

Ameraucana Newsletter

Ameraucana Alliance ~ AmeraucanaAlliance.org

Spring 2015 ~ Volume 1, Issue 1



Since The Beginning

Welcome Members...

Stan Alder, SC
Shelly Armstrong, SC
Denise Baker, IL
Russell Blair, MI
John W Blehm, MI
James Brantley, GA
Rachel Carlberg, NC
Vidal Chavez, CA
Beth Curran, NC
and Walker
Susan Davis, VA
Dick Dickerson, KY
James Fegan, MI
Linda Ferguson, CA
Jeannette Frank, MT
Lee Gerry, SK
Michael Gilbert, WI
Teresa Greer, KS
Myrna Hall, IN
Rusty Hart, MI
Lee M Hethcox, VA
and Esther Rose
Carrie Hill, KS
and Tyler, Brianna & Alice
Debra Hogan, CA
Connor Hogan, CO
Loree Iaconangelo, GA
Keesha Ivins, IN
Christina King, NH
Christine Kitsch, PA
and Will
Harold E Knapp, NY
Kristine Malcolm, CO
and Walter & Gus

William Morrow, MD
Michael Muenks, MO
and Eva & Lucy
Stacy Murphy, FL
Gina Neta, WI
Michelle Ogden, NC
Ken Olsen, KS
Amy Pace, PA
and Nina
Susan E Paolini, PA
Lyne Peterson, CA
Jim Phillips, NC
Jensen Pierson, OH
Robert Rennolet, SD
Heather Rhoad, PA
Bob Roof, WY
Michele Schellie, MI
Leann Schmock, WI
Duane Schroeder, IN
Jerry Segler, IL
Harold Shaffer, PA
Jeffrey Sonsalla, WI
and Jacob & Natalie
Heather Summers, OK
and Trenton & Maxim
Neil Townsend, PA
Donna Townsend, PA
Jeanne Trent, MI
Royce E Van Blaricome, WA
Clarence Vance, WV
Patricia Vidalin, BC
Casar Villegas, AZ
Janie Vogt, MT
J David Waldrop, MS
Fred Zirnstein, AR

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"Tap shells gently as you are filling to release air and allow chocolate to settle. Insert sticks and position in egg carton until chocolate hardens."
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"A female pea comb with three serrated rows and the higher-in-the-center feature will probably not be present on a good female breeder, but it does look good for exhibition."
[read more on page 7](#)

Special Thanks to those that donated between \$5 and \$325 each to the club...

Neil & Donna Townsend
Lyne Peterson
Ken Olsen
Harold Knapp

Christina King
Lee M Hethcox
Mike Gilbert

Vidal Chavez
Russ Blair
Denise Baker

Michael J. Muenks ~ President



Spring greetings to everyone! Spring is known as a time of change and rebirth. I appear to be surrounded by it! As many of you may know, several years ago my father was in a terrible car wreck that resulted in many care responsibilities that ended up in me taking a step away from poultry and Ameraucana for the last two years. Sadly, my mother passed away unexpectedly in January. Suddenly, care for my father changed and things that I had not considered as possibilities were now possible. At the same time I was approached by several Ameraucana breeders to join and potentially serve as a leader in a new club for the Ameraucana breed. While my time and energy has been limited the

last few months as we are getting my father situated, I am proud to be part of the launch of this club and I look forward to a long and successful life for this club.

I want to express my deep gratitude to all that have been part of the launch of this club. An amazing group of Ameraucana breeders has come together to form this group of breeders focused on the Ameraucana breed. The website and forum are up and running. We have 50+ members and meets scheduled. An amazing amount of work has been done in three months . . . the experience of the individuals making up the Ameraucana Alliance is apparent.

I have remnant's of my old flock of Ameraucana and look forward to building this year. I will be doing a lot of hatching and buying this year. I look forward to getting back out to shows and doing a bit of showing. I have a few black, splash, and silver bantams along with a blue wheaten and black large fowl.

I have a few bantam chicks already. Unfortunately, they are mixed color and mostly wild marked chicks. I'm amazed at the nice egg shell colors these mixed variety birds have managed to produce. I will probably keep a few around with nice egg color in the goat barn for color and fun.

Best wishes for your hatching season!

John W Blehm ~ Secretary/Treasurer

Back in 1964 Lefty Frizzell was singing "I was born in Saginaw, Michigan". Well the song was a huge hit, but he wasn't born there...I was 10 years earlier. I'm still in Saginaw County...the last house on a dead end gravel road. Kathy and I will be married 42 years in May and we have three adult children. My folks had chickens when I lived home and I got some a few years after being married, but it wasn't until I was 28 that I found out about Standard bred poultry, exhibiting, clubs and all that related stuff. Since then I've bred all 16 recognized varieties of Ameraucana, created several of those varieties and co-created a few. Bantam buffs are still my favorite.



Mike Gilbert said "The old ABC has now become the Ameraucana Alliance". Short and sweet...that about sums it up for me too. With hind sight it is clear we did the right thing by walking away and just picking up where we left off as a chicken club about chickens. The Ameraucana Alliance has a great start with some members that are also in the ABC, some that resigned and transferred their membership to the new club and some others are joining us without prior Ameraucana club membership...Welcome Everyone!

Bantam buff, silver and lavender chicks. Photos by John Blehm



Beth Curran ~ Director of Club Meets

Hi, all! So much has happened in the last few weeks, I don't know where to start. When we began this club, I was hoping to maintain the friendships I'd made, keep in touch with each other and continue to have a dialogue about the birds, but I never imagined that a few short weeks later we would be at 60 members and have a national meet and five club meets scheduled with several fall meets pending. (If you do not see your favorite show listed as a meet, don't hesitate to call or e-mail me and request it. Usually all I will need is the name and contact information for the host club and the date/time/place of the show, requested in time to have the meet published in the bulletin preceding the entry deadline of the meet. But the earlier the better, for greater exposure.)



For those who don't know me, I guess I should take a minute to introduce myself. My name is Beth Curran, and I am the Director of Meets. I grew up in Gerrardstown, WV and graduated from Martinsburg Senior High, like my mother and grandmother before me. My husband, then boyfriend, joined the Marine Corp in 1997 and was stationed at Camp Lejeune. We were married in 1998 and settled on 5 acres in Maysville, NC. Mike is now civil service on the base, and our son, Walker (Fuzz) was born here, so we have pretty much put down roots, but I still get homesick, especially in the fall & winter - I miss the mountains, autumn leaves, the smell of apples in the fall, sled riding, etc. Our season changes here on the coast are much more subtle.

I have been raising Ameraucanas for 6 years, so compared to many of you I've barely gotten my feet wet. But my interest goes back to a grade school incubator project in 1979 I believe, give or take a year. I was given eggs by a local farmer who said he had 2 breeds "ones that lay blue eggs and ones that lay green ones." He gave me the green ones. They never hatched and I have no idea what type of birds he actually had, but I never lost my fascination with the birds that laid those unique eggs and in 2009 I hatched my first LF black & wheaten/blue wheatens from eggs purchased from Wayne Meredith. LF buffs & lavenders followed the next year, and this past year we added bantams.

In addition to chickens, I am a life-long horsewoman with a nearly 24 yr old QH mare I've had from birth, along with Lamanca goats which are pets and family milkers, a dog & cat who are brothers from another mother, totally inseparable, and an Orange-winged Amazon parrot who is probably about as old as I am.

My son, Walker, is all about chickens and has been since we got the first layer birds when he was just a toddler. He particularly loves bantams. He has silver and white Ameraucana bantams, black MGBs, and butterscotch Call Ducks. He loves to show and competes in youth showmanship.

Unfortunately, we haven't been able to do any showing this spring, due to other things going on here at the farm, but we were able to make it to the Forsyth Fowl Fanciers show in Winston-Salem as spectators last month, hang out and exchange some birds with other Ameraucana folks.

The hatching season is winding down, I've had a decent number of chicks hatch, unlike the last two seasons, and with any luck I should have a limited number of started birds available for sale soon.

I hope to be able to sit down and talk face to face soon. It has been wonderful catching up on the forum with old friends and making new ones. The outpouring of support since we began this journey has meant more to all of us than you will ever know, I love you guys, and will do my very best to never let you down!



Chicks on the left are from this week's hatch of 16 LF brown reds.

To the right is a mature brown red Ameraucana cockerel.

Photos by Mike Gilbert



Jim Fegan ~ Director

Hi to all you fine Ameraucana breeders and friends.

I have been raising chickens for almost as long as I can remember which takes me back to 1942 when I hatched a few chicks with eggs under a Brown Leghorn pullet. My first Ameraucanas came from Silver Ameraucana eggs I received from Jerry Segler in the middle 1980's. At one time or another since then I have raised all the recognized LF varieties of Ameraucanas except Blue. For many years my focus was on the Silvers. The past five or six years I've been working on the Brown Reds with the initial birds coming from Mike Gilbert. I think I've been making limited progress with them. This year has been a disaster for my Brown Red hatching. Unless I get some late hatches there won't be more than a couple birds from this year. I've also raised Silver and Buff bantams but no longer work with them. Hope to see all of you at a show somewhere.



For many years I bred some really good Black Australorps, both LF and bantams along with some competitive Barred Plymouth Rock LF.

Currently I have way too many varieties. Besides the Ameraucanas, there are Barred Rocks LF and bantams, White Rock and Columbian Rock bantams, White and Partridge Chantecler LF, Partridge Chantecler bantams, Light Sussex LF, a couple of Dark Brahma LF, White Leghorn LF, Salmon Faverolles LF, Black Copper Marans LF, Welsummer LF, and two varieties of Barnevelders. Also a few Silver laced and Partridge Wyandotte bantams plus Buff Brahma bantams.

I can summarize the rest of my life's activity as a farm boy who became an engineer who became a husband who became a father who became a grandfather who became a local pastor in the United Methodist Church who has retired three times but remains active in all of the roles. I still consider myself to be a husband although I lost my mate of 56 years to cancer in April of 2014.

Chocolate Filled Eggs

You will need:

- 12 Eggs
- 2 lbs Candy Melts (Wilson or other brand) (give or take, depending on egg size)
- 12 Lollipop sticks
- Sharp pin or ice pick
- Elmers non-toxic glitter glue
- plastic gems (optional)

Carefully poke a hole in the small end of the egg. Enlarge hole to about 3/8 inch. Empty contents into a bowl (they can be cooked and fed back to the chickens), thoroughly rinse empty shell and bake in the oven for 20 minutes at 250 to sterilize. Allow to cool. Melt candy in a squeeze bottle and pipe into shells. Tap shells gently as you are filling to release air and allow chocolate to settle. Insert sticks and position in egg carton until chocolate hardens. Decorate with non-toxic Elmers glitter glue and gems.

Variation: Instead of a lollipop, you can coat the inside of the shell with chocolate to make a hollow egg. Once the chocolate is hardened it can be filled with jelly beans or other treats.

Submitted by Beth Curran



Mike Gilbert ~ Director of Recruitment & Promotion



Many if not most members of Ameraucana Alliance know me either in person or through correspondence and/or the internet. Here is a little info for those who don't. Don Cable and I founded the Ameraucana Bantam Club in 1978, and that club later became the Ameraucana Breeders Club when the American Poultry Association adopted our bantam Ameraucana Standard for the Ameraucana large fowl that exist today. Don has not been able to keep poultry of any kind in recent years due to a lung condition. The old ABC has now become the Ameraucana Alliance in my humble

opinion.

About the time large fowl Ameraucana were recognized, John Blehm came on the scene and has been a driving force for the breed ever since. He, along with Wayne Meredith, Paul Smith, Jerry Segler, and a few others are responsible for the steadily increasing popularity of the Ameraucana. I apologize to those whose names I failed to mention, as I'm quickly reaching the "mental pause" stage of life.

I'm a retired farmer and tax accountant/consultant living with Mary, my wife of nearly 50 years, on the home farm in northern La Crosse County, Wisconsin. We raised four children, three boys and a girl, none of whom has served any significant time in prison or jail. These days that seems to be something of an accomplishment in itself. (Actually our youngest boy is a Pastor). Over the years we have worked to create or co-create many strains of Ameraucana chickens, most of which were bantams. Contrary to popular opinion on some internet sites, no Araucana chickens were used to create Ameraucanas, just the landrace colored egg chickens we now call "easter egggers," most of the time crossed with other breeds to obtain true breeding, recognized color varieties. It has been an enjoyable and rewarding ride to come from somewhat despised (by some) beginnings to where we are today with the Ameraucana breed.

I currently serve as secretary-treasurer of Chantecler Fanciers International, having co-founded that organization in 2007 to promote another under-appreciated breed of poultry. I also co-founded our local Coulee Region Poultry Club, Inc. and serve as president and show secretary. Here is a link to our website: <http://couleeregionpoultryclub.webs.com/>. Our show is held the first Saturday of June each year, and all are welcome, even if just to visit. This year we are holding the very first, the Inaugural Meet of Ameraucana Alliance. We hope to see many of you there! Contact me for a show catalog or just go to our club's website for information. Thanks for reading.

Club Notes ~ John W Blehm

Deadline for the next Ameraucana Newsletter is June 15th. Please have reports, articles, photos, ads, etc. to me by then.

Most members are registered on the Ameraucana Forum. In the Members Only section a topic has been started to introduce each member. If you haven't replied to the topic about you yet, please do and include a short bio and photo. If you have any problems logging in please let me know. There is so much information there and you have to login to post and to view the Members Only subforum.

The Ameraucana Directory is available from the Home page of our AmeraucanaAlliance.org site and often updated. If you can't access the site and want a copy please request it from me. Members should proof their listings and update them as needed by sending an updated membership form or email to me.

Members may request a membership list from me. It can be emailed as a Microsoft Excel document. It is only for Ameraucana Alliance members and the data should be considered confidential.

The Exhibitor Points have not yet been brought up to date. They will be posted on the Point page of our website once they are.

Our constitution has not been finalized, but we have agreed to have each Director take on some of the duties normally done by the Secretary to lighten that load and spread the work out between all club officers.

Ameraucana Alliance Meet Policy

This policy, as set by the Board of Directors, outlines the procedures for requesting and placing Club meets. Ameraucana Exhibitor Points and club sponsored awards are only available to members exhibiting at Ameraucana Alliance sanctioned meets (including the National Meet).

The club has two tiers or levels where awards are awarded in Open Show competition.

1. With three or more exhibitors of Ameraucanas in a class (bantam or large fowl) a ribbon is earned for Best of Breed.
2. With five or more exhibitors of Ameraucanas in a class (bantam or large fowl) a ribbon is also earned for Reserve of Breed.

Nonmembers exhibiting Ameraucanas count as exhibitors, but are not eligible for club awards or points. If a member and his/her children enter a meet as individuals, they compete against each other for purposes of club awards and points.

Club meets may be placed by the Director in charge of meets when a member requests a meet for a specific show in time for the meet to be publicized in the quarterly Ameraucana Newsletter prior to the show's entry deadline. Members need to know well in advance when and where meets are placed for planning purposes. Meets should only be placed when it can be reasonably expected that three or more exhibitors will show Ameraucanas. The requesting member may furnish the names of at least the minimum number of expected exhibitors to the Director in charge of meets at the time he or she requests the meet in order to facilitate the Director's decision making process.

The Director may refuse to place a sanctioned meet, for up to one year, with a show club that doesn't submit a show report within sixty days of that show club's prior Ameraucana Alliance meet.

In the event a member is refused placement of a requested meet the Director shall provide an explanation to the member. If the member is not satisfied, he or she then may appeal the decision in writing to the President, who shall poll the Board of Directors. The Director will have an opportunity to defend his or her decision to the entire Board; an absolute majority vote of the Board of Directors shall be final in any such dispute.

In Open Show competition we offer...

- a Best of Breed Ribbon, with 3 or more bantam exhibitors.
- a Best of Breed Ribbon, with 3 or more large fowl exhibitors.
- a Reserve of Breed Ribbon with 5 or more bantam exhibitors.
- a Reserve of Breed Ribbon with 5 or more large fowl exhibitors.

In Junior competition, regardless of the number of exhibitors of Ameraucana in a class, we offer...

- a ribbon for Best of Breed bantam.
- a ribbon for Best of Breed large fowl.

The placing of the annual National meet and club sponsored awards is governed by Article IV of the constitution.

Rev. 3/18/2015

APA & ABA Yearbook ads

Both clubs put out Yearbooks and breed clubs, such as ours, often get 6 six members to take out individual black & white ads. With every 6 individual ads purchased the breed club receives a full page ad featuring the breed club across the top, above the member's ads. If 12 members buy ads we can have two pages, etc. The APA ads are \$18 each and the ABA ads are \$20 each. Please contact the Secretary if you are interested.

Treasurer's Report

Checking account at Credit Union Plus, Birch Run, MI	
Previous Total Balance as of 2/23/2015 =	\$0.00
Previous Checking Balance as of 2/23/2015 =	\$0.00
Income =	\$1,785.00
E x p e n s e s	=
	\$295.65
Checking Balance as of 4/13/2015 =	\$1,489.35
PayPal Balance as of 4/13/2015 =	\$282.84

AMERAUCANA BREEDING AND SELECTION – THE FINER POINTS

By Mike Gilbert November 2007; Revised November 2013

Some years ago Don Cable, one of the founders of the Ameraucana breed, wrote an informative and entertaining article for the ABC newsletter dealing with proper head traits for the Ameraucana bantam. He contended that all else being equal, most poultry judges will pick the chicken with the “prettiest face.” This writer agrees.

In selecting a proper Ameraucana head, the first thing that usually comes to mind is the comb. It needs to be relatively small, straight, not twisted, consist of three distinct rows of finely serrated points, and be higher in the center than at the front or back. The best female comb for exhibition is not the best one for breeding, as the latter must be extra small to throw a proper comb in her male offspring. A female pea comb with three serrated rows and the higher-in-the-center feature will probably not be present on a good female breeder, but it does look good for exhibition. Conversely, the hen with a good exhibition comb will often throw males with combs too large and unsightly for optimal results when shown. Some of this will depend on her mate of course. The second item is eye color. For all varieties of Ameraucana the eyes must be some shade of reddish bay. The exact shade of bay will vary depending on the variety and even the particular strain or line. For example the eyes of most buffs will be lighter in shade than the eyes of most brown reds. As responsible breeders we must avoid eyes that are pearl (very light in color) or dark brown to black. The writer has observed the pale yellowish-green eyes in wheaten bantams, and has seen very dark brown eyes in blacks, blues, white bantams, and buff large fowl. The gene responsible for dark brown eyes is recessive and is carried on the sex-link chromosome. Translated, that means a dark eyed hen or pullet will throw the unwanted gene to 100% of her male offspring. Consequently a male may have bay eyes but can be a carrier of the gene for dark brown eyes, thus will throw dark eyes to about half of his female offspring, or progeny. The writer once borrowed a beautiful brown red bantam cock that provided a perfect example of this; half his pullet progeny were dark eyed and were consequently culled. Never use a male breeder with dark eyes, as he will throw the unwanted gene to all his chicks.

Another head-point issue that may reoccur from time to time is white in the earlobes. Ameraucana lobes are to be solid red from a genetic standpoint. Positive enamel white is a disqualification, and any white at all is a serious defect. The genotype of female lobes may be quite difficult to determine as they are very often pale – approaching the color of the bird's skin – which is itself white. In fact, the Standard says: “Earlobes: Red, except female earlobes to be very pale, matching color of the skin.” It stands to reason then that selection efforts must center on the males, as they seldom if ever display the pale lobe syndrome. The recommended practice is to cull any male showing even a trace of white in the lobes, as experience has shown those “traces” can morph into positive enamel white within just a generation or two.

Moving to the bottom of the head, we consider what is proper in Ameraucana muffs and beards. The muffs on either side of the head together with the beard should appear in the shape of three fairly distinct lobes. Too small in the muffs may mean impurity for the Mb gene or it may mean the bird is too hard or short in feather. Too large means the bird may be too soft and long of feather. We are not breeding Faverolles, we are breeding Ameraucana. Moderation is the key – somewhere in the middle.

Now we move to the other end of the bird and consider tails. The correct Ameraucana has a medium length tail that is neither pinched together nor fan shaped from the side view. A tail that resembles that of an Orpington or Wyandotte is not an Ameraucana tail; those are too short. A tail resembling that of a Leghorn is not good either; it would be too long and too spread. A good Ameraucana female tail will rise at a 40 degree angle from the horizontal and be very moderately spread both horizontally and vertically – just as the A.P.A. color standard depicts. The tail coverts will flow well up the sides of the main tail but leave enough of it showing to allow for observation of color, condition, and placement of the seven or eight feathers on each side without the need for handling the hen or pullet. For Ameraucana cocks and cockerels the proper tail transitions smoothly and not abruptly from the saddle and is held at 45 degrees above the horizontal. Tail coverts are abundant, and the two main sickle feathers extend beyond the main tail. The latter point has sometimes been overlooked breeders and judges alike. Lesser sickles should ideally cover the main tail in cocks and finished cockerels.

(continued →)

Back to the front of the bird. Male hackles should be full and actually touch in front of the neck. Breasts should be well rounded and full in both genders, and the male Standard description calls for "prominence." The front of the birds should be somewhat higher than the back when standing in the natural position. The Standard says "slightly elevated at the shoulders." That means water would flow from the hackle toward the saddle or tail on a proper Ameraucana of either gender in its' natural stance.

With regard to general appearance the Ameraucana is quite unique in the configuration of its various parts. Not real deep and soft feathered like an Orpington or Wyandotte, but not so slightly built as a Leghorn or Hamburg. Not short of body like a Cornish, nor extra long of body like a Chantecler. Feathering is quite similar to that of a Plymouth Rock. Keep in mind the Ameraucana is a breed of moderation and not one of extremes. If the breeder feels a need to aim for something extreme he or she can always try for the bluest egg shell color possible without even a trace of green. In pretty much everything else the successful breeder will strive for balance by taking a "middle of the road" approach in order to stay on the right path of producing outstanding Ameraucana.

Post Script: The current American Poultry Association contains a typographical error and will be corrected in future editions. The female tail is to be held at 40 degrees above horizontal, not 45 degrees as the more current versions of the Standard of Perfection incorrectly states.

Ameraucana National Meet ~ 2015

The Board of Directors has placed our 2015 National Meet at the Fowl Fest, October 10-11, in Birch Run, Michigan. This is just off I-75 and less than two hours from the Ohio border. Check out the "Our First National Meet" topic on the Ameraucana Forum for details, including accommodations or contact the club Secretary.

Upcoming Ameraucana Meets - Go to AmeraucanaAlliance.org for updates

May 2, 2015

Montana Meet, requested by Royce Van Blaricome
Rocky Mountain Poultry Association, Missoula MT
Contact: Laura Denitto (406)273-4645
MyFunnyFarm4@msn.com

June 6, 2015

Wisconsin Meet, requested by Mike Gilbert
The Coulee Region Poultry Club, Galesville WI
Contact: Mike Gilbert chantecler7@gmail.com
(608)857-3386

June 13, 2015

Illinois Meet, requested by Denise Baker
Central IL Poultry Club, Spring Show, Bloomington IL
Contact: Dianne Weer (309)303-7409 (989)529-7030

July 10-26, 2015

California Meet, requested by Debbie Hogan
California State Fair, Fur & Feathers, Sacramento CA
Contact: ? (916)263-3247 info@CalExpo.com

September 8-10, 2015

California Meet, requested by Debbie Hogan
The National Heirloom Exposition, Santa Rosa CA
Contact: Elyn Mavalwalla (530)743-7939
info@TheHeirloomExpo.com

October 10-11, 2015

National Meet, placed by the Board of Directors
Fowl Fest, Birch Run Michigan
Contact: Matt Boensch mjwaterfowl@yahoo.com
(989)529-7030

Ameraucana Alliance Board of Directors

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Secretary/Treasurer, John Blehm

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