabad organization to hold public menorah lightings around the globe. According to Wikipedia, the first large public menorah lighting was in 1975.

Chabad of Citrus and Hernando Counties will

Hanukkah Celebration

WHAT: Eighth-night celebration of Hanukkah, or Chanukah, with a first public menorah lighting by Chabad of Citrus and Hernando Counties

WHEN: 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 21

WHERE: The Depot near downtown Inverness, 300 N. Apopka Ave., north of the Citrus County Courthouse

RSVP: Call 352-405-0502 or email rabbisero@gmail.com

ONLINE: www.jewishcitrushernando.com

how many dreidels are inside. The winner receives a \$50 Amazon gift card. The Chabad congregation is asking those who attend

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

Photos with Santa

Vote your favorite Photos before December 12

HAVING FUN WITH LLAMAS ON A HIKE





Breathe... Early and Often!

by **Marty McGee Bennett** on [March 19, 2014](#) in **Tips**

The value of cultivating this habit can hardly be over stated. It is the easiest most powerful tool that you have to help your animal relax and YOU too!

If you are nervous in a plane or behind the wheel or learning a new sport it is almost inevitable that you will unconsciously hold your breath. This leads to other physical manifestations. Your muscles tighten and you are less able to keep your balance. While this might not be crucial if you are learning to play tennis or are a passenger in a plane, or even driving a car holding your breath really gets in the way of your performance when you are handling an animal. It compromises your balance and that is important BUT holding your breath also encourages the animal to hold his breath. When animals hold their breath they hold tension in their bodies as well and after a minute or so they must do something to release it. Often this comes as a rear, kick, spin, or spit. If you do nothing more complicated than take a breath you can prevent these behaviors. Following is a list of instances when you are likely to hold your breath. Knowing this you can train yourself to replace the breath holding behavior with deep breathing.

- When you are just putting the halter over the nose
- Just as you are about to put the needle into the skin

- When the judge walks up to you in the show ring
- When you find yourself behind an animal in a packed catch pen
- Just as you bring the rope over the head when you use the wand and catch rope technique
- Just as you approach the animal with the intention to land on the midline
- of the neck when you use the midline catch
- When you get ready to push medication into the mouth
- When you unbuckle the halter and get ready to let a difficult animal go
- Just as you leave the catch pen teaching an untrained animal to lead
- When posing an animal for photographs
- Putting the ropes on during shearing
- When herding animals through a gate when you think they may not go



You get the picture. You can probably add to the list based on your own experience. Knowing that you have the tendency to hold your breath is more than half of the solution! Writing breathe on your hand when you work or wearing a colorful wrist band that will remind you to breathe are all good strategies to exchange and old habit for a new one.

Learning to breathe when the tendency is to hold the breath takes practice. Practicing yoga or other martial arts such as Tai Chi can help you retrain yourself to breath when you begin to feel tension in your body and this new habit will show itself when the same thing happens when you are working with animals.



About Marty McGee Bennett

[View all posts by Marty McGee Bennett →](#)



2026 Calendar of Events

January 17 & 18, 2026 — FALA Winter Classic

Visit falainc.com/ for information and sponsorship forms.

February 13, 14, 15, 2026 — Florida State Fair Youth and Open Llama Show

floridastatefair.com/shows/llama

★ Need to re-home a llama or alpaca? Contact Claudia Hammack, llamachick@yahoo.com

★ Youth interested in showing a llama or alpaca for FFA, 4-H, or for fun? Contact Tracy Weaver, lotsallamas@earthlink.net



FALA 2025 Annual Llama Walk