

Down Under, Over The Rainbow

BERNVILLE (Berks Co.) — "Most people say there is a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, but at the end of my rainbow was a dream just out of reach," Sherry Bashore said.

The woman was talking about how she had been one of a handful of young adults across the nation who were selected to represent the United States in a world-wide agricultural work experience program. She had been chosen to go to Australia.

However, not having the funds to travel made it look as though the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity was going to pass her by.

Working on an Ono-area farm in Lebanon County, her plight caught the attention of the local newspaper and eventually the county agricultural community. The agricultural community raised the money to send Sherry on the trip.

"My dream was to participate in the Work Experience Abroad (WEA) program and go to Australia," Bashore said, adding that the WEA is run by the FFA and rural youth around the world.

"Thanks to the generosity of individuals, groups and businesses of Lebanon County, I was able to follow my rainbow down under.

"In January 1989, I boarded a plane to Australia. Roy and Elva Dalitz and sons were my host family. I stayed with them for three months, working on their dairy farm," Bashore said.

She said her memories of her time in Australia will stay with her forever. She said she came to regard them as family and affectionately address them as parents.

"Milking, painting the dairy, along with other farm chores were some of my jobs. Exchanging notes about farming and other customs with the Aussies also proved to be a challenge everyday," Bashore said.

But too soon the trip was over and she returned to Harpers where she worked for her brother on his dairy farm.

In September, she married Bob Bashore and moved to Berks County. The couple has 90 head of registered Holsteins and call their operation Plenty-Good Holsteins. They farm on about 450 acres in Mohrsville.

With the memories of Australia seemingly tucked away to recall for pleasure, Sherry said she settled into her life and didn't really know if she would ever see the Dalitz family again.

But recently, Bashore got that chance. This time it was her turn to show off the agricultural community.

"Three years later, I found another end to a rainbow. My lost 'parents' were coming to the U.S.A.," Bashore said. "They started their six-week stay in America on May 15, by doing an organized five-day country tour around Lake Michigan.

"They rented a car and drove to a trainee, a WEA participant, in Wisconsin. You have to watch out. Australians drive on the wrong side of the road," she said.

She said the Dalitzes also got to experience the unusual late spring weather this year. "They left warm Wisconsin to come to cold Pennsylvania," she said.

About 9 a.m., May 26, the phone rang at the Bashore house. Sherry answered. "'We are in Bernville,' they (Dalitzes) said," Sherry recalled. "I jumped in the car and drove to the service station.

"G'Day and hugs were the greeting. Roy and Elva said it's colder today (in Pennsylvania) than it gets in winter (in Australia). They got settled in and we all enjoyed the afternoon catching up on all the news. We went to my parents' house for a Pennsylvania Dutch feast.

"The meal consisted of pot pie, lettuce with hot bacon dressing, chow-chow, butter carrots and corn. For desert we had a treat — cherry crisp and ice cream. Elva said, 'Cherrys are very expensive, and we don't get them.'"

The Dalitzes are from Deniliquin, New South Wales, Australia. They milk about 160 head of Holsteins. Their farm consists of about 350 acres that are flood irrigated.

Their three sons, Steven, Trevor and Darrin, kept operations running back at the Dalitz farm, while Roy and Elva went on "holiday,"

the Australian term for vacation. It was also the couple's 25th anniversary celebration trip.

"Wednesday at noon, we left for Niagra Falls, Canada. We found a motel, two big blocks away from Horseshoe Falls.

"We decided to walk down to the falls and view them by night," Bashore said.

"Well, we got lost. Our sense of direction proved us wrong. Finally, the roaring water was right in front of us. The different colors of lights shining on the water reminded us of a rainbow. They falls were absolutely beautiful — the amount, speed and sound of the water was incredible."

She said that, after the dark walk back up the hill to the motel, they all made a stop for ice cream — sundaes and banana splits.

Bashore said the night went quickly, and the morning light saw them still enthralled with the magnificence of North America's natural beauty . . . of God's gifts.

"After sightseeing on both sides of the falls, we were on our way to the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon. Wow!" Bashore said.

She said that peering out from the overlook at Leonard Harrison State Park and viewing the seemingly endless mountains covered in trees which dropped quickly and deeply down to the Pine Creek was almost surreal.

"The depth of the drop of the mountains to the valley below is really something," she said.

Meanwhile, Roy and Elva became intrigued with the squir-

rels and other common North American animals.

Then the trip came closer to home. The next stop was near Ephrata.

"'Elva, get your camera. There's a dragon ahead,' I said as we approached Green Dragon Market. The hay and straw auction impressed Roy," Sherry said. "He said, 'If we want hay, we ring up an agent and he'll put us in contact with someone.'"

Elva spent time at the market milling through the offerings of craft articles.

Then the group did another Dutch County tradition — they ate lunch at a smorgasboard.

The pace of the trip slowed as it neared its end. With everyone contentedly full and relaxed, Bob Bashore drove the car back to Bernville, taking all the back roads.

"Cameras were clicking as we passed Amish farmers in the fields," Sherry said.

That evening, Bob and Sherry hosted a 'Get to Know the Aussies' picnic for their families.

Early the next morning, the realization of having to say goodbye was sobering and sad, Sherry said. She said those feelings mixed together strangely with the fresh happy memories of the past days.

The Dalitzes drove away; to Missouri, then on to Yellowstone National Park, Washington state, the Canadian Rockies, and eventually back to Australia.

Meanwhile, Sherry and Robert have settled back to the lives they are making as Pennsylvania dairy farmers, now enriched and fulfilled in the knowledge of the generosity and friendliness of the agricultural community in Lebanon, Pennsylvania and the world.

Should You Refinance?

WEST CHESTER (Chester Co.) — Confused about the benefits of refinancing your home mortgage? Concerned that you may not have all the information necessary to take full advantage of refinancing? Penn State Cooperative Extension is offering a seminar, "Refinancing Your Home Mortgage," on Thursday, July 30, at 7:00 p.m. at the Chester County Cooperative Extension office, 235 W. Market Street, West Chester.

What factors do you need to consider if you are thinking about refinancing? Should you refinance to get a lower monthly payment or to pay the mortgage off sooner? What are the tax consequences? How long will it take before you see a benefit from refinancing? These and other questions will be discussed.

For registration information, contact Chester County Cooperative Extension at 215-696-3500.

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