

The Great American Giant Homer Young Bird Futurity

By R. L. ("HAP") BEATTIE, Tulsa, Okla.

Each year throughout the United States there are literally hundreds of fancy fowl and pigeon shows held. Various specialty clubs hold Lawn and District Shows in the promotion of their respective breeds, while other clubs hold all-breed shows, open to all exhibitors. All of the aforementioned shows occupy an important place in today's pigeon fraternity.

In the early part of 1974 a new and different type of pigeon show for American Giant Homer Young Birds was planned. It was during a lunch-break that Jack Anderson and Hap Beattie were having. Jack, having been involved with untold numbers of Quarter Horse Shows and Futurities, wanted to know what would happen if some of the same ideas were incorporated into a pigeon show.

After Jack informed me of what he wanted to do, he asked me what I thought of the idea, and whether or not I thought it would make for a successful pigeon show. Naturally, since I knew we had never had anything like it in the history of the Giant Homer Association, I told him it couldn't fail. In fact I couldn't even recall any other specialty club, either Fancy or Utility that had ever had anything like it before.

When plans were finally formulated it was decided that the show would be called the Annual American Giant Homer Young Bird Futurity. It would be held at the end of each year in Dec. It would be unique in that all exhibitors would be required to nominate their prospective show birds in July, nearly five months before their actual entries could be accepted. A nomination fee of \$2 would be charged on each young bird. No band numbers would be listed at time of nomination, and the entire amount of the nomination fee would be paid back on each color class. This in itself was very unusual for a pigeon show. As if this wasn't enough, there would be \$50 added to each color class, and in the beginning there were six color classes, or a total of twelve classes, counting both sexes. Beautiful trophies were offered for First, Second, and Third Best Displays. Also there was a Cash Special of \$100 for Champion Giant Homer, and \$50 for the Best Opposite Sex. In later Futurities additional Cash Specials would be offered for Reserve Champion, and the Best Bird in each color class.

In the beginning there was no limit on the number of young birds that an exhibitor might want to nominate. The nominations were open to the world. All birds shown and nominated would be required to wear a single seamless band of any reputable banding organization. The number of birds entered could not exceed the number of birds nominated by any exhibitor. If an exhibitor did not enter and show the number of birds that he nominated, he would forfeit his nomi-

nation fee on the un-entered birds. By using a little simple arithmetic it is not hard to figure out how much money might be offered on any particular class of birds. If there were 20 birds in a class at \$2 per bird it would amount to \$40. After the \$50 cash was added, there would be a total of \$90 up for grabs on that particular class. It was decided that the top half of each class of birds would divide the payback on a percentage basis. All exhibitors present would be paid in cash following the judging.

An added feature of the Futurity was the holding of an Auction Sale at the conclusion of the final judging. Birds offered for sale were required to be placed in the top five birds of their particular class. They also were required to be noted by a check-mark on the entry blank that they would be offered for sale. The Oklahoma Giant Homer Club was placed in charge of the Auction. A fee of 10% of the selling price on each bird sold was charged. The selling exhibitor received 90% of the price, and 10% was deposited in the club's treasury.

The first Annual American Giant Homer Young Bird Futurity was held in Dec. of 1974. A total of 275 Giants were nominated. There were twelve states represented by the 29 nominators. The second Futurity was held in Dec. 1975. A total of 479 Giants were nominated by 39 nominators from 14 states. The third Futurity again was held in Dec. 1976. A total of 676 Giants were nominated by 48 nominators from 16 states. The second and third futurities offered more color classes and more Cash Specials. Also there were beautiful trophies offered for best Displays by Junior exhibitors.

At the conclusion of the first futurity the Auction Sale was held. Much to everyone's surprise, over \$1,000 worth of Giants were sold. Nearly every exhibitor present was at one time or other attempting to buy a bird of his liking. If an exhibitor wanted to bid on his own bird, and succeeded in buying it, he was required to pay the 10% commission to the Okla. Giant Homer Club treasury. The second futurity Auction Sale was greater than the first one.

In the beginning Jack Anderson agreed to underwrite the cost of the first three Futurities. This was with the thought in mind of making the Annual Futurity self-sufficient beginning with the fourth one. It was decided that a Benefit Auction would be held following the third Futurity. Members and exhibitors were asked to donate anything of value, plus certain well known show winners in Giant Homers. All proceeds of the Benefit Auction would go toward the financing of the Fourth Annual Futurity. All items, birds, etc. sold at the Benefit Auction would not be subject to the 10% commission charged at the regular Auction. It was also decided that the nomination

fee for the Fourth Annual Futurity would be \$3 per bird, with \$2 still going into the class pay-back, and the balance going toward expenses. The Benefit Auction following the Third Futurity produced over \$1,700 in cash to be used on the Fourth Futurity. At this writing the Fourth Futurity has 569 Giants nominated by 42 nominators. At the conclusion of the Fourth Futurity another Auction will be held for the benefit of the Fifth Futurity. We will have various items of value including loft and shipping equipment, not to mention valuable Giants offered by the exhibitors.

At the conclusion of the Fourth Futurity over \$10,000 will have been spent in the promotion of the American Giant Homer. The American Giant Homer Breeders can be congratulated for the way in which they have supported all of the Futurities. Their nominations and attendance from all corners of the USA was very enlightening. Their most generous donations for the Benefit Auction following the Third Futurity made it possible for the Fourth one to be held. From a financial standpoint the first three Futurities were made entirely possible by the generosity and desire of Jack Anderson to promote the breeding of the American Giant Homer. His ability to organize and promote the endeavor, is unsurpassed in the annals of American Giant Homer Association history. Our entire membership is very grateful and happy to have Jack on our team.

The Fourth Annual American Giant Homer Young Bird Futurity will be held in Norman, Okla., on the 10th and 11th of Dec., 1977. Every one in the pigeon fraternity, be they Fancy Bird, or Utility Bird breeders is invited to attend. In the past we have had very favorable comments from various fanciers who have attended our Futurities. Some old-timers have said that they have attended shows for 20 and 25 years, but have never been to a show where the competition was so stiff and the pay-back so great. Others have attended and commented about the enjoyment they derived from the Auction Sales.

There are many factors which contribute to the success of this Futurity. One of the main and most important factors is the central location in which the show is held in relation to the rest of the country. Okla. is almost at the mid-way point between the East and West coasts, and the Northern and Southern borders of the USA. We can be reached by Air Freight in just a few hours from any city of medium size, permitting the Giants to arrive in top condition. Membership participation by the Fifth District members is almost 100%. Their desire to see that everything is in order and proceeding smoothly all during the show, eases any tensions that may build up unnecessarily. Holding the Futurity in a spacious well lighted and heated showroom has been very beneficial, along with the fact that the exhibitors could park their automobiles on the inside, away from the

inclement weather if they so desired.

In closing the writer would like to apologize to all past Futurity exhibitors for not thanking each one individually in this article for his most valued patronage and support. Time and space just don't permit it at this time. We are honored in that practically every top breeder of Giants has chosen to exhibit with us, and we hope they will do so in the future. The top pros from Iowa, Minn., Ohio, Wis., Wyo., S.D., Ill., Mich., Mo., Ind., Ark., Texas, Neb., Calif., and Okla., have all cast their lot with our Futurity at one time or other, and we love them dearly for it. Last but not least is the "Key" State of Kentucky. Those Giant fanciers at one time were the backbone of the whole organization. The center of Giant Homer activity was in and around the city of Louisville. The better shows were always held at the Kentucky State Fair. At the present time the celebrated National Young Bird Show for all breeds of pigeons is held in Louisville each year. A word of appreciation goes out to those Kentucky Giant Homer breeders who so

faithfully support our Futurity.

We believe the Futurity for Young American Giant Homers has accomplished what it was designed to do. It has created additional interest in the breed. It has brought a great per cent of the membership closer together in acquaintance and in the sharing of birds with each other. Breeding Giants together with the main purpose in mind of improving the breed is what it is all about. Recruiting new members and encouraging the Juniors to exhibit makes for a more healthy organization, that can grow and prosper.

Our growth depends upon our performance. A growing vine or tree must have roots, limbs, and leaves. It cannot stand still. If it stands still for very long its leaves begin to fall for lack of nourishment, and finally the roots die along with the rest of the vine or tree. If our Futurity can act as a shot in the arm, and cause the organization to start growing again, we will feel that all of our time, money and efforts are worth it.