

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Richard Smith

Dear Fanciers,

I hope everyone had a happy and healthy holiday season and a good year with the birds. I wish you all the absolute best in the New Year, both in the sport and with your families.

The I.F. and the pigeon sport have come a long way. I am proud of what we have been able to bring you in this issue of SKYTALK, including articles and information you can use. Thank you to all of our advertisers for participating this year. Many people contribute to the production of SKYTALK, but Paul Walsh deserves the most credit for pulling it together. He does an amazing job. Thanks Paul!

This year's I.F. Convention and Race, hosted by the Brooklyn Concourse Association was a great success, as I am sure you agree. The lectures and information provided by the guest speakers drew an amazing crowd, especially when Dr. Colin Walker & Dr. Carlo Gyselbrecht, our visiting Australian and Belgian Veterinarians spoke.

Very impressive! Next year's Convention will be hosted in Philadelphia and is already shaping up to be a great experience. Don't miss it!

I welcome several new people this year. We have a new member on the I.F. board as of December, Grace Mehl. Many of you may know her if you are part of the Suffolk Nassau Combine, where she is a member of the Northern Long Island Club. I also welcome a gentleman who has helped me over the years with my birds, Dr. John Kazmierczak, D.V. M., or Dr. "K", as I call him. He has agreed to be the Veterinarian advisor to the Board, keeping us up to date on any new developments in pigeon health.

I want to take this opportunity to talk about an important subject, which affects all pigeon fanciers. This past year, in Chicago, a zoning law was passed, making it illegal to keep pigeons of any sort (homers, fancies, rollers, etc.). Fanciers within the set boundaries, were required to get rid of ALL of their birds. This has set a very dangerous precedent for us in the sport. Obviously, we are taking this very seriously and so are our counterparts at the A.U. Changes in zoning regulations severely restricting or



banning pigeon lofts could doom our sport. All zoning changes of this nature must be fought in an organized and unified manner as soon as they are raised. This is vital to our future.

This ties into my next point, promoting our image and the sport. How do we get new people interested in the sport? We do it by educating people. Most pigeon flyers were exposed to the sport as kids. We all need to make the time to talk to kids about our great sport and get them involved. That is where our next generation of pigeon fanciers will come from.

If you haven't visited our website recently, take a look (www.ifpigeon.com). We have changed quite a bit and I hope for the better. Club Secretaries, if your family is tired of fielding all those calls about lost birds, make sure your E-Mail address is published in the band list next year. And, how about including your members' E-mail addresses with their membership information. We'd love to have it!

We have made great progress this past year. We want to continue on this path and we are already making a good start. Thank you all for your support and encouragement. Here's wishing you all the best in 2005!

Yours Truly,
Richie