

# MSPA Official Newsletter

Summer 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](mailto: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 201<sup>st</sup> Street NW, Big Lake, MN 55309** or call (612)889-2945. 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!**



## Notice of MSPA Upcoming Events

Submitted by – Kathryn Rhode

**The North Star Classic will be November 11, 2017**

**McCloud County Fairgrounds**

**Hutchinson, Minnesota**

If you are interested in taking out an ad in our **Premium Book**, please contact Bruce Rhode (phone number and email on [Minnesotastatepigeonassociation.com](http://Minnesotastatepigeonassociation.com) ). If you are in a specialty club and want to host a meet at the North Star Classic, please let Bruce Rhode know! All ads must be in **by Sept 10, 2017**, so we can put together a spectacular premium book!



### Officers' Reports

#### A Message from our President

Submitted by - Bruce Rhode

You were missed at the summer lawn show. Those who came had a good time. We had several non-members attend. It was a great day and fun.

The summer is winding down and now is the time to start thinking about fall shows and how your prospects look. The County Fairs are in full swing and I am hearing about good turnouts at some of them.

The premium book is about to go out so now would be a good time to get an ad in it. This will help get your birds/breed out there so people will know what is available, the premium Book also helps fund the show report we need your support.

This is an election year so submit your nominations. All offices are up for election.

On a personal note, I heard the complaints about our date for the Lawn show. If we wanted to use the fair grounds pavilion that was the day available. I chose it back in January to make sure we had a summer lawn show. It is like our show date in November - we have had the same weekend for years yet other clubs choose the same one. There are only so many days in a year. I hope you're all having a great year and healthy young. Bruce

### **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President's Message**

**Submitted by - Tim Kvidera**

It was a great turnout at the 2017 MSPA Picnic and Lawn Show. Not only did we have some members come from quite a distance, we also had a number of 4H visitors (not currently MSPA members) for the Show Preparation seminar that I had the pleasure of conducting. The weather was beautiful and the picnic shelter in the fairgrounds was a great venue. Thanks to all those who came and made the event enjoyable.

The 2018 North Star Classic is fast approaching. If you want to place an ad in the premium book, please get your thoughts and design together soon. Don't wait for one of us to track you down. Let us know so we can get it set up.

I am hoping that the turmoil in my life will soon be far enough behind me that I will be able to make the cage boxes I committed to well before the North Star Classic. They sure make handling the show cages much easier. Thanks Rick for designing and making the first round of them.

Hope that all have had a good season in the breeding pen. We look forward to seeing what you have accomplished at the North Star Classic.

### **MSPA Treasurer's Report Executive Summary current through July 29, 2017 Respectfully submitted by - Patti Dietzel, Treasurer**

Account Information Minnesota State Pigeon Association Trust Checking & Savings Accounts

Business Checking:

\$1,819.75

Pending Withdrawals/ Debits \$ 0.00

Pending Deposits/ Credits \$ 0.00

Available Balance \$1819.75

Account Information Minnesota State Pigeon Association Trust Savings Account

Business Market Rate Savings

\$3,601.12

Pending Withdrawals/ Debits \$0.00

Available Balance \$3,601.12

**Total: \$5,420.87**

**Minnesota State Pigeon Association  
General Membership Meeting Minutes**

**July 29, 2017**

**Respectively submitted by -Tim Kvidera**

Meeting was called to order by President Bruce Rhode, who thanked those in attendance. About 25 members and visitors were present and about 30 birds in a variety of breeds were exhibited.

The Executive Board has met and initiated work on the forthcoming 2017 North Star Classic. Would like to get the premium book ads in as soon as possible so that we are not on deadline when it comes to getting it out.

Vice President Tim Kvidera has volunteered to build three more of the wooden carts, patterned after those made by Rick Opatrny, to hold cooping. The Purebred Pigeon magazine has been contacted to add the North Star Classic to their show calendar.

Treasurer Patti Dietzel reported that the current club balance is \$5,420.87 split between the business savings and checking accounts. Motion made and report accepted.

The club's new trailer title has been registered and all four trailers and 1,200 coops are covered on our MSAP insurance. The policy has a rider covering kitchen from when the club ran the food stand. Dropping that coverage would only save \$2.00 so we are leaving it in place.

**Old Business:** - none brought up.

**New Business:**

A discussion was held concerning the possibility of getting a bus trip together for interested fanciers in the area to go to the Louisville National Young Bird Show. It was suggested to put it on Facebook to see if there is enough interest to make it feasible. Paul is to look into availability and costs. At this time it is looking like the 2018 show would be the target as 2017 is fast approaching.

Paul Lepinski informed the group on the following topics:

- The state of Wisconsin is now open to poultry functions, had been closed due to avian influenza
- New Ulm, Brown County Fair is holding a young bird pigeon show in conjunction with the fair. Info and entry forms were handed out.
- Our MSPA picnic and lawn show today is in conflict with Brown County Poultry and Pigeon Association's picnic. We should endeavor to not do so in the future.
- Vaccines used for pigeons need to be manufactured in the USA and approved by USDA and FDA to be legally sold. The NPA is working different avenues to see if compliant vaccine can be obtained.
- A motion was made and approved for the MSPA to donate \$200 to the National Pigeon Association Legacy Fund.

John Johnson mentioned that the entry deadline for the open pigeon show at the Minnesota State Fair is August 1st and must be done on-line.

Meeting adjourned for food, show preparation seminar and lawn show judging.



## **Pigeons at the Carver County Fair**

**Submitted By - Tim Kvidera**

I was asked to judge the 4H and open class pigeons this year, 2017, at the Carver County Fair. It was a pleasure doing so. It is always enjoyable to talk with the kids and evaluate their understanding of their birds along with their self confidence and showmanship abilities.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with 4H type competition let me give you a general overview. There are multiple classes in which competitions are held. The bigger part of the show includes each exhibitor entering a "breeding pair" of whatever breed they own. Then there are also classes for a single young bird of either sex, and again of any breed. Both breeding pair and young birds are broken out by Fancy, Flying and Utility breeds. There was also a class for breeding pairs of doves. Exhibitors can show in any, or all of these classes.

The placings within these classes are determined by a combination of exhibitor knowledge along with the quality and condition of the birds they are showing. After these classes are placed the winners and reserves of each class were brought up to be judged on bird/s quality to determine the order of eligibility for moving on to the Minnesota State Fair. Throughout these classes the poise, knowledge and self confidence of the exhibitors is considered for presenting Champion and Reserve Showmanship Awards.

The 4H exhibitors included... Charles Dietzel, Danica Dietzel, Joseph Elskamp, William Elskamp, Dylan Myers, Mikayla Schlosser, Wyatt Tesch, Hailey Wickenhauser, Paige Wickenhauser. All did a great job. Congratulations on your participation. About 50 birds in a variety of breeds and, considering the time of the year, the birds were in pretty good shape. It was obvious that they were well cared for.

In the pigeon Utility Breeding pair class Champion went to Will Elskamp and Reserve to Dylan Myers. Best young Utility went to C.J. Dietzel. Fancy Breeding pair class Champion was Hailey Wickenhauser with Reserve going to Mykala Schlosser and Best Young Fancy went to C.J. Dietzel. Champion Flying Breeding pair was shown by Hailey Wickenhauser while Joe Elskamp won Reserve as well as best young bird. In the State Fair lineup the top four were determined to be Hailey Wickenhauser's Frillbacks first place, Mykala Schlosser's Indian Fantails second place, Hailey Wickenhauser's Saddle Racing Homers third and Will Elskamp's Giant Homers fourth.

In the dove class breeding pairs were shown. Will Elskamp had Champion and Wyatt Tesch Reserve with the State Fair lineup going Will Elskamp, Wyatt Tesch, Joe Elskamp and C.J. Dietzel.

Showmanship Champion was Will Elskamp while Mykala Schlosser was Reserve.

The open class pigeon show of about 50 birds was down some from previous years, but also had quite a variety of breeds represented. The surprise, for me, was the entry of Frillbacks. I think there were a couple young birds and 6 old. All had very good wing curl. Unfortunately some of them had condition issues. The old hen bird I picked as best Frillback went on to be overall Champion of the show for Jordan Busse. Reserve Champion went to John Jopp with a blue bar young cock German Modena which was in fantastic condition. Another surprise in the open show was there was only one flying bird entered, a Roller.



## **Announcement!**

**What:** Tri State Pigeon Club all Breed Show

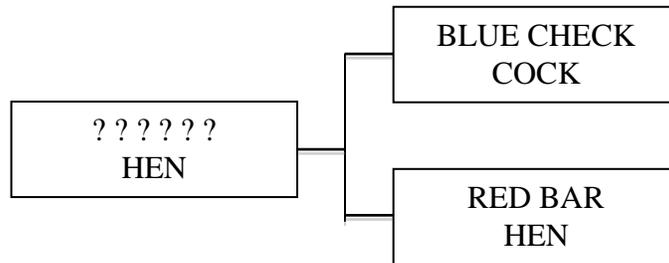
**When:** Saturday November 11, 2017

**Where:** Decorah, Iowa

**Show Secretary:** Dave Foelske (319)-882-3488

## *Pigeon Pedigree Puzzler*

*MSPA Newsletter Summer 2017*



For this *Pigeon Pedigree Puzzler*, assume that the descriptions of the colors and patterns of the parents in the pedigree above are correct, and that this Blue Check cock and Red Bar hen are the true parents, sire and dam, of the daughter indicated. Note that the color and pattern of this daughter are not given; there are only question marks where the names of the 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"/> Blue Check         | <input type="checkbox"/> Recessive Red                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Check          | <input type="checkbox"/> Recessive Red Mottle             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Bar           | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow (Dilute Recessive Red)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Bar            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Splash                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Barless       | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Check (Dilute Blue Check) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Barless        | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Check (Dilute Ash Red)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Check Grizzle | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Bar (Dilute Blue Bar)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Check Grizzle  | <input type="checkbox"/> Barless Silver (Dilute Blue)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Bar Grizzle   | <input type="checkbox"/> Barless Yellow (Dilute Ash Red)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Bar Grizzle    | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid Black (Spread)             |

The correct check/no check solution pattern is given on **page 20**.



**2018 NPA Grand National  
Pigeon Show and Banquet  
Amarillo Texas**  
Show Dates- January 18, 19 & 20

**Show Hall- Amarillo Civic Center**  
401 S. Buchanan Street

**Host Hotel- Embassy Suites**  
550 S. Buchanan Street and SE 6th Ave.  
Reservations 1-800-560-7782

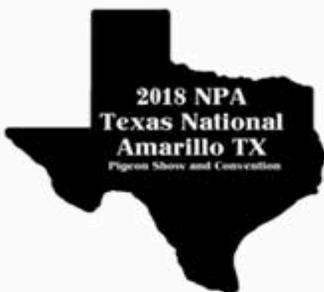
**Host Airport- Rick Husband International**

**General Membership Meeting**  
Thursday Evening 6pm  
Amarillo Civic Center

**Annual Awards Banquet**  
Friday Evening 7pm  
Amarillo Civic Center

**NPA Auction and Parade of Champions**  
Saturday Afternoon  
Amarillo Civic Center

**NPA Secretary/Treasurer**  
**Tim Heidrich**  
1.404.922.4960  
npasecretary@yahoo.com  
NPAusa.com



Editor's note: Gail Peterson first penned this poem about the joys of flying a kit of Birmingham Rollers in the mid 1970s, more than 40 years ago. He gets it out, dusts it off, and tweaks it up every few years, as he did most recently for a 2015 issue of *Purebred Pigeon* featuring Birmingham Rollers as the *Breed of the Issue*, so some of you have probably seen it before. But it has never appeared in an MSPA newsletter before, so this should be a new experience for most. We hope you enjoy it.

## The Kit

Gail Peterson

They've been together, never apart,  
Since just three weeks of age.  
From small squeakers to strong adults,  
Through each moult and training stage.

As one body they grew and mellowed,  
Learned to eat, and then to fly.  
Now they move as one spirit  
Even high in the sky.

They're all brothers, sisters, cousins,  
Aunts and uncles, nephews, nieces.  
Yet different colors and different  
markings,  
Like a puzzle all in pieces.

Half asleep, each on its perch,  
In the cool, dim kit loft peace,  
They wait quietly for me,  
And the freedom of release.

Twenty birds snap to alert  
As I swing wide the kit pen door.  
I give a call, a little whistle –  
And to the sky the twenty soar.

Soon they're floating way, way up there,  
Must be a good four hundred feet,  
They rise a bit, appear to stall,  
And then they *break!* Wow! That was  
*neat!*

Back together, they climb still higher,  
Swinging in a new direction,  
Banking up against a breeze now,  
A *full turn*, with near perfection.

At break of day, on a summer morning,  
Long before the world's astir,  
You can *hear* the kit performing,  
Their spinning makes a soft, low *twir-r-*  
*r.*

What a show they can put on then,  
In the early, cool AM,  
It makes me wonder: Do they know  
That someone's watching them?

And so they skim the clouded ceiling  
For a half an hour or so,  
Then they gently flutter down  
To the loft and me below.

They soon trap in, for they have learned  
There's something there for them to eat.  
Each takes a drink of fresh, clean water  
When they've finished with their treat.

Then they hop up to their perches  
As I shut and lock the pen.  
They'll rest now, safe and sound,  
Until it's flying time again.

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## **It Finally Happened to Me**

**Submitted by - Tim Kvidera**

I am sure many of you have heard stories of "odd" things happening with our pigeons. And many of us figure such things would never happen to us. Well, never say never.

I have been active in the pigeon hobby for close to 60 years and have heard many a horror story about what happened with other peoples' birds. There are the fairly common stories of assorted varmints taking birds. Those who fly their birds are often visited by BOP's (birds of prey - assorted hawks, owls, etc.) and such is an expected hazard of the flying game.

There are many stories of four legged critters killing pigeons - raccoons, weasels, mink and the like. Heck, last winter even I was visited by one of those, a mink, who got up to the roof of my two story loft, pried open the door that covered the bobs in the side of a cupola, and dropped into a couple sections of the loft proceeding to kill 50 birds. Never would have thought a mink would get in that way. I have friends who have been visited by even more destructive carnivores - bears and mountain lions. Do not be surprised to hear of neighbor's, or even your own, pets taking out some birds. Dogs and cats are naturally born hunters.

It is up to the pigeon fancier to design his loft in such a way to minimize the chances of these losses occurring. Keeping varmints out of the loft should be a critical consideration when designing the housing for our birds.

But what about inside the loft? I have had birds die inside a waterer. At that time I used gallon jugs with a hole, or two cut in the side/s such that 2 to 3 inches of water would be

held in the base. The size of these holes is critical. Obviously the holes need to be large enough for the birds to stick their heads in to get a drink and large enough to facilitate cleaning. Too large and it will allow more spoilage of the water as bedding, droppings, etc. get kicked into the container. And it needs to be small enough to ensure a bird does not get in through the hole and be trapped, often resulting in death by hypothermia or drowning. Yes, it has happened to me.

For decades I have heard of birds getting hung up by a leg in a variety of manners. A band might get caught up on an exposed nail or hook. Many stories have involved legs getting caught in the cup holder of the typical exhibition cage. You know, the drooping wire pinched loop on the front of most of the commercially available show coops, which are designed to attach feed and water cups. I have heard that some guys cut the loop off to eliminate the "hazard." I have used these type of cages for eons and never had a bird get trapped on one of these loops. UNTIL a couple years ago. Really bloodied up the leg of a nice bird before I found him thrashing around in the cage unable to free himself. It finally happened to me. I immediately got a pliers and bent the upper portion of the loops on all my cages so the two legs of the vertical T are close to touching - not a wide enough gap for any pigeon leg to pass through.

But a couple weeks ago I had a new one for the record books. A young bird found a creative way to attempt to kill himself. And darned if it wasn't a genetic project bird I really wanted. I use a lot of 1 x 2 inch welded wire for individual breeding pens, nest fronts, etc. in the loft. Occasionally a bird will poke its head through the 1 x 2 inch opening. If it was able to poke the head through it should be able to pull it back out. Well, not always a simple matter. Depending on the breed and head size often it takes a certain orientation to extract the head, but usually the bird can accomplish that unaided.

This drizzle Homer youngster had just been pulled out of his parents breeding cage and released into the community section that has the breeding pens suspended around on the exterior walls. Baby wanted to get back in with parents to be fed. But they were busy rearing the next clutch of youngsters. This went on for a couple days. The weanling hanging onto the side of the breeding pen, clings onto the wire and poking his head inside. Well when I went out to do chores one day, not only had he stuck his head through the 1 x 2 opening, he also popped his head out the opening above so that head and beak were outside the breeding cage and his neck looped around the horizontal wire. By the time I found him exhaustion had set in and he was just hanging there three feet off the floor unable to use his feet to grab any wire to take the body weight off his entrapped neck. Thought he was a goner. I freed him from his ensnarement and placed him in a quiet cage by himself. He pretty much just laid there for a few days with little movement. I hydrated him by syringe and after the second day squirted a mash of dissolved pellets into him. By day three he got up on his feet occasionally, but wobbly. Took him about a week before he tried eating on his own. Now he seems fine, aside from the funny bump on his neck. Hope when he molts he is as attractive as I expect him to be.

Anyone else have similar stories? I am sure the members would be interested in hearing them. They could prompt preemptive projects to save their birds from similar mishaps. Or even be entertaining. But, never think that such things could never happen to you.

### **Pictures from the MSPA Summer Picnic**



Tim Kvidera presents on showing to our 4H members and guests.



Birds await the judging.



Judge Don Steinbruckner examines the birds carefully.

## **With Respect to Old Strains – *and*: To Old Strains, with Respect**

**Submitted by- Dr. G. B. Peterson**

The farming communities of the upper Midwest include many families of Scandinavian heritage whose histories go back to pioneer days. The story goes that the editor of a small town newspaper in one of these communities was visiting such a family in preparation for writing a story about them. After several albums of old photos had been carefully reviewed and the clan's whole long story had been told, the grandfather of the family dramatically announced, "Now --- I have something very special to show you," and with that he reached out and, from a nearby corner, retrieved a rather plain looking ax.

"This," the old man reverently said, "is the ax that my great-great-grandfather brought with him to this country all the way from Norway in 1845. It is the ax he used to hew logs for the first cabin, and to cleave the boards to furnish it with cupboards and tables and chairs and beds. It is the ax he used to clear the trees from our fields. This ax had been his father's ax back in the old country, and it has been passed down from generation to generation and used by his direct descendants here in America now for over 170 years."

"Wow!" the reporter exclaimed, as he ceremoniously received the ax into his hands and began to examine it with awe. "I certainly want to have a picture of this in my story."

But then the newspaperman noticed something odd.

“But if – if,” he hesitantly began, “but if this is your great-great-grandfather’s ax from 1845 Norway, why does it say *ACE Hardware*® here on the blade?”

“Well,” the old man explained, “with all that hard use, time came when it needed a new handle, and then a few years ago we had to put on a new blade too -- but we’ve only ever had that one ax, Great-grandpa’s Ax, and you’re holding it there in your hands right now!”

I was reminded of this story when I got an email from someone in another state asking if I had any pigeons I would be willing to sell. He had heard that I have a particular old strain that I have kept “pure” (his word). It is no big secret what the name of that strain is, but for the purpose of this essay I am going to refer simply to “the John Doe Strain”. I want to use a generic name because the point I will try to make is a general one and not unique to my personal situation. My purpose here is to suggest what the proper attitude should be toward all old strains and the fanciers after whom they were named, especially when the originator of the strain has been out of pigeons or dead for a long time.

But back to my email story: my new email correspondent said that he had had the John Doe Strain of pigeons many years ago and would love to have them again, but he was finding that they were hard to come by nowadays because nobody had kept them “pure”. The fact that I had kept mine “pure” meant a great deal to him.

I emailed back that, yes, it was true that I had obtained my foundation stock from John Doe and had not crossed in birds from anyone else since then. I hastened to point out, however, that that was well over 40 years ago, and that many generations of pigeons had come and gone in my loft since then. As would be the case with any breeder over such a long period of time, my own tastes, preferences, and biases had no doubt come into play to a significant extent. For all I knew, I wrote, Mr. Doe himself might not recognize the birds in my loft today as being the same kind of pigeons he had so carefully and expertly bred all those years ago. In fact, for all I knew, he might strongly disapprove of what had happened to his birds in my hands. (I certainly hope that would not be the case, but I don’t know; he was pretty fussy.) He might be quite upset to learn that these modern-day pigeons were being equated with his elite strain of the 1950s, 60s and 70s and still being identified with him by name. He might not want his name associated with them at all. After all, I pointed out, John Doe had died in 1979, and thus had obviously had no control whatsoever over the breeding and management of my or anybody else’s pigeons now for almost 40 years. I certainly was not going to claim that I had “The Pure John Doe Strain” in its totally original and unaltered form from nearly 50 years ago. As far as I was concerned, I wrote, the John Doe Strain had pretty much ceased to exist, in any authentic and meaningful sense, shortly after old John died. The most I would be willing to say was that I have a small family of pigeons that has been bred, exclusively, but over a great many generations, from stock originally obtained from John Doe -- period. That’s it.

And if you think about it, that is really all anyone could honestly say after many years of breeding, even in a closed loft situation. Just because the studbook has been closed on a small population of breeding animals does not mean that the genetic profile of that population will remain exactly the same as it originally was forever and ever. Unless lots and lots of individuals are produced every generation and they all have the same

opportunity to reproduce, it is highly unlikely that the relative frequencies of the many different genes in the original population will remain the same for all time. And of course, in a selective breeding program, by definition, not all individuals produced in every generation do get the opportunity to reproduce; only “the select few” do. In addition, there is usually a fairly limited number of individuals produced in each generation from the selected breeders, and from this limited pool of candidates, again, only selected ones are permitted to reproduce. Under these circumstances of conscious and unconscious selection, limitations on numbers, random drift, unexpected losses, plus “founder effects” from the somewhat arbitrary, small-sample *grab-bag* collection of foundation stock birds originally acquired, it is inevitable that all the various families of most modern representatives of some famous old strain will be quite different from and, in most cases, mere fragmentary remnants of the stock of birds held by the original strain maker. For these reasons, I did not think it was proper for him to believe, regardless of what he had heard through the grapevine, that I had the same Pure John Doe Strain of pigeons that he had once had or that John Doe himself had had.

Although I thought this reasoning was airtight, it did not seem to register with my new long-distance correspondent. He continued to press me, albeit gently and politely, to sell him some “Doe”, as he put it, if I could possibly spare any, because he had so loved his “Doe” years ago. It then struck me that there was something about the term he used to refer to these pigeons, specifically, his referring to them as “Doe”, in the singular, rather than “Does”, the plural, that suggested he harbored a further misunderstanding of the nature of so-called “strains”. There have always been famous strains of pigeons, most notably in Racing Homers but in virtually all other breeds as well, but no strain of pigeons or any other kind of purebred livestock is, despite having a specific name, an absolutely uniform commodity, an invariant and homogeneous “substance” that just happens to come in separate packages (individuals) like so many separate pint containers of Dairy Queen soft-serve ice cream. Every pint of DQ soft-serve may be absolutely identical to every other, but every individual living animal is unique, even though it might belong to a singular *strain* with a famous name. The process of breeding pigeons never results in the sort of uniform production one sees coming from the nozzle of a soft-serve ice cream dispenser. Each individual is different from every other. That is what makes the hobby so fascinating, as well as what makes it possible for us to nudge our birds in new and different directions in our breeding programs.

I am not the only fancier who sees things this way. I have discussed this with several other veteran fanciers, including a couple that currently have strains named after them, and deservedly so, and I can report that there appears to be very widespread agreement on this issue. Furthermore, we are not the first ones to have come to this point of view. This view actually goes back at least as far as the earliest days of our understanding of the effects of selective breeding. For example, consider the following from one of history’s most well known students of pigeon breeding, Charles Darwin:

“When the same kind of pigeon has been kept pure, and has been bred during a long period by two or more fanciers, slight differences in the strain can often be recognized. ... In the strains long kept distinct by different fanciers, such differences are so common they cannot be accounted for by the accident of the birds first chosen for breeding having been originally as different as they now are. The explanation no doubt lies in selection of a slightly different nature having been applied in each case; for no two fanciers have

exactly the same taste, and consequently no two, in choosing and carefully matching their birds, prefer or select exactly the same. As each man naturally admires his own birds, he goes on continually exaggerating by selection whatever slight peculiarities they may possess.”

*The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication: Volume 1, 1868, Pp. 228-229.*

So how should we regard old namesake strains? With respect and honesty, that’s how. We should respect and honor the memory of the old strain makers and their birds. They certainly deserve to be remembered for what they achieved. But, as they would surely agree, they should be remembered within the context of their own time and place. Outside their own time and place, in contemporary times and contemporary places, we must be honestly circumspect before invoking their names in association with the pigeons of today. This is an especially delicate matter when it comes to cases where the birds of today may not be up to the standards of those of yesteryear. Give credit where credit is due, but do not give, or even imply, discredit where it is not due. Don’t blame the dead for the shortcomings of the living. And in cases where the modern descendants of an old strain are clearly superior to their ancestors, again, give credit where credit is due; duly acknowledge the old strain as the foundation, but give today’s breeders the kudos they have coming. After all, their names deserve to designate strains, too.



**New Named Strain: *Jack Russell Fantail***



**Join Us For Our  
Annual Show and Swap Oct 14 2017  
Freeborn County Fairgrounds  
1031 Bridge Ave, Albert Lea, MN 56007**

**Memberships are Available  
for a 5.00 Annual Fee**

**All members are eligible for a drawing  
for a one year subscription to  
“Purebred Pigeon Magazine”,  
awarded at the show.**



**Trust me guys, I know this is the road home!**

## **Pigeons Resist Misguided Leaders**

**By James Gorman**

**SCIENCETAKE**  
**SEPT. 26, 2016**

### **Follow the Leader(s)**

When a leader tries to take a flock in the wrong direction, homing pigeons still find the right way home.

By ALEXANDRA EATON, ROBIN LINDSAY and JAMES GORMAN on Publish Date September 26, 2016.

When the leader of a flock goes the wrong way, what will the flock do?

With human beings, nobody can be sure. But with homing pigeons, the answer is that they find their way home anyway.

Either the lead pigeon recognizes that it has no clue and falls back into the flock, letting birds that know where they are going take over, or the flock collectively decides that the direction that it is taking just doesn't feel right, and it doesn't follow.

Several European scientists report these findings in a stirring report in Biology Letters titled, "Misinformed Leaders Lose Influence over Pigeon Flocks."

Isobel Watts, a doctoral student in zoology at Oxford, conducted the study with her advisers, Theresa Burt de Perera and Dora Biro, and with the participation of Mate Nagy, a statistical physicist from Hungary, who is affiliated with several institutions, including Oxford and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Biro, who studies social behavior in primates as well as pigeons, said that the common questions that ran through her work were "about group living and what types of challenges and opportunities it brings.

She and her colleagues at Oxford have pioneered a method of studying flock behavior that uses very-fine-resolution GPS units, which the birds wear in pigeon-size backpacks.

The devices record a detailed position for each bird a number of times a second. Researchers in Budapest and Oxford developed software to analyze small movements and responses of every bird in a flock.

With this method, the scientists can identify which pigeons are leading the way. They can build a picture of how each bird responds to changes in the flight of other birds.

The consistent leaders were often fast fliers and occupied the first position in the group of flying birds. Other birds followed them.

But what if one day, a leader flew in the wrong direction?

The researchers arranged to feed the leaders misinformation by putting them in lofts with artificial light for a few days. By shifting when the lights went on and off, compared with the actual external schedule of light and dark, the researchers could shift the pigeons' internal clocks a few hours forward or back.

Pigeons navigate by using the position of the sun and an internal clock, so the change in the clock threw off their sense of direction and they didn't fly toward home at all.

But the pigeon flock corrected its flight path, and went the right way.

Dr. Biro doesn't know exactly how they corrected. The followers all had the right information, so they might have collectively said, "this guy's wrong, let's not follow him," Dr. Biro said.

“Or, the leader said, ‘Something’s wrong here,’” and fell back into the flock, “effectively choosing not to lead,” Dr. Biro said, and another pigeon, that knew the time of day, led the way.

Sadly, these kinds of decisions by pigeon flocks offer no reassurance to humans who think political leaders are misinformed or misdirected.

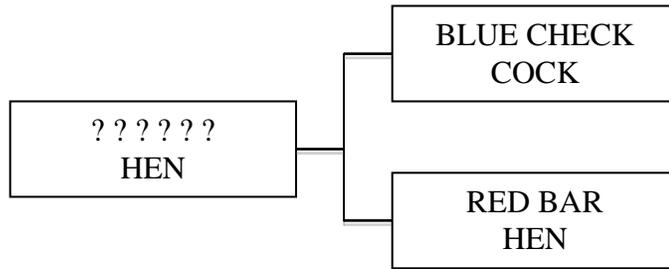
The pigeons don’t communicate directly about where they are flying. The flock changes its flight path because of split-second reactions to position changes by other birds. There’s no decision-making process remotely similar to, say, an election.

But knowledge of how the pigeons work might be useful in creating swarms of small robots for activities like search and rescue. If researchers can reduce the decision-making process of a flock to a few simple rules about who follows whom, and when, those rules might be applied to robot groups.

Then the group of robots might be able to make some of its own decisions, at least about where to go or how to get there.



*Solution to the Pigeon Pedigree Puzzler*



The checked boxes in the list below indicate legitimate possibilities for the color and pattern of a daughter of the pair above, whereas the unchecked boxes indicate cases that are not possible.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blue Check   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recessive Red                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Check               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recessive Red Mottle             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blue Bar     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yellow (Dilute Recessive Red)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Bar                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yellow Splash                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blue Barless | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Silver Check (Dilute Blue Check) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Barless             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Check (Dilute Ash Red)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Check Grizzle      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Silver Bar (Dilute Blue Bar)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Check Grizzle       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Barless Silver (Dilute Blue)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Bar Grizzle        | <input type="checkbox"/> Barless Yellow (Dilute Ash Red)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Bar Grizzle         | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid Black (Spread)                        |

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.



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

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**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 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>. Any new memberships received after November 1<sup>st</sup> will be applied to the following year unless specific instructions are provided to apply the dues to the current year.*

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