

Sheepshearing is finished, ewes are all located in pens of eight, quiet reigns in the barn. Time to relax.

Guess not. A few days ago, two little “maas” alerted us to the first pair of new lambs. This morning, when we went to the barn a little after six, nine overnight babies welcomed us—three pairs and a set of triplets. So far, all of the twins have been “one of each,” a ewe lamb and a buck lamb. The triplets are two rams and one ewe lamb.

Our first trickle of lambing was all from the progeny of Ghost, the Clun Forest ram. A year and a half ago, when we purchased the buck, a little boy was sorry to see the young ram loaded on the truck and taken away. But, he brightened when we suggested that he name the sheep and we would call him that. As it was October, he chose the name Ghost.

We have never named our rams, but Ghost is the exception. And, without planning it, his offspring have become Ghosties. Until we kept some of the lambs from Ghost, our sheep have been, for many years, all white-faced. But, now, we have spotted faced lambs from Ghost and all white babies from the white rams.

Our first four pairs of lambs were Ghosties. But with this morning’s nine new births, the white rams have caught up. The triplets from this morning are interesting—two pure white lambs and one solid black lamb, just a white streak on his face marring his dark color.

It might seem strange that after all these decades, it is still so interesting when lambing starts to see what each new baby looks like. And the addition of Ghost has made the variety in appearance even more pronounced.

Lambs are not the only sign of a changing season. After checking the containers in which I’d planted seeds several time a day, since I have no faith ever than anything will actually come up (though it always does), the Commander Volkov tomatoes have sprouted. The Amish Paste are starting, as are the Oregon Spring. And peppers, too, are beginning to emerge, as have the aubergine. The plant stand will soon go up, and anyone seeing our basement from the distant road will observe the bright purple-red glow of the grow lights.

It may seem that there are abrupt changes in the seasons, but, for the most part, winter activities flow rather seamlessly into

spring work, and we resilient humans adapt.