



Pigeon Tracks

American Racing Pigeon Union

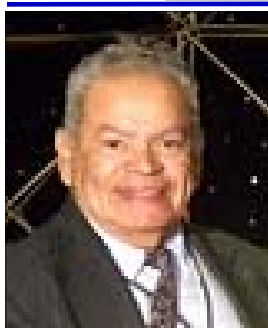
Fall 2011

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IMPORTANT NOTICE:

We will discontinue printing *PIGEON TRACKS* in April 2012. It is posted on the website under the Junior Members page under Info & Events. To continue receiving a paper copy, please contact our office prior to that date. 1-800-755-2778.



AU PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Freddie Rivera, AU President

Hello and thank you for being a very important member in our organization. No matter what state in America I visit, I meet youth involved in our sport. It makes my heart feel good to know that the future of our sport is in very good hands . . . yours. As you are aware, our AU has the Help A Beginner Program and Tracks Newsletter to keep you informed and in touch with other Junior Members. If you have an interesting story or information that you would like to share with other members of the AU; Junior Members or adults, contact our Sport Development Manager, Deone Roberts at aupromo@aol.com or 405-848-5801. We like hearing from you.

Everyone in the pigeon game likes to tell you about their special methods for flying birds. But the best advice I can give you, is to have fun. Get to know your birds, and more importantly, let them get to know you. When you feed and water them or clean the loft, talk to them.

Believe me when I tell you, they are always listening and watching. Move slowly when around them or in the loft and let them know that you respect their home. Once in awhile, for no particular reason, give them some candy (small seed).

Cherish the time you spend with your birds, and as you watch them grow and learn to eat on their own, and fly on their own, think about how much pigeons and people have in common. Take a lot of pictures, keep a log and write down what the birds are doing each day, and what you're doing with them, and with your parents or the adult who is helping you with your pigeons.

Although my Dad passed away many years ago, I think of him often, and the many experiences we had raising and racing our American Racing Homing Pigeons. That makes me very happy.

In this day and age of computers and I-Pods, and many other distractions, our pigeons are important, because they keep us in touch with nature and the real world.



As a pigeon person, you are part of something very special; learning and sharing the history, the mystery and the fellowship of our sport.

I want to thank the AU Junior Members that are taking time to share our sport with others, for taking your birds to school and 4-H, to the Boys & Girls Clubs and Boy and Girl Scouts, as well as showing your birds to senior citizens groups and community groups. You may be young, but you are excellent ambassadors for our sport. I know that when you speak about our American Racing Homing Pigeons, people will listen.

If I can ever be of service to you, or answer any questions you may have, just pick up the phone or e-mail me, and I will be glad to talk pigeons. My Telephone number is 352 584-5918, and my E-mail;

FREDDIESBEKAERTS@TAMPABAY.RR.COM

INTERNATIONAL CHAT

By: Whitney Sabrowsky, AU Youth Ambassador

Greetings Junior Members,

Have you ever wondered how fanciers handle their pigeons in other parts of the country? Does the thought of meeting other young people who share your interest of racing pigeons excite you?

If you answered yes to the questions above, you will be thrilled to hear about how you can get connected with other flyers.

I have always enjoyed meeting other fanciers, especially junior flyers; the only problem is that it can be difficult to find other young people who share your interest of the pigeon sport. Luckily, the AU has a solution; a Google Group called, PigeonNation.

PigeonNation is a chat room

site where fanciers can meet and share knowledge about pigeons. It is a perfect place for junior flyers to contact other kids and perhaps become lifelong friends.

To keep PigeonNation a safe place for juniors, potential group members need to receive an invitation from an administrator such as Karen Clifton, Deone Roberts or myself.

I would love to have you join me on PigeonNation. I am eager to meet you and hear about your pigeons. We will have a great time sharing our thoughts on training, racing or anything that has to do with the sport that we are so passionate about.

If you would like to be a member of PigeonNation, please contact me at birdwhitsky@gmail.com or



email Deone Roberts at aupro-mo@aol.com

Hope to see you on PigeonNation!

Sincerely,
Whitney Sabrowsky,
AU Youth Ambassador

NEW COMMITTEE PROVIDES ANOTHER AVENUE TO SHARE THE SPORT

Northeast Zone Director, Bill Desmarais, has added another title to his duties on the AU Board of Directors. He is Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee. The committee works to provide materials that can be used to share when speaking to veterans groups.

We spoke with Bill at the AU's mid year meeting to find out more about what is happening in that area. He shared the following with us:

"I am very pleased but not surprised, at the large number of our American Racing Pigeon Union members and families that are supportive

of Veterans and our efforts to utilize the American Racing Homing Pigeon to demonstrate respect for our country and our troops; past and present, and to support today's Veterans as they adjust to civilian life.

We have been working diligently to develop a working model and process, that can be packaged and sent out to any club or member willing join us in accomplishing our mission. Sitting on this committee with me is Herb Cartmell, 4-H and AU Policies and By Laws Chair, and Jim Greelis, our AU Historian. Jim has tons of artifacts and information relating to

the American Racing Homing Pigeon's combat service, and has actually interviewed Pigeoneers; our members who cared for, trained and utilized our birds in combat.

I have taken our American Racing Homing Pigeons on the road, and not just for training. I have

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SHARING WITH VETERANS

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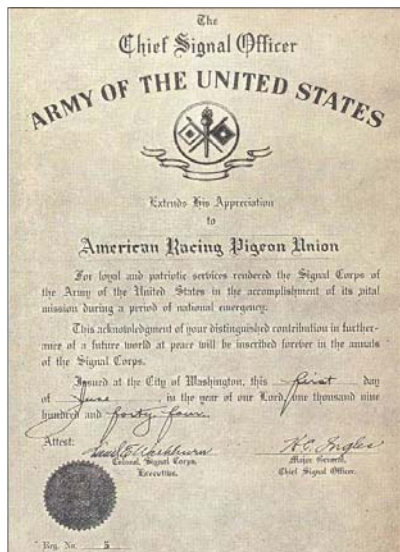
appeared and spoken before various groups, such as Chambers of Commerce and Veterans, and have released our birds on special occasions; Vietnam Veterans Day, Memorial Day, POW/MIA Day, etc. We have participated in events such as parades, and the unveiling of an actual girder from 9/11 that was received by our local Fire Department and Fire Museum. Almost all of these releases have been recorded in the print and visual media; front page newspaper stories or on news programs.

When doing a presentation, we follow a story telling format of going from Combat to Peace time. We display artifacts and pictures, we discuss and provide information about our American Racing Homing Pigeons' role in combat. And of course we tell the story about Cher Ami, from WWI, and how it received the Croix de Guerre from France, and G.I. Joe, from WW II who received the Dickin Medal from England, for delivering the message that saved British troops and Italian civilians from bombardment.

We discuss the history of the American Racing Homing Pigeon and how members of the American Racing Pigeon Union, young and old, donated hundreds of thousands of our birds of peace for combat duty. We talk about how it was the American Racing Homing Pigeon that was able to fly the English Channel and in all kinds of weather; rain, wind, sleet and snow, when at that time the Belgian pigeons were unable to do so. (Bet you didn't know that!) It's all documented in U.S. Army archives and our own AU records. Being in

Massachusetts, I'm proud to inform the local groups that a pigeon donated by AU member Harry Toppings, of MA was the pigeon that delivered the message that informed us of Rommel, the Desert Fox's position. This bird delivered the message that enabled us to find, track and hound Rommel until he ran out of gas and was defeated. Prior to this Rommel was very successful in fast attacks and then disappearing before we could mount a defense and attack of our own.

These were not just isolated events. Many, many of our birds received the Dickin Medal and other awards for their bravery and service in combat. As pigeon men and women you should not be reluctant to brag and tell their stories. Because of our AU member's contributions of the best birds from their lofts, the American Racing Pigeon Union was awarded a citation from the U.S. Army Signal Corps and the U.S. Government. You can obtain a copy of this citation from the AU Office, or from me. It is great document to use in a presentation, and/or for display in your home or club.



When we do releases for parades or other Veteran related events, we first release White Homing Pigeons (White Rock Doves), to represent peace, hope and love, and then a platoon, (one or multiple baskets of pigeons) to escort the white birds on their journey. After explaining the significance of the white birds, we inform everyone that the multi colored homing pigeons represent the many cultures and races of American Troops that have served in the military, and that the American Racing Homing Pigeon itself, has served right alongside our troops, and are in fact also combat veterans.

Whether outside at a parade, or inside at a group presentation, providing this information not only gets everyone's attention, but earns our American Racing Homing Pigeons the recognition and respect they deserve.

Bird releases are usually done at the beginning or at the conclusion of a parade or outside event, But at an inside presentation, they are always done at the end of the presentation, as the group members join you outside for the big release. Sometimes I actually let members of the group hold the birds prior to releasing them. It makes for a great personal experience and photo opportunity.

When doing an inside presentation we always bring actual pigeons, and encourage participants to see, hold and touch our birds, prior to the release at the end of the gathering. You would be surprised how many people have never held or

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SHARING WITH VETERANS

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touched a pigeon, or even seen one up close. Very often I hear people remark how they never realized how beautiful our pigeons are.

After the military end of the presentation, I like to provide pigeon facts and details; especially information that debunks some of the old myths about pigeons. I make sure each person has a printed copy of this information. Our AU office can provide you with this material. I often say, that the American Racing Homing Pigeon is like the Rodney Dan-

gerfield of animals, because it doesn't get the respect it deserves, and as a Vietnam Veteran, I tell them that I can certainly relate to this. Although Vietnam Vets are now getting the respect they deserve, back when I first came home from Nam and out of the Marine Corps, that wasn't the case. Now it is the right time for our birds to get recognition and respect, they have earned.

After the facts part of the presentation I display pictures of White Homers (White Rock Doves) at

weddings or funerals, and our Racing Homing Pigeons at their lofts or being released for a race. Also, pictures, clocks and materials about what our birds are doing today. I explain that these birds of peace that went to war are now doing what all Veterans are trying to do; live and enjoy a peaceful life, in the backyards of America's cities and towns. I explain about the AU, and the sport of racing; training and flying of our birds,

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARING WITH VETERANS

By Whitney Sabrowsky, AU Youth Ambassador

The AU has recently raised awareness of the need for pigeon fanciers to get involved with local veterans. As Americans, it is our duty to show appreciation for the sacrifices that our veterans have made. Saying 'thank you' is a nice gesture, but as pigeon fanciers, we can share something more; our birds.

After reading an article by Bill Desmarais, who heads up the

AU's Reaching Out to Veterans program, I was inspired to share my pigeons with the veterans in my area. The setup was easy; I only had to call my local VA and schedule a date to have my pigeon presentation and release.

July 22nd was a beautiful Minnesota summer day - perfect for my release. When I arrived at the VA Center, I assisted

the staff by pushing wheel chair bound veterans outside. There were about 15 veterans who were able to attend.

I gave a little talk about pigeons and explained how races work. The veterans were a captive audience and enjoyed petting the birds. I even met one veteran who had homers at one point in his life.



LITTLE SCHOOL HOUSE ON THE ISLAND

As shared by Bill Desmarais, AU Northeast Zone Director



The school stands on Prudence Island, off the coast of Rhode Island. There is where you will find the school racing Homing pigeon loft that the kids are now utilizing for their hands-on learning.

AU's Northeast Zone Director, Bill Desmarais, lent a hand in getting this project "off the ground" so to speak. He has been working with them for about two years, supplying them with birds, advice and educational materials.

The one-room school house is busy with activity. Students interact on the internet and through pigeons with their friends on the mainland. They are working to establish a Pigeon Post between the Island and the mainland.

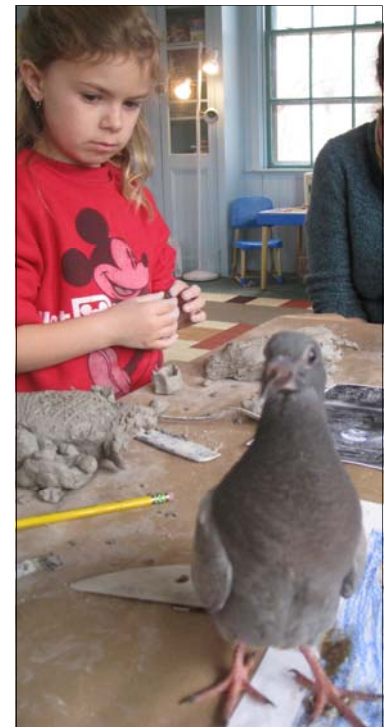
The teacher utilizes the pigeons to teach the children about numerous subjects.

Bill shared photographs with us, "In these pictures you can see the young bird proudly posing as the students try to make clay sculptures of this mighty pigeon. The pigeon looks proud as a peacock, and it is very clear that he is on friendly terms with the class and staff.

You will notice that the loft for the pigeons is constructed to look like the one room school house.

Nice people, but if you ask me, you'll never get their pigeons to be ordinary racing homing pigeons after they have been treated like members of the class on the Island. The one that is posing on the table as the children are making clay sculptures of it acts like he is KING PIGEON."

The Prudence Island School Foundation's mission is to provide a customized quality educational experience for the children of Prudence Island, utilizing the unique opportunities for learning given the island's natural environment, historical legacy, strong community involvement, as well as the advantages of learning in a multi-age setting. The foundation is also committed to preserving the Prudence Island Schoolhouse -- it remains the only one-room schoolhouse still in operation in Rhode Island.



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A Century of Excellence!



GI Joe
American Hero

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is no different than someone exercising their dog, or us jogging. I explain to them that we may call it racing, but to the birds, it is just doing what they love to do, fly home.

We have been implementing and massaging the delivery of this information and very shortly we will have a step by step, How To Do, Veterans Outreach format. You can certainly follow our format, but you know the story of the American Racing Homing Pigeon, just as we do; display and release your own racing team. And if you utilize the CD that the AU has developed, you will have additional tools to educate about our birds military history, as well as pictures of our birds and pigeoneers in combat.

Many of you have some great

ideas on how to accomplish this important mission. Please share them with us. Send us copies of your materials, pictures of events, articles of releases or presentations that appear in your local newspaper. Working together, we can really connect with the public and earn the respect that our birds, our members and our sport deserves. My telephone number is 508 324-4171, and my e-mail address is PD2071@AOL.COM I look forward to hearing from you.

A great benefit of our birds is that they can help today's returning combat Veterans. Our birds can provide peace and solace, and help them deal with the stress of combat and reintegrating into society. By being active with Veteran organizations

and special events; honoring America and Veterans, there is no doubt that you will pique the interest of modern day Veterans. When they do show an interest, be accepting, be helpful, and be ready to provide them with services. Do whatever you and your club possibly can to make them members of your club. Consider giving them free club and/or combine dues for their first year of membership. What better prospects for new members than Veterans. With the military history of the American Racing Homing Pigeon, the American Racing Pigeon Union and our members, our birds and our AU organizations, is just the ideal sport for Veterans to embrace."