

National Pigeon Association 1985 GRAND NATIONAL SHOW

by
Kay Mahi
Oregon State Coordinator
Scappoose, Oregon

The predawn hours of Wednesday, January 16th, were clear and cold in Portland, Oregon. Shivering members of the Northwest Pigeon Fanciers of Portland and the Mid-Valley Pigeon Fanciers of Salem, two Oregon clubs forming the Beaver State Alliance, gathered at the empty Convention Hall of the Portland Memorial Coliseum for the mammoth task of preparing the hall for the 63rd Grand National Show. Months of planning and preparation were past; hours of toil were now beginning for these dedicated workers. The job must be done quickly, and it must be done right. All across the nation pigeons and pigeon-people were on the move; 326 exhibitors were en route to the city, bringing with them 3,855 of the finest show birds in the country.

The sun rose gloriously over the shoulder of Mt. Hood, but the Beaver State Alliance had no time to notice; like the proverbial beavers they were hard at work. Under the capable leadership of Show Director Darwin Grange and Show Secretary Keith Casteel the work crews moved the multitude of tables into position, erected row upon endless row of coops upon them, attached feed and water containers, secured neatly typed show tags to each. Judging areas took form at predetermined points throughout the hall; fifty judges would labor for three days to select the best of the best, the Grand National Champions. Reporter Steve Erickson, of the Oregonian newspaper, arrived to interview the organizers of the show as it was a newsworthy event. For the first time in the 85-year history of the National Pigeon Association the Grand National Show was coming to the "City of Roses."

When the hall opened at 3 p.m. for the cooping-in, all was in readiness. The neat rows of coops sat upon paper-covered tables awaiting their occupants; judging areas were in place, complete with seating for spectators. Alliance members stood ready to direct arriving breeders to their assigned part of the great room, for 31 separate Specialty Meets were scheduled as part

of this extravaganza. Then the pigeons began to arrive: big pigeons and little pigeons, smooth pigeons and ruffled pigeons, pigeons of every possible hue. Carriers of every size and type came through the doors, from simple cardboard boxes to elaborate partitioned wooded cases, which contained the high hopes of each breeder. Master Breeders and Novices, Juniors and life-long fanciers with fifty or more years devoted to the hobby have been brought together by their common love of these gentle birds. Mingling in the aisles the exhibitors were intent upon



American show racers - Judge Orrie Moore

locating their assigned coops, to reassure their nervous birds, and to smooth out their ruffled feathers. There were old friends to greet and new friendships to be formed, but this would wait until the birds were fed and watered.

A camera crew and reporter John Hammarley, from KGW-TV, arrived to film the activity for the 5 o'clock news. Exhibitors freely spoke of their birds, their love of the fancy and their hopes of a National Championship. Throughout the afternoon and late into the evening birds continued to arrive. The pigeons had come to Portland, and Portland welcomed them with warm enthusiasm.

The Uncommon Pigeon

It is doubtful that there is anyone in this country...perhaps in this entire world...who has never seen a pigeon, or at least a picture of one. Pigeons and their near kin the doves have been around for a long, long time. The Bible records, in the 8th chapter of Genesis, that Noah released a dove to determine whether the floodwaters had abated, and the bird returned with a sprig of olive in its beak; to this day that event is commemorated as the international symbol of peace.

Pigeons were one of the first birds to be domesticated by man, and possibly the very first to be bred as a pet. They have provided a source of food for the

hungry, a means of sending messages for the military. The liquid melody of their cooing has soothed many a troubled heart, and their cooing of alarm in the night has alerted many a householder to the presence of an intruder. They have domiciled in humble shelters provided by peasants and castle parapets provided by royalty. When Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth inherited the throne of England, she also inherited the British Royal Loft with its renowned racing homers. Spectators at the Opening Ceremonies of the 1984 Olympics witnessed the release of a multitude of pigeons; the birds were racing homers and their release was the start of the very first race of the Olympics...a pigeon race.

Yes, the pigeon is a very familiar bird. Even a common bird. Yet for all its familiarity the average person knows little about it. The iridescent-hued blue-gray birds we are accustomed to seeing are but one of a multitude of varieties descended from one common ancestor, the blue rock dove (see article in the Dec/Jan 1985 *Watchbird*, page 36).

From the genes of that single wild species have come a wide variety of descendants, so diverse in size, structure, feather and color that it becomes difficult to realize they are even related, much less members of the same species. Through natural mutation, selective breeding and genetic engineering the distinctive qualities of each variety have been developed, improved, refined and perfected. The process has taken centuries; countless enthusiasts all over the world have played a part in it.

Varieties have been named for specific characteristics: pouter, cropper, roller, fantail, etc.; for cities of origin: Modena, Berliner, Bokhara, etc.; for nations where they were developed: American roller, English trumpeter, Indian fantail, Chinese owl. Each variety has its own Standard of Perfection against which exhibition birds are judged.

While pigeon fanciers may keep several varieties in their lofts, it is a common practice to specialize in one. With so many varied types to select from, finding a breed of pigeon suited to one's individual tastes is not at all difficult. Whether one favors a popular breed or one of the rare and unusual types, there are always other enthusiasts with the same interest. This bond of common interest frequently leads to long-term friendships, making Grand National Shows not only competitive events, but times for reunion.

Fancy shirts and jackets, embroidered or painted with the likeness

Photo by Joe McLaughlin, Dundee, Oregon

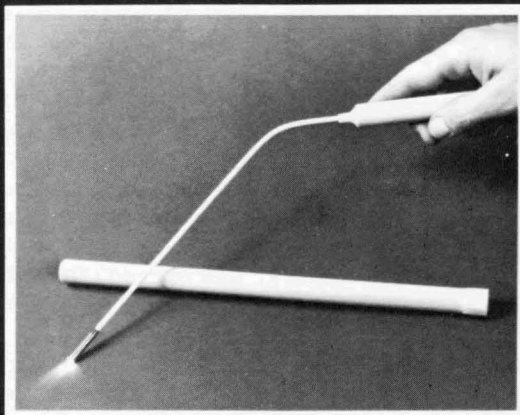
of a fancier's favorite breed, are seen in profusion. Loft coats, part of the grand tradition of pigeon breeders, are also seen in abundance. Similar in appearance to laboratory coats, these knee-length white garments are usually embroidered with the breeder's name, club and specialty. Cloth badges stitched to pockets, sleeves or shoulders declare honors garnered by the breeder throughout his or her career. Much sought-after is the distinctive "Master Breeder" patch, a title bestowed upon qualified individuals by the N.P.A. To be eligible for the Master Breeder award, a breeder must have been a member in good standing for at least 10 years and a consistent breeder of one variety. Applications and nominations for this honor are screened by a select committee to uphold the high standards and ideals of the organization, so those who have been awarded the title display the patch with justifiable pride. Even more proudly worn, but not so frequently seen, is the "Hall of Fame" badge, an honor bestowed upon a few worthy members for long-standing dedication and service.

Meeting The Pigeon-People

The American Federation of Aviculture was assigned a table location facing the entry, providing an excellent first impression to both visitors and exhibitors attending the show. Not only were we able to provide information about the Federation to all and sundry, but also to engage in friendly and informative conversations with many exhibitors. While it isn't possible to report on all...or even most...of the wonderful folks we met, we would like to mention a typical few.

The moment you meet Jerry Fussell, you know he is from the "Lone Star" state. The boots and hat, the sunny smile and gentle drawl all give him away. A building contractor from Midland, Texas, Jerry is President of the National Pigeon Association. When he started out in the pigeon fancy in 1964, he selected breeding stock of three varieties: helmets, African owls and Chinese owls. By the '70s he was so well satisfied with his progress and success with the Chinese owls that he began to specialize. Winner of numerous local and regional honors and holder of 10 National Championships, Jerry has attained the status of "Master Breeder." The Chinese owl pigeon is one of the smaller types, distinguished principally by the unique feather pattern of the breast. There were 168 Chinese owls entered in competition, all exceptionally fine specimens. Judging was

CANDLING WITHOUT HANDLING.



With this unique flexible transilluminator.

This revolutionary portable light features a high intensity, pre-focused bulb on the end of a ten inch flexible shaft which may be bent into any configuration. Also,

its protective cover may be removed and used as an extension handle which will allow you to reach 27 inches. It is perfect for candling eggs in the nest!

Write to Medical Diagnostic Services, Inc. for more information regarding this and other inexpensive diagnostic products.
P.O. Box 1441, Brandon, Florida 34299-1441. Phone (813) 685-1727.



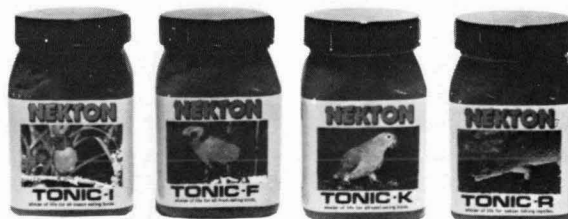
NEKTON TONIC-K
NEKTON TONIC-F

FORMULATED WITH YOUR BIRD IN MIND!!!

- **NEKTON-TONIC-I**
For Insect-Eaters
- **NEKTON-TONIC-F**
For Fruit-Eaters
- **NEKTON-TONIC-K**
For Seed-Eaters

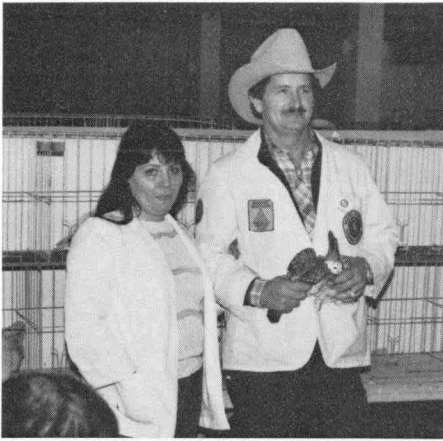
• **NEKTON-TONIC-R**
For Fruit and Nectar-Eating Reptiles

If Your Supplier Does Not Carry Nekton... CALL TODAY!
NEKTON U.S.A.
1917 Tyrone Blvd. • St. Petersburg, FL 33710 • (813) 381-5800



NEKTON TONIC-I

NEKTON TONIC-R



Champion Chinese owl owned by Master Breeder Jerry Fussell (N.P.A. Pres.) of Midland, TX and Judge Pat Scroggins

meticulous, and much nervous tension detectable among the exhibitors, broken finally when the Champion was announced; an exuberant Texas war whoop and a flying hat greeted the announcement: The winner, Jerry Fussell.

Show Secretary Keith Casteel, of Vancouver, Washington, is a breeder of the sleek and streamlined American roller which is very popular among the members of the Northwest Pigeon Fanciers. Keith was kept so busy with his duties that he had scant time to keep track of the progress of his entries in the field of 79. He almost missed the announcement that he had won the National Championship.

Junior exhibitor Chris Shaw, a personable and enthusiastic 14 year-old from Oregon City, Oregon, who has been raising pigeons for just three years, could scarcely contain his delight when the American roller he has named "Blackbeard" pirated away the awards for Best Junior, Best Black, Best Opposite Sex and Reserve Champion. Both he and his ten year-old sister, Angie, have had winners in local competition. Although Chris strongly favors the American rollers, they also raise tumblers and African owls.

A.F.A. member Fred Thoelke, from Crystal, North Dakota, is another enthusiast pigeon fancier who stopped by the table to share with us his joy over a National Championship. With deep parental pride, Fred displayed for us the bird belonging to his son Nathan, which had won Champion Parlor Tumbler, Best Parlor Pigeon and Best Tumbler titles. Parlor tumblers are very unusual and interesting birds, bred not only for their beauty, but also for a most unique and mysterious behavior. When placed on the floor these birds become feathered gymnasts, executing single and double flips. These intriguing birds were developed in the Philadelphia area

about a century ago, Fred told us. Bred from a strain of roller pigeons with a strong tendency to perform "roll-downs" (a flaw in roller flight causing the bird to continue rolling until it strikes the ground, rather than pulling out to regain altitude), these birds mystify breeders and scientists alike. For a time it was believed that the tumbling behavior was caused by epileptic seizure; however, exhaustive tests with drug treatments known to control epilepsy have shown absolutely no effect on the behavior of the birds. Whether or not the cause is ever discovered, these birds will always delight audiences with their startling performances.

One of our favorite visitors at the A.F.A. table was Master Breeder and Hall-of-Famer Russell Sapp from Mt. Holly, New Jersey. A jovial and gregarious bird-lover who unabashedly admits to 65 years, he displays unbridled enthusiasm for the pigeon fancy. When asked how long he has kept pigeons, he replied: "I can't remember a time I was without them." Specializing in the popular Modena pigeons, Russ has been showing them in competition since 1935 and holds three National Championships. The Modena pigeon originated in Modena, Italy. It ideally exhibits a very round appearance, whether viewed from the front, the side, or from above and is seen in a wide range of color and plumage patterns. There were 450 entries attesting to the popularity of this international favorite. Frequently called upon as a judge, Russ Sapp travels to many shows, often as far from home as Canada and Bermuda. His readiness to share his experience and expertise is perhaps only equalled by his obvious and genuine love for birds and people.

Conveniently near our table and furnishing a feast for the eye were the Jacobins, 103 stately and elegant birds. Slim of body and very erect of carriage, these pigeons bear a stunning hood of feathers in the form of a rosette on either side of the head and almost entirely concealing it. Several fanciers who specialize in Jacobins stopped by the table to visit, and if this writer had not already been completely captivated by the birds, their enthusiasm for this beautiful breed would certainly have clinched it! The Jacobin is an easy bird to fall in love with, although a challenging one to breed to its full perfection. Champion exhibitor Ed Bachman of Pontiac, Michigan has been breeding his exquisite Jacobins for 25 years. Why did he choose Jacobins? When queried, his

reply was that he "fell in love with them, just like my wife...and I've kept her for 32 years!"

All Good Things Must End

By the time the judging was completed on Saturday afternoon, both pigeons and people were beginning to show signs of the strain of a three-day show. As the 6 o'clock closing hour neared, the tired-but-happy exhibitors filed out through the doors to refresh themselves for the evening banquet. A red Jacobin cock was seen to thrust his head between the wires to rest it against the neck of his yellow mate in the adjoining coop. As the doors closed for the evening, there they remained.

Break of dawn on Sunday, January 20th, found the weary members of the Beaver State Alliance gathered again at



Oregon State Coordinator, Kay Mabi

the Convention Hall. Cooping-out time had come; 3,855 birds now must be checked out and placed back in their carriers. The 326 tired exhibitors prepared to leave sunny Portland and make their ways home, some of them to areas beset by winter gales and blizzards. It was a time for congratulating the winners, and for talking about the awards presented at the banquet. Six new Master Breeders had been announced, the Dr. Monroe Green Award for Outstanding Service had been presented to Show Director Darwin Lee Grange and the coveted Sportsmanship Award went to Show Secretary Keith Casteel. It was time for farewells, and for turning to the task of folding coops, chairs and tables and cleaning the hall. Perhaps Northwest Pigeon Fanciers' member Maymelle Kline summed it up when she later remarked: "I was so busy, I didn't even have time to be tired!" ●

Attention! Border Canary Breeders

The North American Border Club was founded at the 1984 National Show. All persons who wish to learn more about Border Canaries are welcome to join. Send annual dues of \$10.00 single or \$15.00 dual membership to: Claire Brammer, North American Border Club, Rt. 3, Box 247A, Jay, OK 74346.

Canadian funds are suitable from Canadian members.

The Club has been set up into several regions with regional directors as follows:

- West - Fran Way, Bob Monnahan;
- South - Clarence King;
- Midwest - Paul Dee, Pat Kane;
- East - Sig Larson, Frank Alessi.

All members will receive two newsletters each year. Join now to get the premier issue. Bands are available if desired at a cost of 25 bands, \$3.75; 50 bands, \$7.50; 75 bands \$11.25; 100 bands, \$14.00 — all shipped postage paid.

Lots of good things will be happening. Rosettes will be sent to any club requesting them. The current point standard pictorial model and three dimensional model are currently being reviewed with the intention of bringing it up to the quality of the contemporary birds on the show bench.

So join in on the fun and excitement of the world's most popular type of canary: the Border. Join the North American Border Club today.

Yours in the fancy,
Bill Reichert, President

Fly Into April With Bird Kites

Perfect for those windy days of March or April. Or just the right touch for that bare wall in your bird room or home. These Kites will add that beautiful designer's touch to your decor. All kites made of taffeta nylon and satin. Kites come in three styles as shown: Dragon, Windssocks and Diamonds. Each feature elaborate designs made from individually cut nylon and satin fabrics, hand sewn to create all around applique designs that offer vivid color and dramatic beauty. Prices range from \$17.00 to \$60.00—plus \$2.50 shipping. Send orders to: K-Bird Boutique, 102 W. Willow, Prospect Hgts., IL 60070. 312-398-0307.

#101 DRAGON BIRD OF PARADISE
23" x 35" \$60.00

#102 SM. DIAMOND PARROT
33" x 39" \$36.00

#103 LG. DIAMOND TOUCAN (with 33" tail)
43" x 46" \$42.00

#104 LG. DIAMOND COCKATOO
43" x 46" \$36.00

#105 LG. DIAMOND MACAW
43" x 46" \$36.00

#106 DESIGNER WINDSOCK TOUCAN
60" (with swivel hook) \$40.00

#107 DESIGNER WINDSOCK COCKATOO
60" (with swivel hook) \$40.00

**K-Birds
Boutique**

THERMOCARE, INC. offers Water Heated Warmers for Portable Intensive Care

DOGS — CATS — BIRDS
PRIMATES — REPTILES

For treatment of Hypothermia in Newborns, Shock, Convalescing and Post-Operative Patients.

Dome Riser Model for Aviary Patients

New MEDICATION NEBULIZER included with all TENSIV/CARE units

**Economical
75W Heater**

25" x 17"

CONTROLLED UNIFORM HEAT (75° - 100°F)
Conducted thru Water and Circulated by Convection

42" x 27"

Also Available:
New BROODER INCUBATOR for young chicks

Send for free Brochure:
Thermocare
P.O. Drawer YY
Incline Village, NV 89450

**SAFE HEAT
SAVES LIVES**

(702) 831-1201