

" The Right Pigeon For The Right Fancier"

By

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Starting in the pigeon racing sport was not an easy task. Specially when a beginner in the sport had no extra means to buy quality birds. Explaining to a beginner that even the quality birds that he recently purchased and spend his savings with is not a guarantee for his immediate success in the pigeon sport. Winning the coveted prizes in his new chosen hobby was not easy as counting 1 to 3. Quality birds even with excellent eye signs, handling and pedigrees may not even do the job for the new fancier. Beginner's luck was another story. A beginner will win a race or two and may never win the elusive first place ever again. I have known a lot of devoted fanciers that have never won a first place. Some have quit the pigeon sports and some are just happy being with their pigeons and plainly participating in the pigeon club's activities and gaining trusted friends was more important to them than winning.

During my early days in the pigeon sport, I was also struggling to acquire quality birds, my deep pockets can afford. I tried my best to acquire almost all family of birds (during those times I called them "different breeds") around the San Francisco bay area. Some with pedigrees and some without pedigrees. To my dismay not a single one of them won a first place. Winning first place was all that matters. Trophies were only given to first place winners. And nobody will congratulate a 2nd ,3rd ,4th or 5th placer in the race.

Thinking back of what I might have done wrong was the key to understanding beginners in our sport. Having too many different families of birds overcrowding in a small loft was one big mistake a beginner always commit. We all wanted to have all the families we can keep. And what a pleasure it was to tell someone you do have the family of that bird and this bird. Enumerating all the families in your loft was like mesmerizing our unforeseen grandeur. Most likely we were bound not to succeed in our great quest for grandeur.

I believe that my early failure then was not because I got poor birds. It was my failure not to understand how different families of birds come into "super form" for better racing results. My inadequate overall loft management and failure to observe specific bird's behavior and character were other big factors. The inadequacy to detect and cull sick birds in the race team in the early part of training was also one of them. My hesitation to cull breeders whose health was not par to produce healthy and vigorous youngsters filled with vitality and pre-potency to continue the winning tradition of their ancestors.

One of the greatest mistakes of fanciers acquiring birds for stock was overlooking the said bird's ancestry. The family tree of the bird you have your eyes set was indeed essential. The grand parents, the great grand parents and their great great grand parents before them was very important. The further through the generation you can trace the pedigree the better would be your understanding of the bird you just acquired. The bird's family tree should have winning bloodlines through generations which was the indication of pre-potency in your stock birds. To skip a generation or two was just fine. As long as the winning trend will crop up once again in the upcoming generation.

Most fanciers will argue that pedigrees do not fly. Of course pedigrees do not fly. They were all just a piece of paper that can be blown away by the winds. Specially if one makes it into a small kite. But to a true connoisseur of breeding and flying these fine "sky warriors",
The pedigrees of their winning athletes was the true essence of how beginners or experienced fanciers in the sport should breed and hopefully continue their birds winning traditions. Giving them a better chance of successfully following their right path to Rome.

A well written honest pedigree was the key to understanding the capabilities of your youngsters. If the winning genes were present it would be there in their chromosomes. It was the understanding of their constituents that can help you propel your "sky warrior" to become super athletes. How many times have we heard the story of a champion bird that did not breed well for a certain fancier but did breed champions to another. And how many times have we heard about a stray bird or a bird about to be culled and saved by their new owner for a few Franks that gave them a very high esteem and in retrospect the pigeon in question continues to breed the winning "sky warriors" for their new master when paired to the best breeder or racer in the loft.

If the quality was in the genes it would be imbedded in the chromosomes. The genetic qualities of the ancestors even in the up 10th generation could still crop up in your present day youngsters. You can wonder why a Slate color crop up even there was no indication of slate colored bird in the 2nd or 3rd generation. Wherein if you do have the pedigree in the 4th and 5th generation, the simple paper that was being mocked by countless fanciers as worthless paper can give you the most valuable answer to your question. It was very important to know the genetic make up of your bird's ancestry. If you can get hold of up to the 5th generation or much further down the line, the better a fancier can propagate his bird's ancestral qualities imbedded in their genetic package called "genes", the carrier of hereditary traits. At times we do tell a friend that our champion bird's character and looks was exactly like his grandfather. Thus for those fanciers who doesn't care about pedigrees were losing the great knowledge of understanding the genetical constituents of their "sky warriors". We heard of some "naive" advice that on selecting pigeons only the sire and dam matters. This was indeed a very "naive" advice.

Visit some champion breeders and flyers in the big and prestigious combines. The great majority of them had compiled and protected the piece of paper that doesn't fly with a plastic sheet. The same piece of paper being ridiculed by fanciers who don't care about pedigrees and genetics in general. Even the Janssen brothers who hate to write pedigrees had pain stakingly recorded their breeding and success in a piece of paper they called the "pedigree".

What I'm really afraid of were "fake" pedigrees. Written by dishonest fanciers who's main objective was to get your hard earn money for his own selfish benefit. These kind of fanciers were a disgrace to our pigeon sport. And we must act accordingly when we do meet these special kind of "predators".

I believe in a fancier's gut feeling towards a certain bird. In selecting stock birds for breeding the fancier must like the bird. It can be done by handling and examining the bird, following our gut feeling and checking out the pedigree. But in certain cases, like buying birds in the internet, we could be confident to go just for the picture and pedigree of the said bird. At most times we were frustrated when the bird arrived from the mail(US Postal Service) and upon handling the bird we were fully dismayed. Since we already have the bird, we will most likely give it a chance to breed and to our surprise, often times these birds that made us think twice upon their arrival was now our favorite breeder in the loft. Breeding the goods. I also asked the opinion of my good friend Stan Culligan (now residing in Dewey, Arizona). He told me about the same story of a family of bird that he bought and upon arrival he just don't like the birds. But since the pedigrees were excellent indeed. He bred the birds and the birds bred winners in their first year of breeding and his loft will not be without the young of these previously disliked stock birds.

There were still a lot of stories untold out there. About a certain pigeon and a certain fancier. One thing do I firmly believe, follow your instinct in breeding and flying your "sky warriors" and interact positively by being a true friend to our feathered friends. There is always the right pigeon for the right fancier.