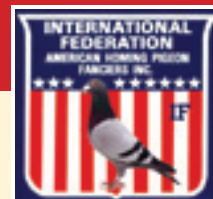


RICHARD C. STEWARD

- *IF Champion Loft - 3rd Place*
5 lofts to 25 Lofts 2011 Young Birds
- *IF-11-SBRPC-0703 3rd place IF H O F*
5 lofts to 25 Lofts 2011 Young Birds



The Very Early Beginning

Richard Steward was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1939. He enjoyed, along with most of the kids in the neighborhood, playing in the streets. Around 1950, there seemed to be a strong interest that grew among the “street kids” to raise pigeons. So they began building rudimentary lofts from anything they could salvage from the neighborhood. Then they set out to catch as many feral pigeons as they could accommodate from Jackson Square in the French Quarter. Richard was 10 years old when this adventure began. This adventure didn’t seem to hold their interest that year. It was becoming boring. To the rescue, came Waldo Slie with a new idea. He said, “Let’s form a club for racing pigeons.” Well, at that time, they had no idea what he was talking about but they were willing to give it a try. On their first gathering, they were introduced to an older (approximately 26 years old) gentleman, Tanner S. Davis. Through his experience as a fancier, they all formed the TSD Racing Pigeon Club. Waldo put together all the strategies and necessities needed to sustain a club with a membership of 28 or so kids. They were directed to resources for pigeons, the established Racing Pigeon Club of the Greater New Orleans area. They were then able to procure, learn, and have fun. That’s how Richard got into the sport.

The Epilogue to the Aforementioned

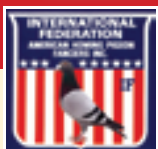
At the time that they were all having great fun playing racing pigeons, his two large German Shepherds were studying and planning a massacre. One day upon Richard’s return from school when he was about 14 years old, he entered his yard and discovered all 150 of his most loved and attended to birds were DEAD! That tragically ended his pigeon-life and experiences. That was around 1954.

Fast-forward 2003:

Many years after retiring from the Los Angeles Unified School District, his new enjoyable past time became offshore fishing in the Pacific Ocean aboard his new Grady White Seafarer. A very close friend from New



Orleans, now living in Los Angeles, called and informed him that he had just returned from a visit to New Orleans. He inquired if Richard knew or remembered a neighborhood and childhood friend, Waldo Slie. Richard told him, “Of course.” He said he had visited with him and learned he was deathly ill. Richard asked for and received the phone number of Waldo. He then called him. Waldo answered and Richard asked to speak with “Bird.” He replied, “This is he.” He also said that this had to be someone from deep in his past because no one called him “Bird” as an adult. They proceeded to reminisce and the childhood experiences with pigeons took center stage. He subsequently told Richard of his professional position at present with the pigeon sport. Richard told him that the experiences and activities when they were kids were very fond to him. Waldo then began to



I.F. Interview for 2011 Champion Flyer

RICHARD STEWARD *(continued)*

encourage him to return. Richard quickly rejected that idea and answered with a weak response like, “I am too old” and “I can’t clean all that shit anymore.” Waldo’s immediate response was to build a loft with a wire floor. Richard quickly responded, “It’s been a very long time since I had pigeons, I wouldn’t know where to begin.” Waldo being Waldo would not relent. He said, “You build the loft, I will supply the birds and the knowledge.” Hence Richard’s return to a long lost hobby which he had no idea that he would get deeply involved in again.

The first year was quite eventful. He would visit New Orleans approximately three times that year. The time was spent with family and friends, but mostly with Waldo. He began getting a crash course in racing fancy pigeons. It came as such a compressed and intense instructional learning method. It was all he could do to just cognitively imprint it in his mind.. Waldo was true to his commitment and Richard did receive his first set of stock birds (6 pair) from his partner Phil Calerich. Waldo was able to provide him with instruction through his first breeding season. He would additionally provide Richard with other nut and bolt issues that related to the sport. It was very difficult for Richard to comprehend the vast amount of information Waldo was giving to him. It was not until a few years had past, a tanker load of mistakes and tons of money wasted, that his teaching began to reach fruition. It was a sad commentary

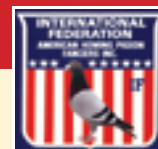


associated with this endeavor for Waldo passed away a year following their coming together. Richard felt like he was abandoned in a sinking boat in the middle of the river. Hence the first year of his inaugural return... Through the subsequent years, the help and influence has been enormous. Richard’s friends in New Orleans; Willie “Blue” Daniels (deceased), Tyrone McGowan and Edward Hartzog have provided an invaluable pick-up were Waldo had left off. In Los Angeles, the great ones: Steve Warner, Rusty Williams, Ken Jackson, and Greg McKnight, were just as important. But the most valuable to him during his growth and development had to be Jose Ibarra. He has been and is currently always available to assist. Richard is grateful to them all!

The Particulars; Breeding

As he sits authoring this memo, Richard has just completed pairing his stock birds. He anxiously is looking forward to this season, as it will include the smallest number paired (22) since beginning. He would generally breed approximately 42 pairs. His approach this season emphasizes quality. He said, “My age dictates it.” His program is obviously a conglomerate of techniques as garnered through time. He began with a medication regime, which includes vaccination for PMV. This is done about 4 weeks before pairing and he turns the lights on about 3 weeks. The first week after Thanksgiving he places the cocks in their individual boxes. He lets them remain there for two days alone before placing the hens in with them. This he does at night so he can turn the lights off overnight. He has found less damage to the hens by doing it this way. He allows 5 days of mating before he introduces disinfected nest pairs into the nest boxes. The pairs he has mated are put together in a variety of ways. Now that he’s limited his number of pairs, he can pair them with a better defined method. These include mating by size and eye color, preferring opposite eye color and preferably medium size. The most important method is determined by the race sheet.

The most important impact in the sport has been with young bird racing, especially 2010-2011. As neophyte, Waldo told Richard that given his limitations with practice and knowledge he would have a better chance with the Young Bird races. This is true with him now. He has not shut the book, nor will he on learning as much as is possible to get better.



Richard's young bird techniques follow simple but precise schemata. "Make every attempt to provide an environment of comfort within the loft. The thought being, create a love for the home". When they have demonstrated routing and ranging for 45 minutes to an hour for two weeks, they begin training. They train from six miles to 12, 22, 40, 60 and 80 miles. They will release from these distances at least three days each. Approximately three weeks before the first race, they will begin training on the truck along with the other fanciers. They will ship them twice weekly, 90 miles at first and a week before the race, 120 miles.

This year They've cut back considerably on the stock birds. They reduced their numbers by half. They now are breeding with 22 pairs. They expect to have 60 plus young birds to start. They do anticipate an overall loss ration of 50%, thus leaving about 30 to begin the season.

To his surprise, in 2010, Richard won the Average Speed, Champion Bird, and Champion Loft Awards. Now with the 2011 season at a close, he has been informed that he is the winner of the Champion Bird and the Average Speed Awards, though not the trifecta this time. As Waldo stated to him, "my best chance for success would be with the young birds."

Now Old birds, that's a little different. In fact quite different! Success during this racing has been few and far between. His hope is that this season will be a little different than the past. Health and nutrition for the breeders and racers has been an evolutionary process. They began by following blindly everyone's advice about lots of medications and protein. Since coming to a more

sensible approach, they are emphasizing more natural supplements. Richard studied biology in college and can't imagine how he had ventured from those principles so easily. Well, now they view the pigeons' needs according to it's needs and apply those laws as it dictates.

Richard thinks that the aforementioned sums up a little of his experiences about being a fancier of late. As Waldo put it, "Just think how nice to be able to return to your childhood pleasures again!"

Richard would like to thank the officers of I.F. for the work that they do in maintaining this great organization and also for sponsoring the awards and the fine trophies that they present to the winners in each category. It is refreshing to know that there are still individuals willing to do the hard work it takes to recognize all the deserving sportsmen and all the special birds who earn those positions. "To the I.F. officers: your hard work is applauded and appreciated. Your Sky Talk keeps getting better each year. Keep up the good work!"

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