

MSPA Official Newsletter

Fall 2017

Thanks to the efforts of our knowledgeable members this issue is again full of great articles and information about the pigeon hobby. If you have an idea for the newsletter or would like to contribute an article, please contact me at Pigeonprekker@hotmail.com I welcome your input.

The Electronic Newsletter Reminder!

Due to the cost of postage and printing a high-quality newsletter, the MSPA Board of Directors has decided to make the quarterly newsletter available on the MSPA web site at <http://www.minnesotastatepigeonassociation.com>, under the Member Section tab. If you are a member that doesn't have internet access, you can view the newsletter at your local library or request a mailed copy at: **MSPA Newsletter, 21500 201st Street NW, Big Lake, MN 55309** or call (612)889-2945. Prior to the posting of every Newsletter, a postcard will be sent to each member alerting him/her to the availability of the new on-line Newsletter. For the time being no password is necessary to view the "Membership Section" of the web site. An archive of past newsletters will also be available on the MSPA web site. The Newsletter can be downloaded or printed from the web site if the member desires a hard copy. **If you have already notified me of your desire to receive the Newsletter via conventional mail, there is no need to notify me again, I will mail your copy!**

IF YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS CHANGES, PLEASE NOTIFY US!

The 2017 North Star Classic is in the Books!.



Readers will find pictures and results of another successful North Star Show starting on page 5 of this newsletter!

Officers' Reports

A Message from our President

Submitted by - Bruce Rhode

I am very proud to have served as the President of the MSPA. I was very happy with the way the North Star show went. Everyone at the show appeared to have a good time. I would like to have hit the 1000 bird mark but it was still a great show. I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

MSPA Treasurer's Report

Executive Summary current through November 21st, 2017

Respectfully submitted by - Patti Dietzel, Treasurer

Account Information Minnesota State Pigeon Association Trust Checking & Savings Accounts

Business Checking Balance: \$3,830.09

Pending Withdrawals/ Debits \$ 998.90

Pending Deposits/ Credits \$ 0.00

Available Balance \$2831.19

Account Information Minnesota State Pigeon Association Trust Savings Account

Business Market Rate Savings Balance \$3,091.45

Pending Withdrawals/ Debits \$0.00

Available Balance \$3,091.45

Total: \$5922.64

*Waiting on building rental fee for North Star.



IT IS ELECTION TIME AND THE BALLOTS ARE OUT!!!

Please vote and mail your ballots in as soon as possible. If you did not get an official ballot in the mail and you are a member in good standing please contact Bruce Rhode at;

Bruce Rhode

P.O. Box 2 143 First Avenue N

Brownton MN 55312

E-mail Address: rhodespigeons@yahoo.com

Let's Meet the Candidates!



Candidates for President:

Paul Lepinski Hutchinson, MN 55350

No Bio Submitted

Candidates for 1st Vice President:

Tim Kvidera Prior Lake, MN 55372

Candidate Submitted Bio.

I have been a vice president of the MSPA the past four years and have enjoyed working with the executive team. I have been a member of the MSPA since 1959. Over the years I have consistently worked, mostly behind the scenes, promoting the club, shows and bulletins while being more heavily involved in assorted breed specialty clubs, showing and judging throughout the nation and occasionally in Canada. Besides showing competitively in a number of different breeds and flying Tiplers in endurance contests I am pretty deep into pigeon genetics. I look forward to working with the executive team in continuing to keep the MSPA a vibrant force in promoting domestic pigeons in the upper Midwest.

Tim Kvidera

Candidates for 2nd Vice President:

Will Elskamp Watertown, MN 55388

Candidate Submitted Bio.

I have had pigeons for over 10 years now. I started with racing homers, and it evolved to showing various breeds including Doves, American Giant homers, and still racing homers. I have always been trying and been pushing since I first started showing to bring more people into this great hobby, and I truly believe that there is always ways to get people into and enjoying showing pigeons.

Will Elskamp

Rick Besemann Finlayson, MN 55735

Candidate Submitted Bio.

My name is Rick Besemann I own the Hidden Pigeon Ranch near Finlayson, Minnesota. I have raised pigeons since I was a boy. For many years I raised English Trumpeters but I recently switched to Indian Fantails. Why do I raise Pigeons? That's a question I was asked by some High School students doing a report about the North Star show. For me the answer was easy! I just enjoy the birds. We all want a winning bird, but that is not a priority to me. I enjoy going to a swap or show and maybe come home with a new bird or two. Winning a show is nice, but if you do not enjoy your birds the other 360 or so days of the year why have them. I have gotten a lot out of raising pigeons and I think it is time I give back to the hobby. That is why I am running for 2nd Vice President of the MSPA. It is time to give a little back! Enjoy your bird's have a great year. I will see you at the shows. Thanks in advance for your vote. Rick

Candidates for Treasure:

Pattie Dietzel Cologne, MN 55322

Candidate Submitted Bio.

Greetings fellow MSPA members, I am currently your MSPA treasurer. I have elected to run for another term as treasurer. I am fairly new to the hobby, around 4-5 years. I have two kids that are in 4H and show poultry, including pigeons and doves. My son has taken pigeons and doves to the state fair in 4H for the past 3 years. Breeds we have in our loft are: West of England, German Strassers, Old German Owls, Old Style Muffed Tumblers and 4 pigmy pouters. My goal, as treasurer, is to manage the MSPA financial accounts with integrity and transparency. I strive to accomplish tasks assigned to me as quickly and correctly as possible. I also want to encourage all MSPA members to introduce a kid (or even an adult) to the world of pigeons.

Thank You! Patti Dietzel



The North Star Classic Show Winners

Junior Exhibitors: RESULTS

Junior Show Champion - Birmingham Roller Owned and shown by **Able Moon**

Best Flying- Birmingham Roller Owned and shown by **Able Moon**

Best Fancy- West of England Tumbler Owned and shown by **Danica Dietzel**

Best Utility- Giant Homer Owned and shown by **Will Elskamp**

Best Dove - Dove all Breeds Owned and shown by **Abby Laird**

Junior Showmanship- First Place **Myra Arvig**

Second Place **Will Elskamp**

Third Place **Mikayla Schlosser**

Open Class Exhibitors: RESULTS

Best of Show Champion- Norwich Cropper Owned and shown by **Trevor Nau**

Reserve Best of Show- Show King Owned and shown by **Amy Nicolai**

Best Flying- American Roller Owned and shown by **Larry Wilmes**

Reserve Flying- Syrian Dewlap Owned and shown by **Roger Hanson**

Best Utility- Show King Owned and shown by **Amy Nicolai**

Reserve Utility- Giant Homer Owned and shown by **Larry Wilmes**

Best Fancy- Norwich Cropper Owned and shown by **Trevor Nau**

Reserved Fancy- Nun Owned and shown by **Larry Wilmes**



Trevor Nau and Amy Nicolai with their Champions!



Best of Show Champion- Norwich Cropper Owned and shown by Trevor Nau.



Reserve Best of Show- Show King Owned and shown by Amy Nicolai



The show is over and it is time to Relax!



2017 LAPC Pageant of Pigeons Show

By - Tim Kvidera

The Los Angeles Pigeon Club's annual all breeds show, the Pageant of Pigeons has long been on my bucket list. During my work history I, on many occasions, had business trips to Southern California, but I could never arrange the work to coincide with the dates of the Pageant. This year I was invited to judge the Indian Fantails at the Pageant and I could not pass up the opportunity.

The Los Angeles Pigeon club has a long history of aggressively promoting the pigeon hobby. It is the oldest continuously active all breeds pigeon club in the United States. The LAPC was founded in 1911 and has had a Who's Who list of great pigeon fanciers on their rosters. They really know how to put on a top notch show, and the Pageant annually is testament to that. Nice spacious halls, well decorated, close to hotel accommodations and air service, great hospitality, high class competition, wide variety of breeds, and good people. Oh, and in November the weather is much warmer there than in Minnesota!! The LAPC has also has hosted eight of NPA Grand Nationals, which typically have drawn more entries than nationals held most other places.

This year the Pageant was held in the Ontario Convention Center, adjacent to the Double Tree by Hilton and across the freeway from the Ontario Airport. Everything you needed within a few "stone's throw."

I have been to a few California NPA Nationals over the years and knew the Pageant would be like a mini-national. Fred Maenpa and his crew did a great job putting on a classy event. Although, like many shows this year, the entries were down some, there were still about 3,000 birds. With California being the hotbed of English Trumpeters, it was no surprise that the ETs led the entry numbers with about 500. Lots of great looking birds that kept the judge, Rick Leimann, very busy three days.

A surprise, to me anyway, was the numbers, about 200, and depth of quality in the American Show Racers. Other large entry breeds included West of England Tumblers - 180, Modenas - 170 (judged by fellow Minnesotan Jerry Burgr), Chinese Owls - 140, Fantails - 120, Old German Owls - 110. There were about 325 assorted Pouters and Croppers and 160 Color Pigeons. I ended up judging about 70 Indian Fantails and a dozen Mindians.

Birds are not allowed to be crated or cooping dismantled until ALL the breed judging is completed. Then the best of breed birds are displayed in the Row of Champions which this year was then evaluated by a panel of international judges from Germany (Leo Kunath), Norway (Jan Oksnes) and Bahraini (Andulla Alqahtani) to pick best and four reserves of the show. Most of the breeds finish judging on Friday, or early Saturday, so much of Saturday is very relaxed with the opportunity to visit, make new friends, etc. while waiting for the Best of Show determination mid-afternoon.

A couple firsts, for me, at this show involved security. I have been involved in shows where varying degrees of biosecurity measures were in place. But this is the first time I have had go through, almost airport level, inspection to get into a show hall. Unfortunately this is the time we live in, with crazies willing to do mayhem on "soft targets." This emptying pockets and getting wanded was a surprise, but only a minor inconvenience, to improve chances of everyone's physical security. The other was bird security. Those guards that monitored entering individuals also checked outgoing people. If anyone left the building with a pigeon before the end of the show, they had to purchase an "Early Release Form" from the LAPC documenting the bird, seller, purchaser and an LAPC representative authorizing the departure of the bird from the show. And yes, they did bar the doors should they detect anyone leaving with a bird/s.

Friday night the LAPC put on a banquet with good food, lots of nostalgic talk, presentation of club awards and entertainment. Drew Lobenstein emceed the festivities which led up to the feature speaker introduction and program presented by Jim Jenner. When I heard that Jim was going to speak I had to go. Jenner is a listener, reporter, storyteller and producer who has made a number of professional quality pigeon films, mostly involving Homing pigeons and their husbandry, but some to help introduce kids, city councils, etc. to the benefits of pigeon hobby. One of the more memorable take-aways I got from Jim's presentation is that, contrary to what many of us keep saying and feeling..."the pigeon hobby is not dying, but it is changing color." The demographic of the historic American pigeon fancier is changing from white to many different shades of color and language.

I was fortunate enough to follow up this introduction to Jim Jenner on Saturday night with a couple hours of one on one chatter with Jim on a host of different topics, many of which were not pigeon related, while watching the UCLA/USC football game before we had to call it an early night and both catch a 4:00 AM shuttle for our return home flights Sunday morning. If you have a chance, sometime ask him about geezerball.

Yes, I can now cross the Pageant of Pigeons off my bucket list, but that for sure does not mean I will never return. It was an experience worth repeating. And if you have not been to one, maybe you could put it on your bucket list too.





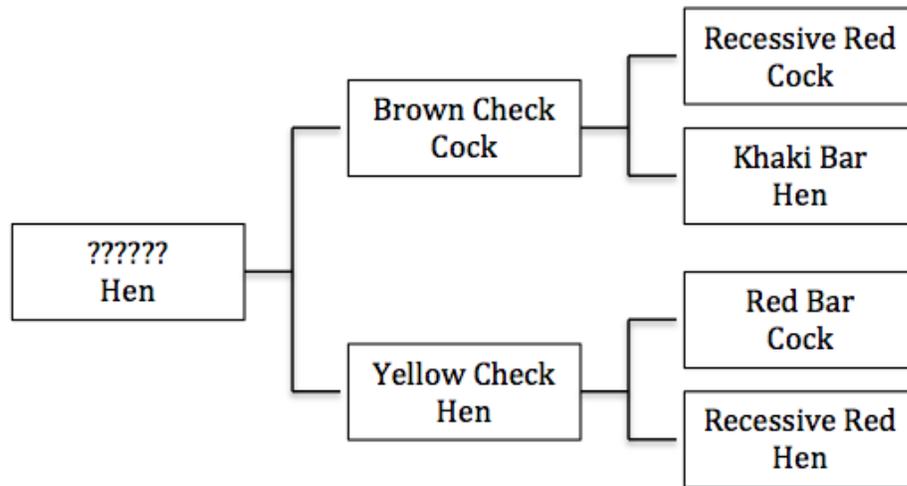
Dr Colin Walker
Avian Veterinarian

There are two articles in this issue of the MSPA Newsletter by Dr. Colin Walker. Here is some additional information on the author. Dr Colin Walker was born in 1954 in Melbourne Australia. He graduated as a veterinarian from the University of Melbourne in 1979. Through post graduate examination he became a college accredited avian veterinarian in 2003. He also has a Bachelor of Science majoring in Zoology from the University of Melbourne. Colin worked as a general practitioner veterinarian until 1994 but since that time has focused his veterinary work on birds. Colin established the Knox Bird Veterinary Clinic, later the Melbourne Bird Veterinary Clinic in 2000. Colin has kept pigeons since he was 10 years old and started racing in 1969 when he was 15. He races most years except when work or travel commitments preclude this. Colin competes in his local club, the Knox Racing Pigeon Club and is the club's president. The Knox Racing Pigeon Club is affiliated with the Victorian Homing Association which has about 300 members. Colin has twice been federation champion (i.e. best flyer for the year) and has twice been runner up. In 2010 he was placed 12th overall. Colin also keeps and exhibits several breeds of fancy pigeons - Nuremburg Lark, Damascene, Australian Suabian, Syrian Tarbesh, and British Show Racers and over the last 10 years has had over 15 National Champions. Colin also maintains 38 aviaries and breeds the less common species of Australian parrots and also Australian Fruit Doves. He believes that maintaining healthy captive populations of these declining birds is a vital part of their conservation. Colin established the Australian Pigeon Company in 1994 which produces a range of pigeon health supplements and medications that are widely used throughout Australia. The active competition of pigeon racing has lost none of its excitement for Colin and he remains an "avian-tragic" being fascinated by all things avian. He feels privileged to work with many of the birds that he sees at his clinic and finds being an avian veterinarian enjoyable and rewarding. Please visit his Web site at <http://www.melbournebirdvet.com> it is packed with great information!



Pigeon Pedigree Puzzler

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For this *Pigeon Pedigree Puzzler*, assume that the descriptions of the colors and patterns of the parents and grandparents in the pedigree above are correct, and that this Brown Check cock and Yellow Check hen are the true parents, sire and dam, of the daughter indicated. Note that there are only question marks where the names of her color and pattern would normally be. Your task is to check all the boxes in the list below that correspond to conceivable and genetically lawful possibilities for what this hen's color and pattern could logically be, and *to refrain from checking any boxes corresponding to impossible cases*.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Check | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Bar (Cream Bar) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Check | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Bar (Dilute Blue Bar) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Check | <input type="checkbox"/> Khaki Bar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Bar | <input type="checkbox"/> Recessive Red |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Bar | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow (Dilute Recessive Red) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Bar | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Check (Dilute Blue Check) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Check | <input type="checkbox"/> Lavender (Spread Ash Red) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Check (Dilute Blue Check) | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid Black (Spread) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Khaki Check | <input type="checkbox"/> Almond |

See Page 19 for the answers.

SLOW CROP

By Dr [Colin Walker](#) BSc, BVSc, MRCVS, MACVSc (Avian health)

The crop of healthy pigeons should empty within 12 hours if fed twice daily and within 24 hours if fed once daily. Delayed crop emptying can be the initial indication to the fancier that all is not well with the team.

Often the problem is first noticed when birds are picked up for a morning toss and are found to have food in their crops from the day before. Alternatively birds may not appear normally hungry and trap sluggishly simply because they still have food in their crops, waiting to be digested, from their last feed.

And so what are the possible causes of delayed crop emptying? I find it easiest to group potential causes into four categories, namely, problems with the food, the crop itself, the environment or the body generally.

The crop

The crop is the dilated area of the esophagus (the tube from the throat to the stomach). It is the initial place that swallowed food comes to rest. In health it is a functional, contracting, muscular sac. At the completion of the meal it begins pushing boluses of food through into the stomach. Anything that inflames the crop wall interferes with this function. Common infectious causes include wet canker, thrush, and bacterial infections (often E coli.). Microscopic examination of a sample of fluid taken from the crop i.e. a crop flush, can be used to identify a problem.

Food

Feeding poor quality food contaminated with bacteria, fungi, or toxins will lead to a slow crop.

The Body

One of the initial subtle ways that birds have of showing us that all is not well is a crop that takes too long to empty. Frustratingly the list of possible health causes is virtually endless. The problem could be a disease elsewhere in the body that is not immediately associated with crop function e.g. worms or Coccidia. Alternatively it could be one of flock management that indirectly effects the birds well being e.g. over-training. Exposure to heavy metals such as zinc and lead is an often over looked problem. Drinkers, storage drums or feed trays made of galvanized metal can all expose the birds to these toxins. Quickly absorbed but slowly excreted they accumulate over time leading to a range of health problems including delayed crop emptying and even infertility.

The environment

Basically birds from lofts that fail to provide a sense of well being can be expected to experience delayed crop emptying. This may be because they fail to provide an environment conducive to health. For example they may be cold and damp. Alternatively they may fail to provide a sense of security so that the birds do not rest properly or may be poorly set up leading to excessive territorial disputes etc.

What to do?

A crop flush should be done immediately, particularly during racing, to identify any crop infection present and treatment given as indicated. If no problem is detected, a thorough clinical examination, together with microscopic examination of a fecal smear, may give the answer. Medication is not necessarily indicated.

The birds' recent management should be reviewed together with the loft design relative to recent weather. If the birds have been working hard and the weather is cold, no tossing for a few days and some probiotics or vitamins may help. Slow crops correlating with a recent change in a grain batch may indicate a feed problem.

Interestingly, at last years avian vets conference in Manly, our guest speaker was Dr. Lorenzo Crosti, the veterinary director of Loro Parque in Tenerife. Loro Parque is a world famous bird breeding facility. Dr. Crosti stated that he had good results treating birds that were otherwise healthy, with slow crops, with fennel tea. Fennel tea bags can be purchased from health food shops. Simply make a cup of fennel tea, as you would a cup of normal tea for yourself. This can then be added to the drinker. There is no strict dose rate. It smells like licorice but unless mixed too strongly the birds drink it readily.



You would be slow too, dragging this thing around!

NEW PIGEON SUPPLY CATALOG REVIEW **JEDDS 2017-2018**

Submitted by – Gary Gorman

Most pigeon fanciers here in the Midwest are familiar with Foy's pigeon supply catalogs largely because Foy's started here in Iowa and later moved to Golden Valley Minnesota when the previous owner Clair Hetland acquired it in the 1970s I think? Many of us *are not* familiar with Jedds which originally catered more to the racing pigeon fancy than anything else. However, now both catalogs offer a wide range of products not only for the pigeon fancy but cage birds as well. Both make interesting reading during a cold winter's night... and provide the fanciers with up to date products, books and related pigeon stuff such as collectables.

Jedds, for example has section on: collectables and gifts with a nice selection on Pins which are made of wood and hand painted “using 24 color shades” and using 5 color patterns of birds for example ; blue bars, blue checks, red checks, silver and blue bar pied (all homers)but very well done. Another section is for Prints and Stationary and another for, lapel pins trophies and more all on page 34. Jedds is a 100 page color catalog! Lots to look at.

Another thing that caught my eye was their selection of books for hard to find books on flying Rollers such as: The Birmingham Roller pigeon, by William, Bill, Pensom, Winners and Spinners by Dexter Graham, Keys TO Flying Completion Rollers Thomas R. Hatcher also Keeping Fantail pigeons by Jacob Barrett; these books are all in paperback format.

There are other books covering Genetics and doves as well as books on such things as Doves and Dovecotes and related history of same.

The largest section of this catalog covers Medicine and pigeon/bird supplements, I had no idea just how many Supplements there for our birds whopping 22 pages worth full of supplements if I counted right; pages 50 to 72. I wonder which ones work?

Medications on pages 36 to 49. That is 13 pages worth all with ample descriptions of what they are used for.

Those of you who may raise cage birds and/ or poultry will find Jedds find lots to look at as well. A feature I found unique to this catalog was its section on Diet. The section is only two pages long but, gives the fancier a brief and well-illustrated with color photos explanation of food values such as fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals of 20 different grains and peas. I would be poor reviewer if I did no mention that the catalog has a very good INDEX to help locate al of their various offerings. Jedds is located in Anaheim California.

There contact information is WWW.Jedds.com or toll free phone number 1-800-659-5028



Here is Gary teaching a lesson on Skin Cancer Prevention. Most people thought it was for the birds!



The Yin and Yang of Pigeon Breeding

G. B. Peterson

The notion of yin and yang comes from ancient Chinese philosophy and refers to the complementary forces that, according to the theory, are part and parcel of all the dynamic processes of nature. Yin and yang are symbolized by the figure at the top of this article. That symbol is meant to illustrate how the distinctive dualities of yin and yang (the black and white forms) intimately interact to create a coherent unity (the circle). The yin and yang forces are believed to be of equal strength and importance; you cannot have one without the other, and without them, the emergent phenomenon of primary interest simply will not exist.

Variation and *selection*, the fundamental biogenetic phenomena underlying the natural history of all life forms, plant or animal, wild or domestic, are like yin and yang. Obviously, you can't have selection without variation. If there were no physical or behavioral variation whatsoever among our birds, then we would have no way to distinguish one from another or to decide whether any given bird should or should not be used as a breeder. Nor would we have any basis for matching them into pairs that would be different from purely random assignment.

As it turns out, that has never been and never will be a problem because such "no variation" circumstances never arise among living creatures; even the proverbial *peas in a pod* vary one from another. Consequently, we always have some basis for distinguishing breeders from non-breeders and for selecting A as a mate for B rather than for C or D, and, to that extent at least, we are all well aware of variation.

However, I think many of us may have a tendency to underrate the value and importance of variation in our pigeon breeding efforts relative to the amount of credit we give to selection. It seems to me that we regard selection much more positively than we do variation. One could argue that we show favor to the selection process even in the very names we use for our main methods, e.g., *artificial selection*, *selective breeding*, *selection index*, etc. Although we sometimes take steps to expand the genetic and phenotypic variation in our flocks, as, for example, when we make a deliberate outcross with birds from another bloodline, we never use the word "variation" as part of our technical names for such practices. Instead we use terms like *outcross* or *hybrid*, which make no explicit reference to variation *per se*.

One could even argue that we have a tendency to see variation as something to be dreaded, something we need to be on guard against and to take steps to eliminate or at least to avoid as much as possible. I know I was definitely guilty of that when I was still learning the ropes of pigeon breeding. I was very intolerant of anything that varied from my ideal. The main cause of my negative attitude toward variation, no doubt, was the profound reverence I gave to my personal *standard* and to *breeding to the standard*, concepts I took to mean that any bird that deviated noticeably from my ideal in

performance, size, shape, type, station, color, markings, feather, feathering, temperament, expression, intelligence, or what-have-you, had to be culled. I culled ruthlessly in those days, but as the years have gone by, I have come to believe that my idealistic view was too extreme and quite probably even counterproductive. I look back with regret and remorse about birds I culled that, with the benefit of hindsight, I now believe could very well have made valuable contributions to my breeding program. My impetuous decisions back then caused me to lose forever some valuable genetic material I dearly wish I still had today.

I am not suggesting that we shouldn't have clear show or performance standards and criteria; of course we should have standards, high ones, and be guided by them. All I am suggesting, especially to the enthusiastic and intensely ambitious new fanciers among us, is that they might find it worthwhile, in the long run, to lighten up a bit on the idealism and be a tad more tolerant of birds that may not quite make the grade with respect to this or that specific trait in the standard. Some of those variant individuals may turn out to be more valuable to your breeding program than even some of their more perfectly formed comrades. Birds that do not quite measure up to earn honors in the show pen may well still be worthy stock birds because of specific strengths they can pass on. Most veteran fanciers agree that, strangely, many great show or performance champions fizzle in the breeding pen, whereas other birds that never won a diploma or placed in a show class turn out to be extremely valuable there. It is one of those perplexing facts of life. Go figure.

Don't disdain variation; savor it. Don't be too quick to cull. Take time to fully assess the worth of each bird. Look not only for faults and weaknesses and reasons to cull, look also for strengths and virtues and positive breeding potential. Try to develop an *appropriately appreciative* and balanced attitude toward selection and variation (remember: it's yin and yang, yang and yin) rather than betting everything on the power of selection alone. Try to imagine the benefits certain variations in your birds might represent for the future and hold them in reserve, at least for a while. Sports teams aren't the only ones that need bench strength and depth.



Even peas in a pod show variation.

DEAD IN SHELL YOUNGSTERS

By Dr [Colin Walker](#) BSc, BVSc, MRCVS, MACVSc (Avian health)

With breeding now in full swing I receive regular calls from fanciers that fertile eggs are failing to hatch i.e. that the embryos these eggs contain are dying through the incubation time. Many fanciers immediately think of Salmonella when they see this, when in fact all infections together including Salmonella account for less than 5% of all dead in-shell youngsters.

And so just why do these youngsters die? Most youngsters that die in the egg usually die either in the first few days of incubation, or alternatively the last few days of incubation. In the first few days embryo death is usually due to either inadequate incubation leading to too low a temperature to keep the chick alive, excessive jarring of the egg that either fatally damages the chick or yolk, or alternatively, a genetic problem affecting the chick which is incompatible with life.

Towards the end of incubation, chicks usually die as a result of problems associated with hatching. As incubation ends the chick has to shift from getting its oxygen through the membranes that surround it, to breathing air and also re-absorb its yolk sac (which supplies it with both food and immunity). If the temperature or humidity is incorrect at this time these processes fail to occur correctly and the chick can die. Between the beginning and end of incubation the chick is essentially just growing and it is here that nutrition and infection become more important. If the young chick is lacking a nutrient it needs for growth or becomes infected it dies.

This year has been a particularly good breeding season for me in that I have not failed to wean a single fertile egg i.e. every egg that was fertile has hatched and been weaned. I have now weaned 50 youngsters. Although pleasing this situation is unusual despite the best of care. I did however, have one fancier mention to me last week that he had had 30% of all fertile eggs fail to hatch. He did not seem overly concerned and appeared to think that nothing could be done. This is far from the truth. An embryo fatality of 5% could be regarded as normal. Anything more than this should arouse suspicions of a problem.

For those of you having a problem with dead-in-the-shell youngsters, let's have a look at the potential problems that can arise with each of these periods of incubation in more detail, so that hopefully the problem can be solved.

Embryonic Death At The Start Of Incubation

Deaths early in incubation can be detected by opening the egg and seeing that it is in fact fertile, but that the embryo is only poorly developed. As mentioned earlier, the usual cause is poor incubation leading to the egg becoming cold after development has started. Possible causes include improper nesting material, over interference by the fancier, inadequate control of nest bowl mites or pigeon flies, failure to provide second nest bowl for next pair of eggs, too many birds in a section, older arthritic birds, poor nest box design, competition with other birds within the loft, poor parenting, nest box too hot or

too cold or poorly ventilated, disturbance outside loft etc. Also as mentioned earlier, eggs are very vulnerable to vibration type injuries early in incubation. Shaking or jarring can kill the developing embryo either directly or by rupturing the yolk. This is of particular relevance when eggs are being transferred for fostering. The effect of thunderstorms is a total myth. Embryos that are unlucky enough to have genetic abnormalities usually also die early in incubation. Genetic problems are more likely to occur with in-breeding.

Deaths From Day 4 To Day14 Of Incubation

This is the longest period through incubation and yet is the time when least deaths occur. The embryo is simply growing. The growing chick receives its nutrition from the yolk and deaths here can reflect nutritional problems in the hen. Hens that are correctly fed produce nutritious yolks that support healthy embryos. The effect of stock bird nutrition is very underrated. By simply feeding a blend of 2-3 grains and grit it is not possible to prepare the stock hens well for breeding. Fanciers who believe they can do this often accept an elevated embryo death rate or several weak chicks in the nest, as normal.

Although embryos can die of infection at any time through incubation, it is at this time of growth that they are most vulnerable. Certainly there are some infections that can be carried by the hen such as Chlamydia and Salmonella, that can infect the ovary. These can be incorporated into the egg at the time of its formation, and subsequently infect and kill the embryo as it grows. Infection can also pass through the oviduct wall into the egg. These types of infections, that enter the egg prior to laying, are in the minority however. Most infections that embryos develop are caught after hatching in the nest. Nests that are dirty, poorly ventilated or excessively humid lead to egg- shell contamination and movement of infectious agents into the egg. Egg quality is also important here. Cracked, thin, mis-shapen, rough eggs allow easier entry of infection and are more subject to trauma. Poor eggs can be due to oviduct disease, but are more often associated with a nutritional deficiency in particular calcium deficiency. Some fanciers will have noticed eggs with translucent clear lines running around the outside of the egg, showing the eggs rotations, as it was passing down the oviduct. These thin areas can be an early sign of calcium deficiency.

Embryonic Deaths At The End Of Incubation

Through incubation a membrane called the chorioallantois develops around the chick. The chorioallantois acts a bit like a human placenta, in that it delivers air to the embryo after it diffuses through the shell. At the end of incubation the chick must swap from a chorioallantoic respiration to breathing air. It does this in two stages. First it internally pips. This involves cutting a small hole into the air chamber at the end of the egg and starting to breath the air it contains. At this stage vibrations can be felt in the egg and chick will sometimes vocalize. After another 12-24 hours the chick then cracks the shell and breaths external air. While this is happening the last of the yolk sac (the chicks nutrition during incubation) is drawn into the navel (and eventually ends up as a tiny sac in the wall of the small intestine called Merckels diverticulum which lasts the whole life of the bird). Interestingly, during this time, the chick also drinks the clear fluid around it called the amniotic fluid. This amniotic fluid, and also the yolk sac contain the antibodies that protect the chick from infection in the first few weeks of life.

While all this complex physiology is going on the chick is vulnerable to problems. Too

high or low temperature or humidity during this time will adversely affect the chick. The usual problem, is however, too high a temperature, or too low a humidity. This combination causes the shell and shell membrane to become hard and dry. This can lead to even a healthy chick becoming exhausted. In addition to this, the chick quickly becomes dehydrated. I am sure many of you, myself included, have helped these chicks hatch only to find them dead later. These chicks die because they are dehydrated. Such chicks if given small drops of water will often suck them down greedily and survive. These dehydrated chicks are called sticky chicks because of the way they stick to the dry shell membranes. They are often found dead after hatching $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ the way. If removed from the shell they often have unabsorbed yolk sacs and there is often dry, gluggy albumen still in the egg. For consistently high hatch rates, it is vital the stock birds have access to either rain or a bath around this time. If not possible the underside of the hen and also the eggs can be lightly misted with water from a spray bottle. Ideally the nest box should have a temperature of 20-25 degrees celsius, and a humidity of 70%. If unsure, a thermometer and hygrometer can be placed in the nest box.

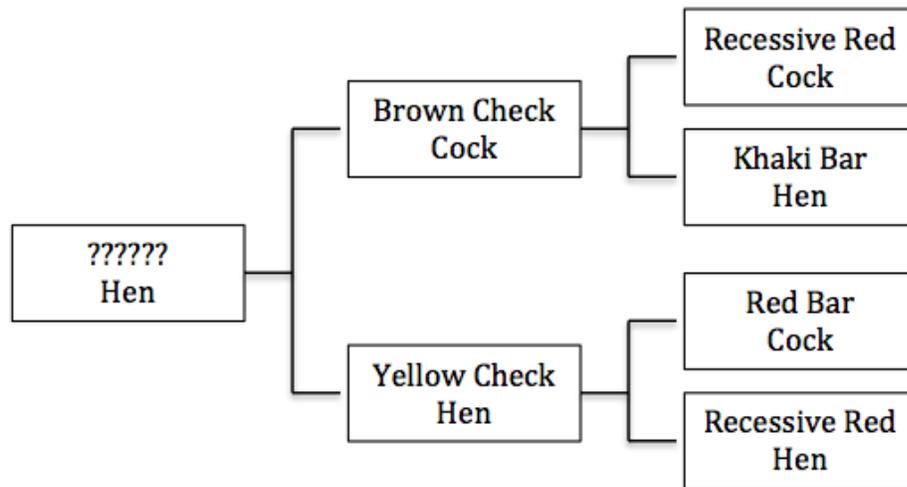
In summary, in most lofts hatchability can be dramatically improved by three simple steps:

Improving stock bird nutrition in the months prior to breeding.
A fresh nest bowl for every round, and ongoing nest box hygiene.
Access to rain or a bath around hatching.

If attending to these matters does not help, your avian veterinarian will usually want to test the hen for infection, or alternatively do an egg autopsy.



Solution to the Pigeon Pedigree Puzzler



The checked boxes in the list below indicate legitimate possibilities for the color and pattern of the hen in question above, whereas the unchecked boxes indicate cases that are not possible. If your answers match ours, congratulations! If there are discrepancies --- well, we are going to leave it to you to try to puzzle them out on your own (after all, that's the best path to enduring understanding). If you get totally stymied, however, and think that maybe we are in the wrong, we will be happy to discuss any issues in the next newsletter. Just send your questions to Ardy and he'll take it from there.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Check | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Bar (Cream Bar) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Check | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Bar (Dilute Blue Bar) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brown Check | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Khaki Bar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Bar | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recessive Red |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Bar | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yellow (Dilute Recessive Red) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brown Bar | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Check (Dilute Blue Check) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Check | <input type="checkbox"/> Lavender (Spread Ash Red) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Check (Dilute Blue Check) | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid Black (Spread) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Khaki Check | <input type="checkbox"/> Almond |



**Minnesota State Pigeon Association
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM**

Date: ____/____/____ **New** () **Renewal** ()

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: (____) ____-____ **Cell Number:** (____) ____-_____

E-mail Address: _____

Bulletin Option: () Read on MSPA web site, () E-mail, () Postal Delivery

Membership Options and Dues:

Individual () \$10.00

Family () \$15.00

Junior () \$5.00

Please note: *The membership year is January 1st to December 31st. Any new memberships received after November 1st will be applied to the following year unless specific instructions are provided to apply the dues to the current year.*

**Mail to: Patti Dietzel
MSPA Treasurer
12355 134th St
Cologne, MN 55322**