

No Kidding: Quads Born To Shropshire Ewe

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KLEINFELTERSVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — Paul Eberly has been raising purebred Shropshire sheep for 50 years

"I've had many sets of twins and triplets over the years, but this is the first set of quadruplets," Eberly said.

The quads, born April 14 to an 8-year-old ewe, are spunky, healthy lambs that enjoy romping in the outdoors.

"Initially, all four lambs nursed, but as they grew older, so did their appetites," Eberly said. He supplemented with bottle feeding the smallest of the four.

Eberly and his wife Ferne own a little farmette in the village of Kleinfeltersville. Being allowed to raise sheep in a residential area has been "grandfathered," and will not be allowed by zoning if Eberly stops raising sheep on the property.

Sometimes the sheep escape and get into the neighbor's flowerbeds. To prevent their escape, Eberly had installed an electrical fence, but the neighbors convinced him to remove the electric fence because the neighborhood children congregated at the fence to watch the sheep.

Eberly knows the fascination lambs hold for youngsters. He started raising Dorset sheep when he was 12 years old and showed purebreds at the State Farm Show. When he left for college, his brothers took over his flock, but eventually abandoned the venture while Eberly attained a bachelor's degree, taught physical education and chemistry, and joined the Navy, where he served as a World War II navigator in the southwest Pacific. After Eberly returned home, he purchased a few Shropshire lambs.

"The Shropshire is a nice lamb for wool and meat," Eberly said. The flock increased and by 1985, Eberly had 85 ewes.

The Eberlys had three sons who helped out with the flock. When the oldest son was sent to

Vietnam, Eberly reduced the flock, but his youngest son retained his interest in sheep. After the son became an electrical engineer, married, and settled on a farm in Centre Hall, he began raising Dorset lambs. However, he found the market wasn't viable in his area, so after each breeding season, he gives the lambs to his dad to put on pasture to finish and to market.

Now retired, Eberly finds great pleasure in shepherding his own Shropshires and his son's Dorsets.

"I sell them between 90-100 pounds, either privately or at New Holland (Sales Stables)," Eberly said.

"I always have a pet," Eberly said. For the past 11 years, his favorite has been a ewe named after his granddaughter Chelsea.

He pampers the pet ewe by hand-feeding her apples and allowing her to graze on the lawn. In return, Chelsea serves as the leader of the flock when he wants to move them.

Eberly purchases colostrum from friends who have dairy cows and freezes it in 4-ounce glass nursing bottles until needed for lambs. The colostrum is fed immediately after birth if a ewe does not have sufficient amounts for her offspring.

"You can't feed lambs colostrum after they are 24 hours old or it works as a laxative," Eberly said.

Although Eberly enjoys the birthing season and usually has little problems, he said of assisting births, "When you have two legs from one lamb and a head from another, you know you have a problem."

Amazingly, the quads were born without any assistance.

"I thought the ewe was finished, and then she had another one," he said of the delivery that spanned about two hours.

Of the April birth, Eberly said, "The birthing season is earlier, but I waited to have the ewe bred because I had a young ram I wanted to try."



Paul Eberly has been raising sheep for more than 50 years. During these years, he has seen lots of twin and triplet births, but this year was the first he had quadruplets born on his Kleinfeltersville farmette.

Lambs are vaccinated at birth to prevent overeating.

"The little lambs can slip through the fence to where the ewes are feeding," Eberly said of the need for the vaccination.

Most of the flock are called by their tag number. Eberly relishes in bragging that they answer when called by individual numbers. Neighborhood kids often hang around and are impressed when Eberly calls out a number such as "143" and the ewe comes running.

Generally Eberly and his son take care of shearing the flock, but this past year, with his son in England, Eberly hired a shearer. The most frustrating problem is that wool prices are so low that it doesn't pay to shear for wool.

Nevertheless, Eberly is part of the Berks County Wool Pool, where growers gather to weigh, grade, and sell wool.

Wool, he said, must be stored in burlap bags so it can breathe, and not in plastic.

Eberly is also a member of the Pen-Mar Shropshire Association, (abbreviation for Pennsylvania and Maryland).

Eberly worked for 31 years as a physical therapist at the Veteran's Hospital and served on the naval reserve for 21 years. One year he had a tour of duty during the lambing season. His wife took care of the flock and assisted with the births. She thought she did rather well, but her husband said, "I'll never take a cruise again during lambing sea-

son. That was a big mistake. It cost me a lamb and a ewe."

Ferne doesn't miss the responsibility and is content to watch from the kitchen window. Although Ferne doesn't help with the sheep, she has given her own special touch to her husband's lambing venture. She is an accomplished artist and presented Eberly with a beautiful watercolor of his sheep.

Ferne, a former high school art teacher, holds art shows of her watercolor paintings. Of the Eberlys' eight grandchildren and one great grandchild, the oldest one shares Ferne's artistic talents.

The Eberlys enjoy eating lam-
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Elderhostel Provides Learning Experiences For Those 55 And Older

LOU ANN GOOD
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EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — Retired high school teacher Ferne Eberly believes learning should be a lifelong process. Her quest for learning has taken her across the U. S. and to London, Ireland, and the Wales.

Ferne participates in Elderhostel, a nonprofit organization with 25 years of experience in providing high-quality, affordable, educational adventures for adults who are 55 and older.

"Elderhostel is open to everyone. No educational prerequisites or grades are required. Some of the participants are doctors and some never received a high school diploma," Ferne said. "Their ages range from mid-fifties to the 80s."

No tests or assignments are required during the five-day to three week programs offered.

Ferne said, "All you need is an inquisitive mind, an adventurous spirit, and the belief that learning and discovery are lifelong activities."

The 10 programs that Ferne has participated in were related to watercolor or some type of art. But art is only a small part of Elderhostel's offerings.

This year, Elderhostel offers

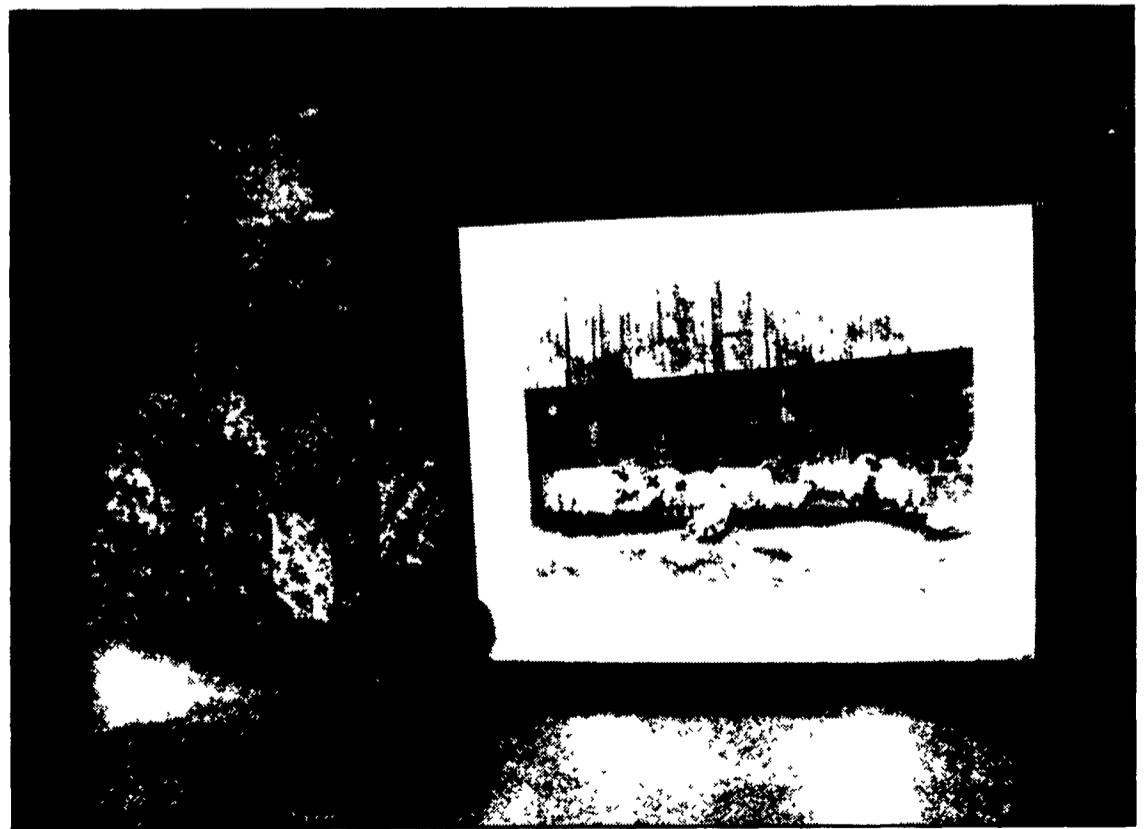
10,000 educational adventures in 50 states and 90 countries. Studies are offered in classrooms, on the beach, in the mountains, in urban settings, and in small villages.

Participants can study birds of Ecuador in the Amazon Basin, Egypt along the Nile, birding and wildlife viewing here and abroad, and historical studies that include field trips. Classes for beginners and advanced studies are available in many areas. Not all classes are considered traditional subjects. Participants can learn to knit, weave baskets, textile print, and photograph wildlife and landscapes.

Some people have always wanted to learn to paint, refinish antiques, sculpt, landscape, or become adept in operating computers. Instructions on these subjects and many others are available in many states. Recreational activities include bicycling tours, hiking, and canoeing.

Participants are responsible for transportation to the program's location, but the cost of registration, accommodations, meals, classes, and field trips are covered in the fee. Average cost of a six-night program is \$450, and a five-night program is \$430.

"Strangers quickly become



Ferne Eberly has traveled the world to perfect her watercoloring technique. But home has provided the inspiration for this pastoral setting. This is her husband Paul's flock of sheep that she views through her kitchen window.

friends as you share classes, meals, and free time," Ferne said.

A spouse or adult companion

can attend with an age-eligible participant.

For more information, call Elderhostel at 1-877-426-8056,

Monday through Friday, between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Or check the Internet at www.elderhostel.org.