

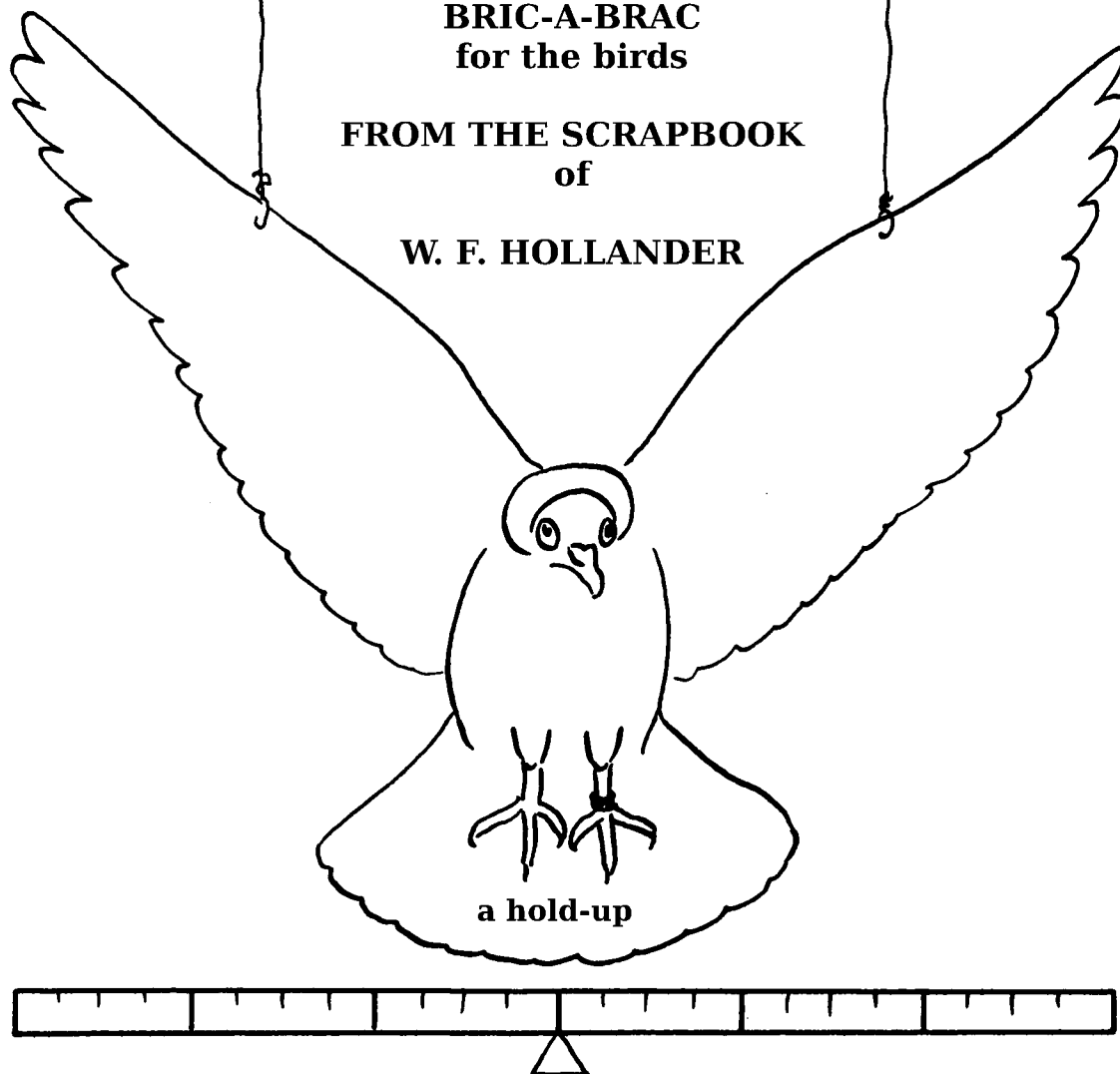


Doo TELL Doo

BAGATELLES
&
BRIC-A-BRAC
for the birds

FROM THE SCRAPBOOK
of

W. F. HOLLANDER



1965

(Sent free to all fanciers that are members of the National Pigeon Association on January 1, 1965. Some extra copies are available at a cost of \$2.00 each).

PREFACE

by Art W. Kehl
Secretary, National Pigeon Association

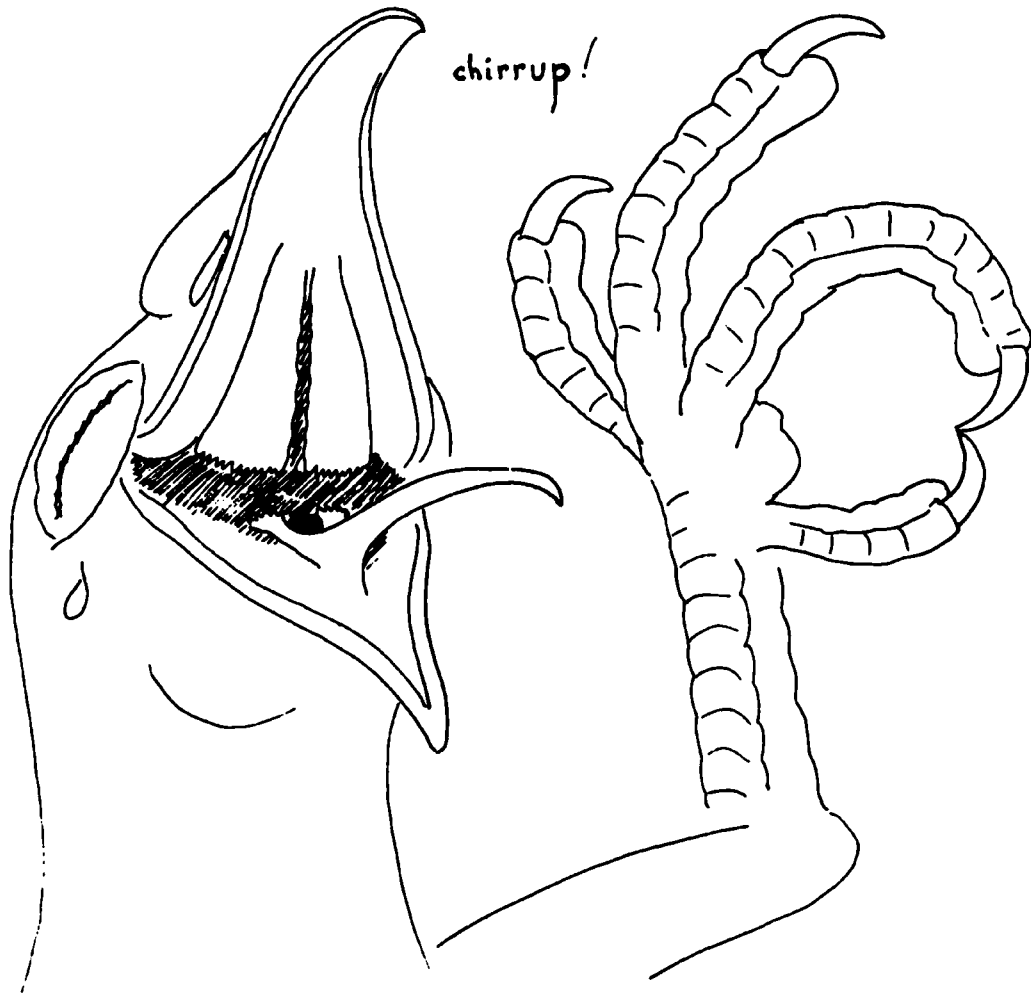
“Doo” is Scotch for dove, or pigeon. And after a shot or two, “Doc Highlander” is probably the punnuttiest of pigeon profs. Most of these science notes, brain teasers, and funnybone ticklers are reprinted from other sources, as indicated. Not all are from his own pen. The whole collection is a pot-pourri, if not a witches' brew. But that's typical—even Doc's birds are all mixed up. But they doo tell!



THE BOID OF COIVES

FOREWORD

Our hobby is indispensable, but almost unendurable at times. We are continually confronted with crises. We curse the weather, the rats and mice, the diseases, unfair judges, and barren hens. We resign ourselves to neighbors, unsympathetic wives, expensive feed, unscrupulous competitors, shows too far away, and unintelligible books. Sure, the loft has its sweet satisfactions. But humor? Bah! Even our magazines are mostly shop talk and serious stuff. For relief we look at comedy on T.V. The funny thing is, the actors act as if they were always in scrapes and trouble too.



Oft have I smiled the happy pride to see
 Of humble tradesmen in their evening glee,
 When of some pleasing, fancied good possessed,
 Each grew alert, was busy, and was blessed.

Whether the call bird yield the hour's delight,
 Or, magnified in microscope, the mite,
 Or whether Tumblers, Croppers, Carriers seize
 The gentle mind, they rule it and they please.

—George Crabbe (1754-1832)

NEWS FLASH ON RED TAPE

by Q. Knifely Cutting (alias Jay Brushart)

The anti-monopoly activities of the Justice Department have eradicated the cartel agreements on production of that ubiquitous commodity, which comes in long strips, rolls, and tangles easily, but is of special interest to the Un-American Committee because of its hue. As a consequence, red tape is cheap and easily obtained in any organization. My first-hand experiences with the use of this material may be seen written up as a feature article in the financial magazine "Business Weak" of Wall St., N.Y., U.S.A. However, in that article I did not explain a few things which it will be safe to say here in the delicious privacy of "APJ".

First, one needs to know what tools to use. Since the stuff is sticky, it is wise to know the secrets of how to disentangle it and the proper way to cut it. Otherwise one can get into a real mess. That's all right if the other fellow is in it, but not us. The stuff has to be used circumspectly and in the right place.

Second, it is necessary to know where to expect to find the tape. Dashing into an office without getting the green light from a secretary (young and purty) is likely to be dangerous, as the party in the sanctum very likely is surrounded by quite a meshwork. There's nothing like gentle pull to clear up such a barrier. Crude force is useless.

Third, despite claims of the manufacturers, red tape must not be mixed with baloney or applesauce, and hot air is detrimental. The best procedure is to keep a supply handy next to the Constitution and By-Laws, and serve with formality and sincerity, even coldly.

It takes practice and time to acquire the know-how, but everyone can become an expert in handling this. But brother, take a tip from me,—after a daily work-out with it, go out into the loft to relax!

—American Pigeon Journal, Sept., 1949, p. 273.

IN ONE EAR —

by Hal L. Campbell

ALTRUISM—Cleaning up another fancier's loft.

PIGEON CULTURE—A form of extravagance practiced by men who do not wish to die rich.

AN OPTIMIST—A pigeon fancier who sees a silver cup in every cloud; a pessimist is one who bites it to see if it is real silver.

EXTRAVAGANCE—What the other fellow pays for a pair of pigeons you hoped to buy yourself.

DOES PIGEON BREEDING PAY?—Yes, but only one cent on the dollar.

A PIGEON CLUB BANQUET—A fifty cent dinner that you pay two dollars for.

A PIGEON AUTHOR—One who would rather write than work.

Tuned in the other evening and listened to a discussion concerning the value of a prominent official of a certain pigeon club. The subject of a writer's value to a pigeon magazine arose. It was advanced that a pigeon club's "suckertary" received no letters saying: "If Mr. Soandso continues in office I will no longer attend club meetings." But every editor of a pigeon periodical gets letters from "Constant Readers" and "Indignant Subscribers" to the effect that if Enos Itall's articles are not discontinued I will not read your (censored) paper any more, and stop my subscription. The result is the same; that disgruntled club member continues to attend the meetings in the hope that the said Mr. Soandso will miscue and bat 0.000; the Indignant Subscriber threatens; but he continues to buy the magazine in the hope that the person whose writings irritate him will someday drive him to frenzy.

—Amer. Pigeon Jour., Sept. 1945, p. 134.

MALADIES OF THE LOFT

Of course the big news research-wise is the publication of Wendell Levi's revised edition of *THE PIGEON*. This seems to be the last word on most subjects, though not too encouraging in regard to some disease matters.

The research committee has been concerned for years with disease. We have recommended various things, like not having National shows, or liberal use of the axe (on the birds), or just patience. We have urged against the use of patent medicines, and have even been leery of "wonder drugs". But it is hard to tell the difference between a fad pushed by high-powered ads and something really sound. We have offered diagnosis of worms without charge; there have been three brave souls who really wanted to know whether there were such critters in their birds.

In such a state of affairs it is probably foolish to expect much progress from your committee. However, we have discovered the remarkable fact that Levi's encyclopedic work has no chapter on "maladies of the loft", a very important topic. There is plenty on maladies of the *BIRDS*, but not of the *LOFT*. Therefore we grasp opportunity by the tail feathers and run. (Please do not block the exit.) Herewith is a brief treatise on some of the more prevalent.

(1) Fibrosis. This is a malady of Racing Homer lofts, chiefly. It is a relatively new disease, being unknown a hundred years ago, and it is getting more serious. The disease is easy to diagnose but very difficult to cure without moving to clean territory. Symptoms are broken wings and necks, ripped crops, and other injuries. The birds seem unable to meet the problem of telephone wires head-on. Television antennas are much less likely to cause trouble. Suggested treatments: painting the obstructions white; draping them with streamers; or clipping.

(2) Lumbago (swayback). This is generally a malady of old age but may afflict young lofts of poor constitution. The most serious symptom may be fracture—sometimes of the floor, sometimes other parts of the skeleton. Splints, braces, or radical surgery are indicated. Crutches are only palliative.

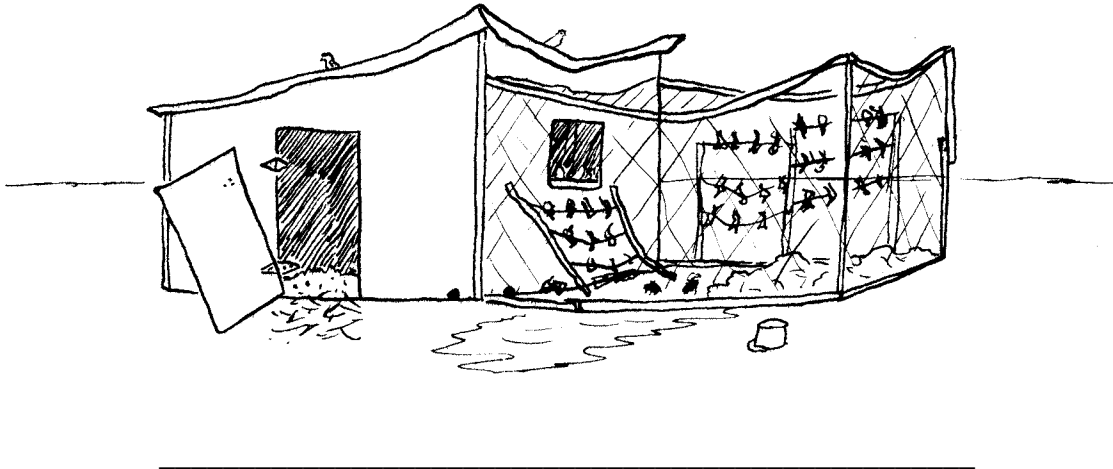
(3) Suppurative flux. This malady is usually temporary but seasonally recurrent, following local precipitation. The symptoms consist of accumulations of fluid, generally in the flypen but in severe cases also in the loft itself. It is aggravated by bathing. The pitch of the roof, or punctures in it, may favor the disease. If not cured promptly, the lesions may generate foul odor and lead to complications. Remedies are improved drainage, wire floors, roof grafts.

(4) Scrofula. This is a degenerative disease often associated with lumbago. Symptoms include scaliness of the surface, with peeling, fungoid rot of the frame leading to scoliosis of the flypen, and disruptive oxidation of the wire netting. Plastic surgery is the best treatment.

(5) Constipation. This is a very common ailment in which the birds are accumulated in dense impactions and layers. It is caused by irregularity in disposal, and also by overindulgence ("just one more won't do any harm"). No loft is immune, though some strains of birds are sterile enough to check the tendency. Advertising and the axe are good remedies.

Readers' suggestions will be appreciated for future attack on these and other serious though non-contagious maladies.

—N P A News, March 1958, p. 16-17.



MYSTERIOUS MITES

Even under a magnifying glass mites look tiny. These lively little spider-like blind creatures are all around us in unbelievable numbers, and sometimes on us, but as one mite expert has commented, "To the ordinary person mites do not exist." Even a person afflicted with "the itch" can hardly be convinced that tiny 8-legged animals are burrowing in his skin.

Of the many kinds of mites only a few are really important pests. Many others live peacefully in the soil, in decaying vegetable matter and manure, or even in water. But the pests can be terrific at times. There are some that spoil food, such as the cheese mites. Others suck blood, such as the red mite of chicken houses. Mange mites irritate the skin; "scaly leg" of poultry is caused by one of these kinds. Air-sac mites invade the respiratory organs of chickens and other birds, causing trouble there.

In a class by themselves are the feather mites, which may be found literally by the thousands on a bird yet seem to do no definite harm at all. They "ride the rods", so to speak, on the under-surface between the barbs where they are attached to the feather shaft. The eggs of the mites are also found between

the feather barbs, glued there securely. The mites hold on by microscopic suckers at the tips of their legs. But in spite of their abundance and accessibility, these mites are still somewhat mysterious. They go through several transformations from egg to adult, shedding their skin each time. One of the most amazing transformations is a quiet sausage-shaped stage that lives buried under the skin and along the wind pipe of the bird. How does it get there? How does it get out? What do the growing mites eat? These and other problems remained unsolved.

Pigeons commonly have three species of feather mites. Their scientific names are

1. *Falculifer rostratus*, found chiefly in the flight feathers;
2. *Megninia columbae*, found on body and tail feathers; and
3. *Pterophagus strictus*, found on the smaller body feathers.

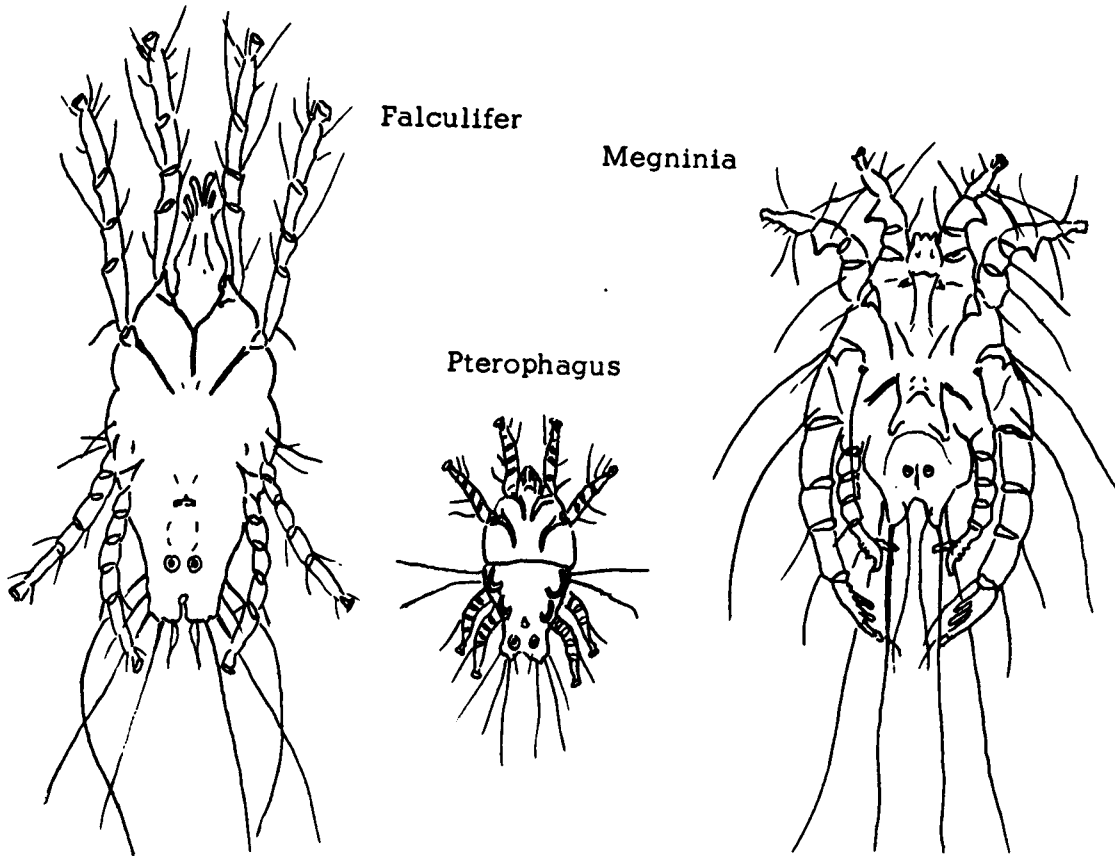
Falculifer is the largest, *Pterophagus* the smallest. The photographs do not show their bristles and skin markings well, nor their delicate reddish color. To the eye of the naturalist these creatures have a sort of complex beauty. Notice the differences between the males and females. One can often find mating pairs, and the males' large legs may be for holding the female.

All sorts of guesses have been put forward by mite authorities about the feather mites. Dr. Banks in 1904 thought "They rarely do any damage to the birds, but are usually of service in keeping the skin and feathers clean." Dr. Beebe in 1902 thought that the stage living under the skin was responsible for death of some birds in the New York Zoo, including two great crowned pigeons. Dr. Reuter of Finland in 1909 discussed the question of over-wintering; in that cold climate he generally found no adults of *Falculifer* on the feathers in winter. Presumably the sausage-shaped ones under the skin stay safe and warm there until it is favorable weather.

One way that has been suggested by several persons for the mites to get under the skin is through the open cavity left when a feather is moulted. But I have found the mites in 5-week-old squabs which never lost a feather. To me it seems more likely that when the bird preens its feathers some of the mites get in its mouth and work their way inside from there, or perhaps they even get inhaled and start from the lungs. It seems hard to believe that these spiny creatures do not irritate the internal membranes of the pigeon, but those under the skin cause no inflammation at all. One pigeon may have hundreds of them plastered on the jugular veins near the thyroid glands.

I have handled a bird with all three kinds of mites thick in his feathers, but none came off on my hands. So I use no sprays, no powders, no fumigants. As long as I find them harmless, these mites are interesting to watch. They make me wonder how they live, these tiny "bums".

—All-Pets Mag., Feb. 1951, p. 62, 65.



RESEARCH NOTES

Apparently some of my correspondents have the idea that research is a frantic occupation among deadly chemicals, fancy glassware, mysterious machinery, and surgical instruments. Well, maybe sometimes, but that is not the main idea.

Research is an inquiry, and like a detective, a researcher may inquire by letter, telephone, checking documentary sources, personal observation and examination, or by experiment. But always an inquiry is about a problem, a queer fact, a mystery. What we want is more and clearer understanding—what is the cause, who is the villain, how can we get control.

For years and years the homing ability of pigeons has been such a mystery. Anybody with a few pigeons can join in the research and have himself a delightful time. Of course he is unlikely to solve the mystery all by himself, but if

a hundred breeders all pitched in their two cents worth of personal observations and little experiments, progress would be phenomenal.

But for progress to be realized, there must be organization. Why do an experiment that has already been done several times by other people with satisfactory results? For example, it has been conclusively demonstrated that a blinded Racing Homer no longer is able to find its home. Repeating the test adds nothing to help solve the mystery. So it is desirable to know where the problem stands. That is where organization is necessary. And that is what I am trying to do.

But this note is not to be all about the mystery of the homing faculty. There are hundreds of other mysteries equally exciting, unfathomed, and important. Few pigeon breeders realize what a pile of problems hide under those feathers. What's more, few would realize what many of them are even if I listed them. For example, is the colon bacillus pathogenic in squabs? A simple inquiry. Get on the telephone, man; call the FBI; write your senator; check in the veterinary medical journals; run an experiment. So the answers come in: "What kind of colon bacillus?" "How old are the squabs?" "Do you mean fatal or just causing dysentery?"

When you get down to brass tacks, research organization demands library work. And it has to be a good big library. Some industrial firms keep full-time library researchers on the payroll, to keep on top of the flood of reports, patents, and contingent items. A good library researcher functions as a pilot.

Once an eager young man wrote to me that he was able and willing to undertake a bit of research, so what should he do? Wonderful, says I. How about testing the linkage between crest and grizzle? Well, all the eagerness disappeared. That inquiry, which was crying for an answer, fell on deaf ears. Moral? I suppose it is that research will be best pursued by those whom the question interests.

Here's a question that has interested many: why did the Passenger Pigeon become extinct? Obviously here no experiments are possible, but research in the library can turn up some astonishing answers. That is what was done by A. W. Schorger. He ransacked old newspaper files, town records, business documents, all sorts of old magazines, books, letters, and so on. The result of all this, when organized, is a fascinating book: "The Passenger Pigeon, its Natural History and Extinction." This is a 1955 book published by the University of Wisconsin Press, at \$7.50. I'm not trying to sell the book, but to illustrate that research can be a multitude of doings, and that many little contributions can make a big result. How about it, now, NPA members? Inquiries and contributions always welcome!

THE CRYSTAL BALL

by S. U. Donohue

How I ever got mixed up with this I'll never know. We were making the rounds of the side shows at the circus and it was getting late. We got to the fortune-tellers' tents and Bud chose the great Ali Bali or whatever the whiskered guy's name was, so I had to get mine told by the woman.

She wasn't a fat old dame with a turban and tea leaves like I expected. No sir, she was just a plain American girl, kind of tall and thin and dark, but with ordinary bobbed hair and those pointed spectacles. She waved me to a plain chair, turned out the ceiling light, and there in front of me was a crystal ball, glowing from inside like one of these fluorescent lights.

"I've been waiting for you," she said softly. "Look in the globe. See, it is the world, revolving on its axis. Here is North America and over here is where you think we are. But no, we are spiritually ten thousand miles above." I felt hypnotized. The ball did look like the world. I couldn't say anything then.

"You are a very important person but do not realize it," she continued. "You can do great things, and you shall." She sat down in front of me and stared at me.

"Your name is Sam. You came here on a lark. I was expecting you. You were operated on for appendicitis seven years ago. Now do you believe what I say?"

Up to then I was trying to shake off the spell, trying to answer "Oh you tell that to all the guys," but I was transfixed—she was right. All I could say was a faint "yes."

"You belong to a modest organization which is called NPA. National Peace Association. You have not done your part."

"NPA—not peace, pigeon," I said.

"Pigeon, dove, peace, what's the difference," she said. "You haven't done your part."

"What part?" I asked.

"Closing time!" came a call from outside.

"Your part is to—"

"Hey, Sam, let's go," yelled Bud.

"—build a—" my fortune-teller's soft voice was lost in the noise.

"A what?" I pleaded.

"Closing time! All out!"

The lights came on, and I found myself standing alone. I wandered out and met Bud.

“Boy did that old son of a gun hand me a line,” he laughed.

— N P A Yearbook 1950-51, p. 35-36.

UMPTEEN WAYS TO DIE

Four fanciers were having one of those delightful evenings together, where you sprawl on sofas and sip drinks and reminisce about old times, grand birds, and other loft gossip.

“Did I ever tell you,” mused Mr. A., “about the way my grand champion hen of '34 finally died? Well, you'd never believe it if you didn't see it. Tony, remember that leg hook I made, like the ones they use to catch chickens? I used it to catch some youngsters for a couple of times, but then hung it up on the wall and forgot it. Well, that old hen was flying out of my hand one day, and her wing flicked up that hook. It got her by the neck and she was a goner. I couldn't do a thing.”

“Yeah,” said Tony. “Funny how things happen. First time I cleaned the window in my loft one of the forty-dollar cocks I had just bought from Langville bashed right through it. He didn't seem bad hurt, but he bled to death before long.”

“Speaking of bleeding,” said Mr. C., “I had a bird that bled for weeks from one feather. I pulled the darn thing out, and it seemed to heal, but as soon as the next one started to grow, blood all over the place. Finally the bird was a bloody ghost, so I had to kill it.”

“Let me tell one,” chimed in Dave. “There was a common squab raised on a ledge outside the window of the insurance office. I watched it grow. It got too big for the ragged nest and finally when the old birds were feeding it, it fell over the edge. I stuck my head out of the window. There it was on the awning of a window below. It hung on for days, through rains, lifting and lowering of the awning, until it was able to fly. It finally flew back up to where it was raised, with the parents. But the mother disowned it and chased it off. It flew waveringly across the street to the big brick chimney on the restaurant. Bingo, down it went into the chimney. There's fate for ya.”

“Don't let's get maudlin over it,” laughed Mr. A. “I'll bet there's a pigeon down every big chimney in the city. One came down ours at home and got soot all over the rug before we got it removed. But that one never died.”

"Yeah, some live like Methuselah," said Tony. "Charmed life. Take that big blue cock, runner-up to champion last year. I caught him stealing a nest from one of the other cocks lately. He has a nasty habit like that. Well, I clipped him with my fist. Bang against the wall. It never bothered him. And you know what? That other cock that I was helping up and died. No reason at all."

"There was too a reason," Dave retorted, blowing a nice smoke ring around his glass. "Probably had Newcastle disease."

"When you say that, smile," laughed Tony.

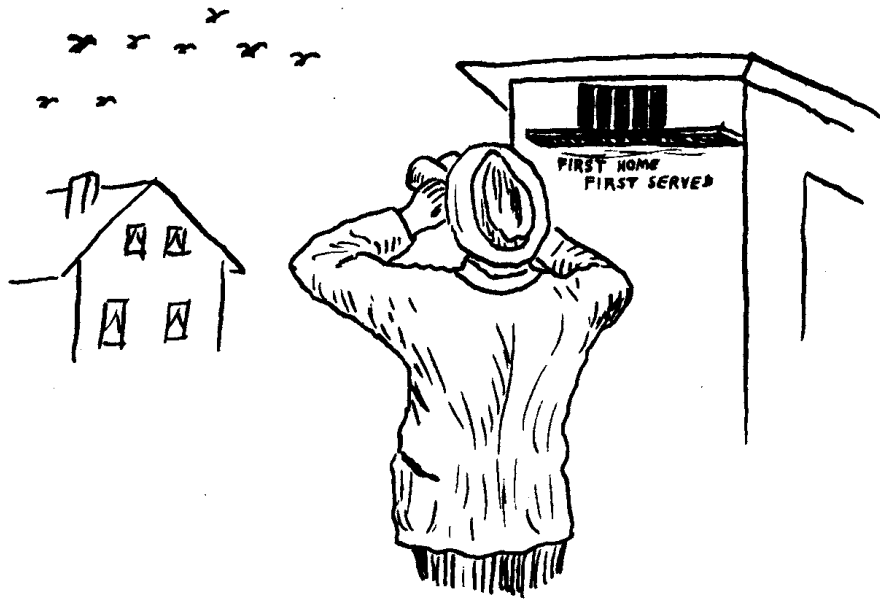
"Could be ornithosis, Tony," jibed Mr. C. "And the symptoms resemble several other maladies, such as cholera, uremic poisoning, cardiac failure, or edema of the lungs."

"Don't forget esophageal trichomoniasis!" roared Mr. A.

"Or apoplexy," added Dave.

"Say!" said Tony, rising to his feet and facing his tormentors, "what started this? Here I am peacefully enjoying a glass of beer and you throw da book at me. Next guy says a big name—he's a dead pigeon!"

—Pigeon Patter, January 1948, p. 9



GETTING THINGS STRAIGHT DEP'T.

Webster's dictionary defines pigeon thus: "Any bird of the widely distributed family Columbidae (Order Columbiformes); a dove; especially, one of the many domesticated varieties—derived from the rock pigeon (*Columba livia*) found on the coasts of Europe. The pigeons are altricial, and have a stout body with rather short legs, and a bill horny at the tip, but with a soft cere at the base."

Pigeon eggs, hard-boiled or poached, will surprise you. The albumen or white never gets very firm like that of hen or duck eggs, and may remain transparent.

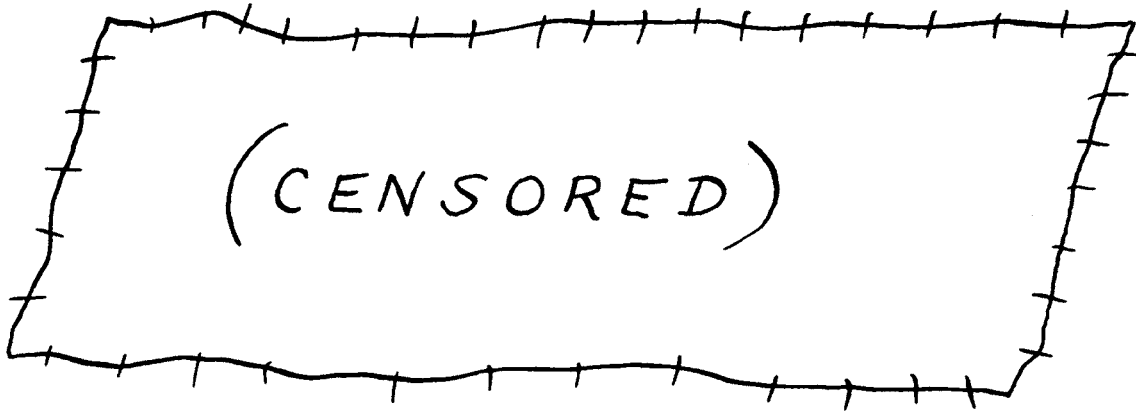
What's in a name? Look at these for pigeons and doves in Europe:

Columba (Latin)	Piccioni (Italian)
Colombe (French)	Pigeon (French, etc.)
Golub (Russian)	Biset (French)
Peristera (Greek)	Skvabb (Scandinavian)
Palumbus (Latin)	Squab (English)
Palomba (Italian)	Taube (German)
Palombe (French)	Dufva (Swedish)
Paloma (Spanish)	Duif (Dutch)
Turtur (Latin)	Dove (English)
Turturelle (French)	Due (Danish)
Turtle (English)	Doo (Scotch)

Interesting pigeon displays are to be seen in some museums: Examples, The U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C., and the Chicago Natural History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

—N P A Yearbook, 1947-48, p.31

(Note added later: the Greeks had some more words. Peleia and Treron were for doves; Trygon meant turtle dove; and Phassa or Phatta were used to designate the Wood Pigeon.)



THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF DOWN

Bob Kremer has brought the subject of down up and suggests for me to bat it around. O. K., I'll have an inning, but may be fielded out.

Down is normally long on squabs of wild species of pigeons and doves. Presumably it has some use—keeping the birds warm or dry or shielding from bright sun. Therefore we might expect short-down squabs to be more or less handicapped, at least when conditions are not very good, such as cold weather and careless parents.

A similar argument may be made regarding skin color of squabs. Wild species may develop very dark skin, especially when subjected to bright sun. Ultra-violet light in large doses, as most of us have learned by experience, is not to be enjoyed by palefaces! A well-tanned skin can take it though.

By some strange quirk of nature, short-downed types of pigeons (and doves) are also pale-skinned, but the reverse is not always true. To be specific:

- (1) Albino (recessive) pigeons have very short down and no dark pigment in skin, eyes, or feathers.
- (2) The white variety (sex-linked recessive) in ring doves is almost like albino pigeons, in general appearance.
- (3) Almond pigeons have short down and pale skin.
- (4) Auto-sexing pigeons have light skin and rather short down in the male sex. The auto-sexing factor ("faded") is known to have originated from almond.
- (5) Dilute (recessive, sex-linked) pigeons have short down and light skin.
- (6) "Blond" ring doves have a dilute factor essentially the same as that of pigeons, as shown by hybridizing.

- (7) "Pink-eyed-dilute" pigeons have short down and light skin (this is not sex-linked). (I might mention in passing that a pink-eyed-dilute type in chickens also has shorter than normal down.)
- (8) Combinations of the above types, such as "dilute almond", tend to be shorter-downed and still lighter-skinned.

There are exceptions. Silky-feathered pigeons, especially when homozygous, may have quite short down yet dark skin. And I have seen a few other examples of dark skin with short down, and don't know what the genetic basis was. Then there is the well known fact that bull-eyed white has white skin but ordinarily long down, and the same is true for the recessive red, smoky, and reduced factors.

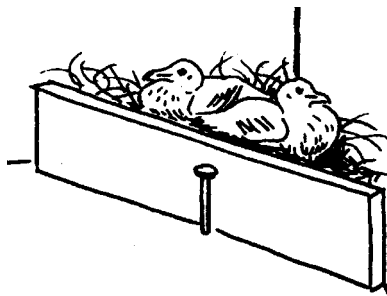
Now why should short-downed (and light-skinned short-downed) types be accused of "weakness"? Should they be accused without a statistical basis? We all know that these types can survive and breed, and often excellently. But 100% as well as other types?

The evidence that I have seen (and I shall not go into details here) all tends to indicate that there is weakness. Compared with otherwise similar stock that is not short-downed and light-skinned, the mortality rate of squabs is higher, by ten percent or more. That may not be terrific, but it is worth recognizing. After the birds get mature, little evidence of inferiority is available.

Granting weakness of these types, what should we do? Kill off all the almonds, dilutes, auto-sexing strains, etc.? Or should we look into the possibility of fortifying these birds? I personally favor the latter idea. Probably these squabs need extra amounts of certain vitamins (my guess is riboflavin). Somebody who is interested in this matter could easily test the idea with proper comparisons. I haven't been able to do everything myself.

Giant Homer breeders who claim great things for the breed in squab production may make history if they are the first to explain the riddle of weakness with short down. It is worth a try, even if it costs some effort, time, and money.

—Amer. Giant Homer Association Bull., July 1956, p. 7.



SHACKLES IN THE LAND OF FREEDOM?

by J. C. Reginald Tukesbury-Jones

In all justice to the reader, it is necessary to state that I am a newcomer to America, and only here for a period of industrial conferences lasting several months. I have had the honor of being invited to apply for U. S. citizenship, though that is quite out of the question.

Previous to my departure from England, we pigeon fanciers had been dashed well impressed with the apparent vitality of the fancy in the U. S. A. We had obtained several fine books, "The Pigeon" in particular surpassing anything produced either in Britain or on the Continent for decades past. And periodicals showed vigor as well. There was a vast amount of scientific study, extraordinary in depth and scope. We had been amazed at the discovery of "auto-sexing", scarcely dreamed of in England despite the fact that, as is well known, the earlier discovery of auto-sexing in domestic fowls was British. Some superb White Kings had also been purchased from America, and in the London shows they were a sensation. Quite possibly they may grace the Coronation ceremony. Prodigious squab-producing farms, unknown in Europe, had captured our imagination and seemed marvels of enterprise.

It is perfectly clear then that I jolly well expected great things here. My first disillusionment came early. Living in Boston, I discovered that the only fanciers in the city were of the lower classes, while to visit the others scattered many miles apart in the outlying districts a motor car is a necessity. No club meetings, so regular at home, appear to be held.

Another disillusionment was my observation that in the streets and commons one sees the same dirty mongrels as in any other city. I had expected more decorative sorts, perhaps Starlings or other Toys (of course by Starling I do not mean the small wild birds which I see have been introduced here from England).

Possibly this city is not truly representative of the United States as a whole. Indeed, I have seen no Red Indians or cowboys as yet. But why is it that no one whom I have consulted hereabouts knows anything about auto-sexing pigeons? And why is there apparently only one fancier in the entire Boston area who breeds White Kings? I went to the supposedly enormous squab company in Melrose, near the city, and found it to be merely a mail-order trade establishment, breeding no birds at all.

The climax was the celebrated Boston Poultry Show. With all candor, I must say that it was frightfully dull. The blatant commercialism was most shocking. In the pigeon division there was a beastly lack of educational effort for the visiting public. The fanciers present were in fact rudely indifferent to my

attempts to converse. Leaflets should be made available for the benefit of young persons and prospective fanciers. It is deplorable for me to have to suggest that in London it is done much better.

There was also an appalling narrowness of the exhibited varieties. One would think that this great show could assemble more than fifteen breeds. Where I had expected to find Kings in profusion there was not one. Nor did I find any of America's auto-sexing types.

All together it has been a shattering and disconcerting experience. It is as if one had been taken in by fraudulent advertisement. I cannot understand it except in terms of some unseen, mysterious fetters which have been imposed on the fancy from above. Knowing nothing of the persons who control such shows here, I can only wonder. Can anyone explain to me where the fault lies?

—Northeast Fanciers Exchange, Nov., 1949, p. 47.

DID YOU KNOW?

That Noah had no Fantails on the Ark?

That pigeons are no more faithful to their mates than people are?

That two squabs have been known to hatch from a single egg?

That direct sunlight will cause the skin of squabs in the nest to blacken, at least in breeds with black beaks?

That pigeons can be hybridized with Ringneck doves? And that the hybrids are almost always males?

That domestic pigeons of all kinds are not native to America, but were brought here from Europe?

That the skeleton of a pigeon (prepared by taxidermic methods) weighs only about half as much as the feathers?

That the pigeon is the only altricial species of bird domesticated for food purposes?

That America's most popular breeds, the Racing Homer and the King, were developed originally from planned crosses?

That pigeons can balance their own rations as well as any breeder, provided an adequate choice is afforded?

That there is a family of hereditarily naked Homer pigeons?

That pigeons with feet webbed like a duck's have been produced?

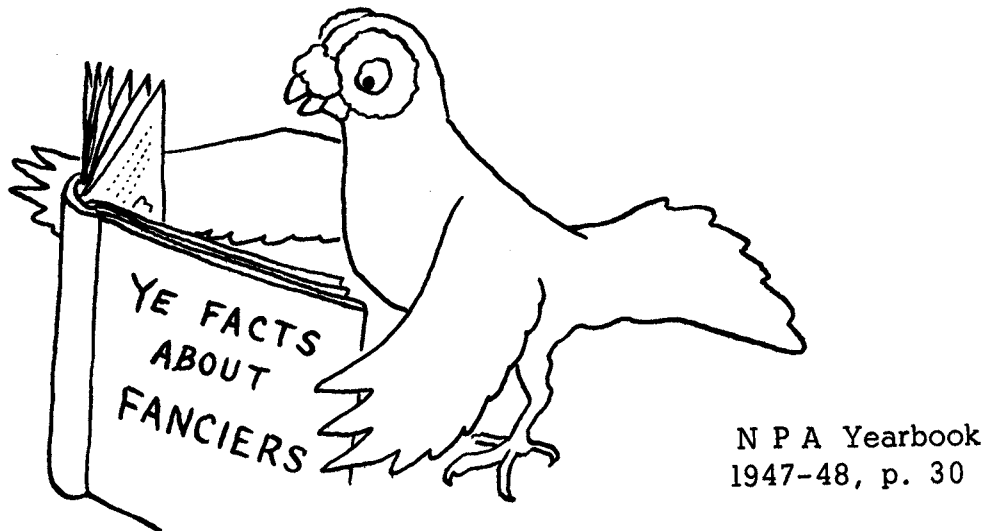
That pigeon eggs when boiled or poached usually have a more or less transparent white (albumen)?

That six-week-old squabs will produce pigeon "milk" in their crops in less than five days if they are injected with a little pituitary hormone (prolactin) in the breast muscle?

That the pigeon's voice box or syrinx is located on top of the heart?

That YOU too may know something of interest to other readers, and should write a letter to the editor about it?

—The Pigeon Loft, Feb. 1945, p. 9



FREAKS

The freaks which I am going to talk about now are monstrosities of rare occurrence. Let's confine the discussion to pigeons, though some fanciers may come under the definition. And let's exclude all breed and variety characteristics, because there is disagreement as to whether Pouters or Parlor Tumblers or Fantails or Barbs or Jacobins or Trumpeters etc. are freaks, depending on whether you breed them or like them, or don't.

Almost every breeder eventually raises a monstrosity or two, or sometimes many, but he is usually not proud of it; in fact, he may even wring the poor creature's neck to get it out of the way, so that he will not feel ashamed when visitors look at the birds. But what makes monstrosities?

There are three general sorts of freaks: those that lack parts of the body, those that have extra parts, and those that have distortions. Sometimes a freak

may be very complex and difficult to describe even in such classes, but then it is usually so abnormal that it fails to hatch.

In the first group, here are some examples of “lacks” that I have seen myself (pigeons of full development otherwise): one wing missing; eyes absent; rear toes absent; all feathers absent (naked pigeons); tail missing; breastbone lacking; tips of middle toes absent; and eyelids lacking fringe and immovable. In dead embryos one can sometimes find similar and even more extensive losses of parts. The beak is occasionally absent, either entirely or in part.

Freaks having extra parts are also well known—extra legs, extra toes and fingers, two heads, two tails, extra feathers, webbed toes, and additional lobes of the liver or other internal organs. I have seen one pigeon with four thyroid glands instead of the normal two.

Distortions may be of great variety. A common example is “cross-beak”, and another is clubbed foot. Benign tumor-like crests or protuberances sometimes occur. Very thick bones, folds of skin, and very small or very large claws may be classed here. But most peculiar of all are “lop-sided” birds, bigger on one side of the body than the other, so that they walk and fly awkwardly.

It is possible to imagine many reasons or causes for such malformations and others which may be found. There may be an actual injury during growth, so that loss or over-regeneration occur. Harmful bacteria may destroy organs, or distort their development. Certain poisons, as for example selenium, may be passed into the egg of a bird that has eaten food containing them, and thus harm the embryo. Dietary deficiencies of the mother may also be reflected in the eggs she lays. And there may be disturbances in the incubation of initially normal eggs—too much or too little heat or moisture at critical periods of embryonic development, or perhaps fouling of the eggs by the previous set of squabs.

But by far the most important and persistent cause of freaks is heredity. Maybe both parents are normal—they usually are. But defective or abnormal tendencies may be “carried” hidden for generations. Or the freak may be a “sport”, capable of being perpetuated but not carried by the ancestors at all. Lop-sided birds may be normal on one side and “sport” on the other. Sporting is brand-new change in the hereditary constitution. It is also termed mutation.

There is one more cause of monstrosity which may occur. Sometimes two or even more embryos may begin to develop on the same yolk. They may stay separate, but it is possible that they may grow together to form a single embryo, or one with two heads or tails or extra legs.

Freaks are a loss to anyone who has no interest in what makes life develop in this way or another. Medical schools keep museums of abnormal human beings, and it is an education of a sort to study the weird and astonishing errors that Mother Nature has made. As yet there is no such museum for pigeons. But that does not mean that they have no scientific value; a photograph

and brief description published by any magazine will put the cases on record at least, and specimens preserved in formalin (10%) or alcohol are usually accepted gladly by Zoology professors in colleges.

There is nothing to be ashamed of if a freak is raised in your loft. It happens in the best of families. It is easy to damage a machine by all sorts of tinkering, but by tinkering we learn how it works and how to improve it. In our case, Mother Nature does most of the tinkering and it is up to us to take advantage of the results if we can.

—The Pigeon Loft, Nov. 1944, p. 13

I WAS A PIGEONEER ON THE HOME FRONT

by H. P. Macklin

In April of 1943. . . I was pretty glum as I started the trek across the U. S. to become a Pigeoneer. One of the things I hated most in Army life was the uncertainty. Just when you thought you were setting pretty, wow! away you went. I certainly didn't know what to expect in California and about the only comforting thought was the knowledge that pigeons would be somewhere along the line.

The three of us, a little the worse for wear and dust, finally arrived at Bakersfield; went to the field (Minter) designated in our orders, only to find that there was no pigeon department there. In fact, the WACs and high-toned sergeants behind the desk thought the whole thing hilariously funny. All these "farmers" were being sent there by mistake. We were to be taken to a sub-field near the town's airport.

As the Army truck drove up to our destination, my heart sank at what greeted my eyes. So this was the 1310th Signal Pigeon Company (AG). A row of barracks that looked like chicken houses stared back at me. It resembled a desert and dead, brush-looking weeds gave the place a haunted look. We drove around the barbed wire fence until we finally found a gate that was unlocked and proceeded to the Orderly Room. All the buildings were empty but I did see a face stare at me out of the shower room. Then a hand appeared with a scrubbing brush and the face said, expressionless, "This is IT!"

The one clerk in the Orderly Room assigned us to barracks, and with our arrival the company had grown to 30 men! There was no Mess Hall, and we had to take our mess kits and walk a mile to the airport to be fed. The first day I

didn't bother to eat as my appetite had deserted me with the first look I got of my "future home".

I thought to myself that surely things just couldn't be as bad as they looked so I inquired around about the pigeons. No one seemed to know just when the birds would arrive. You see, we had no lofts yet and they didn't know just when the government would get around to sending them either. Well, you can't keep pigeons without lofts, so I lost my appetite for another day. By this time I was working in the office as that was my specialty.

Everyday saw more men piling into our "forgotten" outpost. Ninety per cent of them were in the same frame of mind as myself; they had had good jobs and were settled at their respective fields and then yanked out to California on a minute's notice. Most of them were fighting mad and, as I look back, I guess it was lucky for the pigeons that they were late in arriving.

One of the boys used my office phone one night (while I was writing my former First Sergeant begging him to get me out of this hole) and called his home in New Jersey. As soon as the preliminaries were over he told his mother to go out in the loft and kill every one of his pigeons. He explained—"if it hadn't been for those lousy critters I wouldn't be in this fix!"

The question on everyone's mind was, "Where's the birds?" or for that matter, "Where's the lofts?". We were sick of drilling and getting lectures on why we should respect our officers, but that was about all there was to do.

After a month or so the lofts started to arrive and the company was in a fever pitch of excitement. A few were erected but then they decided to wait to see when and how many birds we were supposed to get.

In typical army fashion the birds arrived in Bakersfield one Sunday morning and we knew nothing about it. One of our boys telephoned from town that he had seen "thousands" of pigeons at the depot and they were for us, the 1310th! Excitement ran through the camp like wildfire and boys were routed out of beds while trucks came roaring in from the motor pool. It looked more like an attack rather than the arrival of our long-awaited pigeons. If "thousands" of pigeons were at the depot, then lofts, yes, lots of lofts must be assembled at once. An emergency crew went to work on the lofts while the rest of the howling bunch sped off for the express station.

Well, after the dust settled, we had enough lofts up, some 500 birds, if I remember rightly, had arrived and quite a few of them were sick. So another section, the "hospital lofts," had to be erected at once. But the main thing was, the birds had arrived, and you never saw such a change come over a group of men. Every one was in a good mood and no complaints at all when it came to working on the lofts or with the birds.

There was quite a cross-section of personalities in our company. This included the "pigeon character" who talked your arm off and insisted on talking

pigeons, in a loud voice, in the bus, the theater, and so help me, even in church! As Company Clerk, I grew to know all of them and they all had their good sides even if they did deserve to be shot on some occasions. We had men that talked with accents; some were tough, some were gentle. We had horse trainers, dog trainers, farmers, orchard specialists, poultry experts, cage bird breeders, wild bird banders, naturalists, upholsterers, carpenters, lawyers, politicians, mechanical experts, forest rangers, truck drivers, in fact, just about everything you can expect from a cross-section of humanity.

We had quite a few New York Italians who were always throwing a monkey wrench in the works but who made up for it with their likable personalities and the belly-laughes they gave us with their antics. Apparently, those boys knew how to train women as well as pigeons. My phone was kept busy, especially if passes happened to be revoked for an evening.

Another peculiar thing was that no one in the company wanted it to be known that he was training pigeons. Since I took a great many of the phone calls I was always told, in confidence, just what I was supposed to say their duties were, just in case the girl should ask. We found one thing out early and that was no major field seemed to enjoy having a pigeon company around their premises. We soon became known as the “Bastard Company” because our sources of supply were changed quite often and we usually got our orders over the phone direct from Washington. Well, anyhow, we went busily on our way.

Some of the men were pigeon experts, some knew a little and some knew absolutely nothing about the birds. This held true with our officers as well. “Our officers”—I could go into that subject very thoroughly but I shall just skate along.

To begin with, pigeon racing men in civilian life have a one track mind when it comes to the “right” way to train homing pigeons, especially “Their” way. Well, they don't change when they get into the Army, let me tell you. So, while the coming of the “doves” brought good will and happiness to the 1310th Pigeon Company, it soon boomeranged into a gosh-awful wangle of who was telling who to fly what which way. The barracks bull-sessions of an evening had everyone on the coals, particularly the training methods that were at the time being put into practice.

To make a long story short, it was all very amusing, especially the facial expressions on some of the older enlisted men who had raced pigeons for years when they were being told how to train the Army birds by some youngster of an officer (who was a “veteran” pigeon trainer of possibly five or six years!)

I will say this for the officers: they had a very convincing way of talking pigeons even though they didn't know what they were talking about.

I can't vouch for this but some of the loft sergeants swore it was true. It seems one of the lieutenants instructed his men to get a warm bucket of water

for each loft and to gently lay a warm, wet cloth over the incubating eggs so as “to help the hen keep the moisture in the eggs”. The story goes that someone had whispered in his ear that the dry California climate would dry up the eggs! (The second morning the “new method” was suddenly dropped.)

Considering all the different “right” ways of training birds that were tried out on ours, the records showed rather good results. And it was amazing how the boys preferred the “hardships of the road” when the time came for portable loft training. Why, I couldn't even find half the company one day when the motor pool had been too liberal with the jeeps. That didn't happen again especially after one pair of pigeoneers (who never looked at a pigeon until they got in our company) took a basket of birds out for release. After chalking up 72 miles on the jeep, they brought the birds back with them! (They had made a few stops on the way and were cooing like turtle doves when we caught up with them.)

We had fair success with night flying and on the whole the pigeons had a better average than the men on finding their way home after dark. In fact, one time we had to send some of the enlisted men out to find the officers as they became “confused” while trailing in the wrong direction. (I nearly lost my job for inserting that fact in my Company History.)

Taking it all in all I was glad to be in a pigeon company. We had dogs and cats all over the place. In fact, the company mascot had her five pups under my bed. We had game chickens, sparrow hawks, snakes, white rats, and for one day, a cow, to keep us company during our duty hours. It wasn't long either, until little private lofts of fancy and homing pigeons began to spring up just outside the training area. And the enthusiasm of those Sunday morning races between our birds and those of the townspeople! Yes, I enjoyed it after the birds arrived and my only regret is that I was separated from the Company when it split up to go overseas.

— Amer. Pigeon Journal, Jan. 1946, p. 208

BEEG MONYA FROM SQUABS

He was a nice-looking young fellow, about 22 years old, I think, and had a job in a restaurant with fair pay. He had a good high school education, with a lot of shop-work training. In his five years since high school he saved his money carefully. Since he lived with his parents, who were immigrants and had a small filling-station-store at the edge of the city, he had few expenses. His only vice was smoking. Let's call him Al.

Next to the filling-station-store was the farm of a poultry broiler raiser. Al watched this farmer's ups and downs. Al didn't want to raise broilers—too smelly, too risky. But Al didn't feel satisfied. He wasn't using his training.

One day Al read an ad in a magazine. "Raise squabs. Luxury market, easily raised, 25 days, steady profit. Send for free book. Melrose Rock Squab Company." Al sent. He got the fever. He made plans. Here was where his training was to show its value.

Al studied the housing suggestions. In his spare time he built a five-unit house capable of holding 150 pairs of white pigeons, the very best, from Melrose Rock. This building took him nearly a year to complete, and cost about 1400 dollars of his savings. It was well done, with plumbing, electricity, welded metal bars, and so on. Al was proud of it, and the broiler-raising farmer was impressed with the simplicity of it all.

Al sent off for fifty pairs of pigeons at last, which cost another tidy sum. Quality is what counts, said Al. He explained his plan to his parents. He would sell the squabs directly to the restaurant and thus have no middleman to deal with.

It was a busy life for Al then. The pigeons arrived, very dirty and bedraggled; they took their baths immediately, and soon looked beautiful. However, three died within a week and Al sent for replacements. Al gave them the best of care, according to directions. Soon he had some squabs—about a dozen. Al decided to raise these to fill the empty pens.

Al raised all his squabs for about eight months and finally filled all the pens. Next was the raising of squabs only for the restaurant. Unfortunately Al had made no deal with his boss; Al found that his boss was not enthused. In fact, he said nothing doing; this restaurant wasn't a night club or a coffee shop. But Al wasn't easily discouraged. He prevailed on the boss to give the squabs a try. Price? Well, they'd settle that after a couple of weeks. So the squabs went on the two-dollar-fifty dinner menu. They sold out. People brought friends. Al didn't have enough squabs to keep up. He was delighted, but it was a lot of work, taking care of the birds and picking feathers. He wondered how he would manage when all those young birds began producing.

At the end of the year, on the anniversary of his birds' arrival, he made a balance sheet. He had spent a little over \$2200 all together, and that included the building, taxes, electricity bill, water bill, all feed, grit, miscellaneous supplies, and some help. The monthly bill for feed was running around \$50.00 now. On the other side was income from about 150 squabs at 80¢ each—\$120.

Next year he figured he should raise over a thousand squabs for sale, maybe 1500. Of course the first year's record of only 350 squabs was what one would expect from birds moved to new homes. So next year the income should go up to about a thousand dollars or more. Now let's see, the birds would need more

feed next year; Al estimated a total of perhaps \$700. Then if all went well he'd make a profit of say \$400.

A little calculation indicated that in about five years he could get back all the money he had sunk. What then? Yes, what then? The long grind of extra work, new customers, build more pens—more money sunk?

Al hung on a little longer. He wasn't a quitter. But he got sick. Squabs piled up in the pens—he couldn't dress them. When he recovered, he wrote a letter to Melrose Rock:

“Dear Sirs: Illness has made it necessary for me to sell my pigeons. I have about 150 pairs can you buy these”

—N P A Yearbook, 1950-51, p. 34



MOULTING TIME

by Kleur van Duiven

Day by day the season turns to Fall:
 Though summer's heat still fumes,
 The pigeons sense the silent call
 And start to change their plumes.

Feathers, feathers on the floor,
 Flights and coverts, quills and down,
 Sweep them up and down come more,
 Piling in the corners, blowing all around.

Now in wing and breast and tail
 Turgid sprouting cylinders appear,
 Flake their casings and unveil
 Spreading vanes for one more year.

Basking in the sunshine
 Or bathing in the rain,
 Primping, preening, dabbing oil,
 —There, the job's all done again.

—N P A Yearbook, 1947-48, p. 25

HANDLING PIGEON PRESS RELATIONS

“Sure, come on in, this is a pigeon show, open to the public, free, gratis, no charge. Take a look around, maybe you'll get the pigeon bug too.”

“Oh, no, no bugs. I'm a reporter. Could you explain the birds to me?”

“Glad to. Now this here is what you call a Racing Homer. You'd probably call it a carrier pigeon, but a Carrier isn't a Homer and a Homer isn't a Carrier, see? Newspapers always get that mixed up. A Carrier can't carry messages. Here's a real Carrier over here, I mean the kind that doesn't carry. See, it is too over-developed to do that sort of work.”

“Well for heavens sake, what does it do?”

“Nothing. It's a show bird. Show birds are just for show. You see, this show is put on by a pigeon club and the members are fanciers and they compete for prizes.”

“Oh, I see, you mean like a dog show, blue ribbons and all that, even if the dog couldn't keep awake to watch for burglars?”

“Yeah. Now here's another breed, the Fantail. That funny jerking of the head and neck is just natural—they all do it. And here is a Hungarian—neat marking, huh? And here is a bunch of Kings. Nice cobby stuff, huh? They use Kings a lot to raise squabs, you know squabs, they serve 'em at high-class banquets and stuff. Fancy eatin' but personally I don't like 'em—too greasy.”

“I thought you said the pigeons were just for show. Now you say they are used for food. Are the Carriers and Fantails and Hungarians no good for food?”

“Oh, sure, they are just the same as any other kind of squabs, only they don't breed as fast or aren't as big. Now look over here, this is a Runt. That's the biggest kind.”

“The biggest? Then it must be the best for squabs.”

“Nope, too big and slow. Now here's a Jacobin. Its head is down there in the neck feathers. Look at that sweep of feather! And over here is a Blondinette, perfect lacing and peak. Swell enties this time. And here's the Modena, perfect Gazzi. Bowl shape, that's the ideal. Look at this one, this is an Archangel.”

“This is all very interesting, but let me make some notes. Now who is the sponsor of the show?”

“Parkton Pigeon Club. You know Robert Render? He's the prexy. Lives over on Maple Avenue.”

“Does he keep pigeons there? In his house?”

“Well, not in his house. In a loft. A loft is a pigeon house, not a barn loft. Some places in the city you can't keep pigeons, they aren't allowed, livestock, you know.”

“But the street pigeons can go there, can't they?”

“Street pigeons? Oh, you mean commies. Sure, law means nothing to them. But fanciers never keep commies.”

“What do you feed the birds—popcorn and peanuts?”

“No, we use regular feed, corn, peas, wheat and so on, and health grit. Has salt and minerals in it, you see.”

“And how do you tell the males from the females?”

“Oh, little differences in behavior, mostly. You have to be experienced. But there is some new-fangled way to breed them with males one color and females another—sex-link, it's called.”

“Well, thanks a lot, I'll have to get going. I'm supposed to cover this in an hour.”

Result in the next day's Parkton Chronicle:

PIGEON SHOW IN ARMORY

“Parkton Armory this week houses a novel event—a pigeon show, sponsored by Parkton Pigeon Club. The club is made up of fencers. These people live in special parts of the city and grow pigeons in lofts on the ground floor. They are very law-abiding and do not tolerate communist pigeons.

“There are many kinds of pigeons on display with prices and ribbons. The Carrier pigeons are like vultures and don't carry anything. The Raising Homer is the real Carrier because it raises and carries things.

“There are white pigeons with jerking heads called Fantails, and Hungarian pigeons with so-called Neet marking. And more large white pigeons called Kings which are eaten as squabs. They have something to do with corn cobs, apparently a special diet, but the fencers think squabs are not very good food because they are too grassy.

“There are some peculiar names for other kinds, showing that fencers have a sense of humor. The Runt is actually the biggest of all, and the Blondie Net is more like a black net. Then there is the Mudina, which has something to do with mud in a bowl. This is described as perfectly Godsy. And then there is the Archangel, which really looks like a little devil.

“The fencers give the pigeons a substitute food instead of peanuts and popcorn. It is regular-health feed, salt and minerals on corn, peas, and wheat. Only experts can tell males from females, except by a new method of coloring them with axle-ink.

“The show lasts until Thursday night and no admission is charged.”

—Amer. Pigeon Journal, May 1948, p. 105

PATHOLOGY—IT'S SICKENING!

At the NPA business meeting in Milwaukee last January I was asked to comment on what research is in progress on pigeon diseases. My reply was that a fair number of uncoordinated lab studies have been and are going on, not just in the U. S. but also in many foreign countries. These studies generally involve pigeons as experimental subjects, more or less like tools. That is, the research is not as a rule for pigeons but with them.

That does not mean that such studies are of no use to us. Under the circumstances we should be thankful. However, it is an unending and tricky job to find out about such work. Usually there are published reports, and I can eventually run these down in the library. Then they must be read (often in French, Spanish, German, Dutch, etc.), digested, evaluated, and filed. A lot of reports are of little value because of their particular subject, duplication of other work, or poor quality.

I have the vague impression that some NPA members think there is some sort of panacea or magic solution for “the disease problem”, and that this is attainable by somebody else's research. Such an attitude is in my opinion foolish and dangerous. Each disease brings its own problems, often quite different from those of another disease. Treatment or control of one trouble-maker may open the way for another. New kinds of bacteria, viruses, protozoa, molds, and other parasites may arise or be imported from other lofts, from other kinds of birds, or from other parts of the world. Some kinds run their course and disappear, others reach a climax and then subside but don't disappear, and still others never relax. One's defense must be appropriate to the enemy. The breeder who is afraid to

soil his hands in posting a bird, or who wants some government agent to be his guardian angel, or who is nauseated even by reading about diseases, is inviting disaster.

From the above sentiments, it should be evident that the Research Committee is not doing much tinkering with glassware, but striving for knowledge. The trouble is that my time is limited. If breeders take the attitude that this is a subject to be left to the Research Committee unless it hits them between the eyes, we shall fail. Not a single NPA member has shown interest in participating. One doesn't have to be a medical man or a veterinarian. I think everybody should look into the problems and prepare for emergencies, not wait stupidly and panic. If you think my approach is wrong, let me have it straight.

Recently I got hold of a big two-volume German treatise “Pathologie der Laboratoriumstiere” (Diseases of Laboratory Animals). I figured that it should be a gold mine of information on pigeon disease research. It was published in 1958, and is by a large number of specialists, under the editorship of three noted veterinary pathologists, Cohrs, Jaffé, and Meessen. Pigeons parrots, and canaries are dealt with in one chapter by H. Köhler, pages 578-714. As a matter of fact I got about 150 new (to me) references from this, including several important ones. Unfortunately Köhler's review is uninspired and uncritical, and in spite of the wealth of bibliography he has missed many works covered in Levi's book The Pigeon. Köhler apparently has had little or no personal experience with pigeons.

One of the books referred to by Köhler repeatedly is “Die durch Obduktion feststellbaren Geflügelkrankheiten” by A. Eber and his daughter Ruth Pallaske-Eber, published 1934 in Hanover, Germany. This is a digested record of post-mortem studies from 1911-1930 at the Animal Disease Institute of the University of Leipzig. I have studied the book and herewith present a few notes:

About 2170 pigeons were included, mostly from North and Middle Germany. About 40% had “infectious diseases”—virus, bacterial, or fungus; about 30% had miscellaneous accidents, inflammations of undiagnosed cause, etc.; about 15% had worms; about 3% of the females had trouble with the reproductive organs; and finally there were other miscellaneous troubles such as poisoning, tumors, ruptured spleen, heart failure, etc. Strangely, only two cases of trichomoniasis are reported, and no cases of ornithostrongylosis. I suspect some of those undiagnosed inflammations, diphtheria and Aspergillus infections!

This book does not deal with treatment or prevention, but is designed to aid the veterinarian (or you and me) in diagnosis. Therefore it has a morbid flavor which I find stimulating. It shows how diagnosis changes with the times—Eber knew nothing about ornithosis, so he found none. He never examined the thyroid glands so he found no goiter. What will the next thirty years bring?! And how about you, dear reader—when did you last get out those trusty scissors to

post a bird? Can you tell when something looks different from normal? Or is ignorance the same old bliss?

—N P A News, October 1959, p. 21

FLUFF AND FEATHER

by Hal L. Campbell

Fluff! Known to pigeoneers as a “light down”; to those of the writer's cult a “let down.” A “let down” is usually tolerated by reasonable folks. The exceptions are those individuals who dabble in writing publicity blurbs and who in the cause of their illustrious careers as news hounds pull their share of reportorial “boners.” When they slip-up and are compelled to admit it, it is termed a lapsus calami. These are the cognoscenti; the elect of the gods, infallible and inviolable. When a common or garden variety of scribe with a life membership in the society of the “great unwashed” miscues, often the result of a “bum steer” it is !!x!! (censored) stupidity. If he happens to inadvertently poach upon what these lordly individuals deem their sacrosanct property and “steal” some of their thunder, the crime is the heinous offense of lese majeste, and the punishment—hypothetical of course—is that the culprit be drawn and quartered, and his noggin decorate the business end of a pikestaff and placed in some prominent spot, there to be derided or deemed a martyr according to the disposition of the bystanders. The identification of the cognoscenti is unmistakable. From one corner of his mouth protrudes the moist remains of a black cigar; from the other side issues a tirade of abuse, heaped upon the defenseless head now adorning the pike-staff. His philippic is punctuated with a succinct, probic brand of verbiage in an attempt to describe his prowess as a master of the Hunt and Peck system, and his adroitness as one afflicted with the incurable malady known to those who haunt the back pages of Webster's Best Seller as: furor scribendi.

—Amer. Pigeon Journal, July 1945, p.103



ECCE DODO

Behold the obese dodo bird—it isn't any more.
 Its story has been often heard, but never is a bore.
 This fowl was like an ostrich in a dumpy sort of way—
 It found an isolated niche to keep off beasts that prey.

So on the isle Mauritius in South Seas peace it throve
 A-gobbling nuts delicious that fell from palms above.
 It lolled around not flying and cut down on its brain
 —What was the use of trying? for thinking's quite a strain.

There came some men, whole ship loads, with praises for the bird
 Mauritius was a cross-roads for sailors who had heard.
 Its faith in man was very gay, for man was sure no beast
 Man didn't pray, not ever, nay, till dodo was deceased.

—Anon.

OFF TO YE NATIONAL

Hooray! Oh boy! Green light! I can go! Four whole days off! The boys at the office will handle my work while I'm gone, and my pay won't be docked.

Can't go by train or bus—takes too long. As I figure it, the trip will set me back about a hundred eighty bucks; of course I'll have to cut corners, like not getting the best hotel room. My wife won't be along, naturally—has to keep the kids fed and all that; school, you know. And my boy will tend my birds twice a day.

It'll be grand to see all my fine feathered friends again and yak far into the night. Then too there'll be all that liquid refreshment, California climate, the banquet, the _____. And the show room!

I'll have to check over some of those 5000 birds. Must be quite a hall!
 Yep, the life! Whoopee!! Be seein ya!!!

P. S., Jan. 9. Couldn't get to the airport, car wouldn't start, too damn cold. Have to cancel everything.

Oh well, I'll be saving a couple of hundred bucks. That's a whole year's feed bill, at that. And I won't be hungover, or hoarse from too much gab and

smog; and I'll be sure my birds won't be neglected. Guess the boys at the office, and the family, aren't too sorry I'm staying.

Well, see ya next year, pals!

—N P A News, Feb. 1962, p. 17

THE MANURE PROBLEM

Most fanciers can't see manure. Most other people can't see anything else.

Pigeon fanciers are in no worse predicament than the dog men, the cat ladies, the horse lovers, the hamster kids, and the rabbit people. In fact we should be very thankful we don't have their added urine problem. But the pigeon fancy will stay in the doghouse unless our problem is met and solved.

The usual solution is to spend Sunday cleaning out. Scraper, shovel, dust mask, wheelbarrow, garbage pails, and elbow grease. But the pigeons don't seem to appreciate clean floors. And Sunday is a poor day, especially if it rains or if visitors come, so most of us let things pile up a bit. After it gets about six inches deep we can say we are following Levi's "powdered dropping system" for better health. Funny thing is it works. But let a non-fancier look at that floor!

If the climate is not too harsh another solution is to have wire floors. One-inch mesh is least likely to clog with feathers, and if the floor is two or three feet clear of the ground, care is easy. A little raking weekly is enough—earthworms underneath will decompose the accumulation without odor.

The manure problem is worst at a show. Not only do visitors get bad impressions, but the birds are nervous and mess up their feet and feathers. Diseases can be traded around very easily, especially paratyphoid.

The Association could make show history by being the first ever to use wire floors for show coops. I figure it would cost about a dollar a hole to do a snazzy job of it, but that would be an investment. Still, considering that no pigeon club is well off, this is probably a foolish pipe dream.

Well, guess I better go out and start scraping. The other fellows can spread it thicker than I can, any day. Oh, hi, Ed! Nice of you to come to visit!

—Amer. Giant Homer Assoc. Bulletin, Mar. 1964, p. 4

NIGHT, DAY, and SWINGSHIFT

An interesting experiment was made back in 1948 that still seems newsworthy. It was at the poultry farm of Kansas State College, and the experimenter was a graduate student, Herman D. Smith.

He started with seven pairs of common pigeons in a light-tight house, on June 14. From June 23 to July 8, two weeks, day and night were reversed: the house was kept dark from 6 A. M. to 6 P. M. , and then the lights were turned on until 6 A. M. Smith reports: "Pair #1, which had been brooding when the light schedule was changed, were irregular in brooding the first day; that is, both male and female were on the nest for short periods. The following day, however, a regular schedule was begun which they and the rest of the birds coming into production followed rather closely. The male bird came on the nest about 10 P.M. and remained until about 4 A. M.

"On July 8 the light period was reduced to four hours—4 P. M. to 8 P. M. During this test the pattern was not so regular as in the day-night reversal. At first the females relieved the males in the dark. Then followed an intermediate period in which the exchange of nest duty occurred within the light period. The final picture was that the males relieved the females in the dark, and the females relieved their mates just before the lights went off."

Well, it looks as if the birds adjust to sudden changes in their schedules about as rapidly as we could—maybe more so. Now we wonder what they'd do if the lights were left on all the time, or if they were put on eight-hour shifts!

—N P A Newsletter, July 30, 1954

PRETZEL BREEDING

Experts in the peristeronic world disagree about the best way to breed pigeons. Some say you should line-breed, but just how straight or crooked the line should be, and whether it should go backward or not, seem totally arbitrary. Some say inbreeding is good; some say it is bad; some say a dash of it is okay but don't overdo it. And some say cross-breeding or at least strain crossing is fine, some say it is criminal, and some say, Ssh, don't tell about it or your stock will get a bad rep.

For some inexplicable reason, breeders have repeatedly asked me how do I breed. These fellows of course have never seen my birds; that may have something to do with their faith in Science. My specialty is pretzel breeding. It's

very simple, not only to explain it but also to practice it. First in, then out, then follow the line around, then back-cross, and then start over again, anywhere. To do the job up brown, expose briefly to a hot argument and add a grain of salt. In my experience the squabs produced by this system are nicely variable and go well with sage and celery dressing.

The Bible says quite a lot about breeding, but unfortunately in a lot of the series of “begats” the females got omitted completely, so the exact system isn't clear. It is too bad that Moses didn't get an eleventh commandment such as “Thou shalt not pretzel breed”, or something.

Apparently the first pigeon man to go all out for inbreeding was Noah. In view of his success perhaps we should consider it seriously, although it has been argued that he was all wet. A French experimenter named Lienhart put the matter to the test. By the eighth generation of consecutive brother-sister matings, his birds became extinct from sterility and weakness. On the other hand, crossing pigeons with ringneck doves at the University of Wisconsin also wound up with extinction from sterility.

If you consult the textbooks on scientific breeding, for example “Animal Breeding Plans”, by J. L. Lush, you get into all sorts of complications, such as the use of arithmetic in figuring out homozygosity and the relative significance of heterosis. It is questionable how much advanced the new textbooks are over the Old Testament when it comes to advice.

So you see, obviously, we are between the devil and the deep blue yonder. The only way out is to do like the music—go round and round. Try pretzel breeding. You may not like the results, but you can eat 'em.

—Amer. Pigeon Journal, August 1953, p. 254

FIGGERS DON'T LIE

by Zezem Foggerthot

Ray sure is shakin the bones these days bet you thouhgt I was in the grave long ago. Yep its been many a day sinse my name got in a pigeon paper so you can see the fever must be risin cant say I made a milion out of this squab business espesally sinse prohbiton was repeled and the corn all had to be fed but by dam I still be young enough to pick em eh Ray? Well what for shoud I wait up on the meat of this here spiel so here goes. When a guy has lived with the birds as long as me he lerns a mite mostly from doin things wrong the first time and when a guy like rootin Ray soft soaps you and says cmon old foggy and spill some

of them beans of expernience for us novises well I never had as much use for dark secrets as lite talk anyway. Back in school (how the hell do you suspose I lerned to read and write then?) my arithmetic techer used to say put yer given facts on the left and yer question on the right and work it out undernethe. Yep the ansers sure went around undernethe alright but workin was somethin else. Back at the last Natuonal and aint we ichin for the next I was havin a drink with Holman dont let him give you that teetotaler line he can spiel like a barker and he was feelin mihgty low. Zezem he says, times is bad, if I had a racket like you it sure would be nise. This pigeon magizine and rabbits is no gold mine. He never even herd me when I told him off Frank you old blockhead I says, yer grass is just as green as mine stick to it and use yer imajination like you useter at Chatawkua meetins. Man that gang from Texas was a caution. Been years sinse me and Doc Nugent and Powers and Church had a desent crap game will them days ever return. And there was Ray King and of corse Ray Gilbert with those everlastin Parlors and Levi braggin what a great book he is writin and Roy Payne and Bob Volopick and Harry Weber and Earl Emery whoap makes me feel old. Well what I was fetchin up to was how to figger yer profitts in the squab business so like my old teacher told me Ill lay it out right and left and you help work it out undernethe.

Given facts	Question
<p>Costs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feed corn 70 cents a bushel oats 25 cents a bushel oystershell \$3 a hundred salt \$2 a hundred 2. repairs on lofts about \$10 a year 3. repairs on windmill and pipes about \$30 a year 4. shells to shoot varmints about \$40 a year 5. blacksmith work on horse and wagon about \$10 a year 6. Dues to NPA and magazines about \$6 a year 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is total cost?
<p>Income</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sales of live squabs to market 20 cents each in sumer 25 cents each other times 2. Trespassin collections about \$10 a year 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is total income?

Now figgerin this out is not so dam easy because things aint the same ever year for instence corn useter be lots cheaper and trespassin aint always reglar but it averges out. Figgerin on about a thousand birds and sellin about three thousand squabs a year and about half of them at sumer price, it costs close to five hunderd dollars a year and income is about 700. So you see I get a nise profit. Trading manure for some of the feed is a good idea and it pays to let the birds out to scrach in sumer. Yes sir experninence pays so get yer figgers strait and Ill see you and Ray at the next Natuonal.

—N P A Newsletter, Nov. 1946

THE LOS ANGELES SHOW

by Hal L. Campbell

It was in the Homer section I met a lady who informed me she was writing an epic poem on the Homer; she of course called it the "Carrier". For a full hour of my precious time I had to give this embryo Sappho the history of the breed from the time of Pliny, who was the Wendell M. Levi of his time (23 B. C. to 79 A. D.), to "Babe Twombly", happily of this present day and age. The enterprising poetess looked as if she had just blown in from Greenwich Village; low-cut shoes, black lisle stockings, mannish, severe cut dress, straight grayish hair and large horn-rimmed glasses. If dress and (lack of) make-up was any indication of her ability, Gertrude Stein and Edna Millay had better look out for their reputations. That dame asked more questions than a young district attorney, the replies to which she copied in a copious note book. If you should ever have the misfortune to encounter her like at a pigeon show, my advice is duck into the nearest rest room and hide. I believe it was friend Metcalf who shyly steered this curious reincarnation of the Sapphic era to me. May his progeny grow up to become Show King breeders.

I have yet another peeve. Long and often have I intimated that the A. O. C. section has been abused. It was instituted in the first place to encourage the propagation of colors not classified. Going through the aisles I found the A. O. C. sections cluttered up with a mass of colors that would do justice to Joseph's coat of biblical renown: An indescribable collection of mismarked birds, most of which should never be seen in a showroom, and a goodly number of them fit only to figure under pie crust. They were a disgrace to the breed they were said to represent; an eyesore to the real pigeoneer; and a theme for wonderment to the

layman. Mismarked, miscolored birds are sometimes useful as breeding stock in the loft, but there they should remain. If a bird is no color it can't be Any Other Color, and I have yet to see a standard that provides a class for harlequins. At the last year's show I passed up a number of Red and Yellow Norwich Croppers with colored tail feathers where only white should be. They were masquerading in the A. O. C. classes whereas they should have been in the classes provided for Reds and Yellows, and be penalized for these blemishes. This year, when asked to judge the Norwich, I let it be known that I would follow the same procedure as that which I adopted the previous year. It was indeed a great satisfaction to me to find that not a single bird in the Red and Yellow classes was penned having the unsightly blemish of colored feathers in its tail. All birds shown in the A. O. C. classes were those whose colors had not been classified. And, all birds in the Red and Yellow classes had the full complement of tail feathers, or else.

Banquet was a "corking" success. The femme ensemble put on a floor show of revealing nature. Johnny Becker admitted there were other living creatures besides the Modena that lavishly displayed bounteous curves. Meal ducats set the guests back two bills and a half. The money was worth it! After the "banquet" several guests adjourned to Phillip's eatery to get a meal. Others went home and raided the icebox. One guest who ordered the entire bill o' fare, from appetizer to toothpicks, was asked by the waiter if he would have it on "rye or white". There is no truth, it appears, in the rumor that a certain pigeonality was seen setting his watch by the weighing machine in the "Bucks' Room". . . .

—Amer. Pigeon Journal, Mar. 1946, p. 39

VERY NICE BUT A.O.C.

We of the U. S. A. take great pride in our progress. We invented a lot of things first; we out-produce, We out-compete, out-sell, out-date, and out-rank all comers. That is, except in pigeons. There it is a different story. We import fancy birds in quantity from European experts; we listen with awe to a new theory of homing ability from England, where it was already considered hokum; we don't try new things developed in the U. S., because they are too new and merely American.

How many breeds or varieties of pigeons have their origin in the United States as compared with Turkey, India, Italy, France, Germany? Count them on less than the fingers of one hand. Look at our master breeders—how many of them created more than a better strain of a good variety of an old breed?

What does it all add up to? Why, progress amounts to standing still, not losing the quality we have, or maybe making infinitesimal improvements. The only really new thing on the breeding horizon in the last ten years is “auto-sexing”, a new color discovered here in this country, but still almost unknown. All auto-sex birds in a show are classed A. O. C.

I think a lot of fanciers would like to see new American developments but are discouraged by the iron rules laid down in years gone by. “What's the use of developing a new breed if it can't get a place in a show? The old boys that run things say there are too many varieties already. “Too many? Well then, why not throw some out completely, such as the Blue King, or the Black Fantail, or the Birmingham Rollers and Racing Homers that fill up the show pens and waste the judges' time instead of sticking to performance? Oh, but Heaven forbid! Those are old, established things, and some powerful old-timers promote them.

A little imagination can suggest new breeds that could be made and that would have a rightful place in the show. And lots of new color varieties. Here is one example: the pencilled Fantail. If that wouldn't be more of a challenge to any breeder than the plain black, then he's no true fancier.

Well, why don't I have the courage of my convictions and breed it? Well hmmmmm. I think I could if I wanted to, but I'm more interested in other types. And why don't you go ahead and breed it? You don't know how? Why, for shame, to admit that those inferior unprogressive Europeans can do things you can't! After all, it's just a matter of crossing and testing and selection for about ten years. Oh, you can't wait ten years? You're really an old boy at that.

But suppose you breed it, at a cost of several hundred culls, a hundred sacks of feed, and ten years—what do you get out of it? Just fun, because when you put it in the show, the answer is: Yeah, very nice, but A. O. C.

—All-Pets Magazine, March 1953, p. 146

THE WORST DISEASE

Well, it all started back about 1923 when my pet common pigeon tried to make friends with a milk truck. Unfortunately she didn't wait for it to stop. With the aid of a sympathetic friend the resulting lacerations were sewed up. They got badly infected and such a stink, but finally she got well and had more sense.

As my flock grew, I became interested in production. Most of the birds seemed to have other ideas. They either wouldn't lay, or they didn't hatch, or they didn't raise the young. It was most discouraging. I began to recognize

canker and intestinal worms in some of the dead ones. Then I learned that pigeons had to have “health grit”. I got some. The birds were crazy for it. When funds ran low, I discovered I could make my own health grit according to formulas in pigeon books. It was amazing how much better production the grit gave me, but there was still death right and left to keep the stock from over-population.

As time went on, I found that certain families were dying out while others were multiplying. Survival of the fittest. Also it became apparent that cross-bred birds are generally superior in stamina over pure-breds. I positively could not keep a Red Carneau or a White King alive six months.

An omniscient acquaintance informed me that I could hardly expect to keep “good” birds in such an unsanitary place. The floor was muck in every rain; the feed trough was a parade ground; the water pan was worse. Disease thrives in filth, I learned. So I got religion and sanitized but I guess that those diseases were so ingrained by that time that it was too late. Many of the birds were chronically wheezy, skinny, lumpy, and dysenteric.

Then I read in one of the books that to spare the axe would spoil the stud. Eureka! I got the axe. Salvation rested on sadism as well as sanitation. Unfortunately, after thus purging the flock of most troubles, I lost most of the remaining birds to a big dog that tore open the cage one night and slaughtered even more efficiently than my axe.

As time and my education progressed, I discovered more and more things that would kill or disable the birds, such as vitamin deficiencies, snakes, bedbugs, glandular disorders, inherited abnormalities, virus diseases from chickens, pox, malaria, and what have you. Any one of these can be serious, and my birds experienced all of them eventually to some degree. And often several at once.

What is the worst disease? Is it coccidiosis? Paratyphoid? Tuberculosis? Canker? Aspergillosis? Feed poisoning? Take your choice—they can all make you want to quit the game.

But it is not necessary for everybody to go through all the blunders that I did to raise pigeons with a minimum of disease. Knowledge can be obtained by reading. If you are still reading, I hope my comments will aid your knowledge; knowledge rather than a big medicine cabinet is our chief aid against diseases. I use no tonics or patent medicines—in fact, two items make up my present set of drugs: carbolated vaseline and bluestone, mostly against canker. That does not prove the valuelessness of other medicines, but I know of no proof of their value. Prevention, by wholesome food, sanitation, quarantine, and the axe seem far more fundamental to me now. Of course it is desirable to have tough, naturally hardy stock too, but that isn't always so easy to get.

There is one consolation in an epidemic. When it is over (and most epidemics eventually die out or kill out) your remaining birds must be pretty tough. But don't expect tuberculosis or worms to disappear without effort.

So what's the worst disease? For the fancier who is not too much concerned over some financial loss, I'd say pessimism is the worst disease. Consider every hurdle a challenge, and make its solution an added trophy on your mantel.

—N P A Yearbook, 1950 - 51, p. 28

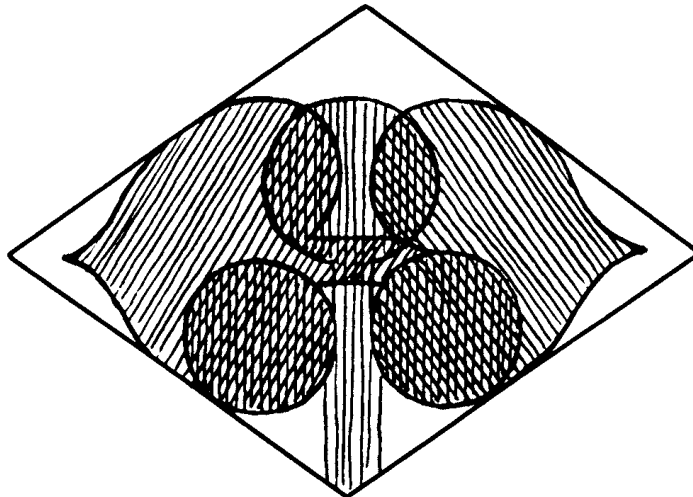
MORE WET CORN

from Zezem Foggerthot

Here I was thinkin ol rootin Ray was the smartest jaybird in the chickenhouse and now look he comes just like all the NPA presidunts before him to cry on Zezems sholder. Zezem says he Zezem things are in a sorry stew. Well I replize what is it it cant be any worse than the time I tried red pepper in the mash and blew up the barn. No he says it is a natuonal calamity Zezem did you know that there are at least thirteen pigeon clubs trying to be more important than the NPA and we cant seem to konquer them. What in the world can we do? Ray says I its exakly the same as American history. Now when I went to school dont you dare laff at me the teacher told us all about it. The English had a monopoly on tea and they were tryin to force the American colonists to drink it instead of coffee from Brazil so the folks in Boston got sick of drinkin the stuff you cant blame em cause if there is any weak miserable brew worse than tea it is some of this factory likker with purty labels and no corn behind it well the people in Boston were the tough stuff that later came out here to make the West, not the sissies that are there now so they said to hell with the teapot dome and they threw the stuff in the harbor. Of corse that made the Britishers mad as the devil so King George told the Americans that if they were going to drink coffee he would put a big tax on it just like modern likker. That was to much for the Americans so the whole thirteen colonies riz up like one man and says no taxation without regimentation. They got their rifles and kicked the British where they came from. Then there they were the thirteen American colonies they were free to drink all the coffee they wanted but they didnt have anybody exept themselves to proteck them maybe France or Spain would take the oportunity to capture them so each colony set up like a separite natuon with its

own army and navy and airforce but there was one flaw in the ointment. The citizens of one colony were always movin across the border into another and disobeyin the laws so New York was about to make war on Virginia and South Carlina was in dutch with Pensylvanya see it is exakly like yer thirteen pigeon clubs aint it. Well some of the lawyers got together from the colonies and says look here all this bickerin is bad for everbody but us lets be brodminded and cooperate so they wrote up a contrack to join up all the colonies. First they thouhgt theyd have a King but George Washington said hed rather be presidunt so he could retire when hed had enough and each colony was susposed to send congressmen to make laws for the whole country. There was quite a argument for a spell about whether little colonies like Rode Island should have as many congressmen as big colonies like Virginia, but they finely got things settled friendlylike and started the natuonal goverment with a constitution. After that you can just see how sucessful this country got of corse there was the civil war but we still got the natuonal goverment and we still are sucessful even us squab perducers like I told you. So thers yer lesson from history Ray get the smart lawyers from all the thirteen pigeon clubs to set down together and unite them like the United States then ever pigeon breeder is automaticly a citizen of the Natuonal but can change citizenship from one state to another if he wants to.

—N P A Newsletter, Oct. 1947



MAKING A MATH OF IF

Here are some queer results of combining a free-wheeling ball-point pen with some blank paper. Fantastic, perhaps, but maybe not too wild?

Suppose that a definite amount of protein is needed to produce a pound of squab; also suppose feed brand "A" is very satisfactory and contains 24% protein. Simple arithmetic then yields the information that if we use another feed, brand "B", containing only 12% protein, it will take twice as much feed to produce the same weight of squabs. If feed "A" costs \$6.00 per cwt., and feed "B" \$4.00 per cwt., it will cost some 30% more to produce a pound of squab on feed "B" than on feed "A".

Turning to another idea, suppose a breeder started with 10 pairs of squabbers, and these averaged 12 squabs per pair per year, or a total of 120. Suppose he sold all the Summer and Fall squabs, totaling 80. Then he would start the next year with 30 pairs. Assuming that there were no serious losses, and he followed the same program year after year, it would amount to tripling his flock every year. The third year he would have 90 pairs; the fourth year 270 pairs; the fifth, 710 pairs; the sixth, 2130 pairs; the seventh year 6390 pairs; the eighth, 19170 pairs; the ninth, 57510; and the tenth year, more than the five biggest squab plants of this country all put together, and then some.

Then there's the morbid angle. Suppose a pen of 100 pigeons covers 100 square feet of ground (10' x 10'). Suppose each pigeon contains one fertile intestinal worm, which produces an average of 1000 eggs a month in the droppings. In a year the ground would contain about a million eggs, or some 10,000 per square foot. We won't go on to the bitter end of this.

Here's a thought from hybrid corn. If we cross two breeds, such as Fantail x Tumbler, we get a hybrid different from both parents. To put it mathematically, $A \times B = AB$. Now suppose instead of just Fantail and Tumbler we have also Magpies, Modenas, Pouters, Barbs, Jacobins, Trumpeters, Carneaux, and Oriental Frills—ten breeds. How many possible hybrids could we get? Well, the formula is $n(n - 1) / 2$, or in this case $(10 \times 9) / 2 = 45$. Suppose we went on to three-way hybrids, $AB \times C = ABC$. The possible number of these is given by the formula $n(n - 1)(n - 2) / (1 \times 2 \times 3)$, or in this case $(10 \times 9 \times 8) / 6 = 120$. Next how about four-way hybrids— $AB \times CD = ABCD$. The formula is $n(n - 1)(n - 2)(n - 3) / (1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4)$, or here $(10 \times 9 \times 8 \times 7) / 24 = 210$. Similarly, there could be 252 five-way hybrids, 210 six-way hybrids, 120 seven-way hybrids, 45 eight-way hybrids, 10 nine-way hybrids, and one (only one) ten-way hybrid. The grand total of possible hybrid combinations of these ten breeds is then over 1000. When you recall that such famous breeds as the Racing Homer and the King are derived from breed crosses, you begin to wonder what possibilities lie unexplored in those thousand combinations! If even one in a hundred were as good as a

breed we already have, would it be worth the trouble of searching for? Or do we have too many breeds already?

—Amer. Pigeon Journal, July 1951, p. 198

WHAT'S INHERITED?

At the last National we got into a discussion about crooked keels. Seems like several splendid big Kings had this invisible defect until the judge exposed it and refused to consider them further. He said it was a bad hereditary fault and should be expunged from the blood. Or words to that effect.

So I was rung in to opine whether the judge knew what he was talking about, and since I didn't know whether he knew but nobody else knew nothing neither, and wouldn't take no for an answer, there I was on the hook.

Well, maternal necessity drug up an interesting deduction from pure logic. Of course logic is notoriously subject to abuse, but fortunately it is insensitive to pain, so it's not cruelty.

Obviously, I said, crooked keels can't be inherited. Why not? Well, I replied, even straight keels aren't inherited. And I can prove it. How? Because it stands to reason, I explained. Inherited means transmitted from parent to offspring, right? Well, does a parent bird hand over its keel to its squab? Having no keel left, if it did, the poor parent bird obviously could have only keelless squabs thereafter. But happy thought—at least they wouldn't get crooked keels then. So, the problem is solved.

Not so fast, they said. Hadn't I many times said color is inherited? H'mmmmm? How about that. Well, I stalled, it stands to reason that if a pigeon inherits its feathers, there's going to be trouble after the molt. Will the poor bird have to get a new set of hand-me-downs?

Aha, said one of my persecutors, this heredity business is just a trick. It don't work except in crazy crosses.

O. K., I said, try this one. I crossed an Archangel cock with a Racing Homer hen, and all their squabs were plainhead, like their mother. Did they inherit the plain head? Why sure, obviously, somebody said. Now wait a minute, I cautioned, isn't plainhead just the absence of crest? So the squabs got no crest from their mother, and if they got nothing from her, how come they didn't inherit the something from the Archangel?

Oh hell, says somebody, we ain't getting nowhere this way. So I was off the hook at last.

But it's really neat logic, now, isn't it. This way I can show that certain diseases and parasites are inherited—handed down from parent to progeny—but heart, liver, and lungs are not. Nevertheless, heartless pigeons are not commonly found.

And those breed crosses. The Archangel crosses didn't have a crest, but in the generation after that some of them did have it. Was it inherited?

Well, maybe people think it's insane to cross up good pure breeds to make worthless hybrids. But it can be fun, like kids breaking a dam in a creek to see the pent-up water show some action. Or pricking gaudy balloons.

If you are getting exasperated with my stupidity, there is of course an easy remedy—just throw this on the floor and stomp the daylights out of my logic. But I have pricked the last balloon. Guess it's time to go back to vitamin D, oyster shell, sanitation, and soft nests. If they don't eliminate the crooked keels, maybe I can call in a bone mechanic or use pliers.

THE OTHER SIDE

Mr. Moise asked me, as an ex-resident of South Carolina, to write something “on just any subject you care to write on”. However, he really knows that if I write something he doesn't like, it'll go into the trashbasket, so he's safe. It would be a shame to throw away a nice sheet of paper with words all over the front. So I'll write on the other side.

How would you like to live where the temperature stays below freezing for a month straight? Where the mud is bottomless in the Spring? Where in Summer it often gives tornadoes, hail storms, cloudbursts, droughts, spells of over 100 degrees, and gigantic weeds? That's Iowa.

But there's another side. You should see the pink of condition displayed by my pigeons in Winter here. You should see the National Show in Des Moines. The long life of wire netting . . . The wonderful vegetable gardens. . . The great corn harvests.

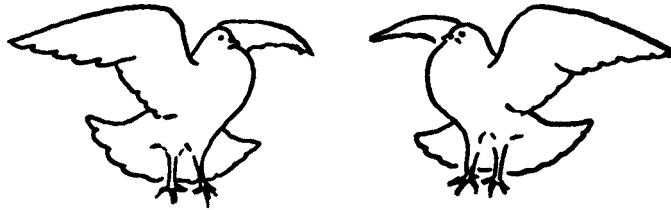
Maybe there are exceptions; maybe some situations don't have another side. But most of 'em do. Some sort of compensation usually can be found for even the worst trouble. The wiser I get, the more absentminded, and the more I forget, the happier I am.

I remember vividly that when I visited around Florida in 1938 I caught cold on a beach, and sat down on a beautiful lawn full of sandburrs. On the other side I remember Koster's squab farm, the Jacksonville zoo, the avenues of royal palms.

I'd like to forget that the closer a breed is pushed to the ideal, the more abnormal it becomes; that dilute-colored pigeons have more losses in the nest than others; that corn isn't a complete diet; that pellets don't stay fresh; that advertising blurbs aren't scripture; that pigeons grace a scene but disgrace it too. I'd like to forget that some of the greatest pigeon fanciers have the most cursed behavior and the most screws loose; that ignorance is bliss.

On the other side, since I can't forget all those things, which have been imprinted on my mental blotter, maybe I can discover other sides to those unhappy facts, and do something about them. Maybe I can find out why dilute-colored pigeons have losses—maybe they need more vitamins PDQ. Maybe I can find a way to supplement corn neatly. Maybe a trick such as sugar-coating would make pellets stay fresh. And maybe even someone else could look at the other side. And then it will be time to look at the reverse of the other side, or maybe at the trash basket.

—Yearbook of Carolina Pigeon Club, 1953-54.



UP A YULE TREE

with Zezem Foggerthot

That erly blizard sure plaid hell with the pigeons this year it supprized them and me both and busted 4 fountens but things has gone pretty good sinse. Of corse there was some city guys out as usuel tryin to cut my shelterbelt trees for sellin at Xmas but a lode of birdshot gets rid of them quik. I had to get a new horse after thanksgiven the old one triped his feet in some old pigeon wire and fell against a pile of firewood dam good thing we wernt geting more than a hunderd squab a week then so I could haul em to town in a coster wagon. One of the guys at the depo asked me to play Santa Claws for his kids cause I have white face decerations naturly but I never went in for this Xmas spirit much sinse the new deal repeled stills. Well this year Ill send one of my young Lynx

cocks to the Natuonal show ever sinse Holmann quit showin his the competiton aint been much but Frank never let his birds condition thereselfs like mine anyhow boy it does my old eyes good to see the birds come thunderin and swishen up from the fields for there evenin feed they sure hate to be penned up for show traning theyd rather be out even if a hawk was around its funny how birds behave now aint it they dont much mind me shootin cause I do it so much but one of these new red autamobiles comin up the lane gives em the panic of corse I got lots of pets in the flock but I never handle em exept at night. Any bird that acts skeery of the light gets his head puled off so they mostly is dosile as lams and just yaun at the light. With the good prices and lots of good corn and oats this year I kind of exspanded a bit but it dont do no good a man cant handle more than so many squabs and I like to enjoy some lezure readin the old APJ and chewin the rag with one or other breeder its nise to lissen to my new radio to exept the news and advertizing. You know mostly Im the one you all ask for advise but this year aint ben so busy for me thataway maybe Wendel Levi is geting more or maybe that hefty yearbook Warner sent out was what done it but the NPA aint been doin much sinse that came out that I can see I guess it must of wore Warner out. Thats alwase what happens the good secertaries get reelected and by that time they got combat fatege and what ever hapen to Ray Gilbert he useto write me reglar as rain well it must be his famly thats gumin up the works. I aint got nothin agenst wimen exeptin they alwase cluter up a plase with kids now Hal Camel had the right idea he says why buy a chicken when you can get the gravy on the side but Hal is even more unsettled than Ray. Say this has been a rouhg year alright you can call me a oldtimer but the obitrary notises in the APJ included lots of younger. Powerhouses some of em was to. I never met Ray Geirach but he was all behind NPA werent he well thats the point I was comin to I been in this game plenty long and been dishin out perls of experninence but now Im puzzled where is the younger generaton to take this over? All they want is movies and link dances. Persistent pigeon breeding aint there idea of business or fun nether. Of corse I aint figgerin on retirin soon but a man dont last forever and then whatll hapen to old Foggys feather farm? and the same goes for the NPA we got to get rejuveinated thats what I been slow to admit it but boys we got to get new ideas or fold up so thats my sendiments and happy new year.

-- N P A letter December 1952

A NIGHT AT HOME

by Marian S. Church

I had 12 bottles of whiskey in my cellar and my wife told me to empty the contents of each down the sink or else. I said I would and proceeded with the unpleasant task. I withdrew the cork from the first bottle and poured the contents down the sink with the exception of one glass, which I drank.

I extracted the cork from the second bottle and did likewise with the exception of one glass which I drank. I then withdrew the cork from the third bottle, emptying the good old booze down the sink save for one drink which I drank. I pulled the bottle from the cork off the next one, drank one sink out of it, and poured the rest down the glass.

Pulled the sink from the next glass and poured the cork down the bottle. I pulled the next cork out of my throat, poured the sink down the glass, bottled the drink and drank the pour. When I had emptied everything I steadied the house with one hand and counted the bottles and corks and glasses with the other, which were 29. To make sure I counted again when they came by and I had 74, and as the house came by I counted again and finally I had all the houses and bottles and corks and glasses counted except one bottle, which I drank.

—N P A News Letter, April 1, 1954

BIRD IN THE HAND

It all started unintentionally. I heard about it second-hand but I won't use the people's real names. Well, it seems that this Homer lit on a sidewalk and was so exhausted that it couldn't fly away. It just ran around a telegraph pole to keep from being trampled by the throng. Nobody paid attention to it until toward evening Mr. Smith (not the real name) looked at it. First he went on by to get his car at the parking lot. But then he stopped his car at the curb, quickly looked around for a cop (none in sight), and finally scooped the bird up and put it in the car.

Of course his wife was outraged at the idea of bringing home a pigeon. But Mr. Smith showed her that it was too worn out to take care of itself, so her pity overcame the displeasure. And after all, it was a beautiful pigeon, not like those dirty ones in town. It was a neat black and blue checkerboard color, with rainbow colors on the neck. So the upshot of it was that they put the bird in a

carton with a glass of water and a piece of bread. But the bird refused to eat the stuff and pined.

The next day Mr. Smith brought home popcorn and peanuts, like the pigeons get in the park. No luck—the bird still fasted. Getting desperate, the Smiths telephoned a veterinarian. He was not very helpful but did suggest contacting the Audubon Society. So after much telephoning around, they found that the Society did not have any telephone. In fact, it was just a bird-watchers' club and the members had no use for pigeons, sick or well.

Mr. Smith next decided to go to a poultry farm, although it was about nine P. M. already. The poultry farm manager was kind of disgruntled about being interrupted in his favorite T.V. program and for such a trivial matter. He told Mr. Smith to feed the bird peas, because that is what pigeons like. Happily Mr. Smith went home and had his wife open a can of peas. But the bird refused to eat them, and looked weaker than ever.

"This is ridiculous!" said Mrs. Smith. "Wild pigeons never saw canned peas. What he wants is bird seed." So they telephoned some neighbors to find out where bird seed could be got at 10:30 P. M. Fortunately one of the neighbors had a parakeet and came over with some seed and lots of advice. This time the pigeon showed some interest and ate some of the seeds.

Next day Mr. Smith went to a dime store to get more bird seed. The girl at the counter told him that he ought to go to a feed store and buy pigeon feed instead, so he did. The man at the feed store was pretty busy and refused to sell small quantities. The only solution was to buy a hundred-pound bag. He did. Also a bag of health grit which the man told him was the best.

Well, the pigeon recovered amazingly after that, and started to fly around the room. With mop and fly-swatter it was finally caught, rather out of breath. Mrs. Smith patted it and looked worried. "I'm afraid it has got a fever," she said. She tried to take its pulse, but when she figured 400 beats per minute it didn't seem possible.

Mr. Smith wasn't worried but he got the clinical thermometer. They decided to put it down the bird's mouth. After two minutes they looked at it. It said 108 degrees. The Smiths really got worried. They telephoned the veterinarian again. He was not very helpful—just said that birds usually have high temperatures.

Mr. Smith got a carpenter to make a cage for it, very nice (\$17.00). He decided that pigeons were really very lovable birds and perhaps he should get a mate for this one. After much more telephone inquiry, he found a man who owned pigeons. The only trouble was that they were Fantail pigeons, but the man was very friendly and visited the Smith home to see their bird.

"Why that's a Racing Homer," he said. "See that rubber ring on its leg—that is a race countermark. Got lost on a race, she did. You should advertise to

see who lost it.” So Mr. Smith sent an ad to the pigeon magazine that the Fantail man subscribed to. But the ad was returned (with the money) with recommendation that it be sent to a racing magazine. This Mr. Smith did. He received a sample copy of the magazine, full of pictures of champion flyers. It sort of enthused him.

After about three months, with no reply to the ad, the Smiths had a brilliant idea. They put a typewritten message on the pigeon's leg with some thread, and let it loose. The bird flew high and far. It never returned, and no answer ever came to the message.

But that is not quite the end of the story. The Smiths now have a nice loft of Fantails.

—All-Pets Magazine, December 1956, p. 28

DIARY OF A SECRETARY

by O. Howitt Hertz (alias Jay Brushhart)

Monday. D— Diary: I'm a stupid, dumb, crazy fool. Yes, it's happened. And I thought it would be such a wonderful honor, too, but now the tarnish is all worn off the gelding, and I'm so illusioned. Being Secretary-Treasurer of the UPA is just plain drudgery and hell too. Don't believe a thing I said about it last Tuesday.

The last straw came today. A letter from the president—of all people—asking why he had to pay dues. Nobody ever told me that the officers got in free. Why I paid my own dues this year. Sap, that's me. And he also asked me why there hadn't been any bulletin this month. Bulletin! does he think money grows on trees? And when am I supposed to get my beauty sleep? Or maybe he thinks I'm getting a fat salary and can get flunkies to do the details? Hah, he should be secretary, just for a month. Then he'd yell uncle. That's a good idea. Suppose I just resign, quit, leave em all flat, he'd have to pitch in, the lazy fat cat. I'd love to see him answering the daily mail. This letter says, “Dear Secretary, Will you kindly tell me what are the annual dues of UPA for two years and please retaliate me a couple of bulletins not too old or else last years yearbook and I raise racing homers, is there any other club for them and what is the best place to find out how to get cheap express rates? Sincerely, Edwin Pascagoultry.” Not even a stamp for reply.

Tuesday. D— Diary: I went to an efficiency expert today. I said to him, Mr. E. E., I have a problem. Every day it gets worse. I'm a secretary.

"Are you sure you have come to the right man?" he replied. "If your employer is amorous, perhaps you should take a new job."

"No, my problem is different. You see, it involves pigeons."

"Pigeons? Oh I see. Yes, quite simple. Don't walk too close to the walls of the buildings on the street. And of course you have screens on your windows?"

"Oh, no, you have this all wrong. I get a dozen letters or more every day from pigeon breeders all over the country, and they have to be answered."

"Pardon my curiosity, but why?"

"Well, I'm Secretary of this pigeon club. They write me for information, they send dues, they want bands, and so forth. I was elected to the job, and now I don't see how I can keep up with it."

"Well, then, you have come to the right place after all," said E. E., relaxing with a cigar. "Obviously, you have not had much secretarial training?" He seemed very confident.

"Not a bit. But this work doesn't require shorthand, does it?"

"No, but stenography, the use of the typewriter, methods of filing, cataloging, indexing, and book-keeping seem highly desirable here, to say the least. Now I would suggest that you enroll in the Clayton Secretarial School for six months to get the necessary techniques."

"Six months from now I'll be dead if I have any more work to do. I can't take that suggestion. I want specific help or you don't get any fee." I was sort of peeved. Do you blame me, Diary?

"Very well, I shall attempt it," he replied, putting down his cigar. "First, where do you put your letters?"

"Well, I put the unanswered letters in a basket marked RUSH, and the answered ones I file in expanding letter files, alphabetically."

"Ah, very good. And do you have any other files?"

"Well, I have a bunch of card catalogs. One is the membership alphabetically by last names, of course, and grouped according to states and big cities, and each card is marked with signals as to what breed is kept, whether he is a life member or just yearly, whether paid up or in arrears, and so on. Then there is another catalog with names of persons not members but asking for service of various sorts. And finally there is another catalog with cards for all sorts of other correspondents, such as officers of rival clubs, manufacturing concerns, magazines for advertisements, and so on, all signaled."

"You don't say!" said Mr. E. E. "Is that all?"

"Oh no, there are files for minutes of meetings, reports of committees, canceled checks, bulletins, yearbooks, and press notices. And then there are the bank books, ledgers, boxes of documents, supplies, rubber stamps, and so on."

“I see. And what was your problem again?”

“How can I be more efficient?”

“More efficient? Poppycock. Your problem is not that. What you need is an assistant secretary.”

Oh well, I guess the sympathy was worth the five bucks fee. Kind of made me feel important. It would be terrible if the club fell apart. My god, diary, I'd better quit mooning and get busy and finish answering those letters and start getting up that bulletin.

—American Pigeon Journal, October 1949, p. 306

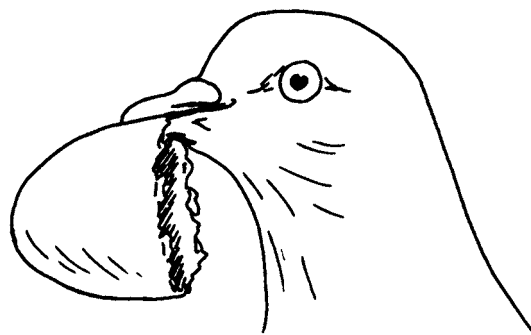
HOOZIER HOOPEE

with Zezem Foggerthot

Yep that it was and its a religon to go to ever Natuonal show if my rumatiz aint beyond fixin with another brand of corn so its a good thing there keepin it in the corn belt but it was hard on my corns the dam bus depot was a devil long way to walk to the show. First time I been in Indianapplis sinse 1920 when we started the Natuonal Pigeon Association say that town has groan big but the same old monument is there with wild pigeons all over the benches and say the fare grounds where they held the show had a flock dam near as big as here at my plase but of corse mine is purebred Lynx and no comperison. I had to find the rite bilding by the smell it didnt have ary anounsment sine and the food in there eatery was better than the cafe but they wanted to much for it so beer and pretselfs at the tavern made some fill in even if it was stail stuff. Biggest show I ever was at and stayin up there to sleep was a better new idea sure enuf walkin back to the hotel like in Des Moines is to far. Say them boys was a caution they put feed in them pens with a shovel but I guess they found out it was for free so they used it for beddin. Hummel says Foggy old top how come you dont let me import you some real good Lynxes and I says Lyn if you just get off that pianno stool a bit and see my birds youd want to export so he says why aint you got any here and I says Frank wont show his so there aint no competiton. Hollman just laffs and looks like a plutocrate and I says Frank you got good days now yep but them plush sofas dont do for Lynx nests and Frank laffs and says why Foggy you got the wrong idea I am having a little sucess but I am far from welthy and I says there aint no excuse, why the rabbits alone shoud put you in clover not to mention politics so he gets huffy you know Frank and he says is

that so why I spend almost all my time on the APJ and I says Frank you dam lier a kid in briches could put out a beter job with the stuff you dump in the waistbasket and its time you rased some more pigeons insted of just yer voice well the pallaver on them loudspeaker horns was so big a raket even Frank coudnt outshout it and there was so many metings nobody saw all the birds and the judges was so tired you coud here them snorin as they sleepwalked around. I slaped Jake on the back and says how about a snort and all he could say was yellor hen gets first well Jake still has a leenin for them tilted Hungarians but he knows a good Lynx too its a shame more dont. Why I bet John Sandin never even saw one but hes a good presidunt he lets the secertary be the goat but this young feller Keehl is not for sneesing at hes the smarttest one we ever had maybe thats why hes lost his wig yep it was a grate Natuonal and it was good to see a few of us old timers back where we started this NPA thing 34 years ago. Say you can see how things was goin Levi got his figgerin mixed up and says 35 years well you shoudnt drink so much before the banqet you should have seen Sealbinder why Art was the life of the party but Treeleaven was doin well in spite of havin a new wife. Of corse the banqet spiels was almost to much on top of all that band music and big crowd in the top of the hotel we was bulgin out the windows but Church was in rair form with a few new jolks and Frank spouted threw his hat as usule. I was rely supprized how meny young peple there was so Im not so pesymistic about the NPA carying on OK but they didnt say much so who knows but thats life so there goes another year of it and heres hoping wele all get to the next Natuonal.

—N P A Letter, Feb. 1954



RESEARCH, PROGRESS, and REVOLUTION

Once upon a time there was a very ambitious young man who thought that a man should not wait for time and tide to sweep away all the flotsam and jetsam of accumulated ignorance and jelled habit in this pigeon fancying business. Whereupon he came unto me, and spake thus: "Doc, what do you think is the proper way to make color classes in the shows?"

Unaccustomed as I am to such interrogation, I pulled my beard and twiddled my mustaches for a minute in silence. Then I said, "Do you want my official or my personal opinion?"

"Both, naturally," he replied, much to my dismay. I put on my spectacles and tossed in the upper plate. This boy was entirely too persistent.

"In writing or by the spoken word?" I growled.

"Oh, just tell me," quoth the lad. Now I breathed easier and loosened the old toupee. The sweat wasn't good for the adhesive.

"Well, son," quoth I, "my official comments are too profound for me to burden your young auricular orifices with their cacophonic lucubrations. Consequently let me limit my statement to letters of four words or less; or to put it otherwise, I shall simply reduce the caliber of my inculcation to the plateau of the common intelligence quotient." I cracked my arthritic knobby knuckles silently.

"Yes," said the boy, still enthusiastically.

"Ah yes. Well, in the first place, you must realize that there are—ahem—quite a few genes. You know, those are the tiddlywinks of heredity. Ah yes, probably thousands of different genes. Is that clear?"

"Sure, I knew that."

"Oh. you did? Well, there are also a lot of these genes which are responsible for color development, and pattern. It has been estimated that as many as fifty are of this category."

"Sure, but does that mean we should have 50 classes in shows?"

"Of course not. You must realize that these genes may be combined in all possible ways also. That permits a total number of different classes in the neighborhood of two to the fiftieth power; zillions, in short."

"Zillions?" At last the cocksureness of my visitor began to wilt. "But isn't that ridiculous? We could never have that many classes in a show—not even the National!"

"Facts are never ridiculous. Only people are. Except me." I bulged out my bay window and snapped my galluses.

"Then you are no help at all. I thought a man in your position would be more interested in using research for progress."

"You malign me, friend," I said. "I gave you the results of research, but it did not agree with your preconceptions. You thought I might give you a nice simple solution to your dilemma. Well, there isn't any. Either you use genes and have zillions of classes, or you don't use genes, and classify as usual."

"But there must be—there's got to be some happy medium. Don't you believe in compromise?"

"No, but you could kill off all the inconvenient genes."

"You are kidding."

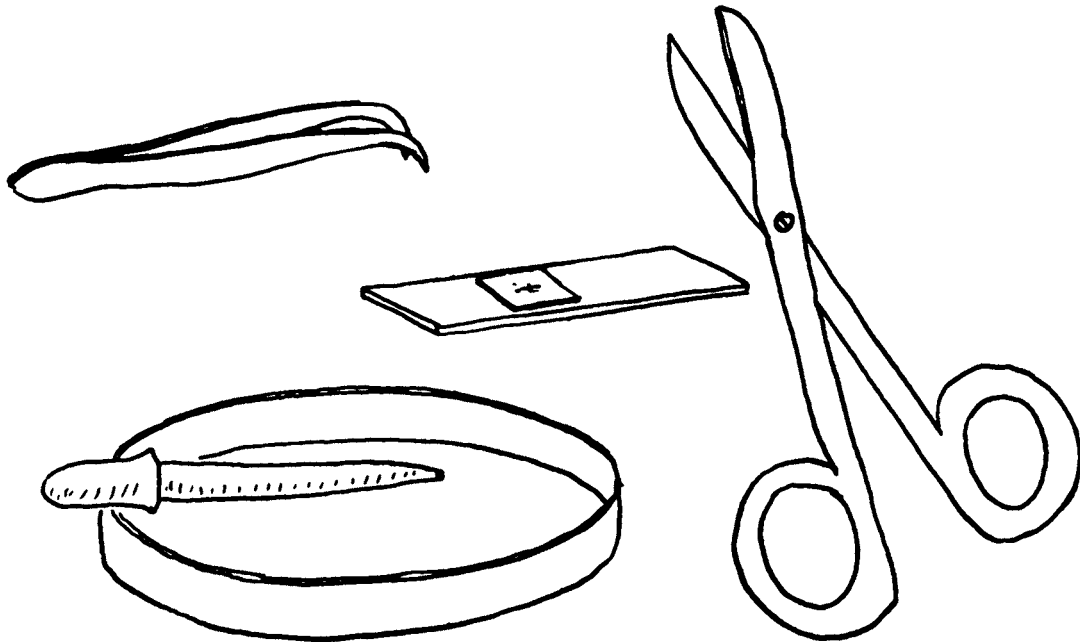
"Not at all. It is done all the time."

"I see it all now," said my guest, with sibilant voice and narrowing eyes. "You are a saboteur, a revolutionary. You are just trying to change all our good old methods."

He grabbed his coat and swept out of the house without even a sideways glance as I reached to buckle on my wooden leg and escort him.

Well, that's the way of progress in this universe of curves.

— N P A News Letter, Jan. 6, 1956, p.2



A SUGGESTION ON THE HOUSING PROBLEM

The price of a new loft these days, like that of a new house, is rather inflated, even when one tries to cut corners. Seems to me that it is about time for some wild new ideas to be tried out, maybe prestressed concrete or polyethylene on inflatable arches, just to keep us from getting hardened arteries in the tool box. During the last War, numerous novel loft designs were brought forth, both stable and mobile types. Didn't any of them survive? Or do just the expensive ones get any promotion?

Imagine the reaction of a Boy Scout who decides to go for a merit badge in Pigeon Raising. Unless his Dad helps him by underwriting the building costs, he is not likely to have a decent loft. Of course, if he is a good scrounger he may get hold of enough furniture crates and other discard material to do the job well enough; and it could be argued that a poor scrounger will be a poor pigeon man. But who can be so sure? And if he builds a ramshackle shed when he could do better, not only his pride suffers,—the birds may too.

In England there are regular ads in Racing Homer magazines, selling knock-down lofts. Why not here? Too much shipping cost? At the next NPA convention before the beer begins to blear, or maybe after, a contest with liberal prizes should be set up for new plans for best cheap housing.

— N P A News, September 1958, p. 6

PIGEON CONSTANCY QUESTIONED

by C. R. Hull

I think pigeon knowledge is like the fellow said of the flea, "when you put your finger on him, he is not there."

For instance. I have read and been told:

That one could keep two breeds of pigeons in one loft if all the birds were mated.

That a pair of pigeons once mated are faithful to one another as long as both are in good health.

That if you take a pigeon from its mate or young ones, it will mourn two or three weeks and pay no attention to the other birds.

One fancier says he uses nest bowls because the young do not fall out; another doesn't use nest bowls, because the young fall out and can't get in again.

One uses them because they keep the young warm; another doesn't because they get cold and chill the eggs if the bird leaves the nest.

One says use straw, because it is soft; another don't, because the holes in the straw harbor red mites.

One says use tobacco stems, because they drive away lice; another says don't, because they are too hard and give the young crooked breast bone.

One says use saw dust, because it is a good absorbent of the moisture of the droppings; another don't, because it gets damp and breeds maggots.

One says feed from a hopper so the birds will sit close and not come off the eggs at meal time; another, feed by hand so birds will come off and air the eggs.

One says let the birds alone while sitting; another lift them off a few minutes at a time towards the end of the hatch.

One says moisten the eggs; another says let them alone.

One says take the first egg away until the second is laid; another says don't.

And then the great variety of nest boxes. And so it goes on.

It reminds me of the chap who had been to the Madison Square Garden Show and came away with some queer ideas. One was that in "ye olden times" it used to take a hen three weeks to hatch eggs, now they have a machine that does the trick in twenty four hours, for didn't he see a man take a lot of chicks out of a machine and the man told him that he would have another lot hatched the next day.

While this "faithful unto death" and "mourning the lost mate" is a lovely sentiment, I believe in some birds, like some people, that the phrenological bump of moral responsibility is represented by a dent.

Some time ago I obtained three pairs of "Rollers" and for ability to "work two ways" have never seen their equal.

I caged them up in different corners of the loft, letting one pair out each day for a week, and they had been all through the regular motions and were well mated. Then I thought it a good plan to let them get their fighting done before laying, so I turned two pairs out in the morning. When I came home in the evening they had changed mates and seemed quite satisfied.

When the second round was about one week old I lost one hen. The cock did not waste a minute, but went over and induced one of the other hens to leave her mate and two young and come over and start housekeeping with him. In about ten days she laid, and hatched two young in good time, the cock feeding his young and the hen going over each day and helping her former mate feed her young.

In the meantime I lost the cock of the third pair and the hen, which had young and was sitting, left her eggs and mated with the grass widower and raised young, feeding her own until able to care for themselves. After a while

they got so mixed up none of them knew "who was who". I got fifteen youngsters that season, but I am sure some of them had the "Bar Sinister."

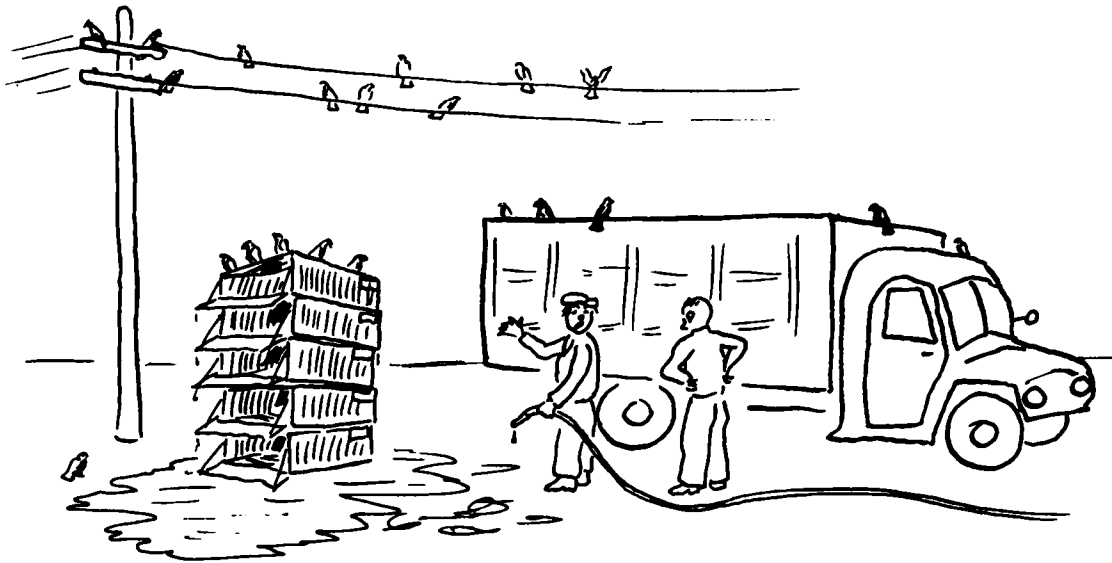
I thought this was "going some", but I had a cock I wanted to breed to two hens and wanted to get them the same age (for a try out) and did not want the cock to be worn out attending to one hen first. I made a breeding box with three divisions by sliding doors, put cock in center and one hen on each side. Part of each day I slid out one door so that cock could go with one hen and part of the day with the other. He mated with both, showing no partiality.

After the last eggs I intended using were laid I let all run together and have seen a hen mate with three cocks inside of an hour.

How is this for "faithful unto death" and "mourning the lost mate"?

I could tell you a lot more, but all this reminds me of what a German friend of mine used to say: "So long you lives, so much you finds, py chimney, you don't know it, ain't it?"

—Amer. Pigeon Keeper, 1927, vol. 29, #11, p. 15.



THE DIRECTIONS SAID "WATER WELL AT RELEASE"

THE SHOW SECRETARY

by Hal L. Campbell

The best pigeon show is only as good as its management. The management, fundamentally, comprises the show superintendent and the show secretary. They must work as a team, with understanding, and in perfect harmony. They are the “Siamese Twins” of a pigeon show. Each with his own ideas, but bound together by the cord of a common purpose, the consummation of which is to effectively “put over” the project entrusted to them; the success, or failure, of which is in their hands.

The qualifications demanded of the perfect show secretary are as numerous as they are varied. He must be a combination of showman, optimist, altruist, humanitarian, organizer and avid panhandler. A keen sense of humor will be a decided help. He must have imagination and be self-effacing and indulgent. He must have the humility of a Milquetoast, with the (paradoxical) strength, courage and daring of the superman. Since he will encounter among the entry forms received many that resemble Chinese laundry tickets, and others bearing written characters of “strange device” a pre-knowledge of decoding and deciphering hieroglyphics will be a handy thing to have around. To separate the young cocks surreptitiously slipped in as young hens by the “Smart Alex,” an elementary knowledge of biology will also be an asset. Summing up it will be seen that a show secretary must be a curious composite of sage, seer, saint and simpleton.

After being elected to office a show secretary should begin to map out his procedure. This should be commenced at least three months prior to the date of opening. Personal letters should be sent to the secretaries of specialty clubs, requesting their support, which implies the staging of district meets, and, of course, a hint that a few cash specials would not be amiss. Personal letters are the more effective media. I have no faith in the stereotyped, mimeographed form letter. A personal letter, sent airmail, with an airmail stamp enclosed for a reply, has more business-like dignity, and, as I have personally discovered, infinitely more appeal. During the organizing period of the “Pageant of Pigeons”, which started three months before the show was held, I wrote personal letters to the secretaries of specialty clubs—twenty-three in all—and without exception each club acceded to my requests, and in addition, over one thousand dollars was contributed by those splendidly responsive organizations. It meant many hours of letter writing, but the results justified the amount of labor spent.

During the interval awaiting replies, the premium list should be assembled for the printer. If advertisements are required to finance the cost of printing, further correspondence will be found necessary. The approach to the

prospective advertiser should be the same as that employed in addressing the officials of the specialty clubs, to wit: the personal letter; in which should be pointed out the object of the show; its import; and the advantage of carefully written and timely advertising in the premium list. The form letter in this case, will be found more than ever a futile thing, which invariably winds up in the waste-paper basket; perfunctorily read but definitely interred in that familiar receptacle.

It is advisable to keep in close touch with the printer after having submitted your "copy" for the premium list which should be double or triple spaced. Since the printer is not likely to be versed in columbarian matters the "proof pulls" should be carefully read so as to obviate typographical errors. The premium list should be in the mails at least six weeks prior to the show; the names of the prospective exhibitors taken from a prepared mailing list. Entries should positively close ten days before the opening date of the event. It is a rule mostly observed in the breach, which invites tardiness on the part of the exhibitor, and involves considerable confusion for the secretary, who should be engaged assembling the entries and indexing the names of the entrants prior to making out the all-important judging sheets during the ten-day interval.

Selecting judges is a most important item. Too often it is left to the last day. The twenty-four judges for the "Pageant of Pigeons" (fancy section) were selected weeks before the show, each one being personally contacted so as to find out the day and the time it would be convenient for him to take his assignment.

These details were printed on a large "Time Table," prominently displayed in the show room. I believe it was an innovation. Certainly it was appreciated by the exhibitors present, who knew exactly when a certain variety was to be judged, and were on hand to witness the operation. It worked so effectively that the entire show was judged and the awards made by the third day of the show.

Another large board was displayed showing the champion in each section, together with the band number of the winner and its owner's name, and the name of the judge.

Another of these boards, 50x30 inches, was displayed-showing a "Master Chart" of the aisles, which were numbered and lettered to correspond with the chart. The name of each variety was also designated by a printed oblong case; this was mounted and placed on the coops. The arrangement obviated all confusion when birds were being penned by the supervisors and owners. Having a competent supervisor for each variety proved a blessing, since the judging sheets were turned over to him and he given full charge of his variety. The list of supervisors was made and their duties clearly defined weeks ahead of the opening date, by personal letter. To these able, hard-working supervisors much of the credit of the success of the "Pageant of Pigeons" must be assigned. The details of the arrangements mentioned were in the hands of the show secretary

and are mentioned here to show others of the duties expected of him. The delivery of the coop cards, made out under the supervision of the show secretary, to the show superintendent on or before the day he was chosen to setup the show, is highly important. Without them his work is seriously delayed.

By the above it will be seen the show secretary shoulders a considerable amount of responsibility. How much only those who have done the work have the slightest conception. It means long hours of concentrated effort requiring the patience of the patriarch Job, whom historians tell us was afflicted with boils, mention of which, at this time, is not as incongruous as it seems. "Punch" advice to those about to marry was the cryptic "Don't!" If one is contemplating a show secretary's job and is not encased with a hide as tough as that of an elephant, perhaps the negative advice given by "Punch" should be given a deal of consideration.

—National Pigeon Association Yearbook 1947-48, p. 42.

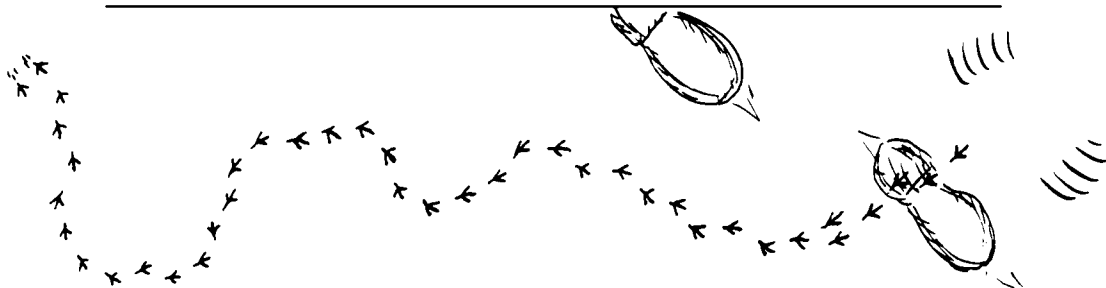
TEN BELOW DES MOINES

by Zezem Foggerthot

Well I got back from the Natuonal again and got rested up boy that rely was the show and I had a slug to much of somthin. Ever sinse they puled the Natuonal back out here in the corn country its been getin better those Sandins sure had there sholders to the axsel but to bad they dont like corn speshally the bottles I brung from the farm they aint like the old crowd boy we hit the high spots and some of the time the spots was hittin us well it got pretty nippy one nihgt so a few exter nips was nesenary yessir it went down to ten below and I was a mite worriet about the farm but them Lynx is good scrachers they eat snow if the fountens freezed. Not meny squabs in Janaury enyway say things is changin fast I saw Eizen-hower on telvizen in one of them bars caint hardly bleeve we finely got the republicans back in washington maybe some changes will hapen there now. The old NPA shoud get on telvisen say that was a pretty show with all them troffees. That young Buri had a big heep of dishes with pigeons colord on em like before and there was lots of rosetts and ribons and sertificats another new thing was signs on the iles to tell what breeds was in em but there wasnt eny new ones there so we all knew what they was alredy the troble with NPA all the time for many years is they don't fight. Some of the guys grump a lot but they dont fight take the business meetin it was smooth like shurch hell back

in the old days we had nock down argiments I tried to start some but it didnt work this new secertary Art Keehl is to smooth he just smiles and smokes like he swallered a canary these young guys ain't had much experninence but plenty of self confedinse he never not onse ast a thing from me how to do things and I been with NPA when he was still in school I gess he ment good but hes just young he sent out a litle book that was susposed to be a directery he called it a Whos who and he left out some of us. Of corse he apoligised to me but he said that he had lots of other things to do maybe he was remembering about me fergeting to pay my dues hes smart alihgt not as smart as me thogh, he is maried shes nise enough but all wimen are troble. Saterdag was the big day some of the boys got sick but I got more corn us old charter members of NPA got together Marien Church and Jim May is fattern ever and the storeys was jucey as usule. Ray Gilbert came runnin all stary eyed with news about siense he thinks reserch is religion almost but a shot of corn loosens him up. Frank Hollman looks more like a dam plutocrate and we found out why its the APJ done it he sells six thousand a month and I told him thats no excuse not to enter Lynx in the show enymore. Marien was tostemaster at the banquet that night he puts on a big front, we all shoud after that big turkey dinner there aint eny squab breeders near Des Moines so turkey can compeat. Frank told how to get yer name in the papers by a gift of squabs to the editer well maybe that would help the editer spell yer name right of corse I aint good at spellin but you know Frank but he didnt wait for me to rib him he said his spiel and cauhgt the train well pretty scon all that lite talk and hevy food dosent help and I felt like newmonia was comin on but it didnt so I got back to the farm just in time to keep the birds from starvin they stash away heeps of it this kind of wether but it aint fancy like the mixter the show was feedin. No sir I use mostly corn.

—N P A Letter, March 1956



LIKE BEGETS LIKE — or does it?

Me: Here is a white egg in my hand. What will hatch from it?

You: How should I know? —maybe a turtle. What laid it?

Me: A bird laid it.

You: Well, naturally you'll get a bird from it.

Me: But what kind of bird?

You: Well, the egg is white, so it wouldn't be a robin's or a crow's or a killdeer's or —maybe a kingfisher?

Me: No, a pigeon laid it.

You: Well then, it'll produce a pigeon. Satisfied?

Me: No—what kind of pigeon?

You: For Pete's sake! Anything except a stool pigeon. What laid it?

Me: A Fantail laid it.

You: Well then, it will naturally hatch a Fantail.

Me: But what kind of Fantail?

You: Ye gods. Whatever kind they were that laid the egg.

Me: They were white with big tails.

You: O. K., it'll be white with a great big tail. Anything else?

Me: Will it be more like the father or the mother, or a blend?

You: I thought you said they were just alike.

Me: No, the father has 42 tail feathers and the mother has 29.

You: Why didn't you ask me for a photograph of this future bird?! I guess it will be in between.

Me: You don't know?

You: No—I'm no magician.

Me: But you have already given me a much more definite prediction about what this egg would produce than a scientist using the most refined techniques of chemical analysis could have given.

You: But anybody knows that like begets like.

Me: Then as far as the parents are alike you can predict, but when they are different you can't?

You: That's it. Up to that point, it is simple.

Me: Then if both these parent Fantails had 42 tail feathers, you'd say the squab would also?

You: Probably—I'm not sure.

Me: What makes you uncertain now?

You: Well—tail feathers in Fantails are sort of variable—.

Me: First you say like begets like and now you say sometimes it doesn't. Where is the dividing line?

You: Say, you're running me ragged. How do you expect me to know all the details of those questions?

Me: How can we find out more about those details ?

You: Well, we could hatch the egg and see, I guess.

So we hatch the egg, and what do you know, the bird grows up to be a white Fantail all right, but it has 43 tail feathers and a crest on its head.

Scientific studies of cases where like fails to produce like have revealed three common reasons and a fourth which is less common. First, it is practically impossible to find two birds exactly alike in any trait: careful measurements reveal hair-breadth differences, at least. Such differences are often meaningless in heredity, as they may be due to feeding, climate, etc., or obscure fluctuation in the expression of a gene. This may account for some of the unpredictability of feather number in the Fantail, for example.

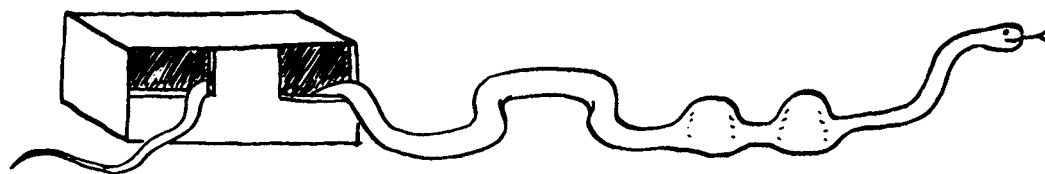
Second, the parents, although identical in appearance, may "carry" a trait derived from a previous ancestor, and this will appear in a certain proportion of the young according to Mendel's laws. For example, two black Owls may produce some solid red squabs; or two blue check Homers may produce some blue bars. Certain sex-linked colors behave somewhat similarly: a pair of blacks may produce some dun daughters, or a pair of red checks may produce some blue daughters.

Thirdly, there may be a case of mistaken identity. There are two closely similar genetic types of red, which when crossed will produce some blacks; and two similar types of silver which when crossed will produce blue. A red Turbit hen crossed with a red Tumbler may give some blacks, and a Silver King crossed with a silver Giant Homer may produce some blues.

The fourth and rarest cause of new or unlike types is mutation or sporting. Cases of sporting are hard to prove, as a rule, but proof has been available in a few cases. Sporting is rare because it is due to a breakdown in the vital machinery or to some other unpredictable change in the otherwise routine processes of reproduction and growth.

These four causes tending to make like not beget like make it a bit dangerous to predict in detail just what would come out of that little white egg. And that is where the fancier's fun begins!

—Amer. Pigeon Journal, December 1940, p. 409



KEHL'S KWAZY KQUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- Q. — Dear Mr. Kehl I am ten years old and my pair of raisin Homers just hatched two babies. Please send me two bands right away. P. S. , should I put them on the right leg or the left leg and does it half to be right side up?
- A. — Dear Johnny: you forgot to enclose 10 cents.
- Q. — Dear Mr. Kehl: I breed transom rollers and I want to know if you sell bands to any other roller breeders near me.
- A. — Dear Pete: Yes, I do.
- Q. — Dear Mr. Kehl, my letter to you last week came back marked "No such address" and I finally realized that you are not in Watertown New York ha ha. Why do you live so far from civilization?
- A. — Dear Jake: I like to be in the vicinity of beer and bees knees.
- Q. — Dear Mr. Kehl, I guess you remember I bought a book. That was last year. Now I am ready for a bigger one, which one is best?
- A. — Dear Izaak: There isn't any bigger one.
- Q. — Dear Sir: This is to notify you that a pigeon was picked up dead in front of my office and it had a ring on its leg with this number: NRA 61 B 27284391. A friend here told me to notify you. Please tell me what to do.
- A. — Dear Mr. S.: Bury, it.
- Q.— Dear Mr. Kehl, I am going to produce a new breed. I am crossing Fantails with Runts to get the tail of the Fan on the body of the Runt. How can I get this new breed listed for judging?
- A. — Dear Noah: You make it, we take it.
- Q.— Dear Art: I want 20 bands as follows: size A, numbers 111, 222, 333, 444, 555, 666,777, 888, 999. Size F numbers 123, 234, 345, 456, 567, 678, 789. Size K numbers 135, 357, 579. Also size T number 1000. Nifty number system, don't you think? I enclose a buck.
- A. — Dear Sir: And I pass it back again.
- Q. — Dear Mr. Kehl: I bought, six new pedigreed Racing Homers for new blood. Now they are mated with my other birds. When I let the birds out for eserxise how can I pervent there escarp?
- A. — Dear Mr. Koliotera: the frustrate thing to do is get the mitigate closed.
- Q. — Dear Mr. Kehl: I belong to twelve (12) pigeon clubs. I am informed that six of them are affiliated with NPA. Don't you think I should get free membership in NPA?
- A. — Dear Fred, we expect to get a constitutional amendment to that effect about 1985. Come again.

Q. — Dear Mr. K., I get spent barley from the brewery to feed my birds. What I want to know is how to keep my Rollers from bumping.

A. — Dear Amos: we have a similar problem here with a lemme see um burp hic yup OK on the rocks.

—N P A News, April 1963, p. 19

SPLITTING BLOOD

Fresh blood! Good blood! Paternal, maternal, and thicker than water! But there has been bad blood among friends concerning the channeling thereof.

Whatever breeding system or lack of one is used, a pedigree results. According to the sages, a bird gets half his blood from the father and half from the mother. What could be fairer? Except that the mother seems to get less credit than she deserves, considering her greater labors in the matter.

Following this elementary calculation, the sages figure that a quarter of a bird's blood is from each grandparent. And an eighth from each of the eight great-grandparents. Continuing this pleasant train of thought, we note that there were 16 great-great-grandparents; further back, doubling the ancestors each generation, we get 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, and in the tenth generation 1024. Then each of these 1024 ancestors contributed 1/1024th of the blood of our bird?

This is all very delightful until we push further back. If we figure that it took about 20 years to get those ten generations, then a century ago would have taken us back 50 generations. To calculate the number of ancestors 50 generations back is a bit laborious with pencil and paper, but easy on a desk calculator. I reckon it at some trillions more than a quadrillion. If that number doesn't seem impressive, just think that there probably have not been so many pigeons in all since the landing of Noah's Ark!

Continuing these absurd calculations we soon reach fractions of blood more numerous than the number of atoms in the bird's body. That does it. I can't split blood that fine! Somewhere along this crazy path a lot of ancestors somehow must get canceled out. But that seems impossible too, since each ancestor was contributing 1/2 to its progeny!

What a bloody mess! But the paradox is easily resolved, by saying that "chromosomes" instead of "blood" are passed on. Our bird has let's say 35 pairs of chromosomes per cell; one of each pair from the sire and the other from the dam. Those from the sire were a presumably random-picked half of his 35 pairs, and the same idea for the distaff side.

By such figuring we can show that some ancestors even three or four generations back may be unrepresented in our bird, chromosomally. Such ancestors, and most of those further back, are merely ciphers, only of historical significance. Maybe it's just as bloody well.

—N P A News, May 1962, p. 6

NEED SEED IN FEED?

In the October A. R. P. News I read Mr. A___'s alarums (page 40) about things in the feed: worms, spray, mineral oil, lubricating oil, crumbling pellets, molasses, etc. It is clear that Mr. A___ has not the proper respect for feed companies, or their agents, and furthermore he is attempting to subvert other fanciers with his paranoiac suspicions.

I believe in progress. One of these days we shall hear of an American Racing Pigeon shattering the world speed record, and it will be done by a pigeon fed on the power-packed and protein replete feed put out by an American feed company. What is needed is simply the scientific knowhow to get ever higher percentages of carbohydrates, lipids, proteins, vitamins, and minerals. How about 80 - 10 - 25 - plus! And elimination of fiber will be a must. A flying machine can't carry useless weight!

It makes me sick to hear the silly notions of some otherwise able racing men. They say the price of the feed is too high. Then, who's going to pay for all the research? I ask you. They say what good does the research do? Now I would have supposed that such intelligent men would have known what research does—it makes better automobiles and machinery, doesn't it?

Yes, I'm particularly peeved with persons who point to pigeons in the park and pester me with pother about how they can be healthy on-a diet of peanuts, popcorn, and puddle water. Whoever heard of entering such spoogies in a race?!

No indeed, hot dogs and soda pop didn't fuel the chariots of Ancient Rome, and spraying worms into our feed won't win a race either. Motor oil is the thing for speed.

Mr. A___ objects to crumbling pellets. Well, who crumbled them? When they came from the factory, they weren't crumbled, were they? You just can't be so rough with these scientific feeds as the old-fashioned kind. Precision manufacture. Handle with care. You don't drop a jeweled wrist watch on the floor the way you would an old alarm clock. Ha!

Perhaps in a few more years we will get our feed in hermetically sealed cans, not flimsy sacks. Sealed-in freshness guaranteed. And then the empty cans could be used for nest bowls, or bath pans, or to sit on.

Time will tell.

—Amer. Racing Pigeon News, Nov. 1964, p. 7

IN QUEST OF THE BEAUTY PEST

No kidding, somebody really asked me what does the Beauty Pest pigeon look like. If I'd had any, I might have made a sale. Maybe somebody ought to start breeding 'em.

Pity the poor show secretary when those weird birds come in and the entry blank spells it "Budapest."

Did you ever hear of the "Mucky"? or the "Mookie". Well heck, how can you expect everybody to know how to spell them furrin names?!

But spelling isn't the half of it. The Mookee is also reputed in some books to be a Tumbler. But then, a lot of other "Tumblers" don't do it, either.

Foreign languages do make a bit of trouble. Here are some samples: the Barb in Germany is called the Indian pigeon; in French and German the Giant Runt is called the Roman pigeon; the Italians call our Modenas the Triganini; in French the Jacobin is called Capucin; in German the Crescent is the Moon pigeon, our Archangel is the Gimpel, and the Carrier is the English Bagdette.

And there are other mix-ups. The German Beauty Homer in Germany is the Schautaube. The Hungarian is the Huhnscheck, and the Swallow is a Flügeltaube. Tumblers may be called Purzler, and Trumpeters are called Drummers.

While we're lousing things up, let's do it but good. Is the Mondena a cross between a Modena and a Mondain? How come the Show Homer isn't a Show Racer? Why is the Komorner the same as the Hungarian Magpie Tumbler? When did the Russian Trumpeters no longer answer to the monicker Bokhara, or vice versa? Are Magnani different from Schietti? Can't a Pheasant be called a Suabian, which is really a Starling? And is the "Jewel Mondaine" a new breed or just a tiger-colored Swiss?

And another point, why should a slap-dash mongrel product from crossing Jacobins, Trumpeters, and Swallows be labeled "Lenardo", while my pedigreed multiple hybrids are labeled "Junk"?

Oh, that's right, we got standards. We got even more than that—we got books. But just because something is in print, does that prove the author was a polyglot? And how many show judges and other high muckymucks have time to read, assuming they have loined how?

Call me a cynic? O. K. , so you like ignoramuses better. All I'm doing is pointing out that provincialism is a corollary of empire. Unlike the enthusiast who makes two breeds grow where one thrived before, I urge that we wring the water out of our stocks.

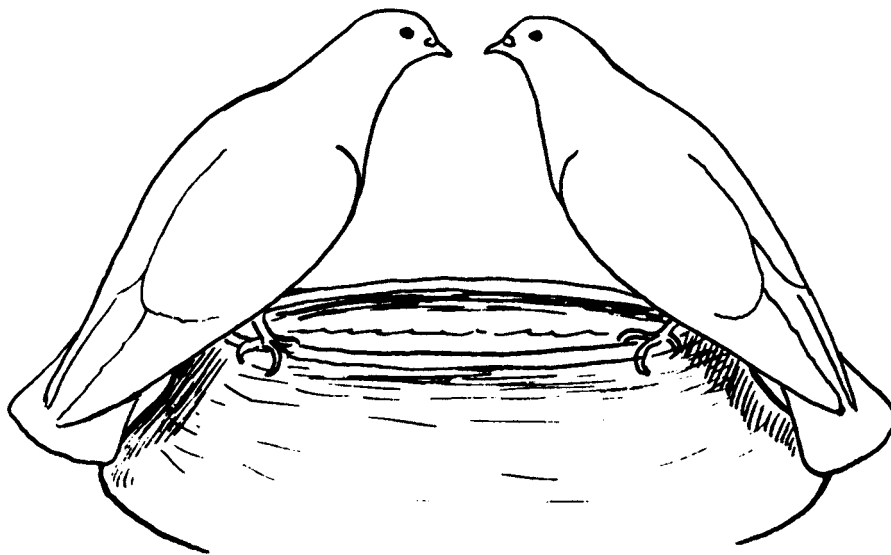
Now don't make me out as advocating that a National should admit only Kings, Rollers, and Homers; that might simplify some problems, but not the judges' or the visitors'. But the tag labels at a National (not to mention one or two other shows!) should be more than a source of misinformation.

In politics, “splinter groups” are regarded as insanity. Is the Fancy a victim of insanity? How many breeds can one man be master of? How many clubs can you afford to pay dues to? Divided we flop.

O. K. , so I got rid of one breed, the Beauty Pest. I killed off a potential flock of local, national, and maybe international clubs that would have boosted it. I've done my part.

But more “breeds” will sprout, I'm sure. Breeders will continue to separate Elsters from Magpies, and Shield Owls from Turbits. Well for crying out in the wilderness, maybe there is a Beauty Pest? ?

—N P A News, Oct. 1964, p. 10.



HOW MUCH LABOR-SAVING?

Any true fancier, according to my present statistical analyses, can take as long a vacation as his boss will permit, within reach of his pocketbook and his wife's apron strings. He can go anywhere, such as Shanghai, and relax completely, for example with an interesting book. Because a new era of pigeondom has been inaugurated through the genius of the NPA. That is, great new labor-saving devices have been discovered.

In brief, the new methods are very simple. All they require is money. The first method is to sell all one's birds at a reasonably reduced price to Sears Wardgomery, and then after one's vacation buy them (or reasonable facsimiles) back from the dealer again. Price unmentionable.

The second method is to convert one's loft to mobility, either by putting it on wheels or by substituting a nice trailer; one then telephones the nearest animal rescue league's office and has them haul the affair off to their haven for whatever length of time is needed, at a small fee.

The third method is simpler but not the best: let (or sublet) your house to a party who agrees to care for the birds in lieu of rent.

The simplicity of these new methods should be obvious to any suffering fancier who has stayed home to chore his birds instead of going off to the beach or the mountains. We hope that NPA members will show their appreciation of this tremendous, not to say revolting development by sending in testimonials for the method they like best. Perhaps we are wrong about the third not being best.

Anyway, we'll be seeing you on that trip to Naples.

Bon voyage!

—N P A News Letter, August 4, 1956, p. 2

DEMON DAY or GREMLINS IN THE LOFT

Ah, it were a beautiful day. All through church I was dreaming about the things I'd fix up in the afternoon. Blessed be the Sabbath, when the bread and butter job can be forgot, and a guy can commune with the birds.

So after lunch I got out the short hoe I made into a scraper, and began a real spring cleaning. Right in the middle of the dust here comes Jackson to look over the birds.

"Wait a bit," says I, "I'll finish this in a jiffy." So I speeds up the job. Well, the dust was so thick I couldn't see what I was at, so I gasps and wheels around

to go out for a second. Rip! there went a ten-inch triangle in my pants, just snagged them on that nail where I hang my band string.

I was so surprised and mad that I didn't notice the scraper. As I stepped the other way my foot came down on the blade, and wham, the handle practically broke my leg at the knee. Sunday or no Sunday, I said a few choice Anglo-Saxon words so you could hear 'em from hell to breakfast. I jumped up and down in agony on my good leg, and sure enough, crash! my head hit the light bulb. Blood began to trickle down my scalp. I saw red. I roared.

Jackson meanwhile became alarmed, and thought I needed help, so he yanked open the loft door. The door spring broke loose, hit him on the side of the head, and half stunned him, so he stumbled in with me and on the way bumped into my water fountain. He hastily grabbed it so it would not turn over, but pulled up the inner part. Water poured over his shoes and the floor. He was so embarrassed that he tried to clean his shoes with his handkerchief.

As he leaned over he lost his balance again on the slippery floor, and came down with a crash against me. Now my loft is made for pigeons, not lurching elephants, and Jackson and me aren't delicately built. The floor boards broke through, and we were half through too.

Well, we finally got out. To this day our wives believe we had a knock-down drag-out brawl. But they can't understand pigeons anyway.

—National Pigeon Association Yearbook, 1950-51, p. 43

WILD PIGEONS OF THE WORLD

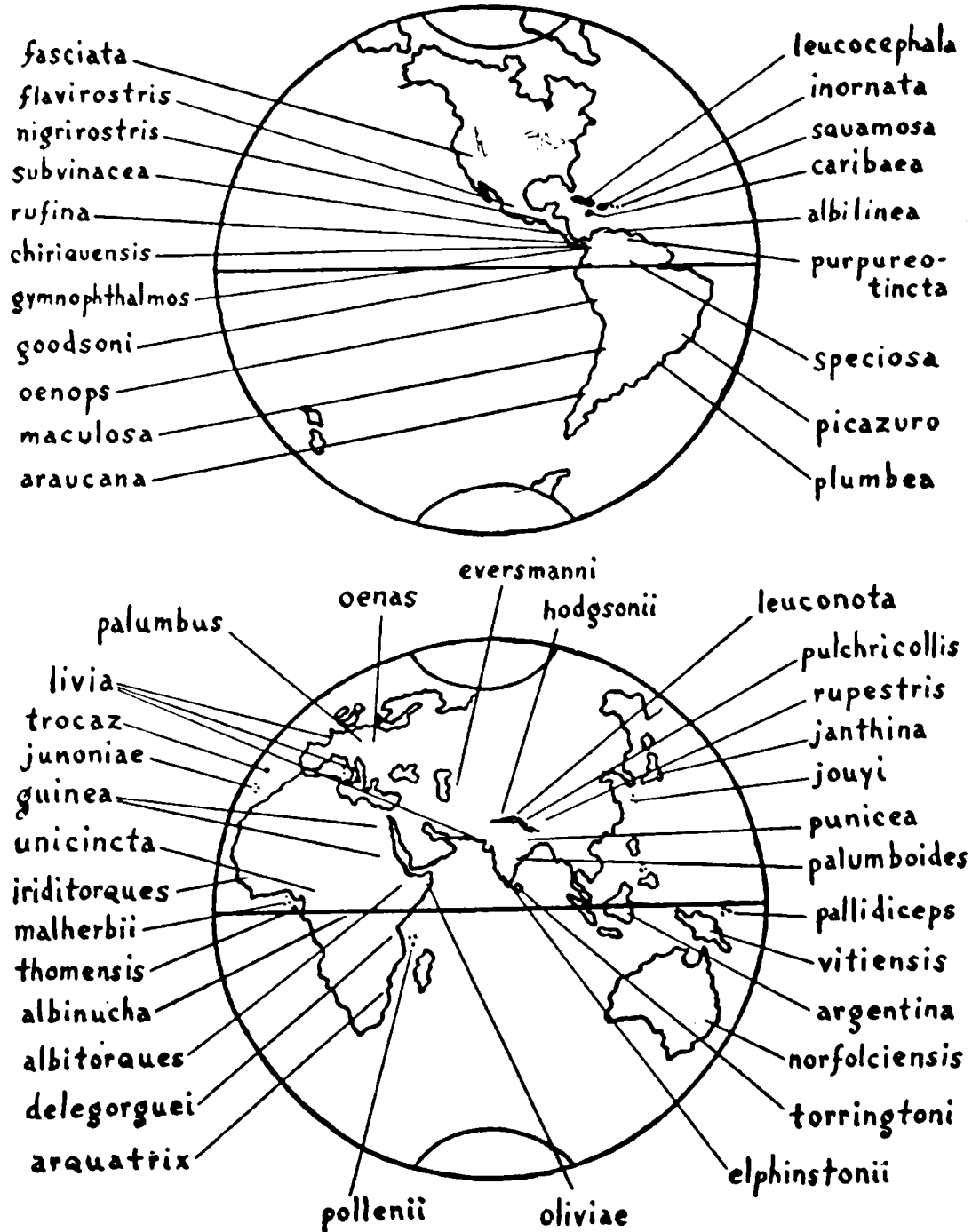
Only one species of truly wild pigeons is found at all commonly in the U. S. This is the Band-tail, which lives along the Rocky Mountains and toward the Pacific.

As we go to Mexico and South America, we find many other wild species. Some are beautiful, some queer. In Europe we find the shy Stock Dove, really a pigeon, and the Cushat or Wood Pigeon; and wild Rock Pigeons, like our blue bar or blue checker common pigeons, inhabit coastal cliffs and caves. In Africa many other kinds abound; one of the most interesting and widespread is the Triangular-spotted or Guinea Pigeon, with broad red eye-cere skin. Also in India and other parts of Asia still different kinds abound, some of which feed on tropical fruits and have gorgeous colors. And the East Indies have further variety. Notable is the Bleeding Heart Pigeon of the Philippines.

Many of these wild species can be and are imported by aviculturists, for zoos and private collections. Some will breed successfully in captivity, and may even be hybridized with domestic pigeons. But that's another story.

CLASSIFICATION OF PIGEON											
PHYLUM	CLASS	ORDER	SUB-ORDER	FAMILY	SUB-FAMILY	GENUS	SPECIES				
VERTEBRATE (Back-boned)	AVES (birds)	COLUMBIFORMES (pigeon-like)	COLUMBAE	COLUMBIDAE	TRERONINAE (fruit pigeons)	STREPTOPELIA	turtur risoria (ring dove) chinensis (pearl-neck)				
					COLUMBINAE	ZENAIID-URA (mourning dove)	COLUMBA	livia guinea etc.			
						GOURINAE (great crowned pigeons)		PHAPS (bronze-wing)			
					Didunculinae (tooth-bill pigeons)	GALLI-COLUMBA (Bleeding-heart)	etc.				
					Pterocletes (sand-grouse)	RAPHIDAE (Dodo, etc.)					
					Psittaciformes (parrot-like)						
					etc.						
					MAMMALIA						
						etc.					

SPECIES OF COLUMBA



PIGEONS AFOUL OF YE LAW

The key problem to us is the city ordinances banning or restricting pigeon keeping. The city fathers are mostly ignorant of pigeons; the only ones they see are common pigeons messing up their buildings. Maybe the big shots have eaten squabs, but they may not know squabs are pigeons.

The city authorities usually have free rein. They get complaints about pigeons, never get the breeder's reply. Sure, pass an ordinance. No pigeon association is ordinarily awake and ready to fight for its rights. The ordinance is passed. Gradually it is enforced; then squawks. Too late, brother; move out of the city. The city health officer has police power.

If the ordinance has been passed which is unduly restrictive, an energetic club may convince the authorities that it needs amendment. One breeder, alone, is almost helpless.

If an ordinance is pending or under discussion, again, an energetic club can soften the blow, or perhaps prevent passage. This takes time and thought, but how else? "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." NPA cannot take over the fight for you in your own town, but it can help. The NPA President and Secretary should be appealed to immediately, be given the facts of the case, and their considered opinion solicited. Their letters may be of good influence in the battle.

Half the trouble usually can be blamed on wild common pigeons. In a park they are decorative and interesting, but they don't stay there. When numerous they are definitely a nuisance. The local pigeon club can cooperate with the city health officers in trapping them. An interesting example of such co-operation is reported from Buffalo, N. Y., on page 20 of the American Racing Pigeon News for August, 1949. They trapped 55,000 in a year. And they didn't get all of them. By all means read this report as a progressive step. The details can't all be given here, but they are elegant.

The Racing Homer breeders have been more alert generally than other fanciers in these problems. In some cases they have persuaded ordinance-makers to state specifically that Homers are to be exempted from the provisions of law. Unfortunately these fellows have ignored the fancy pigeon breeder—may not realize such a critter exists. We believe more co-operation should exist, on both sides.

President Harry C. Burke of the American Racing Pigeon Union has been outstandingly effective in these matters. His leadership helped iron out a nasty dispute over an ordinance prohibiting pigeons from flying out of coops in Bayonne, N. J. The whole story is written up in the American Pigeon Journal for May, 1949, pages 140-142. This is another "must" article, to get details of how the public was rallied to the Racing Homer breeder's support.

Cleveland, Ohio, had a peculiar pigeon incident this Spring ('49). Dead birds fell like bombs in the streets. The health department seems not involved, this time; the Park Commissioners put poisoned grain out to kill the huge flocks of pigeons at the city dump; it was claimed that these flocks were dangerous to planes landing or taking off from the nearby air port. The poisoning was abandoned, and trapping by cooperation of the local Racing Homer club was substituted. (Information supplied by Earl A. Klotz.)

Another case of a dispute, but this time concerning noise, flies, and smell from a loft, is reported from Los Angeles. President Frank McFarland of the L. A. Pigeon Club tells the story in the American Pigeon Journal for July, 1949, page 218.

Yes, it's quite a fight, but we can win, or we can get a compromise, within reason. The only other answer is to live outside the town.

—N P A Yearbook 1950-51, p. 29

ORDURE IN THE COURT!

Oyez, oyez! The court's in session!
To try Dick Roe for murd'rous aggression.
The judge he bangs his gavel down
And wipes his hand upon his gown.

The bailiff grasps the Bible grim
The witness for to swear him in,
But oops the book slips, hits his toe
He swears himself it pains him so.

The witness squirms upon the stand
—The seat's not dry as desert sand.
A feather floats down from a beam
A lady dodges with a scream.

Recess! Recess! the judge ordains
To clear the court of birds and stains.
Another day for trials gory,
And that concludes this dirty story.

—N P A News, Feb. 1962, p. 16

Pigeons on the grass alas. Pigeons on the grass alas.
 Short longer grass short longer longer shorter yellow grass.
 Pigeons large pigeons on the shorter longer yellow grass alas.

—Gertrude Stein, 1929, “Four Saints in three acts.”

PIGEON PSYCHOLOGY

Most of us want to be friends with our pigeons; we want them to be happy, to have confidence in us rather than fear; we want them to live peacefully among themselves and have a productive family life.

But how often we are frustrated! The birds would rather be anywhere except in our hands; they even would rather be out of doors than in their nice (and expensive) coop; the fancy feed mixture palls—they get choosy and waste a lot; they battle with each other, swipe their neighbors' nests, scalp one another's squabs, abandon their eggs, trade mates, or commit adultery, and they become insanely hysterical or panicky at the sight of anything new, such as a visitor with a pink dress.

These are all psychological problems, and it should be possible to solve them. It certainly is possible to solve them individually, but unfortunately it seems impossible to solve all together. The cure for one trouble may exaggerate another, or it may be suitable for one breed but not others.

Is it possible to change “pigeon nature”? Yes. The long but most gratifying method is by breeding. Witness the naturally phlegmatic versus the nervous breeds; the inborn behavior tendencies of certain breeds of dogs, horses,—and men! But most of us don't have time to wait several decades; what can we do now?

The bird's nature can be bent by training, and the loft, feeding methods, and pink dresses can be changed. It is probably best to humor the bird as far as possible. If experiment shows that he likes a dark nest box instead of a whitewashed one, paint it black. If he refuses to eat wheat and is crazy for peas, maybe he knows this batch of wheat is poor quality and the peas are bursting with vitamins.

A separate coop for each breeding pair would be an ideal solution for problems like adultery and fighting. Expensive, however, and more trouble—if the coop is not fairly large the cock may work off his surplus energy by battling with his spouse! Probably the best compromise is to space the nests in the flock pen, and have small openings.

Training is partly a matter of knack and partly just patience. A pigeon kept in a small coop, such as a show coop, with all sides and top wire or otherwise transparent, and with food and water cups always full, may take a long time to develop confidence in the owner. Mad attempts to escape are likely to result if the person makes a move toward the bird. But the same bird in a cage of the same size with only the front of wire is miraculously calmed. Perhaps it feels safe when cornered? Anyway, this sort of coop, with small offerings of feed and water once or twice a day by the owner, is a very effective start in training confidence. The same method is adaptable to the flock pen; a fairly small one with no fly-pen gives best results. With no exit possible, the birds soon take little or no alarm, even when approached to be caught. Talking to the birds, or whistling, or cooing, are useful aids also.

The science of pigeon psychology is not fully developed yet by any means, and its study promises fruitful results.

—All-Pets Magazine, July 1947, p. 53

MONCKYSCHAINS IN MILWAKEE

with Zezem Foggerthot

Well I see by the almanak this hear was goin to be a mild winter but they miss the perdition onset in a while and this is a looloo the fussy caderpilars wasnt to relyable this time also. Usuly I can tell by how thick the fluf and fat is on the squabs in the fall only this time my fingers was so swoll with the rumatiz I didnt pick any I just made a deal with a new sliker from the city he give me just as good of a prise, 4 bits a peice that give me a pretty good profitt dont tell them income tax peple about it cause I spent most of it alredy. One thing was a TV from the male order plase and man I have to wach them pretty girl shows when the old womans in the kichen she perfers westerns we dont hardly need the raddio any more one time we seen a Disney show about a criple boy and his homeing pigeons it was crasy I never seen a boy with branes for pigeons they only mess up a loft. Pigeons is a mans game especally the shows man the shows I been to in my day also nite for that mater. I never did figger whyn hell they ever put the Natuonal show so dam far away so many times lately I cant go cleer to the oceon but finely they brung it back to gods contry again. First I ever seen wisconsin and didnt get a warm reseption alrite.

Milwakee is sposed to be a brewburg that stuff sure is highprice for the kick in it that bier mash aint got the mulepower like corn. Most of the strenth goes out the head that bartender scraped it off with a come off the stein well Wane Reif sez to me he sez dont be so snoty over this natuonal drink Zezem at leest its fresh and I sez to him whon hell wants fresh likker hes a young feller and got to lern but hes smart like old Trealeven lots of the boys is lookin older and more teeth is missin well I still got 5 left on the rite side old Doc never pulled none of mine. Too bad Church didnt come them Texas boys sure useter be a caution well Frank Holmann was up to his usuel triks man can he spiel like a senitor but one guy at the banqet went to sleep on him Frank didnt enter a bird in the show course I never niether but with Lynx their never is no competiton now. Them old Swiss Mondanes is makin a comeback maybe Lynx will to, some day. It needs a good permotor and say did you ever here of them dolap pigeons they was new to me Levi was bragin his big book got lots of dolaps in it who wants to pay tweny bucks for a book I dont care if NPA do get a raikof the bus tikets cost to much and we get bigger books free from the male order plases you dont relize how many things they sell even pigeons but their probly culls. I never got no sleep that first night couldnt stop them blowhards Schamhart was the only one got tired Walter Swister never yawned oncet after doin all that werk. Say that hotel was fancy I usuly sleep in the lobby but this belhop didnt let me morn a little wile. He thought I was drunk but it was that reel young feller give him a time. Humell finely put me up hes a reel frend even if he wont breed Lynx. He cant enjoe a breed unless the flites got to be pulled. That biziness meting was dam tiersome with all them detailes and argiments about boy scuots and nominatons even Art looked board well it was comicle when young Buri nominates some guy that aint even a NPA member. You gotto get new blood but such a outcross aint helthy say was Ray Gilbert gushin over some rair color birds but theys just week throwbacks wed cull out from Lynx this hear signtific gentics will pass and reel pure blood will tell just ask Jake. Well they still didnt make me a master breder but Keenborst got honord so maybe I will get mine next Natuonal like I say time is to short.

—N P A Bulletin May 1959, p. 25.

QUEER EGGS

Every once in a while Mother Nature makes a slip. And unless she starts making a habit of it, we get a kick out of the results.

I have seen some remarkable eggs from pigeons, and read of others. Here is a review of the most interesting ones which will give you an idea of the variety of mistakes Mother Nature can make.

Defects of the shell are rather common. The most striking is the soft-shell. Related to this is chalky shell: the shell is thin and often rough, and lacks the glossy finish. The pigeon that lays such eggs will often repeat, even when she has plenty of lime; it is most likely that the trouble is due to some infection or abnormality in the bird's oviduct.

I have seen at least two pigeons that regularly laid lop-sided eggs. One bird, a White King, had a large tumor in the body which probably pressed the forming egg out of shape. What was wrong with the other bird, a Homer, I don't know. Her eggs often showed healed-over cracks on one side.

No one has reported a square egg yet, but some odd shapes do occur. A Homer of mine lays eggs almost as round as a ping-pong ball. In other breeds I have seen long thin eggs; eggs tapering very strongly at one end, like those of a plover; and eggs with equal tapering at each end. And I have seen one egg that had the air-space right in the middle instead of near the large end.

Pigeon eggs may range in size from as big as an ordinary chicken egg down to as small as a pea. The very tiny ones are generally "wind eggs"—without any yolk. Their cause is unknown, but may be poor health or old age. Very young and very old birds often lay small eggs.

Gigantic eggs are generally duplex or multiple in formation, and rare. In the A.P.J. for Oct. 1917, page 319, Mr. P. J. Schuler writes that one of his Homers laid an egg measuring six inches around the long way and four and a half inches around the middle. When opened it was found to contain albumen and another egg, shell and all. The same sort of duplex giant was reported from a White King by Mr. W. J. McDowell, in the A.P.J. for July, 1928, page 260. Another giant weighing two ounces, laid by a Homer, was written up in the A.P.J. for May, 1930, page 231, by Mr. F. C. Myers. Mr. Myers claims that this egg brought him good luck in an unexpected way. In addition to the above references, three other cases are known to me: one from a white Fantail, at the University of Wisconsin, and two from Kings at the Palmetto Pigeon Plant. All of these contained another egg with separate shell. Similar eggs have been reported for chickens, and the explanation offered was that a normal egg instead of being laid got backed up the oviduct. Then it came down again and was covered with albumen and another shell.

Large eggs, but not gigantic like those described above, are rather common. Sometimes they are overloaded with albumen; sometimes they have an unusually large yolk; but more often they contain two (sometimes three) yolks. These may be tightly pressed against each other or they may be separated by albumen. Generally the double-yolked eggs are fertile, and after a few days of

incubation when candled show two embryos. But the majority run into trouble about this time, and few live to full size. Out of about three dozen double-yolked eggs which I have watched, mainly at the Palmetto Pigeon Plant, only five developed to the pipping stage. Even twins so far along have slim chances of hatching because they are usually packed together in haphazard fashion and cannot turn around. Mr. Wendell M. Levi and his assistants at the Palmetto Pigeon Plant have in a few cases succeeded in helping such twins out.

A good many reports of double-yolked eggs are in print. Here is a sample list of some good cases:

1922 Amer. Pigeon Keeper, April, page 21. Mr. N. F. Steilen found two squabs in a large egg from a Tumbler.

1924 American Pigeon Journal (A. P. J.), April, page 157. Mr. B. L. Eggers writes that a White King hen frequently laid large eggs, and in one he found two squabs pipping.

1924 A. P. J., June, page 248. Mr. C. H. Fisher states that a pair of his Runts hatched squabs from two double-yolked eggs.

1926 A. P. J., June, page 251, and Amer. Pigeon Keeper, June, page 14. Mr. Richard Whitney writes of a black Baldhead Tumbler which frequently laid large eggs. One of these had an air space at each end, and two squabs hatched from it without assistance. Later, A. P. J. August 1926, page 325, and Amer. Pigeon Keeper, July 1926, page 28, Mr. Whitney says the same bird hatched two more squabs from one egg.

1927 A. P. J., Jan., page 10. Mr. H. G. Jones reports two squabs in an egg from a White King pipped but did not hatch.

1927 A. P. J., July, page 312. Mr. J. Schenack says a pair of red tiger Flights laid a clutch of large eggs. Each egg contained two squabs which pipped but failed to hatch.

1929 A. P. J., Feb., page 61. Mr. J. M. Canright says a Silver King laid two large eggs. Two squabs hatched from one egg and grew up normally. He also says one of his Carneau hens hatched two squabs from an egg of about usual size.

1930 A. P. J., Sept., page 423. Mr. C. Porsvrig claims that a pair of his White Kings produced all double-yolked eggs; some of them pipped, but very few hatched.

1931 Amer. Pigeon Keeper, July, page 12. Mr. P. G. Klotz says that one of his Homers hatched two squabs from an egg of about ordinary size.

1933 A. P. J., May, page 191. In the report of the Chaffey Squab Breeding Contest it is stated that a pair of White Kings owned by Jack Pun produced two eggs each containing two squabs.

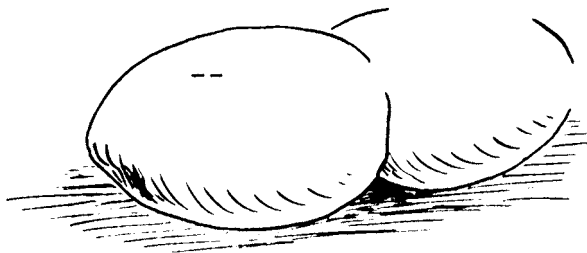
At the University of Wisconsin a number of double-yolked eggs have been recorded, and at least one developed two squabs which died pipping. A blue

barless Strasser laid four double-yolkers in a row (two clutches). None of the embryos lived more than a few days. Another Strasser, daughter of the blue barless above, also laid a double-yolked egg.

From the records it looks as if the tendency to produce double-yolked eggs is not limited to any particular breed but may run in families. The tendency is also found in some chickens and other kinds of birds. The cause seems to be simply an overproduction of yolks, but what causes the over-production is unknown. Another sort of overproduction of yolks is illustrated by an increase in size of clutch. For example, Mr. J. E. Harris in the A. P. J. for August, 1924, page 329 says that one of his Homers repeatedly laid three or four eggs in a clutch, and hatched most of them. Mr. W. H. Oldfield in the A. P. J. for June, 1928, page 232, tells of a White King which twice laid three eggs in a clutch. Mr. E. A. Robinson in the Amer. Pigeon Keeper for March, 1938, page 30, says that one of his Homers has repeatedly laid three-egg clutches. At the University of Wisconsin a female part Homer occasionally laid three-egg clutches, and one of her daughters did also. Well, enough of that. And I won't bother with underproduction of yolks—it's too common.

Going back to twins: Twins can also occur in eggs that have only one yolk, but very rarely. All such twins which grew to the pipping stage have been females, as far as known. A study of such twins was made by Dr. Oscar Riddle of the Carnegie Institution in 1921. He thought these were identical twins, but Mr. Levi and I have evidence that they are not. An article by us on twins and monstrous embryos is published in the Auk (ornithology magazine) this year. We had examined two sets of single-yolk twins. I have since seen another pair, also females, at the University of Wisconsin (D900P3).

I have seen only one report of an unusual color in pigeon eggs. Mr. L. Bell, in the A. P. J. for Oct. 1927 page 428 says that a splashed red and white Tumbler laid a brown egg. This egg was fertile. The bird also laid some white eggs. Now why can't we find a pigeon that lays blue eggs? A breed of chickens from South America does. And why stop at blue? Green, buff, or speckled would be nice too. Maybe some day Mother Nature will give us a break (no crack intended)—queer eggs, but beautiful.



—Amer. Pigeon Journal, May 1940, page 132

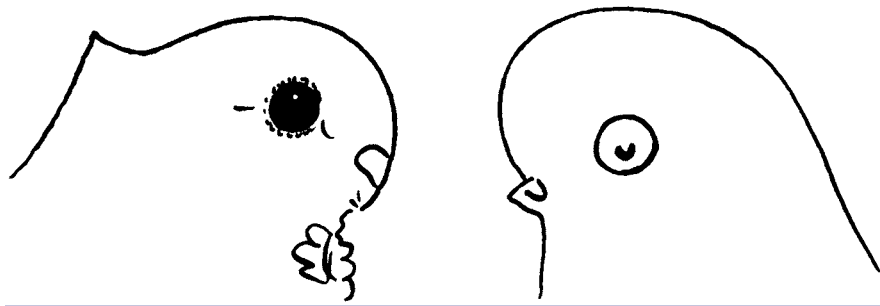
PIGEON ENGLISH

The plump, the pompous-bosomed bird
 Perches upon the steepled roof.
 He wears a look of mild reproof
 And speaks in accents soft and blurred.
 One pessimistic theme is his:
 “And the difficulty is. . . . and the difficulty is. . .”

His neighbor sits and cocks an eye
 Upon the busy street below.
 He sees the people come and go,
 He feels Time's feathered wing brush by,
 Nods his head sagely, and says he,
 “Indubitably. . . indubitably. . . .”

—Sara Henderson Hay in *The New Yorker*, 1944.

PIGEON	ENGLISH
(infantile) see, see	please, please
indubitably	O.K., Buster, I see you
but the difficulty is	Just keep the hell off my property, see?
ishkabibble	I'll show you, ya dirty. . . .
Ha!	Danger!
Hut sut rillerah	I'm in the mood for love
Tsk, tsk!	Whiskey! A-choo!
You sure look SWELL, gal	You sure look swell, gal
mmm, mmm, mmm	Mmmush
(wings) Clap, clap, clap	C'mon! coffee break!
Ooo-ah, ooo-ah, ooo-ah	Lover, come back to me



CAT GOT YER TONGUE?

—NPA Yearbook, 1947-48, p. 29

COLUMBA SUB ROSA

In case your Latin isn't, that means a pigeon under a rose. What would a pigeon be doing there? Why, naturally, one of two things:

- (1) helping the plant grow with a contribution of fresh fertilizer, or
- (2) partaking of the flower's aroma, which most people think would help a pigeon by any other name.

Of course most pigeon breeders haven't time to combine roses and pigeons. It's all I can do to keep the sidewalk shoveled free of snow in winter, much less cultivate roses. Geraniums grow better in winter anyway. And what self-respecting pigeon would be sub geranium?

When I'm in the loft, I want to concentrate on pigeons. If there have to be roses, O.K., let 'em be the non-nuisance sort, that is, on the wall paper. And if the air has to be sweet, O.K., out with them dead squabs and rotten eggs. But I don't want my friendly neighbors coming to visit and lifting their nostrils and eyebrows because the pigeons aren't housebroke.

The fact is, neighbors' dogs can fertilize my roses but the same neighbors may object to the pigeons having liberties inside their own loft. The fact that dog worms can be picked up by kids, well, that is not worth noticing beside the fact that pigeon droppings can be picked up by shoes.

If you rent your domicile, your landlord has you by them proverbial spheres. Especially if you don't like the rental. Of course you could be clever like one of my friends, who has an invalid landlord. Never snoops. But neighbors!

A man's home is his castle, but even if you own it, those city ordinances, zoning agreements, property-owners' restrictive covenants, and neighbors! What we should do is have a city exclusively composed of pigeon fanciers. Anyway, I

have found it impossible to persuade fanciers to become neighbors, or neighbors to become fanciers. Roses, yes; wild kids, yes; loud cars, yes; loud lawn mowers, yes; loud dogs, yes; blow-outs, yes; pigeons, no.

Well, I have discovered the final answer. Keep the pigeons—as many as you like—in a sound-proof, clean, temperature-controlled chamber right in the house. This chamber is wonderful for preserving the birds in good condition. Its usual name is freezer chest.

Maybe there are other answers; I suppose one could even try to become a landlord, for example. But that is almost as difficult as keeping roses for the pigeons to be sub. So guess we'll continue to have problems until we are sub lilies.

Don't get me wrong—I'm not antisocial or in general anti-neighbor or even antediluvian. Just philosophical and not rich. Maybe I should get a trailer and sub-let. What say, Ed? Sub judice.

—Amer. Giant Homer Assoc. Bulletin, April, 1963, p.3

FORTY LEAVEN LUMPS IN MY CRAW

Every so often on a blue Monday or some other day I gotta unload a gaggle of gripes about pigeon problems. Not that this can or will get any results, but one can dream, dassent I? Well, here's today's.

(1) Shipping crates. Am I the only one who receives crates made of heavy teak wood with the birds knee-deep in green goo and all scarred or scalped from fighting?

(2) Magazines. Page after page of weak wasted words. Is there a single editor in the country who encourages pictures by the inspired solution of paying for them?

(3) Feed. Why should I pay 25% extra for screened, dust-free grain, when I throw it on the floor for the birds?

(4) Bands. Too many clubs try to make a lot of income off aluminum. Wouldn't it be better to sell services or something of super value at a high price, and give the bands away as a gimmick?

(5) Books. Most of the books offered for sale by dealers are crap from the stone age. I want fresh, new, beautiful and reliable crap.

(6) Letters. My self-addressed envelopes don't come back, or they are filled with nearly illegible stuff such as "Sorrie my birds is all sole out."

(7) Prices. I don't see why the express bill on a pigeon for 200 miles should cost more than the bird itself. Maybe I should buy better birds?

(8) Old Timers. These superannuated cusses think they are entitled to run everything but too good to do hard work. Fossils.

(9) Squabs. While I'm busy they get too big to band, or the ones I band kick the bucket.

(10) Loft coats. When I forget the name of a guy I have to walk around behind him to read it off his back. And he forgets my name too.

(11) Prizes. Such monotony. Always the incentive is for maintaining the status quo. Who ever heard of a prize for "best new gadget" or "most inconvenient new loft design"?

(12) Pills. The money wasted on pills and medicines that do no detectable good would suffice to build and maintain a good pigeon research laboratory.

(13) Show stewards. Pouring feed in the water and water on the coop floor and sweeping manure into the aisle is their specialty.

(14) Bitchers. People are always crabbing about my judging. They should realize that I know a lot more about it than they do.

(15) Lotta lumps unlisted, but right now I gotta go see "The Unmentionables" on TV. After all, you can only do one thing at a time.

—Amer. Giant Homer Assoc. Bulletin, Nov. , 1963

UPS AN DOWNS & HORSE FETHERS

by I. B. Dand

It all starts after Abe, thats my buddy, see, he bys that ritzy layout in Homewood Hills. He never done it on his paycheck but that killin he made at Hiahlea was from pure lucky strike. Well he useta keep pidgeons when he was a kid and now he drools for some fancy fantails to sort of jazz up his back yard, see, cause its from hunger out there, just grass and landscape. Abe has a noodle full of notions. Hes got a sedimental streak, get it? Crazy, man, but cool.

Well he excavates some other cat whose hep to this jive and he lays out some cool lettuce for a dozen of them birds, see. When his sole mate digs em she starts the count down. They has quite a rumble but he swares he wont spend so much time at the tracks so it cleers the top brass. Hes reely elevated about that.

Next hes got to make them birds a pad but he aint no arcitech, see, just persistant. He blows a couple of century notes on lumber, tools, paint and stuff,

also some pideon gadjets and a sack of special chow. After a few weeks he finalizes the construction deal and tosses the birds out of there crate into the coop. They takes a splash in a dishpan and likes the dump okay. Its not to bad a lookin fright at that, see, sort of a cross between a privy and a tennis cort.

Ever day Abe is out there playin with them white fantails. You know what they say some fellers got a green thumb well he must have a fethered thumb them birds reely do propigate. Pretty soon hes got so many he opens the coop and lets em fly loose outside. Them white flappers gets all over his simoniz job and his laun ferniture and his roof not to mention his nieghbors to also. But they reely look pretty and Abe is reely happy.

Sudden like he gets slapped with a summons. Seems there is a ordnance against poltry in Homewood Hills. But Abe hires him a good mouthpeice, see, so he beats the rap. He can keep the birds, only he got to keep em in, no more flying loose. Abe is disgustipated about that part for sure, but his atourney cant fix that.

Well the pidgeons keep perducing and they get thicker and he cant sell em there just aint enuf costumors. One day he tells us they are dyeing. We tole him to contact a dog medic so he takes a few sick ones. This doc gives him a long chatter about worms in there guts. Pretty bad. So Abe blows more dough on medicine, some new sockomycin. It helps a lot so the birds keep perducing and Abe keeps shoveling in the chow.

Finely there is so many birds the coop looks like a sack of pooped popcorn. Abe aint happy no more. Sudden like one day he goes nuts, see, sort of berjerk. He digs him a great big trench alongside his landscape. He rings all them birds necks and throws em in. He tares down the coop. Now hes back to the oatburners. Like I always says, there cheeper in the long run.

—N P A News, October 1959, p. 20.

UNCLE LOOIE VISITS THE SHOW

“Mine gootness, und vot kind of vogel iss dot? Say, Mister, dot bird in der first cage dere, do you know der name vot it belongs to?”

“Why certainly, that is a Carrier. Are you a breeder too?”

“Breeder? You mean do I breed animals? Nein, I haff a goot beezness, I sell da groceries down on the main street. Oh, look, der bird mit der balloon on der top—vot you call him?”

"I thought he would interest you; he's a pigmy. Pigmies are my breed. Finest pigeon there is."

"Pigmy? Vy he iss bigger dan diss bird over here, denn you must call diss de dwarf, hah? No? Tippler? Vot a name. Vell denn, come ofer here, now, iss dissa giant?"

"Well, not exactly; it is called the Runt. You see, pigeons were named long ago; the birds change even if the names stick. It is hard to explain."

"Yah, und it iss hart to onderstand also. But can you tell me some more the names from?"

"Of course; I've nothing special on hand. Over here is the Carneau, and next to it there are white and some silver Kings. And now we come to the pigeons with wool over their eyes—the Jacobin in these pens and the Trumpeter in those Excuse us please, we want to get to the aisle Now this is the Fantail, and that is the Swallow, and next to that is a bunch of Magpies."

"Vait a minute. How can a pigeon be der same like anudder bird? Von't some vun get dem mixed up?"

"Well, probably when the breed was first produced, the breeder thought they looked like that kind of bird, so he gave them the name."

"Diss gets vorser und vorser. Do you mean dat a man made all dese kints of pigeons like you make de loafs of bread? Impossible. In de Bible it says—"

"Hold on, let me explain. Breeds aren't made that way; you see, we mate our best birds together, and add their different qualities together gradually until we get something still better, and maybe that will be so different from what we started with years ago that it is given a new name. See?"

"Vell vot do you know about dot. Denn people do really make new kints of birds. No, I can nicht believe dot. Look, all dose beeg vuns und little vuns und short vuns und tall vuns, und dose mit de viskers und diss vun mit de fedder duster feets—, no, nein, people couldn't make dem."

"Ha ha, I'm sorry to disillusion you, old chap, but they certainly weren't the kind of dove that Noah took on the Ark. They have all arisen since that."

"Denn a breeder can make a breed joost like he vant to? Vy don't you make someting vort while, vun so beeg like a toorkey? Oder like a goose?"

"Ha ha, just give us time, maybe we will! But we like what we have, even if you do think it isn't worthwhile."

"Vell, you say you make vot kint of bird you vish. I don't tink so. I pet you can't make vun mit yellow legs und veb between der toes, like a duck. Say, Mister, vait a minute—hey, vait, I got some more to say—"

BREEDS OF PIGEONS NOT YET BORN

In recent issues of the A. P. J. there has been much sad lament over “vanishing pigeons”, and ballyhoo to save them from the fate of the dodo and the auk. As usual we'll let George do it, while we devote our efforts to Homers and Kings. After all, the pigeon competition demands progress, not resuscitation of the dead! (Or should I say restoration of antiques?)

No, I don't really mean it. Variety is the spice of life, and the more breeds the merrier. But why not make some new breeds too? After seeing some of the big shows you may think that every imaginable breed has already been created. Well, guess again. Did you ever see a breed with very short wing flights and a long tail? Maybe not so extreme as a pheasant, but on similar plan.

How should I go about making a new variety? Do I wave a magic wand, or feed the birds some coo coo concoctions? Or should I get out pencil and paper and work out a breeding plan?

Anyway, new breeds will be born—but also made.

—Amer. Pigeon Journal, June 1946, p.100.

THE POLAR
PIGEON





BARBS & BARBULES IN THE BREEZE OF A BIERGARTEN BLOW-OUT

Sur le pons d'Edinburgh

A body don't need to cry, but forsooth a wee bit of Scotch makes for memories of rock doves in the caves of Cromarty. Ah, how bonny to be back in the land of the firths and tarns, with lairds and lassies in plaid a-comin through the rye. By the rood, how can a laddie leave Connecticut, where 't is rob Roy to recompense Ronald, and tramp the heaths and moors of Ivanhoe? Witches of Inverness, cast a spell to hie a Yankee to Birnam Wood! Oho—is that the ghost of Banquo? And hark, what quoth he?—Merlin's magic mouthful:

KONSTANTINOPOLITANISCHERDUDELSACKSPFEIFENMACHERS-
UNTERSTÜTZUNGSVEREIN!

What's that, Mac? Lady Constance kidnapped by the Loch Ness monster? Doo tell! Hoot mon ami, to the rescue, Fitz-Douglas! Lay on! and on, and on, and on. . . . One more for the road. You take the high one, but I'll fly on the wings of a doo and be there before you.

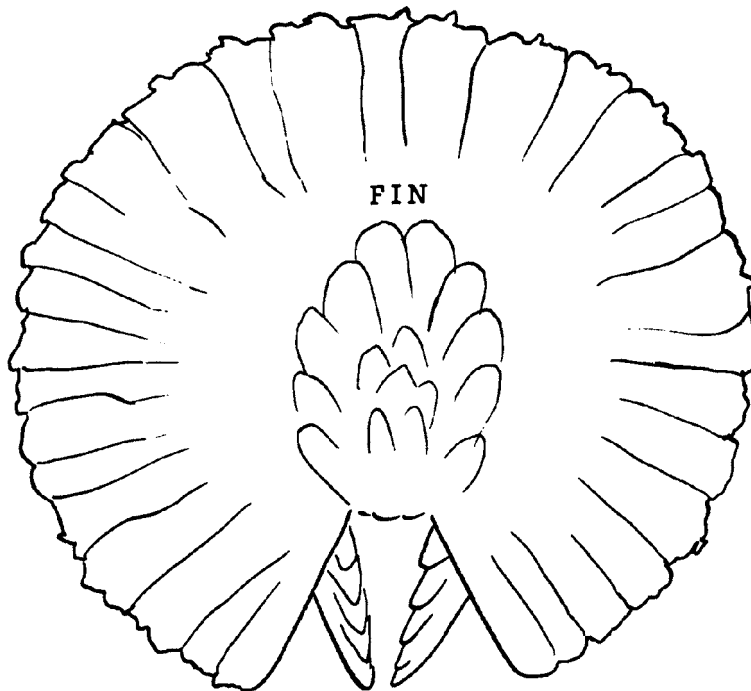


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