

AMERAUCANA BANTAM BULLETIN

Ameraucana Bantam Club - 6442 Chestnut Ave., Orangevale, CA 95662

Winter, 1981

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Election Results

Election Commissioner Bernard Kellogg reports the following results of our recent election of officers for 1982-83:

President: Mike Gilbert, Holmen, Wisconsin
Secretary-Treasurer: Don Cable, Orangevale, California
Eastern District Director: Ken Carpenter, Ossining, New York
Central District Director: Jerry Segler, Sparland, Illinois
Southern District Director: John Fugate, Athens, Tennessee
Western District Director: Marie Rayher, Tracy, California

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National Meet

Our National Meet will be hosted by the Pacific Poultry Breeders Ass'n. at their annual winter show, the California National, at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa on the weekend of January 30-31. Our Club will be offering four of our beautiful new rosettes for Champion Ameraucana bantam, Reserve Champion, Champion Display and Reserve Display. In addition, we will offer cash awards- \$130.00 so far- which will be spread out for all members to compete for. If you would like to make a donation, contact your secretary.

The California National has turned into the top winter show on the West Coast and Pacific Poultry Breeders president Jim Salee and show superintendent Dick Carrington will see to it that our National Meet is well staged. Western District Director Marie Rayher and your secretary will be on hand at the show and will look forward to your participation and to meeting and visiting with each of you personally. Western District members, come on out and support your National Meet!

For a premium list, contact Bonnie Salee, 19333 Lovall Valley Court, Sonoma, CA 95476. Entries close January 18.

It's that time again! Membership renewals are due January 1. Please send your \$5. annual dues to the address at the top of the page. Many thanks!

Developing Head Points

By Don Cable

In breeding for head points, the key is in creating balance among the various components. An oversized, beefy comb, skimpy beard and muffs, or long, narrow head and beak can, in and of themselves, upset the balance between standard points and deny the overall type and effect sought in distinguishing true breed character.

Basic to achieving desirable head points is of course, a head whose dimensions meet those described in the standard. It is a head of sufficient width and depth to support a fully developed beard and muffs and with adequate frontal so as not to appear overwhelmed by them. No combination of head points however, can overcome a poorly developed, long, narrow structure approaching what is referred to as crow head.

Beak length can be critical in its effect upon head point balance. A short, stout beak enhances all but extremely sparse beard development while a long, narrow beak must have a very full beard to compensate for its excessive length, particularly if the bird lacks in frontal. A shorter faced bird has a natural advantage in any bantam requiring beard and muffs and we would be wise to select for this desirable trait when making up our proposed matings.

A relatively wide base is required for proper development of the pea comb, especially in males. We have all seen tall, narrow pea combs having a tendency to lop to one side. Fortunately, these are no longer tolerated and have no place in contemporary breeding pens. The proper type of pea comb is both described and illustrated in Bantam Standard and there can be no mistake regarding what is desired. It has been my experience that the small pea comb required on males can be achieved by breeding from females with extremely small combs- so small in fact, that the serrations peculiar to pea comb are barely discernible.

Male lobes are more prominent not only because of their larger size, but because muff development is frequently less profuse than in females. Moreover, the standard wisely allows for a lobe that is often quite pale in females and blends more readily in the abundant facial feathering. Developing sufficient muffs to make male lobes less obvious is an ongoing challenge. Lobes should be concealed, but not so the eyes, which should be large, bold and well placed.

It is the beard and muffs that when properly expressed, add the final touch and bring all points together in the well balanced head. The beard should be full, yet well tucked under the lower mandible, not pendulous as in certain large fowl. Muffs fully developed and profuse, are turned backward from the face, revealing the bright, expressive eyes, then sweep outward from either side of the head to form a triangular effect in combination with the beard. The well balanced head is difficult to describe and virtually impossible to define, yet an experienced judge or breeder worth his salt, knows it when he sees it. It is this charming little owl-like face combined with a sprightly manner that give the breed its appeal and is the essence of its true character.

Just how important are head points? My personal feeling is that they are expressive of breed characteristics far beyond the number that they are allowed on the standard general scale of points and that they provide an impression perhaps second only to overall breed type in judging bantams. As in anything else, a desire to maximize certain head points without regard to maintaining balance may be self-defeating and in the long run, do mischief to the breed. The late Lynn Breneman cautioned breeders of Polish bantams to remember that they were breeding crested bantams, not crests that incidentally, had bantams under them!

It is difficult not to first examine the head and face when taking a bantam in hand and it is not just the close proximity, but rather we are apparently conditioned to do so. To quote Dr. Will Wise in Fred Jeffrey's "Bantam Chickens": "Personally, I look for pretty heads, as near the ideal for the breed as described in the standard as I can find...It is pretty common knowledge that when people talk to each other, most look into the other's eyes. I think nearly all judges do this first and last in judging poultry, much the same as they would a Miss America contest. All other factors considered equal, they will pick the girl (or bantam) with the prettiest face."

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Financial Report

Income: (12/5/80 - 12/7/81)

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| Balance brought forward --- | \$104.62 | |
| Annual dues ----- | \$210.00 | |
| | | \$314.62 |

Expenditures: (12/5/80 - 12/7/81)

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| Bulletin ----- | \$ 76.39 | |
| Rosettes ----- | 66.30 | |
| Postage ----- | 50.00 | |
| ABA Color Plate Fund ----- | 25.00 | |
| Poultry Press ads ----- | 24.00 | |
| | | \$241.69 |

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| Ending balance (12/7/81) | | \$ 72.93 |
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Although we again end the year in the black, you can see that our balance for the year is down better than a fourth from the previous year. Your Board of Directors will continue to try to give you the most for your money and welcome your suggestions in this regard.

Under the Mulberry Tree

The mulberry leaves are yellow and worn and in spite of it being mid-December, the tree seems somehow reluctant to give them up as though not yet willing to put an end to yet another good year. And so it has been. The past two years in fact, have been quite productive and I am proud to have served with your board of directors who have accomplished so much in such a short span of time. I would like to express my gratitude to those of you who cast your ballots if nothing else than as a vote of confidence and look forward to serving the club for another term of office.

Another term of office means exactly that. I have done my best to do a good job for this club and shall continue serve this organization to the best of my ability for the next two years, but I do not wish to become an institution as has been the case of some poultry clubs. I believe that it is a healthy thing for a change in leadership and the relatively new change of secretary in both the ABA and APA bear this out. I know of at least one national club in which the secretary is literally dying on the job and taking the club with him. I will be glad to serve the club in some other capacity, but two years from now it is my wish that one of you out there will take my place as the new secretary of the Ameraucana Bantam Club.

Years ago a somewhat jaded member said that in any club a quarter of the members think that the officers are doing a great job, another quarter think that they are doing a lousy job and the rest do not care one way or the other as long as they are not expected to do any work. Let me assure you that your present board of directors does not take such a cynical approach and welcome your thoughts, ideas and suggestions for the betterment of the club. Let us hear from you.

Our member from Britain, Dorian Roxburgh, would like some photographs of Ameraucana bantams for the British Araucana Club newsletter. If any of you have photos that you would care to share, you may send them to Dorian or to your secretary and I will see that she gets them.

The fine array of cash awards offered thus far at our National Meet next month were made possible by the generosity of the following club members: Jane Brooksher, Ken Carpenter, John Fugate, Jack Gard, Mike Gilbert, Ken Huffstutter, Jerry Segler and my old friend, Bill Miller. With the support of people such as these, the future of the club looks very bright indeed. Thank you folks!

Your board of directors is in the process of establishing clear district boundaries, setting uniform policy for our meets, is considering the compiling and publishing of an Ameraucana Bantam Handbook as a service to members and is actively seeking recognition of the Ameraucana bantam by the American Poultry Association. In addition, we are working with Frank Gary, Chairman of the ABA Standard Committee, in the possible addition of new varieties of Ameraucana bantams for forthcoming editions of Bantam Standard. In short, we will be very busy in the next two years and hope that we may count upon each of you for your continued support of our efforts in behalf of the club.

Finally, to each of you, my very best wishes for a happy Holiday Season!