



KARAKUL SHEPHERDS ALLIANCE ~ where the flocks gather

Karakul Tails & Tales

Late Fall 2025

Volume 7, Number 2

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Karakul Alliance Goals

1. find flocks & count Karakul sheep
2. build a community of Karakul shepherds

The Alliance has been working toward these objectives since 2014.

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## NO PRICE CHANGES & REMEMBER THE REGISTRY FEE:

The Alliance 2025 Work Order remains the same with no price increases for 2026. For breeders wishing to register their Karakul sheep, please include the annual Registry Fee of \$24 when submitting your monies.

PayPal is a payment option. Zelle & Venmo coming soon. Checks are still preferred.

~~~ ~ Deborah ~~~

"Registries are only as good as we breeders make them."

Words of wisdom from the late Page Jacobs ~ Dec 8, 1988

Photos - Permission from & Courtesy of Mel Gnatkowski

Happy New Year 2026!

KSAR News - Some History, the Database & Old Certificates

Between 1965 and the present, over 8,300 US Karakuls have been registered, including a handful from Canada. Not included are B & C-series, another 1,100. See reverse bottom left.

To generate database pedigrees from the earliest possible Karakul ancestors, I started with AKSR 1 in 1984. Basic records from Transfer Logs and some certificate information were compiled into spreadsheets; those 3,962 records have been uploaded to the database.

AKSR 2 started in 2000 & continues presently to be written into spreadsheets in preparation for the database. I picked a number and stopped at A8300, totaling 3,894 records. From the twelve breeders who generously provided their old certificates to be scanned for the database, currently that is almost 20% or about 700 records.

If you decide to send your historical certificates, there is no need to organize; just place them in a Priority flat rate envelope or box. I will scan & return them in reg# order. Some were impressed receiving them so orderly. If you want them left in order sent, let me know.

Question - Would you like to view old certificates in the database? Is this important to you for historical significance? Many have photos included which could be valuable. The database programmer has offered this for Karakul breeders, but it will make storage of certificate images more expensive in the long run. Please [email](#) your thoughts.

The book continues to sell nicely & has been well received. Reminder – it is only available through Amazon.

I am not handling any orders,

packing or shipping; that's preferred and one of the reasons I chose Amazon KDP. Search Persian Lamb Magic & see the attraction for yourself. *Deborah*

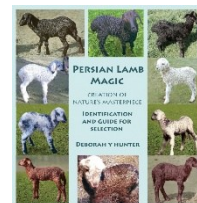
Comments from shepherds & non-shepherds:
Well done! Very nice photos!

I'm impressed! ...fabulous book!

...a very nice work of art

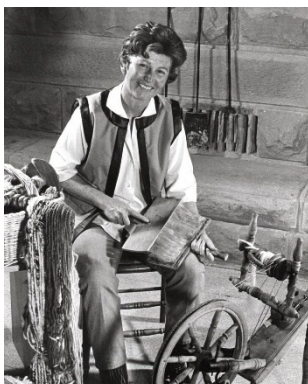
...such an informative & educational book

This will better my breeding program!



This Newsletter Is Dedicated to Those Who Bred Karakuls When No One Else Did Legacy Shepherd Janice Gnatkowski

Gnatkowski Karakuls show up in pedigrees of the well-known late breeder Page Jacobs from Coolidge, Arizona. This genetic impact was significant since there were so few Karakul breeders in the 1960s & 70s-time



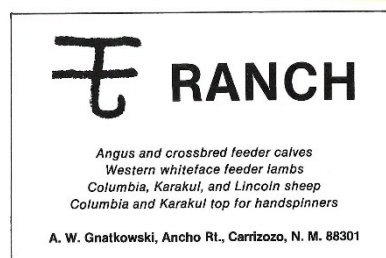
Janice at home with wool. Behind her, the wall was reclaimed from a bank building. With her design, the house was built from these hand-hewn stones turned to the proper angle for heat in winter & no sun in summer.

of the breed's lowest popularity. The letters I have from that period indicate breeders were repeatedly looking for new bloodlines. In the late 1970s popularity increased again when Karakuls were used to

cross on other breeds for natural colored wool, the Black Sheep Craze.

The recent Summer Newsletter introduced **167 International Sheep Breeds**, published in 1978 by Janice Gnatkowski. On page 21, the above ad for the Lazy H 6 ranch showed they raised Columbia, Karakul and Lincoln sheep. Carrizozo is in the high desert of southcentral New Mexico, elevation 5,545 feet, average rainfall less than 13 inches, perfect for Karakul sheep. The Spanish town name is derived from Carrizo reed grass, which grew in the area, with the additional 'zo' at the end added to indicate grass abundance. The town is locally referred to as 'Zozo'. [Wikipedia]

Janice Hall grew up as an only child on a large area ranch. After college she met a flight engineer from Michigan, and when she married AW 'Gnat' Gnatkowski in 1946, they lived in Denver until her dad said he was going to sell the ranch if they didn't want it. Gnat proved with grit, records & finances he didn't have to be ranch-born to be a good rancher.



Timing Receipt of Certificates

- Please plan a month
- Specify date needed
- 1st class mail for 1 – 3 certs
- Add Priority fee for 4+ certs
- Fax to show super. for fee
- RUSH is 5-10 days, add fees

HAPPY SHEEP SHOWING!!

Contact

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Librarian, Historian,
Registrar & Web
Shepherd

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Thanks for helping the
Alliance to connect
with so many breeders
while we build the
Karakul database.

Please keep in touch.
We welcome your
comments and
suggestions.

Karakul Registration counts:

Stultz, NY 1965-1979 &
Koch, OH 1979-1984
K-series numbers
estimated to be about 444

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Start A-series numbers  
AKSR Part 1  
(DeVlieg 1984 – 1999)

A0445 – A4406  
= 3,962 registrations

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AKSR Part 2
(Perera 2000 – present)

A4407 – A8300(ongoing)
= 3,894 registrations
B & C-series not included

Janice sheared sheep, built stock trailers, carved furniture, wrote books, spun, wove & sewed clothes, made jewelry and tatted delicate lacework. She wove about 20 yards of fine wool cloth every year, the sheen & resiliency she loved. For many years they had about 900 head of sheep in addition to cattle, with 25 to 30 orphan lambs every year. Their biggest problem was predators—lions, coyotes & eagles. Still Janice preferred the sheep and spent much time promoting the industry, always teaching about wool.



Janice 1971, Lincoln County Fair

Thousands of New Mexico State Fair goers learned about sheep and wool through the efforts of Gnat and Janice. They launched the Sheep to Shawl event in 1971 with a \$2,000 bank loan. Their family plus two others in the area furnished the sheep, a shearer, and educational material. "We just wanted to put wool into the hands of the public," Janice said. The emphasis was always on education. Son Mel was heavily involved, even making his own loom.

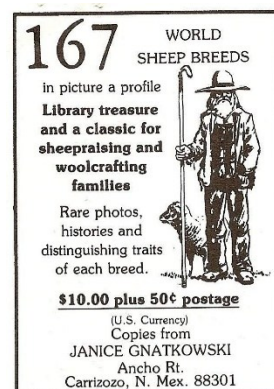
In the late 60s, 3 to 4 years before the monumental effort of Sheep to Shawl, the Gnatkowskis got into Karakul sheep. They purchased from both breeders in the state, Brahim Hindi & Lowry Hagerman. They went back several times to the Hagerman ranch to learn from Lowry & Christmas 1971 he gifted them a copy of *The Karakul Handbook*. Sometime in the 15 years the family had the breed, they sold to Alice Gatterdam of California & Connie Taylor, Taos NM. Later, Alice & Connie sold Karakuls to Page Jacobs; although there is a chance of direct sales since Janice sold their Karakul flock in the early 80s when Page was just getting started. Either way Gnatkowski became part of Jacobs' pedigrees.

I have a scan of a letter Janice wrote to Julia DeVlieg about 1985. Julia purchased the Fur Registry & sheep flock from Karen Koch in 1984, and was designing forms for the new American Karakul Sheep Registry. She wrote a Karakul information piece, which she sent to Janice for her opinion. Janice provided some advice on color inheritance

& curl development in Karakuls, and on registering & judging, advice Lowry had passed on to her. Most significant was her point about longevity "In 15 years we never had one die of old age & their teeth never wore out. We would finally sell them because we knew their age." At letter's end, Janice complimented Julia on her paper and was sorry they had sold out [with an effective person now taking over the national Registry]. (Unfortunately Mel found no sheep photos)

The Gnatkowski family had Karakuls for 15 years, from the late 60s to the early 80s, at a time when the breed was at its lowest popularity. A Legacy of Loyalty. In 1997 they won New Mexico Wool Growers of the Year. Their contributions to the sheep industry in the Southwest have been legion.

If you are interested in a copy of *167 International Sheep Breeds*, please email and I will put you in touch with Mel Gnatkowski. They are \$30 each, which includes \$10 media mail shipping.



Janice's book ad on her
stationary, 1985 letter

~~~~~ Education Focus - Wool Sunbleaching vs Fading ~~~~~



L to R: 9-month ram sunbleached (non-dominant) black, 7-month ram black, 2-year ewe faded dark gray, yearling ewe faded lightest silver, 4-year ram faded light silver gray

There's a genetic component to both, but the major difference between sunbleaching and fading is where it takes place. Bleaching from the sun occurs on the fleece outside surface. Fading happens inside, from the wool follicles. If they fade, sometimes it's best if they do so quickly, like the yearling ewe, as it is quite attractive & makes fleeces easier to sell. Fleeces that do not fade are attractive, sought after & easier to sell. I receive requests, a few every year, for non-fading Karakul sheep. If blacks, browns or reds do not fade, save the genetics by breeding those sheep & let me know so I can pass on to buyers.

Photos courtesy of Mary Carol Buchholz, Hagerman-Onion Creek Bloodline, Dripping Springs, Texas
More photos & information on the Alliance For Sale page