

Ameraucana Bantam Bulletin

AMERAUCANA BANTAM CLUB, 6442 CHESTNUT AVE., ORANGEVALE, CA 95662

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Although this will reach you well after the deadline for entering birds in our 1984 Ameraucana Bantam Club National Meet, the Gilbert family certainly hopes to see many of you the weekend of October 6 and 7 at Milwaukee. If this A.P.A. annual convention and show even approaches that of 1983 at Columbus, Ohio, it should be one to remember. Attractions this year include a free bus tour of various Milwaukee attractions, a free Sunday breakfast featuring omelettes prepared by employees of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, and a Saturday evening poolside reception at the Holiday Inn with drinks and snacks on the house.

Add to this tons of prizes- merchandise, cash, trophies, ribbons, rosettes, and a judging contest for the juniors, and it should make for one terrific weekend.

But take away all the trappings and frills except for the birds and the people and there would still remain a great time for all- because poultry exhibitors are the greatest. Especially Ameraucana bantam exhibitors, in my experience. So if you read this and have not entered birds, come anyway just for the enjoyment and comradship of it all. With the sweet aroma of excitement and renewal in the air, no one will come away a loser. "Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel." Proverbs 27:9 (NIV)

Our Club's annual meeting will take place at the show hall at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, October 7th. Anyone wishing to place matters on the agenda should let me know as soon as possible. See you there!

Mike Gilbert

ABC NATIONAL MEET

As Mike Gilbert has indicated, our National Meet is fast approaching and the awards- both from our club and the host club- are substantial and well worth competing for. The cash awards alone are well in excess of a hundred dollars and well spread out so that virtually all categories for awards are covered from champion, reserve champion, best display and most of the varieties, as well. Our club cash awards were made possible by donations from the following club members: Ken Carpenter, John Wunderlich, Jim Tuckwood, your president and secretary. In addition to our special club rosettes for major awards, the host club, Wisconsin State Poultry Breeders Association offers \$15 cash for best display of Ameraucanas, a silver compote for champion and a large rosette for reserve champion.

The most lasting awards however, are the great memories that such a gathering provides, so don't be left out- attend if you can.

THE SALMON AMERAUCANA

The Salmon variety as seen in the Faverolle is not too well known in the United States and is probably even more rare in France. The Germans, however, have within the last several years created striking specimens of this color variety in the Faverolle bantam in particular. Salmon as in the Faverolle breeds true but from time to time those who breed for exhibition put a wheaten male over salmon colored females to redden the back of the male bird. The process is somewhat complicated and takes three seasons to complete so I will not go into it here. The salmon variety as in the Faverolle does not concern us anyway for our salmon Ameraucana is nothing more than a silver wheaten and it does not breed true. Actually the males can be shown as Golden Ameraucanas; that is Gold Duckwing with hackle/saddle striping. Most of our wheaten Ameraucanas carry the gene for striping whether we like it or not, so select for or against the judges don't seem to care much anyway.

This is how it is done with the Ameraucana: put a wheaten male over silver females. The male birds can be shown straightaway as salmon or golden but to get good females another season is required. Breed the wheaten X silver progeny among themselves and select the good salmon colored females. You will also get some good salmon and/or golden males from this cross, but most will be wasters. As I mentioned in a previous article, the silvers I used were not pure for silver; they still carried the gene for non-sex-linked gold which I am sure contributed to the good red backs of my first cross male birds. I would like to say that birds produced by these crosses are beautiful and would qualify as salmon colored but a purist or discriminating judge might not buy this act, but you have to start somewhere.

John Fugate

COLOR BREEDING

* Our thanks again to John Fugate for an interesting article on color breeding. John is also working to perfect the buff Ameraucana bantam as is Mike Gilbert. The last report was that John was trying to eliminate a recurring problem with this variety- black in tail.

Jim Tuckwood, our good member up Wisconsin way is working with another new variety of Ameraucana, black tailed red. Jim reports considerable progress and will perhaps report his findings by way of the bulletin next year if all goes well with this project.

As mentioned before, charter member Harry Cook of New Jersey, is working on the barred variety and from a photograph provided by Harry, your secretary can attest to the good, distinct barring on Harry's birds.

Your secretary returned from last year's National Meet with a blue wheaten cockerel which was to be crossed onto wheaten this past Spring. After an entire season with no fertile eggs, this bird was turned out to roam about the yard and only then, did fertility begin to pick up, but unfortunately, virtually all hens were broody and no longer laying. However, one hen did manage to hatch a couple of chicks and among the birds on range, was a buff Orpington bantam hen. This hen stole her nest and this past week showed up with five little blue wheaten X buff Orpington bantam chicks. This was the cross John Fugate made to create his buff Ameraucanas, but with a wheaten, not blue wheaten, male. In any case, your secretary has decided to see just what these chicks turn out to be, mistake or no.

WELCOME!

A big welcome to Billy D. Huffman, 3305 E. Orlando Rd., Panama City, Florida 32405. Billy is our first member ever from the state of Florida and another member for our rapidly growing Southern District. Billy writes: "I have been showing bantams since the late 50's. When we moved to Florida we sold all the birds and now have started over again. I now breed Crele and Blue Red Old English. Your Ameraucanas interest me. I would like to work with a new breed, setting color and type. I would like to purchase two trios before January as we can mate up early in the Spring."

APA YEARBOOK

The deadline for articles and advertising has been set at December 1 for the 1985 issue of the APA Yearbook. Our club has taken an ad in this publication for the past several years and in as much as we are now an APA associate member, it might well be time to support this organization with a larger ad than we have previously had. The new rates are now \$60. for a full page club ad as per the ABA, and if we have sufficient interest to put together such an ad, we could take 6 individual ads from members at \$10. each, just as we have done in past years with the ABA. This would be of course, in addition to the full page ad that we have placed in the ABA Yearbook for the past several years. What I am saying is that it is time to support both organizations who are in turn supporting us.

Any interested member may contact your secretary on this with your ad copy and check for \$10. made out to the APA. The deadline for this will be November 1, as this will give me time to return any money if we do not receive the required six members for a full page ad. Please think this over and act by November 1, so that I will have time to put the ad together and get it to Bill Holland, one of the members of the APA committee putting the APA Yearbook together for 1985.

USING OUR MONEY WISELY

Your board of directors has always been very conscious of the limited amount of money in our club treasury and has tried to act reasonably and responsibly in its use. In order to better use our money for advertising in the future, it will be necessary to determine just where our dollars are doing us the most good. With this in mind, the next issue of the club Bulletin will carry a survey to determine which periodicals are reaching new members in order to help us make wise choices in the future. This simple questionnaire will ask where you first heard about our club, and if in a periodical ad, which one. We hope to have the cooperation of all members that have joined our club within the last three or four years. At present, the club bulletin is far and away our most expensive item at about \$35. per issue for printing and postage. These costs rise with almost every issue and will increase again with the projected rise in postage fees next year. Advertising is our next highest expense, which is why we are examining our advertising budget in order to make the most of each advertising dollar and continue to serve our membership.

RANGING BANTAMS

There are several reasons why some fanciers choose not to range their bantams. Some do not do so due to inadequate fencing to keep them in certain areas and out of others. Poultry and garden are a natural combination, but poultry IN garden can often lead to disaster- for the garden. Others do not want to take a chance exposing their birds to the threat of predators, be it raptors or stray dogs or other varmints. Still others want their birds in close confinement so that they will be at hand to work with in taming them for show. All of these are legitimate reasons and there may be others as well.

Some of us however feel that the benefits of ranging bantams outweigh the possible drawbacks and are willing to take a chance in this regard. My birds generally have the run of the backyard from the time they are no longer obvious prey for cats- half grown or better- until final selection and culling is completed for the year and they are penned for the Winter. During this range time, which generally lasts from June through October or November, they are fed a grower ration (Purina Game Bird Flight Chow) supplemented by fallen fruit from the peach and plum trees, grass and any insect unfortunate enough to fly, hop, or crawl on the property. They are fed all they need, not all they want, and are therefore kept busy scratching and looking for that tender morsel.

Grasshoppers were in abundance this year here in the Sacramento Valley apparently due to their seasonal cycles, and my neighbors complained bitterly about the pests. It has been estimated that eight 'hoppers in one square yard of foliage will eat as much as a cow and calf. They eat their own body weight in season between dawn and dark. Fortunately, the bantams ranging in my backyard made short work of them and they were not about long enough to do much damage. The bantams were on patrol during the daylight hours in my yard while my neighbors were spraying to try to control the pesky grasshoppers. In spite of all of the poisons man has poured on the environment, we have yet to exterminate a single insect species. The birds are not penned at night and roost in the fruit trees along the north side of the property. A bit of fruit is sometimes sampled or spoiled by the roosting bantams, but they are primarily interested in the fallen fruit that would collect under the tree if they were not about. What does collect under the tree is their droppings which no doubt accounts for the bumper crops of fruit, the superb taste and the general robust health and growth on the trees. If the early Spring weather permits adequate pollination, the trees always require thinning of fruit since the bantams have been at work fertilizing the trees and the branches would break under the sheer weight of the fruit set each year. Even the thinned fruit and culls are relished by the birds so that with the bantams ranging in the shade of the trees during the hot summer days, there is virtually no wasted fruit and they keep the area clean and tidy.

Curiously, the birds do not range far from their feed and water; generally no more than a hundred feet or so. Being a lazy person, I have let a pinhole leak in one faucet bib direct a fine spray into a large crock so that I have a lazy man's automatic waterer under the mulberry tree. Even the birds do not object to this fine, cool spray on their faces, as this has been a record setting summer with more than 35 days of over 100° and the weather man says there is no end in sight. Finally, in spite of the potential hazards in ranging bantams, it seems to work for me and as Ralph Sturgeon has said: "There is something about sunshine, green grass, and soil out on the range that we humans have never been able to put in a feed bag." Nuff said.

Don Cable

UNDER THE MULBERRY TREE

It's difficult to pick up Poultry Press or Hen House Herald these days without seeing a picture of that gadabout from Readstown, Wisconsin, Bernard Kellogg. Now that's a fellow that gets around! In addition to Ameraucana bantams, Bernard, who has served as our election commissioner since the club was formed in 1978, is a breeder of Naked Neck bantams second to none. He has penned an interesting and informative article on this unique breed in the 1984 ABA Yearbook and is indeed working on a book on Naked Neck bantams as well. When completed, I will be one of the first in line for a copy- autographed, of course!

Speaking of the ABA Yearbook, one of Mike Gilbert's early articles for our club bulletin appears in the new edition, too. The item is on Beard and Muff genetics and also appears in the Ameraucana Bantam Handbook. An article on Ameraucanas also appeared in this year's APA Yearbook as well, so the breed was well represented in both publications.

The September issue of Poultry Press carries an excellent article from the prolific pen of Jack Fugate on one of his favorites- the Dutch Bantam. Jack has also managed to start both member Jeanette Frank and your secretary in this charming little breed, and it was Dutch chicks that were the subject of the article in the last bulletin regarding the technique to feed 'em 'maters. This is alluded to in the Press article.

Speaking of Jack reminds me of the fact that our Southern District has now ten members, some one fourth of the club membership. In as much as our National Meet will be held in the Central District this year, it might well be in order to consider a Southern District site for next year's national meet. You Southern District members might want to start thinking about this and contact Jack with your ideas in as much as he is your Southern District Director and would be in charge of the meet.

There is no news to report on the progress of the paintings of the Ameraucana bantams for the forthcoming supplement to the Standard of Perfection. In her last letter, Ms. Jacky indicated that rendering the wheaten color, especially for the female, which was the main concern, would be no problem. However, being a natural worry-wart, seeing is believing, or I'm from Missouri- with apologies to John Wunderlich. When I know- you'll know and hopefully by the next issue of the club bulletin.

You may have noticed that there seems to be some problem for some in spelling "Ameraucana". Curiously, the word will often be spelled two different ways in the same article or ad and often both of them are wrong! Your secretary receives on average about a dozen letters a month regarding some aspect of club business and there may be just as many varieties in attempting to spell "Ameraucana." The killer is when that rare soul does manage to spell it correctly and then messes up my address with "Orangeville" rather than "Orangevale", but then nobody's perfect, me least of all.

News along the grapevine has it that our Western District Director, Marie Rayher, of Tracy, CA, who is also Secretary of the Golden Gate Bantam Club, has now also taken on the job as vice-president of the Greater California Poultry Club that holds its annual Winter show in Fresno. Well, the old saying is that if you want to get something done, give the job to a busy person. Best wishes in all of those big jobs, Marie!

The latest word is that Mike Gilbert and Jim Tuckwood and John Wunderlich will again have that beast of the Northwoods, "Chainsaw" Horman to contend with at this year's National Meet. However, he will not be able to soft-soap and sandbag the group with his novice routine as he did last year, and they will be laying for him this time around. For those folks that still have not made up their minds, don't miss a great show, go to Milwaukee!