

"BARTER"

by
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It seems it was just yesterday. It was a Sunday morning a few months after the great fire of Baclaran Market (Baclaran, Paranaque, Metro Manila, Philippines) took place. As a young lad I usually accompany my dad, Atty. Conrado G. Bunag do errands in Baclaran Market. The market was walking distance and a few blocks from our house in Dimasalang street.

My eye caught a small group of five high flying pigeons. These pigeons are routing well near the burned out area where some fortunate people had rebuilt their houses from scrap and burned out iron roofs.

Dad and I finished our errands and went back home. After drinking the glass of fresh carabao milk and eating a piece of "pandesal" (dinner roll) with fresh white cheese (neatly folded by a fresh green banana leaf) that we just purchased from the market.

I hurriedly went back in the market area. With my admiration, I saw that the small group of pigeons was still flying and ranging vigorously. I waited until the birds landed. Then I waived at the little kid a few years younger than me. He was standing on their roof top with a little red flag on a short wooden pole placed by the left side of their roof.

I believe I ' am 12-13 years old at that time. He smiled as he waived back at me. Telling me to come inside the house. I was amazed to see that his pigeon loft was attached to the house. The entrance to the loft was basically inside the house's living room. It was about 5 feet by 5 feet by 6 feet high. I asked him if I can see the pigeons. He nodded and we climbed the 4 step wooden stair case going to the loft's entrance.

My eyes caught the gorgeous blue bar hen in an instant. I noticed that the blue bar hen was un-banded. He told me that they cut the aluminum PHA band. And that "Jimming lumber" bred the bird. The bird trap inside his loft together with his birds when the bird was still a very young squeaker learning to fly. As I examine the bird in my hands. My heart was pounding. My " gut feeling" was telling me that I must have this gorgeous hen.

I gathered my inner strength and asked the little boy If I can exchange his young hen with one of my young pure white pigeon that I just bred. He said "no" right away. I took a deep breath and I said " okey, how about two pure white pigeons" ? There was a complete silence. He paused for a while and think it over a little bit before saying "no". I told myself that I have to have this gorgeous blue bar hen. I'm not a kid that would easily give up. After all I 'am a son of Atty. Bunag. This time I gave him an offer he can not refuse. I said, "Three pure

white pigeons for your blue hen" ? He did not speak. It seems he was weighing things out. Then he finally said, "yes" ,with a smile. I was jumping with joy. Adrenalin was flowing inside me. I told him that I will get the three white pigeons and to wait for me. He nodded with a smile.

I hurriedly run back home to fetch the three young white pigeons. The best white youngsters I proudly bred that year. I just declined an interested buyer (another pigeon kid of course) the other day. And here I am running with the wind. I can not figure out how I carried the three white birds along with me. I know it was not an easy task. With my adrenalin flowing it was a piece of cake.

I was surprised when I got to the kid's house. His parents were along side with him. At first I thought "oh ,ohhh" They don't want to exchange! But it was the other way around. His parents were delighted to see me carrying three gorgeous young white pigeons for the exchange of their son's one blue bar hen.

The barter of the century took place and I was even offered an iced cold "sarsi cola",which I gladly accepted and immediately replenished my thirst. I was happy to see the whole family enjoying the three white pigeons as new additions to their pigeon loft. As I finished the iced cold " sarsi-cola" ,the kid handed me the beautiful unbanded blue bar hen. Gladly , I bid them farewell.

I was floating with joy to have the object of my desire in my hands. I named her "Pigs". The name of the pigeon I just saw in our black and white TV. A walt disney presentation about a crippled kid who raced his pigeon "Pigs" and was able to walk when the pigeon finally came back to it's home loft after experiencing several dangerous adventures on its way back home. "Pigs" my pigeon turned out to be one of the best breeder and flyer in my loft. I was able to settle her after pulling the flight feathers and letting it grow back.

So many years had passed. I wondered if I can still recognize that little kid. The young fancier I made a barter of the century. I do wish that he is still keeping pigeons and I'm hopeful that one day he can read our wonderful story and e-mail me at caviteboy45@aol.com . I believe in happy endings especially in our beloved sport. This article is dedicated to you my dear lost friend.