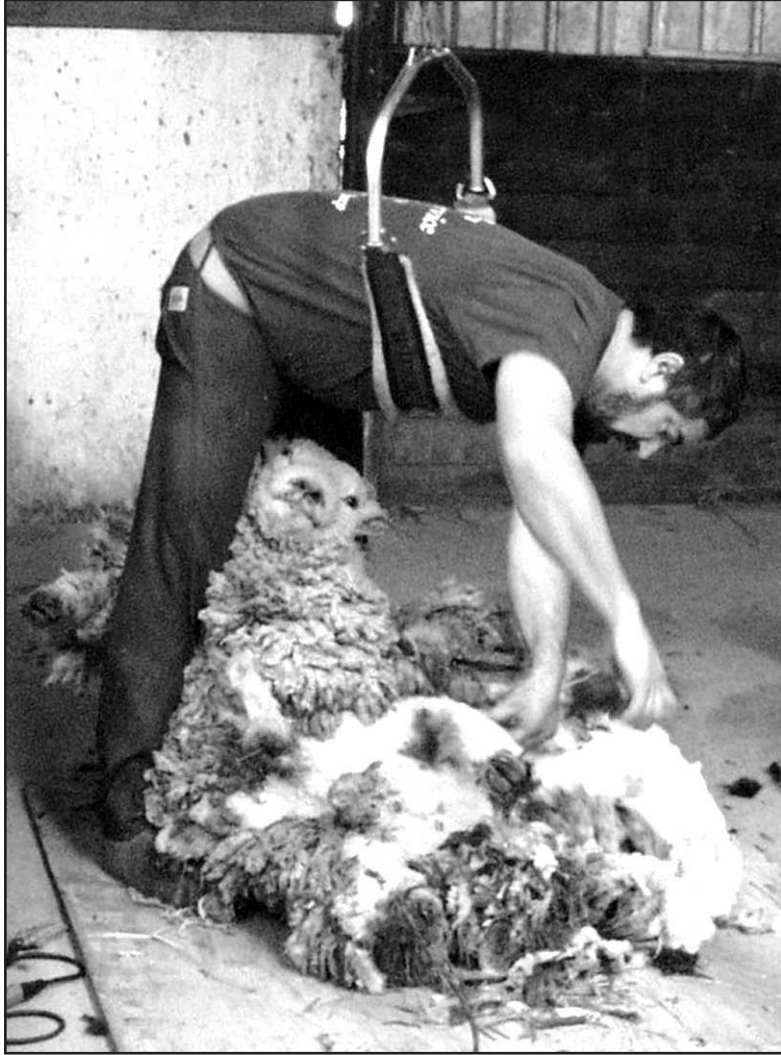


How many sheep can a sheep shearer shear? See answer below



How many sheep can a sheep shearer shear if the sheep he shears are shy? It turns out the answer to this tongue twister is, about six sheep per half hour and all sheep are shy.

Timber Road residents Sandra and Charlie Rogers recently had a professional sheep shearer come visit Sonny and Cher, Ebony, Thelma and Louise, plus Rambo, a friend's ram.

The sheep shearer, Eddie Dunham, is an Australian who

Left, Eddie Dunham at work shearing a sheep while suspended from harness.

learned to shear on his family's ranch. "I was 17 and helping the shearing crew on my family's ranch and the shearer told me I had the right potential for it," Dunham said.

Now, Dunham lives in the Lafayette area and shears in Oregon and Washington from January through April. Then, he works his way east through Idaho, Utah, New Mexico, Texas, and New York by the end of August. The rest of the year is spent shearing in Australia. He shears sheep and alpacas in the States, alpacas only in Australia.

Dunham started this sched-

ule in 1997 and his experience and efficiency show. He arrives in a pickup with canopy along with his apprentice, son Jethro. They pull out equipment, hang a harness from a handy beam, using a metal arm Dunham designed, and he is almost ready to go to work. He changes into moccasin-like (no hard soles) shoes so his feet won't hurt from the rolling they do while positioning the sheep. Now he's ready to start the dance he performs when shearing.

A sheep is brought in, flipped onto its back between Dunham's feet and the electric shears start. Working first on the sheep's stomach, then around one side, around the legs and head, over the back and around the other set of legs to finish on the opposite side of the stomach. Dunham rolls and positions the sheep, using one free hand and his feet, so that the movement, like a dance, doesn't stop until the finale. The coat of wool falls off in one piece, the hooves are trimmed, and the sheep is released. Okay, bring in the next one. Dunham will do this dance about 40 more times that day, depending on travel time to the rest of the day's stops.



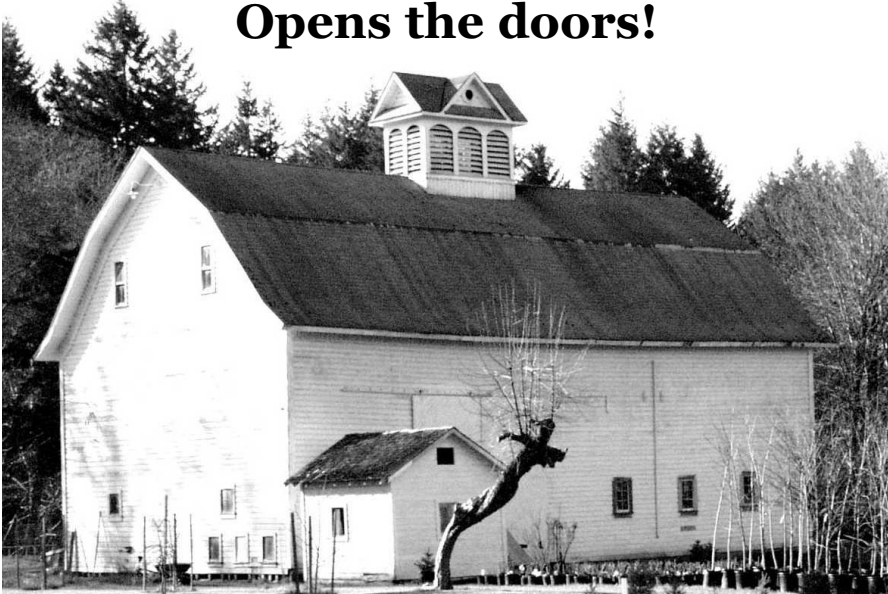
Above, sheep look like this after Dunham is finished.

After the six sheep are sheared, everything is packed back in the truck and the Dunhams are off to the next stop and the next small flock of sheep or alpacas. To contact Eddie Dunham, call 503-864-4240 or e-mail him at <theshearer@macnet.com>.

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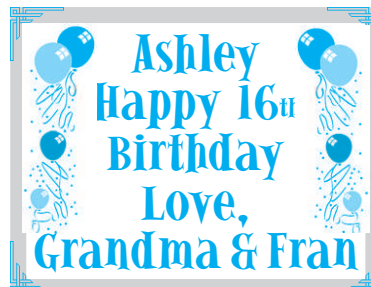


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