



Photo by Charlie Dirkes

American Racing Pigeon Union

Winter/Spring 2011

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The 2010 Winners!

National Youth Race

Treg Etbauer's AU 2010 Centennial 10007 zipped through the trap to grab the #1 spot in the 2010 race. Treg just joined the racing sport, and with the help of super mentors in Oklahoma City's PRO Club, he blew away the competition. Treg is well acquainted with competition,

as part of the Etbauer rodeo circuit royalty.

Congratulations Treg!

Youth Membership Contest

AU's own Youth Ambassador, Whitney Sabrowsky takes away the electronic clock as the prize for the 1st place essay. Whitney received the clock in person from Ed Minvielle, Michael Gantner and Hanno Troll, (representing Benzing), at the AU 2010 Centennial Celebration in Oklahoma City.

Congratulations Whitney!

Junior Art Contest

Ivy Ciaburri walks off with first prize in the art contest. (page 4) She has her choice of a free AU T-shirt or 1-year free junior membership.

Congratulations Ivy!

Loft Contest

Kristoffer Manalokon had the winning entry in the Showcase Lofts. He is part of the Florida East Coast Club and has been in the racing sport for six years. His loft entry

illustrates a compact and effective loft so often needed in smaller backyards. (page 5)

Nice work, and congratulations Kristoffer!



Each year we look forward to seeing how each of you excel with different talents. Tell us what you would like to see featured.



Billy & Hollie Etbauer & family.
<http://www.expressranches.com/cowboys/>

2011 AU NATIONAL YOUTH RACE

. . . IT'S ON!

By: Karen Clifton, Executive Director



The American Racing Pigeon Union (AU) is hosting the 14th annual National Youth Race. The AU is the only pigeon organization that offers a national race for youth. We are proud of our junior members and are excited to recognize them for their participation.

The 2011 National Youth Race will be held during the AU Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Richard Doud of the Arizona Invitational club will be the loft handler. The race will be 200 miles from Indio, California and is open to all AU junior members.

Each competitor will receive a certificate and the top ten will be mounted on a handsome plaque. The top place will receive the plaque and a trophy. Additionally, he or she is invited to attend the 2012 AU convention as our guest!

The application is on the following page. Applications should be signed by a parent or legal guardian and returned to the office by no later than **March 1, 2011**. As soon as applications are received, we will send notification advising of shipping details. **Applications must be received prior to shipment for entry into the race.**

We hope you will participate and look forward to hearing from you soon!

Karen Clifton

14th Annual Youth National Race APPLICATION FORM

The AU "Youth National Race" is open to all AU junior members. The race will be held during the 2011 AU Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. Race day will be December 1, 2011. Please print the following:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ CLUB: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

I hereby indicate that I wish to participate in the 2011 AU "National Youth Race". I also understand that participation is limited and my name may or may not be randomly drawn. I certify that any 2011 young bird I may enter in the "National Youth Race" has been raised and cared for by me.

_____ Yes, I plan to attend.

_____ I will be unable to attend, but
am excited to enter a bird.

_____ I would like to have my bird returned
after the race. (Cost of shipping to be
coordinated through handler.)

(Signature - Junior Member)

(Signature - Parent or Guardian)

(Date)

Return this application form to the AU national office. It must be mailed to arrive by March 1, 2011.

Mail to: **American Racing Pigeon Union, Inc. P.O. Box 18465, Oklahoma City, OK 73154**



GOOD LUCK!

From page 1 . . . The 2010 winning entry in the Art Contest. With this entry, Ivy Ciaburri wins her choice of a free AU t-shirt or 1 year junior membership.



Introducing New AU Directors

Steve Lawler handed the President's gavel to the new President, Freddie Rivera. As a result, offices shifted. The AU's newest members of the Board of Directors are Alan Porter and Al Hassler.

Alan Porter is the new Plains Zone Director covering IL, IA, KS, NE, MO, MN, ND, SD, WI & Central Provinces (Manitoba & Saskatchewan) and Al Hassler is the new Southeast Zone Director covering AL, FL, GA, MS, TN, SC, NC, VA & Washington DC, Puerto Rico (& other Carriibbean Locations).

Join us in welcoming your new representatives.

Alan Porter, 608-838-8959, alan_porter@msn.com

Al Hassler, 727-860-4590, ahass38860@aol.com



Alan Porter and Al Hassler take the oath of office during the 2010 AU Board Meeting in Oklahoma City

From page 1 . . . Kristoffer Manalokon takes first place in the Showcase Loft Contest. Kristoffer says, "I always wanted a small team because I want to get to know the birds individually, it's my thing! . . . hopefully this would help new and veteran flyers that have a small or only want to fly a small team of young and old birds. Having a small loft means less birds to take care of, small coup to clean and less expensive to maintain. (Did you hear that! less expensive!) That's the answer that all flyers are looking for. The bigger the loft, the more birds to have to feed, the more expensive the hobby gets. My neighbors love the white birds and the new loft, they're are always saying something nice about it.



HELP-A-BEGINNER CHANGES

By Karen Clifton, AU Executive Director

Last May, we announced that we had divided the country (east and west) in order to better serve members wanting to participate in the program. We welcomed two new Help-A-Beginner coordinators, John Somerville from Amarillo, Texas, and Gary Oliver from Ellerslie, Georgia. Both hit the ground running. Depending on where the applicant resides, the applications were forwarded to the appropriate program coordinator. This system has been working well. We are appreciative that John and Gary stepped up to the plate!

While John will continue to assist members in the west, Gary has indicated he will step down. We want to thank Gary for his service and we wish him much success in every new endeavor.

The AU is proud to welcome the new coordinator for the eastern part of the country, Steve Jenkins. Steve resides in Norfolk, Virginia. He has been an integral part of the AU's Help-A-Beginner Program for many years serving as a mentor to several beginners each year. He is eager to share his experience and knowledge and is now ready to serve as a program coordinator.

Steve started in pigeons in Ohio at 12 years of age. After starting with wild pigeons and fancy birds,

he received his first pair of racing homers when he was 15.

He left the sport for a brief time when he was drafted. He has been racing in Norfolk since 1973. Steve has served as President of the Hampton Roads club, Tidewater Concourse and the Dixie Southern Racing Pigeon Association.

Steve shared his enthusiasm for the program with us saying, "The greatest thrill for me in this sport has been as a mentor for new flyers over the last 20 years. This is the main reason I'm in favor of the AU's HAB Program. We all need guidance when we start and there are so many variables that a new flyer can't be expected to know everything." He went on to tell us that in this day of technology, a new member needs some fairly quick success or he or she may become discouraged and leave before really getting a chance to enjoy the sport.

So we have two program coordinators ready to assist new flyers and assign them to mentors. If you are a new flyer and you would like to participate in the program, please contact the AU office (405-848-5801). We will get the application to you. You may also download the application at <http://www.pigeon.org/habapplication.htm>.

Memories of the 2010 AU Convention

By: Whitney Sabrowsky; AU Youth Ambassador



Many of us fanciers anticipated the 2010 AU Convention for many months. Now the much-awaited convention and AU birthday celebration has passed and is a bright memory that we will forever remember. I never cease to smile as I think back to the once-in-a-lifetime experience I had at the AU Centennial in Oklahoma City.

I am a very fortunate junior flyer because of my exceptional, supportive family. One day in April, I found out that AU wanted to introduce me as the youth ambassador at their banquet. So I told my mom that we should take a trip to Oklahoma for this unique opportunity. Of course, I was joking and knew that I could only dream about attending the convention. Little did I know that my parents were seriously considering taking a family vacation to Oklahoma so that I could attend the convention.

When my mom made the announcement that we were going to Oklahoma City for the AU Convention and Centennial, I was ecstatic and overjoyed. Well, there probably isn't a word in Webster's dictionary that accurately described my excitement. Remember, this news was made known to me in April; the convention wasn't until November. Summer passed quickly, but the last few weeks before the day we were scheduled to begin our trip seemed to drag on and on.

Eventually the day arrived when my family loaded our car and started the journey from Minnesota to Oklahoma. After 14 hours of

traversing across the expansive Midwest, the lovely Oklahoma City was before us. The feeling of finally arriving at the destination of my dreams is hard to describe.

Nov. 10th: Following check-in, I found myself standing in a multitude of pigeon fanciers from all over the U.S. and beyond. I could feel the enthusiasm that radiated from everyone as they became acquainted with other flyers and examined the convention race birds.

Nov. 11th: I awoke to a misty gray sky on race day, the first full day of the convention. Highlighting the day's schedule was a trip to the Continental Breeding Station (CBS) and the World of Wings (WOW). Everyone was hoping that the weather would clear as predicted so that the races could go on.

We were to spend the morning at CBS watching for the return of the National Youth Race pigeons. The weather was still overcast as we loaded the bus and traveled to Continental. As CBS appeared in my view through the bus window, I was speechless with amazement at the sheer size of the operation. We were welcomed by Rick Mardis, owner of CBS, and invited to go through the vast loft.

I was a tongue-tied pigeon fancier in heaven as I was led through what seemed like miles of pigeon loft. Pigeons, pigeons, and more pigeons; I could get lost in the loft and spend the whole day looking at birds! I must have taken at least one hundred pictures of the loft and

the gorgeous pigeons inside. Enough complimentary things cannot be said about CBS. The pigeons literally glow with health and the loft is splendidly clean.

The Youth Race birds, our main reason for visiting CBS, were slow in arriving home. After many fly-by false alarms, wild pigeons, a youth bird finally sailed in. Congratulations to junior flyer, Treg Etbauer, for winning the 2010 National Youth Race.



Time flew by and we said our sad goodbyes to the Continental Breeding Station; we were on the bus and off to our next exciting destination, World of Wings.

The weather conditions were suddenly more friendly as we spread out across the grounds of WOW; the sun had broken through the gray blanket and it was turning out to be a perfect day. I was eager to explore in the WOW museum and take a tour of the Gold Band Breeding loft.

Memories of the 2010 AU Convention

Continued from page 6

Most of the fanciers were mingling on the lawn and keeping a vigilant eye open for the AU Convention Race birds. I thought that the sight out on the grass was really special - pigeon fanciers from across the nation, gathered together as buddies and yet as competitors. Everyone was having a great time sharing stories about the birds and sport they love.

Out of the blue came the familiar shout of, "birds!" I think that we all were holding our breath as seven birds circled and gracefully touched down on the landing board. Randy Goodpasture, one of three race handlers, whistled and the birds dropped through the trap. I never tire of the beautiful sight of pigeons swooping in and landing together before they rush into the loft.



A group of birds landing at WOW



Items displayed at the museum

My visit at the museum was enjoyable. The collection of pigeon paraphernalia is extensive. Prominent in the museum are the many war articles - pictures, baskets, and a life-size mobile army loft. The WOW library of pigeon books and magazines is an incredible place where any pigeon fancier could spend hours studying from a myriad of sources. The few minutes I spent there was not near enough time!

The afternoon drew to a close and once again we loaded into the bus to return to the Sheraton hotel. Being at Continental and the World of Wings was a splendid way to spend the first full day of the convention.

Nov. 12th: The major event of the day was the seminars presented by highly respected fanciers. Most memorable of the presenters was Belgian flyer, Andre Roodhooft. I will never forget the sound of Mr. Roodhooft's accented voice relating his methods regarding racing pigeons and his entertaining stories of adventures with the Janssen Brothers, mainly Louis, of whom he is close to. By the expressions on the faces of other flyers, I could tell that they were just as enchanted by Andre as I was; it felt as if we all were over in the Racing Capital of the world and meeting Louis Janssen.

Another memorable moment at the seminar was when the speakers formed a panel and contrasted their methods. I marveled at how different the routines of each flyer were and how they all were champion pigeon men. Every flyer listening to the seminars went home with new

things to ponder.

In the evening we celebrated the AU's 100th birthday with a party. After a fancy supper, we socialized while listening to music and watching the entertainers.

Nov. 13th: I was a bit sad when I realized that this was my last full day with my new friends, but I was anticipating hanging around with the "old guys" and soaking up as much knowledge as possible. All of the flyers were so nice and I could sit down with anyone and just *talk birds!*

In the afternoon, most everyone attended the auction. I always find it interesting to watch fanciers wait in line to handle the pigeons. They take the pigeons in hand, almost close their eyes and then seem to wait for a sign that the bird would be a beneficial addition to their lofts. Some look into the eye of the racer, others pull out the wing, but every flyer is hoping to find that perfect pigeon!

The auction came to a close and flyers rushed off to get ready for the grand finale of the AU Convention, the awards banquet. Our wonderful executive director, Karen Clifton, presented awards and talked about the fanciers receiving them. There were many excellent people recognized at the banquet. Plus, we listened to a speech given by our new president Freddie Rivera. All in attendance were on an emotional high as they enthusiastically applauded for the speakers and award winners.

Continued on page 11 . .

Technology- Brings Fanciers Together and Educates the World

By: Whitney Sabrowsky, AU Youth Ambassador

Three years ago, in the mind of Chris Ferrante, pigeons were simply a common type of bird. Frankly, he never gave the pigeon a second thought or knew that there was a bird known as the racing homer. Chris, a New Yorker, was unaware that there was even a sport of racing pigeons.



Chris F

In 2008, Chris Ferrante's uncle, Dominick Guardino, who resides in upstate New York, returned to the pigeon sport after abandoning it as a young man. His uncle's return to the sport was Chris's first exposure to homing pigeons, but he still was not impressed. An accidental escape of one of Uncle Dominick's pigeons was the turning point of Ferrante's interest in birds.

Chris's uncle had purchased a valuable pigeon from an Oklahoma flyer. While feeding his birds, the new pigeon slipped out of the loft and flew away. A couple days later,

Uncle Dominick received a long-distance call from Oklahoma. His newly purchased bird had made the journey home. Chris says that he was "blown away" that a pigeon could fly from New York to Oklahoma, much less find its home.

Now Chris Ferrante's eyes were finally opened. He was hooked on the fascinating hobby and sport of racing pigeons and was determined to learn as much about pigeons as possible in order to start his own loft. While scouring the Internet for racing pigeon information, Chris was dismayed to find that there were only a handful of knowledge sources available.

Wanting to put his computer and marketing skills to a productive use, Ferrante decided to launch a website that would encompass informative articles on every pigeon topic imaginable to help beginner flyers and offer the experienced new ideas. Chris was envisioning a site so complete that it would act as a novice's mentor—www.pigeonracingpigeons.com was the result of Chris's diligence in designing the ultimate "mentor".

While Ferrante's main reason for starting the site was to help him further his own knowledge and provide great information to the rest of the pigeon community, he had five specific goals: preservation, promotion, development, education, and community.

He remembers, "I wanted to help *preserve* the sport and hobby and I knew that by starting the



site and building my own community of fanciers and friends, we could help do that together."

Chris hopes that *promoting* the pigeon sport through his site will bring in more youth and he feels that the social networking aspect of the site is an attraction to the younger generation. To keep up to speed in a fast paced world, Chris wants to continue *developing* the site. "The more visitors and members we get into the site the more I can get feedback and develop and incorporate new features into the site such as real-time chat, web 2.0 integration and social technology just to name a few... By researching and incorporating new features that people are already using, I think it will be much easier to gain interest to a much wider audience."

Ferrante notes, "In the beginning, *education* was my sole goal. I myself wanted to learn as much as I could and by building a database of articles, videos, interviews etc. that fanciers could access at any time (even on their phones now-

adays!) it would allow for better treatment for our birds."

Lastly, Chris adds, "Building a *community* of both expert and novice fanciers from all over the world is probably my most favorite part about the site. I consider everyone on the site my friends and friends to one another. All members of the community can open discussions about the articles and leave their comments, this, I believe is what makes [pigeonracingpigeons.com](http://www.pigeonracingpigeons.com) so dynamic and powerful. In the web 1.0 days, the internet was only a one way street where visitors could only consume content, now with web 2.0 they can actually reply to content and post their own thoughts and comments, which again adds a whole new dynamic."

Currently, about 3,000 users from 30 different countries are delving into [pigeonracingpigeons.com](http://www.pigeonracingpigeons.com). Whether a fancier is from Africa, India, Europe, or America, everyone enjoys reading articles from respected flyers such as Ed Minvielle, Alex Bieche, Peter Mulder, Bob Prisco, and Dr. Colin Walker. There are over 200 articles archived on the site. Archived videos really make the saying "A picture is worth a thousand words" ring true. There is nothing like actually taking a video tour of a widowhood-style loft or watching a flyer demonstrating how to vaccinate pigeons.

The overall response to [pigeonracingpigeons.com](http://www.pigeonracingpigeons.com) has been exceedingly positive. It has been called, "awesome", "excellent" and "great". A user of the site says, "I enjoy the site immensely, it is well

written, and well informed, even I, who have been racing for 40 years, have learned a thing or two, so it goes to show you are never too old to learn." According to the response of the users, Chris's site has reached its goals of educating novices, but still reaching flyers with experience.

As far as the future of www.pigeonracingpigeons.com, Chris says, "I want to continue adding quality content, articles, interviews, videos and more to the site; also testing and adding new features that visitors not only will love, but also enjoy using."

"All in all, I just hope the site will continue to grow, help preserve and promote the sport, and that the visitors continue to find it valuable."

Chris has made an incredible contribution to the racing pigeon sport. Amazingly, he does not even have his own loft and birds yet. Chris laments, "Because of my crazy schedule (working 50+ hours a week), I had to make the very difficult decision that it just isn't the right time to have my own birds and wouldn't be fair to them either since I couldn't give them the care they deserve." Needless to say, Chris will be far ahead of the game when he does start flying!

The Voice of a Youth

A young man by the name of Alan Gregg is also promoting the pigeon sport on the web and in his community. Alan, a 14 year-old from Ohio, became interested in pigeons when his elderly neighbor fell ill and needed some help maintaining his loft.

With hands-on experience feeding birds and cleaning the loft, Alan Gregg's passion for pigeons grew.

Assisting a pigeon flyer in his community was not enough for this excited fancier protégé; Alan wanted his own loft with his own pigeons! Soon after obtaining pigeons and a loft, Alan and his family found a club to call their own - the Independent Homing Club. Being an enthusiastic novice, Alan has been the recipient of many quality pigeons and heartfelt advice from the members in the Independent Homing Club.

In 2009, Alan gave a 10-minute speech, complete with a PowerPoint, at his middle school to educate his classmates about pigeons. He would like to thank AU Promotion Manager Deone Roberts, who Alan calls "a totally remarkable lady", for her great handouts and pigeon paraphernalia. In the near future, Alan will also be giving a presentation for the local Cub Scout group.

Young Mr. Gregg did not stop his promotion with a school speech. Alan is making use of YouTube by posting homing pigeon videos. He has even started a Facebook page to keep people up to date with what is happening in the pigeon world.

Similar to Chris Ferrante's experience, Alan Gregg realized that the web did not have a lot of information for a beginner flyer. With his dad's help, Alan crafted www.NRPigeon.com. Taking note of everything expert flyers have shared with him, Alan put his knowledge into written articles in his quest to help novice flyers be-

Technology

Continued from page 9 . . .

come successful. NRPigeon.com has an attractive photo gallery to illustrate loft design and has stunning pictures of the racing homer. Alan has also incorporated a public chat feature into his site that allows fanciers to communicate. Another great idea that he had was to write reviews on different pigeon products such as wormers and antibiotics.

Alan Gregg is an incredible ambassador for the AU and the

sport. He works closely with the local animal wards in Ohio. Alan has gotten numerous calls from the animal wards regarding lost homing pigeons and he steps in to catch the birds and locate the owners.

The Independent Homing Club has a young flyer that they can be proud of and that member is Alan Gregg. The racing pigeon sport can applaud Alan for being an outstanding promoter!

Chris Ferrante and Alan Gregg, two different people with a common interest. Two people who are concerned with the future of the sport and have a common goal of promoting homing pigeons. Check out the products of their diligent work, www.pigeonracingpigeons.com and www.NRPigeon.com.

Students vs Teachers Race Series

By Ronnie Shumaker

Many pigeon racers were introduced to the sport when they were children. This is the purpose of the Students vs Teacher Race series: to introduce the sport of pigeon racing to students and incorporate the sport in all areas of the curriculum. In the 2009 young bird race season, two schools were able to compete against each other and their "pigeon" teacher.

For the past two years, pigeon flyers from around the United States have entered pigeons in a race series called the Students vs Teacher Race. The 2009 series consisted of the Tiger Loft with Mrs. Runyon's third grade class at Harris Elementary, and the Panda Loft with Mrs. McDonald's fifth grade class at Poplar Springs Elementary. Both schools are located in Meridian, Mississippi. The teacher loft owned by Ronnie Shumaker is about 10 air miles south of Meridian.

Many teams were entered from flyers from the GHC and Spring Hill, FL area. Others came from the far NW corner from Washington and other sections of the U.S. Points were compiled from four races 100, 150, 200, and 250 miles. More points were

given for the longer races.

Erio Alvarez, FL placed 1st in the series followed by Pete Yachimske, FL; John Hundrup, WA; Bill Thornton, AL; and Bob Lynch, GA. The 250 mile race was won by Dave Dunn, WA. Erio Alvarez and Bob Lynch had equal birds on the 200 mile race. John Gallagher, FL, won the 150 mile race. Mike Butler, MS and John Hundrup, WA had equal birds for the 100 mile race.

The Bulldog Loft at Clarkdale Middle School was added for the 2010 young bird season.

Mr. Shumaker's 7th grade class enjoyed winning two of the four races in the series: the 100 and 250. The Panda Loft, now manned by fifth graders, won the 150 mile race beating the Tiger loft by only eight seconds! The teacher, Ronnie Shumaker, finally won a race, the 200, this year with an excellent bird entered by Gary Gasaway and the Metro RPC, who also won the 2010 AU Convention Race.

The 2010 series was flown the same distances as the year before. The final points standings were extremely close with David Kraczek winning the series by two points over the

Greater Pensacola RPC. Third place and high point team was won by Troy Bunn, MS. Dan Miller and Pete Yachimske won fourth place. Continental Breeding Station won fifth place.

David Kraczek won the 250 race with 1073 AU 10 CAMELOT edging out the Greater Pensacola RPC's 655 by one second at the Bulldog Loft. These birds came in 14 minutes ahead of the other birds! The Metro RPC won the 200 mile race. The 150 was won by Troy Bunn. 680 AU 10 CBS won the 100 mile race and was on the first drop at the Bulldog Loft three of the four races.

We would like to thank the hundreds of fanciers that have supported our projects over the years. Thanks to your generosity many new lofts have been started and seeds have been planted to grow pigeon racers in the future.

Please help us continue our project by sending birds to the 2011 Students vs Teacher Race. Contact Ronnie Shumaker at 601-938-6775 or go to www.studentsvsteacherrace.com

Memories of the 2010 AU Convention

Continued from page 7 . . .

I'd like to thank Karen Clifton, Deone Roberts, and all the wonderful people at the AU whom I do not know for putting together such a grand convention and centennial celebration. Hours and hours of planning and work climaxed into an event that will be remembered forever.

The banquet was over and I retired with my family to our hotel room. Then it really hit me. The AU Convention was over. Tomorrow, we would be starting that long drive back to Minnesota.

Nov. 14th: Saying goodbye to my new friends was hard. Really hard. Before leaving Oklahoma City, my family made a final stop at Cattleman's Steakhouse for breakfast. I could hardly enjoy my breakfast steak because I was so choked up.

I usually only cry when my favorite bird does not return from a race (which seems to happen too often). But on the way home from the convention, I think I cried until we reached Kansas, which is a long way from OKC!

As you can probably tell from the length of this article (novel?), I loved being at the convention and meeting other people who share my love of racing pigeons. I hope that there many more conventions in my future. In closing, I believe that every pigeon fancier should travel to Oklahoma City and visit the AU headquarters. And everyone should attend at least one convention, you won't regret it. I promise.

Peace Poster

The Peace Poster contest is sponsored by Lions International every year. Snohomish Skypilots Coach and AU Bylaws Chairman, Herb Cartmell, tells us that their student, Megan Cook, won in the Multiple District. Each

entrant received a certificate of appreciation. Here is a link with more information. <http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/our-work/youth-programs/peace-poster-contest/index.php#>



Future pigeon flyer, Bowman Montgomery, held by grandpa, Bob Montgomery. Son of Walt and Lindsey Montgomery.

American Racing Pigeon Union

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