



John W. Blewett

Ameraucana
Breeder
Club

March/April 1996

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SPARKY BALONEY'S "ALMOST CHICKENS"

When I was a boy some fifty years ago, I spent my summers at my grandmother's home in Lincoln, a small town in California's Sacramento Valley, (As those of you who suffered through Pete Crow's Eggs will remember). Half of the town was made up of recent immigrants and first generation from Southern Europe- Portuguese from the Azores, Italians from Sicily, Greeks and Slavs and Mexicans up from the state of Sonora.

Common to this mix of people was a large vegetable garden and a flock of chickens- practical breeds like Reds and Rocks, mostly. Manure went to the garden, eggs to the table and an occasional fat hen to the cooking pot. Even though we were soon coming out of the Great Depression, poultry and garden was a way of life going back to the old country and many generations beyond.

My uncle Jerry always spaded up a garden plot for my grandmother which was seeded to tomatoes mostly, and of course we had a flock of chickens, a scruffy mixed lot as I recall. I had a mindset of what a chicken should look like and had never seen a diminutive, purebred bantam of any kind.

The ragamuffin kids that I played with had a game combined with the elements of hide and seek and tag, called Black Widow, which was also the name of the person who was "it". We were all armed with a piece of wood shaped like a pistol, the handle of which had a clothes pin attached by tape and held one end of a piece of automobile tire innertube, while the other end was looped and fit over the muzzle of the "Rubber gun". Squeezing the clothes pin released the piece of innertube, which would produce a substantail sting at short distance. We always aimed for a boy's butt, as a shot to the face or head was considered poor form. If the Black Widow found a person's hiding place, a shot to the behind made him "it."

Unfortunately, "it" almost always fell to he who was slow of foot and of mind, one Petey Price. While Petey covered his eyes and attempted to count to one hundred, we scattered to the four corners shouting, "Petey Price is the Widder, Petey Price is the Widder!" Many years later, my uncle Tony, who lived close by, recalled us chanting, "Petey Price is the Widder!" of a summer evening.

The best hiding places were in an old abandoned pear orchard of something over an acre in size being between my grandmother's property and the East Avenue Bottle Shop, at the end of the street. This store and nearby residence was run and owned by a gentleman with the unlikely name of Spartacus Eologna, but was better known to the locals as Sparky Baloney. Sparky was a successful merchant as evidenced by the expensive chain link fence surrounding his property and to which he frequently referred.

It was among the tall, desiccated weeds along this fence that I chose to hide from Petey Price. Being small for my age, I was able to tunnel into the dry grasses and lying on my side in a fetal position, felt secure from Petey's prying eyes. I could hear the squeals and laughter as the "widder" probed for those hiding from him. My hiding spot was almost too secure and after a period of bored inactivity, I made a small opening in the weeds facing Sparky's fenceline as I waited with decreasing patience.

As I lay quietly peeping through the hole a strange little creature popped into view on Sparky's side of the fence. It stood on what could be described as tall, skinny legs for so tiny a critter, with a compact, feathered body and tail, topped by a long, thin neck and a narrow, snakey head. Mesmerized, I watched as it preened its wings, then stood quietly on one leg, shivering, as if cold. It was fascinating and as I attempted to enlarge the window through the weeds for a better look, I spooked the creature and it ran as I arose from my hiding spot and joined several other fellows as tiny and peculiar as itself.

At the supper table that evening I recalled with excitement the strange creatures that I had seen that day.

"Guess what I saw in Sparky Baloney's yard today?", I asked.

My grandmother replied, "What did you see?"

I answered proudly, "Something little- almost chickens!"

She and my uncle Jerry laughed and as he gave me a Dutch rub on the top of my head, he exclaimed, "Almost chickens? Those are bantams, you little sap!"

I had seen my first purebred bantams- Modern Games.

DC

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CHAOS

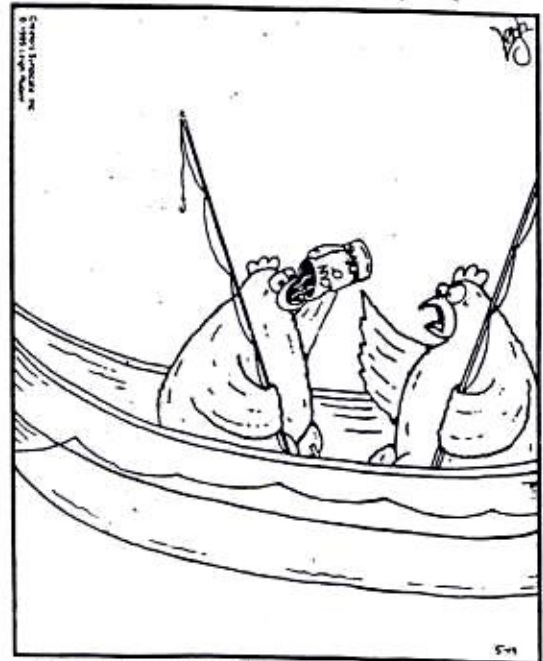
By Brian Shuster



"I think it's all politics anyway."

RUBES

By Leigh Rubin



"For cryin' out loud, Murray, we're never gonna catch anything if you keep eating all the bait!"

NOTES FROM NORTHERN MICHIGAN:

I just came in from feeding and locking everyone up for the night. Had to don my Sorels once again as we got 6" of snow last night. OH Spring where are you? We've had about 230" of snow this winter. Our average is 160". It's been a long and never ending winter. But - as we speak I have in a box in the bathroom 20 chicks who hatched over the weekend. All AMs and 3 Silkies. Then I have 2 AM bantams sharing a clutch of 9 eggs. So it must be spring.

I have had a long winter to study and learn a few things - I read and found some things about feed, and lots of things about better hatchability. We all feed our birds and don't think about it - buy the feed and feed them. I learned that to have good chicks, you must first have good eggs. Makes sense! To have good eggs the birds need the correct feed to insure fertility. None of the regular feeds have a good dose of Vitamin E. A breeder ration will, but here in Michigan one cannot find a source of breeder ration. Gamebird feed is good if you can find it. You can add wheat germ oil to your feed. I found wheat germ oil by the quart at a Farm and Fleet Store. \$11.95 a gallon. You need only to add it to the feed once a week. I added $\frac{1}{2}$ cup to a 10 qt. pail of feed. I stirred it around with a wooden spoon. Just that much mixed well and coated all the feed. Vitamin E is very important to the fertility of the cocks. Plus they like it. You can also buy wheat germ capsules and give it to individual birds or inject individual birds with a wheat germ oil - once a week. I decided not to do either of the latter options. I don't have a super super champion or a fertility problem, but I didn't realize how important vitamin E was. If you can't find affordable wheat germ oil, or breeder ration, a handful of dry cat food a week in the feed will do it. Cats' food is high in vit. E and on your cupboard shelf, as well as mine - is probably liquid corn oil. Canola oil - 20% vitamin E. That would be just fine. The birds during breeding time really need the addition of vitamin E. It gives the egg a better chance of hatching. Especially after a long hard winter and no natural vitamin E to find because of all the snow. I never would have thought to look at my Crisco canola oil bottle until I read in one of my books about the importance of vitamin E. It also is great for feather conditioning for show birds.

Then next, this is really good news. These 20 chicks who have just hatched - I gathered the eggs from my unheated henhouse when it was cold cold - like 10°. I had started gathering eggs in a fit of spring fever then we got cold again. Since I'd started I thought why not continue. I had my heart set on firing up my Roll-X incubator March 1. Nobody ever says, that I've read how cold it can be to gather eggs. My friend Tim told me he gathered eggs when it was 20°, let them kind of warm up a bit in the house - and all is fine. I gathered and stashed 54 eggs over 2 weeks or so, put them in the incubator. Rusty came over 10 days or so later with a candler. I was prepared to toss away at least 40 eggs. Well, we tossed only 10. They were clear. That left 44 eggs in the Roll-X and 21 of them hatched. I can't believe it. That's almost 50%!!!

That's as good as you get in good weather. I am so excited. I have early chicks. I never have early chicks, because I don't have eggs. Well these Crow AMs I got a year ago have been amazing the whole time. They began laying in Nov. and have been non-stop. I've been getting eggs all winter - then as I said earlier two of them are sharing a nest. I've never had broody hens this time of year. Of course, there is bad to all the good news. The bantams aren't breeding 100% true color. I have 50% wheaten chicks and 50% not sure what yet - only days old - blue guys with a red head - but I still say - if you don't have a source in your area to increase your flock of Am bantams I wouldn't hesitate getting chicks from Crow. They have the good shape, combs, beards, etc. and are such nice birds. Who lay eggs all year!!!

Save them in baggies. They won't dry out. That will increase storage time up to 3 weeks. It works. My 10° gathered eggs were stored in a Ziplock for over 2 weeks.

That's the news from here. Rusty and I will be going to the Centreville Show on Mother's Day weekend. I'll for sure see John Blehm and Jim Fegan. If BK hasn't become a stay-at-home I might see him. I can hardly wait. I think I have a few champions to take.

Jeanne T
4/4 Almost Spring

Goats Are Great

Especially Toggenburgs

Dr. Gary G. Gray
Shadow Farm
29502 Glidden Rd.
Kingston, IL 60145, USA

25 Feb. '90

Hi, Jeanette—

Here, finally, is my renewal: better late than never. (Although, as my Great-great Aunt Elvie used to say, "Better never late!") I've enjoyed getting the newsletter & appreciated your notes & inquiries.

To answer some of your questions— I originally got a trio from Mike Gilbert at the Nat'l meet (at Belvidere, Ill.) in 1994,



KIIMAIRA, Rt. 2, Box 22835

all of which were lost during a year to various accidents, so I met Mike at the Jamesville, Wis. show in Sept. 1985 and got ANOTHER trio. Hope I can hatch a few of my own in 1986! My interest is wheaten & blue-wheaten bantams.

I'm a Ph.D. wildlife ecologist whose college-teaching positions were lost in various budget cuts, so I've been working 3rd shift in a factory the last several years. My major hobby is Toggenburg dairy goats, but got somewhat interested in poultry while with my last ex. Our farm name was Liatri's (blazing star prairie flower), which no one could spell or pronounce. So when I started all over again, I opted for a name people could understand. My foundation goats come from Sunshine Farm (in Wis.), so Shadow is the "flip side" — & also expresses the bad luck cloud that seems to follow me around!

Thanks again for the interesting & informative newsletters. Keep them coming!
All the best,
Gary



New Member

Linda Durant
7470 E. Mill
Cadillac, MI 49601

Happy Birthday

Sharon Bell (3/25)
Norbert Burke (4/18)
Alice Lee (3/4)
Amelia McAlexander (2/17)

"BLUE RIBBON EGGS"

We Can't all win—it seems
a sin
we thought our bird was best
But the judge is ever right —
they say
Tho we might say—in jest
Who Knows, perhaps—the
bird was tops
I mean the one that won.
Then maybe too, my Bantam
lost
from getting too much sun
Now if you get no ribbon
I mean the one that's Blue
Just take it with a smile they
say
Tho what you think is true
We Question no one's hon-
esty
There are Standards to be met
The first Hundred years are
the hardest
I may get a Blue Ribbon
yet!!!

Paperbacks • New Paperbacks • New Paperbacks

Wildlife and People

The Human Dimensions
of Wildlife Ecology

GARY G. GRAY

"Provides a much needed, highly readable synthesis of the literature—experiences, insights, and research findings—of [the] human dimension of wildlife conservation. . . . Essential reading for wildlife professionals and conservation activists." — Robert Leo Smith, *Choice*

"Very well written and enjoyable to read. . . . Will appeal to anyone who is intrigued by human and wildlife interactions." — Richard W. Warner, director, Center for Wildlife Ecology, Illinois Natural History Survey

Wildlife and People focuses on the human aspect of the animal-habitat-human triad, introducing virtually every discipline involved in the human dimensions of wildlife ecology. The most fruitful approach to wildlife ecology, Gary Gray maintains, grants coequality to wild animal population biology, the ecology and management of wildlife habitats, and human aspects of wildlife ecology.

Gray examines topics ranging from aboriginal human-wildlife relationships to wildlife law, policy, and administration.

GARY G. GRAY has taught at Northern Illinois University and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

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February

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FOOD

EGGSTRA! EGGSTRA!

Read all about it! The egg breaks out of its shell • by Arlene Stadd

■ “Probably one of the most private things in the world is an egg until it is broken,” wrote M. F. K. Fisher. We wanted to see what was behind the blank stare and tap into its history. When we got crackin’ on the case we discovered that things are not always as yellow and white as they seem.



Q. Are eggs nutritious?

A. Short answer—yes! Egg protein is often used as the standard by which other protein foods are measured. The egg contains small to significant amounts of 13 vitamins—it’s one of the few foods that naturally contains vitamin D—and numerous minerals. On the other hand, eggs are not high in sodium or calories.

Q. But what about cholesterol?

A. Nutrition experts say the two main influences on blood cholesterol levels are heredity and saturated fat—not cholesterol consumption per se. Contrary to long-held belief, dietary cholesterol is not strongly correlated with risk of coronary artery disease. The problem is that some people are genetically cholesterol sensitive (i.e., their blood cholesterol levels do rise when their dietary intake of cholesterol increases) and therefore need to watch their intake of foods high in cholesterol. And eggs are high on that list: Although the whites are both fat- and cholesterol-free, the yolk of one large egg has 213 milligrams of cholesterol and five grams of fat—1.6 of them saturated fat. Although as a general rule the American Heart Associa-

tion recommends a limit of four yolks per week, some diet and heart-disease experts assert that dietary advice should be more individualized.

Q. What do the grades mean?

A. As you probably know, in descending order the grades are AA, A and B. What you may *not* know is that grade B eggs are as nutritious as those that are AA or A. Packers determine grade by the quality of the exterior (cleanliness, soundness, texture, strength and shape) and interior (shape and firmness of yolk; proportion of thick white to thin white). Eggs that don’t meet USDA or state standards for grade B or better never even make it to the market as shell eggs; in fact, most grade Bs are processed into dried or other egg products.

Q. What causes blood spots?

A. A spot forms when a blood vessel on the yolk ruptures during the egg’s formation. It actually indicates a fresh egg, since as the egg ages, water moves from the albumen (white) into the yolk, diluting the blood spot. It is not a sign that the egg is fertile.

Q. Can eggs be frozen?

A. Not in their shells. To freeze whole eggs, beat them just enough to blend

the yolks and whites, then transfer them to freezer containers.

Q. Is it safe to eat raw eggs?

A. As with all raw food from animals, there’s a small possibility of bacterial (usually salmonella) food poisoning. Infection is more serious for those who are very young, pregnant, elderly, or have an impaired immune system. The American Egg Board says: Keep eggs cold. Cook them until the whites are set, yolks start to thicken, and no visible liquid remains.

Q. Why are some hard-cooked egg yolks ringed with green?

A. A harmless iron and sulfur compound forms when eggs are overcooked or not cooled quickly.

Q. Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

A. The Bible claims fowl. “And God said, ‘Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth. . . .’” Modern scientists hedge by saying neither—both are alternating stages in life’s never-ending progression. We like the reply of one thoughtful woman who, when asked by a child, answered, “Chickens. Because God would never lay an egg.”

QUICK RICE AND EGG STIR-FRY

Makes two servings.

Preparation time: approximately 5 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

1 teaspoon olive oil
1/3 cup chopped red bell pepper
1/3 cup chopped mushrooms
1/3 cup chopped green onions
1 clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger
1 cup cooked rice
1 tablespoon reduced-salt soy sauce
3 eggs
1 tablespoon water

■ In large nonstick skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Add bell pepper, mushrooms and onion; stir-fry 2 minutes. Add garlic and ginger and stir-fry 1 minute more. Add rice and stir-fry 2 minutes more. Blend soy sauce into rice mixture.

■ In small bowl beat eggs and water until blended. Pour over rice mixture and stir-fry until eggs are firm. Serve.

Nutrients per serving: calories 311; protein 15g; carbohydrates 35g; total fat 12g (saturated 3g), 34% of calories; cholesterol 393mg; fiber 1g; sodium 381mg. Exchanges: vegetable 0.8; bread 1.95; meat 1.6; fat 1.3.



LEGENDS & LORE

- Ancient Egyptians believed their god Ptah emerged from an egg laid by the almighty Chaos Goose, creator of the sun and moon.
- Because it symbolizes new life, many consider the egg an aphrodisiac.
- German and Slav peasants rubbed a mixture of eggs, bread and flour on their plows hoping to improve the harvest.
- To ensure a big family, a 17th-century French bride would crack an egg on her new home's doorstep before entering.
- In the 19th century, builders in Bombay, India, put an egg and milk into the foundations of new structures to protect them from harm.

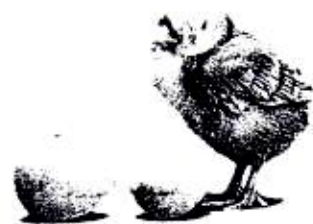


THE EASTER CONNECTION

Even before Christian times people colored, blessed or exchanged eggs as part of the rites of spring to welcome the sun's awakening from its long winter sleep. Early Christians adopted the egg, which represented the renewal of life, as a symbol of Christ's resurrection from the grave.

Several folktales explain the origin of dyeing Easter eggs. One legend from Poland recounts how the Virgin Mary herself painted boiled eggs in bright colors to please the infant Jesus.

People around the world celebrate Easter or new beginnings with eggs. Eastern Europeans may exchange eggs bearing the letters "XB" for "Christ Is Risen." Russians exchange a decorated egg and three kisses. Chinese people present a red hard-boiled egg with congratulations when a child is born. And German immigrants to the U.S. introduced the tradition of the Easter bunny delivering colored eggs to children.



OLD WORLD DUTCH PANCAKES

Makes four servings.

Preparation time: approximately 5 minutes

Baking time: 15-18 minutes

Ingredients

3 large eggs
3/4 cup 1% milk
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 tablespoons margarine OR butter
2 tablespoons powdered sugar
1 lemon, cut into wedges

■ Preheat oven to 400°F. In blender or food processor mix eggs, milk, flour, sugar and nutmeg.

■ Place margarine or butter in 7x11-inch baking dish or shallow 2-quart ovenproof baking dish. Place in oven and allow to heat 2-3 minutes until butter is melted but not browned.

■ Carefully pour in egg mixture. Bake 15-18 minutes until puffy and browned.

■ Cut into four servings. Dust with powdered sugar, and serve with lemon wedges to drizzle juice over hot pancake.

Nutrients per serving: calories 242; protein 10g; carbohydrates 25g; total fat 11g (saturated 3g), 41% of calories; cholesterol 198mg; fiber 1g; sodium 147mg. Exchanges: milk 0.175; bread 1.15; meat 0.8; fat 1.7.

Recipes developed by Sandra C. Krogh.

Hard-boiled research: Eggs may not be so bad

USA Today

ANAHEIM, Calif. — New research is scrambling some old ideas about laying off the eggs.

Many people with high cholesterol can eat two eggs a day as long as they stay on a low-fat diet, says Dr. Robert Knopp, Northwest Lipid Research Center, University of Washington, Seattle.

"There's room for flexibility," Knopp says. "Maybe two eggs a day can help people stay on a low-fat diet by making it more palatable."



Since the beginning of the end of America's love affair with fat and cholesterol, eggs have been targeted as one of the key foods to avoid. They're high in cholesterol and traditionally

fried in saturated fat.

Experts warn people with high cholesterol to not eat eggs and to go on a low-fat diet.

Life is hard enough, Knopp says, so his study was aimed at finding a compromise.

He and nutritionist Alice Dowdy put 131 men and women, average age mid-50s, on an American Heart Association 30 percent fat diet. All had high cholesterol. Then for 12 weeks, half got two eggs a day and half got an egg substitute.

The Egg Nutrition Board financed the study, but researchers said it was conducted independently of the group.

Results, presented Tuesday at the American Heart Association's scientific sessions:

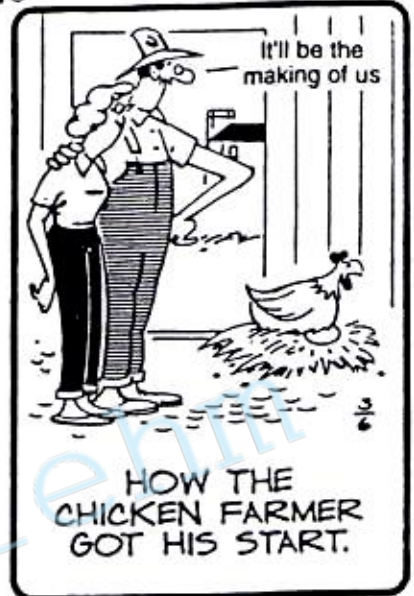
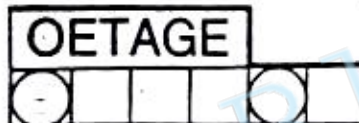
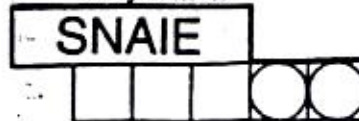
- Two eggs a day did not raise cholesterol in people who have only elevated LDL (cholesterol).

- Two eggs a day were bad for people with high LDL and high triglycerides — fats in bloodstream — raising their levels even more.

The bottom line: As long as you don't have high triglycerides, and you are on a 30 percent fat diet, and you fry your eggs without fat, boil them or poach them, "vive les oeufs."

JUMBLE® THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

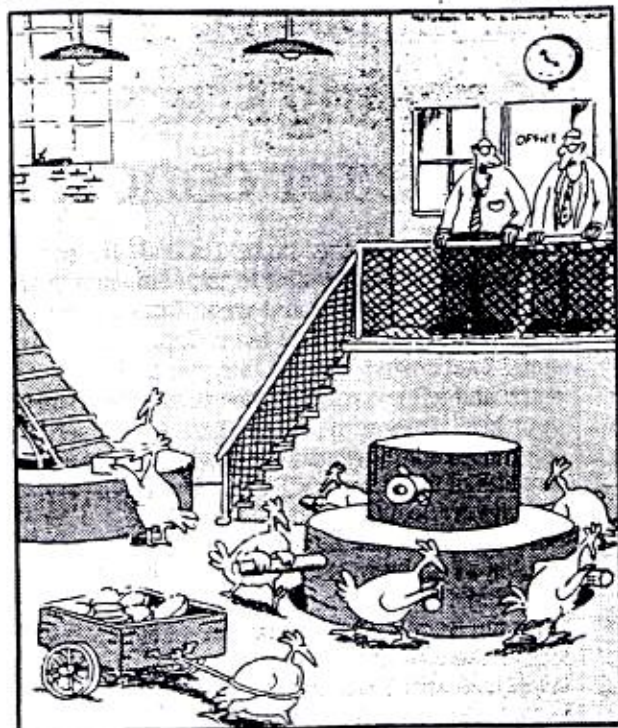


Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: WITH A ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

FAR SIDE

By Gary Larson



"Oh, yeah! They work real hard, all day long, seven days a week! ... And here's the best part — for chicken feed!"

*Thanks,
Mary Lou,
for the cartoons.*

REFLECTIONS FROM THE BIG SKY COUNTRY

When I started this (4/9) it was +80° and sunny. All the snow was gone and the birds were singing. I even had the windows open and several of my plants out on the deck. This morning there was 8-9" of heavy, wet snow on the ground and the temperature was +45°. Ah, Spring!

I've received some renewals of memberships. Thank you. Dues are always accepted from those of you who are still procrastinating. A red check mark here _____ is a reminder that I'm still waiting.

One of the pleasures of my job is the letters and articles from you. I've included some in this newsletter. Jeanne T sent the card for the cover. It is Hallmark's latest of Marjolein Bastin's work. They have also put out a packet of stickers of her chickens. Received several cartoons from Mary Lou. Some are in this newsletter. A nice long letter from Richard Orr this morning about his adventures in Columbia over the holidays. Gary Gray has a book out. The review can be found elsewhere. I have a copy but I have to finish another book before I can start his. A note with Pegi Ficken and family membership dues. They are busy, busy, busy people. Boy are those kids growing. Susan will be going to Cornell University this Fall. A letter from Koralyn Kibbee in Manhattan, MT. She had gone to the Utah Show the first of March. She said the show was great and well organized. The people were so friendly and helpful. Unfortunately there were only seven AMERAUCANAS..she won BB with a wheaten. Koralyn sent me pictures of her with her trophy but it is too dark to reproduce. She also sent me photos of some of her birds..a pair of wheaten females and a photo of her Silver Smoke male and Camelot female. The Silver Smoke reminds me alot of the Silver Duckwing pattern. Thanks to all and please don't stop writing.

I'm still waiting for nominations for the offices to be filled in the election this fall.

We have had several inquiries about our club and our breed this past month or so. Some wanting to know where they could get eggs, chicks or stock. Mike Gilbert has suggested we do a Breeders Directory. What do you think..drop me a line.

Had a complaint about a judge at a show - seems this judge wouldn't even go look at the Ameraucanas because "they aren't a true breed." This from a supposedly very knowledgeable well like judge. He just came down to the bottom of the ladder in my book. I guess no one ever taught him the art of being subtle with exhibitors.

Oh, before I forget it...Richard Orr said "I have started reading back issues of the club newsletters, but stopped due to travel and health. Am ready now to start again and compile a "history" but need more as to who did what (outside the club) to create the "AMERAUCANA". Any of you want to respond get in touch with Richard. If you need his address or phone # let me know.

And with that I had better put this newsletter to bed. Before I do ...fishing wise...Jerry got his boat and trailer so we'll be going fishing more, I suppose. So far this year we have only gone fishing seven times and haven't come back empty handed yet. We have so many people depending on us to keep them supplied with fish. Wonder what they would do if we didn't fish so much. This year we are going to try to learn how to fish for walleye.

Until next time.....

Jeannette Frank
APA Licensed Judge
Large Fowl & Bantams

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