

Ameraucana^{BH}



Breeders
Club

SPRING "89"

VOL. XI #1

Today was a fine day, sunshine and everything, no freezing rain, no sub-temps, no wind, just a fine day. This winter is turning out to be as crazy as last summer. We have had the whole gambit and from what I've heard on the radio, read in the paper and in letters from you, you've all had the same. Just hearing on the news Kentucky had 7" of rain. Oh, boy! What next? 50° one day; -15° the next. I'm amazed the animals seem to be okay. Talked with JF..her "kids" have managed thus far and they have had -50°/-60° wind chill. I can't even imagine that.

We had a fairly good Breeders Directory response. I have it all written out. JF & I decided rather than combine it with this newsletter to print it separately. This newsletter is fairly lengthy, thanks to all you contributors. I know many of you are anxious as to who is near you who can help with eggs, chicks, etc. This way you don't have to destroy the newsletter to keep your directory. And please remember..to keep us updated on your status. I feel this year we may come up with more birds than members.

We had a flurry of dues activity after the last newsletter and THANK YOU to all of you who kicked in with an extra \$5.00. I hope I wrote to all of you who did that. I've been trying to stay ahead or at least keep in step. There is quite a number of you, however, who haven't paid your 1989 dues. My list is 87 or so total members. Hate to harp on money but we need those dues. JF & I cut corners everywhere we can. JF has found an inexpensive place to get the bulletin printed and it comes out looking nice but we still need those dues.

The Bay City show was as fun as always. Saw John Blehm - I beat him finally. Took me three years. Don't get me wrong. I don't go to shows wanting to beat someone. We just have a friendly rivalry. I go to shows hoping Ameraucanas get proper recognition. Jeff Halbach was the judge this time. He'd never judged Ameraucanas at any show I've been to. He, I think, is really up on Ameraucanas - large and bantam. I was impressed with him for several reasons. He knew about Ameraucanas, he didn't talk down Ameraucanas. He was very nice when I introduced myself to him and asked him to "look over the birds". We all have a tendency to be intimidated by the judges, I think. They are just humans. I have learned this over the years. I can only emphasize..don't be afraid to approach the judge. Take a friend with you if you feel afraid. How can we learn if we don't ask questions? Anyway, I got hold of Jeff and he was totally in love with my pullet "Mini". [I call her that because she is so small.] I asked him about her being so small..he said the bantams can't be too small. It's better than being too big. Mini caught his eye as she did many people because she is perfect in every way..including the black in the tail and wings. Jeff said if I got ten birds like her I'd be in business. Hopefully, she will lay a bunch of eggs and I can get back in business.

Jeff did say he thought we were doing a great job as a club, but we must get our birds to the shows. I couldn't agree more. I know many of you have at best just a few birds, many of you not even one, but hopefully this spring we can all get on track. Don't be afraid to go to those shows in your area. Of course, if a bird obviously has a disqualification don't enter it, i.e. single comb, no beard, wrong leg color. If you're kind of iffy, go for it. You will learn and have a better idea of how you are coming along. What you have in your minds eye may not be quite right or you may be trying to be too perfect, whatever..get those birds to the shows and don't be afraid to talk to the judge. I listen to a radio call in talk show..one of the hosts always says "There are no dumb questions", sometimes dumb answers, but your question is not dumb! A talk with the judge is especially important when a bird you thought was A+ and it didn't even place. Say to yourself.. "Wait a minute! Maybe I'm viewing this all wrong! Better ask the guy and find out what I missed or am missing." Always be cordial and non-threatening but mainly curious when approaching the judge. They respond better to that kind of attitude.

The big show, of course, is THE HIGHLAND, IL SHOW, Nov. 4&5. Our ABC National Show. It'll be a long drive in my Jeep but I know well worth it. We've been making plans and tossing around ideas of what all will go on plus the anticipation of seeing everyone. I can hardly wait. We do hope that many of you will attend and we are hoping to see 100 Ameraucanas plus! There is a fair nucleus of members who live fairly close to that area and I am looking forward to meeting many of you. That thought will help me



through a long, busy summer. Since I do have the Jeep I will be able to bring any spares (birds) I may be lucky enough to raise over the summer. Hopefully "THE THING" has moved on to newer things and it won't bother me this summer.

The cover for this newsletter was drawn by my good friend, Pat, and I love it. I had no idea what she was going to do and she wouldn't let me see it until today. She was thinking Spring hence the hen and chicks. Be sure to check out the faces on some of the kids. I am all fired up to get going with my new crop - hey, Spring get here. THANK YOU, PAT. For the cover. You will get a chance to meet Pat at Highland. Pat's got the show bug. She is going to show birds at Highland. This will be her first time. If you haven't shown before let '89 be your first time as well.

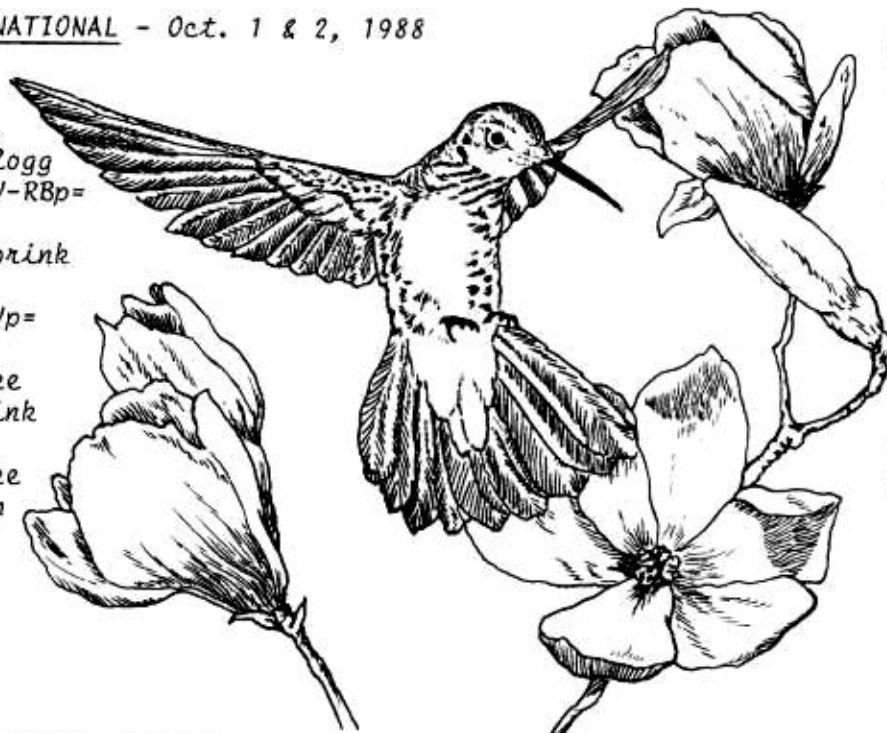
Happy hatching. Hope to see you all in November. Jeanne Trent

WHITE RIVER POULTRY CLUB = Sept. 3 & 4, 1988, Spencer, IN Ameraucana Large Fowl - Gary VanAtta
 1BV - BBK; 1RV - RBP
 =====

WISCONSIN INTERNATIONAL - Oct. 1 & 2, 1988

Bantam AM:

- White: 1c, 1h, 4p,
 1BVk=Kellogg
 2h, 2k, 1BV-RBp=
 Buske
 2-3p=Fosbrink
- Black: 3p=Buske
 1BV-B-2RVp=
 Fosbrink
- Blue: 1BVp=Buske
- Golden: 1p=Fosbrink
- Silver: 1c, 1BVh,
 1RVh=Buske
- Wheaten: 1p=Boehm



MISSOURI STATE FAIR
 August 18-22, 1988
 Sedalia, MO

- Bantam Ameraucana:
 Wheaten - 1c, 1k, 1h=
 Clark
 1-2k=Anders

=====

ABILENE POULTRY ASSO.

- Ameraucana:
- Bantam - Wheaten:
 2k, RB, RV,
 1kBB, BV=
 Larry Carey

=====

YORK COUNTY FANCIERS ASSOCIATION - Large Fowl Ameraucana = Moody
 Bantam Ameraucana = Stoneback
 =====

SOUTH KENTUCKY POULTRY CLUB - Glasgow, Kentucky November 26 & 27, 1988

Junior Exhibitor: Ameraucana - Black: BV shown by Matt Betz
 =====

FFF POULTRY CLUB OF TOPEKA, KS - Oct. 29 & 30, '88

- Ameraucanas: Large Fowl - 1 Buchanan
- Bantams - Blue Wheaten 1C BB
 123P RB=Ikenberry

104th NEBRASKA STATE POULTRY SHOW

- Ameraucanas: Large Fowl - Lemon Blue 1k=
 B. Conkling
- Bantams - 1k = B. Conkling
 wheaten 1p BV = B.
 Conkling

SIERRA SLOPE

In the beginning...Mike Gilbert agreed to serve as president if I would act as secretary until we could organize sufficient numbers for the nucleus of a national club to bring about acceptance of the Ameraucana bantam by both the ABA and eventually, the APA. Mike and I served in this capacity until we had our first election and then served two more terms, for a total of about seven years.

The situation in 1978, when we began this endeavor, was a mixed bag at best. Two former "Araucana" clubs had recently folded due to internal squabbles and one had been carrying on a running (and quite vocal) battle with the leadership in the APA in both newsletters and via Poultry Press. To make matters worse, the commercial hatcheries were selling virtually anything that laid an egg other than white (and frequently brown) as "Araucanas" or "Easter Egg Chickens" and touting them as the greatest thing since Col. Sanders. Moreover, the ads made claims that Araucana eggs were higher in protein, lower in cholesterol, and in every way superior to other eggs. None of this is true, of course, but added to a climate which would cause many a fancier to bristle just at the mention of the "Araucana", so there we were. And are. If you detect a trace of hostility or a reluctance to accept the Ameraucana a decade later, do not be surprised as it still exists to a degree in many places throughout the country.

Into this somewhat hostile environment we began to organize and a few of these hardy souls are with us still: Harry Cook of NJ; Jerry Segler of IL; Bernard Kellogg of WI; and D.L. Keeney, Jr. of TX, who is credited with coining the name "Ameraucana" when we voted on the name and various points of the proposed standard. There were fourteen ballots cast in the important decision which chose shank color, eye color, standard weights, color varieties and name, which is a contraction of American Araucana, a name we had been using loosely to differentiate between our breed and the Araucana, which had already been accepted by the ABA. Fortunately, we also had the support of members Bill Holland of ID and the late Frank Gary chairman of the ABA Standard Committee. Without the help of these two key people, we would have been up the well know creek and I seriously doubt that we would have overcome the considerable resistance we encountered for the next several years.

Resistance from within the newly formed club faded when a couple of mal-contented from the Pacific Northwest who wanted a multi-colored variety and did not get their way, dropped out. However, there was plenty of resistance to acceptance of the breed from without, and we were assailed via Poultry Press by several articles and letters accusing us of all manner of skull-duggery, the most persistent being that we were somehow trying to undermine the fancy and make a huge profit selling stock to unsuspecting newcomers to the hobby. One fellow in particular from North Carolina, claimed to have a "hotline" to the Lord which indicated that acceptance of the Ameraucana bantam was evil. Both Mike Gilbert and I countered with letters to Poultry Press and the situation became so nasty and volatile that the Editor refused to print any more on the subject until things cooled down.

In the meantime, Mike and I pressed forward and with the help of those early members and supporters tough enough to take the heat, we finally achieved acceptance by the American Bantam Association. However, we were only half way to our goal of acceptance and with increasing sentiment to help the large Ameraucana became accepted by the American Poultry Association as well, we had our work cut out for us. More on this next time.

Don Cable

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GATEWAY POULTRY ASSOCIATION - Martinsville, IN

Large Fowl Ameraucanas: Sirgar Ridge Farm = 1k, 1p,
BVk, RVp, BBk, RBp

Junior Bantam Ameraucanas: Self Blue - Matt Betz = 1k BV
Black - Matt Betz = 1k BV, BBp
White - Matt Betz = 1h, 1p,
BVp, RVh, RBp

The following is a copy of a research paper I wrote a few years ago for an English Class. - I submit it as a reminder that as we breed and raise chickens we can save time by building on the experiences of others.

HOW CAN I INCREASE THE VITALITY OF MY FLOCK?

by John W. Blehm

12-4-84

What do you get if you cross a white chicken with a dark one? An expert in genetics could give an educated guess as to the result, but for me it is a riddle.

As a hobby I've raised chickens for years and done some selective breeding to get the characteristics I wanted in my flock.

In 1982 I concentrated on a recognized breed, Ameraucana bantams, rather than my own "backyard variety". Bantam refers to miniature breeds, usually ornamental, which are not profitable for egg or meat production. The Ameraucanas lay blue shelled eggs and their plumage is of different color varieties including white and wheaten.

The nearest person raising Ameraucanas at that time was Mike Gilbert in Wisconsin. He sent me 31 eggs out of which only eight hatched. I culled (eliminated) four because of deformities such as misaligned beaks, crippled toes and deformed leg joints. From the survivors I ended up with three roosters and one hen.

Two breeding seasons have gone and I've got just six hens and four roosters. Figuring that the poor hatchability and deformities are due to too much inbreeding, this spring I mated one of my roosters with a white Leghorn bantam hen from my brother's flock. I thought that this would be a good way to introduce new blood into my flock. I figured that by using a white hen my colors should prevail. There are many differences between the breeds such as leg, eye and lobe colors and the combs. Leghorns have a single comb that stands up straight and narrow while Ameraucanas have a pea comb which is low to the skull. From this mating I got a rooster with a pea comb, blue slate legs and half of the right colors to be an Ameraucana. The coloring that's white should be black, but if black is a dominant trait this can easily be bred out. Questions come to mind such as is black a dominant color? Are some Leghorn traits going to show up in the future generations? After how many generations can I call my stock "pure bred"?

My search began by calling Mike Gilbert, president of the Ameraucana Bantam Club. I explained my condition and Mike agreed new blood is needed since my entire flock has been "line-bred" from the same hen. Mike disagreed with my method of crossing with a Leghorn because their yellow legs and white ear lobes are dominant and would be hard to breed out. His suggestion is to get an Ameraucana rooster from Jeanne Trent, a poultry fancier in Traverse City, to add vigor to my blood line. I haven't met Jeanne, but we have corresponded over the past year since Mike started her with Ameraucanas.

After talking to Mike I knew I didn't know enough about genetics. The book "A Guide To Better Hatching" backed up Mike's statements.

Inbreeding and crossbreeding show different results. Close inbreeding of chickens usually results in a decrease in hatchability... Inbreeding or linebreeding are the only breeding systems that will 'set' or establish a trait or characteristic... hatchability is often increased with strain-crossing. If the hatchability of a strain is low, crossing in another strain may increase hatchability. (4:9)

In THE AMERAUCANA BANTAM HANDBOOK Mike Gilbert has a few articles published on genetics. They are written in layman terms, although I had to look up the word "progeny" which means offspring.

Each bantam offspring inherits one genetic blueprint from each parent for any given characteristic... A bird which is genetically pure for beard and muffs has inherited the trait from both it's parents, not just one... A bird may carry the genetic factors for both red eyes and brown eyes, (one from each parent), but if red is dominant, the bird will have red eyes. The brown will not manifest itself in progeny which are pure (homozygous), for brown eyes. i.e., those which have inherited brown eyes from both parents, the red factor being absent in such offspring.

The next part, about leg color, I should have read before crossing my blue legged Ameraucanas with the yellow legged Leghorns: "Since yellow epidermis must be pure to manifest itself, try never to breed from yellow or willow-shanked breeders. To do so is asking for trouble." (1:22, 24-25)

I'm writing this from the sunny south while waiting for my flight to leave Phoenix for home. The Super National was a nice show. Around 2700 birds and 247 exhibitors. I arrived on Thursday morning, as did Bingham Shaffer (Louisiana), fellow club member. We watched and helped the Arizona Club set up. They had the show all arranged, single decked; the fire department came by to inspect. They insisted on aisles 10' wide which meant they had to do it all over - double decked. Birds started arriving Friday A.M. and were still coming in at 8:30 A.M. Saturday.

As you all probably know, the weather in most parts of the country has been horrible. Some of the birds came in with frozen and/or frost-bit combs & wattles. We heard a few horror stories from several of the travelers. But, for the most part the birds and their keepers came thru in pretty good shape. Duane & Phyllis Urch from MN were there and Jason Springer from Charles City, IA had the only Ameraucana bantam entry, a wheaten cock. I had entered two, a cockerel and a pullet, but they both came down with a cold due to the weather change, so I left them home as well as the three Dominique bantams that were entered. There was one Ameraucana large fowl there - a real nice hen with good blue legs. She was by a junior exhibitor and as far as I know, not a club member.

We are gearing up for the Southeast Kansas Show at Girard the 25th of March. We'll have an area meet there. The last I heard Don Davis of OK and Cliff Ikenberry of KS both plan to show, as do I. Cliff has donated a trophy. **THANKS, CLIFF!** We are finalizing the plans for The Christian County Poultry Association Show at Nixa, MO the 13th of May. We'll have an area meet and either cash or a trophy. The Heart of America Show at Ottawa, KS has the Kansas State Ameraucana Meet on May 6,7,8. Hope I can make it to that one, too.

For a catalog for the SE KS Show write: Don Meeks - 303 N. Cayuga, Frontenac, KS 66762. For a CCPA catalog write: Larry Merritt - Rt 5 Box 2550, Nixa, MO 65714. And for a Heart of America catalog write: Benny Dean - 1139 Maple St., Eudora, KS 66025.

It was good to see Don Cable at Phoenix even if he was only able to stay briefly. Hope you are feeling better, Don. Get that old sock started for Highland this fall. We need you there!

Hope you all are hatching some good ones. Let's just "set them on their ear" at Highland this fall - wouldn't an entry of 100 or more (even better) look good? And we can do it, too! I'm thinking positive. I have three Ameraucana eggs in the incubator. Jim is saving eggs for me while I'm gone. Now, I'll have a long serious talk with my "girls" to get the old egg production factory rolling.

Think Highland '89 and get those future Champions hatching.

Mary Lou Phelps
Central District Director
February 13, 1989

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**From Ravel to the roaster**

JERUSALEM — Research at Hebrew University shows chickens exposed from birth to classical music get plumper faster than "culturally deprived" birds.

The university said Monday that experiments by Dr. Gadi Gvoryahu show that chicks played music and given visual stimulants gain weight 2 percent more effectively than those raised by conventional methods.

"The chickens prefer calming music, without dramatic crescendos ... turkeys thus treated weighed in at 4 percent better than culturally deprived turkeys," he said.

Compiled from News wire services.







NEWS FROM THE OHIO VALLEY

So far we couldn't ask for a milder winter, just light dusting of snow. Temperatures in the 35° - 45°...broke some records at 62 - 65°. Too much rain, real muddy on the farm, soft hauling cow and horse manure out on the fields.

Want to congratulate our new Central District Director, Mary Lou Phelps. You need a director to represent the Club at the distant shows.

I could only make the Ohio shows but they were good ones. Lucasville down on the Ohio River, Great Lakes show south of Toledo, Northern Ohio Poultry Breeders Show in April at Findley, OH and the great Ohio National in Columbus. Also we have a big June show at Greenville OH, put on by the Dayton Poultry Breeders.

I think that the Club Editors did a real good job on the Fall-Christmas issue of the newsletter. The art work was terrific.

When I first started showing "tailed" Araucanas at Columbus and organized the Araucana Booster Club, Linda and Clu Agler told me they didn't want the tailed Araucanas in their show because they looked like a mixed chicken and people entered them as Araucana, or as bearded Araucana, tufted Araucana, etc. So in 1983 we got the colors standard and the one name = Ameraucana.

I started holding meets at the Columbus show several years before we consolidated with the Ameraucana Club. I furnished the cash awards and bought rosettes for every first place and entered 20-30 Large Fowl.

This went on every year and I would donate \$20.00 to \$65.00 every year. So what happened this year. I just got tired of footing the bill and was hoping some good member or members would come forth with a special pledge. So those who were unhappy that there wasn't a Special Meet just come forth with the special pledges.

I can assure you that in 1989 the Ohio National will have a trophy for Champion Ameraucana Bantams.

I had a bad year raising Ameraucanas from "vermin". Starting on Aug. 10th I thought weasels killed 48 Ameraucanas in one room in my modern six room chicken house. One week later I opened the door into my guinea house and found 40 dead 1/2 grown guineas. Then they got into my Pheasant house and killed 48 nice pheasants. The chicken house is 700' from the farm house and you couldn't hear attack noises. Anyhow, on Nov. 28 - walking back the lane in the dark to go deer hunting we heard noises in the guinea house and turned on the lights and saw 15 dead birds and two very surprised mink. Having our guns we shot one male mink but the female got out the hole and into the darkness.

We have been on the farm for 26 years and raised poultry and last fall is the first time we had mink. Usually it is stray dogs or foxes or coyotes.

Anyhow, we are getting some eggs and chicks from friends to start over. We ran sheet metal 30" high around the bottom of the chicken house.

On the last week of October I mowed down eight acres of 4th cutting alfalfa in 68° with plenty of sun. Baled it on November 2nd in 39°. How's that for a record. 352 bales.

Trapped 40 muskrats on our pond and four mink.

Tom Lippincott

AMERICAN BANTAM ASSOCIATION

ELEANOR VINHAGE  
Secretary



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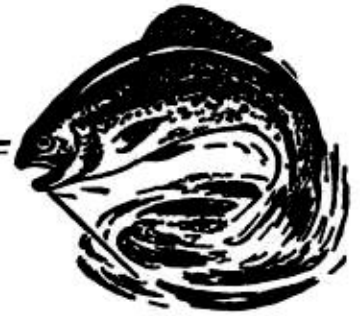
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WE ACCEPT YOUR ARTICLES & PHOTOS

# Bill Schiess



WINTER ADDRESS:  
777 North 3441 West  
Rexburg, Idaho 83440  
Phone (208) 356-7275

SUMMER ADDRESS:  
HC 66 Box 140  
Island Park, Idaho 83429  
Phone (208) 558-7201  
or 558-7755

January 14, 1989

Jeanne,

Here is the completed form. As of right now I do not have any Ameraucanas but would like to find of quality Wheatens to raise. Do you or will you have any eggs for sale this spring? I would like to obtain some for showing. Last fall I saw some in Utah and fell in love with their color and style. I am currently raising Old English Games and am developing a barred feathered chicken to use for tying flies. I have been doing this by crossing Dominiques and Barred Rocks with Phoenix. We about have the style of feather that we desire.

I manage a fishing lodge during the summer called the Wild Rose Ranch on the shore of Henrys Lake, that is why I have the two addresses on my stationary. I am also a fishing guide and outdoor writer during the year. We are located just 18 miles from Yellowstone Park so we are in the center of the greatest fly fishing area of the world.

I heard about the Club from the Hen House Herald. I felt by joining the Club that I could find someone that I could get some Wheaten Ameraucanas from. In fact I have been looking for some for the past four months. If you could let me know as soon as possible if you or any one you know has eggs for sale from some quality birds, I would appreciate it very much. I would also like to order an ABC Club patch and have enclosed a check for it.

Thank you,

*Bill Schiess*

Bill Schiess  
777 North 3441 West  
Rexburg, Idaho  
83440



REFLECTIONS  
FROM THE BIG SKY  
COUNTRY -

Before I get carried away with my soapbox I want to express my heartfelt "THANKS" to the ones that worked so hard to establish this great club. With this issue we can honestly say we are TEN YEARS OLD!! The first newsletter was mailed about mid-March, 1979. I hope I am still around when this club celebrates it's 20th.

By now some of you probably have your incubators plugged in with hopes of hatching that "GRAND CHAMPION" for the Ameraucana Breeders Club National Show at Highland, IL in November, 1989.

We will have more on the National in the next two issues. Right now we just want to get you thinking positive on it.

And for those interested - No, I didn't make it to Phoenix.

We keep hoping our winter is over but by now most of you have felt the "DEEP FREEZE" that swept down from Alaska in early February. We did have some wicked wind chill factors but this really has been more like the old fashioned winters I remember in Montana. It has been a long time since we have had a normal winter so we forget what to expect.

I have had numerous letters from members - mostly to express their thoughts on the club and the newsletters. Great. Always glad to hear from you. As you will note there are articles by other members in this issue with a promise from others for future issues. Please don't forget..that is what makes these newsletters worth reading...your articles.

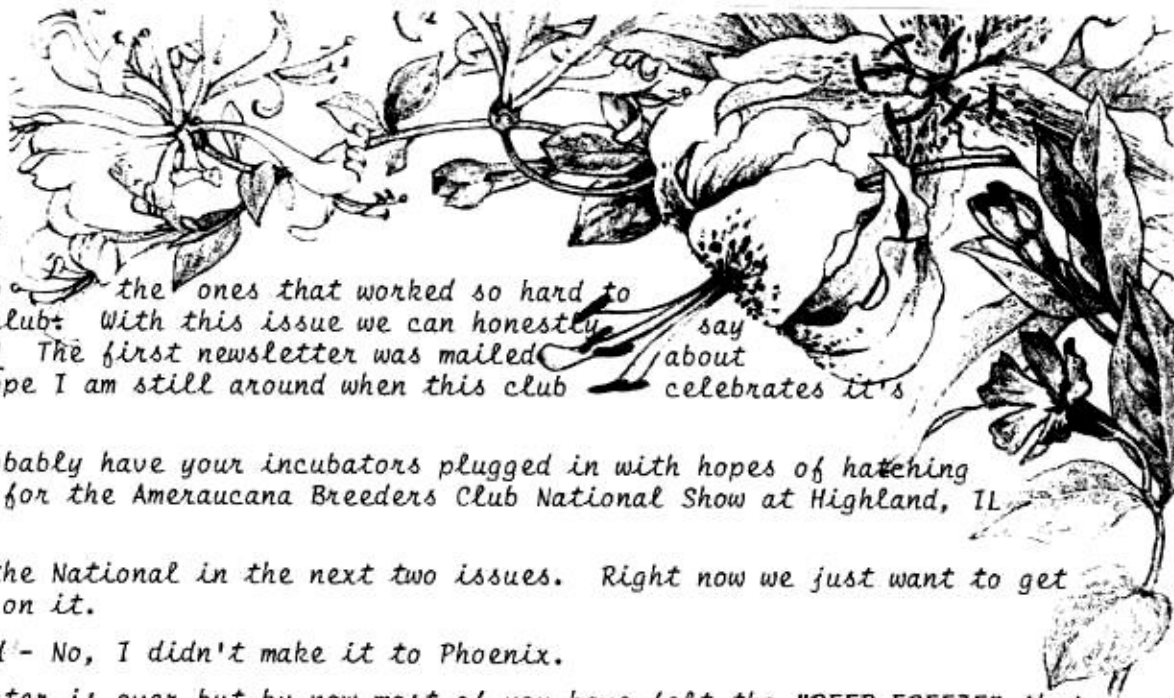
Too many people think that if a hen lays an egg other than white or brown it must be Ameraucana and they can show her. If the bird has the merest suggestion of a muff..show it. And really.. how many judges actually know what the eye color or leg color should be for an Ameraucana? Let me advise all of you - the judges do their homework. May I relate a recent episode to you? I'm going to anyway so read on: Since I'm suppose to be the local expert [hate that term] on Ameraucanas I was asked by some friends to look at some young birds a "professional" breeder had sent to them "as real show birds". Well, my friends weren't too sure I knew an Ameraucana from a Cochin when I told them the birds were barnies (otherwise known as mutts). They entered them in a show in a different area with a judge that "had no idea what an Ameraucana was". And were they embarassed when their so called Ameraucanas were disqualified. When they later asked the judge why they had been disqualified the judge told them "Those birds are only good for the stew pot."

One of my pet peeves are hatcheries/breeders that advertise "Easter Egg" chickens. I've never seen one..Have you?

On another subject..one of the articles reminds me of an incident that happened here at the State Fair. An out of state exhibitor knew he had the champion bantam Orpington because he told all of us how many shows these birds had won before he brought them to show here. Anyway three of his six so called champion Orpingtons were disqualified because of stubs. The fellow grabbed one of the disqualified birds and started checking the comb. He couldn't find "any stubs..the judge must be blind". Finally, he had one of the juniors ask the judge what a stub was. The stubs were not huge nor were there lots of them. That is not the point. The point is..as an exhibitor it is your duty to know these things and to know your bird. If you read the standard [APA or ABA] it states under "general disqualifications: On clean-legged breeds - presence of, or unmistakable evidence of any down, stub, feather or part of a feather from shank below hock joint, or foot or toe."

On that point I had better close. Just be sure you know your bird and the standard for that bird.

One more item..there were four winners of the hidden message in the last newsletter... Laurence & Mary Bea Smith in Beaumont, TX; Carl Fosbrink and Matt Betz of Seymour, IN. Thank you to all who tried and Congratulations to the winners. Jeannette Frank, President



PANHANDLE SOUTH PLAINS FAIR - Sept. 24-26, '88  
Lubbock, TX

Bantam Ameraucana: Best of Breed -

Wheaten h = Larry Carey

\*\*\*\*\*  
1988 KANSAS STATE FAIR

Hutchinson, Kansas

Ameraucana Large Fowl: 1 h = Reiber

\*\*\*\*\*  
Any other shows will be reported in the next newsletter. Please, send the show results to either Jeanne T or me so we can preserve our eyes and give you a better newsletter.



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Steve Tressler is looking for hatching eggs of Ameraucana. He said he really isn't fussy about variety at this point..purebred and accepted, please.

Let him know what you have, etc.

Steve Tressler

1646 Stony Hill Road

Hinckley, Ohio 44233

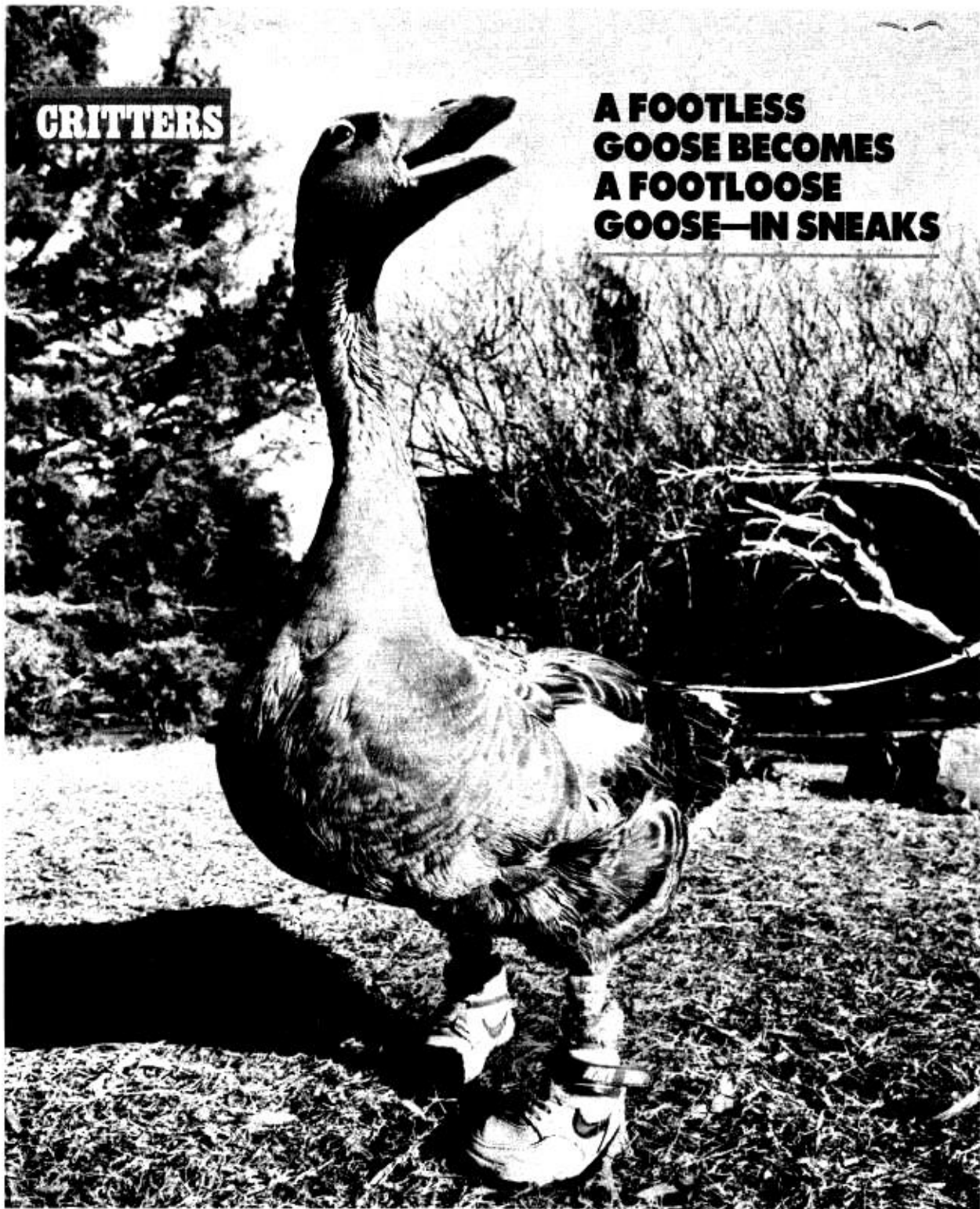
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Because I think friendship in all ways is one of the most precious things we have...

"The friends greet you. Greet the friends, every one of them. 3 Jn.15

**CRITTERS**

**A FOOTLESS  
GOOSE BECOMES  
A FOOTLOOSE  
GOOSE—IN SNEAKS**



**T**ake a gander at Andy the footless goose. That's what Gene Fleming did last fall when he stopped in to visit his sister-in-law Donna Mae Schuck's farm in Harvard, Nebr., and came across a sad sight. There was Andy, a 2-year-old gray goose born without feet, hobbling around Schuck's yard on his stumps. Fleming was moved by the plight of the unlucky but plucky fowl. "Because I'm a Shriner," he says, referring to the charitable organization whose mission is to aid crippled

children, "my natural instinct, once I saw the goose, was to help him."

So Fleming gave his sister-in-law a more valuable pair of geese in exchange for Andy and Andy's lifetime mate, Polly. Back on his own 91-acre spread in nearby Hastings, the 66-year-old retired businessman and farmer fitted Andy with a pair of size 0 baby shoes. When the \$13 white leather shoes lasted only a month, Fleming made the switch to sneakers. As for the steps he took to teach the 40-lb.

bird a new way to walk, Fleming sounds like any proud papa. "I held Andy upright for three hours before he figured out what to do with those shoes," says Fleming. "But when he got the hang of them, he just took off. Now he struts around like a peacock."

Loose as a you-know-what, Andy also runs, swims, flies and shows affection for his goose Samaritan. "He knows what I did," says the crafty cobbler, "and I think he's grateful. He's a one-man goose." ■