

"Horse' Shoe, Luck or No Luck"

By

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A simple horse' shoe (a shoe for horses) had been a symbol of good luck for many lofts. May it be a grand loft or just an ordinary humble backyard loft. It was in the loft of Lu Stephens of Detroit, San Francisco (now residing in the beautiful Mt. tops of Auburn, California) that I first saw a horse's shoe in a pigeon loft. Lu had two fantastic Arabian horses at that time. In his own opinion the horse shoe gave him luck winning Champion Young Bird Hen in the SFR club. If my recollection serves me right, I believe it was year 1988, when he won the elusive award.

So off I went and got my first horse' shoe. With all my enthusiasm I placed the horse' shoe just below the pigeon's stall trap. I excitedly raced with high hopes of winning that season. In the middle of the season. I started to doubt the horses' shoe. The luck that it carries may not be true after all. Weird thoughts about luck was spinning in my troubled mind.

It was not until Don Rutan (Pacifica, Ca.) visited my loft and asked me why my horse' shoe was placed in an "inverted U". The horse' shoe he explained should be placed in a " U" position by the trap. If you placed the horse' shoe in an "inverted U" it means that you are hindering your pigeons to enter the loft. While in the other hand a horse' shoe placed in the "U" shape position means that you are welcoming good fortune for your pigeons to come home fast. Thereby, hopefully winning the first place trophy.

(the wrong way to put a horseshoe in the loft, "inverted U" –bad luck)



(the right way to put a horse' shoe . "U" – good luck)



I have visited a lot of lofts through the years and I seldom not see a horse' shoe nailed in the loft wall or by the trap door. Looks like most fanciers believe that a horse' shoe can one way or the other bring them good luck in winning the coveted first place.

May 28,2008 , a message in my answering machine. It was from Lonnie Patterson(Pacifica, California),my good neighbor down the block. Just a sling shot throw below my loft. I returned his call and he told me if I have seen the falcon. He was concerned that my bird had been taken. I told him yes I did saw the falcon glide and disappear in the horizon. I asked him if he does believe in "luck" like putting a horse' shoe in the loft, especially by the trap entrance. He replied that he doesn't believe in it and that he doesn't have a horse' shoe placed in the loft. However, what amazes me was that he knows that there is a proper way of installing a horse' shoe in the loft. If ever one wishes to place one in the loft. He explained that it should be positioned in a "U" and not "inverted U". There you go , I said, "You do know something about the horse' shoe's luck" and we both laughed in the phone.

June 30,2008 , I got a phone call from Frank Martinez around 5:45 PM. I just got home from work and getting ready to tend the birds. He told me that a bird banded 07SFR 1453 trapped at Mike Cambra's loft. Frank gave me Mike Cambra's telephone number to let him know that I'm the owner of 07SFR 1453. But before I called Mike I checked my breeding records and I said to my self that this is impossible. 07SFR 1453 was sent to the Philippines, Miro Salariosa (Caloocan,Metro Manila) owned this bird. I called Mike Cambra to verify the band number. He said it was 08SFR 1453 and it was a grizzle. We both laughed when I told him that the band number was 07SFR 1453 and we both laughed when I told him that 07SFR 1453 was in the Philippines and it would be a phenomenon if it flew back to California and trap in his loft. I promised Mike that I will personally handle the matter regarding 08SFR 1453 and contact the real owner. But before we hang up I talked to him further and i found out that he started racing with the Hayward Club 51 years ago and still very competitive in racing up to the present time.

Mike Cambra doesn't believe in a horse' shoe's luck. he believes more on the manager's luck. He said it is "nine out of ten " it was the manager not the pigeon that can assure you of success. I asked Mike if I can call him back again if i need some feedbacks on topics regarding our pigeon sport. So i can share it world wide through Pifers E-group(Filipino fanciers around the globe)."You can call me anytime", was his positive reply.

I called back Frank Martinez to get the details about 08SFR 1453, I told him it was not 2007 banded bird. He apologized for the trouble and we found out the bird was owned by Francisco Padilla. (San Francisco ,California). Frank and I talked a little bit more and I asked him about his opinion about the horse' shoe's luck. He said he don't have one in the loft. But would like to try . He had friends with horses and will put one by the trap outside the loft. And he will update me if he would have some luck this 2008 young bird season.

Leo Gomez (Daly City, California) has a donkey shoe placed in the loft. He got this donkey shoe when he visited his uncle 5 years ago who owned a ranch in Mexico . He was walking in the ranch when he found the donkey shoe. He added that he believes in GOD and doesn't believe much in superstitions. He believes in doing good and being a good catholic. He said it wont hurt to believe that there is some luck coming from his donkey shoe. Leo Gomez is one of the best flyer in the San-Francisco Racing Pigeon Club.

Dino D'Ercole (San Mateo, California) never paid any attention to a horse' shoe. He also believes that there is no harm in putting a horse'shoe by the wall in the loft. He also added that the late Brad Laverne has a horse'shoe . It was located by the wall near the feed room in the loft. And Chick Brooks of HapyCo Lofts of California also had a horse'shoe installed above the door entrance of his "Hyatt Regency" the term he used describing one of Chick's loft.This loft has individual pens, containing his number 1 pairs.

Gunther Grosser(Redwood City, California) responded that it wont hurt to believe in luck or to place a horse' shoe in the loft for luck. But he really doesn't believe in it. 15 years ago he found a horse' shoe by the trail in a park and he kept it and place it by the door entrance to the loft. He pointed out that a horse' shoe should be placed in a position with its two ends up.

Eddie Ungaretti (San Bruno, California) was the past president of SFR for many years. He believes a horse shoe can bring a fancier good luck. It is in the matter of believing. Everybody believes in "bad luck" so why not "good luck". The horse is placed upwards so it catches your luck. To win anything not only in races but in life in general. It's

either we have luck or we don't . And if you do have a bird that died after drinking water coming from a very hard long distance race, "that I call bad luck" ,he added.

Fenglin Lin (San Mateo, California) according to him the belief in putting up a horse for luck originated in European nations like Germany, Belgium and Holland. It is rather a European belief than an Asian belief. He said that the horse' shoe should be placed face up (for luck) and face down (bad luck). He doesn't have a horse' shoe in his loft. For him winning in the races is for fun but it is more to test the breeders. He believes in mating one hen to different cocks every year. He also believes in location for luck. Where you live has a lot to do with luck. he said when you live in a location like Alex Beiche, that he call a lucky guy to be upfront in the combine ,about 35 air miles ahead of everybody. But then if we are lucky here in the SFR Club ,we can still win the combine. He won the combine last year at 400 miles YB race.The grand dam was the slate hen I bred off his Frankie -Vernazza line. He lend me a full brother and sister off this line. Instead of crossing I bred them together to produce the slate hen. I gave the slate hen back to him and the sire and dam. He told me that when he went to Hong Kong for two years, Don Wayne saw the birds at Craig Centis loft and killed the hen. Don Wayne's reason was that he doesn't like the body of the hen. That he said, I called " bad luck".

Humberto Padilla (Concord, California) has no horse' shoe in the loft. He said he believes in his pigeons. He believes in working hard and training the pigeons hard. He has been doing the same system for 25 years of flying racing pigeons. He is the King of long distance in the SFR club and he is now currently a member of the MTZ club. And just recently , Humberto won the 600 miles combine race (2008 old birds).

Alfredo Ramirez (San Francisco, California) has no horse' shoe in his loft either. He said he believes in a lucky bird . When you ship 7 birds to the race. And the one that comes home first and won the first place was a bird in the last of your list ,the one you don't expect to come home and this bird even won the race. That to him was "good luck". And the good one doesn't show up. You will be surprised. That he called "bad luck". He said he exchanged some young birds with Raul Martinez (Forth Sutter CLub, Sacramento) . At 2 year old, one of the birds doesn't want to fly too much around the loft. Alfredo said to Raul that he is training his birds to much. And it is a hot weather. But Raul was complaining that the bird always lands in the neighbors house. Raul shipped the bird in the 600 mile race and won the race. That Alfredo called "good luck" for the bird is not even doing any good in the short races.

There you are, we have heard the comments of some fanciers here in the San Francisco bay area. Luck or no luck, it boils down to dedicated hard work of the fancier. And if luck is in your side, with the help of the horse' shoe's luck or not , one can win races. But remember it doesn't hurt to believe in a horseshoe or any object for luck. I wish you "good luck".