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Cathy Spalding

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Today, Cotswold sheep are officially classified as a rare breed. A 1989 American Livestock Breeds Conservancy census discovered that a small number of domestic breeds dominate our farms while over 80 minor breeds are threatened with extinction. Founded in 1977, the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy is the only organization in the United States working to conserve rare breeds and genetic diversity in livestock. It is a clearing house for information with the strong belief these rare breeds are a part of our national heritage and represent a unique piece of the earth's bio-diversity. "We have inherited a rich variety of livestock breeds, the loss of which would impoverish agriculture and diminish the human spirit. For the sake of future generations, we must work together to safeguard these treasures." Mother Hildegard has presented their work with the Cotswold at Our Lady of the Rock before this conservancy.

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy supports a number of programs including research on breed population size, genetic health and distribution, gene

banks, rescues of threatened populations, education about genetic diversity and the role of livestock in sustainable agriculture as well as offers technical support to breeders, breed associations and farmers. The conservancy reports that each day some breeds move closer to extinction stating with each extinction, there is a reduction in "the diversity within the livestock species and the biodiversity of the Earth." For more information on the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, how the watch of rare breeds is categorized and to discover what breeds are being watched, visit their web site at www.albc-usa.org/

Cotswold sheep are not the only rare breed gracing the fields at Our Lady of the Rock. In their continued exploration of breeds that are hardy and provide well for their intended use, they have acquired the Kerry cow, a breed developed in Kerry County, Ireland. The Kerry was the first breed to be developed as a milker and is often called history's first dairy cow. It is quite hardy surviving on hill pasture not normally sustainable for other breeds. Kerrie's are a small sized dairy breed most

often black in color. These horned cows are long lived often still calving at 14 to 15 years of age. They produce rich milk and have a gentle nature. The Kerry is now, too, a very rare breed. Imported to the United States in 1818, they prospered through the early 20th century. By the 1930's, they had all but disappeared from North America. By 1983, only 200 cows were known in Ireland. The Irish Department of Agriculture immediately took steps in support of maintaining the breed and today their numbers are gradually increasing. Currently, there are only 200 Kerrie's in North America with most of those residing in Canada. Our Lady of the Rock has a young Kerry bull named Seamus. He recently arrived from the New England Breeds Conservancy to service their females.

Our Lady of the Rock is the only working farm on Shaw Island. In addition to the Kerry, several Jersey cows provide milk for the monastery. The cows are milked early each morning and evening. Our Lady of the Rock is the *only* hand-milked dairy in the State of Washington. Their dairy

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Spring Celebration Llama Sale

You are cordially invited to attend the 21st annual Spring Celebration Llama Sale to be held on April 3-5, 2009 at the prestigious Heritage Place in Oklahoma City. For those who have never been, this is an opportunity to see hundreds of the top llamas in North America and to meet llama owners from all over the U.S. and Canada. For those who have been, it is a chance to renew acquaintances—join in the festivities and enjoy the new and exciting additions to the weekend's activities.

We will begin with the Celebration Classic (an "OPEN" double halter show and a walking fleece show) on Friday, the preview and auction on Saturday and the World Futurity show on Sunday. Don't forget the Celebration pre-sale party at Embassy Suites Friday night—hors d'oeuvres, live music and a no-host bar. All Celebration Sale buyers are eligible for a drawing to win a Martin Eichinger bronze "Winter Birth" specifically cast for the sale (valued at \$2,900).



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Mother Therese with one of her Jersey cows, left, and a Kerry mom, right.

has been named a dairy of merit and has a solid customer base. Some even travel by ferry from other islands to pick up their rich milk packaged in wide-mouthed glass jars. Though there is often more milk than anyone could drink, none goes to waste. Mother Therese makes farm cheese and a wonderful sort of mozzarella. The pigs enjoy any left over whey.

The monastery is also home to Scottish Highland cattle, llamas, alpacas, rare green-headed Australian spotted ducks, peacocks and their hens, rare Dominique chickens, pigs and various cats and dogs. Dominique chickens are on the critical list for rare breeds. It is estimated that the global population is less than 2,000 with fewer than 200 annual registrations in North America.

There's more... much more. Locally, the nuns are warmly termed "The Spinning Nuns." Each of the nuns pursues a special art of their own. There is a large collection of spinning wheels, fiber tools and looms in constant use. The nuns spin and weave items for their own use as well as offer handcrafted items for sale. Many of the liturgical vestments in their chapel have been hand woven from their spun and hand dyed yarns. Three hardy meals a day are prepared from ingredients grown or raised at the monastery. The nuns run their own farm machinery, welcome a steady stream of guests and drop by visitors while pausing for prayer and meditation eight times each day. And there's more...

Mother Hildegard George, OSB, holds a Ph.D. in child and adolescent psychology with many educational honors to her credit. She is a leader in the field of animal assisted therapy devoting her working career to troubled youth. In addition to her many



Evening prayer

responsibilities within the monastery, Mother Hildegard serves as a consultant for the American Humane Association regarding

animals and children. She lectures each year at the Washington State University School of Veterinary Medicine. She is a consultant and trainer to programs involving at risk children and teens, a Pet Partners instructor with the Delta Society and leads a llama 4-H group on Shaw Island. Mother Hildegard continues to travel throughout North America giving presentations on the important bond between humans and animals. She has presented in Monaco, France and Canada. The area of animal assisted therapy is vast and Mother Hildegard is a leading mentor with much to share. Her work with troubled youth and animals is renowned.



Kids and Llamas at Our Lady of the Rock Monastery

My personal (and now painfully obvious) limited view of monastery life has vastly changed since that first notice of Mother Hildegard leading her llama those many years past. In coming to know more about her and Our Lady of the Rock, I have felt to pause and consider where I am, where I am going, where I have been and how I chose to live as I travel my own path. Those incredible nuns on Shaw Island do not simply talk the talk... they live it with dedication, grace and humor.



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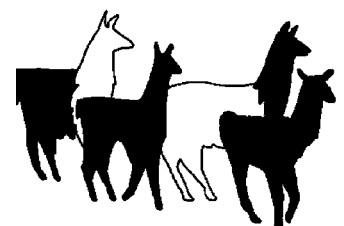
We are humbled to share the joy and beauty of these lovely creatures.

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A Close Call For A Little Llama



by Darlene Awarski

and ballooned from the hoof to the hip to three times its size! I called the vet again. At this point I was sure it was broken. I still couldn't believe that she was that hurt from stepping over the rail. We talked about an x-ray, but Dr. Wall thought the leg was too swollen to get an accurate view. When he came out that afternoon he was shocked to see the condition of her leg. When he started to examine the leg it exploded by his mere touch. After squeezing, lancing, draining and cutting away the damaged flesh, the leg looked much better. Still horrifying, her leg looked like someone had thrown a grenade at it. Dr. Wall gave her a course of antibiotics by IV and some more Banamine. The outlook was not very good. He felt she could die or lose her leg. Our job was to give her injectable antibiotics every other day, flush the wound with Nolvasan, and squeeze out any pus twice daily until it stopped seeping. Not my favorite thing, but Chimes' leg and maybe her life depended on our diligence. After the first week we switched to Betadine for the flushing, still giving antibiotics for three more weeks. Although I rotated the injection areas she still ended up getting abscesses in her armpits. Poor Chimes. Now the treatment was as bad as the affliction. We were also giving her a regimen of vitamins and pro-



While preparing for a show this past fall, I vowed not to wait until the last minute to get ready. So I began my list of things to take and who to groom when. For this show, my sister and I would be taking more llamas than ever, so I planned to groom each weekend and re-groom each llama that had already been groomed to keep up on them.

My young female llama named Chimes, had had several grooming sessions already and it was two weeks before the show. We had all of the llamas started and just needed to do touch up at this point. We ended with Chimes for that day as she is a very sweet little girl and easy to handle. We tied her to the wooden corral and began to brush. While we were brushing her she stepped through the rail of the fence and back. I picked up one of her back legs to get an area near her foot and she collapsed onto her other back leg. Had she hurt her leg when she stepped through the fence? It was such a simple incident that I couldn't believe she was that hurt. We felt her leg for any obvious damage, but couldn't feel anything. We walked her around and she did have a slight limp. So we figured she must have pulled something. We put her away thinking she would be okay in a couple of days.

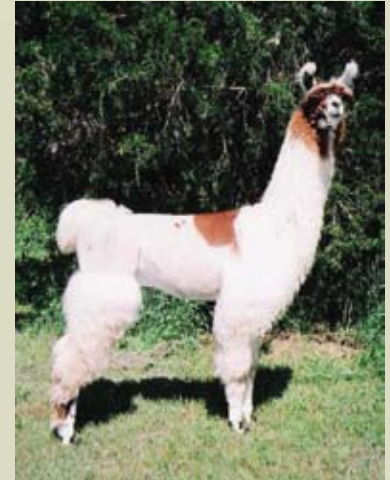
The next day her leg was swollen and she was limping even more. I called my vet, Dr. Jason Wall and we discussed watching her, putting her on stall rest and Banamine. By day three the leg had heat

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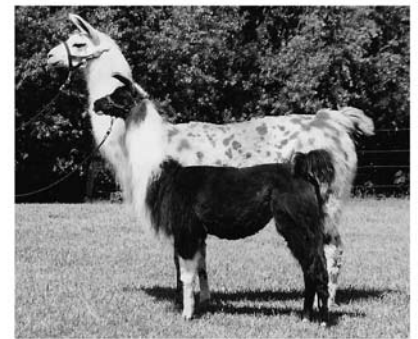
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biotics for stress support, and through all of this she never resisted.

When the leg had reached a point that the draining had stopped, the flesh started to chunk off. At times it looked like cooked chicken. We then started to hose her leg with water and slough away the dead areas twice a day. We then applied scarlet oil and incorporated manipulating the leg to give it some movement. We continued doing this until the weather became too cold to get the leg wet. By this time the injury had healed to just a scab the size of a quarter.

When Chimes first started to limp it bothered me that she could have been hurt so badly so quickly. But at Dr. Wall's first exam, he discovered 2 puncture wounds. At that point I remembered that a couple of days before our grooming session I had caught one of my other mini's aggressively chasing a dog out of my pasture. That dog must have

bitten Chimes before it was chased away. Our vet agreed that Chimes' wound looked like it could have resulted from a dog bite.

We were fortunate that she didn't die and grateful that she didn't lose her leg. Dr. Wall is very surprised at her progress, but we followed his instructions to a "T" and feel that is the reason for her recovery. She still has a limp, and we'll never be able to show her, but our sweet little Chimes is still with us!

