

## Interested in Pigeons?

The sport of pigeon racing is at the crossroads of its future. People are leaving the sport, and most of those involved are doing nothing to recruit new people. What is wrong with us, are we all happy to sit back and watch it happen? What are the reasons for it and if they can be identified can they be rectified. Members will leave an unprofessionally run organisation and spend their money on some other type of interest, which most likely would be a lot more enjoyable and less stressful than the sport in which we try to achieve some enjoyment.

Have a good look at your club and those around you and look at the way your members present the club and themselves to the general public. Maybe some pigeon flyers should take a look in the mirror because chances are the person that they are looking at isn't pulling his weight, or is stuck doing things the way they have been done in the past, for something to progress it needs to go forward, not backwards, even standing still leads to stagnation. Usually the people who do not want change are the ones, who under any new system either don't understand the benefits for everyone as a whole; instead of just themselves maybe they just want things to be the way they were before.

New members in pigeon racing are sometimes treated as mushrooms because it's extra money we can get out of them through selling birds, prize and pool money etc. Then after a while they leave the sport and the so-called clubmen say, "He had no idea". Maybe it was the miss-information given to the poor guy that meant he had no hope in the first place. Most other sports have development plans and working systems and plans to get new members involved. This type of organisation ensures that their sport will have a future, which will benefit all. They also endeavor to have a high profile within the media and actively seek all publicity that they can get.

Let's take a look at this. Most sports have high profile individuals able to produce incomes from what were once weekend hobbies. Major sponsors are spending big dollars to market their products. Sports in general are competing more and more for the recreational dollar. Sports are advertised all over the media to the general public as a means of relaxing and winding down after the pressures of work. Costs are getting a lot higher in relation and regard to perceived image. E.g. Nike and other brand names that kids have got to have or they won't be able to compete to the best of their abilities without these products.

Now let us look at pigeon racing, No major sponsors. With costs getting higher to fly birds, due to declining membership and rising costs in today's normal world. No advertising in general media, except for results usually only stating names, bird velocities and a race point. What does all this mean to the average person on the street? Does it make them think that they would like to race pigeons? Does it give information to the reader that may stimulate them into enquiring about racing pigeons? Now not every club

can afford to pay for ongoing advertising to bring our sport out of the secret society it seems to be, but with more consideration towards the general public being given positive information about our sport. E.g. write ups in the local newspapers and I don't just mean race results with some nominal advertising along side. Most papers will print newsworthy items free of charge; so make use of the chances you get. "But we do" I here you say or I have even heard the excuse that "people don't want to read that in the paper" (maybe the added interest may have more people consistently reading articles and this may show that some flyers aren't doing as well as they say). These are only excuses for out of date thinking of the past. If your clubs publicity officer (if you have one) is inclined to do the bare minimum, it is time to have a look at the direction your club or organisation is heading. Most likely you have the wrong people in the driver's seat in your club. If you want to interest other readers (other than pigeon flyers) give them something that they can understand and not just in the pigeon jargon. Make an article (story) to go in with the results and make it humorous! If you can't do this get help from other people outside your club members for the article or hand the job to someone who is willing to try. Don't make your club or organisation look unprofessional by using excuses. New people join our sport and bring new and fresh ideas with them, but usually the out of date thinkers squash the ideas or make excuses as to why they should stay the way it has been for years and force these people back out of the sport. We all feel comfortable in our own little world and sometimes change is needed to move forward even if it is not benefiting us directly but the sport as a whole.

In the future we all would benefit just by starting to present our sport and ourselves on a lot more professional basis. Each organisation and club should have a code of ethics and some clubs have achieved this, these clubs should be congratulated for the positive step for the sport. Think of how you present yourself to the general public.

### **General Appearance:**

Your general appearance and personal presentation to people you meet. Professional people will not be inclined to join a bunch of sloppy dressing pigeon flyers.

### **Do you Pay your Bills?**

How hard is it to get local businesses to sponsor some races when members don't pay their accounts, sometimes it's even those involved in running the club. What an example to follow!

### **General Cleanliness at Home.**

If you can't keep your house and yard clean, it is so much more difficult to convince a new potential flyer that this is the sport for him.

It is time for everyone involved in pigeon racing to make an effort, to get more professional and to think of the damage that is being done to the sport. There will be no future, if your club loses members, take a look at who is left. Why are people leaving? The sport needs more forward thinking people with business ideals than it does knockers.

But like most things in life, the condemners and backroom politicians always seem to have the loudest voices.

Yours in the Sport,  
Barry Trewin  
© Barry Trewin 2004



