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Home on the Range, Moraga Style

By Cathy Tyson



Inquisitive Barack O'Llama says hello.

Photos Cathy Tyson

Cynthia and Byron Hann have more than a charming fluffy labradoodle dog and tabby cat to keep them company. The family's home on the suburban range boasts 22 chickens, two fun-loving goat brothers, and a handsome colorful llama with white eyelashes.

"It's really not that much work," notes Cynthia Hann who has a full time job and two kids, one at home, and one away at college. The family loves the fresh eggs the hens lay, collecting from 10 to 20 per day of various shades depending on the breed of chicken - egg colors include light blue, pink and of course brown. The hens have their own fenced area and coop with automatic water and grain dispensers, along with an automated door system that keeps them in at night and lets them out in the morning. During a recent visit the hens were vocal, but because it's an all-girl gang, there's no rooster to wake the entire neighborhood. There's definitely a pecking order when newly

adopted chickens join the group, said Hann.

How did they grow from suburban family to light duty ranch hands? It started when husband Byron grew up in Piedmont, where his family had chickens. Now a scientific researcher at UCSE, he had a three-year posting at a University in Scotland more than a decade ago, where the new family's temporary digs included farm critters. When they purchased their current home in Moraga, one of the major selling points of the property was the adjacent one-acre parcel that juts out into open space land directly behind the home. Hann credits pure luck on finding a lovely home and a sunny protected bonus parcel ide-

ally suited to their expanded family. "It kind of snowballed," recalled Hann, explaining the uptick in the number of their animal companions. First they got the chickens, then they had trouble with predators, so they adopted the llama from a ranch in Willits. Although the regal beast is quiet and friendly with spectacular coloring - reverse appaloosa - he's always on the lookout. Their prior problems with coyotes, fox and raccoons stopped as soon as "Barack O'Llama" joined the team.

Then the llama seemed a bit lonely, so they got this charming pair of Nigerian dwarf goat brothers - Huckleberry and Finn. Hann's husband built a very sturdy goat enclosure out of recycled materials that keeps the 'boys' happy and makes for a convenient location for food storage, cozy bedding hay and a salt lick. With a soft coats and sparkling personalities, these fellows are happy to share the pasture with Mr. O'Llama. When their large dog comes out to frolic, it's a free for all. Next on the to-do list is building some sort of climbing structure for "king of the mountain" play.

A pediatrician in her day job, Hann makes sure the crew has their annual shots and de-worming meds from a large animal vet. In addition to the animals, the Hanns have a substantial garden on the sunny hillside in the backyard. "I don't think we'll be getting any more animals anytime soon!" jokes the homeowner.



Homeowner Cindy Hann is greeted by goat brothers Huckleberry and Finn.



A chicken taking a dust bath.



Goats and llama at home on the Moraga range.

Photo Provided.

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