

The following questions were asked of this year's candidates running for the Suri Network Board of Trustees:

- ❶ What do you feel you bring to the Suri Network Board that would enhance and strengthen the Suri Network's support of Suri breeders?
- ❷ If you had one sentence to summarize your potential contribution to the Suri Network, what would it be?
- ❸ What would you like the Suri Network to look like in five years and how will you help it get there?
- ❹ What is one strength of the Suri Network that you feel should be built upon and how can you help do that?
- ❺ What is one challenge that the Suri Network faces and how do you believe you can help to address it?

JASON BREHM
ROGUE SURI ALPACAS

MEDFORD, OR
ROGUESURIALPACAS@YAHOO.COM



Hello fellow Suri breeders, I am Jason Brehm with Rogue Suri Alpacas located in beautiful Southern Oregon. My wife Beverly and I along with our two children, Christian (12) and Julia (8), started this wonderful business six years ago and absolutely love the lifestyle and people that are involved with the Suri world and the exciting shows throughout the country. I have found my true passion in life as I am sure most reading this can agree to as well. Alpacas have an amazing sense of calmness to them like no other animal I have experienced. In the fast paced lifestyle we live in as restaurant owners, we as a family enjoy getting away with our show crew and kids. Beverly and I both started early in life, marrying at the age 20 and 21. We purchased our first business Jet Fuel Coffee at the age of 23. As a team, we do just about everything together and understand that team work and compromise are the foundation for any business. By managing and breeding Suri alpacas carefully,

this business will one day be our only means of income. This is a monumental time in the alpaca world and each step and choice we take must be well thought out and maintained.

1. The Suri Network is comprised of some of the best people in the industry and with that said, I feel I can bring a youthful perspective to an industry that needs to be awakened.
2. My potential contribution to Suri Network would have to be the ability to configure new and creative ideas that can boost the energy of the Suri industry as a whole.
3. The five year evolution for the Suri network should consist of more members and a greater participation of young breeders. By volunteering my time to this group, I believe I can help with this goal.
4. The Suri Network has an amazing communication system and a very useful platform with the SHIP program. With that said, I have a few ideas for the SHIP program to make it more convenient for people to participate.
5. One challenge that the Suri Network has for the future is making the Suri alpaca known to more people and to be treated as a profession. Suri alpacas are still unrecognized to the average person. If that was to change, so would the industry. We as an organized group of specialized breeders should emphasize getting the Suri alpaca in the public eye more often. Suri alpacas are self sustaining when managed properly like other livestock and treated as a serious business. I believe that my ideas to industrialize alpacas may help.

Over the last eleven years my husband Scott and I have been involved in just about every aspect of the alpaca business. From the beginning, purchasing and agisting our animals all over the U.S. then planning and putting together our ranch in El Dorado County. On to developing our website, marketing, training and showing our alpacas and breeding and selling our production and offspring, and now finally selling our own “Estate Grown” suri alpaca rugs. We’ve educated ourselves and attended many seminars and hands on training clinics. Our ranch is now home to over 70 suri and huacaya alpacas, where we continually strive to improve the quality of the breeds. Best of all, we have made some wonderful partnerships, clients and friends through the alpaca industry.

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 the following 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 have 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. Just recently I have volunteered to be on a show committee that I feel will bring fiber awareness to people with an innovative new cottage alpaca show this fall.

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.

The last four years I have served on the CALPACA Board, with the last two as President and it has proven to be a very rewarding experience. I feel certain our membership is strong and passionate about the industry and will continue to be one of the leaders in our state, if not nationwide. With my contagious enthusiasm and honest passion for the alpaca industry, I can help play a part in moving the suri industry forward and serving the membership by serving on the Suri Network board.

1. My past experience as Calpaca President was a rewarding experience and it allowed me to understand the challenges we face both as alpaca owners and as an organization that is trying to maintain memberships and continue to provide value to its members.
2. I have contagious enthusiasm and honest passion for suris and people.
3. As more people are introduced to the Suri breed I can see Suri Network becoming an even larger and more significant organization. Suri Network is already known as being a front runner in the alpaca industry due to the development of the Suri Breed Standard, of which my husband and I got to be part of during the affiliate discussions. People are the driving force behind any organization and they become enthusiastic about something when they are engaged with knowledge and passion. I believe I can naturally provide that to this organization.
4. The fact that the Suri is the only alpaca breed to have an association written and approved breed standard with the S.H.I.P. program to back it up puts Suri Network in an environment that is one step ahead of any other alpaca organization. I believe I can continue to build on this by promoting our success with the EPD program, utilizing the S.H.I.P. program and continuing to support the knowledge and education Suri Network provides to all Suri breeders.
5. The challenge of any membership is to continue to provide value for its members. Having dealt with that as a past President of Calpaca I feel I have the skills to enlist people to continue to support Suri Network. Putting the word out that by promoting and belonging to Suri Network supports all Suri owners, large or small.



Alvina established River Hill Ranch to further develop a sustainable livestock model for Suri alpacas. By developing relationships and attending training in the agriculture, textile, and fashion sectors, she has translated how to efficiently run a livestock operation to alpacas while being an ambassador for our industry. She now runs 90 head of Suris with a breeding program objectively focused on fiber production without sacrificing conformation. Every bit of fiber produced (even “thirds”) is turned into a product and sold. Alvina worked with her state government to allow alpaca to be processed for meat resale which has quickly gained interest in the local food scene. She believes culling to the terminal market not only provides an additional revenue stream to the ranch, but is necessary to create room for genetic improvement to further a sustainable fiber market. She has served the past three years on the Suri Network Product Development Committee, her greatest contribution being gaining funds and producing the P2P DVD project. This past year she has served as Chair. She is the Vice President of the Kentucky Alpaca Association and a Fellow for the Farmer Veteran Coalition. She represents the Homegrown by Heroes program for both FVC and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. She holds

a B.S. in Political Science from the U.S. Air Force Academy and a M.A. in Organizational Leadership from Gonzaga University. She served six years on Active Duty and still serves as a Reservist. Her most difficult job and greatest joy is being mother to two young children and being married to Mr. Incredible.

1. Passion, strategic thinking grounded in practical application, focus on formalizing our industry to support financial sustainability. I’m also a grant writer and a sucker for serving the greater good.

2. I get “stuff” done

3. An internationally branded breed organization with resources and training to support all levels of Suri alpaca farms and Suri fiber businesses. The main reason I have Suris is because the Suri Network has always been progressive: logically looking to the next step in industry development and systematically setting and meeting attainable goals to move us all forward. I would continue this tradition by supporting the development of a measurable Suri fiber product branding campaign, develop more training materials for members to develop their businesses, and look for and develop ways to increase sales and production of Suri products. One step I’d like to accomplish is developing various business models that appeal to a range of operations. Model financial statements can be downloaded and modified to adjust for local operating costs. Tools such as this can de-mystify the business management piece, showing members how they can smartly focus on making their business profitable.

4. See response #3. One of my greatest strengths is identifying mutually beneficial relationships and using collaboration to help each other meet our goals. There are many more organizations that we can work with to continue making progress.

5. Our challenge is to further expand the supply chain, manufacturing, and retail sales of Suri fiber products. Our industry has done an excellent job at establishing the seedstock tier of our livestock. Alpaca market prices are starting to stabilize accord to measurable quality differences, and will continue to do so with SHIP. We have several companies buying fiber and manufacturing quality products from Suri. Now we need more folks wanting to run fiber farms to produce uniform quality fiber. We need fashion designers made aware of domestic Suri. We need sales and marketing folks to sell it. We need boutique owners to carry our products. Unfortunately I don’t have a background in any of these areas, but I also don’t believe Suri Network should be the one to actually do this work. What Suri Network can do is recognize what partnerships and framework can facilitate these critical voids to be filled both in and out of our membership. In addition to being skilled in building information networks, at 32 years old I represent another demographic we should be reaching out to. I started last year by organizing Suri Network’s participation in the National FFA Convention. Let’s do more outreach in a way that directly drives members’ success.

I am a 6th generation farmer and herd manager for Over Home Alpacas outside Bethel, PA, where I oversee the farming of 200 acres and care for 100 Suri alpacas. After seven years in the alpaca business I have gained extensive knowledge about alpaca health, nutrition and pasture management. With a B.S. degree in Life Sciences from Penn State I have applied my scientific understanding to our breeding program. I also have experience working with government agencies that funded the implementation of best practice management on our operation. Off the farm I have recently taken half-ownership in a commercial glazing company, where we focus on installing windows and doors in schools, warehouses, office buildings and retail storefronts.



1. As a Board Member I would bring the voice of a true farmer to a politically and business-oriented organization.

2. Along with answering agronomic questions, I could mentor members in setting up proper farm infrastructure and pasture management, ensuring a suitable foundation for raising any livestock, but specifically alpacas.

3. The Suri Network needs to be a one stop shop for ANY question that a potential new alpaca owner would have, ensuring a highly supportive environment that would draw potential buyers to Suri farms vs. the currently more successful Huacaya farms.

4. The SHIP program has a lot of potential, and I feel getting more participation from Suri breeders is essential to improve our breed and to understand the genetic factors that will help us make better breeding decisions. This will ultimately result in sounder animals, increased fiber production and consequently, greater profitability. With my educational background and experience managing the breeding program of a large farm, I believe I am able to effectively explain the importance of the program and persuade members to participate.

5. We must answer the question; are we breeding for a show industry or a fiber industry? Our industry must move towards a fiber market and as Suri breeders we must have a clear focus as to how we can get there together. My goal is to develop viable solutions by working with the SN board and its committees.